

Child Safeguarding Framework



Cultural Practice Collective Vision

The Cultural Practice Collective vision is:

'To create a culturally grounded and empowering collective dedicated to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our First Nations children. We envision a future whereby every First Nations child grows up in an environment free of harm, where their cultural identity is respected and celebrated and where they have equal opportunities to succeed'.

KAA recognises the pivotal role that culture plays in safeguarding children and the protective factors for children when they are connected to family, community and culture.

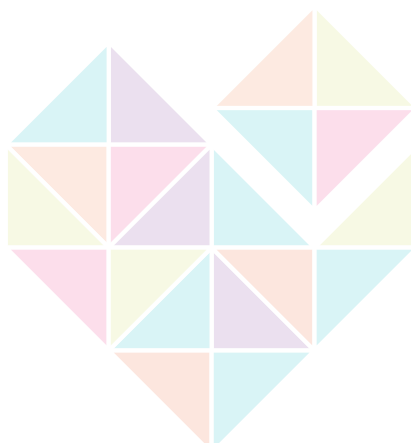
Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Key Assets Australia (KAA) is a national, not-for-profit children, family, and community services organisation dedicated to achieving positive and lasting outcomes for children, families, and communities. As a Child Safe Organisation, KAA is committed to safeguarding – a term that encompasses the actions we take to protect the health, wellbeing and rights of children and young people. Our Safeguarding Framework outlines how we are accountable and dedicated to upholding the highest standards of safety and protection. It ensures that every child and young person we support knows their rights, feels empowered to raise their concerns, and trusts that those concerns will always be heard and acted upon.

We recognise that safeguarding goes beyond policies and procedures—it's about fostering a culture of respect, trust, and accountability. Our Safeguarding Framework represents our collective accountability to children and young people and demonstrates how we are taking meaningful action. By being accountable to young people, we can foster systemic, generational change that better meets their needs.

I encourage you to familiarise yourself with this framework, to understand its importance, and actively contribute to its implementation. Together, we can continue to make a difference in the lives of children and young people.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.



KAA Vision

All children and young people thrive and connect to family, community and culture.

KAA Culture and Core Values



Recognising everybody counts and is accountable



Providing high quality and safe services



Achieving excellence through continuous improvement



Cultivating knowledge, innovation and learning

Objectives of our Child Safeguarding Framework

The objectives of our Framework are to:

- Strengthen our organisation's safeguarding practices and set out clearly our commitment to safeguarding children.
- Promote a consistent, child centred, and culturally sensitive approach to safeguarding.
- Provide staff with the information and training they need to be alert to, prevent and respond robustly in all situations where children are vulnerable to or have experienced harm.
- Empower children, their families, carers and the community to identify, escalate and prevent child abuse.
- Continuously improve our services and demonstrate accountability to children, and the families we serve.



KAA's Safeguarding Commitments

KAA embraces our responsibility to ensure all children* feel **safe**, are **protected** from abuse and are enabled to **thrive**. We are **accountable** to the children and young people we serve and strive to create environments in which children's voices are nurtured, listened to and acted upon. We are proactive in **motivating** the surrounding sectors and systems to build communities in which **all children** experience protection and appropriate support.

KAA recognises that children's safety is achieved when we **encourage open and honest** communication about topics that can sometimes be difficult or distressing. KAA creates **opportunities for the development of meaningful, trusting relationships** between our staff and the children we support, to enable important conversations to take place. We support our staff to develop the skills to build lasting and meaningful connections with children. By modelling relationships with a foundation of respect we help children to have safe and meaningful interactions with others. Through our direct work with children, we demonstrate our commitment to hearing children's voices and taking action to ensure their safety.

KAA's safeguarding practice is attuned to the additional safeguarding measures necessary for children with disabilities, children in the Out of Home Care system, and those who face discrimination because of their gender, sexuality or socio-economic backgrounds. Of particular importance is the vulnerability facing children of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage linked to the impact of invasion, dispossession, exclusion and the ramifications of intergenerational trauma stemming from the forced removal of First Nations children. We understand the strength of protection afforded to children who remain connected to family, culture and country. KAA works actively to ensure all First Nations children remain connected to family and culture and are provided with opportunities to make choices about their own lives.

KAA has a strong **organisational culture** in which safeguarding measures, responsibilities and actions are communicated clearly to all staff via training, literature and direct discussions. As an **exemplary child safe organisation**, we consider safeguarding implications in decision making at all levels of the organisation. We promote children's safety as a responsibility **held by all** in our organisation and see safeguarding as a fundamental part of our everyday practice. We have established mechanisms providing scrutiny to ensure that the protection of children remains at the centre of our thinking and our practice.

*The term child / children is used throughout this document and refers to all children and young people under the age of eighteen years.



Safeguarding Definition

Safeguarding at KAA refers to all the activities we take to protect the health, wellbeing and rights of children, enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. Safeguarding encompasses the policies, procedures and governance arrangements that promote the safety and wellbeing of children. Through our commitment to assessing and addressing risk we ensure that children can reach their full potential and thrive in safe environments. When we talk about safeguarding risks, we are referring to:

- Sexual abuse.
- Physical abuse.
- Emotional abuse.
- Neglect.
- Family violence.
- Cultural abuse.
- Exploitation including sexual, criminal and employment exploitation; and
- Emerging safeguarding risks including online abuse, knife crime and gang violence, harmful sexual behaviours and mental health of children and young people.

KAA Child Safeguarding Framework and Governance Arrangements

The KAA Child Safeguarding Framework (the Framework) describes our organisation's overarching architecture and specific initiatives to safeguard children from harm. The Framework aligns with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and underpins our commitment to meeting the expectations established by the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework. It is compliant with jurisdictional laws in relation to the protection of children and young people across the communities we serve.

The Framework is evolving in nature as we learn and grow as an organisation. The Framework is underpinned by the KAA Child Safeguarding Action Plan which sets out the action we will take to enhance our safeguarding practices.

KAA has robust governance arrangements that will guide the evolution of the Framework and lead on overseeing our commitment to child safe practice. This includes:

- The **KAA Board** – Our Board is responsible for leading KAA's child safe culture. Safeguarding is incorporated within all decision making and strategic direction setting for our organisation. The Board has underscored its commitment to safeguarding via the establishment of the Quality Practice and Safeguarding Committee. This forum focuses on our safeguarding strategies, risks and responsibilities ensuring alignment with the National Child Safe Principles.

- **The Quality Practice and Safeguarding Committee** – Our QPS Committee is responsible for ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of all children accessing KAA services. The Committee focuses on embedding best practice in safeguarding through oversight of the Child Safeguarding Action Plan activities and other quality and risk measures.
- **The KAA Quality Practice and Safeguarding Directorate** – This team has oversight and accountability to ensure the safety, wellbeing and delivery of high standards of care across all KAA programs and services. The Directorate works in partnership with operational teams to bring about robust, best practice as well as working closely with the QPS Committee and other senior leaders of KAA to embed improvements in safeguarding practice across the organisation. The Directorate actively monitors indicators of child safety and wellbeing and acts in response to emerging risks and trends. The Directorate works closely with the KAA Governance, Risk and Compliance Directorate to successfully implement our risk management framework and quality activities.
- **Cultural Practice Collective** – The Collective was initiated to guide and enable KAA's commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our First Nations children as well as providing advice from a cultural perspective on key organisational matters. The Collective plays an important role in ensuring our child safe practices take into consideration a child's culture in the identification and response to risks and action we take to prevent children from suffering harm.
- **The Safeguarding Leadership Team (SLG)** – Includes representatives from each KAA jurisdiction and operational function with responsibility for reviewing, developing and implementing the KAA Safeguarding Framework and delivering on the KAA Child Safe Action Plan.

Key Principles of our Child Safeguarding Framework

The following principles and approaches guide our Safeguarding Framework:

1. The importance of children's VOICES and our ACCOUNTABILITY to children

We take our accountability to children seriously. The Chrysalis 'Voice of the Child' initiative reinforced the high value children place on workers taking time to build strong, professional relationships with them. We are committed to listening to children and ensuring that the things they tell us that are important to them are acted upon. Workers are encouraged to spend time with children seeking their views and including them in decision making. We are creative in gaining feedback from children who rely on alternative forms of communication or are non-verbal to ensure that the voices of all children are heard, including those of the most vulnerable.

2. Culturally safe and attuned to diverse needs

Our commitment to reconciliation is unwavering. We strive to create inclusive environments for all members of the community by celebrating diversity and difference. We educate and support staff to be mindful of the additional

vulnerabilities to abuse and exploitation experienced by minority groups. KAA recognises and celebrates the family, community and cultural strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and strives to work alongside First Nations People in a manner that is inclusive and promotes self-determination. To this end, KAA is active in its efforts to ensure our safeguarding practices take into consideration cultural norms.

3. Trauma informed and responsive

KAA understands the impact of trauma on a child's development, relationships and how they experience the world. By being trauma informed in our work we strive to prevent our interventions causing children further harm and work to build relationships with children that bring about emotional and physical safety.

4. Partnership

Successful outcomes for children depend on strong partnership working. Partnership working helps to manage and mitigate risks and good communication between agencies helps keep children safer. We enable staff to work openly and collaboratively with colleagues, families and the wider professional network in order to safeguard children.

5. KAA Safeguarding Circle

The KAA Safeguarding Circle illustrates the key elements of safeguarding practice and encourages holistic thinking about the interdependencies that work together to keep children safe from harm and thriving. It encourages staff to think broadly about ways in which safeguarding can be incorporated into all aspects of our organisation and the wider community and systems in which we operate. Not just those that work directly with children, young people and families.

The KAA Safeguarding Circle also highlights the opportunity to leverage the systems in which we operate to build communities where children's rights and safety are paramount. KAA sees opportunity in the 'easy to understand' nature of the Circle and its relatability to the KAA Care Team Model and use this when discussing enhancements or opportunities in our child safe practices.





Key Assets Australia Approach to Safeguarding

1.1 Child Centred

We are responsible for protecting children from harm and creating environments in which children can thrive. To achieve this, we work to strengthen children's understanding of their individual rights, provide channels through which children can let adults know when they feel unsafe and build children's confidence to raise concerns when something is worrying them. We are proactive in building children's understanding and knowledge of safeguarding, and work to strengthen capacity in families, communities and our staff. By strengthening existing safeguards (such as within family and a trusting community of adults), and providing educational and training opportunities, we strengthen capacity in others to identify and respond to the signs of abuse. To fulfil these commitments we:

- Provide opportunities for staff to form trusting and meaningful connections with the children we support so they feel respected, valued and heard (NP* 2 & 7).
- Build staff's capacity to communicate effectively with children and to understand their role in safeguarding children (NP 2 & 7).
- Educate children with age-appropriate information about their rights and our organisational obligation to keep them safe and promote their wellbeing (NP 2).
- Educate children to have autonomy over their bodies, set healthy boundaries and support children to learn how to make safe, age-appropriate decisions about risk (NP 2).
- Support children to speak up when they feel worried or unsafe and provide them with information on how to raise concerns, who they can speak to, and what action they can expect as a response (NP 6).
- Teach children about the signs of harm, what is safe and unsafe behaviour (both in person and online), and what they can do to reduce the likelihood of harm to themselves and their peers (NP 2).
- Support families and carers to speak to children about their safety. We provide caregivers with accessible and tailored information on children's rights, the signs of harm and abuse, and the actions they should take to protect children (NP 3).
- Seek feedback from children, families and caregivers and provide them with clear information about the actions we will take when concerns are raised. (NP 3).
- Provide opportunities for families and carers to provide feedback on our Framework and contribute to future enhancements of our safeguarding practice to ensure alignment with their expressed needs (NP 3).

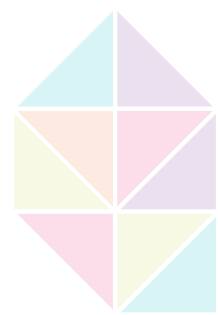
* NP refers to National Principle of Child Safe Organisations

1.2 Proactive to prevent harm occurring

Our Framework supports us to take active steps to prevent harm, abuse or neglect from occurring, and reinforces the need to respond swiftly in situations where harm occurs. By completing thorough assessments and risk assessments we ensure that practice is attuned to individual needs and that environments for children are safe. We take the following steps to prevent harm from occurring:

- KAA has developed robust governance arrangements to oversee our safeguarding responsibilities, policies, systems, and continuous improvement activities identified within our Child Safeguarding Action Plan. This includes the QPS Committee, QPS Directorate, GRC Directorate, and SLG, which have various delegated responsibilities across these activities (NP 1).
- The KAA Code of Conduct outlines our minimum standards of behaviour and conduct for all KAA employees and including actions staff should take regarding safeguarding (NP 1 and 10).
- KAA's Child Safe policies and procedures provide staff and carers with details on roles, responsibilities, and processes to follow in response to safety concerns (NP 10).
- We apply rigorous recruitment and screening processes for all staff, students and contractors to ensure their suitability to work safely with children. This includes obtaining relevant references and national police and WWCC checks. We promote our organisational Child Safe commitment in job advertisements and the use of behaviour-based interview questions to evaluate each applicant's competency in child safe requirements (NP 1 & 5).
- We apply safe carer recruitment processes and complete robust assessments on all caregivers supported by our organisation. We ensure references are obtained and the necessary background checks completed. KAA also applies rigorous processes of renewal to ensure the ongoing suitability of caregivers (NP 1 & 5).
- All new staff, carers and volunteers complete safeguarding training that sets out mandatory reporting responsibilities including recording and sharing concerns and responding to child abuse (NP 1, 7 and 9).
- All front-line staff are offered regular supervision and mentoring to ensure the development and maintenance of best practices in safeguarding children and supporting them to thrive. More regular supervision is offered to newly qualified workers and managers lead by example to embed a strong child safe culture across the organisation (NP 1 & 7).
- In situations where a staff member, volunteer or carers' performance has fallen short of expectations, any investigation will identify performance management shortfalls and make recommendations to improve practice and enhance safeguarding skills where necessary (NP 1, 6, 7 and 10).
- KAA caregivers receive regular supervision in line with the KAA Practice Framework delivered by qualified staff. Our Practice Framework promotes a coaching and capacity building approach, and we apply these methods in our direct work with carers and the families of the children we support (NP 1 & 7).

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- The KAA Learning and Development team and local Quality teams support the delivery of training in safeguarding, our legislative frameworks and adherence to federal and jurisdictional requirements. This ensures that workers and carers are aware of their obligations to report and escalate concerns in accordance with our safeguarding framework (NP 7).
 - Our commitment to anti-discriminatory practice ensures children are provided with equal rights and protection from harm regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or ability (NP 4 and 7).
 - Each child supported by our organisation has an individual Care Plan that details vulnerabilities, needs and steps staff should take to promote a child's wellbeing. Plans are reviewed regularly, and risk assessments are completed so as to manage and mitigate identified risks (NP 2, 8 & 10).
 - All First Nations children supported by KAA have an individual cultural plan. This guides our work in helping children develop a sense of safety and belonging in the context of their culture. It also draws on cultural connections and networks that work together to help protect children from harm (NP 2, 8 & 10).
 - KAA completes regular practice audits to benchmark against national and organisational safeguarding standards. Audit outcomes inform our continuous improvement plans and provide guidance on how effectively we are meeting our safeguarding objectives (NP 1, 8 & 9).
 - Our processes and procedures around environmental risks mean we have a shared understanding about safeguarding hazards and how to rectify them to prevent future harm (NP 8 & 9).
 - KAA actively measures the impact and outcomes of our services to children and their families. We involve our children in bi-annual surveys that evaluate children's feelings of safety, happiness and satisfaction with the care they receive. We use emerging themes and trends to guide the improvement of safeguarding arrangements (NP 2, 3 & 9).
 - KAA's enterprise risk management framework highlights our principle focus on safeguarding children and contributes to the continuation of our child safe practice by enabling robust attention to safeguarding risk and associated mitigation strategies. (NP 1).
 - Attachment A details the legislation, regulations, Standards, Commitments and Conventions and organisational policies and procedures that influence and impact our safeguarding practices (NP 1 - 10).





1.3 Responsive to Safeguarding Concerns

When children have been harmed or are at risk of harm, we act decisively to make necessary improvements to prevent recurrence. In response to serious incidents, we identify and put right any failures within our systems. We work proactively to ensure our policies, procedures and processes are evidence based, effective, and consistent with our National and Jurisdictional requirements.

To fulfil these responsibilities, we do the following:

- Our incident reporting and escalation procedure means that carers and staff report concerns quickly, with clear records of incidents kept, including the actions taken to address needs and risks (NP 1, 8 & 10).
- Our incident reporting process guides staff in the escalation and reporting of safeguarding concerns. These processes bring about consistency of practice in responding to allegations and enable us to meet requirements of external mandatory reporting processes (NP 6, 8 & 10).
- KAA has a national procedure that sets out our framework for the investigation of complaints. All concerns are looked into thoroughly and we communicate the outcome and any further actions so that complainants understand the steps we will take to put things right and learn from these incidents (NP 6).
- The Young People's Advisory Group is chaired by the CEO of KAA. This group helps keep us accountable in our commitment to listening to children and taking action to implement changes in response to children's feedback (NP 1).
- KAA review mechanisms and auditing functions ensure that we identify gaps and implement learnings from serious case reviews to drive forward best practice. We draw on the latest research to inform decision making and adapt as new information becomes available (NP 1, 9 and 10).
- Our Serious Incident Review Panel provides oversight and independent scrutiny of safeguarding incidents that occur. Serious incident review reports identify and set out learnings including clear recommendations to prevent similar incidents occurring in future (NP 1, 6, 7 & 10).
- We engage stakeholders in contributing to the development of safeguarding materials and practices to ensure a collaborative approach in reducing the likelihood of harm occurring (NP 2 & 3).
- KAA remains alert to emerging societal risks to children, ensuring that policies and procedures are updated in response to new threats (NP 9).



1.4 Accountable and Continuously Improving

KAA is accountable in situations where children have been harmed. We accept responsibility when our practice falls short in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children. We use these situations as an opportunity to improve and enhance our services, systems and programs and mitigate against the recurrence of harms. We are open to feedback and learning from investigations to ensure that children, their families, and our staff are actively engaged in any remediation work carried out.

To fulfil these responsibilities, we do the following:

- KAA has joined the National Redress Scheme, acknowledging the suffering experienced by survivors of child sexual abuse in Australia and the harm caused to them. We are committed to redressing harm experienced by a child whilst under the care or support of KAA and work to enable survivors to access counselling, support and appropriate financial compensation in line with the scheme. (NP 10).
- KAA embraces its leadership and advocacy role in driving solutions to the over-representation of First Nations children in the child protection and youth justice system. As a member of Allies for Children, a partnership of CEOs working across the Child, Youth and Family sector, KAA is actively involved in igniting long term, positive change on national issues that need collective response and advocacy. KAA is also an active member of Family Matters and SNAICC and is steadfast in working alongside the transfer of service to Community Controlled Organisations across the country (NP 1, 4, 10).
- KAA's commitment to reconciliation is set out in the KAA Reconciliation Action Plan. This document makes clear our commitment to ensuring the services we provide promote the cultural and identity needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families. We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children benefit greatly and thrive when supported by members of their own communities and we work to ensure our services restore and build meaningful connections between children and kin. KAA acknowledges the wrongs and injustices that have been done in the past and is committed to working together towards reconciliation (NP 1, 4, 10).





Child Safeguarding Framework

Impact Assessment

We will know our Child Safeguarding Framework and actions have been effective by measuring the following:

1.1 Child Centred

- Feedback from children highlights their increased sense of safety and awareness of safeguarding measures available to them.
- Children and their families demonstrate increased awareness and knowledge of their rights and supports available to them.
- Children feel confident to raise concerns with trusted adults.
- Children are supported to be involved in and share feedback on key safeguarding activities and KAA commits to its accountability to children by acting on this feedback.
- Families express confidence in knowing how to raise safeguarding worries and what actions they can take to foster a child safe culture across the community.
- Staff express confidence in knowing their responsibilities to embed a child safe culture across the organisation.
- Staff express confidence in supporting children to understand their rights and working alongside children as a trusted adult.
- The number of children, families and staff accessing child safe educational or training materials is increased.
- Tracking safeguarding matters that are reported and acted on and refining our practice in line with continuous improvement opportunities that may emerge.

1.2 Proactive approaches

- Embedding safeguarding reporting across the organisation with particular focus for the QPS Committee, GRC Directorate and operational functions including the progression of child safe continuous improvement opportunities.
- Staff are aware of and compliant with Child Safe policies, procedures and responsibilities.
- Auditing of practice confirms:
 - Compliance with recruitment and screening process for staff, students and contractors.
 - Compliance with carer recruitment and assessment processes including the completion of reference and background checks.
 - Compliance with supervision and mentoring of staff and carers on their child safe responsibilities.
 - Compliance with the completion of child safe training and development opportunities for staff and carers.
 - Compliance with the completion of individual care plan and cultural plans for the children supported across KAA.
- Outcomes measurement data applied in developing child safe opportunities.
- Staff are enabled to work therapeutically and developmentally by the provision of Practice Framework and therapeutic models of care training.

Child Safeguarding Framework

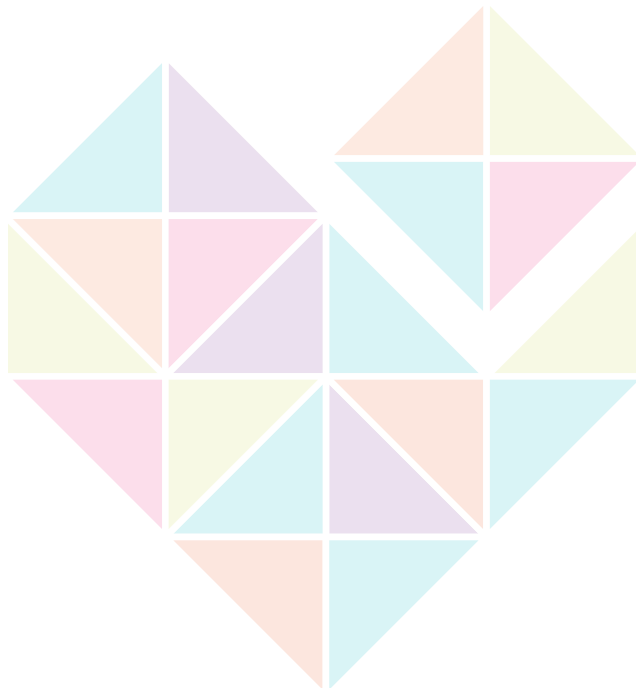
Impact Assessment

1.3 Responsive approaches

- The reporting and response to incidents and complaints is in line with policy and regulatory requirements.
- Feedback from children, carers and families on the organisation's response to incidents and complaints is positive.
- Child safe policy, practice and process is regularly enhanced by emerging best practice and in line with emerging risks and feedback.

1.4 Accountable and continuously improving

- Our response to Redress applications and resulting actions are in line with policy and satisfactory to the survivor.
- KAA continues to engage in systems influence on child safe actions and responses.
- Feedback highlights our services are culturally safe and have positive influence on a child's connection and wellbeing.
- The KAA Stretch RAP is developed and implemented across the organisation.





ATTACHMENT A - Key Safeguarding Resources and References

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Closing the Gap

Family Matters

ATSI Child Placement Principle Key to Care Practice Framework

Key Care Team Model

KAA Policies and Procedures

- Carer Review Policy
- Character Checks for Caring Households
- Child and Youth Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safe Policy and Procedure
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Cultural Plans
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Household Safe Care Plans
- Incident Management Policy
- My Safe Care Plans
- National Redress Procedure
- Performance Management and Disciplinary Procedure
- Recruitment and Assessment of Carers
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure
- Risk Management Framework and Policy
- Safe Caring Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Serious Incident Review Panel Procedure
- SNAICC Placement Principles
- Worker Screening and Compliance Policy



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SERVING CHILDREN, FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES

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