Building evidence to support practice with children with disability in out-of-home care

ACWA Disability Good Practice Symposium
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We acknowledge the tradition of custodianship and law of the Country on which the University of Sydney campuses stand. We pay our respects to those who have cared and continue to care for Country.

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Tree of Knowledge **-** pokerwork on kangaroo skin, Lynette Riley, 2010
http://Sydney.edu.au/kinship-module

Overview

- Findings from a review of literature on children and young people with disability in out-of-home care
- Messages from the out-of-home care and disability sectors
- Addressing research, policy and practice gaps

Rapid evidence review

- Conducted September 2022.
- Keyword search of 4 databases (Proquest, Psychoinfo, Scopus, CINAHL)
- Inclusion criteria: English-language, reporting empirical findings or summaries of studies about children and young people with disability in out of home care
- Total of 53 studies were identified
- 27 quantitative, 19 qualitative, 3 mixed methods and 4 literature reviews.
- Review organised around 7 key themes: leaving care, disability prevalence, voluntary out-of- home care placement, placement stability, health and education outcomes, support services, family preservation.

Children and young people with disability in OOHC

- Consistently over-represented in care but poorly recorded in data
  - Disability status available for 57% of children in OOHC in Australia in 2021
  - No national prevalence data on the number of Indigenous children in OOHC care with disability
- More likely to have significant needs, challenging behaviours, and be placed in residential care
- Children with intellectual disability or autism are more likely to enter care than children without these disabilities
- Boys with disability more likely than girls with disability to be in OOHC

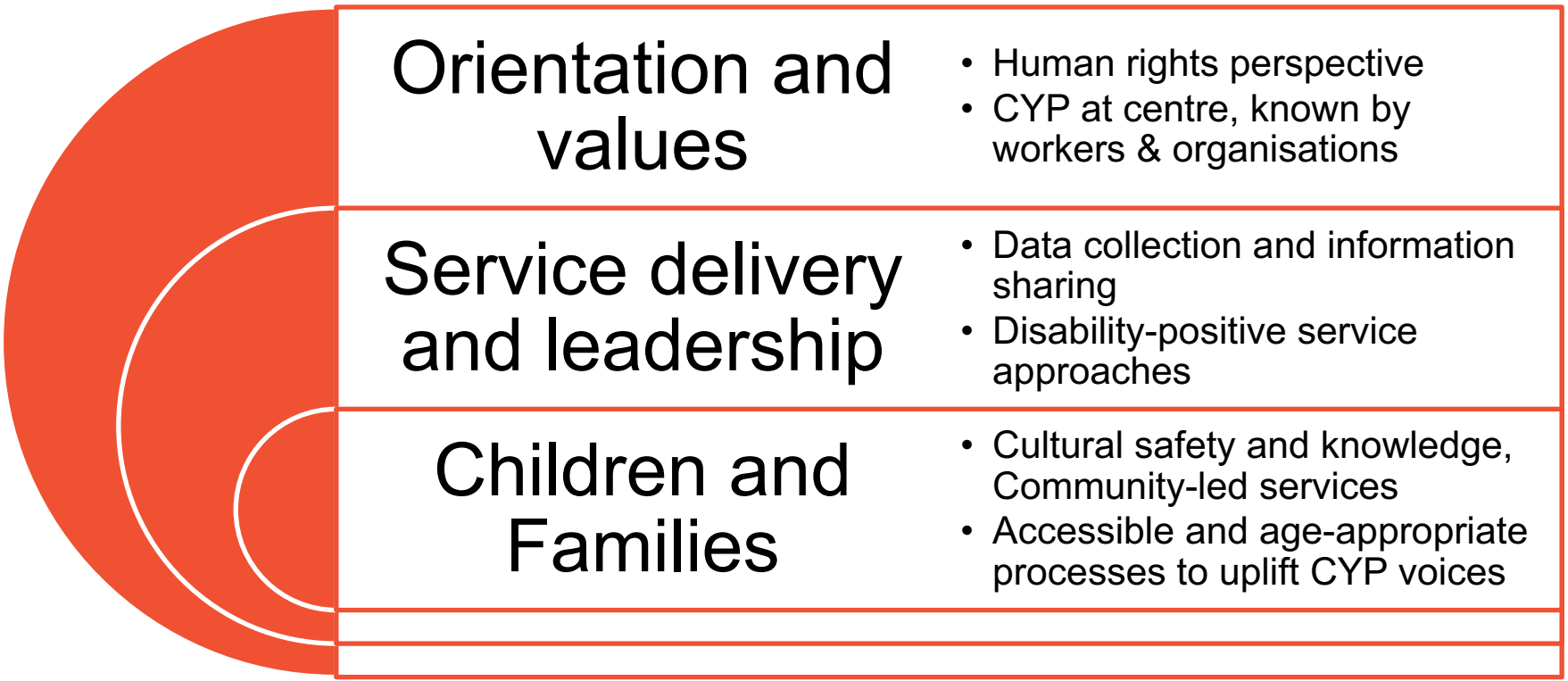
Key concerns arising from research

- **Voluntary placement and family preservation** – need for supports when families experience crisis i.e., challenging behaviours and parental ill health
- **Placement stability** – longer stays in care and higher rates of placement disruptions necessitate specialist training, carer recruitment and supports
- **Leaving care** – lack of access to transitional accommodation, mental health supports, positive relationships
- **Health and education outcomes** - lower quality of life and more restrictive placements than other young people in care and young people with disability who are not in care
- **NDIS interface** with mainstream services prevents a coordinated early intervention response and impacts long-term outcomes

Building evidence on practices that promote interagency collaboration & positive outcomes

- Workforce forum held in December 2022
- Brought together research, policy, practice and community experts.
- 65 representatives from peak bodies, government, and service providers
- Presenters shared innovative and intergrated service models
- Small group reflections on challenges, gaps and service improvements

Feedback on opportunities for practice improvement



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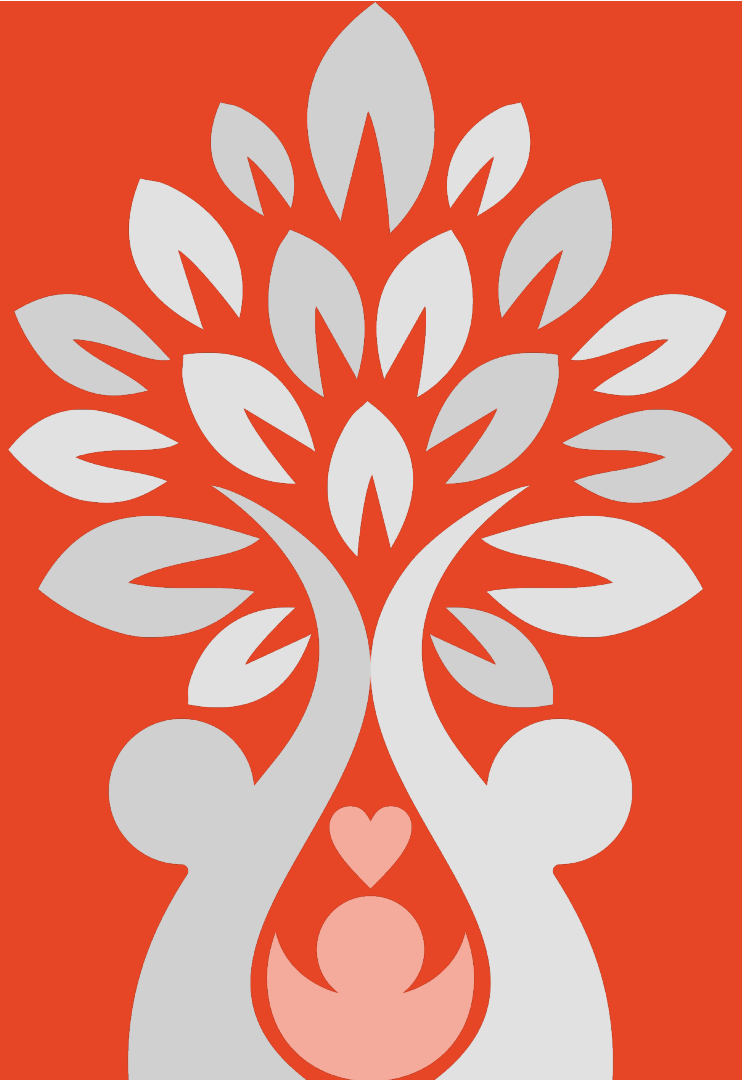
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