

STATE BUDGET

2019-20

MINISTER FOR CHILD PROTECTION HON RACHEL SANDERSON MP MEDIA RELEASE

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\$1.6 million to pilot family group conferences

The Marshall Liberal Government will deliver a new early intervention pilot that will enable more children and young people identified as being at risk to remain safely with their families.

The 2019-20 State Budget provides \$1.6 million over two years to the Department for Child Protection to pilot family group conferences convened by the Chief Executive.

The early intervention measure provides an opportunity to identify a family care option that addresses Department care concerns.

A family group conference is a facilitated, voluntary process led by family members to plan and make decisions that protect a child or young person who is at risk of harm or abuse or has been abused.

Currently, family group conferences are only convened by the Youth Court of SA.

“The Marshall Liberal Government has provided \$1.6 million towards this new early intervention pilot, with the aim of enabling more children and young people to remain safely with their families” said Minister for Child Protection Rachel Sanderson.

“Family group conferencing relies on the facilitator identifying capacity within the family of a child or young person at risk.

“The family group conference aims to ensure everyone at the conference is able to speak and be heard, including children, where appropriate.

“The facilitators are not involved in making any decisions about the child or family – they are there to support the family to develop a plan that has the safety and care of the child or young person at its core.

“Providing early intervention options such as this one is pivotal in our aim to reduce the number of children and young people coming into care.

“We continue to work hard to ensure that we grow family-based care options, including kinship care, in South Australia because we know that home-based care is far more beneficial for children because it gives a child a sense of family.

“The love and support children and young people receive in a home environment is invaluable.

“Protecting the state’s most vulnerable children and young people is a priority of the Government and that is why a whole-of-government approach is so important.”

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A new Intensive Support Unit is being set up within the Department for Human Services to commission and deliver intensive family services that intervene early, reducing the need for children to enter out-of-home care.

A State Government Taskforce has also been charged with redesigning South Australia's child abuse and neglect early intervention and prevention system, with the aim of reducing the impact and extent of child abuse and neglect in SA.