

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Burgoyne to the Minister for Territory Families:

Face to Face Case Management

1. In line with the Territory Families policy of case management of children, what percentage of children had meaningful face-to-face contact with a case manager at least once every six weeks in the 2021/22 financial year?

ANSWER

The percentage of children who had meaningful face-to-face contact with their case manager every six weeks in the 2021-22 financial year was 68.3 per cent.

2. Please provide detail about what is considered face-to-face contact? Is teleconferencing or any method other than being in the same physical location as a child accepted as face-to-face?

ANSWER

Face-to-face contact is a direct and meaningful interaction between a practitioner and the child where the practitioner provides the child with:

- a supportive safe environment where the child may express themselves freely;
- opportunity to voice their opinions, choices, and concerns;
- regular opportunity to speak away from others who may inhibit the child's willingness to express themselves honestly and without fear or embarrassment; and;
- planned contact times where priority safety and wellbeing issues are discussed.

Meaningful contact involves the practitioner providing a supportive environment for direct interaction with the child where the child has opportunity to voice their concerns, opinions, feedback and choices and to be heard.

The practitioner may have contact with a child or young person by video, messaging app, email, phone calls or social media. This form of contact augments regular face-to-face contact to check in and support the young person, or for the young person to seek support or ask for assistance.

If a child resides interstate, or attends boarding school interstate, the child's practitioner must have meaningful face-to-face contact with them when they return to the Northern Territory for a visit or family contact. Contact with the child under these circumstances must be made face-to-face and not by video, phone, messaging and social media.

When a practitioner cannot have face-to-face contact with the child within a six week period (e.g. weather conditions prevent travel and access to a community)

arrangements are made for another practitioner, a suitable Department staff member, or third party to have meaningful face-to-face contact. Recognised third parties include members of the Northern Territory Police, staff from the Department of Health, Department of Education, interstate child protection authorities, or out-of-home care providers.