

## Emerging Minds Focus framework overview: Child-focused, parent-sensitive practice for social services and NGOs

[Emerging Minds Focus](#) takes organisations on a quality improvement journey in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of infants, children and their families.

This overview is intended to build your understanding of the key attributes for quality improvement within the Emerging Minds Focus tool. [A suite of resources](#) has also been developed to further your understanding of how Focus can support quality improvement and enhance mental health outcomes.

The following areas and attributes are used for the Change Team and Organisational surveys within Emerging Minds Focus, and are intended for **social services and not-for-profit organisations**. Each attribute is reflected upon and rated based on whether it is:

- 'In place'
- 'Partially in place'
- 'Not in place'
- 'Unclear'; or
- 'Not relevant'.

The results of these surveys help to inform the next steps in your quality improvement journey. If an attribute is identified as a priority, you can consider the recommended actions provided or create your own, assign them to [Change Team members](#) and integrate them into your Focus action plan.

### Organisation

This area considers the elements required to create a child-focused, parent-sensitive organisation that supports parenting, infant and child mental health and development, and family wellbeing.



### Mission and values

The mission, purpose and/or strategic plan of your organisation state a commitment to supporting the mental health, wellbeing and development of infants and children.

### Child safe organisations

Policy and procedures are in place to support the organisation to embed the [Child Safe Organisations National Principles](#).

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing

Service design and delivery considers cultural connection to support the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families/kin.

### Child and family partnerships

Child and family voice are considered in service design and delivery.

### Data collection

Systems are in place to ensure that child, parent and family data is collected and collated in such a way that summary-level reports can be used for internal planning purposes to support child-focused, and parent-sensitive service delivery (and for external stakeholders as required).

### Child mental health leadership

The leadership team includes an identified portfolio (lead/strategy) for children's mental health, development and wellbeing.

### Interagency relationships

Interagency planning and information sharing processes are in place.

## **Services**

This area considers the elements required to improve the provision of child-focused, parent-sensitive practice in your services to support parenting, infant and child mental health and development, and family wellbeing.

### Addressing the needs of parents, children and family members

Practices to support infant and child mental health, wellbeing and development and their connection to the needs of parents and other family members are understood, implemented and embedded.

### 'Best practice' approach

The service has adopted a 'best practice' approach to child-focused and parent-sensitive practices.

### Practice leadership team

Practice champions/coaches provide leadership in child-focused, parent-sensitive practice to ensure parenting, infant and child mental health and development, and family wellbeing are considered and supported.

### Service delivery audits

Child-focused and parent-sensitive service delivery data is audited regularly.

### Child-focused and parent-sensitive environment

Service leaders are working towards a child-focused and parent-sensitive environment.

### Forms and documentation

Forms and documents are child-focused and parent-sensitive.

### Pregnancy and early parenting

Focused support is provided for families during pregnancy and early parenting periods (birth to four years).

### Supervision strategy

A supervision strategy includes child-focused and parent-sensitive practice, which promotes a lens on parenting and the needs of the child.

### Staff training

Staff have received basic training in child-focused and parent-sensitive practice, informed by the guiding principles of infant and child mental health.

Staff can describe practice that supports:

- children and their local ecology
- parent-child relationships
- prevention and early engagement approaches
- a focus on enhancing and promoting strengths, while accounting for vulnerabilities
- child and family resilience
- trauma-informed and responsive ways of working
- a developmental perspective
- cultural and spiritual identity
- children's rights.

## **Practice**

This area considers the knowledge, skills and confidence in child-focused, parent-sensitive practice to support parenting, infant and child mental health and development, and family wellbeing.

### Conversations in practice

Holding conversations about children, parenting and family/kin to support infant and child mental health and development and family wellbeing is a routine part of practice.

### Nurturing parent-child relationships

Engagement and practices provided by our organisation nurture parent-child relationships.

### Information and referrals

Parents are provided with information about parenting and infant and child mental health and wellbeing, and (when necessary) are linked to local services that provide parenting and/or family support appropriate to their specific needs.

### Child support network

Parents are encouraged and supported to explore networks that wrap around both their child and family, including natural supports (e.g. kin, culture, community).

### Pregnancy and early parenting support

Focused support is provided for families during pregnancy and the early parenting period (birth to four years).

**Learn more about  
Emerging Minds  
Focus**

