Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

Carer fact sheet 2

Providing foster and kinship care

Learning opportunities for carers

Queensland Government

Whether you are an experienced carer or new to the role, everyone can benefit from learning more about being a foster or kinship carer. Ongoing learning can assist you to:

- feel more confident in your role
- access valuable support networks and other carers
- gain the knowledge and skills to help care for children and young people with special or particular needs
- be better prepared to care for children and young people who have experienced trauma and change
- avoid burnout so you can continue caring for yourself and the children and young people in your care.

Whether it is through informal sources, such as fact sheets, or more formal training sessions, there are a variety of learning opportunities available to you as a foster or kinship carer. Some of these include:

- discussing a particular issue with your child safety officer or support worker from your non-government foster and kinship care service
- attending a carer support group (refer to Carer fact sheet 3: *Support for carers)*
- attending a training session by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services or a non-government foster and kinship care service
- attending a relevant training course through another training provider.

You can talk about your learning and development needs at any time with your child safety officer or non-government foster and kinship care service support worker.

Your needs will be recorded in the development and support plan in your Foster Carer Agreement, or Placement Agreement if you are a kinship carer.

If the cost of a course is substantial, funding may be available from the department to help you attend. Your local child safety service centre manager will need to approve any funded external training that you attend.

While all carers have access to the same training opportunities, there are different training requirements for foster carers and kinship carers.

Training for foster carers

To ensure high-quality care is provided to children and young people in foster care, all approved foster carers are required to undertake training.

Quality Care: Foster Care Training is a free training package offered by the department to help you develop the skills and knowledge you will need as a foster carer.

The training package has been designed to enable flexible and self-paced learning, training in small groups and one-on-one sessions.

There are three stages to *Quality Care: Foster Care Training*:

1. Pre-service training

This consists of four modules to be completed before you are approved as a foster carer. The topics include:

Module 1.
Context of foster care.

Module 2.
Understanding the past for a child or young person.

Module 3.
Early days in a placement.

Module 4.
Quality care — working together.

2. Standard training

This next stage of training consists of three modules to be completed within 12 months of your initial approval as a foster carer. The topics include:

Module 5.
Promoting positive behaviours.

If a carer has completed *Transforming Care* training prior to undertaking module 5, the department will recognise this as prior learning and the completion of module 5 will not be required.

Module 6.
Caring for children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse.

Module 7.
Support, advocacy and self-care.

3. Advanced training

Foster carers are required to complete eight hours of advanced training during the two-year period following their initial renewal of approval as a carer, as a requirement for further renewal of approval.

Upon completion of this final stage of training, advanced training is optional. There are a wide variety of advanced modules provided by both the department and non-government foster and kinship care services. Carers may also access external training relevant to the needs of children and young people in their care and approved by their child safety service centre manager.

Training for kinship carers

Training for kinship carers is not mandatory. However, it is highly recommended. Training can provide kinship carers with valuable knowledge and skills to help meet the specific needs of the children or young people placed with them. Some of these skills may include:

- building positive relationships with the child or young person's parents that are sustainable and create a nurturing extended family environment for the child or young person
- understanding the child's or young person's needs and helping them come to terms with feelings of separation, grief and loss that may be associated with entering care
- maintaining self-care — feeling happy and confident in the role of kinship carer and as a member of the family or kinship group.

Kinship carers can participate in *Quality Care: Foster Care Training* offered by the department and non-government foster and kinship care services, or attend external training.

For more information

To find out more information about learning opportunities available to foster and kinship carers:

- call the department's general enquiries on **1800 811 810** or **3224 8045**
- visit **www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety**
- contact your local child safety service centre
- call Foster Care Queensland on **3256 6166**.

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