

## MEDIA RELEASE

25 June 2026

### **Thriving Kids must be built with Aboriginal communities to succeed**

SNAICC - National Voice for our Children has released a new policy paper calling on governments to design and deliver the Thriving Kids initiative in genuine partnership with Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs).

The policy paper outlines how Thriving Kids presents a significant opportunity to address longstanding gaps in early childhood development support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and their families but warns that without Aboriginal-led design and delivery, the initiative risks reinforcing the very inequities it seeks to overcome.

Catherine Liddle, CEO of SNAICC has commended the Government's Thriving Kids initiative, saying that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have the most to gain from a system that provides earlier, more accessible and culturally safe support.

"Thriving Kids has the potential to transform how children access developmental and disability support, shifting away from crisis-driven responses and ensuring families get help earlier," Ms Liddle said.

"Our ACCO-led early childhood education and care services are already delivering the culturally strong, holistic support that children and families need, making them perfectly placed to be partners in the design and delivery of Thriving Kids.

"For this initiative to work for our children and families it must be built on the strengths of the services they rely on and trust, Thriving Kids needs to be delivered in ECEC spaces where children and families have the existing relationships and are already doing the work to support families and children with developmental delays. To make that happen, our ECEC organisations must be recognised as partners, not just stakeholders."

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (aprox, one in five) experience disproportionately high rates of developmental vulnerability and disability, yet Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander families continue to face barriers accessing services that are available, culturally safe and responsive to community needs.

SNAICC also called on the Australian Government to provide greater clarity about how Thriving Kids will interact with broader disability reforms and ensure no child loses access to support during the transition.

"We've seen too many reforms promise better outcomes without addressing the practical realities for our children and families. The Government must be clear about how Thriving Kids will connect with existing systems and how it will guarantee continuity of support for every child who needs it."

Access SNAICC's Thriving Kids Policy Paper here - [https://www.snaicc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Thriving-Kids\\_Policy-Paper\\_SNAICC\\_vF.pdf](https://www.snaicc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Thriving-Kids_Policy-Paper_SNAICC_vF.pdf)



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