

Therapeutic and medical needs for a child in care

Most children and young people who are in out-of-home care have experienced harm or trauma in their life. This will impact on each child and young person differently. The Department of Child Safety is responsible for ensuring that each child or young person receives the help they need from appropriate services.

As a foster carer or kinship carer you will work together with the child or young person, their family, your Child Safety Officer and other people in the child or young person's life to identify their needs and ways of meeting these needs.

Therapeutic needs

Entering out-of-home care can be a frightening and traumatic event for children and young people as they are taken away from their family. It is important to ensure support is available to help them deal with the emotions they experience. This can be done in a variety of ways and should involve your input and support.

As a carer you will quite possibly form the closest relationship with the child or young person. It is important for you to access as much support as possible to help both you and the child or young person in your care. Your Child Safety Officer and non-government foster and kinship care service support worker can help you make contact with other support agencies.

Sometimes a child or young person may display difficult behaviour or emotions that you may feel unable to manage. It is important to remember there is support for both you and the child or young person in this situation. This can include family members, the Department of Child Safety and non-government foster and kinship care services.

What support is available for the child or young person?

Some of the services that can help support a child or young person include:

- sexual assault counselling
- drug and alcohol counselling
- grief and loss counselling
- speech therapy

- play therapy
- occupational therapy
- school support
- specialist medical support
- Youth Services
- family or individual counselling or therapy.

Your Child Safety Officer will oversee the referral of a child or young person and work with you to help them access these services as required in their case plan. For more information see the fact sheet *Case planning*.

Medical needs

It is recognised that children and young people in out-of-home care have poorer health outcomes than other children and young people. They have been identified as having increased mental and developmental health issues, and are less likely to have accessed continuous medical care.

It is important as a foster carer or kinship carer that you are aware of the health and developmental needs of the child or young person in your care. It is also important to work with your Child Safety Officer to make sure that the child or young person has ongoing access to medical care. This includes assessments, regular visits to the doctor and treatment from other health professionals when there are specific health needs.

Where can I get more information?

For more information about therapeutic and medical needs and available support, contact your local Child Safety Service Centre.

For additional information and available support, see the fact sheets *Promoting positive behaviour*, *Decision making for children and young people*, and *Support for carers*.

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

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

