



Foster and kinship care

Do you have what it takes?



The challenges

- Managing your own children's feelings about sharing you, their home and their lives.
- Responding to children's behaviours that you may not have previously experienced.
- Being able to say goodbye to children when they leave to return to their families.
- Feeling confident that children will be safe when they leave your care.
- Finding space in your life for yourself when so many demands will be made on your time and energy.
- Being able to persevere when the observable changes may be small or nonexistent.
- Sharing the decision making for the children placed with you.

Experienced carers say the rewards outweigh the challenges and are most often found in the day-to-day moments that they experience through sharing their lives with children.

For more information contact your local child safety service centre or call the foster carer recruitment line on **1300 550 877** or visit www.childsafety.qld.gov.au You can also contact Foster Care Queensland on **(07) 3268 5955**.



Carer qualities and abilities

There are a range of personal qualities and abilities that a good foster or kinship carer brings to the role.

While caring for vulnerable children and young people can be both challenging and rewarding, it is these personal qualities that experienced foster and kinship carers have found invaluable in assisting them to provide quality care to the children placed with them.

Children in need of care come from a variety of backgrounds and bring with them a range of behaviours dependent upon their personal life experiences.

A good carer is:

- tolerant, flexible and non-judgemental
- loving, kind and respectful to children
- open, honest and patient
- understanding and able to persevere.

Children in need of care experience trauma upon being separated from their parents.

A good carer is:

- able to respond to the grief and loss that children experience
- able to set boundaries and house rules so that the children know what is expected of them
- able to help children talk about and maintain connections with their family and other significant people in their lives
- able to support a child's return to the family when it is safe for that to occur.

Children in need of care have a range of needs that will make demands upon your time and energy.

A good carer is:

- able to spend time with the children, without neglecting their own family
- willing to learn about ways to best meet the child's needs
- able to listen, provide hope, support and encouragement to children
- able to work as part of a caring team of people to help the children and their family meet the case plan goals.

Rewards and challenges of foster and kinship care

Becoming a foster or kinship carer is a very important decision that will affect your life and the lives of those around you. Experienced foster and kinship carers recognise the personal rewards that this role brings to them and their families, but also acknowledge the many challenges in caring for the children placed with them.

The rewards

- Helping to keep children and young people safe.
- Helping children and young people to reach their full potential.
- Helping parents to develop new ways of relating to their children.
- Using your skills and life experiences for the benefit of others.
- Enhancing your own parenting skills and knowledge.
- Being a highly valued and contributing member of a caring team.
- Expanding your social and personal contacts.