



childaware

Child Aware Approaches are community-led, innovative and practical, grassroots actions to keep children safe and wellⁱ



Australian Centre for
Child Protection

Philosophies of Child Aware Approaches

Child Aware Approaches are:

- A. family-sensitive;
- B. child-inclusive;
- C. strengths-based;
- D. collaborative; and
- E. culturally competent.

Principles of Child Aware Approaches

Within each of the Child Aware Approaches philosophies are one or more principles that guide organisations, practitioners and individuals working with Child Aware Approaches to keep children safe and well:

■ Family-sensitive:

Principle 1. Identify and respond to the needs of adults who are parents.

Principle 2. Acknowledge and build on family strengths while responding to family stressors and risk factors for child abuse and neglect.

■ Child-inclusive:

Principle 3. Understand and apply knowledge of children's needs at each stage of their physical, cognitive, emotional and social development.

Principle 4. Recognise and be sensitive to each child's unique perspective and experience.

Principle 5. Include children as active participants in decisions that affect them.

Principle 6. Promote child-safe environments.

■ Strengths-based:

Principle 7. Enable parents by promoting their parenting role as a motivator for positive change.

Principle 8. Build children's resilience by addressing their vulnerabilities and promoting effective, consistent caregiving.

■ Collaborative:

Principle 9. Develop and maintain connections between adult-focused services and child- and family-focused services.

■ Culturally competent:

Principle 10. Understand cultural influences on family and parenting practices and respond in a culturally sensitive way.ⁱⁱ



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Families Australia and the Australian Centre for Child Protection work to inform both policy makers and service providers about the most effective strategies for building safe and resilient communities that foster the wellbeing of children. We are proud to be jointly providing national leadership for the Australian Government's **Child Aware Local Initiative** (CALI).

At the Child Aware Approaches Conference held in Melbourne, 31 March 2014, the then Minister for Social Services, the Hon. Kevin Andrews MP, launched the Child Aware Local Initiative explaining that,

This initiative is based on our conviction that no one knows the needs and problems of local communities better than local community members.

The Child Aware Local Initiative will build upon local knowledge and local resources, providing tools and expertise about effective campaigns for child protection.

The **Child Aware Local Initiative** aims to enhance community awareness of the range of issues negatively affecting the wellbeing of children and to support communities to foster safe and nurturing environments for their children. Initially eight sites will benefit from this community capacity-building initiative.

Further details are provided in the documents contained in this information package. Please read the enclosed material and consider what role you and/or your organisation might play in helping to make 'protecting children everyone's business'.

We look forward to working on this exciting national initiative with all those who want to ensure that all children in Australia are safe, valued and cared for.

Yours sincerely,

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CHILD AWARE LOCAL INITIATIVE

1. What are Child Aware Approaches?

Child Aware Approaches are community-led, innovative and practical grassroots actions to keep children safe and well.

2. What is the Child Aware Local Initiative?

The Child Aware Local Initiative (CALI) is a capacity building initiative which supports communities to undertake early intervention and prevention activities which contribute to keeping children safe and well.

The Child Aware Local Initiative is a central priority under the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020* and the *Second Action Plan 2012-15*. Endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments, the National Framework represents an unprecedented level of collaboration between Australian, State and Territory governments and non-government organisations to protect children.

The supporting outcomes of the National Framework are the key drivers of the **Child Aware Local Initiative** which is implemented through a partnership between the community sector and Commonwealth and state and territory governments.

The six supporting outcomes of the National Framework are:

1. Children live in safe and supportive families and communities
2. Children and families access adequate support to promote safety and intervene early
3. Risk factors for child abuse and neglect are addressed
4. Children who have been abused or neglected receive the support and care they need for their safety and well being
5. Indigenous children are supported and safe in their families and communities
6. Child sexual abuse and exploitation is prevented and survivors receive adequate support

Key messages of the Child Aware Local Initiative include:

- ▶ Protecting children is everyone's business.
- ▶ Children have a right to be safe, valued and cared for.
- ▶ The best way to protect children is to prevent abuse and neglect from happening in the first place.
- ▶ Children and families should have a 'voice' in decisions affecting their lives.
- ▶ Governments, communities, organisations and individuals can work together to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and families.
- ▶ Children are usually best supported within their families.
- ▶ A 'one size fits all' approach does not work across Australia's diverse communities.
- ▶ Local solutions are required for local problems.
- ▶ Culturally diverse groups need culturally sensitive responses.

3. Who is leading the implementation of this Initiative?

Families Australia and the Australian Centre for Child Protection.

4. How will it work?

Communities will be supported to develop and implement sustainable local plans of action by bringing together existing resources and networks within communities.

In each community a lead organisation will be identified to partner with a range of agencies, groups and individuals such as national, state and local government agencies, community leaders, community sector organisations and groups, corporate and small business, health and education institutions, child protection services and children, parents and families.

5. What will be achieved?

Communities will implement practical actions and local solutions that contribute to keeping children safe and well. Practical actions may include developing resources and some training tools or families reaching out to other families or services asking about children's needs. Outcomes will be reported in March 2016.

6. How many sites will be selected?

Up to eight communities will be selected.

7. What support will be provided to communities and organisations?

Families Australia and the will bring stakeholders together and provide them with support to develop a community vision and associated practical action to drive sustainable change.

Communities and organisations have access to relevant research, training, tools and practice examples from previous Child Aware Approaches projects.

8. Lead agency contacts

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Collective local action for children and families

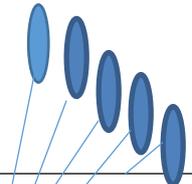
Pre-planning, development of program logic, consultation with DSS, State and Territory, site selection, site announcements

Purpose of Child Aware Local Initiative:
 What is it?
 Why?
 How?
 What do we offer?

Step 1
 Meeting with Lead agency
 (FA & ACCP)

To create an authorising environment ACCP/FA meet:

- National/State representative.
- Key local person from lead agency



Individual meetings held with organisations identified for inclusion where there might not be natural connections with lead agency.

Step 2
 Meeting with Lead agency in community
 (FA & ACCP)

Identify key local people. Map areas of influence. Identify potential barriers. Identify strategies for engagement.

Venue, meals and facilitation arranged

Understanding the environment. What do we know? What does the community know?

Step 3
 Major gathering in community
 (FA & ACCP)

Presentations about:

- CALI
- National Framework
- Contributions by FA & ACCP
- National Forum leadership & Advisory Group

Preliminary local capacity and inputs

Introduce the role of the lead agency

New connections

Facilitation and implementation support provided

Resources
 Data
 Evidence
 Workforce development

Step 4
 Child Aware planning group meeting:

- Explore issues
- Develop plan
- Develop actions (ACCP)

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

CALI Advisory Group

- ❖ Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and the NGO Coalition representatives, will provide strategic guidance for the initiative.

State & Territory Governments/National Forum

- ❖ Facilitating partners in supporting the local CALI sites

Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS)

- ❖ Responsible for implementation of the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children
- ❖ Provides funding to Families Australia & ACCP for CALI initiative

Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP)

- ❖ Through visits to each CALI community:
 - Facilitates formation of community partnerships
 - Facilitates development of Local Action Plans
- ❖ Provides follow-up telephone support to communities during implementation of Local Action Plan

Families Australia

- ❖ Fosters organisational change at the strategic level to embed a child aware approach
- ❖ Provides linkage communication among CALI sites and to the broader community sector

Local Lead Agency

- ❖ Facilitates establishment of CALI local action group
- ❖ Facilitates implementation of local action plan

CALI Local Action Group

- ❖ Promotes engagement of community in CALI
- ❖ Develops and implements a Local Action Plan

CALI Local Action Plans will:

- ✓ *Identify a community vision for the safety and wellbeing of children in their community*
- ✓ *Identify key principles for CALI plan*
- ✓ *Identify actions to embed a Child Aware approach in the community*

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ⁱ Australian Government, *The good practice guide to Child Aware Approaches: keeping children safe and well*, CFCA Paper No. 21 2014, p. 10.

ⁱⁱ Australian Government, *The good practice guide to Child Aware Approaches: keeping children safe and well*, CFCA Paper No. 21 2014, p. 11.