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WE NEED TO WORK HARDER AND EARLIER TO KEEP ABORIGINAL CHILDREN IN NSW WITH THEIR FAMILIES

Aboriginal children are hugely overrepresented in the child protection system, and the numbers haven't really improved in at least five years despite the efforts of consecutive governments.

That's why we need a 25 per cent funding increase in early intervention and prevention services focussed on Aboriginal children, according to Fams, the peak body for NGO family and children's services.

[Reports today](#) show that more than 14,000 children are in Out Of Home Care in NSW, 46 per cent of whom are Aboriginal (more than 6,440 kids).

However according to "[Key Data – NSW Aboriginal People](#)", on 30 June 2019 there were 6,754 Aboriginal kids in out of home care in NSW, meaning the number of kids in this situation is about the same after five years of effort.

According to the NSW Government, just [3.4 per cent](#) of the state's population identifies as Aboriginal.

Fams CEO, Susan Watson, welcomes the new steps that the NSW Government and the Ministerial Aboriginal Partnership Group (MAP Group) is taking to focus on this issue, but says more funding is needed.

"While Fams acknowledges vital investment in the acute end of child protection including Out-of-Home Care (OOHC), we need to invest more in early intervention to prevent this crisis response in the first place," she said.

"Fams is calling on the NSW Government to increase funding in early intervention and prevention services by 25 per cent, which will fund roll out of more evidence-based early intervention programs across NSW.

"This funding needs to prioritise Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations in early intervention and prevention, as well as kids in rural and regional areas and other at-risk groups.

"If you invest in early intervention and prevention services, you can prevent families getting to a crisis point, and ultimately over time reduce the quantum of funding needed at the crisis end.

"NSW Government initiatives such as the MAP group and a restoration taskforce are important, but ultimately we need to see increased investment in early intervention in the next state budget.

"Increased investment makes a lot of sense in a lot of ways and we just need to get on and do it. Early intervention programs are highly effective, evidenced based and key to breaking the cycle of trauma and abuse.

"We need to invest to prevent harm and support families to be safe and together in ways that are culturally safe. We need to shift the funding dial."

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About Fams

Fams is a New South Wales peak body that supports the early intervention not-for-profit sector to build on capacity and capability. We advocate for improved policies for children, families, communities and services. Fams works collaboratively with Government, Policy and decision-makers, non-government organisations, academic organisations, peak bodies, family and community services sector, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and organisations working with diverse communities. For more information about Fams go to www.fams.asn.au