

What is a Care Agreement?

A Care Agreement is an agreement between the Department of Child Safety and a parent to place their child or young person in foster or kinship care with an approved carer for a short period of time. The department may ask a parent to consider entering into a Care Agreement when it is not sure that the child or young person will be safe at home and the parent is willing to work with the department to resolve concerns about the child or young person's safety.

Placing the child or young person in out-of-home care is a positive step that can be taken to ensure their safety because:

- it allows time and space for the parents to sort out any problems they have in the home
- the child or young person can temporarily live safely elsewhere while the parents work actively with the department to sort out the concerns for the child or young person.



As a foster carer or kinship carer you may have a child placed with you through a Care Agreement. It is important to be aware of the differences between Care Agreements and Child Protection Orders. The fact sheet *Child Protection Orders* provides more information.

What rights do parents have if they sign a Care Agreement?

Parents who sign a Care Agreement have the right to:

- have a copy of the Care Agreement
- have the name, address and phone number of the person who is caring for their child or young person
- have contact with their child or young person as agreed with the department
- be consulted about particular decisions as agreed with the department
- end the Care Agreement at any time by giving at least two days notice.

Who will care for a child or young person under a Care Agreement?

The child or young person will be placed with a carer who has been approved by the department. The department always prefers to place a child or young person with a family member or other person of significance to the child or young person.

If the department decides to place the child or young person with a family member or other significant person, this person must be assessed by the department to make sure the child or young person will be safe in their care. If there is no family member able to care for the child or young person, the department will arrange a placement with an approved carer.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

If the child or young person is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, the department will talk with a Recognised Entity about the decision to place the child or young person in out-of-home care.

A Recognised Entity is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisation or individual, approved and funded by the Department of Child Safety, to provide cultural and family advice to assist department decision-making. The fact sheet *Recognised Entities* explains the role and responsibilities of Recognised Entities.

When will the Care Agreement end?

In most cases, the Care Agreement will end on the date agreed to by the parents and stated in the Care Agreement. The parents or the department can end the agreement at any time by giving at least two days

notice. As the carer for the child or young person you will be advised as soon as possible if a Care Agreement has ended.

If there is a change to the parent's situation at home or if they want to end the Care Agreement, the department will complete a new safety assessment to decide if it is safe for the child or young person to return home. If the department decides that it is not safe, they may talk to the parents about an extension of the Care Agreement, or apply to the Children's Court for a court order. The parents will be informed by the Child Safety Officer about the department's decisions and actions. The Care Agreement will end if the court grants custody of the child to the department.

The Child Safety Officer will discuss the implications of these decisions with you, for example, you may be asked if you would be willing to provide care for the child or young person for a longer period of time.

Where can I get more information?

For more information about Care Agreements, talk to your Child Safety Officer.

For more information visit www.childsafety.qld.gov.au

Or contact the Department of Child Safety on **1800 811 810** or **3224 8045**.

