

Explaining the words on child welfare records

This page is a resource to help people understand the words and abbreviations commonly found on child welfare records. It contains explanations and definitions for many words, terms and abbreviations. Please be aware that this page contains language and terms that are derogatory and offensive.

The records from a child or young person's time in institutional 'care' can be difficult to understand and interpret – files from government departments and past providers often contain abbreviations and acronyms, unfamiliar terms and jargon.

[Access to Records by Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants](#) (Department of Social Services, 2016) recommends that record-holding organisations providing access to child welfare records also provide Care Leavers with supporting material to help them understand the records. Explaining abbreviations, acronyms and the organisational context of the records is one way that record-holding organisations can provide support and help people to understand their own records.

Government departments from South Australia and Victoria provided helpful input into this list. The NSW government shared this document, [Abbreviations in historic records](#), a list of abbreviations and acronyms, some of which are only specific to NSW, but many which will also be relevant to records from other jurisdictions.

The Find & Connect web resource team would welcome further contributions from record holders and advocacy and support organisations, so [please get in touch](#) with any suggestions about additions to this page.

Some terms on this page are very state-specific (eg *MTC* as an acronym for [Magill Training Centre](#)), and some terms apply to all jurisdictions (eg *ABS* as an abbreviation of Absconded).

Blue text on this page is a link to a glossary term with more information. You can see the full [Find & Connect Glossary here](#).

This page has some more tips on [How to read records](#).

And this page has information about what to expect when accessing [child welfare records](#).

Searching TIPS for this page:

Use Ctrl-F to search for a particular word, term or abbreviation

Use the alphabetical links to search for words starting with a particular letter

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [Y](#)

A

A/B

A/B (or a/b) is an acronym found on some child welfare records. It stands for Adoptions Branch, the branch of the welfare department that dealt with adoptions in South Australia.

ACPP

The [Aboriginal Child Placement Principle](#) (ACPP) was established nationally in the early 1980s. It is intended to guide child protection services to strengthen Aboriginal children's connections with their family, community and cultural identity and recognise their right to their own heritage, customs, community and institutions.

ALRM

The Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement (abbreviated as ALRM or ALR) is an independent community controlled organisation. It was established in 1971 with the aim to protect and advance the legal rights of Aboriginal people in South Australia. It provides legal advice, support and advocacy for Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal School

Aboriginal schools were separate public schools. They were created because Aboriginal children in New South Wales were legally required to attend school, but could be excluded from public schools if non-Aboriginal parents complained about their presence.

ABS

ABS is an acronym often used on welfare records to mean Absconded. [Absconding](#) is a term used to describe the act of running away or escaping from an institution, foster home or other place of care.

ABS.R

ABS.R is an acronym found on child welfare records from South Australia. It stands for 'Return from Absconding' – the term was used on State Ward Index cards to indicate the placement of a child after the child was absent due to absconding.

ACC

ACC is a term commonly found on welfare records from South Australia. It stands for Anglican Community Care. Anglican Community Care was established by the Anglican Church in 1985 to provide support services to children and others within their communities.

ACH

ACH (or AC Hosp.) is an acronym found on child welfare records in South Australia. It stands for Adelaide Children's Hospital.

ACH (1)

ACH (1) is an abbreviation found on Tasmanian welfare records. It stands for [Approved Children's Home](#) (primary school rate) referring to the amount of subsidy paid by the government to an approved Home for an individual state ward.

ACH (2)

ACH (2) is an abbreviation found on Tasmanian welfare records. It stands for Approved Children's Home (high school rate) referring to the amount of subsidy paid by the government to an approved Home for an individual ward of state. Occasionally the Home received this rate for a child still at primary school but of high school age.

ACH (Emp.)

ACH (Emp.) is an abbreviation commonly found on Tasmanian records. It stands for Approved Children's Home (employment), meaning that the government did not have to pay a subsidy for a state ward living in an approved children's Home because he or she earned enough income to pay board.

ACH Ext. Edu.

ACH Ext. Edu. is an abbreviation used on Tasmanian welfare records to mean Approved Children's Home extended education. This referred to a state ward living in an approved children's Home who had reached the school leaving age of 16 but whose continuing education had been approved by the government.

ACP

ACP is an abbreviation of [Adolescent Community Placement](#) which is a home-based model of care for young people aged 12 to 18. In ACP, young people live with the support and supervision of approved carers.

AD

AD is an abbreviation found on South Australian records. It stands for advocacy, or complaints.

Adm.

Adm. is an abbreviation on some Tasmanian records, meaning 'Admitted to the Department under Section 35' (of the [Child Welfare Act 1960](#)).

Admission

Admission is the process of being formally accepted or placed into a Home or other institution.

Adoptions Officer

In South Australia, the Adoptions Officer (abbreviated on records as A/O) was the departmental officer responsible for dealing with cases of adoption.

Adoption Order

An adoption order (abbreviated on records as AO) is an order granted in a court of law which establishes a legally recognised relationship between an adopted child and the adoptive parents.

Affiliation

Affiliation is a word used to describe the process of identifying the father of a child born to a single mother.

AKA

AKA is an acronym for 'also known as'.

Almoner

Almoner was the name given to social workers until around the 1950s. On hospital adoption files, the letter 'A' could indicate that a single mother had been referred to the almoner, or to the hospital's social work department. In hospitals that were also adoption agencies the almoner played a key role in obtaining consents from single mothers and selecting adoptive parents.

A/P

A/P is a term found on child welfare records. It stands for Adoptive Parent (or Adoptive Parents, abbreviated to A/Ps).

AR

AR is a term found on welfare records. It stands for Adolescent at Risk. Sometimes a child or young person was described as being 'in need of protection'.

Arranging Body

An arranging body is an agency authorised under adoption legislation to make the decision about the placement of an adoptive child. An arranging body can be a government agency (such as state and territory departments responsible for adoption), or an authorised non-government agency (such as church organisations, registered charities, non-profit organisations, companies and cooperative societies and associations).

ASAP

ASAP is an acronym for 'as soon as possible'.

ASCWW

ASCWW is a term commonly found on welfare records from South Australia. It stands for Acting Senior Community Welfare Worker.

ACIS

The Assessment and Crisis Intervention Service (sometimes abbreviated to ACIS) is a 24 hour Mental Health triage service which is the main point of access to public adult mental health services in South Australia. Its main role is triage, emergency psychiatric assessment/management and crisis intervention.

Assisted Employment

Assisted employment referred to a state ward who was employed but needed a subsidy from the Department. Some Tasmanian government records abbreviated this term to A/Emp.

ASWB

The term 'admitted social welfare branch', or ASWB, can be found on some Victorian state ward records. This indicates that a child or young person was made a ward of the state and placed under the guardianship of the [Social Welfare Branch](#) in Victoria (1960 to 1970).

A/SWO

A/SWO is a term commonly found on welfare records from South Australia. It stands for Acting Social Welfare Officer.

At Home while still a Ward

At home while still a ward was a term used in Tasmania from the 1960s to the 1990s, to refer to a child's placement with their own family or relatives pending a discharge from the State if it was satisfactory.

ATU

ATU is an acronym for 'at the unit'. It is commonly found on welfare records, specifically in South Australia.

AU

AU (or A/U) is a term found on child welfare records. It stands for address unknown.

AWOL

AWOL is an acronym for absent without leave. It is commonly found on welfare records.

AYC

AYC is a term found on welfare records. It stands for Adelaide Youth Court.

[Back to top](#)

B

B (Sp.)

B (Sp.) is an abbreviation of Board (Special). On Tasmanian records, this means that the child was boarded out to a foster mother for a payment that was not on the usual scale. For instance, the Department might pay for clothing but not provide board payments.

B (1)

B (1), or Board 1, appears on some Tasmanian records. It means that the child was boarded-out to a foster mother at the lowest rate of payments.

B (2)

B (2), or Board 2, appears on some Tasmanian records. It means that the child was boarded out to a foster mother at the intermediate rate of payments.

B (3)

B (3), or Board 3, appears on some Tasmanian records. It means that the child was boarded out to a foster mother at the highest rate of payments.

B/C

B/C stands for birth certificate.

BD&M

BD&M, or BDM, stands for Births, Deaths and Marriages, the state government departments responsible for recording births, deaths, adoptions, marriages and name changes.

BEHAV

BEHAV is an abbreviation of behaviour.

BFA

The letters B.F.A., meaning baby for adoption, were written on the hospital and case files of pregnant women if the social worker or nursing and medical staff thought the mother would be likely to give the baby up for adoption. Sometimes they wrote this if they thought she should relinquish the baby. The use of the term was a signal to staff as to how to treat the mother and the baby before, during and after birth.

B/F

B/F stands for birth father.

B/G

B/G stands for background information given, on some South Australian records

BIT

BIT is an acronym for Brief Intervention Team on some South Australian records.

B/M

B/M stands for birth mother.

BMP

BMP is an acronym for Behaviour Management Program on some South Australian records.

Boarding Out

[Boarding out](#) was the term used to describe the placement of children and young people in foster care in private homes.

Board of Management

The Board of Management was a group of appointed or elected persons responsible for overseeing the administration of a non-government children's Home or other institution. Boards had varying levels of responsibility and might have overseen such aspects as financial management, staffing, applications for admission, health, education, rules and regulations and general maintenance of the institution.

BOO

BOO is an acronym for Boarding Out Officer. In some states or territories, the department had a boarding out officer who was responsible for finding placements for children in state care.

Borderline Defective

Borderline defective was a term used in the twentieth century to describe people with intellectual disabilities. There were said to be different classes of 'mental defectives'. Borderline cases were described in 1929 as 'persons in whose case there exists mental defectiveness, not amounting to feeble-mindedness, accompanied by instability which is so pronounced that they are rendered socially inefficient and in urgent need of supervision, treatment and training which cannot be given in the ordinary schools' (West Australia Hansard, 17 September 1929, p.742).

This [blog post by Frank Golding](#) is about the many offensive terms used to describe children in their child welfare files.

Br

Br is a term commonly used on welfare records from South Australia. It is an abbreviation for breach or breached. Breach is a term used to describe the breaking of conditions attached to a child's committal into the custody of the department or of parole conditions.

BRM

BRM is an abbreviation of [Boys Reformatory Magill](#), in South Australia.

BU

BU is an acronym that sometimes appears on records. BU stands for 'bring up'. Bring Up was put on files with a date as a reminder to workers about things that needed to be done at a particular time. When BU or Bring Up is written on child welfare records, it has nothing to do with bringing up (or raising) a child.

b/w

b/w stands for between.

[Back to top](#)

C**C of A**

C of A is an acronym for Change of Address.

C of E

C of E is an acronym for Church of England. Records often contain details about the religion of a child's family.

CA

CA is an acronym for child abuse that may be found on child welfare records.

CAE

CAE is an acronym for child abuse – emotional that may be found on child welfare records.

CAFHS

CAFHS is an acronym that appears on some South Australian records. It stands for the Child, Adolescent and Family Health Service, a community based child health service from 1978 to 1995.

CAMHS

CAMHS is an acronym that appears on some South Australian records. It stands for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, which was a service for young people and their families.

CAN

CAN is an acronym for child abuse – neglect that may be found on child welfare records.

CAP

CA is an acronym for child abuse – physical that may be found on child welfare records.

CAS

CA is an acronym for child abuse – sexual that may be found on child welfare records.

CAYH

CAYH (or CYH) is an acronym that appears on some South Australian records. It stands for Child and Youth Health, which provided health services to children and young people and their families from 1995 to 2004.

CC

CC is an acronym for Controlled Care. The use of this term is specific to South Australia.

CCU

CCU is an acronym for Crisis Care Unit. The use of this term is specific to South Australia.

CCW

CCW is an acronym for Crisis Care Worker. The use of this term is specific to South Australia.

Charged

Charged is a word that appears on police and court records within a person's child welfare records. many child welfare records. Under past child welfare legislation, for a child to be placed in 'care', he or she had to be brought before a court and 'charged' – for example, charged with being destitute or neglected. In this context, the word 'charged' does not mean that the child had committed an offence. As one woman said in her submission to the 2004 Senate inquiry, 'As if a child can neglect itself and was a criminal, even today I feel that I have to declare that I have been charged when documents ask for criminal records'. ('Forgotten Australians' report, 2004. Sub 352, p.71.)

Children could also be charged with being 'uncontrollable' or 'incorrigible' under the laws, and some laws made it possible for parents to take a child to court and be charged. The language used in the legislation changed over time, but children were still prosecuted in children's courts with the 'offence' of being 'in need of care and protection' in the 1950s.

Child in need of care and protection

Child (or young person) 'in need of care and protection' was a term introduced into legislation from around the 1950s to describe a child or young person admitted to the 'care' of the state. Formerly, the language used was 'neglected child'. Other common terms were child or young person 'in need of care', 'at risk' or 'in need of protection'.

Child at Risk

The term 'child at risk' began to be used in state and territory child welfare laws around the 1980s and 1990s. Another term that was common at this time was 'child in need of protection'. Formerly, children were said to be 'neglected', or 'in need of care and protection'.

Chn

Chn is an abbreviation of children.

CI

CI is an abbreviation of criminal injuries.

CIRC

CIRC is an abbreviation of Children in Residential Care. The use of this term is specific to South Australia.

CIS

CIS stands for Client Information System, a computerised information system introduced in South Australia in 1991 to collect, record, sort and store information related to children in out-of-home care. CIS includes information about juvenile justice, child protection, financial services, foster care and file movement information.

CLU

This is an abbreviation of Court Liaison Unit. The use of this term is specific to South Australia.

CM

CM is an abbreviation of Child Migrant.

CM 18+

CM 18+ (or C.M. 18+) is an acronym on some Tasmanian records. It stands for 'child migrant over the age of 18'. When a child migrant reached 18 in Tasmania, this meant that supervision and visits from child welfare officers had ceased. However, the young person could ask for help from the Social Welfare Department if he or she needed it.

Comm.

Comm. is an abbreviation of 'committed to an institution'.

CON

CON is an abbreviation of contact. In South Australian records, CON can sometimes mean 'contact register'.

Convicted Child

The term convicted child was used in legislation to refer to a child charged and found guilty of an offence.

In 2018, the state of Victoria amended the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 to ensure that historical care and protection orders are not treated as criminal convictions or findings of guilt in any circumstances. The Minister Jenny Mikakos made this apology:

I would like to use this opportunity to apologise on behalf of the Victorian Government for the significant personal and intergenerational harm caused by historical welfare recording practices. I would like to expressly acknowledge that these recording practices have had a continued impact on those affected, long after historical policies were remedied. I would also like to expressly acknowledge that Aboriginal children were disproportionately impacted by historical State welfare policies. As a result, Aboriginal children were also disproportionately affected by recording practices of the State.

COP

COP is an abbreviation of 'Court offending, Police'. It is used in South Australia.

Cottage Parents

Cottage parents were married couples employed to manage a [cottage home](#) and care for the children placed there. They could be referred to as a cottage mother or cottage father.

CP

Child protection is often abbreviated on child welfare records as 'CP'. The term 'child protection' began to be used in Australia from around the 1960s.

CPS

CPS is an abbreviation used in South Australia, for Child Protection Services.

C/R

C/R (or CR) is an abbreviation found on some records from South Australia. C/R was used on files to stand for a few different things. It can mean 'circumstance report', 'court report' or 'contact register'.

CRACAS

CRACAS is a term sometimes found on child welfare records from South Australia. It is an abbreviation of the Crisis Response and Child Abuse Service, a 24 hour call centre operated by Family and Youth Services.

CSA

CSA is an abbreviation of 'child sexual assault' or 'child sexual abuse'.

CSO

CSO is an abbreviation of Community Service Order. It is used in South Australia.

Custodial Parent [child migrant]

Custodial Parent [child migrant] is a term that appears on some child welfare records. It describes the person (or the institution) who had the day-to-day control over a child who came to Australia as an unaccompanied child migrant after World War Two.

CWD

CWD is an acronym for Child Welfare Department. The CWD existed in [New South Wales](#) from 1923 to 1973. [Victoria](#) also had a department known as the CWD, from 1924 to 1960, as did [Western Australia](#) (from 1927 to 1972).

CWO

CWO is an acronym for child welfare officer. In Tasmania, child welfare officers were employed from the 1960s to supervise children in placements, assess the suitability of adoptive parents, report to the Children's Court and other duties. In the 1970s, child welfare officers emphasised working with families to prevent children from becoming state wards.

CYFS

CYFS is a term sometimes found on child welfare records. It is an abbreviation of [Children Youth and Family Services](#), South Australia, 2004 to 2006.

[Back to top](#)

D

DA

DA is an acronym for drug abuse.

DC

DC is an acronym for District Centre. The use of this term is specific to South Australia.

DD

D.D is an acronym for Deputy Director (of the Department).

Decl.

Decl. is an abbreviation on Tasmanian records. It stands for 'declared a ward of the state'.

Decl. Comm.

Decl. Comm. is an abbreviation on Tasmanian records. It stands for 'declared a ward and committed to an institution'.

Delinquent

The term [delinquent](#) was used to describe a child or young person whose behaviour was likely to lead them to be convicted of an offence.

Dependent Children

Dependent children was a term the New South Wales department used to describe state wards. Sometimes it was abbreviated as DC.

Depot

A [depot](#) (or receiving depot) was a type of institution for children. In the nineteenth century and twentieth century, a receiving depot was an institution for the temporary admission of children, from which they would be admitted into 'care' (for example, into foster care, or admitted to a children's Home). Depots also provided short-term accommodation between placements. From the mid-twentieth century, these institutions were known as reception centres.

Deserted Child

Deserted child is a term that appears on some records from Western Australia. Under the [Adoption of Children Act](#) 1896 (s.2), a deserted child was someone who, according to the opinion of a judge, no longer legally had parents or a guardian that maintained or cared for them.

Destitute Child

Destitute child is a term that appears on some child welfare records. It basically means a child with no means of financial support. Being declared as a destitute child was one reason for placing a child in an institution. A destitute child was defined in different ways in different child welfare legislation.

Discharge

Discharge was a term used to describe the official process of leaving an institution or the care of the State.

Disch. (A)

Disch (A) is an abbreviation of 'discharge by age', sometimes found on records from Tasmania. It means that a state ward had been discharged from the Department, as required by the [Child Welfare Act 1960](#), Section 45 (1), because he or she had reached the age of 18.

Disch. (Adopted)

Discharged (adopted) meant that a state ward was discharged from the care of the state because he or she had been adopted.

Disch. (M.A.)

Disch. (M.A.) is an abbreviation of 'Discharged by Minister's authority', sometimes found on records from Tasmania. It means that a state ward had been discharged from the care of the state before reaching the age of 18 as provided for in Section 45 (a) of the [Child Welfare Act 1960](#).

DOB

DOB is an abbreviation of 'date of birth'.

DS Emp.

DS Emp. is an abbreviation of 'day service employment'. In Tasmania, day service employment was when a state ward lived in a Departmental institution but was employed outside it and paying board to the government.

DSS

DSS is an acronym for the Department of Social Security.

DV

DV is an acronym for domestic violence.

[Back to top](#)

E**EDC**

EDC is a term that is sometimes found on child welfare records. It is an abbreviation of estimated date of confinement. Confinement in this context is an old fashioned term used to describe the time around child birth.

EDD

EDD is a term that is sometimes found on child welfare records. It is an abbreviation of estimated date of delivery'. Delivery in this context is referring to the birth of a child.

EFA

EFA is a term commonly found on departmental records from South Australia. It stands for Emergency Financial Assistance, payments made by a government department or agency to a family experiencing hardship. Sometimes, EFA can also be an abbreviation for Extra Familial Abuse.

EMD

EMD is an acronym for 'exposed to moral danger' that appears on the records of children taken into care or the juvenile justice system. It was a category of being 'neglected', and was considered reason enough to have a child charged and committed to a state institution, industrial school or reformatory. Sometimes it was recorded as [IMD \(in moral danger\)](#).

Emp.

Emp. stands for 'employment'. In records from Tasmania, this refers to a state ward living in a private home and able to support him or herself but needing supervision.

Emp. (T.A/C)

Emp. (T.A/C) stands for 'employed ward trust account'. In records from Tasmania, this refers to a state ward with a job who had a portion of their earnings paid into a trust account managed by the Department. The term was not used if a foster parent or the ward managed the account.

Exemption Certificate

Exemption certificates were created in 1943 in New South Wales by the [Aborigines Welfare Board](#) under the [Aborigines Protection \(Amendment\) Act 1943](#). They allowed Aboriginal people to argue that they should no longer be constrained by the provisions of the Aborigines Protection Act and to access social security benefits that other Australians received, including family and old age pensions. Many Aboriginal people considered this system, and the need to show the documents regularly to police, insulted their dignity so referred to the certificates as 'dog tags'. Exemption certificates were not needed after the 1967 Referendum established that Aboriginal people had full civil rights and they were abolished by the Aborigines Act 1969.

Ext. G.

Ext. G. stands for 'extended guardianship'. In records from Tasmania, this means that the Minister had, under section 45 (3) of the [Child Welfare Act 1960](#), extended a state ward's period of guardianship beyond the age of 18 because they had no parents or legal guardian.

Extra Familial Abuse

Extra Familial Abuse, often abbreviated on records as "EXF", refers to abuse of a child taking place outside of the family. Reports or suspicions of extra familial abuse could be grounds for a notification being made to the child protection authorities.

[Back to top](#)

F

F. stands for 'friends' on some state ward files from Tasmania. This would be recorded on a file when the child was placed with parents, relatives or friends. In this situation, the government did not give any financial assistance.

Fa

Fa is an abbreviation of father.

FACS

FACS is a term found on child welfare records. It is an acronym for [Family and Community Services](#), the Department responsible for child protection and out of home care in South Australia from 1990 to 1998. NSW also had a [Department for Family and Community Services](#) known as FACS (1990-1998).

Fallen Women

Fallen women were regarded as being promiscuous or women who were [unmarried mothers](#).

FAM

FAM can be an abbreviation of Family Court (of Australia).

FAYS

FAYS is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for [Family and Youth Services](#), which was part of the Department of Human Services in South Australia from 1998 to 2004.

FC

FC is an acronym for Family Counselling.

FCM

FCM is an acronym for family care meeting, a term found on some records from South Australia (family care meetings were held for children deemed to be at risk under the *Children's Protection Act 1993*). Sometimes FCM

can stand for family counselling meeting.

Feeble-minded

Feeble-minded was a term used in the twentieth century to describe someone diagnosed (correctly or incorrectly) as having an intellectual disability. It was said to be the highest end of functioning for those with a '[mental deficiency](#)'. Another term used in the past was 'high grade mental defective'. This [blog post by Frank Golding](#) is about the many offensive terms used to describe children in their child welfare files.

FGH

FGH is an acronym for [Family Group Home](#), a model of care that grew in popularity from the 1940s onwards, as an alternative to large institutions.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork is a social welfare term for working with families.

First Class Girl or Boy

First Class Boy or First Class Girl are terms sometimes found on records from South Australia. In both government and non-government reformatories, children were divided into classes depending on their behaviour. The better-behaved children were 'first class' and received more privileges than second and third class children. First class boys and girls also were placed in the better dormitory accommodation within the reformatory.

FLC

FLC is an acronym for Family Law Court (or the Family Court of Australia).

FOI

FOI is an acronym for Freedom of Information. Access to child welfare records is often provided – and restricted – under the provisions of freedom of information laws.

FP

FP is an acronym that appears on some child welfare records. Depending on the context, FP can stand for foster parent or financial planning.

FRN

FRN is an abbreviation that appears on some child welfare records. It stands for Friend/Neighbour.

FS

FS is an acronym for Financial Support.

[Back to top](#)

G

GBH

GBH is an abbreviation found on child welfare records. It stands for Glandore Boys' Home.

GCH

GCH is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for Glandore Children's Home.

GG

GG (or G.G.) is a term found on child welfare records in South Australia. It indicates either that the child was observed by the Department as doing well, or that the child's situation with his or her foster parents was good.

GOM

GOM is an acronym for Guardianship of the Minister. This term is found on some South Australian records. It indicates that a guardianship order has been made, placing a child under the guardianship of the responsible Minister (for example, the Minister for Family and Community Services).

GPAU

GPAU is a term sometimes found on welfare records. It is an abbreviation for the Gilles Plains Assessment Unit.

Guardian [Child Migrant]

Guardian [Child Migrant] was a term used in law to describe the person responsible for the well-being of a child who came to Australia as an unaccompanied child migrant after World War II. Under the Commonwealth Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946, the guardian of a child migrant was the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration, who delegated the role to the welfare authorities in the state where the child was placed.

[Back to top](#)

H

Habitual Truant

Habitual truant was a term to describe a child who was often absent from school. Being a habitual truant was a way a child could come under the notice of the police, or the child welfare authorities, and be placed into institutional care.

HD

HD (or H.D.) is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for Home Detention. Home detention is an alternative to custodial sentences under correctional services legislation.

HH

HH (or H.H.) is a term found on child welfare records. It stands for His Honour (or Her Honour), to refer to a magistrate or a judge.

Hol.

Hol. is an abbreviation of holiday. It was used on departmental records to indicate that a state ward had left their foster home or institution for a brief period of time. Their status and payments for board did not change when they were on 'holiday'.

Homefinder

Homefinder is a term found on some records from New South Wales. A homefinder was a person who worked to find places for children who needed foster parents or apprenticeships. The term was borrowed from American charities.

Hosp.

Hosp. is an abbreviation of hospital. It was used on departmental records to indicate that a state ward had been hospitalised.

HV

HV (or H.V.) is a term found on child welfare records. It stands for home visit (for example, when a social worker visited a family or a foster care placement).

[Back to top](#)

I

I.A.H.B

I.A.H.B is an acronym for Inmate of Ashley Home for Boys.

Int. Ord.

Int. Ord. is an abbreviation of Interim Order, a measure of delaying a child being committed to 'care' introduced by the Tasmanian Child Welfare Act 1960.

Illegitimate Child

An illegitimate child is a term used to describe a child born out of wedlock, that is, a child whose parents were not

married.

ILP

ILP is an acronym of Infant Life Protection. On records, ILP indicates that a child (or infant) came into 'care' under the provisions of an Infant Life Protection Act.

IMD

In Moral Danger (or IMD) was a term in common use in government departments and welfare agencies. Sometimes it was recorded as EMD (exposed to moral danger). A child being declared as in moral danger was one category through which they could be placed in 'care' under the various state child welfare laws. 'Moral danger' was largely used for the committal of girls, although it did apply to some boys.

Inmate

Inmate was a word used to describe a child living in an institution. The term inmate wasn't limited only to institutions like reformatories or industrial schools. In records from Tasmania, it was often abbreviated to "I", together with the name of the Home where the child lived, eg I/Weeroona meant a resident of the Weeroona Girls' Training Centre.

In Need of Care

In Need of Care (sometimes abbreviated on records as INC or INOC) is a phrase that was used to describe children who were deemed to be lacking sufficient care in their family home environment, and thus could be placed in 'care'. A child could also be described as being 'in need of care and protection'. This phrase entered child welfare legislation from around the 1950s onwards. Previously, children might have been classified as being neglected, destitute, uncontrollable or incorrigible. (Sometimes on child welfare records from South Australia, the acronym INC can also stand for Intensive Neighbourhood Care.)

In Need of Care and Protection

In Need of Care and Protection is a phrase used in various child welfare and child protection acts to describe a situation when a child could be taken into 'care' because they were at risk or not being sufficiently cared for at home.

Incorrigible

Incorrigible – which means disobedient, and unable to be reformed – was a word that appeared in child welfare laws from the nineteenth century. Being declared as incorrigible (or uncontrollable) in a court could lead to a child being taken into 'care'. For example, under the South Australian State Children Act 1895, a parent could bring a child before justices 'as an uncontrollable or incorrigible child to the intent that such child may be sent to an institution, or otherwise dealt with pursuant to this Act'.

IR

IR is an acronym for Inspector's Report.

IRH

IRH was an acronym for 'inmate living in a receiving home', which can appear on records from Tasmania.

IRH (Emp.)

IRH (Emp.) is an acronym which can appear on records from Tasmania. It stands for inmate living in a receiving home (employed), that is, a state ward with employment living in a receiving home and paying board to the receiving home keeper.

IURC

Inner urban regional centre (or IURC) is a term that can be found on some Victorian state ward records. It refers to one of the administrative regional offices set up in the 1970s to look after children's welfare in the area. On a file, IURC might indicate that it was once the location of the file.

[Back to top](#)

J

JIS

JIS is a term found on child welfare records from South Australia. It stands for Justice Information System, the computer system that supports justice and welfare administration in South Australia. JIS can be used to refer to files created by this system, or JISP can refer to the Justice Information System (Program).

JPET

JPET is a term found on child welfare records. It stands for Job Placement, Employment and Training – JPET programs are designed to assist young people to work and study.

Juvenile Delinquency

Juvenile delinquency was a term used in the past to describe the potentially illegal behaviour of young people. Delinquency was regarded as likely to lead to conviction for a criminal offence.

K

K/A

K/A is an abbreviation of 'known as'.

KCBH

KCBH is a term found on child welfare records. It stands for Kate Cocks Babies' Home.

KFT

KFT is a term found on child welfare records. It stands for Keeping Families Together, a program run by the South Australian Department for Family and Community Services.

[Back to top](#)

L

LAC

LAC stands for Looking After Children, an approach to out-of-home care introduced in Victoria in around 2002. The LAC framework was originally developed in the United Kingdom. It is based around the creation of Assessment and Action Records which focus on the child's development across 7 life areas..

lbs

lbs is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'pounds', as in the imperial unit of measurement for weight of babies and children.

LFM

LFM is a term that appears on child welfare records from South Australia. LFM stands for 'Licensed Foster Mother'. The licensing of foster mothers was a requirement of the State Children Act 1895, and subsequent legislation.

Life Story Book

A Life Story Book (sometimes referred to as LSB in child welfare records) is a record created for children and young people in out-of-home care. Life Story Books are a way of recording a child's development and history, and are used in 'life story work', to help with a sense of connection and identity.

Likely to Lapse

Likely to lapse is a phrase that appears on some child welfare records. It is a shorthand term for one of the definitions of a neglected child, which was 'likely to lapse into a career or vice or crime.' For example, in the Victorian Children's Welfare Act 1933 one of the categories of a 'neglected child' was a child living under conditions in which they were 'likely to lapse into a life of vice or crime.'

LOP

LOP is a term that appears on some child welfare records. It stands for 'loss of privileges', one method for

disciplining children and young people in institutions.

LTU

LTU is a term that appears on some child welfare records from South Australia. It stands for 'Left the Unit'.

Luth

Luth is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'Lutheran'. Records often contain details about the religion of a child's family.

LWP

LWP is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'left without permission'.

[Back to top](#)

M

M.

M. is a term that appears on Tasmanian child welfare records. It stands for 'Missing'.

Maintenance

Maintenance is a term that appears on child welfare records. It means providing financial support for a child. The state often obtained maintenance orders against the parent of a child in an institution to make the parent contribute to the cost of the child's upkeep.

Maladjusted

Maladjusted was a term used in the mid to late twentieth century to describe a child who had behavioural and emotional problems.

Mandate

A mandate was a legal document committing children to the care of a reformatory or industrial school.

McB

McB is an abbreviation of McBride Maternity Hospital, which was run by the Salvation Army in South Australia.

MDO

MDO is a term that appears on some child welfare records from South Australia. It stands for 'Marion District Office', that is, the government departmental offices located in the suburb of Marion.

MED

MED is a term that appears on some child welfare records, to indicate medical and/or health issues.

Mental defective

Mental defective was a term used in the twentieth century to describe someone diagnosed (correctly or incorrectly) as having an intellectual disability. Mental deficiency was conceptualised as having different grades. In the language used, 'idiocy' was at one end and 'feeble-mindedness' was the highest level of functioning (this was also referred to as 'high-grade mental deficiency').

It should not be assumed that children in institutions who were labelled 'mentally deficient' were necessarily intellectually or otherwise disabled. Some 'mental defectives' were noted to be 'high grade', or of normal intelligence, but behaved in ways authorities could not accept. People could be classified as 'mentally deficient' because of criminal behaviour and even unconventional sexual behaviour, such as sex before marriage (such people were sometimes said to be 'moral defectives'). Children could be diagnosed as mentally defective due to challenging behaviour or 'delinquency'. Inadequately-managed physical disabilities such as deafness, educational disadvantage, an institutional upbringing, and poverty, neglect or abuse could all lead to this diagnosis.

This [blog post by Frank Golding](#) is about the many offensive terms used to describe children in their child welfare files.

Met
Met (also recorded as Meth) is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for Methodist. Records often contain details about the religion of a child's family.

M. Hosp.
M. Hosp. is an abbreviation that appears on some records from Tasmania. It indicates that a state ward had been sent to a psychiatric hospital (or mental hospital as they were formally known).

MO
MO is a term that appears on child welfare and adoption records. It stands for 'mother'.

Moral Defective
Moral Defective was a term used in the twentieth century to describe people who were diagnosed (correctly or incorrectly) with intellectual disabilities. Mental deficiency was conceptualised as having different grades. Moral defectives were described in 1929 as 'persons in whose case there exists mental defectiveness coupled with vicious or criminal propensities or habitual delinquency, and who require care, supervision and control for their own protection or the protection of others' (West Australia Hansard, 17 September 1929, p.742). Single mothers were sometimes labelled as moral defectives.

This [blog post by Frank Golding](#) is about the many offensive terms used to describe children in their child welfare files.

MP
MP is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'missing person'.

MPR
MPR is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'Missing Person's Report'.

MTC
MTC is an acronym found on child welfare records that stands for Magill Training Centre.

[Back to top](#)

N
N/A
N/A is a term found on child welfare records. It can either stand for 'not available' or 'no answer'.

NAB
NAB is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'no abnormalities detected'.

Nat Aust
Nat Aust is a term that appears on some child welfare records. It stands for 'Naturalised Australian'. Naturalisation was a process similar to modern-day citizenship. People born outside of Australia could undergo 'naturalisation' to renounce their allegiance to the country where they were born and gain the same rights as 'natural-born' Australians.

Near Relative
Near relative was a term defined by section 4 of the State Children Act 1907 in Western Australia, to describe close relatives, who could be asked to maintain a child. Near relatives were defined differently for children born in wedlock and those who were 'illegitimate'.

Neglected Child

Neglected child was a term that was used in nineteenth century child welfare legislation. Being declared a neglected child was a common way that children came into 'care' and were placed in institutions or foster care. The definition of neglected child changed over time; it could refer to a child who had been abandoned or was found begging, wandering about, sleeping outdoors or residing in a brothel. The definition also included children whom parents were 'unable to control'.

NESRC

NESRC is an acronym that can be found on some Victorian state ward records. It stands for North Eastern Suburbs Regional Centre, one of the administrative regional offices set up in the 1970s to look after children's welfare in the area. On a file, NESRC might refer to the location of a child's file.

N.F.A

N.F.A. is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'no further action'.

NFPA

NFPA is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'no fixed place of abode', which could be grounds for a child being declared neglected under various child welfare acts.

NHSA

NHSA is a term found on some child welfare records from South Australia. It stands for National Health Services Association.

NIDH

NIDH is an abbreviation that appears on some records from South Australia. It stands for Northfield Infectious Diseases Hospital (1932 to 1948). It was sometimes abbreviated as Northfield ID Hosp.

No.

No. is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'Notifier'.

NOC

NOC is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'Notifier Only Concern'.

NOW

NOW is a term that can be found on some Victorian state ward records. It stands for Northwest One Stop Welfare Centre, one of the administrative regional offices set up in the 1970s to look after a range of community services, including child welfare. On a file, NOW might refer to the location of a child's file.

NPSN

NPSN is an acronym found on some state ward records. It stands for 'not provided with sufficient nursing'. On a file, NPSN reflects the assessment, made by a welfare worker, that the physical needs of a child or infant were not properly provided for.

NR

NR is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'notification refusal'.

NSA

NSA (sometimes referred to as NST) is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'Newstart Allowance', a form of unemployment benefits.

NVMS

NVMS is an abbreviation found on some state ward records. It stands for 'no visible means of support'. Being declared as having 'no visible means of support' (or no visible means of subsistence) was a definition of 'neglect' in child welfare legislation.

[Back to top](#)

O

ODR

ODR is an abbreviation that appears on some child welfare records from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It stands for 'outdoor relief'. Outdoor relief was a system, originating in Britain, of charities providing funds or food to people living in poverty that did not require them to go into an institution (which was known as 'indoor relief').

OI

OI is a term that appears on some child welfare records. It stands for 'office interview'.

OP

OP is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'other person'.

OR

OR is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'other resident'.

Out-of-Home Care

Out-of-Home Care (or OOHC) refers to any form of care which is away from the family home. It includes, but is not restricted to, residential care, foster care and kinship care.

oz.

oz. is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'ounces', as in the imperial unit of measurement for weight of babies and children.

[Back to top](#)

P

PAR

PAR is an abbreviation that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'parent'.

P. Bridge

P. Bridge is an abbreviation that appears on some Victorian child welfare records. It stands for Princes Bridge, the site of colonial Melbourne's earliest institutions including the Immigrants' Home.

PC

PC is an abbreviation that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'phone call'. This term was also abbreviated as P/C or PHC.

PD

PD (or P.D.) is an abbreviation found on child welfare records from Tasmania. It stands for Provisional Discharge, meaning that Departmental officials were planning to discharge a ward from care but required a trial period first, during which the Director retained guardianship.

PG

PG is an abbreviation that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'Parent/Guardian'.

PINOC

PINOC is an abbreviation of 'person in need of care'.

Placement

The term placement is used to refer to the act of placing a child with a care provider. A placement can be in an institution or into foster care.

PMED

PMED is a term found on child welfare records from Victoria from the period 1978 to 1989. It stands for 'physical mental and emotional development in jeopardy' – which comes from a clause in the Community Welfare Services Act 1978.

POI

POI (which stands for 'protection of infants') is an acronym which appears on some files kept by Victorian children's homes and government departments.

PP

PP is an abbreviation that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'Police Prosecutor'.

Prev. Sup.

Prev. Sup. is an abbreviation found on some child welfare records from Tasmania. It stands for preventive supervision, meaning that a child welfare officer supervised a child either by request of the parents or because it seemed that an unofficial interest in the child would be helpful.

Private child

Private child was a term that was used in Western Australia for a child or young person who was in out-of-home care, but whose board was not subsidised by the State Government of Western Australia.

Private placement

The term 'private placement' was used to describe children who were in 'care' but had not been made a ward of the state under state child welfare legislation. A child in such a situation was sometimes referred to as a voluntary ward. Such children were often placed in Homes by their parents during times of hardship or crisis, and often only for short-term stays.

Probation

The term probation refers historically to children or young people who were committed by the Children's Court to a period of supervision by the Department. There were various periods of supervision, with discretion being given to the Court and/or to the Department as to what was an appropriate period for this probation to last. It was possible for a child to be placed on probation with parents or other relatives.

PROG

PROG is an abbreviation that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'Programs'.

PSYC

PSYC is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'psychological appointment' or 'psychiatric appointment'.

Putative Father

A putative father was the man who was regarded as the father of a child. This term was used in the past mostly when referring to the father of a child born 'out of wedlock'. Sometimes on records, it was abbreviated as "P/F".

[Back to top](#)

Q**QEH**

QEH, or Q.E.H., is an abbreviation for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in South Australia. It is also sometimes abbreviated on records as TQEH.

QVH

QVH is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for Queen Victoria Hospital in South Australia.

QVMH

QVMH is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital in Tasmania.

R**R/.**

R/., or 'Returned', is a term that appears on some child welfare records from Tasmania. It indicated that a state ward had been transferred from a placement after being temporarily absent.

RAH

RAH is a term that sometimes appears on welfare records. It is an abbreviation for the Royal Adelaide Hospital in South Australia.

RC

RC stands for Roman Catholic. Records often contain details about the religion of a child's family.

RDO

The term 'returned per directors orders', or RDO, can be found on some state ward records from Victoria. It refers to the way welfare workers were able to return a ward on home release to care without having to go through the courts.

Re-Alloc.

Re-Alloc. is a term that appears on child welfare records from Tasmania. It stands for reallocation of wages, meaning that, following a pay increase, a different portion of a state ward's wages had been allocated to a trust account.

REL

REL is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'relationships'.

REM

REM is a term that appears on child welfare and juvenile justice records. It stands for 'remand'.

RFO

RFO is a term found on child welfare records from Tasmania. It stands for Remanded for observation. Under the Child Welfare Act 1960 section 24 (1), when a child was found guilty of an offence, the child could be placed in the custody of the Department for up to 3 months so that further information could be obtained. The court then made a final decision about his or her placement.

RINC

RINC is a term on some records from South Australia. It stands for Remand Intensive Neighbourhood Care, a short term foster care program for young offenders.

R.Park

R. Park was used on some child welfare records from Victoria. It stands for Royal Park Depot (later known as Turana) which was the reception centre for children committed to State care from about 1880 to 1961.

RTU

RTU is a term that appears on child welfare records from South Australia. It stands for 'Returned to Unit'.

[Back to top](#)

S**SAAP**

SAAP is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'Supported Accommodation Assistance Program', a housing program funded by the Commonwealth government and delivered by the States.

SADS

SADS is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for South Australian Dental Service.

SAHT

SAHT is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for South Australian Housing Trust, a statutory authority that provided low-cost rental housing.

SAPOL

SAPOL is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for South Australian Police.

SAU

SAU is a term that appears on child welfare records from South Australia. It stands for 'Sturt Assessment Unit' or 'Sturt Assessment Centre'.

SBR

SBR is a term that appears on child welfare records and juvenile justice. It stands for 'Social Background Report', a pre-sentence report commonly used in the Youth Court in South Australia.

SCIS

SCIS is a term found on some Victorian state ward records. It stands for Statutory Client Information System.

SCD File

SCD File is an abbreviation found on South Australian child welfare records. It stands for State Children's Department File.

SDA

SDA (or S.D.A.) is an acronym that was used on some child welfare records. It stands for Seventh Day Adventist. The Department often recorded details about the religion of a child's family.

SE

SE is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'secure care'. This term was used in South Australian records to describe the accommodation of children and young people in reformatories and training centres. .

SEACC

SEACC is a term that appears on child welfare records from South Australia. It stands for South East Aboriginal Child Care.

S. Emp

S. Emp stands for Service Employer, a term found on child welfare records from Tasmania. Service Employer referred to the situation of a state ward living with his or her employer and receiving guidance and supervision from a Child Welfare Officer.

S.Emp (T.A/C.)

S. Emp (T.A/C.) stands for Service Employment (trust account), a term found on child welfare records from Tasmania. Service employment (trust account) referred to a state ward whose employer paid pocket money and deposited the rest of the wages in a trust account on his or her behalf. Withdrawals for clothing, dentistry, and holidays could be made.

Service Children

Service children is a term that appears on records from Western Australia. The Department described young people under the guardianship of the Department, but placed in employment under a service agreement. This was also sometimes referred to as 'placed out to service'.

SIG. O

SIG. O is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'significant other'.

SIL

SIL stands for Supported Independent Living, which means providing accommodation and support for young people who are moving out of 'care' into independent living.

SM

SM is an abbreviation for single mother. In Tasmania, records sometimes refer to SM receiving outdoor relief, meaning a single mother receiving a small payment from the Social Welfare Department to enable her to support her child. This predated the introduction of the supporting mothers' benefit by the Whitlam government in 1973.

SOD

SOD is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'Supervisor On Duty'.

SOL

SOL is an abbreviation that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'Solicitor'.

SP

SP is a term that appears on child welfare records from South Australia. It stands for Senior Practitioner.

Special Field Squad

The Special Field Squad was part of the Child Welfare Department in New South Wales from 1950 until 1983. These officers, often working with police, inspected children who were selling items on the street, performing or engaging in other public work. These officers also inspected fun parlours, transport hubs, picture shows, parks and dance halls seeking children they considered were inadequately supervised by their parents.

SPO

SPO is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'Senior Probation Officer'.

SPY

SPY is a term that appears on child welfare records from South Australia. It stands for 'Special Programs for Youth', a government-run program for working with young people.

SR

SR is a term that appears on child welfare records from South Australia. It stands for 'special referral' or 'specialist referral'.

SSO

SSO is a term that appears on child welfare records from South Australia. It stands for School Support Officer.

SSP

SSP is a term found on child welfare records from New South Wales. It stands for Schools for Special Purposes. These were public schools for children with special needs that were set up by the NSW Department of Education. They operated within a number of state child welfare institutions.

State Child

State Child was a term used from the nineteenth century to refer to children committed to the 'care' of the state. It was commonly used in South Australia, as well as in Western Australia. In WA, a State Child was also known as a Government Child. Another term was 'child of the state' (this was commonly used in Tasmania, for example).

State Ward

State Ward, or ward of the state, were terms used to describe a child under the guardianship of a state government child welfare authority.

Statutory Client

Statutory Client is the term used in New South Wales since 1998 to describe a child or young person under the guardianship of the Minister for Community Services.

Sup.

Sup. is a term that appears on child welfare records from Tasmania. It stands for 'Legal Supervision'. It was introduced by the Child Welfare Act 1960.

Supply Authority

A supply authority is a document issued by the New South Wales Adoption Information Unit to people who are seeking adoption information. Supply authorities contain identifying details of all the parties at the time of the adoption: the adopted person, the birth parents and adoptive parents.

Surrender

Surrender is a term found on child welfare and adoption records which indicates a parent or guardian having agreed to place their child in 'care'. While some parents and guardians did voluntarily place their children in care, it is important to understand that government and church agencies could put considerable pressure on families. Social and financial supports for families were limited and parents and guardians who surrendered their children often had very little choice.

SW

SW is an abbreviation that appears on child welfare records. It was used to stand for 'Social Worker', and also for 'State Ward'.

SWIC

SWIC is an acronym of State Ward Index Cards. These are records from South Australian departments. They were small cards created when a child entered the department's jurisdiction. Some cards contain comprehensive details while others may contain nothing more than the child's name and the date they were placed in care.

SWO

SWO is an abbreviation that appears on child welfare records from South Australia. It stands for 'Senior Welfare Officer'.

[Back to top](#)

T

TAFE

TAFE is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'Technical and Further Education', a form of education for young people and adults that is primarily vocational.

TB

TB is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'tuberculosis' (which was also sometimes known as consumption).

TC

TC is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'telephone call'.

Temp. Adm.

Temp. Adm. is an abbreviation found on records from Tasmania. It stands for temporary admission, which was when child was in government 'care' for a short time, but did not become a ward of state. For instance, a lost child might be kept overnight until the parents were found.

TH

TH is an abbreviation found on child welfare records. It stands for Torrens House, a Mothercraft Training Centre in Adelaide established in 1938.

Trs/

Trs/ was an abbreviation for transferred, on records from Tasmania. It meant that a state ward had been moved from one placement to another.

Truant

Truant is a term to describe a child who does not go to school. Habitual truants were children who were 'constantly and habitually absent from school'. Truancy was one way that a child could come under the notice of the Police and the child welfare authorities, and be committed to institutions.

[Back to top](#)

U

UAG

UAG is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'Usual Advice Given'.

UB

UB is an abbreviation found on child welfare records. It stands for 'Unemployment Benefits.'

UB-

UB- is a term that was written on hospital forms by social workers and medical staff. It indicated that the mother was unmarried and was placing her baby for adoption (Unmarried, not keeping baby). Frequently this was an assumption made by hospital staff, rather than the stated wish of the mother. According to Farrar (1999), in the 1960s, hospital records began to use the terms UB+ and UB- instead of the term BFA (baby for adoption), so that the mother did not have to hear the word 'adoption'.

UB+

UB+ is a term that was written on hospital charts and records by social workers and medical staff. It indicated that the mother was unmarried and intended to keep her baby (it stood for 'unmarried, keeping baby', as opposed to UB- which meant 'unmarried, not keeping baby').

UCC

UCC is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'unborn child concern', a report that can be made when child protection authorities believe that an unborn child may be at risk.

Uncontrollable

Uncontrollable is a term that appears on child welfare records. From the late nineteenth century, child welfare legislation in Australia contained clauses that children deemed to be 'uncontrollable' could be taken into the custody and control of the State. The laws also referred to 'uncontrolled' children.

[Back to top](#)

V

Voluntary Placement

Voluntary placements was the term used to describe children who were in 'care' but had not been made wards of the state under state child welfare legislation. A child in such a situation was sometimes referred to as a voluntary ward. Such children were often placed in Homes by their parents during times of hardship or crisis, and often only for short-term stays.

W

Ward

Ward (or ward of the state, or state ward) was a term used to describe a child under the guardianship of a state government child welfare authority.

WCH

WCH is a term that appears on child welfare records from South Australia. It stands for Women and Children's

Hospital.

Weak-minded

Weak-minded was a term used in the twentieth century to describe someone diagnosed (correctly or incorrectly) as having an intellectual disability. This [blog post by Frank Golding](#) is about the many offensive terms used to describe children in their child welfare files.

WO

WO is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'welfare officer'.

W.O.

W.O. is an acronym found on records from Tasmania. It stands for 'written off', meaning that the child who had been supervised by child welfare officers but was not a state ward, no longer required supervision.

WOP

WOP is a term that appears on child welfare records. It stands for 'without permission'.

Y

YC

YC is a term that appears on child welfare records from South Australia. It stands for Youth Court.

YP

YP is a term that appears on child welfare records from South Australia. It stands for Youth Program.

YSAAP

The Youth Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (YSAAP) is a Commonwealth-State jointly funded program to help young people without a home make a transition to permanent forms of accommodation.

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/explaining-the-words-on-child-welfare-records/>