

Education Support Plans

A good education gives children and young people the best possible start in life, leading to greater opportunities in adulthood. Children and young people in out-of-home care often have unique educational needs, and meeting these needs requires planning and support.

New 'learning or earning' laws that came into effect on 1 January 2006, as part of the *Youth Participation in Education and Training Act 2003* mean that young people will have to stay in education or training until they turn 17, unless they are working full-time. These laws recognise that for young people to prosper they need to complete 12 years of education and gain qualifications that will provide them with opportunities for training, work or tertiary study.

In Queensland every child and young person who is subject to a Child Protection Order that grants guardianship or custody to the chief executive officer of the Department of Child Safety, and is enrolled in a state or non-state school, should have an Education Support Plan. See the fact sheet *Child Protection Orders* for information about the requirement for Child Protection Orders.

What is an Education Support Plan?

An Education Support Plan aims to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for a child or young person in out-of-home care. The plan outlines goals, strategies and how to access services and programs that will help children and young people reach their academic potential.

Education Support Plans focus on three key segments for setting individual student goals. These are:

- **Participation** – setting goals to ensure the child or young person is able to access and participate in appropriate education programs
- **Wellbeing** – setting goals to help the child or young person become emotionally, mentally, and physically ready to participate in education. This often involves the use of resources both inside and outside an individual school setting
- **Academic achievement** – setting achievable goals to help the child or young person reach their full academic potential.

Once goals are set for each segment, the Education Support Plan involves the participation of the student and their supporters in developing strategies to achieve these goals. This process encourages a collaborative and creative focus on achieving academic success.

When is the Education Support Plan developed?

The school Principal will finalise an Education Support Plan within one month of a student enrolment or from being advised that a child or young person is in out-of-home care. The child or young person should be involved in the development of the Education Support Plan in a way that is appropriate for their age and development.

The Education Support Plan is a working document and is reviewed and updated as the needs of the child or young person change. It must be reviewed at least once a year and when the child or young person changes school.

What are the responsibilities of the Department of Child Safety?

While it is the school's responsibility to develop the Education Support Plan and arrange the formal meeting, the Child Safety Officer is a key partner in the development of the plan. The Child Safety Officer signs and retains a copy of the Education Support Plan and ensures that a copy is:

- provided to the child or young person, if appropriate
- provided to the child or young person's foster carer or kinship carer
- provided to the child or young person's parents
- placed on the child or young person's Department of Child Safety file.

What is the carer's role in Education Support Plans?

As a foster carer or kinship carer providing day-to-day care for the child or young person, you are often in the best position to provide advice about their education needs and to help them participate in learning opportunities.

Your Child Safety Officer may speak with you prior to meeting with the school, or invite you to attend the plan development meeting.

It is also very important for you, together with your Child Safety Officer and school staff, to support the child or young person's involvement in developing the Education Support Plan.

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

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

