

# Providing foster and kinship care

## What is an Education Support Plan?



A good education gives children and young people the best possible start in life, which can lead to greater opportunities in adulthood. Children and young people in out-of-home care often have unique educational needs, and meeting these needs requires planning and support.

Under the 'learning or earning' laws outlined in the *Youth Participation in Education and Training Act 2003*, children and young people are required to stay in education or training until they turn 17 years of age, unless they are working full-time.

These laws recognise that for young people to prosper they need to complete 12 years of education and gain qualifications that will provide them with opportunities for training, work or tertiary study.

In Queensland, every child and young person who is in out-of-home-care and subject to a Child Protection Order that grants guardianship or custody to the Chief Executive of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (the Director-General), and is enrolled in a state or non-state school, should have an Education Support Plan.

For more information about the requirements for Child Protection Orders refer to Carer fact sheet 9: *What is a Child Protection Order?*

## What is an Education Support Plan?

An Education Support Plan aims to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for a child or young person in out-of-home care. The plan outlines goals, strategies and the accessibility of services and programs that will help children and young people reach their academic potential.

Education Support Plans focus on three key areas for setting individual student goals. These are:

- 1. Participation** — setting goals to ensure the child or young person is able to access and participate in appropriate education programs.
- 2. Wellbeing** — setting goals to help the child or young person become emotionally, mentally, and physically ready to participate in education. This often involves the use of resources both inside and outside an individual school setting.
- 3. Academic achievement** — setting achievable goals to help the child or young person reach their full academic potential.

Once goals are set for each area, the student, school principal, child safety officer and the carer develop strategies to achieve these goals.

## When is the Education Support Plan developed?

The school principal will finalise an Education Support Plan within one month of a student's enrolment or from being advised that a child or young person is in out-of-home care. The child or young person should be involved in the development of the plan in a way that is appropriate for their age and development.

The Education Support Plan is a working document and is reviewed and updated as the needs of the child or young person change. It must be reviewed at least once a year or when the child or young person changes school.

While it is the school's responsibility to develop an Education Support Plan and arrange the formal meeting, the child or young person's child safety officer is a key partner in the development of the plan.

The child safety officer will sign and retain a copy of the plan and ensure that a copy is:

- provided to the child or young person, if appropriate
- provided to the child or young person's foster or kinship carer
- provided to the child or young person's parents
- placed on the child or young person's departmental file.

As a foster or kinship carer providing day-to-day care for the child or young person, you are often in the best position to provide advice about their education needs and to help them participate in learning opportunities.

Your child safety officer may speak with you prior to meeting with the school, or invite you to attend an education support plan development meeting. It is also very important for you, together with your child safety officer and school staff, to support the child or young person's involvement in developing their Education Support Plan.



## For more information

To find out more information about Education Support Plans:

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