



MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW GOVERNMENT REVIEW INTO FOSTER CARE NEEDS TO INCLUDE MEASURES TO STOP CHILDREN ENDING UP THERE IN THE FIRST PLACE

The harrowing stories about foster care in NSW in [today's papers](#) shows the urgent need to fix the system – but also the need for more work to stop kids ending up in it in the first place.

Fams, the peak body for NSW family and children's services, says there has been no substantive increase in funding for early intervention services to keep vulnerable kids out of dangerous situations and ultimately foster care for more than 10 years.

Fams CEO, Susan Watson, is meeting with Minister Kate Washington today, and will urge the Minister to consider the role of, and funding for, early intervention and prevention services in the newly-announced Review.

"When it comes to helping the most vulnerable kids in NSW – those at significant risk of, or who are already experiencing harm, there's been a constant narrative from NSW Governments that we need to fix the pointy end first. That's just not the right approach," Ms Watson said.

"Our current NSW child protection system settings are akin to prioritising funding for emergency departments at the expense of primary care and preventative health measures that keep people healthy in the first place.

"There is no doubt that the foster care system is broken and needs fixing and funding – but what we need to do is **also fund the services that will stop children from experiencing harm and ending up in bad situations including foster care in the first place.**

"I absolutely congratulate the Advocate for Children and Young People (ACYP) on their report which shines a light on the tragedy that is the foster care system in NSW, and welcome the NSW Government's commitment in response to an urgent review.

"What we need to do is make sure that the new review and the response to today's reports tries to turn the tide on this situation, and help kids before things get to the crisis point. We need systemic change not just another crisis response."

Less than 9 per cent of the spend on NSW child protection services is invested in early intervention and prevention services which are highly effective and are key to breaking the cycle of trauma and abuse.

"As the peak body for family and children's services, we are calling on the Minns Government to increase funding by 25 per cent across early intervention and prevention programs," Ms Watson said.

"The frontline workers in the not-for-profit system are highly professional and qualified. They are achieving some incredible outcomes despite a lack of resources. The families they see are much more complex now than 10 years ago and services are stretched to the limit. The NSW Government needs to give them the resources they need to keep more children safe and more families safe and together.

"What we need to stop is continuing to spend billions of dollars on crisis services while more and more vulnerable children fall through the cracks," Ms Watson said.

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About Fams

Fams is the NSW peak body that represents the child protection NGO early intervention and prevention sector. We advocate for improved policies for children, families, communities and services. Fams is committed to:

- Children and families receiving the support they need
- Evidence-informed and outcomes-based service delivery
- Government and sector accountability
- Influencing policy