



Family and Community Services Insights, Analysis and Research (FACSIAR)

Family Preservation Annual Snapshot 2022-23

Performance Analysis and Insights

Communities and Justice



Executive summary

This annual snapshot of Family Preservation and its service models in 2022-23 provides an overview of measures across their performance (such as service provision, referral uptake, and program completion) and demographic characteristics of the children and young people whose families receive a service (such as Aboriginality, age, gender, and household composition).

In 2022-23 Family Preservation service providers commenced reporting on the program using a new and more comprehensive Minimum Data Set. In addition, a new data collection system was adopted, called infoShare. This system has since been used to report to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) on information about the program, its clients, services, and performance. As expected with the change to a new system, providers and DCJ are in a process of transitioning to new ways of recording and reporting data, and as such, this shift has had some impact on data quality.

Where possible, the analysis in this annual snapshot attempts to address known data quality issues – noting that the counts used in this snapshot may differ from those produced in infoShare operational dashboards, which report on raw data (i.e. do not have any data cleaning rules applied to their counts).

Overall, Family Preservation has continued to service a large and diverse cohort of children and young people (CYP) with the aim of keeping them safe at home and out of the Child Protection and Out of Home Care (OOHC) systems. As has long been the case, the performance of Brighter Futures is a big contributor to how Family Preservation is perceived to function overall, given that it makes up roughly two thirds of CYP participating in Family Preservation. With respect to performance measures for Family Preservation overall, service provider acceptance of DCJ referrals along with the waiting times between data of referral and service commencement show positive results (see table on following page).

Despite some positive signs and consistency in performance, Family Preservation still has some lingering issues. Aboriginal children and young people remain overrepresented in Family Preservation programs (as is also seen in the rest of the Child Protection system). In principle, this high representation in Family Preservation can help to prevent escalation of child protection concerns for Aboriginal CYP and prevent entry into OOHC. This does not appear to be the case, however, given that Aboriginal CYP were less likely to complete their Family Preservation program than non-Aboriginal CYP, and were more likely to be subsequently reported at ROSH than non-Aboriginal CYP, regardless of whether they completed the program.

On average, program completion rates were below 50%. Over half of all CYP were reported at ROSH within 9 months of exiting Family Preservation, regardless of whether they completed the program before exiting. However, it should be noted that successful completion of Family Preservation was associated with lower ROSH report rates and OOHC entries in the 9 months following program exit.

There are plans to collect data on service offerings and introduce tools to capture client outcomes. Family Preservation will be recommissioned from 1 July 2025, which will see the transformation of service models. Changes to the program and Minimum Data Set will be incorporated into reporting.

Overview of performance, by topic area

Topic area	Details
<p>Aboriginal children and young people</p>	<p>Aboriginal CYP made up 37% of the CYP that received a Family Preservation (FP) service in 2022-23, roughly 5 times the proportion of Aboriginal CYP in NSW in the 2021 Census (7.7% of all NSW CYP aged 0-17).</p> <p>In comparison, the proportion of Aboriginal CYP at ROSH was 3 times the size of the NSW Aboriginal CYP percentage; for OOHC it was almost 6 times the NSW Aboriginal CYP population rate.</p>
<p>Service provision by program</p>	<p>Brighter Futures made up the majority of service provision in FP, with roughly 2 in 3 CYP (64%) who received an FP service in 2022-23 having received it in Brighter Futures.</p>
<p>DCJ referrals</p>	<p>Roughly 4 in 5 of CYP referred in 2022-23 came via DCJ (7,929 out of 10,037 CYP referred).</p> <p>The Family Preservation client cohort is to be primarily sourced from DCJ referrals, with community referrals kept at a minimum. This prioritisation of CYP based on the criteria for various programs can help to prevent escalation through the Child Protection system, including entry into OOHC. Of the eight Family Preservation service offerings, Brighter Futures has the highest volume and proportion of Community referrals (31%), followed by Youth Hope (16%).</p> <p>The vast majority of DCJ referrals were accepted by service providers (89%). The difference in DCJ referrals and acceptance rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal CYP is not practically significant. It is suspected that not all service providers are reporting data to DCJ on referrals not accepted by the providers. As such, this rate of 89% is likely to be an overcount.</p>
<p>Time to receive service</p>	<p>On average, it took roughly 3 weeks (23 days) for CYP to start receiving services from the date of their referral to a FP program. Youth Hope (16 days), Brighter Futures and IFP (19 days) were the programs to provide the lowest average waiting times to receive services.</p>
<p>Exits</p>	<p>6,488 CYP exited FP services during 2022-23, with less than half (47%) having completed the program. This result is predominantly driven by Brighter Futures, which together with Youth Hope were the only two programs that had a completion rate below 50% - Brighter Futures had 42%, while Youth Hope had 41%.</p> <p>The rate of program completion was notably lower for Aboriginal CYP (39%) in contrast to non-Aboriginal CYP (52%).</p>
<p>Length of Stay</p>	<p>The average length of stay for CYP that completed a Family Preservation program was approximately 13 months (381 days). On average, Aboriginal CYP tended to stay in the program roughly 3 weeks longer than non-Aboriginal CYP before completing it.</p> <p>The average length of stay for CYP that did not complete the program was just under 6 months (168 days). As with those who completed the program,</p>

Topic area	Details
<p>Demographics of children and young people</p>	<p>Aboriginal CYP that did not complete the program tended to stay 3 weeks longer than their non-Aboriginal counterparts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were more males than females participating in the program (51.6% male). • Aboriginal CYP participating in the program tended to be younger than non-Aboriginal CYP. • Roughly 1 in 10 CYP receiving services had poor spoken English proficiency. • 3% of CYP receiving services were homeless. • Over half of CYP in the program were part of a single parent household.
<p>ROSH history</p>	<p>Virtually all CYP referred to Family Preservation in 2022-23 had a ROSH report within 12 months prior to their referral (95.5%). The average period of time between the most recent ROSH report and the CYP’s referral date for their first referral to a service model was 3 months (92 days).</p> <p>For CYP with a concern report in the prior 12 months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two in five had ‘Carer drug & alcohol’ as an issue (40%), • One in four had ‘Carer mental health’ as an issue (27%), • and almost one in four had a concern report involving CYP issues (23%).
<p>Post-exit</p>	<p>Over half (56%) of CYP ended up with a ROSH report in the 9 months following their exit from Family Preservation. For CYP that successfully completed the program, the ROSH rate was slightly lower at roughly 50%. Aboriginal CYP were more likely than non-Aboriginal CYP to be reported at ROSH, regardless of whether they completed or did not complete the program.</p> <p>2.7% of CYP who exited the program ended up entering OOHC in the 9 months following their exit. The OOHC entry rate was lower for CYP that completed the program (0.9%) compared to those that did not (4.4%). Subsequent OOHC entries were not considerably different between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal CYP.</p>

