



## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
BEC CODY MLA (CHAIR), VICKI DUNNE MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), CAROLINE LE COUTEUR MLA

### Inquiry into referred 2017–18 Annual and Financial Reports ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Elizabeth Kikkert: To ask the Minister for Children, Youth and Families

Ref: CSD Annual Report, output class 2.1, Early Intervention Services

In relation to: Universal and Targeted Early Intervention and Prevention

1. The annual report states that the aim is 'to deliver a range of universal early intervention and prevention services to all families in the ACT' (p. 41), supplemented by 'targeted services' (p. 38), but I have spoken with two separate experts who have raised concerns that the ACT's services are not universal enough. Besides online parenting information and printed tip-sheets, what specific initiatives form the universal part of this effort?
  - a. How universal is the reach of these initiatives? How do you measure or track this?
  - b. How exactly do the targeted services find their targets?
  - c. What steps is the government taking right now to improve its targeting so that no one falls through the cracks?

Minister Stephen-Smith: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

1. The Government's three Child and Family Centres are a 'one-stop-shop' supporting all Canberra families from pre-birth through to the early years of their child's life. Child and Family Centres provide universal access for families through their intake service. This service is staffed five days a week across all three Centres. Families can drop in without appointments or call the intake line and receive support and information. The Child and Family Centres are a well-known and trusted service and receive regular referrals from a range of service providers. This includes General Practitioners, school-based staff, and health professionals.

As part of their service offer, the Child and Family Centres offer a number of community based activities and events for families with young children. Examples include the *Kids and Families* holiday programs run each school holiday; the annual *Children's Sanctuary* as part of the National Multicultural Festival; and large community events, for example, *NAIDOC in the North* that celebrates significant cultural days and bring community together. All families are welcome to participate, with many families then being linked into a range of supports and services.

- a. The Child and Family Centres form an important part of the ACT Government's commitment to services and supports for families with young children, which includes access to universal health and education services and programs. The Child and Family Centres operate through a service network approach. The co-location of Government services (for example, universal health services including immunisation clinics, Maternal and Child Health services and parenting support) means families can access the supports they need from services based in the community.

The participation by families in the Child and Family Centres' intake service is reported quarterly as part of the Child and Family Centre *Strategic Indicator: Number of occasions of service to Child and Family Centre clients.*

- b. The Child and Family Centres are at the forefront of early intervention services for families with young children. The Centres are staffed by highly skilled and experienced professionals including social workers and psychologists. The services and support provided through the Centres focus on children pre-birth to eight years, however selected services can be offered to children up to 12 years of age.

The Centres have well defined referral pathways which support children and their families receiving more targeted supports and services. The Child and Family Centre intake and assessment process means families experiencing vulnerability and risk can be triaged quickly into a range of supports that are tailored to meet their particular circumstances. Families are able to access a range of specialist counselling, legal and targeted programs which are available either on-site or through warm referral processes facilitated by the Centre staff.

- c. The Government has agreed, through the Early Support initiative to enhance early support capacity across the human services system and to shift the human service system to a commissioning for outcomes environment over the next 10 years. This work will shift the service system away from being crisis or tertiary focused to a system better able to identify and respond to people early in the life of an issue.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services

Signature:



Date: 28/11/18

By the Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith