



Thriving Queensland
Kids Partnership
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Child and Family Hubs Framework



Document 2 Framework Elements

To be read alongside Document 1: Framework
Purposes, Underpinnings, and Practice Principles



Developed to help design and deliver best-practice
Child and Family Hubs

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Acknowledgement of First Nations People

The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) and Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership (TQKP) acknowledge the Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands upon which we live and work, and their continuing connection to land and sea, and to kin, culture and community. We acknowledge that these always were and always will be Aboriginal lands. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and First Nations colleagues.

We are privileged to welcome and grow our children and support our families in these places. We acknowledge the gifts of wisdom, culture and connection of thousands of generations. We also acknowledge the First Nations leaders, advocates and organisations that have fought for children and their rights.

We acknowledge the enduring consequences of adversity and trauma experienced at the hands of systems over

generations, as well as the resilience, determination, leadership, generosity and patience First Nations people have long demonstrated.

ARACY and TQKP also acknowledged that we have much to learn from First Nations ways of living, raising children and connecting to kin, culture and country, and from their example of innovation, integration of knowledges, recognition of the importance of identity and healing, and the experiences of working with, in, and despite systems.

TQKP is committed to working in partnership and collaboration as an ally to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, communities and organisations, and their aspirations and agendas. TQKP signed the Family Matters Queensland Statement of Commitment in early 2020 and continues to engage as an ally.

Background Information

About Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership (TQKP)

TQKP is a Queensland-based intermediary and coalition focused on systems change for the benefit of children and youth. Instigated and hosted by the Australian **Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY)**, TQKP brings together a cross-sectoral coalition of Queensland leaders, organisations, practitioners, and collaborators working together with the shared purpose of improving the conditions for Queensland children and young people to thrive now, and into the future. For more information, please see www.tqkp.org.au

About the National Child and Family Hubs Network (NCFHN)

The Framework was developed in consultation with multiple stakeholders, including Steering Committee members of the NCFHN. The Network is dedicated to strengthening child and family Hubs across Australia to ensure children and families can access the supports and services they need and have a safe place to meet other families and build essential social networks. The Network unites leaders, service providers, policymakers and academics to advance research, advocacy and learning.

By building the capacity of Child and Family Hubs, the Network is helping to ensure fairer health, education and wellbeing for Australian families. For more information – including to subscribe to their mailing list – see www.childandfamilyhubs.org.au. As part of its **Strategic Plan 2024–2029**, the NCFHN will use this Framework as the basis for developing and testing a national version, as well as generation of a related evaluation framework.



National Child & Family
Hubs Network

About the Child and Family Hubs Framework Project

The project was funded with support from The Bryan Foundation and coordinated in 2023–2024 by TQKP.



It primarily aimed to distil practitioner wisdom and the available evidence base to develop a Framework to inform the design and delivery of best-practice family hubs in the Queensland context, and possibly beyond.

Thanks to all who contributed to its development, which included integration of early learnings from the yarning circles conducted across the state by the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak to inform its Thriving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Initiative. While this Framework is not designed specifically for hubs delivered by Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations, it is hoped the rich feedback provided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will help improve outcomes for First Nations children and families. For more information about the Child and Family Hubs Framework project, please see here or contact TQKP@aracy.org.au

Feedback welcome

We would love to hear how the Framework may have helped inform the work of your hub, as well as suggestions for improvement to consider for future updates. Please email any feedback to TQKP@aracy.org.au

Disclaimer

Information in this Framework is intended as a guide only. Although every effort was made at the time of publication to ensure the accuracy of information included, ARACY is not responsible for the way in which this Framework is used. Quality of service provision is the responsibility of individual service providers.

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December 2024



Reader's Guide

This Framework aims to provide shared understandings, language and processes across groups to build effective, integrated local responses. The below list outlines how the Framework can provide value to different audiences:*

Managers and Leaders

Supports coordination of relationships, operations and running of a child and family hub, including connection with and managing different perspectives, priorities and possible limitations to build shared local intent and action.

Practitioners and Staff

Supports greater shared ways of working across all workers (including administration staff and volunteers) who connect with children, families and community associated with a hub.

Community

Provides ways for hub users and the wider community to understand, engage with and be involved in a hub. This might include connecting with others, accessing support, volunteering and participation in co-design, governance and planning processes.

* Additional engagement and communication strategies beyond the Framework are recommended to meet the different needs of stakeholder groups, such as information packs, posters, brochures and online platforms.

Funders and Policy Makers

Helps deepen understanding about hub activities and strategic direction needed to maximise a social return on investment. It may also assist with comparison across hubs.

Researchers

Provides context for formal research to add to a hub's regular evaluation activities. It may also support comparison across sites to evaluate implementation of the Framework.

The Framework is divided into two parts:

- **Document 1:** Background, purpose, principles and underpinnings
- **Document 2:** Elements

Together, these set the scene for what the Framework wants to achieve and why.

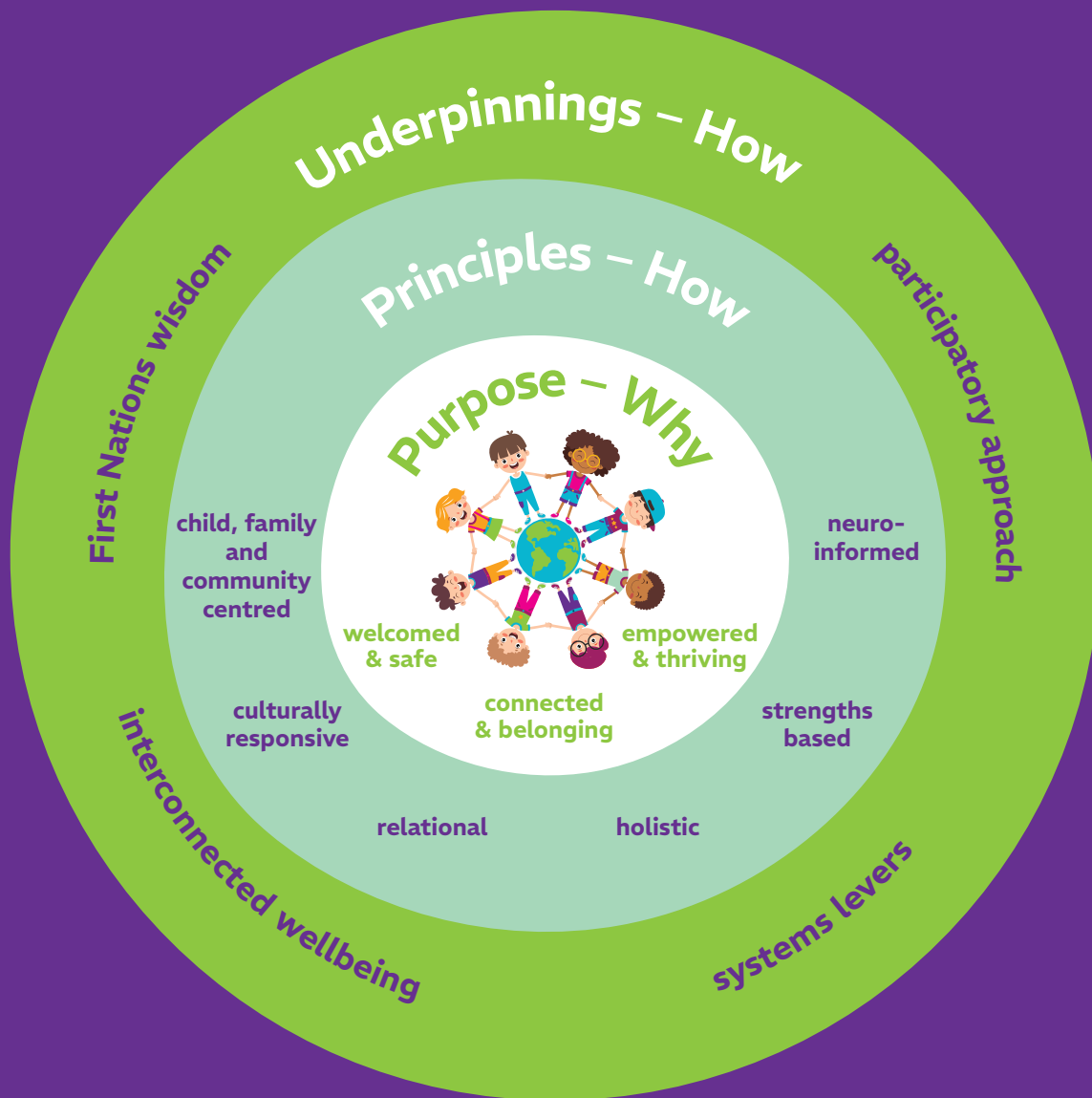
Text in orange is hyperlinked, as are the names/websites of those resources listed in purple. Clicking on the colour text will take you directly to the resource in question.



Child and Family Hubs Framework

The Framework is displayed graphically to the right, and captures its purposes (why), underpinnings and principles (how) and elements (what). It is designed to be viewed from the centre outwards, acknowledging change best occurs when the Framework elements support each other and are woven together. This document focuses on the Framework's Elements (What) of a Child and Family Hub, and is designed to be read alongside companion Document 1 outlining the Purposes (Why) and Underpinnings and Practice Principles (How).





Elements – What

partnership development & management

soft & hard structure

services & program mix

funding

recruitment, support & professional development

strategy & planning

relationship to the local community

information & reporting requirements

shared knowledge, skills, frames, tools & processes

leadership & governance



Framework Elements (What)

The following ten elements are important to consider whether designing a new hub, managing the ongoing improvement of an existing hub, undertaking a review or rethinking existing infrastructure and/or programs.

While the elements are not designed to be achieved in this order, those that need to be considered when establishing a new hub are presented first. Each element supports the three purposes of a hub, as well as the four underpinnings and six practice principles outlined in more detail in **Document 1**.

The following information is provided for each element:

- Overview;
- First Nations perspectives;
- Applications;
- Questions to consider; and
- Resources.

Resources throughout this document are represented by the following icons:



Article



Toolkit /
Practice Guide /
Framework



Book



Webinar



Report



Website



Listed below are resources that particularly apply across multiple elements:



A How-To Guide for Linkers, Navigators and Connectors



Liu, P.Y., Beck, A.F., Lindau, S.T., Holguin, M., Kahn, R.S., Fleegler, E., Henize, A.W., Halfon, N. & Schickedanz, A. (2022). A framework for cross-sector partnerships to address childhood adversity and improve life course health. *Pediatrics*, 149 (5), DOI: [10.1542/peds.2021-0535090](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2021-0535090).



Framing for change: Communicating to improve outcomes for children, young people and families

Note: This is one of the many resources available through ARACY's Framing for Change learning hub.



Place Connect

A community of practice connecting members who plan and deliver place-based social infrastructure in Queensland.



The Long Term Success Tool

A way to identify risks and strengths of 12 factors that are known to impact the long-term success of an improvement initiative.



Queensland Council of Social Services

Guide and toolkit for place-based approaches for community change.



National Child and Family Hubs Network



Thriving Kids Brain Builders Initiative



Partnerships for Local Action and Community Empowerment

1 Partnership development & management

Overview

This element reflects collaboration, belonging, community ownership and responsibility, allowing a hub to draw and build upon local knowledge, resources and networks in supporting positive wellbeing outcomes. Strong, fruitful collaboration empowers stakeholders to contribute to a hub's success, and supports integrated service delivery.

It is therefore important to identify and connect with potential partners at the start of the planning process to make sure their knowledge guides all other elements, including leadership and governance. The diagram on page 11¹ gives a systems perspective on the range of stakeholders that may be considered for collective action, noting that in the case of hubs some of these voices will and should overlap:

Working with others falls along a continuum, as seen below in the Collaboration Spectrum (Tamarack Institute²). Positive partnerships draw upon the relational skills outlined earlier, with authenticity, trust and warmth key requirements for building engagement with multiple groups. This element also involves strong planning processes,

effective communication and organisational infrastructure that has enough funding. It should be noted that integrated service delivery does not necessarily mean services should merge to achieve sustainable, holistic responses.

Regional, rural and remote communities often have the advantage of having closer connections between agencies, in many cases because they need to work more flexibly as they don't have a wide variety of other services to draw upon. However, these informal relationships are often not funded and may hide the real extent of support needs in such communities. In addition, limited social infrastructure such as public transport may require greater reliance on outreach models through hub access to cars and/or agreements to share resources across local partners.

It is therefore important to adequately resource the collaboration required to enable and embed flexible, integrated service delivery. This is particularly important in the event of critical incidents such as natural disasters, when hubs may quickly take on a key role in supporting system coordination and service navigation to help restore community recovery and wellbeing.

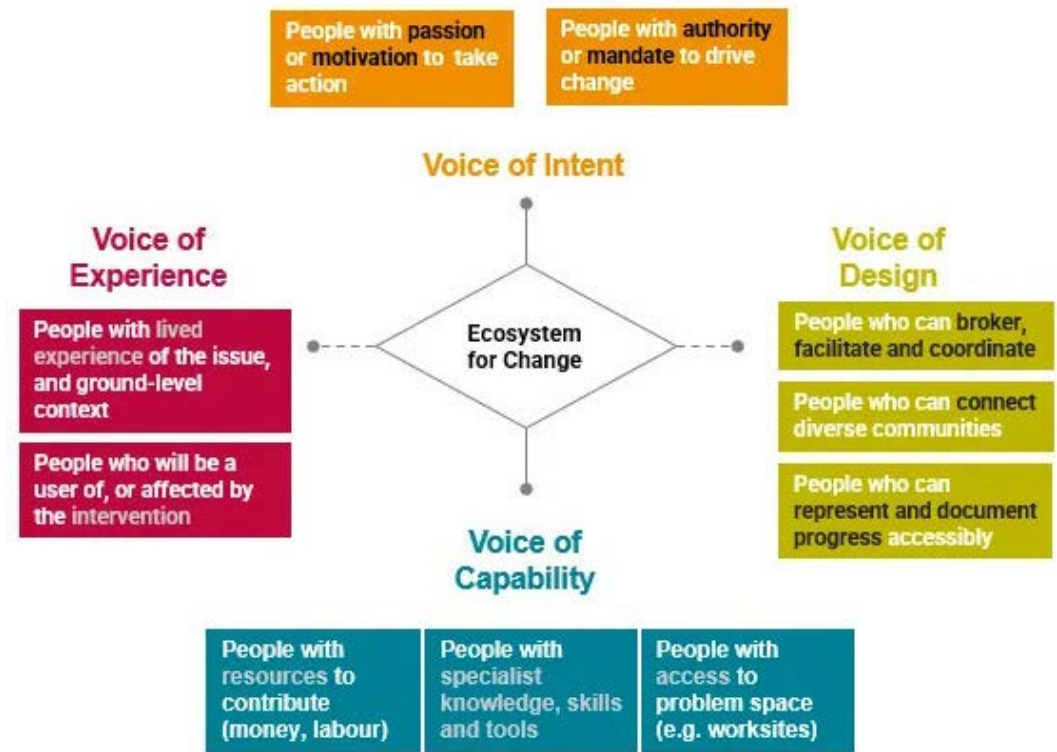
1 From Bannear, B. (March 9, 2023). The new zeitgeist: relationships and emergence. <https://medium.com/@bill.bannear/the-new-zeitgeist-relationships-and-emergence-e8359b934e0>

2 www.tamarackcommunity.ca

Compete	Co-exist	Communicate	Cooperate	Coordinate	Collaborate	Integrate
Competition for clients, resources, partners, public attention	No systemic connection between agencies	Interagency information sharing (e.g. networking)	As needed, often informal interaction, on discrete activities or projects	Organisations systematically adjust and align work with each other for greater outcomes	Longer-term interaction based on shared mission, goals, shared decision-makers and resources	Fully-integrated programs, planning, funding

The Collaboration Spectrum, Tamarack Institute

Diagram: Thinking through who we're connecting in an Alliance for Action (Extended 4 Voices of Design by ThinkPlace)



First Nations perspectives

Relationships and the community are at the heart of First Nations wellbeing. However, the damage created by generations of disempowerment and discrimination has reduced trust in services, which have historically done things to people rather than with them.

First Nations perspectives place and engage with community at the centre as equal partners. It is therefore vital to invest time and energy into approaches “where communities have control and ownership over the development activities they are working on. As communities hold the decision-making power, they can – with tools and support – design and carry out development projects that align with their aspirations and directly meet their needs” (Community First Development, 2021, p. 18).

Working in partnership with First Nations people will contribute to better outcomes for hub users and the wider community. This includes creating a culturally-safe work environment from which to form and develop respectful partnerships. It is important that a hub collaboratively invests in engagement principles and plans in line with local cultural protocols, and that the terms of a partnership clearly spell out expectations for everyone. It also needs to invest time into nurturing relationships including – and well beyond – the initial design phase to build trust and healing. Linking

a hub’s work to helping meet Closing the Gap targets will also build common ground with First Nations partners.

If a hub creates positive experiences with and for First Nations people, this will likely be spread through word of mouth just as much as – if not more than – the formal communication and engagement strategies a hub invests in. Doing so will help create a space for First Nations people to feel welcomed and safe as the basis for healing and empowerment.



Application

- Develop and maintain a strong understanding of local knowledge-keepers, issues, opportunities, services and resources. This will help place hub operations in the broader context of community partnerships that can help build wellbeing in a way that remains responsive to changing local needs.
- Connect with local groups and networks while also developing the hub's own network of invested people, groups, organisations and systems to maintain visibility, relevance and shared practices.
- Develop tailored strategies to ensure engagement with harder-to-reach and/or less visible groups, such as those from a CALD background. This may include identifying and minimising potential barriers to involvement/access, and proactively putting positive supports in place. It can also be helpful to engage through partnerships with organisations and local connectors who have developed positive relationships and trust with these groups.
- Develop a clear understanding of partner priorities and requirements from which develop a collective hub vision, which will help identify and develop shared knowledge, skills, frames, tools and processes.
- Maintain a strong, clear focus on the development of training and agreements that need to occur prior to working together to provide a positive, supportive hub experience for all.
- Develop and implement a clear, well-resourced communication strategy that gives relevant updates to create and maintain engagement with stakeholders.
- Provide safe opportunities for stakeholder views to be heard, acknowledged and considered.
- Identify and hold difficult conversations early if potential stakeholders experience challenges sharing information (communicating); interacting informally (cooperating); and/or systematically adjusting (coordinating).
- Check for and address institutional racism and unconscious discrimination and bias in the hub setting, and build a positive, inclusive workplace to help create cultural safety.
- Highlight partnerships as a key feature and a core function of hub-related work, including reframing roles from being broader than their discipline-specific components to include relational aspects e.g. include specific reference to relationship-building skills and expectations in position descriptions and performance reviews; staff attendance at shared professional development; foster networking with community agencies.
- Encourage opportunities for networking between staff and services associated with a hub, ideally in person e.g. ensure building design includes common spaces shared across hub staff; facilitate introductions of staff new to a hub; support regular on-site gatherings and celebrations.
- Match organisational responses to the level of formality required by a partnership. Collaborations with legal, financial, reputational and/or duty of care implications may require documents such as service agreements or memorandums of understanding. These will need approval and review from senior management of participating agencies, so it is important to allow for enough lead-in time for their preparation and sign-off.
- Review and – where appropriate – formally evaluate and feed back the strength and direction of partnerships as a critical ingredient of hub-related work.
- Consider connecting with external institutions (such as universities) to evaluate hub delivery and/or impact.

Questions to consider

- 1 Who are the partners that are interested in, and required for, hub planning and delivery?
- 2 What is your plan to engage and partner with First Nations stakeholders in a way that builds trust?
- 3 What strategies have been considered to build partnerships between hub stakeholders to enable integrated service delivery?

Resources



Okeyo, I., Lehmann, U. & Schneider, H. (2020). The impact of differing frames on early stages of intersectoral collaboration: The case of the First 1000 Days Initiative in the Western Cape Province. *Health Research Policy and Systems*, 18 (3). DOI: [10.1186/s12961-019-0508-0](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12961-019-0508-0)



[Collaboration for Impact Resource Hub](#)



[How to Write a Communication Plan](#)



[Advancing partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations](#)



[Partnership Analysis Tool \(Vic Health, 2011\)](#)

2 | Leadership & governance



Overview

This element provides direction and responsibility to make sure hub delivery matches its vision, purpose and strategic planning. It develops and maintains sound, supportive structures that build shared intent and energy, have a clear direction and develop practical action through all stages of hub development. Doing so means that hub responses will be safe, inclusive, high quality and guided by local strengths and needs, leading to better opportunities and outcomes for children, families, staff and community.

While many people contribute to the effective delivery of a hub, one agency must be responsible for its overall leadership. This is most likely the one provided specific funding and authority for its delivery, with the Hub Leader taking on a key role in bringing hub operations to life.

Leadership is value-led and provides a role model for others. In the case of a Hub Leader, these include demonstration of the practice principles built on a strong commitment to fairness and social justice. A modern view of leadership is one of stewardship, which suggests that people occupy only a temporary role in looking after and enhancing a service or system for the future benefit of others. This is especially relevant to the long-term vision of a hub, which is intended to be centred in and actively contribute to the lives of its community.

Governance is traditionally concerned with control, operation and accountability, and includes ethics, risk management, compliance and administration (Governance Institute of Australia³). The wide range of stakeholders involved in a hub only increases the need for clear processes to make sure there is alignment between roles and responsibilities. For this reason, hubs also require participatory structures that consider the perspectives and contributions of multiple partners, and privilege the insights of First Nations people, families and community. Considering the view of children is also vital as they have the right to say what they think should happen, and have their opinions taken into account (United Nations, 1989).

Governance should therefore include active partnership with community stakeholders, which will help build a culture of inclusivity, trust and empowerment. These partners include – but are not limited to – representatives of local children and young people, families, community leaders, non-government organisations and other social and civic groups. Inclusion of their voices in all leadership forums (e.g. strategic leadership group, reference/advisory groups, time-limited working parties and community consultations) will ensure a hub can best understand and respond to local strengths and address identified needs. These forums will have different levels of authority and scope, which need to be clearly communicated and reviewed.

First Nations perspectives

When working with First Nations people, the values and actions of a Hub Leader (amongst others) needs to be driven by knowledge of and commitment to addressing the cultural determinants of First Nations health and wellbeing (Arabena, 2020).

Self-determination is one of these determinants and can be expressed as community control, “a process which allows the local Aboriginal community to be involved in its affairs in accordance with whatever protocols or procedures are determined by the Community” (National Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations⁴). This principle must also help guide a hub’s governance strategies. It is not enough to have one First Nations representative at a hub’s decision-making forum, as this would fail to reflect the richness, collective approach and breadth of views, ages and genders of its First Nations community. Further strategies should be developed to seek out, listen to and be led in genuine, respectful partnership by the views of the wider First Nations community to ensure cultural authority rests with local people and is not overridden once input is received. First Nations leadership also needs to be supported and embedded at all levels, including succession planning to enable staff to progress in their careers.

Application

- Recruit and support leaders who demonstrate the practice principles through their values and behaviour, and have the required strategic, managerial and communication skills to help bring a hub’s purposes to life.
- Build the wellbeing of leaders associated with a hub – including the Hub Leader – through application of the three points of the Resilience Scale e.g. acknowledge and where possible plan for and manage demands such as the approach of key milestones, reporting deadlines and the end of financial year (reduce sources of stress); allow them time for the relational aspects of their role (build positive supports); and support opportunities that will develop their strategic and operational capabilities (build core skills).
- Foster authentic connection with the community to develop a shared vision, values and strategy. This will include listening out for and considering local power dynamics to ensure all relevant partners are identified, engaged and able to contribute to collective decision-making.
- Consider the establishment of a First Nations Advisory Group/Council to enable a safe, diverse forum for the collection and amplification of local views, along with strong decision-making and feedback mechanisms to ensure a hub harnesses the strengths and meets the needs of its First Nations community.

³ www.governanceinstitute.com.au/resources/what-is-governance

⁴ www.naccho.org.au

- Develop robust processes for the selection, orientation, payment and support processes of child/family/community representatives to meet duty of care requirements and maximise the impact of their involvement. It is also important to make sure they can sufficiently represent experiences broader than their own, and well as feed back learnings to others in the community so that their role is not tokenistic.
- Communicate the range of ways stakeholders can contribute, from one-off forums (e.g. surveys, focus groups or suggestion boxes) to more formal, ongoing processes, such as roles on management/working groups.
- Identify existing and required governance structures to support clear, transparent, respectful and culturally-safe processes for decision-making.
- Develop strong, fair strategies to seek, reflect and act on stakeholder views and data.
- Develop, communicate and regularly review clear, accessible hub governance documents e.g. organisational chart, meeting Terms of Reference, shared portal for policies and procedures.
- Use clear feedback channels to communicate decisions e.g. circulate hub newsletters and meeting minutes; hold community and staff forums.
- Develop processes to make sure services are aware of – and follow – hub policies and procedures to help build an integrated response.
- Encourage a culture of learning and creative thinking by reflecting on evaluation data and emerging evidence, and quickly developing and trialling new projects to help improve wellbeing outcomes.
- Support sound knowledge and local application of contemporary organisational standards (such as accreditation) so that they become an ongoing process of quality improvement.
- Build risk and change management strategies into hub discussions to help identify and manage potential/actual threats to safe, high-quality services, including risks to resources such as time, money, staffing and stakeholder relationships.

Questions to consider

- 1 What strategies have been taken to support stewardship of your hub?
- 2 How have you authentically engaged with your local First Nations community to ensure your hub's governance processes are culturally-informed?
- 3 What strategies have you taken to make sure your hub delivery is safe and high-quality?

Resources



April, K., Kukard, J., & Peters, K. (2022). *Stewardship Leadership: A maturational perspective* (2nd ed). UCT Press.

DOI: [10.58331/UCTPRESS.57](https://doi.org/10.58331/UCTPRESS.57)



Governance Institute of Australia



Indigenous Governance Tool Kit



Child and Family Partnerships Toolkit



Evidence-informed decision making



3 | Strategy & planning

Overview

This element includes both strategic and operational planning. Strategic planning focuses on wider, long-term issues such as developing a shared vision, building impact by hub staff and obtaining sustainable funding. Operational planning is concerned with the day-to-day running of a hub, including legal, financial and staffing requirements. There needs to be a relationship between both types of planning, which are based on and connected by strong governance processes and a cycle of continuous quality improvement.

Central to the planning element is the process of design in setting up a hub. Establishment processes focus on practical issues, such as legal and financial needs, architectural plans and construction. These will largely depend on the type of hub as well as limited by laws and budget, so are not directly covered in this Framework. However, they work best when considered with learning from co-design, which requires hearing and acting on the views of others as equal partners. This should be guided by the practice of deep listening used by many First Nations peoples, which also honours truth-telling.

Authentically connecting and understanding takes time, which needs to be built into planning for the co-design of a hub and well beyond. While surveys and focus groups are important ways to seek feedback, co-design should not stop at stakeholder consultation as these are tokenistic and fall very short of achieving a quality co-design process (Arnstein, 1969). Co-design instead uses flexible, participatory processes rather than prescriptive checklists, although several useful models may be considered.

This includes the integrated co-design concept model (Kerr, Whelan, Zelenko, Harper-Hill & Villalba, 2022), which puts forward the following phases:

- **Pre-design:** co-design planning; pilot workshop/s; preliminary activities
- **Design:** Co-design workshops; data analysis; prototype development
- **Develop:** Workshop participant feedback; prototype; multiple stakeholder feedback
- **Implement:** Refine and grow e.g. through stakeholder advisory committee, user testing

It may be useful for workshops to be led by a person who is not part of the local community as they can offer an independent view.

Planning attention needs to be given to developing, trialling, building in and sufficiently resourcing the “glue” functions that support integrated practices. These may include policies and procedures to capture shared expectations, with processes built in to help bring them to life through the day-to-day behaviours and activities of hub staff and service providers. It is also important that planning allows for flexibility and adaptability in response to opportunities as well as critical issues such as local hazards, crises and/or disasters.

First Nations perspectives

First Nations perspectives emphasise a holistic, community-centred approach focused on cultural sensitivity and self-determination. They also highlight the need for enough time to build genuine engagement and trust through processes that are relational, respectful and match the values, protocols, priorities and knowledge systems of local First Nations people.

These may be learned through connection with Elders and leaders, with this feedback also sought through their contribution to co-design and governance strategies. Community control notes that First Nations peoples should not just “be involved”, but rather lead, control, and own all aspects of co-design (Butler et al., 2022). Hubs should clearly include in their plans strategies that will help meet their hope for equitable connection and impact with First Nations communities, including those that address the cultural determinants of wellbeing (Arabena, 2020). This includes genuine commitment towards development, delivery and action upon a hub’s Reconciliation Action Plan. In each case, plans should be specific and measurable, backed by enough funding and included in evaluation and reporting to make sure everyone is clear about and feels responsible for their success.

Application

- Invest enough time and money into authentic co-design processes before, during and beyond the establishment phase. This may include money for payment of attendees (including representatives of hubs users and the wider community); transport/parking costs; free qualified childcare; interpreters; venue hire; catering; and use of an external facilitator for co-design workshops.⁵
- Develop a strong understanding of the local community to know who needs to be involved in the co-design process. This includes ways to hear the views of potential staff as they may join a hub after the initial design process e.g., connection with, and guidance from, relevant staff from other hubs; advice from partner

5 The decision to use an external facilitator is dependent on the co-design format and community context. The community development approaches outlined earlier offer useful ideas for facilitation of co-design forums.

services; feedback from professional organisations.

- Consider hub locations that are easily accessible by current (or future) public transport options, and co-located with public and service-connected areas e.g. close to local shopping centres. It will also help to plan for expected local population growth and change, as well as space for extra staff as the hub grows.
 - Consider local challenges to access. In the case of some rural and remote locations public transport is either limited or non-existent, which could be a barrier to people using hub resources. This will need to consider in terms of a hub's location (if based in a physical building), and the model used. For example, funding may be needed to provide outreach support, and/or local services could be used to help share transport resources across the community.
 - Develop a shared vision for the hub through early, authentic connection with relevant stakeholders, including the local First Nations community. Support this with a theory of change (and if required a related program logic model) that actively guides the hub's activities and planning cycle.
 - Jointly develop a strategic plan to bring to life the hub's vision and theory of change. The plan should be long enough to assess its impact (e.g., 3 – 5 years), and clearly communicate activities, stakeholders, timeframes, budget, outcomes and measures.
 - Break down the strategic plan into annual workplans that are specific enough to guide activities, but flexible enough to respond to new and emerging opportunities and evidence. These should be reviewed with hub stakeholders at least once a year to help generate the year's next action plan.
- Work with the local First Nations community and other relevant stakeholders to develop, deliver and evaluate a Reconciliation Action Plan⁶, linked to the strategic plan and annual workplans.
 - Build in the limitations and opportunities of a hub's budget cycle, which may include risks to a stable workforce if staff are tied to short-term contracts.
 - Follow ongoing planning cycles e.g. observe; analyse; plan; implement; reflect.
 - Regularly collect, share and reflect on program, service, workforce and community data to make sure the hub's activities best match current and expected local need, including how it can help improve local social determinants of health.
 - Jointly develop, resource and deliver a communication strategy for the hub. This should include sharing plans, activities and opportunities in languages and ways that are engaging and relevant to local hub users, staff and the wider community.
 - Seek the views of local young people on what would have helped them at a younger age, and feed this information back into the planning of hub services and programs for children.

6 Noting that the services engaged in a hub may each have their own organisational Reconciliation Action Plan, which will need to be considered.

Questions to consider

- 1 How are children, families, community and staff involved in co-design discussions, processes and decisions?
- 2 How do you (intend to) collaboratively develop, resource, delivery and evaluate your hub's Reconciliation Action Plan?
- 3 How well does the hub's strategic plan reflect its shared vision and theory of change?

Resources



What is theory of change?



Child-safe organisations



Reconciliation Action Plan resources



Kerr, J., Cheers, J., Gallegos, D., Blackler, A., & Kelly, N. (2023). *The art of co-design: Solving problems through creative collaboration*. BIS Publishers B.V.



Early Years Place Quality Self-Assessment and Reflection Tool User Guide



Hub Spotlight: Family LinQ

FamilyLinQ is a collaborative initiative partnering with school communities in establishing, developing and co-creating Queensland's first 'purpose built' integrated school model incorporating community hub facilities. It is supported by The Bryan Foundation in partnership with the Queensland Government, and aims to improve the health, education and life outcomes for children and their families.

FamilyLinQ's development has been guided by a Strategic Steering Committee made up of representatives from the Department of Education, Children's Health Queensland, Metro South Health and The Bryan Foundation. The committee works in collaboration to ensure the successful implementation of FamilyLinQ, which opened at Kingston State School in August 2024 with a second site opening at the new Corymbia State School in January 2025.

Creating a school community vision for FamilyLinQ was facilitated through community engagement work undertaken in 2022 with the Kingston State School community. Families, students, school staff, local elders, community organisations and government agencies were asked, 'What will success look like for you?' and, 'How would you measure it?'. Families were brought together around food to ponder these questions and workshopped their vision, aspirations and hopes.

To engage students The Bryan Foundation partnered with the Australian Institute of Play, who facilitated play-based workshops with children of all ages over three days. Children were invited to use a range of materials to build their ideal FamilyLinQ hub. This approach fostered rich discussion with a top priority of children being learning to cook with their families.

The knowledge gathered through these engagement sessions was used to develop the Stakeholder Visioning Report, the Child's Voice Consultation Report, the FamilyLinQ Evaluation Framework and Plan and Program Logic as well as FamilyLinQ's Practice Framework, known as 'Our Ways of Working'.

Key partners who walk alongside and support the FamilyLinQ initiative have been the local First Nations led organisation Gunya Meta, and the local Pasifika-focused organisation Village Connect. Collaboration with both organisations has been integral in the development of the Practice Framework including guidance on the FamilyLinQ ways of knowing, being and doing.

To ensure local decision making, each FamilyLinQ school has established a Hub Implementation Group made up of school leadership, parents, Department of Education staff and The Bryan Education Foundation staff. This group meets regularly and focuses on the initial set up within each school. These groups will evolve to become FamilyLinQ Leadership Groups supporting the development and implementation of site-specific strategic plans, and are supported by the FamilyLinQ Strategic Steering Committee.

The FamilyLinQ initiative will continue to be driven by school communities and will respond to the aspirations and needs of each community. The Bryan Foundation are looking forward to working in partnership with the Kingston and Corymbia State Schools community, families and all key partners to create spaces and opportunities which build connections, belonging, family capacity and enable children to thrive.

For more information, see the FamilyLinQ website: <https://familylinq.org.au/>

4 | Relationship to the local community

Overview

It is crucial that hubs remain responsive to the specific capacities, needs, cultural preferences and aspirations of children, caregivers, staff and local community. They must authentically engage with these groups (including local leaders) to ensure hub processes and initiatives create belonging and a sense of collective ownership.

This element critically analyses the hub's alignment with the local community to make sure it is relevant, beneficial and well-utilised. Participatory, community-led practices intentionally uncover and build upon local capabilities, resources, challenges and assets through access to rich data. It also requires flexibility to respond to local need, including the ability to quickly adapt to changing circumstances such as the impact of local hazards, crises and/or disasters.

System processes should be responsive enough to enable a child or family to access the full suite of services available to them depending on their needs and circumstances, including those offered in mainstream settings beyond a hub if the need arises. A sound knowledge of local resources will develop referral options to connect hub users with to help meet their holistic needs.

First Nations perspectives

Country is at the centre for First Nations peoples. When considering the local context:

Intangible cultural heritage can include Song Lines, ceremonies and Dreaming stories, performing arts, oral traditions, social practices, knowledge and practices concerning nature, plants and the universe, festive events or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts. It can also include languages. Cultural heritage can have both tangible (something you can touch) and intangible (like knowledge or a story about something or how you are supposed to behave) elements. It can be something that has been around for a long time or something that is new. Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) refers to the rights Indigenous peoples' have to their cultural heritage and is based on the fundamental right to self-determination. (Te Hemara, 2021)

Hubs should actively partner with local community as well as collective decision-making processes to enhance cultural relevance and authenticity. Hub staff attending local First Nations interagency meetings and celebrations will build visibility, credibility and connection to encourage access to its services and programs. It will also help them understand and honour any developments within the local

community. These include those may have a negative impact upon families and services providers (including staff), such as sorry business.

Through the growth of genuine trust and relationships, a hub may engage a local First Nations artist(s) to create an expression of the hub's connection to the community. In doing so, it is important that hubs acknowledge and properly recognise the Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property of any cultural expression that is created as belonging to the community.

Application

- Develop a deep understanding of the factors that have contributed historically to the local community and its social determinants e.g. First Nations heritage; decline/emergence of industry; gentrification; critical incidents; natural disasters.
- Access the data on which the decision was made to establish a hub and monitor this over time. It may be useful to match this data against The Nest and Resilience Scale to identify strengths and needs at the local level. This will guide hub planning and help advocate for additional investment to address social determinants impacting on individual, family and community wellbeing.
- Proactively make sure the hub is known to the local community.
- Build a positive relationship with local media and elected officials to promote hub resources and opportunities
- Map the community's background to guide hub's efforts to build cultural safety, relevance and responsiveness e.g. attempt to recruit bilingual staff; engage in respectful relationships with local cultural groups and Elders; provide resources in relevant languages; acknowledge and celebrate culturally-important days and events; offer a range of free cultural foods at groups and functions; showcase the knowledge and skills of First Nations/ CALD staff and community members through their involvement in services and programs.
- Map and monitor local services and activities to build referral pathways; explore opportunities for shared professional development; and identify gaps that may be filled through a hub where appropriate.
- Consider the impact for those who hold the dual role of staff and community member, particularly in rural, regional and remote areas where it is harder to be anonymous. Support staff to maintain a balance between their work and personal identities.
- Acknowledge the cultural load held by First Nations staff and support them (including through cultural leave, flexible working arrangements and payment) when affected by local events/fulfilling cultural demands.
- Build responsiveness of the hub to help keep up with changing community needs.



Questions to consider

- 1 What processes are in place for your hub to connect with and uncover community strengths and needs?
- 2 How will the hub honour and support the cultural expression of its First Nations community, including staff?
- 3 How will the hub stay informed and be guided by local needs and issues as they change?



Resources



Community engagement – a key strategy for improving outcomes for Australian families



Platforms resources, developed by the Centre for Community Child Health as a place-based approach to improving children's lives that provides guidance on how to strengthen community 'platforms' including safe and supportive neighbourhoods; connected families; and high-quality services.



A First Nations Approach to Community Development



Hall, T., Loveday, S., Pullen, S., Loftus, H., Constable, L., Paton, K., & Hiscock, H. (2023). Co-designing an integrated health and social care hub with and for families experiencing adversity. *International Journal of Integrated Care*, 5; 23(2). DOI: [10.5334/ijic.6975](https://doi.org/10.5334/ijic.6975)



Australian Child and Youth Wellbeing Atlas: Freely available data asset that maps information on children and young people aged 0 to 24 in communities across Australia.

5 | Soft & hard infrastructure

Overview

This element is made up of two factors: physical design and service linkages.

Physical design should help children, families, community and staff feel welcomed, connected and empowered. Good design can build positive interactions and relationships to contribute to hubs feeling “safe, vibrant, respectful, non-judgemental, culturally relevant, and welcoming” (Social Outcomes, 2022). It must also meet current laws to provide a safe environment for everyone. This element is focused on the planning, layout and arrangement of a hub, which includes architectural design, its internal spaces and outdoor areas. Each of these factors can significantly affect a sense of connection, which means that issues of hub accessibility, safety, comfort, aesthetics and cultural relevance are of vital importance. Design should also build opportunities for age-appropriate play for children and caregivers.

Effective linkages between services are aimed at providing smooth, joined-up and holistic responses. This needs flexible approaches to reduce gaps and duplication, and to build relationships with other agencies. Developing the glue (or connecting) function of a hub is often overseen by the Hub Leader, and supported by a team of on-site hub staff. They are ideally from backgrounds that mirror the community and are already locally known and liked. A part of these positions includes the tasks of a “linker”, a growing workforce that plays a key role in building connections within and between services.

Linker practices very much match the Framework’s six principles, and are made up of the following:

- Proactively seeking to know the community, what services are available, and how to get in;
- Building trust and connection quickly;
- Identifying barriers and draw out goals and aspirations of participants and focus on what matters;
- Illuminating the path and walk with participants to access support and achieve goals;
- Adopting a holistic, relational and open approach;
- Being an advocate for people within and across systems;
- Being trauma-informed and culturally safe;
- Strengths-based, advantaged thinking; and
- Being credible to people.

(Paul Ramsay Foundation, 2022; 2023)

These qualities, skills and tasks should be built into role descriptions with a clear focus on the relational aspects of the work, and supported through sufficient resources (including time). Support should also be provided for other “glue” to encourage integrated service delivery, including business and information technology processes across services and programs associated with a hub.

First Nations perspectives

Physical design can help recognise, respect and celebrate the cultural heritage of local First Nations people, with the aim of creating a welcoming environment connected to Country that represents culture, inclusion and self-determination.

Hubs may feature local First Nations artwork or cultural symbols to reflect the identity or history of a community, as well as signage at the entry to a hub (including in the local language) to acknowledge the traditional custodians. These need to be done in a way that meets protocols regarding Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property. The space may also include access to communal areas such as yarnning circles.

Integrated practice is built into First Nations ways of knowing, being and doing. The following six themes reflect the features that help First Nations early years services be joined-up and responsive to the needs of their children and families:

- 1 Key characteristics: one-stop shop; connection, identity and sense of belonging; responding to needs; bridging the gap between families and services; and a culturally-responsive workforce;
- 2 Recognising the strength of culture;
- 3 First Nations leadership;
- 4 Governance: Aboriginal and non-Indigenous ways of working;
- 5 Relationships; and
- 6 Sustainability.

(Braithwaite & Horn, 2019)

These themes need to be built into a hub’s ways of working, and supported by the Hub Leader/staff as part of the “glue” that holds a hub together. They must also be brought to life by a shared commitment across all hub-based staff, services and programs to strive for holistic, culturally-safe practices e.g. making sure that all stakeholders respectfully hold an Acknowledgment of traditional custodians at the start of each group gathering; support for staff members in their ongoing journey to build cultural capability; development of related policies and procedures, as well as strategies to measure their use and impact.

Supporting culturally-safe pathways will increase access to – and through – hub services and programs to build wellbeing, self-determination and healing by and with First Nations people.



Application

Physical design

- Include physical build in the co-design process e.g. jointly develop and test ideas on what a hub should look and feel like; test out facility options to ensure they flexibly meets needs, such as access to consultation rooms that can be used for telehealth purposes and a large room that can be separated into two smaller ones.
- Make sure the building, furnishings and the surrounding space meets contemporary design practices and workplace health and safety requirements, encourages play and builds a sense of safety and comfort e.g. close to pedestrian crossings on roads; supports for people with mobility/disability needs; consistent access to adequate airconditioning/heating; colours that create a sense of calm; access to natural light and spaces; location of reception staff in an accessible but secure area (with duress alarms); toys that are safe, culturally-representative and age-appropriate.
- Consider physical links to co-located/nearby services to help build relationships and access e.g. shared walkways, green spaces, common signage, removing physical barriers such as gates.
- Make sure there is reliable internet access. This will help staff do their work, allow for support through telehealth and encourage other digital opportunities by hub users and the wider community.
- Include enough (and accessible) car parks for staff and community use, including planning for future hub growth, and make sure they are supported by adequate lighting.
- Create a family-friendly entrance through an accessible, central reception space that helps build welcome.
- Consider the range of children, caregivers and services that may use the space to make sure physical design supports their needs e.g. baby change facilities, clean private spaces for breastfeeding, unisex toilets, central kitchen facilities, soundproof consultation rooms.
- Include features that build positive, shared communication e.g. electronic street sign, use of a central noticeboard, computer screen in the reception area to display messages.
- Factor in the needs of hub and visiting staff with enough separate and secure spaces for work tasks e.g. staff kitchen; storage of equipment and records; private areas for confidential conversations; access to a large room with good audiovisual facilities for meetings and training; inclusion of features such as a two-way mirror to observe family interactions.
- Include an open plan office to build staff connection, rather than risk disconnected relationships and practice by having separate staff spaces for different services visiting a hub.
- Create accessible, shaded outdoor spaces for use by families, groups and staff. Play areas should be safe, stimulating and encourage appropriate risk-taking by children.

Service linkages

- Make sure sufficient, sustainable funding is available for the “glue” that builds service linkages, such as community connections, staff supports, business processes and shared information and technology systems.
- Support the Hub Leader/staff to coordinate activities and resources that build connections within and between services.
- Develop and maintain a strong understanding of the needs and access criteria of agencies connected to a hub, as well as those available in the wider community and online. This may include a hub’s coordination of, contribution to and/or update of a local directory of services and programs available to local people and groups.
- Help reduce barriers created by inflexible waiting periods, entry criteria, processes and catchment areas.
- Consider establishment of a core hub with satellite sites if this helps improve access, especially in regional, rural and remote communities where distance may be a barrier to attending one larger central base. This will require a clear, creative model to make sure all sites are aware of and guided by the Framework’s purposes, practice principles and underpinnings.
- Explore options to build information sharing between agencies. This may include developing a registration process, consent form and/or linked database covering the services associated with a hub. It is also important to provide clear, accessible messages to hub users about what is being given to who, and why, when seeking their informed consent to share personal information. They also need to know they have the right to change or remove this consent, and that this will not change their access to or quality of support.
- When a person gives informed consent, access relevant information from other services to guide planning and delivery of holistic, integrated support e.g. through regular multidisciplinary case discussions; interagency panels. Application of the Resilience Scale provides a strong foundation to develop a shared understanding of existing strengths and needs, and together identify and act on opportunities to reduce sources of stress, build positive supports and grow life skills. Hub users may be given the option and supported to attend and contribute to these discussions about their care. This will allow them to directly share their views and have a direct say about the decisions that affect their lives.
- Explore options when circumstances or specific funding rule out the (immediate) availability of a physical hub. This may include using current funds to better weave together the local service system through some of the integration strategies outlined here that are not tied to a physical space e.g. shared language. The community may wish to advocate for access to a space that can, over time, form the basis of a hub with its own funding.

Questions to consider

- 1 How does the physical design represent and match the strengths and needs of the community, including First Nations people?
- 2 How does the space encourage integrated practices and processes for on-site staff?
- 3 How are linkages between services supported and maintained?

Resources

Physical design



Mubinova, S., & Gokgol, M. (2023). *What are the impacts of architectural design on occupants’ well-being, and how can architects optimize spaces to enhance productivity?* Proceedings of London International Conference. DOI: [10.31039/plic.2023.8.158](https://doi.org/10.31039/plic.2023.8.158)



Indigenous cultural and intellectual property Information Sheet.

Service linkages



Customer journey mapping and what it can tell us about our service systems.



Ask Izzy (service provider directory)



6 | Shared knowledge, skills, frames, tools & processes

Overview

Shared, contemporary and essential knowledge, skills, frames, tools and processes across stakeholders will help support a smooth journey of children, families and community into, through, between and beyond services and programs associated with a hub. This applies to language used by those in the broader community, including children and families themselves. It should be based on the Framework underpinnings, and designed to embed its practice principles.

Integrated service delivery within a hub context may also benefit from shared measurement, defined as:

Both the product and process of taking a shared approach to impact measurement. In terms of the product, shared measurement is any tool that can be used by more than one organisation to measure impact. The process of shared measurement entails understanding a sector's shared outcomes, often mapping out its theory of change. It also involves the engagement and collaboration needed to result in a shared approach. (Inspiring Impact, 2013, p.6)

Having shared knowledge, skills, frames, tools and processes will break down organisational barriers, and allow greater access to different perspectives regarding strengths and challenges. This will build the sense of a team supporting a child or family, and better meet their holistic needs. Having this common foundation will reduce the need for people to repeat their stories; minimise services gaps; allow early, easier access to support; build capability; and save precious resources including time and money, leading to better outcomes for all.

First Nations perspectives

First Nations ways of knowing, being and doing are naturally holistic, collective and build wellbeing. However, their experiences of services and programs are often disjointed, ineffective and sadly traumatic. This contact may range from minimal when few genuine attempts are made to reach out to build trust, coordinate support and grow capability, to heavy-handed and reactive when crisis services such as police, child protection or hospitals are involved.

In each case, First Nations people are more likely to be directly and negatively affected by the consequences of a lack of shared knowledge, skills, frames, tools and processes. In designing the services and programs to be offered by a hub, active efforts must be made to seek out and listen its local First Nations community (including leaders) to explore ideas and terms that are culturally-relevant and responsive. These learnings should be fed back through all levels of governance, planning and evaluation strategies, and built into a hub's practices and professional development.

Application

- Develop common competencies and practices and share these in easily-accessible forums for staff (e.g., orientation processes, policies, procedures and an operational manual). These may also be summarised and visually displayed to create shared expectations amongst hub users and the wider community.
- Consider breaking down practices into very specific behaviours required of staff to bring to life a hub's purposes, and that can be shared and measured e.g.,
 - within 30 seconds of meeting, establish eye contact with a child/caregiver, greet them, use their name (if known) and smile.



- in a group program, give all participants a task to develop a shared commitment to its effective delivery and build their sense of belonging and empowerment. These may include greeting new members, helping with morning tea and packing up afterwards.
- body language of staff needs to be consistent with words in giving messages of welcome, safety and connection, including being genuine and fully engaged in interactions. It should be noted that body language also needs to be understood in the context of culture.
- Enable all hub practitioners to access – together if at all possible – shared, contemporary and essential knowledge, skills, frames, tools and practices to build high-quality, seamless and holistic services and support. This may include – but is not limited to – training in use of The Nest and the Resilience Scale.
- Plan and resource a range of professional development formats within and between services e.g. journal clubs; work shadowing arrangements; training; reflective practice; communities of practice.
- Use a brief, empowering, holistic assessment tool common across all services associated with a hub to facilitate family-friendly entry. This means users will be engaged in the same way regardless of which agency they first connect with via a “no wrong door” approach, even if it is part of a wider range of tools required by specialist services. This may take the form of a measure that reflects the six domains of The Nest mapped against the Resilience Scale. This could help joint support, and transition between services.
- Create shared forums to identify/develop, upskill in and apply tools to build integrated practices.
- Foster a culture of shared learning to evaluate and celebrate these practices, and to proactively identify and address siloed ways of working.
- Develop a joint commitment and protocols to securely share collated data between relevant agencies. Share this intent in a clear, accessible manner to hub users and the wider community regarding what this data will and won't be used for, how it will be stored/shared and who it will benefit. See also Element 10 – Data collection, evaluation and reporting.
- Explore options to develop a shared information database across participating agencies, or at least one that allows read-only access to other service entries. This may be a long-term goal as it requires significant resources (e.g. funding, technology design and lead-in time), as well as strong governance and training for staff. It should therefore be a very early discussion in the formation of a hub. In the short-term, a minimum data set could be developed for sharing between relevant agencies to guide their work.

Questions to consider

- 1 What steps have you taken to provide all practitioners with shared and contemporary language, skills, frames, tools and processes?
- 2 How do you ensure these are culturally-safe and appropriate for First Nations children, families and communities?
- 3 How do you ensure the secure storage and sharing of data across hub services?

Resources



Integrated service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander children and families.



A quick guide to establishing a community of practice.



Fostering the development of transdisciplinary practice - Information Sheet.



Alberta Family Wellness initiative. (2023). Report 2 of 3: Brain Story: Organizational Change Management. Quality Improvement Implemented Using the Resilience Scale: An Alberta Family Wellness Initiative Proof of Concept.

7 | Service & program mix

Overview

A key role of a hub is to provide a broad mix of services and programs that will enhance the wellbeing of children, caregivers and the broader community. Their purpose is to build engagement, participation and capability, and deliver a shared vision of equitable, inclusive access where people are supported to make connections and grow.

Service and program considerations should be community-led and responsive to locally-identified aspirations and challenges. This may include supporting community/peer-driven initiatives that build relationships and skills, such as social enterprise development. In some cases services and programs may be delivered online or in an outreach/telehealth capacity to increase equitable access, such as in rural, regional or remote communities.

The framework developed by Moore (2021) regarding the core care conditions for child and family wellbeing outlines individual and shared needs. It can be used to guide the choice of services and programs offered by and through hubs, and identify gaps in community support to meet holistic needs.

The impact of a hub will be more effective when participating services and programs are adequately resourced, oriented, supported and motivated to use shared languages and processes, as outlined earlier.

First Nations Perspectives

First Nations perspectives teach us about the importance of considering people holistically in the context of their family, kin and community as well as their connection to Country, culture, spirit and ancestry (Gee, Dudgeon, Schultz, Hart & Kelly, 2014).

Hubs should also acknowledge and enable First Nations practices in bearing, birthing and raising children. This includes ensuring the active engagement of fathers, and honouring the unique and important role of mens' and womens' business. The whole person needs to be considered when developing a mix of services and programs for First Nations people. Elements of culture would be ideally woven within and between these opportunities, including dance, song, story and ritual, and supported through access to culturally-appropriate items including food, books, artwork, mats and toys.

Core care conditions for children and families (Moore, 2021)

Children's needs	Parental/caregiver needs	Shared child and family needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure relationships with primary caregivers able to provide the responsive caregiving needed to build secure attachments Support for developing emotional and self-regulation skills Positive early learning environments in the home as well as in ECEC and community settings Opportunities to mix with children of different ages, and to build social skills Adequate and appropriate nutrition from conception onwards Support to establish regular sleep routines Physical opportunities to play and explore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure time to build relationships with the newborn Positive social support networks (including from family, friends, fellow parents and neighbours) Safe and easily accessible places to meet other families Access to relationally-based family-centred services Access to universal services during antenatal/postnatal periods Access to support services to address additional personal needs e.g. mental health issues, relational violence Information about childcare and development, and support for managing the challenges of parenting Availability of learning opportunities to build additional capabilities Inclusiveness of the immediate social environment – absence of racism or discrimination Employment opportunities and family-friendly options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure and affordable housing Financial/employment security Healthy physical environment (clean air and water, freedom from environmental toxins, green spaces) Safe and easily navigable built environments Ready access to family-friendly recreational and other facilities (libraries, swimming pools, sporting facilities, playgrounds) Healthy food environments that provide access to fresh food outlets Access to support services to address exceptional family needs (e.g. financial counselling, housing services) Inclusiveness of the wider society – absence of racism or discrimination

It is also important to consider how and where services and programs are delivered. Integrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child and Family Centres identify characteristics of their work as “flexibility, local priorities and needs, partnerships, and services” with “community outreach and respect for holistic models of health and wellbeing” (Braithwaite & Horn, 2019, p. 35). Where appropriate, it may be useful to deliver services and programs outdoors. Engagement of local First Nations people as hub staff and/or (co-) facilitators can help create visibility and trust, which builds a sense of cultural safety for local community members accessing hub-based services and programs.

Application

- Seek community guidance to understand and choose hub programs, services and opportunities that add value to – rather than duplicate – existing resources and ways of working.
- Consider a digital service or program, especially in cases where in-person options aren’t available or don’t have the capacity to respond. This may also require thinking about computer literacy and technology capacity and, if needed, what a hub can do to support access to digital options by the local community.
- Before offering a new service or program, confirm their expectations and resource needs to work out if and how a hub can include them in their suite of offerings.
- Consider flexible options to increase community access to a hub e.g. safe use of hub facilities after-hours; creation of a satellite site.

- Develop, communicate and manage a minimum set of requirements for all services and programs to maintain safe, high-quality support (e.g. agreement to work in accordance with the hub’s values and practice principles; evidence of a current Working with Children Check; meeting workplace health and safety requirements; completion of a brief orientation common to all hub services and programs). This may take the form of a written agreement signed by providers, including volunteers.
- Introduce new services and programs depending on availability, capacity, opportunity and need. The Hub Leader/team will likely coordinate their identification, engagement, promotion and orientation to make sure they are smoothly integrated into a hub. This may include display of clear, accessible information for eligible hub users and community members to connect directly with new services and programs if preferred. It is also important to communicate changes to a service or program offered by a hub.
- Where it is not possible, needed or appropriate for a hub to provide a service or program, it may proactively make connections to these resources in the community e.g. via a warm referral.

Questions to consider

- 1 How have you identified potential services and programs?
- 2 What local strengths can you use to match the interests and needs of First Nations children, families and communities regarding services and programs?
- 3 What can you do to make sure services and programs are integrated into existing supports?

Resources



What is wellbeing? Introduction to *The Nest*



Sahle, B.W., Reavley, N.J., Morgan A.J., Yap, M.B.H., Reupert, A., & Jorm, A.F. (2022) A Delphi study to identify intervention priorities to prevent the occurrence and reduce the impact of adverse childhood experiences. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 56(6):686-694. DOI: [10.1177/00048674211025717](https://doi.org/10.1177/00048674211025717)



Community needs assessment



Growing up our way – Child-Rearing Practices Matrix (Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care, 2013).



Engaging with multicultural communities to understand and respond to their needs.



Restacking the Odds

Aims to drive more equitable outcomes in the early years by ensuring that children and families can and do access a combination of high-quality, evidence-informed services where and when they need them

8 Recruitment, support and professional development of staff

Overview

This element applies to the wide range of staff who work in or through a hub. It includes the Hub Leader and their team (including reception staff), on-site service providers and visiting agencies. It is important to link all roles (including volunteers) to best practice standards through competency-based training.

A shared approach to this element will build integrated delivery using common processes, competencies, language, frames and tools. Support for staff will also improve outcomes for children, caregivers and the wider community. Funding should promote healthy workforce development, including peer-driven initiatives that build staff and stakeholder wellbeing, as well as opportunities for career progression and succession planning.

It is important to understand and respond to the strengths, challenges and support needs of the local workforce, including staff shortages particularly facing regional, rural and remote communities. This means it can be hard to recruit even when funding is available, and high turnover and long vacancies make it difficult to create momentum and impact. At the same time these areas often hold and are guided by important local/cultural knowledge, skills and ways of working. However, these strengths (which should be reflected in the skillset required of hub staff) may not be well recognised or paid. They may also be tied to roles that need formal qualifications but that local people may not have, which means that they miss out on opportunities to apply these strengths as a hub employee.

First Nations Perspectives

Being culturally-responsive is best-practice, and underpins a basic right of First Nations people to high-quality services free from discrimination. It requires selection of hub staff who support this view, as well as professional development to make sure they have the knowledge and skills to appropriately welcome, connect with and empower First Nations children, families and community.

This should include forming relationships with Elders and other community members to guide and jointly deliver a workforce strategy for hub staff and other service providers. This strategy should demonstrate a deep commitment to honouring and embedding First Nations wisdom year-round, not just through the delivery of annual mandatory training or acknowledging cultural events. Active efforts should also be made to recruit First Nations staff across all roles associated with a hub, including in leadership and operational positions. This will help build access to its services and programs, enhance cultural capability, support the employment of local people and provide career role models for First Nations children, caregivers and staff to aspire to.

Without support, First Nations staff can feel culturally isolated in their position. They may also experience a cultural load on top of their hub role (such as involvement in internal committees and supporting cultural events), as well as community roles such as attending to sorry business. This load needs to be acknowledged and supported through activities including cultural mentoring/supervision, the discussion of career advancement and ideally additional payment. It is also vital to be aware of diversity within First Nations culture, such as the different roles men and women can and can't play in cultural interactions and activities. It is therefore important not to assume that a solo identified worker will be able to connect in the same way with all First Nations people and develop strategies to address this, including in discussion with local First Nations agencies.

Application

- Use recruitment strategies to select hub staff that match its culture and vision.
- Develop role descriptions that reflect and apply the hub's values, purposes, practice principles, underpinning and tools, including a focus on the relational aspects and integration functions essential to this work.
- Create a panel that includes a community and/or hub-user representative/s assisted by safe, appropriate briefing and support (including payment if not already provided).
- Deliberately attempt to recruit from the community to tap into local knowledge and relationships, as well as ideally match the cultural and socio-economic background of a hub's target group/s to build organisational strength through the diversity of hub workers. This includes the recruitment of caregivers as peer workers to help hub users see something of their own experience reflected in hub programs. This will build their sense of connection and hope from which to feel more empowered in their own individual journey.
- Develop and where needed use risk management strategies for workforce shortages, and seek sustainable funding to help address this (including incentives to increase staff retention).
- Analyse training needs to develop, deliver and evaluate a professional development plan, and build this into everyday business. This plan may include a brief, online session required for all staff associated with a hub (including volunteers and visiting services), right through to specialised training for hub-based staff. It should be flexible, use a range of formats, be based on adult learning principles, meet current professional standards and reflect the perspectives of hub users and the wider community (e.g. through using anonymous stories and feedback).



- Check for and address institutional racism and unconscious discrimination and bias in the hub setting, and foster a positive, inclusive workplace, to help create cultural safety.
- Build a shared understanding of and commitment to the value of the lived experience workforce. This includes the development and communication of processes to appropriately recruit, access, learn from and support these workers.
- Enable all hub practitioners to access – together if at all possible – shared, contemporary and essential knowledge, skills, frames, tools and practices to build high-quality, seamless and holistic services and support. This may include – but is not limited to – training in use of The Nest and the Resilience Scale.
- Encourage a safe space for reflective practice by all hub workers, including the opportunity to consider the relational aspects of their role as much as the discipline-specific ones.
- Proactively build staff wellbeing through application of the Resilience Scale in a work context e.g. support flexible management of demand, duties and working conditions (reduce sources of stress); allow time to establish and enhance relationships with others, including in times of celebration and loss (build positive supports); and promote access to opportunities that will expand their sense of professional control, competence and achievement (build core skills).
- Develop and communicate a clear process for recording, responsibility for, and consequences (including psychological impact) of hub-related incidents/near misses.
- Be aware of the community roles staff may hold outside their paid employment, and provide flexible, culturally-informed support (including leave) for this where needed.
- Connect with a credible employee assistance program, communicate its availability and support staff to access help in a safe, confidential manner when needed.
- Review data related to hub staffing (including vacancies, workload, performance, satisfaction, compliments/ complaints, leave, turnover and exit interviews) to ensure the impact, wellbeing and professional development of staff is visible, valued and well-resourced.

Questions to consider

- 1 What strategies have you used to make sure new staff best match a hub's vision and culture, as well as the background of the local community?
- 2 How have you created a culturally-safe workplace for First Nations staff?
- 3 How have you demonstrated a commitment to staff wellbeing?

Resources



Safe Work Australia



Workplace Cultural Diversity Tool (Australian Human Rights Commission)



Websites with free, current and relevant professional development include **Emerging Minds**, the **Australian Institute of Family Studies** and the Centre for Community Child Health's **Thriving Children, Thriving Communities webinar series**.



Bassot, B. (2023). *The reflective practice guide: An interdisciplinary approach to critical reflection* (2nd ed.) Routledge.



A Guide to Conducting a Training Needs Analysis



ARACY's Common Approach training

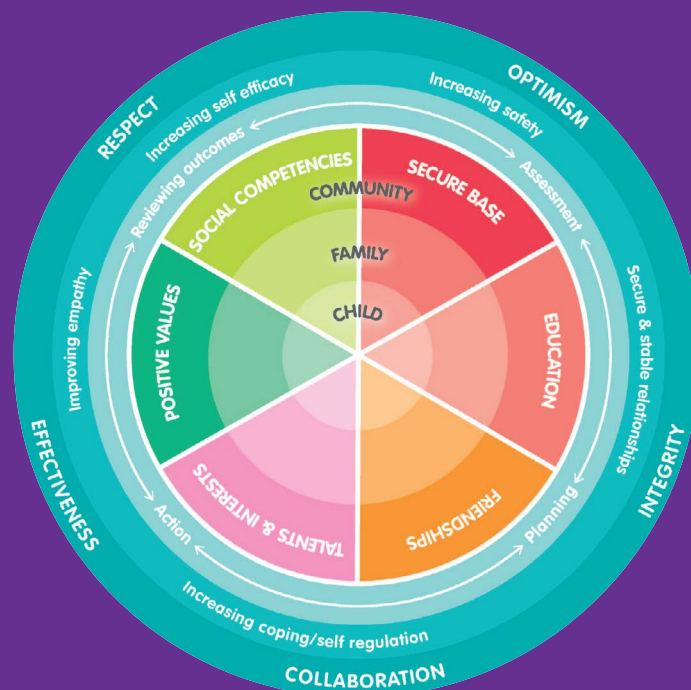
Hub Spotlight: The Benevolent Society Early Years Places

The Benevolent Society’s Early Years Places are underpinned by a Resilience Practice Framework that incorporates the recruitment, support and professional development of its staff. It also includes tools and resources that practitioners can use in their everyday work.

A large majority of The Benevolent Society (TBS) teams live and are active participants in their local community where they work. Having a diverse workforce and inclusive culture encourages varied perspectives for better decision making and problem solving, increases empathy and connection with clients and communities and inspires creativity and innovation for improved service delivery. TBS is proud to be a diverse organisation of people with different ages, cultures, abilities, gender identities, sexualities, faiths, family and caring responsibilities. It is committed to ensuring everyone feels valued, respected and has equal access to opportunities, support and resources to live their best life at work. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Specialist provides a cultural connection in discovering Benevolent’s commitments to reconciliation and cultural safety.

TBS is committed to building a thriving organisation where all employees can live their best work lives. Its goal is to become an employer of choice, where employees want to stay, thrive in their roles, and recommend TBS as a great place to work to others. To support this, TBS strives to listen closely to employees and learn from their experiences at different points in their career journey. To help do this it holds a series of employee surveys at ‘moments that matter’ starting at commencement, onboarding and when leaving the organisation.

TBS’s teams are supported by appropriate professional development to ensure they practice with deep empathy using a strengths-based, trauma informed approach.



Employees are supported to be agile and flexible when needed to adapt service program to be inclusive of its localised community. A culture of reflection has been established ensuring opportunities for staff, service partners and families to regularly reflect on interactions, activities, ways of working and learnings. Continuous professional learning and activities are embedded in the teams’ ways of working through leadership, holistic practice supervision and community of practice between practitioners and teams. This includes bringing TBS staff from a number of sites together four times a year for two days of in-person professional development.

For more information, see The Benevolent Society’s Early Years Places webpage:

www.benevolent.org.au/services-and-programs/early-childhood-years/early-years-centres



9 | Funding

Overview

Hubs are a complex, dynamic, visionary model that require long-term resources to develop, deliver, evaluate and embed into a community. This includes enough support for some of its less visible activities that are critical to the delivery of high-quality, integrated services.

These “glue” functions of business oversight, staff supports, community engagement and shared information and technology systems (NCFHN, 2023) must be included when investing in a hub. Resources also need to be flexible enough for a hub’s design and delivery to meet the current and changing local strengths and needs to achieve best outcomes for all.

Funders should listen to and include community wisdom and data, especially from First Nations people. This is particularly important in regional, rural and remote communities, where the harmful impacts of inflexible, competitive, overlapping and/or short-term funding can be significant and long-lasting. These challenges can interact with and impact upon other local barriers, such as workforce shortages and limited social infrastructure (e.g. adequate public transport options).

Closure of local services due to insufficient staffing can have an immediate negative effect on the entire community due to the lack of other adequate options to help fill the gap. It is therefore important for decision makers to seek local perspectives to understand the flow-on effect of these factors, and build flexibility into how a hub is funded to tap into community strengths and promote creative solutions.

A combined funding approach to hubs may apply – including for different roles or phases – especially in those cases where a hub is introduced as a trial. For example, one partner may invest in set-up and building expenses while another is responsible for glue and community-driven services⁷. Partners may be willing to only provide funding for a set period (such as the time a hub is being evaluated), with the shared understanding that its funding will stop after that time.

This transition phase is a critical risk that needs to be held in mind and managed through strong governance and evaluation processes. This should be done in close partnership with key stakeholders including policy makers.

First Nations Perspectives

Developing genuine, authentic connection and culturally-responsive responses that reflect the strengths and needs of the community takes significant resources, including time. It is important that funding is large, long and flexible enough to sensitively co-design and deliver hub elements in a culturally-informed way.

This will require the costed inclusion of cultural specifications (such as community engagement, staff training and payment for cultural load) in funding applications for a hub. The investment of these resources will be returned and grow through First Nations ownership of – and engagement with – hub activities. Sustainable funding is especially important for First Nations people, as many of them have been exposed to short-term cycles of well-meaning projects that fail to last even when they have achieved positive outcomes for local people. Establishment of a hub without a well-considered, long-term funding strategy may create mistrust amongst First Nations people, and fail to achieve a hub’s vision to improve wellbeing outcomes across the lifespan.

Application

- Support funders to actively and continually seek out community perspectives, including how these change and create impact over time as a hub develops.
- Develop a clear, written understanding with funders of expectations such as stakeholder connections, expected outcomes, reporting needs and how resources can be used flexibly.
- Make sure the original funding agreement provides enough resources for the full range of features required for a best-practice hub (including the glue), and if not proactively explore ways to address this as a real risk to high-quality integrated service delivery. This includes allowing enough coverage of the Hub Leader/team so that staff are not stretched too far when one of them is off sick, or requests leave.
- Include funding for refreshments as a regular drawcard for people to connect (e.g. over tea/coffee, fresh fruit, ongoing supply of bread to make toast) and possibly support those experiencing food insecurity.
- Connect with funders where appropriate in activities beyond just providing the initial investment. These may include governance meetings, strategic planning (including developing a shared vision), signing partnership agreements, media liaison and soft as well as official launches. This will help them understand and support a hub’s activities, processes, successes, challenges and impact.

⁷ This was the model recommended in the case of Integrated Child and Family Centres (Deloitte Access Economics, 2023).



- Develop key messages for funders to use with their own stakeholders to reflect hub relationships, progress and impact. This may include – with informed consent – the use of good news stories and photographs to help bring to life a hub’s activities and effectiveness.
- Develop strong data collection processes to measure implementation as well as impact. If possible, this should include an economic evaluation to demonstrate to funders the financial return on their investment.
- Use these (and other) communication strategies to take a proactive, creative approach to obtaining ongoing resources. It is worth considering the effect on community trust and wellbeing (as well stakeholder relationships and reputations) if a hub had to close due to lack of recurrent funding.



Resources



Where are we? Place-based approaches to tackling community challenges in Australia



A return-on-investment approach for public good research investment and partnerships



Stockton, D.A., Fowler, C., Debono, D., & Travaglia, J. (2022). Adapting community child and family health service models for rural and other diverse settings: A modified Delphi study to identify key elements. *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 30. DOI: [10.1111/hsc.14052](https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.14052)



Funding model options for ACCO Integrated Early Years Services - Final Report



Paying what it takes: Funding indirect cost to create long-term impact



Exploring the need and funding models for a national approach to integrated child and family centres

Questions to consider

- 1 How have you tailored your hub’s funding package to best meet the needs of the local community?
- 2 What role have First Nations people played in leading the direction of hub resources?
- 3 What plans are in place to secure ongoing funding for your hub?

10 | Data collection, evaluation and reporting

Overview

This element relates to a hub's routine collection, review and feedback of individual, family, service, staff and community information. Data is an organisational asset used to help improve the quality of a service, and potentially add to the available evidence base.

An effective management system will ensure the coordinated collection, organisation and safe storage and sharing of data so that it can be analysed for evaluation, reporting and possibly research purposes. Strong evaluation frameworks create a shared understanding of what is being collected, and why. This will build connection and trust with stakeholders, and help in shared decision-making. Reporting on activities and outcomes builds a sense of responsibility for hub resources, and helps show funders the impact of their investment on the local community.

First Nations perspectives

Historically data collected from – and on – First Nations people has been used in a way that undermines self-determination. Using a top-down approach of applying interventions to – not with – people is based on a deficit- (rather than strengths-) based approach, and fails to account for the devastating effects of colonisation. This unfair use of data creates and strengthens negative public stereotypes of First Nations people, and reinforces services and systems based on racism and discrimination.

This pattern has been challenged by a more recent movement to claim Indigenous data sovereignty, defined as the “rights of Indigenous Peoples to govern the collection, management, access, interpretation, dissemination and reuse of data related to them” (Snipp, 2016). Creating shared understanding and clear protocols about – and collective ownership of – data across all of these domains celebrates strengths, builds trust and contributes to truth-telling and healing.

In a hub setting, this is supported by respectful co-design processes based on authentic local partnerships. It is also important that a hub connects with First Nations people to help understand de-identified First Nations data and create a strengths-based story before it is reported to funders. They should also guide how this information is shared with hub service providers and the community to help wider place-based approaches to local wellbeing.

Evaluating and reporting on First Nations-focused strategies is an important tool to build responsibility for improved outcomes, often against wider organisational and/or political priorities (such as the Closing the Gap strategy). However, it requires the collection of a range

of measures including – but not limited to – Indigenous status. This must be done in a strengths-based way, as not every First Nations person will want to identify due to fears related to discrimination and risk of involvement with statutory systems such as child protection. Evaluation tools may not be culturally developed for use with First Nations people (itself a diverse group), let alone for the needs of children and caregivers. For this reason, where possible evaluation tools should be co-designed (e.g. Wright et al, 2021). Evaluation should also include ways of collecting information that is aligned with First Nations narrative approaches, such as sharing examples. It is also important to tackle negative stereotypes by collecting and celebrating stories showing First Nations strength, wisdom, resilience and flourishing. This will help build a sense of trust in the purpose and range of data collected by hubs.

Application

- Consider evaluation issues before a hub is even established, such as developing a theory of change and inclusion of specific measures in a strategic/annual plan. This will help build a shared understanding of the purpose of evaluation, make sure activities are realistic and measurable and build evaluation processes into everyday practice.
- Develop hubs processes to increase the regular, reliable, straightforward collection and entry of data.
- Invest in strategies that increase the security of data, including strong firewalls for electronic databases and storage within Australia (data residency).
- Encourage participating services to store user information electronically rather than in hard copy files. If paper records are required that can't be uploaded, make sure these be stored securely at a hub.
- Agree as a hub to a minimum set of data to be collected and shared (with informed consent) about individual hub users. This may include a person's background details provided when they register, completion of a brief initial assessment tool based on TheNest/Resilience Scale and when they accessed which service/program based at a hub. This will help develop a shared understanding between hub agencies, and reduce the need for hub users to provide their details and tell their story multiple times.
- For reporting purposes provide an overview of the number of people using a hub, as well as satisfaction with their visit e.g. feedback on a scale (e.g. 1–5) entered on a iPad before they leave. Other opportunities include surveys, suggestion boxes and easy, clear ways of providing compliments and complaints. Ask for consent if written feedback will be used in promoting the hub to others.
- Consider hits to/downloads from a hub's website/ social media forums as one way of measuring the



effectiveness of a hub's communication strategy.

- Try to minimise the demands of evaluation on hub users, staff and other stakeholders by thinking about factors such as timing, wellbeing and workload.
- Try to use evaluation measures that are brief, valid and culturally-appropriate and supported by visual tools. Where applicable they should be offered in the language a person is most skilled in, or if needed supported through use of a qualified interpreter. They should also focus on strengths and capabilities, not just needs and challenges.
- In the case of children, use appropriate ways of collecting their views and experiences.⁸ These may include access to local child-focused data, as well as completion of age-specific measures, feedback and creative expression such as drawing and play.
- Use tools that measure a hub's processes relating to purposes, underpinnings and practice principles as outlined in **Document 1** of this Framework. A shared reflection on results will help celebrate success, identify gaps and plan for improvement over time.
- Consider comparisons against other related hubs (knowing that each will be different, and developed to meet local needs) to help continually learn and improve.
- Explore partnerships with an external institution/s such as a university to more formally evaluate hub delivery and/or outcomes. This can strengthen the results of a hub's work and help share learnings with others. It would be especially useful to demonstrate that the quality of a hub's delivery is linked to outcomes. Enough lead-in time needs to be allowed for ethical clearance of such an evaluation, especially given the number and range of agencies involved in a hub.
- Advocate for streamlined and/or flexible reporting processes to reduce duplication and save time.
- Develop interesting ways of sharing information with stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of hub activity, outcomes and opportunities for improvement e.g., infographics made available online, in newsletters, in waiting areas, at interagency meetings, in training.

8 Inclusive of informed consent processes, and with caregivers.

Resources



Involving children in evaluation



**Demonstrating community-wide outcomes:
Exploring the issues for child and
family services**



**Unpacking Indigenous data, Indigenous Data
Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance
for researchers**



Building a positive evaluation culture



**Five strategies to account for diverse
funding sources** (features a related webinar)

Questions to consider

- 1 How have your evaluation measures been tailored to local strengths and needs?
- 2 What strategies have you undertaken to honour and build the principles of data sovereignty into your hub?
- 3 What support has been provided to Hub Leaders to support streamlined reporting?



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Kids Partnership
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