

An evaluation of MacKillop Family Services' Family Preservation and Reunification Response for vulnerable families

ACTRN12621001363875

Status	RECRUITING
Sponsor	Monash University
Enrollment	250 participants

Plain Language Summary

When families are at risk of having their children placed in out-of-home care (such as foster care), intensive support programs that work with the whole family together can sometimes prevent that separation. The Family Preservation and Reunification Response (FPR) delivered by MacKillop Family Services in Victoria is one such program, but robust evidence for its effectiveness in the Australian context is limited. This evaluation study is designed to find out whether FPR genuinely improves family outcomes.

The study will measure changes in parenting capability, family safety, child development, and whether children are kept safely at home or successfully reunified. Staff will also be interviewed about how well the program is delivered in practice. The aim is to build the evidence needed to either scale up the program or refine it.

Families eligible to participate are those already enrolled in the FPR program in Victoria whose child is aged 0–17 and who have at least two of a range of risk factors such as family violence, mental health challenges, or a history of out-of-home care. Program staff involved in delivery for at least one month are also eligible to participate in interviews.

Key Eligibility Criteria

Inclusion (9)

- Parents living in Victoria, Australia, that are at risk for child removal (child substantiation) or have at least one child already residing in out-of-home care. Child is aged between 0-17 years. Parents will have at least two of the following risk factors placing their child at risk of removal:
- history of out-of-home care themselves
- child or parent identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- young mother (aged under 20 at birth)
- drug or alcohol concerns
- ... and 4 more (see full listing online)

Exclusion (5)

- Parents will not be eligible for participation if they:
- do not speak English
- do not reside or work in the relevant catchment areas in Victoria
- are already engaged in another family service programs
- have no child protection involvement

Locations (1 total)

VIC, Australia

<https://www.anzctr.org.au/Trial/Registration/TrialReview.aspx?ACTRN=ACTRN12621001363875>

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