

Children and Families

There is some meaningful cost-of-living support for families doing it tough, especially the initiatives targeted at foster carers and grandcarers. The budget also includes investment in place-based early childhood development and improving outcomes for vulnerable children and families. However, there are concerns about a reliance on short-term measures, rather than sustained structural reform.

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| Initiative | Targeted support for foster carers and grandcarers (BP3, P4, P6, P102, P153, P178, P179) |
| Investment | \$44.3 million over four years. |
| Description | This initiative provides targeted support to foster carers and grandcarers including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$24 million for a 10 per cent uplift to the Carer Subsidy, Respite and Clothing Allowance • Additional \$10.3 million over four years for a new Foster and Grandcarer Gold Card • \$6 million over four years to increase base funding for the Grandcarers Support Scheme, including \$1.3 million for a cost-of-living payment in 2026-27 Registration for the first round starts on 1 July 2026, through the ServiceWA app. |
| Implications | <i>We welcome this targeted cost-of-living assistance to support foster carers and grand carers. Concessions and benefits from the Gold Card will include energy bill relief of \$337, with additional benefits and discounts to help with everyday expenses to be rolled out in future. Over time the success of this initiative may provide a model to extend to others in need.</i> |

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| Initiative | WA Student Assistance Payment (BP2, V1, P62, P344, P360) (BP3, P44, P136) |
| Investment | \$89 million in 2026-27. |
| Description | Third round of the WA Student Assistance Payment (\$150 for each primary and kindergarten student, and \$250 for each secondary school student) via the ServiceWA app. |
| Implications | <i>This provides a small rebate to families with school-aged children. As the payment is being delivered through ServicesWA app considerations are</i> |

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| | <i>required for how those experiencing digital exclusion, who are also more likely to need the support, will be able to access these payments.</i> |
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| Initiative | Early Years Partnership (EYP) <i>(BP2, V2, P483, P480) (BP3, P152, P157, P229)</i> |
| Investment | \$5 million over three years |
| Description | This funding supports EYP initiatives aimed at improving child wellbeing and school readiness and decreasing developmental vulnerability in four communities. Includes \$4.3 million for the Department of Communities and \$726,000 for the WA Country Health Service (\$726,000). Initiatives will include community activities and projects, as well as support for the construction of the Derby Early Learning and Family Centre. |
| Implications | <i>This is a positive, evidence-based investment in early childhood development and place-based prevention efforts. However, funding is relatively limited and there is little detail about longer-term operational support. More could be done to share learnings more broadly with Early Years Networks in other areas.</i> |

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| Initiative | Child Protection <i>(BP2, V2, P482)</i> |
| Investment | \$596.3 million from 2025-2026 through to 2029-2030 |
| Description | This investment in child protection includes a mix of ongoing initiatives and new funding aimed at improving outcomes for children in care and their families, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$377.7 million to strengthen WA's out-of-home-care (OOHC) system • \$44.9 million to expand Aboriginal Representative Organisations and to support the ongoing delivery of Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making Services (AFLDM) in the Midwest Gascoyne and Mirrabooka. |
| Implications | <i>These initiatives are aimed at providing essential supports for children in care and their families. We welcome the continued investment to maintain the delivery of vital services and programs, as well as the focus on Aboriginal self-determination, supporting children and young people to remain safe and connected to their family, culture, Country and community.</i> |

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| Initiative | Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services and Indigenous Healing Services Recommissioning <i>(BP3, P154, P229)</i> |
| Investment | \$17.2 million over four years. |

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| Description | To support the recommissioning of specialised Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services (CSATS) and Indigenous Healing Services across WA, including providers at 11 regional locations. |
| Implications | <i>This funding maintains the previous 5 per cent and 15 per cent uplifts and also embeds the previous national partnership agreement funding into baseline recurrent State funding. It does not represent new or additional funding beyond existing commitments. While this provides short-term certainty during recommissioning, it does not address unmet need, broader sustainability and service demand pressures across these critical services.</i> |

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| Initiative | Thriving Kids <i>(BP2, V2, P480, P482) (BP2, V1, P132)</i> |
| Investment | \$4.6 million over two years. |
| Description | Support finalisation of the service model and implementation plan for Foundational Supports – Thriving Kids services in WA, which includes \$1.1 million of expenditure by WA Health. Targets children under nine years with mild to moderate autism spectrum disorder and developmental delay. |
| Implications | <i>Will support the establishment of Thriving Kids services in WA, in line with the National Agreement on Foundational Supports. Sector consultation processes are underway and a partnership approach will be critical to delivering program success and reducing demand on the NDIS.</i> <i>Note we understand a bilateral agreement with the Commonwealth has been signed, with further planning for the trialling and roll-out of services still to take place. We are advised this will be to a value of \$361m over five years including \$148m in Commonwealth funding.</i> <i>We will share updates via WACOSS News as details are announced.</i> |

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| Initiative | Scheme for Independent Oversight of Child Safe Organisations <i>(BP3, P105, P106)</i> |
| Investment | \$1.7 million over two years. |
| Description | The Ombudsman (\$1.1 million) and Department of Premier and Cabinet (\$617,000) will develop a new oversight scheme for Child Safe Organisations and Out-of-Home Care Providers, in line with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. This funding is allocated for 2025-26 and 2026-27. |
| Implications | <i>The Independent Oversight Scheme represents a significant and necessary shift toward stronger child safety accountability in WA. The current</i> |

funding profile suggests the system is still in a design and early implementation phase. This raises concerns that allocated budget resourcing may not be sufficient to support effective and consistent implementation of independent oversight without adding strain to the community sector.