



Children and Family Centres

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Through the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development, it was agreed that at least 35 Children and Family Centres will be established across Australia by June 2014 to deliver integrated services, including early learning, child care and family support programs. To date the locations for 38 Centres have been determined.

National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development

Many Indigenous families miss out on early childhood services, even though they stand to benefit the most. Early childhood experts believe that making sure services, including antenatal services, child and maternal health services, parenting and family support services and early learning and child care are available at the one location will help ensure families receive the support they need.

The Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership Agreement is based on this integrated approach. The Australian Government and state and territory governments are working together through the National Partnership, with states and territories taking the lead role in implementing it.

Establishing at least 35 Children and Family Centres across Australia in areas with high Indigenous populations and high levels of disadvantage is one element of the National Partnership Agreement. The Government has contributed \$292.62 million to establish the centres.

Additional elements of the National Partnership Agreement provide for increased access to antenatal care, pre-pregnancy and teenage sexual and reproductive health programs and for increased access and use of maternal and child health services by Indigenous families.

A copy of the National Partnership Agreement is available at <http://www.coag.gov.au>

About Children and Family Centres

Children and Family Centres are targeted at addressing the needs of Indigenous families and their young children and will also provide services to all families in the community.

The design and operation of the facilities will differ from centre to centre so that services meet local needs. While the final service mix for each centre will be subject to community consultation, it is envisaged that each centre will:

- bring together important services for children and families including child care, early learning, parent and family support programs
- use existing community strengths and resources to help establish the centres and make sure every centre responds effectively to its community
- connect with other services in the community to ensure families can easily access the services they need, for example, maternal and child health services, playgroups or family literacy programs.

While consulting the local community about their needs, consideration will also be given to how existing Australian Government funded services (e.g. crèches and playgroups), can be incorporated in, or linked with, the Children and Family Centres.



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Children and Family Centre locations

The Centres will be established in a mix of remote, regional and urban locations. They will be concentrated in areas where there is demonstrated need for these services, high disadvantage and a high proportion of Indigenous children under five years of age.

As of March 2011, the following 38 locations for Children and Family Centres have been determined:

- **New South Wales:** Campbelltown, Blacktown (2 Centres), Ballina, Toronto, Nowra, Brewarrina, Gunnedah and Lightning Ridge
- **Victoria:** Bairnsdale and Whittlesea
- **Queensland:** Mt Isa, Cairns, Mareeba, Ipswich, Doomadgee, Mornington Island, Mackay, Rockhampton, Marsden and Palm Island
- **South Australia:** Ceduna, Whyalla, Christies Beach/Noarlunga and Pukatja
- **Western Australia:** Halls Creek, Kununurra, Fitzroy Crossing, Swan Region (Perth) and Roebourne
- **Tasmania:** Bridgewater and Geeveston
- **Northern Territory:** Yuendumu, Maningrida, Gunbalanya, Palmerston and Ngukurr
- **Australian Capital Territory:** West Belconnen

The actual sites for the Centre within each location will be subject to community consultation and availability of land or existing premises. Not all sites will include the construction of a new Centre, but might use existing facilities to enhance or expand services.

Below is a summary of the distribution of Children and Family Centres across states and territories.

Table 1: Distribution of Children and Family Centres across states and territories

Centres	NSW	QLD	VIC	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	Total
Regional/remote	4	6	1	3	4	1	4	0	23
Urban	5	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	15
Total	9	10	2	4	5	2	5	1	38

Implementation

State and territory governments have the lead on establishing the Centres, including undertaking community consultation.

Community engagement with the Children and Family Centres is vital for their success. Consultation will involve key partners and stakeholders (including Indigenous communities, the non-government organisations delivering services and relevant peak bodies). Consultation and engagement is guided by state and territory plans and has already commenced in many locations. Communities may wish to contribute to decisions on:



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- the site for the Centre
- how best to design a new facility or adapt an existing facility
- the services most needed in the community
- the existing community services and resources that should be built into the Centre
- how to involve the community in the ongoing operation of the Centre.

Services from interim sites are currently being delivered from a number of locations. The majority of Centres are expected to be operating from new or refurbished premises by mid 2012.

Funding

The table below outlines the Australian Government funding contribution for the Children and Family Centres in each state and territory.

Table 2: Funding per state/territory – 1 January 2009 to 30 June 2014

	NSW	QLD	SA	WA	VIC	TAS	ACT	NT	Total
Total \$(m)	74.7	75.18	25.22	42.35	16.65	8.09	8.09	42.35	292.62