

Enhancing children's journeys through Out of Home Care: A multi-perspective study

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- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service
- Anglicare Southern Queensland
- Churches of Christ Queensland
- Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs
- Life Without Barriers
- Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak
- The Benevolent Society
- The University of Queensland
- UnitingCare

Main Funding Body

Australian Research Council Linkage Grant

Timeframe

Data collection commences first half of 2021. Subsequent data collection will take place at 9–12 month intervals. Reporting completed by end of 2023.

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The challenge

Children in out-of-home care are a highly vulnerable group who face enormous challenges over their life course. Their experiences in out-of-home care can have life-long effects on their emotional, social and cultural well-being. Despite government initiatives to reduce the number of children in out-of-home care, numbers are increasing. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children are 11 times more likely to be in out-of-home care than non-Indigenous children. Further, many Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children are not placed in accordance with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principles and are at risk of loss of family and cultural connections.

The project

Researchers at The University of Queensland, Life Course Centre, in collaboration with a range of partner organisations, will undertake a three-year study to examine children's experiences of out-of-home care and their social, emotional and cultural outcomes. The project aims to provide evidence to improve service agencies' understanding of children's experiences in out-of-home care and how agencies can best support families, carers and communities to enhance the well-being of all children in out-of-home-care.

Project aims

Analyse Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous children's experiences of out-of-home care over time and at key points in the children's development.

Explore how Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous children's experiences of out-of-home care and their relationships with foster/kinship carers and birth families contribute to their social, cultural and emotional well-being over time.

Analyse the experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous birth families and foster/kinship carers over time and how they can be best supported to improve social, emotional and cultural outcomes for children.

Analyse reasons for, and identify options to address, the low proportion of kinship care placements especially for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland.

Project design and key features

The project will collect detailed qualitative longitudinal data from three main groups of participants in Queensland. Repeated interviews with participants over time will enable rich understanding of their experiences over time.

At each data collection round interviews will be conducted with parents, carers and children. These will be semi-structured and will adopt a trauma-informed, culturally safe and child-centred approach. Parents and carers will also be asked to complete a short survey about the children's wellbeing and behaviour.

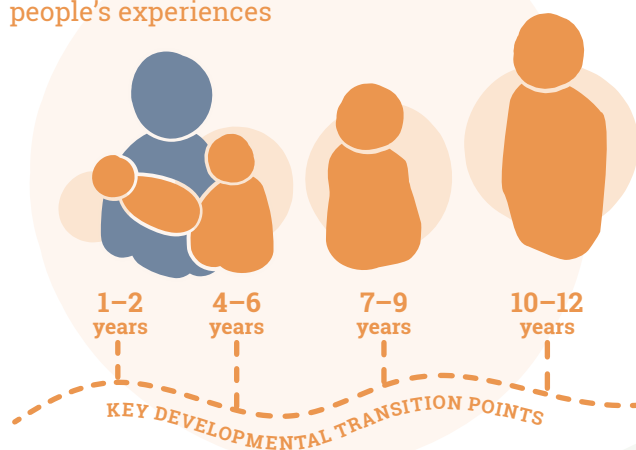
Study 1 will examine experiences of children (1–12 years) over time in their journeys through out-of-home care using data from a sample of 160 children and young people in home-based out-of-home care.

Study 2 will examine experiences of birth families and carers of children in out-of-home care over time using data from birth families and foster/kinship carers of the children from Study 1.

Study 3 will assess factors shaping the availability and sustainability of kinship care placements, especially for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.

Study 1

Children and young people's experiences



Study 2

Birth parents and carers characteristics and experiences



Study 3

Cultural connection and identity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in kinship placements

