

Learning opportunities for carers

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

- feel more confident in your role
- access valuable support networks and other carers
- gain knowledge and skills to help care for children and young people with special or particular needs
- feel 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 a fact sheet, or in a more formal training session, there are a variety of learning opportunities available to you as a foster carer or kinship carer. Some of these include:

- discussing a particular issue with your Child Safety Officer or a support worker from your non-government foster and kinship care service
- attending a carer support group, like those detailed in the fact sheet *Support for carers*
- attending a training session run by the Department of Child Safety or 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 a Child Safety Officer or non-government foster and kinship care service support worker. These needs will be recorded in your learning plan in the Foster Carer Agreement, or Placement Agreement if you are a kinship carer.

If the cost of a course is substantial, funding may be available to help you attend. The manager of the Child Safety Service Centre 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. The Quality Care training package is provided free of charge to approved carers.

Training for foster carers

To ensure high-quality care is provided to all children and young people in foster care, all approved foster carers are required to undertake training. 'Quality Care: Foster Care Training' is a training package offered by the department and is designed 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 delivery.

There are three stages to the Quality Care training package:

1. Pre-service training

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

The topics include:

- Context of foster care
- Understanding the past for a child or young person
- Early days in a placement
- Quality care – working together



2. Standard training

This consists of three modules to be completed within 12 months of your initial approval.

The topics include:

- Promoting positive behaviours
- Caring for children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse
- Support, advocacy and self-care

3. Advanced training

Foster carers complete eight hours of advanced training every two years as part of their ongoing learning and development. There are a wide variety of advanced modules provided by 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 the Child Safety Service Centre Manager.

Training for kinship carers

Training for kinship carers is not mandatory. However, it is highly recommended. Training can provide valuable knowledge and skills to help you meet the specific needs of the children or young people placed with you. 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 or young person's needs when they come into your care and helping them come to terms with the separation, grief and loss that may be associated with entering care
- maintaining self-care – being able to feel happy and confident in your role as a carer and a member of the family or kinship group.

You can participate in the Quality Care training package offered by the department and non-government foster and kinship care services or attend external training.

Where can I get more information?

The Department of Child Safety and non-government foster and kinship care services offer training opportunities for all carers. Contact your local Child Safety Service Centre or foster and kinship care service for more information about when and where these are available, or call **1800 811 810**.

You can access the Quality Care training package on www.childsafety.qld.gov.au

