



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 266

WRITTEN QUESTION

J Davis to the Minister for Children and Families, Hon Robyn Cahill OAM
MLA:

Early Intervention and Prevention Underspend

1. Why did the Government underspend more than \$3.41 million in prevention and family support in 2025–26, while the number of children and young people brought into out-of-home care exceeded the Department's own target?
 - a. Which programs and regions experienced the underspend?
 - b. What were the reasons — for example workforce shortages, procurement delays or service gaps?
 - c. What steps are being taken to ensure allocated funds are fully utilised in 2026–27?
 - d. How many additional families could have been supported had those funds been fully utilised?
 - e. If no estimate of that kind has been prepared, what was the average cost per family supported under those programs in 2025–26?
2. What proportion of the family support budget is specifically directed toward early intervention programs?
 - a. If early intervention is not separately costed within the family support budget, at what level is that expenditure disaggregated, and which programs are counted as early intervention?
3. What evidence or evaluation data does the Government rely on to determine the effectiveness of early intervention in reducing entries into out-of-home care?
4. How does current investment compare with the estimated cost savings from preventing children entering out-of-home care?

5. Has the Government assessed the impact on child safety of housing insecurity, poverty, workforce shortages and access to health services?
 - a. Which factors present the greatest risks to children in the Territory?
6. Has advice been received that places Commonwealth funding linked to Closing the Gap outcomes at risk?
 - a. If so, can the Minister provide the advice received from the Commonwealth?