

# Principles before rules

Child-centred, family-focused and practitioner-led  
evaluation in child protection

**Department for Child Protection, SA**



**Government of South Australia**  
Department for Child Protection

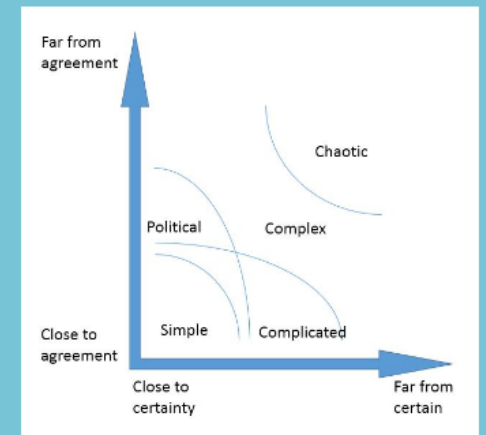
# Who we are

interpreters enquirers  
principled creators learners  
co-designers passionate interested  
collaborators evaluators  
diverse different respectful  
listeners skills  
transparent honest  
spectators

## How we got here

'Children must be acknowledged as experts in their own lives, and we must take care to view families and services through their eyes'

DCP - A Fresh Start (2017)

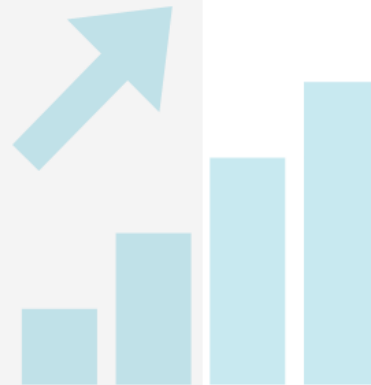


- Nyland Royal Commission
- DCP Strategic Vision 2017-20
- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017

## What are we trying to achieve?

For us all to be better informed by the voice of the child

A reorientation of evidence and findings to improve child outcomes and practitioner learning



A shift in how we view children and families, from service users to service shapers

The creation of more meaningful opportunities to collaborate and inform

# Children as partners

*'To develop effective services, the values and outcomes that are important to children and young people need to be reflected in the services provided to them...'*

- ANZSOG

**Third-hand data sources**



**Participation**

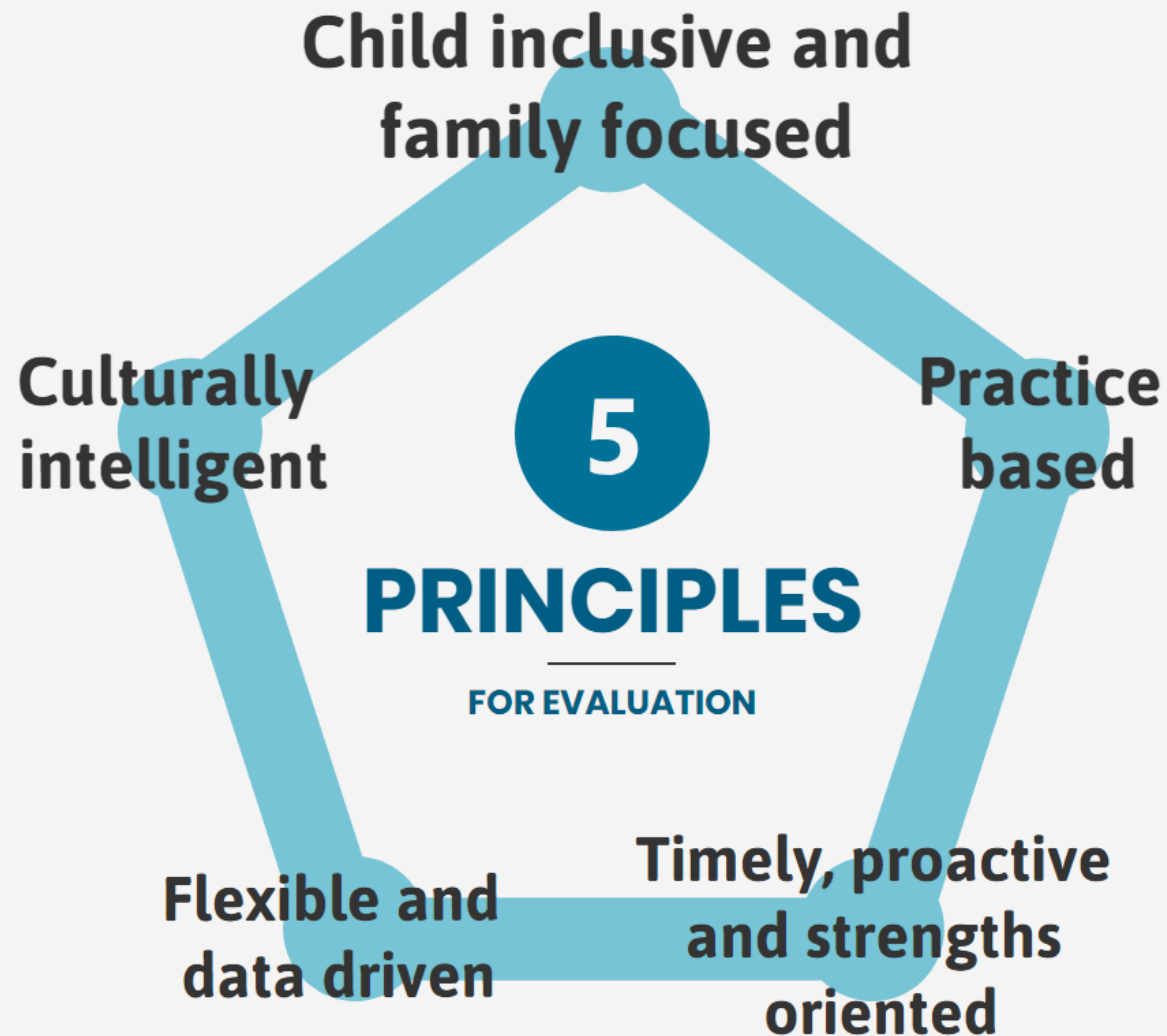


**Improved and effective services**



**Youth empowerment**





# Design and engagement strategies

	<b>Volunteer program</b>	<b>Adelaide Hills Young People's Council</b>	<b>Guardianship Family Day Care</b>
<u>Evaluation type</u>	Summative and Impact	Outcome and Impact	Formative and Outcome
<u>Strategies used to gather information from children</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-completion of a child-focused survey</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small group discussions</li><li>• One-to-one discussions at the office</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Completing MyCare surveys</li><li>• One-to-one discussions in the child's home</li></ul>



"[I like] singing!  
Singing along with my  
volunteer whilst driving"

"[The Council] offers a  
great opportunity to have your say about  
things that are going on in our lives"

"They take me nice places  
and we talk about things"

"They care for me"

"Help keep me  
happy"

## What did our children and young people say?

"I would like to have  
more consultations within DCP  
about more in depth matters  
that impact kids in care"

"I want to turn my  
brother's frown upside down"

"Getting opportunities to  
change the system and  
change it for the better"

# Doing things differently

## Exploring engagement

*'She was happy because she got to decide how it went...'*

- Evaluation Supervisor



## Learning from an ecosystem of stakeholders

- Existing groups of young people
- Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People
- CREATE
- Australian Centre for Child Protection
- Universities
- Women's and Children's Health Network, SA



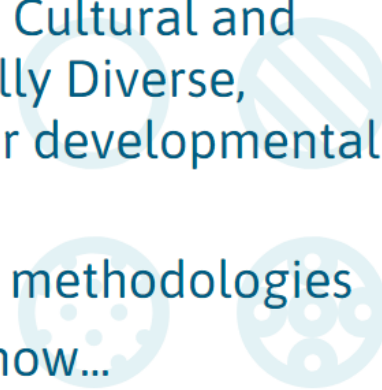
## A listening culture

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017
- Nyland Royal Commission and A Fresh Start



## Inclusiveness

- Aboriginal, Cultural and Linguistically Diverse, disability or developmental delay
- Alternative methodologies
- Not if, but how...



## Consent or assent?

- Assumptions and presumptions about child participation
- Choice, inclusion and contribution



## Gatekeepers

- What if...?
- Clear parameters
- Risk management approach



**Challenging  
the way  
things have  
always  
been done**

# Where to next?



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## A Child Engagement Strategy

Engage children and young people in co-design and co-creation

Encourage others to  
plan for outcomes  
earlier in the process

Evolve and expand our  
principles-based  
approaches

Be smarter and  
more sophisticated  
in our analyses

Use a 'toolkit' to maximise  
feedback from children  
and young people