

*while Jessica's parents were undergoing support to enhance their skills to safely care for her. Margaret worked as part of a team with Jessica, her family, the Department and other relevant services to safely return Jessica to her parents when the parents had demonstrated the ability to protect her from neglect.*

### Long-term care

Long-term care gives children up to 18 years of age, a safe and stable home because they cannot return to live with their family.

Long-term carers commit to the ongoing full-time care of a child.

*Example: Paul and Alison are in their early forties and have been unable to have children. They are interested in caring for a sibling group on a long-term basis. The Department places Luke (five years) and Alicia (six years) with them. Luke and Alicia have been in care since they were six months and 18 months of age respectively, due to their mother's long-term mental illness. Paul and Alison facilitate contact between the children and their mother, when it can occur, a couple of times each year.*

### Specialist foster care

Specialist foster carers provide care for children with complex support needs. These carers are provided with additional training and financial support to assist them in their role. Anyone with skills and/or experience in working with children who have complex support needs may like to consider specialist foster care.

*Example: Peter is a 14 year old boy who has a learning disability. He receives intensive support from specialist foster carers Brad and Melissa to meet his health, educational and day-to-day care needs.*

### To find out more

If you would like more information about the different types of care, contact the foster care recruitment line on **1300 550 877** or visit **www.childsafety.qld.gov.au**.

## Foster and kinship care

### Types of care





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. Foster and kinship carers look after children likely to be returned to their family when it is safe to do so as well as children requiring a permanent home elsewhere. 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. Being a foster or kinship carer is a very special responsibility. Foster and kinship carers can be an individual, couples or even a team of adults. All sorts of people of different ages, backgrounds and family circumstances are foster carers.

Foster and kinship care is not a 'one size fits all' role. Every child has unique needs, so requires different types of care. A foster or kinship carer may have special skills or preferences that will affect the type of care they provide.

With this in mind there are a number of roles within foster and kinship care for consideration.

### **Support care**

Support care can help children feel more connected to their community, while also providing a respite for foster and kinship carers.

Being a support carer is an option for people who can provide short-term care but may not be able to provide ongoing, day-to-day care for a child.

Support carers choose when they can provide care, for example, on

weekends or holidays. Some support carers may become full-time foster and kinship carers. The experience of support care can assist with this transition.

*Example: John and Laura are busy professionals who both work full-time and have two children in high school. They decided to become support carers, and now provide regular care on weekends and school holidays for Jack (five years).*

### **Emergency care**

Emergency carers are carers who are available to provide short-term care at short notice for children who need a place to stay on an urgent basis.

Emergency care may be required when a child first comes into care or if they need a home while they transition to longer-term care.

Often, emergency carers are experienced carers who have developed skills in helping children who have experienced abuse and trauma.

Some carers may consider becoming emergency carers once they have some experience of foster care.

*Example: Tyrone (eight years) and Sarah (six years) needed a safe place to stay at very short notice so they were placed with emergency carers Matt and Lisa for three days while the Department arranged a longer-term placement.*

### **Short-term care**

Short-term carers are full-time foster and kinship carers who provide ongoing, day-to-day care for children for up to two years, where the Department is working towards reunifying the child with their family.

Being a short-term carer means actively working with the child and the Department to progress the child's case plan so that the child can be safely returned to their parents and includes the maintenance of regular contact between the child and their family.

*Example: Jessica (four years) came into care because she was neglected and was placed with foster carer Margaret, as she could not safely be left at home. Margaret cared for Jessica full-time for eighteen months*