



Director-General's COVID-19 UPDATE

Deidre Mulkerin | Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs

25 February 2022

Dear foster and kinship carers

I wanted to take an opportunity to touch base with you again after my email earlier this month. My plan is to reach out regularly so I can keep you informed of any updates at a department level to compliment the ongoing communication you have with local departmental staff.

If you haven't already received an email from your Child Safety Service Centre Manager, look out for one coming through to you soon. I have asked our local Managers to contact all carers in their area to provide updated information about key personnel, service centre processes, planned local support activities, and a reminder about how to raise any needs or issues you may have.

I have spoken with a number of foster and kinship carers in the past few weeks. While the commitment and care you show always shines through, it concerns me greatly to hear that some carers feel that they are not always being heard. I wanted to take a moment to personally reassure you that this is not the relationship we want to have with you. You are vital in keeping children safe and well. Without you, we could not provide the care and stability that children need to be safe and to flourish.

I acknowledge that being a carer can be enormously rewarding, but it is not always an easy path. When you make the decision to open your homes to care for children who are not safe to remain at home, you are also opening your homes to us and our partners in the non-government sector.

Some of you may have seen information in the media recently about an unofficial/new departmental reunification policy. The reports suggest we intend to reunify children with their biological families, before they turn 16 years old, regardless of the circumstances. I wish to reassure you in the strongest way possible that there is no such policy in place, and there is absolutely no intention of introducing such a policy into our practice. In fact the number of children who are reunited every year to their biological families has remained consistent over the past few years and Queensland's overall practice when compared nationally is middle of the pack – not the highest and not the lowest.

I also want to reassure you that as a department we stand by the [Statement of Commitment](#) we make to you in supporting your role as a valued partner in a child's care team. This means always learning, always listening and always striving to be better partners with you, so you can best care for the children who live with you.

I know we don't always get it right, and sometimes it can be difficult to navigate the system; however, I encourage you to talk to your Child Safety Officer, Senior Team Leader and





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Managers. Remember that there is other support available to you too, when you need it, including your partners in foster care, Queensland Foster and Kinship Care and your local FAST representatives. You can also call the foster and kinship carer support line, at any time, on 1300 729 309.

On behalf of the department, I sincerely appreciate everything you are doing to care for Queensland's most vulnerable children and young people. I offer my heartfelt gratitude for the wonderful care and support you provide each and every day.

Warm regards

Deidre Mulkerin

Director-General

Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs

