

Do you want to become a foster or kinship carer?

Becoming a foster or kinship carer will bring both personal rewards and challenges in caring for children placed in your home. Experienced foster and kinship carers say the rewards far outweigh the challenges and are most often found in the day-to-day moments through sharing their lives with the children and young people who need their love and support.

The rewards of foster and kinship caring:

- Helping to keep children and young people safe.
- Helping children and young people to reach their full potential.
- Being a highly valued and contributing member of a caring team.

The considerations of foster and kinship caring:

- How will our family adjust to the addition of other members? What changes, compromises or sacrifices will need to be made? Is everyone prepared to make these changes?
- How would we cope if a child or young person placed in our home has difficult or out-of-the-ordinary behaviours?
- Can we cope with a child or a young person returning to the care of their parents when we feel that they may not provide the same standard of care that we have?



Who do I contact to find out more?

For more information on foster and kinship care and becoming a carer, visit:

www.childsafety.qld.gov.au or phone the foster carer recruitment line on **1300 550 877**, for the cost of a local call.

Foster Care Queensland (FCQ) is a non-government organisation, the membership of which is open to all foster carers, relative carers, limited approval carers and supporters. FCQ is committed to informing, supporting, representing and advocating for carers and the children and young people for whom they care. FCQ can be contacted on **(07) 3268 5966** or email: fcq@fcq.com.au

PeakCare is a peak body for community agencies working with carers. If you are interested in knowing if there is a community agency in your local area that works with foster and kinship carers contact **(07) 3368 1050** or email: admin@peakcare.com.au

Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC) is the peak body for Indigenous health services and also supports the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Partnership (QATSICPP) who is the peak body for Recognised Entities. QATSICPP can be contacted on **(07) 3320 1900**.

Become a foster or kinship carer: **1300 550 877**
www.childsafety.qld.gov.au

Foster and kinship carers...make a difference



What is foster and kinship care?

Some children and young people are unable to stay at home because their families may not be able to look after them or because they may be at risk of harm.

The *Child Protection Act 1999* gives the Department of Child Safety the power to protect vulnerable children and young people under 18 years of age by finding safe and caring places for these children to live for short or long periods of time.

We are committed to making sure children in Queensland are placed in a caring and secure family environment until they can be safely returned to their family. Whenever possible, we turn to the extended family to provide care (relative or kinship care). When this isn't possible, we place children with caring individuals or families (foster care).

We also have a commitment to helping maintain ongoing relationships between children and their families during the period of separation. This helps to reduce the trauma experienced by children during this time and assists them to feel secure.

We need your help

Every day more than 3300 foster and kinship carers open their hearts and homes to children and young people who are unable to live with their families because of abuse or neglect.

Our foster and kinship carers are the backbone of Queensland's child protection system. Without their kindness, generosity and dedication, we could not provide safe and caring homes for children most in need of our support.

Unfortunately there are not enough foster and kinship carers to care for our most vulnerable children. We need your help to give foster children and young people the opportunity to heal, live and grow. You can choose to care for babies, young children or teenagers. The choice is yours.

We encourage you to consider becoming a foster or kinship carer, what you could contribute to these children in need of support, and importantly, what the role might contribute to your life.

"The love, support and encouragement that my foster carers gave me enabled me to grow into a successful person." (Maureen, 27 years old, was in care since 3 years old)

Who can be an approved carer?

Being a foster or kinship carer is a very special responsibility. Foster and kinship carers can be an individual, couple or even a team of adults. All sorts of people of different ages, backgrounds and family circumstances are foster and kinship carers.

It is our aim to best match the needs of children in care with appropriate foster carers. Relative or kinship carers play an important role in caring for children who are members of their family or community.

We also require some carers who are able to look after children for short periods of time.

These short-term carers (support carers) are an essential support to foster carers and relative or kinship carers when they need a respite from caring. Support carers provide short-term care either through regular planned visits or in emergency situations. This type of care is ideal for those people who may not be able to provide ongoing day-to-day care for a child.

What training do carers receive?

Training is provided to help carers prepare for their new roles. All carers receive the same initial training. This training outlines what is required of carers and provides information about child development and behaviour management.

As part of the assessment, the prospective carer's family structure, personal history and motivation for becoming a foster or kinship carer are considered.



The ways in which families may cope with some of the pressures and stress associated with fostering are also taken into account. During the assessment, personal history checks such as criminal history checks are made.

After successfully completing training and assessment, potential carers are approved by the Department of Child Safety.

How are carers supported?

Carers receive an allowance, which is a contribution towards the direct costs of looking after children in care. The allowance, which is indexed annually to the Consumer Price Index, covers items such as food, clothing, household provisions, gifts, pocket money and entertainment. The allowance is not considered a 'payment' for fostering and it is not a source of taxable income. It contributes to a reimbursement of the real costs associated with providing care.

An additional allowance is provided for those who care for children and young people with high and complex support needs. Other reimbursements to carers for child related costs are also available from the Department.

Carers can also seek assistance from Foster Care Queensland, a peak organisation that represents foster carers' interests to government policy makers and provides support and advocacy services to foster carers.