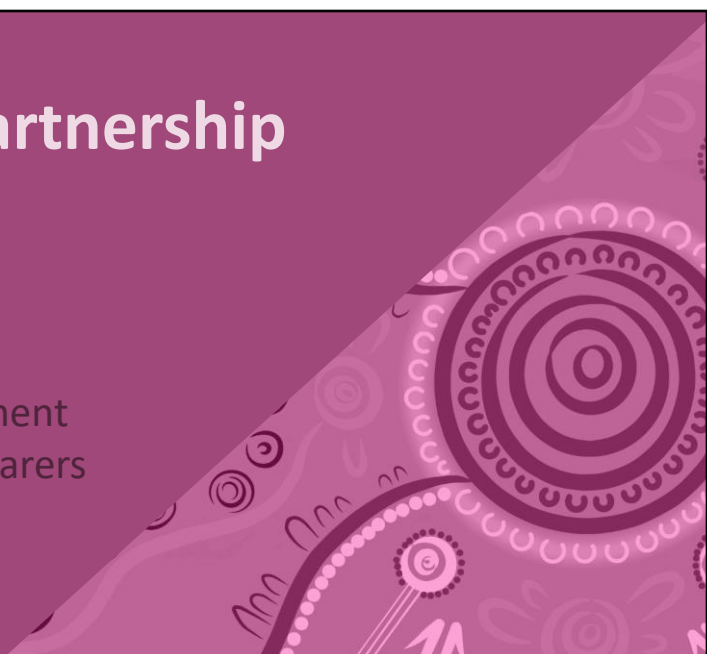


Working in Partnership with DCP

Learning and development
for foster and kinship carers



Government of South Australia
Department for Child Protection





Acknowledgement

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today and their connections to their land, seas and waters. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today



South Australian
**Statement
of Commitment**
with foster and
kinship carers

- INFORMED
- SUPPORTED
- CONSULTED
- VALUED
- RESPECTED

Government of South Australia
Department for Child Protection

The graphic features a central white box with the title 'South Australian Statement of Commitment with foster and kinship carers'. To the right of the box is a vertical list of five colored boxes, each containing an icon and a word: 'INFORMED' (red question mark), 'SUPPORTED' (orange hands), 'CONSULTED' (blue speech bubbles), 'VALUED' (green hearts), and 'RESPECTED' (purple circular arrows). The background is a colorful, abstract pattern of swirling lines in shades of purple, blue, green, and yellow. The entire graphic is framed by a decorative purple border with a repeating pattern of small circles and lines.

S: DCP is deeply committed to working with carers to ensure that you are informed, supported, consulted, valued and respected. Today's session on Working in Partnership with DCP contributes to how we can support you in your caring role. The care that you provide to the child/ren in your care is so valuable and we thank you for all that you do.

Housekeeping



Emergency protocol/exits



Toilets



Breaks



Mobile phone use



Group norms



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- Welcome to today's learning and development module
- Depending on venue, outline emergency exits and evacuation plan and location of toilets and other facilities
- There will be one fifteen minute break about half way through the module
- Please make sure that your mobile phones is off or on silent – this is about being respectful to each other as well as giving you permission to switch off from other tasks so important learning can take place
- If you could return from our break on time, that will ensure we can finish on time and have an opportunity for questions
- Establish group norms

Purpose and learning outcomes

By the end of today's session, our aim is for you to:



Understand your role and responsibilities as a carer



Understand the role and responsibilities of your support worker and other members of the care team



Understand the important DCP processes that relate to your role



Understand what you can do if things aren't going well



Become familiar with the Statement of Commitment and how you can use this when working with the care team



S: *These are the things that we want you to take away from today's learning module:*

Read slide

Topic Overview

A number of important topics will be covered in this learning module. It may feel like a lot of information, however we will make sure you have the resources you need to understand everything we share with you today. Some of the things we will talk about today are:



How the support agency fits within the wider child protection system



How the department works and the laws that govern the work they do



Our commitment to you and how to get the support and advocacy you need



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S: *It's important to note that the information provided here is an overview only. The child protection system is incredibly complex, and we acknowledge that even thinking about all the moving parts can make you feel anxious and overwhelmed. You are not expected to know all of this, or remember it all. If you want to revisit this information at any point, we will provide you with the resources you need to access and make use of it.*

Read slide

You are valued and respected – we couldn't do this without you



Being a carer is one of the most important roles in the child protection system and we value the work you do so much



We also know that being a carer is a really tough job and there can be a lot of mixed feelings and challenges for you



We want to be certain we are supporting you as much as we can at every stage of your journey

7

S: We want to start by acknowledging the incredibly important contribution you make by providing children a safe place to call home. The tireless work that you do in caring is crucial to transforming the lives of children in your care. We are focused on working in partnership with you to support you in your caring role. Carers are valued as integral members of a child or young person's care team and play a vital role in providing safe and nurturing care to children and young people.

Being a carer – what does this mean for you?



Important jobs always come with big responsibilities, and we will support you to understand as much as you can about your role



Being a carer is not just about providing the child in your care with a safe and secure home. It's about being part of a care team that ensures a child's needs are met



This learning module will explain some of those processes and where you can find more information and support if you need it



S: We want you to know that we understand and acknowledge the unique challenges of being a carer. We hope that by the end of today, you will feel more confident in your role, working alongside DCP and other care team members.

Read slide

Decision making and court processes

When a child comes into your care, most often the Youth Court is involved to make decisions about ensuring the child's safety



Family group conferences (FGCs) are used to make decisions about arrangements for the care of a child. They are organised by DCP but coordinated by an external provider or the Courts Administration Authority



Applications for short term and long term care and protection orders are made by DCP and heard at the Youth Court. While you are not involved in making decisions in these matters, you can express your views to the DCP case worker and your support worker



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Read slide

S: *Family group conferences are decision making meetings that provide families with an opportunity to develop a plan to keep their children and young people safe, using the principles of family preservation.*

These decisions are complex and can take some time for there to be an agreement on what should happen. Sometimes parents, the department and the court do not agree and it may be necessary for there to be a trial to work out the care arrangements of the child.

What the law says about child safety

The laws that govern what the department does are contained in the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (the Act)*. At the heart of this legislation is the safety of children and young people as the most important consideration



While the Act recognises that the duty to keep children and young people safe and well is everyone's responsibility, it also outlines specific duties for the department (DCP) and the Chief Executive



This means it is the role of departmental staff to undertake certain tasks to ensure children and young people are safe



Some of these tasks impact you as a carer, and include things like making sure your home is safe, and that everyone who lives with and has regular contact with the child in your care has a working with children check (WWCC)



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s: We understand that at times it might seem that the involvement of the department in your life is intrusive. It is not DCPs intention to be an unwanted and unhelpful presence in your life. We are all motivated by the same desire – to keep children safe and raise them to be happy and strong adults. We will always do our best to explain to you why DCP do the things they do- if you are ever unsure please ask your support worker to explain the reasons and processes to you.

Read slide

What the law says about care

A key element of the legislation that relates to you as a carer are the placement principles



There are general placement principles, and specific principles for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to ensure their cultural needs are met

The general placement principles are as follows:



all children and young people who have been removed from the care of a person under this Act should be placed in a safe, nurturing, stable and secure environment



the preferred option in relation to such placement of a child or young person is to place the child or young person with a person with whom they have an existing relationship



approved carers are entitled to be, and should be, involved in decision making processes relating to children and young people in their care



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Read slide

S: The placement principles describe the right of approved carers to be involved in decision making about children and young people in their care. Examples of decisions that carers can make are things like taking a child to the doctor or attending a school excursion. These are all covered in the Who Can Say OK booklet, which we will talk more about later in the module.

As you can see, the Act talks specifically about carers being approved – we will talk more about this process shortly.

There are other sections of the Act that apply to your role, and other legislation it's important for you to know about. We will cover these throughout the module and will let you know what part of the legislation we are talking about as we go along. We will refer to the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 as the Act throughout the module.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

There are 6 core interrelated elements to the Principle:

- ♥ Identification – Identifying Aboriginal children and young people who are involved with child protection to ensure their cultural status is identified and recorded correctly
- ♥ Prevention - Protecting children's rights to grow up in family, community and culture
- ♥ Partnership - Ensuring the participation of community representatives in service design, delivery and individual case decisions
- ♥ Placement - Placing children in out of home care in accordance with the placement hierarchy
- ♥ Participation - Ensuring the participation of children, parents and family members in decisions regarding care and protection
- ♥ Connection - Maintaining and supporting connections to family, community, culture and country for children in out of home care



Read slide

S: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATICPP) was developed to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in care by recognising the importance of keeping them connected to their families, communities and culture.

The ATICPP recognises that Aboriginal families and communities have the knowledge and experience to make the best decisions about the safety and wellbeing of their children and young peoples.

The ATICPP aims to ensure an understanding of the importance of culture and that it is central to the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle is as follows:

(a) if an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child or young person is to be placed in care under this Act, the child or young person should, if reasonably practicable, be placed with 1 of the following persons (in order of priority):

- a member of the child or young person's family;*
- a member of the child or young person's community who has a relationship of responsibility for the child or young person;*
- a member of the child or young person's community;*
- a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural background (as the case requires), (determined in accordance with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander traditional practice or custom);*

(b) if an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child or young person is unable to be placed with a person referred to in paragraph (a), or it is not in the best interests of the child or young person to do so, the child or young person should be given the opportunity for continuing contact with their family, community or communities and culture (determined in accordance with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander traditional practice or custom);

(c) before placing an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child or young person under this Act, the Chief Executive or the Court (as the case requires) must, where reasonably practicable, consult with, and have regard to any submissions of, a recognised Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisation.



Carer Agreement

After you become an approved carer, your support worker will develop a Carer Agreement with you

The Carer Agreement will be reviewed at least every two years as part of a Carer Review

It can be updated any time a major change or decision is made, such as placing another child in your care

The support outlined in the Carer Agreement may include regular contact with your support worker, and opportunities for learning and development

Developing a new Carer Agreement during a regular Carer Review is an important opportunity for you to tell us what it's been like for you as a carer and what else you need from us

You can ask for help at anytime, you don't need to wait for the Carer Agreement or Carer Review



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Read slide





S: *The Carer Agreement will outline the support you are going to receive and what learning and development needs you have. Carer Agreements are reviewed at least every two years, and may be reviewed more often if needs be. This doesn't mean nothing will change for a full two years from the time the Carer Agreement is developed – you can talk to your support worker at any time about your needs as they change.*

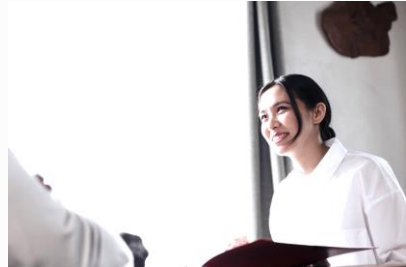
The learning and development opportunities you will be offered aren't there to teach you how to raise the child in your care – we know that you have fantastic skills and knowledge about the child/children in your care . They're designed to support you and to build your understanding of some of the really difficult parts of raising kids in care, like managing tricky family dynamics and responding to challenging behaviours that children who have experienced trauma may demonstrate. Your support worker will be able to tell you what's available for you, but you can also ask for learning and development opportunities at any other time – if there's anything you'd like to know more about, just ask your support worker.

Carer Review

Carer Reviews are required under the Act. They usually happen every two years, but can occur more often if needed.

The Act requires all approved carers to be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that:

-  regular assessments are undertaken of their provision of care
-  relevant courses and training are made available
-  ongoing support and guidance is provided
-  proper assessments are made of any requirement for financial or other assistance



Read slide

S: *The Carer Review will include you and any household members who wish to participate.*

The DCP case worker for the child in your care can also participate in the review.

The views of the child in your care, must be included as part of the review process. If you have biological children in your care, their views should also be included.

When the review assessment is completed, any outcome and/or recommendations are to be communicated to you.

All the information collected during the review process will be included in the Carer Review Report, which is then submitted to the Carer Assessment and Review unit (CARU) for action.





If the outcome of the Carer Review indicates that the carer approval is going to be withdrawn, your agency will inform you of that decision and inform the DCP case

worker, to ensure that arrangements are made regarding the ongoing care of the child or young person in your care.

We understand that the review process can be stressful and seem intrusive. It's important that you understand that we are required to undertake these reviews under law, and also that they are motivated by the need to keep children and young people safe.

The review process is also an opportunity for you to ask for the supports you need, and let us know if you need further learning and development, or other help with your caring role.

Partnering with your support worker

-  The person you will spend the most time with is your support worker, who will visit you at your home, and can also be contacted by phone or email with any questions or concerns you might have
-  How often your support worker visits you will depend on the level of support you need, and this will change over time
-  Your support worker will also work with the DCP case worker to help and support you
-  Your support worker is responsible for ensuring that your carer registration is up to date like processing WWCCs and completing Carer Agreements and Reviews. They will also work with you to identify your learning and development needs and make a plan to ensure that you have access to learning that suits you best

S: If you ever have questions or concerns about your role, how things are going in the placement or for the child in your care, your support worker is the first person to go to. If other people need to get involved, they will know who to talk to and how to get them involved so you get the support you need.

Read slide


Outside of the agency, there are a number of other people who will be working to ensure that the child in your care is safe in your care, and you and the child in your care are getting the help you need.

The worker you will have most contact with outside the agency is your child's allocated DCP case worker.

If you are looking after more than one child, they might have the same or different DCP case workers.

They are responsible for all the paperwork relating to the child in your care. It's also their job to organise things like contact between children and their birth parents,


school enrolments and plans, and health care. They should do this in partnership with you.



Family contact

One of the trickiest parts of being a carer can be managing family contact

Your support worker will help you understand the contact determination and work with you to ensure that family contact remains positive for the purposes of maintaining positive family and community connections

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Read slide

S: *DCP makes the decisions about who the child in your care has contact with and how often.*

You are entitled to be involved in decision making processes about contact, however, DCP makes the ultimate decision and does this based on legislative requirements, professional assessments and professional judgement.

Your role is to support the child in your care to have safe and positive contact.

If you have concerns about contact, or don't agree with a decision, you should raise this with the DCP case worker in the first instance, your support worker can assist you with this. You the right to have your views heard and considered.

Decision making

As a carer you are entitled to partake in decision making. This may involve:



Attending regular meetings with the care team, so that all parties are able to contribute their thoughts, feelings and opinions



Attending the annual review meeting in person or via phone and support the care team to understand what is currently working well and where improvements need to be made



Participating in school meetings so that you are able to contribute to identifying and applying additional academic supports for your child

Read slide

S: *If you want additional support with any decision to do with the child in your care, you can contact the DCP case worker to discuss.*

If you're unsure about your decision making rights and responsibilities, touch base with your support worker to clarify, if you can't find the information you need.

You can also access help after hours. DCP after-hours responds to urgent child protection matters and urgent matters requiring DCP support, in an after-hours capacity. This may include:

- *Providing support in relation to crisis situations for children in care and their carers*
- *Recording information regarding children in care who have been reported to SAPOL as a Missing Person*
- *Responding to urgent child protection matters*
- *Providing medical consents for children in care requiring emergency treatment*

- *Conducting urgent child protection investigations and assessments*
- *Sourcing emergency placements for children entering care*
- *Recording and assessing reports made to the CARL after-hours*

working with children check is not required for a babysitter who is engaged on a once-off basis when it is a personal arrangement between the babysitter and the carer. Any person who provides regular babysitting to a child in care is considered a regular household guest and will be supported in obtaining a WWCC.

If a child attends an overnight stay with a specific family on an occasional basis, the adults of the household are not required to complete a WWCC. If a child attends an overnight stay with a specific family on a regular basis, the DCP case worker must discuss this arrangement with the carer and consider whether a WWCC is required.


In relation to education, as a carer you can make decisions about the child in your care attending school excursions and camps inside South Australia, but school enrolments and transfers to a new school are the responsibility of the child's DCP case worker.

In relation to health, as a carer you can make decisions about general medical and dental appointments, immunisations and emergency surgery and transport in an ambulance, but things like elective surgery and organising Medicare and Health Care cards are the responsibility of the DCP case worker.




As a carer you can make decisions about day-to-day matters such as haircuts, pocket money and bank accounts, but decisions around family contact, attendance at cultural events and police bail are the responsibility of the DCP case worker.


You can also make decisions about recreational activities that are low risk and local holidays and travel. For higher risk activities such as rock climbing or travel that is overnight and interstate or overseas, you will need to work with the DCP case worker to facilitate approval of this.

There are many more decisions and circumstances covered in Who Can Say OK? – if you want any further guidance or are concerned about any of these decisions, please talk to your support worker about this.



Who pays for what?

-  As a carer you will already be receiving a fortnightly carer payment. The rate of your payment will depend on the age of the child in your care
-  It is difficult knowing who is expected to cover some of the other expenses that come with raising children
-  We may be able to help with some of the other expenses that come up, and your support worker can help you identify these

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Read slide

S: *Some of the extra expenses that the department may help with are:*

- Transport to and from ongoing and recurring health appointments, especially if you live in a regional or remote area*
- School camps, tutoring and other special education services*
- Cultural connection camps or activities for Aboriginal children or cultural activities for children from other cultural backgrounds.*

Further details regarding child related costs is contained in the 'Who Pays for What' booklet. You should have received a copy of this in your induction package. It's also available on the carer platform (online).



Break

The Statement of Commitment



S: While the safety of children is always our number one priority, you have rights as a carer as well.

The Statement of Commitment is the key document that describes what you can expect from the department in all your interactions.

We will give you some more information about the Statement and look at each of these principles more closely to outline some examples of what they mean in practice.

You can use the five principles to advocate for yourself as a carer and the child in your care.

Background

- The Statement of Commitment was developed by DCP, in partnership with Connecting Foster and Kinship Carers SA (CF&KCSA) and Child and Family Focus SA (CAFFSA) in 2020
- The [Statement of Commitment](#) articulates the roles and responsibilities of DCP and the sector in partnering with kinship and foster carers
- You can expect to be **informed**, **supported**, **consulted**, **valued** and **respected**



Read slide

S: We encourage you to access a copy of the Statement from DCP’s website and save it so you can refer to the principles at any time when you are talking with your support worker, the child in your child’s DCP case worker or another member of their care team.

Understanding the Statement of Commitment

This short video explains the importance of the Statement of Commitment and how it can be used



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxxDI7sbQKw>



Statement of commitment video – embed from YouTube

S: This video briefly explains the Statement and how we can all use it to work in partnership.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxxDI7sbQKw>

The Statement of Commitment

The principles outline what you can expect as part of your role:

 **INFORMED**

We will provide clarity to carers around their role, responsibilities and entitlements. We will ensure carers have the information they need about the children in their care.


We will be transparent about the legal rights of carers, how carers can report concerns and ask for decisions to be reviewed.

 **SUPPORTED**

We will provide support, guidance and training to carers to meet the needs of children in their care.

We will provide carers with allowances, subsidies and reimbursements to enable a sustainable placement.

We will empower carers to make decisions for children to take part in everyday activities.

 **CONSULTED**

We will involve carers in decisions about the children and young people in their care.

We will be open and honest when communicating with carers and honour agreements made with them.

We will provide carers with the opportunity to give feedback on policies and practices.

 **VALUED**

We will acknowledge the skills, expertise and knowledge that carers bring to their role.

We will recognise carers as an integral part of the care team.

We will listen to carers and value their views and circumstances.

We will recognise and celebrate the contributions carers make.

 **RESPECTED**

We will be culturally safe in the way we work with carers.

We will recognise the significant relationship that carers have with the children in their care.

We will respect carers as individuals beyond their caring role.

We will treat the personal information of carers in accordance with the Information Sharing Guidelines.



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S: These are the five key principles of the Statement of Commitment.

Explore slide

Informed

– you can expect workers to



INFORMED

We will provide clarity to carers around their role, responsibilities and entitlements.

We will ensure carers have the information they need about the children in their care.

We will be transparent about the legal rights of carers, how carers can report concerns and ask for decisions to be reviewed.

- Keep you in the loop and acknowledge your requests
- Talk to you first, or respond quickly when communicating a change to policy or procedure that directly impacts you or the child in your care
- Provide the contact details of another staff member while on leave such as the supervisor or another worker
- Proactively provide options for feedback
- Use your preferred channel to communicate



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Read slide

Supported in practice

– you can expect workers to



SUPPORTED

We will provide support, guidance and training to carers to meet the needs of children in their care.

We will provide carers with allowances, subsidies and reimbursements to enable a sustainable placement.

We will empower carers to make decisions for children to take part in everyday activities.

- Ensure that you are supported to access entitlements
- Tailor frequency of visits based on need
- Empower you to make day-to-day decisions as outlined in *Who can say OK* booklet
- Follow up referrals and advocate for medical, therapeutic and allied health services for children in a timely manner
- Connect you with other DCP services to support you where needed such as Psychological Services



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- Read slide

Consulted in practice

– you can expect workers to



CONSULTED

We will involve carers in decisions about the children and young people in their care.

We will be open and honest when communicating with carers and honour agreements made with them.

We will provide carers with the opportunity to give feedback on policies and practices.

- Proactively ask for your views and opinions and listen to what you say
- Regularly discuss the child's case plan with you not just at the time of annual review
- Provide genuine opportunities for you to attend care team meetings
- Encourage active and ongoing participation in decision making
- Give you the critical information you need to enable genuine participation in decision making
- Find ways to incorporate your views and wishes into decisions made
- Engage in culturally sensitive practices



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Read slide

Valued in practice

– you can expect workers to



We will acknowledge the skills, expertise and knowledge that carers bring to their role.

We will recognise carers as an integral part of the care team.

We will listen to carers and value their views and circumstances.

We will recognise and celebrate the contributions carers make.

- Celebrate wins with you, no matter how big or small
- Acknowledge your strengths you already bring to your role as a carer
- Genuinely consider your perspective when making decisions
- Acknowledge your valuable contribution



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Read slide

Respected in practice

– you can expect workers to

 **RESPECTED**

We will be culturally safe in the way we work with carers.

We will recognise the significant relationship that carers have with the children in their care.

We will respect carers as individuals beyond their caring role.

We will treat the personal information of carers in accordance with the Information Sharing Guidelines.

- Connect with you on a personal level
- Genuinely acknowledge the importance of the relationship you have with your child
- Clearly explain decisions and provide rationales when decisions are made
- Ask you questions about your cultural norms and demonstrate a genuine interest in learning more
- Acknowledge your culture as a unique strength
- Undertake a thorough handover of information when there are staff changes
- Show a genuine understanding of your needs



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Read slide

Supporting document

The Supporting Document provides practical guidance on how to use the Statement of Commitment (for carers and workers). It contains information on:

- What you can expect of DCP and your support worker
- Your role as a carer
- Reflective questions and other prompts to facilitate constructive conversations between you and your support worker, or DCP case worker
- Links to other documents relevant to your role



S: There are lots of ways you can use the Statement in practice to support your conversations with departmental staff.

Take a copy to meetings with your support worker and the child or young person's care team. Refer to it in discussions, phone calls and meetings where appropriate. If you have identified an area where you might need more support, you can use the Statement to start a conversation with your support worker or the care team.

The Statement can be used to highlight areas where you feel your support worker or care team have done a good job in supporting you and you want to let them know. Refer to the Statement and supporting document to clear up any uncertainties about the roles and responsibilities of you as a carer and that of the DCP case worker.

Consider the reflective questions contained in the supporting document with your worker or on your own. This can be a great way to build on a constructive relationship and break the ice on sensitive topics.

Information about the Statement of Commitment is publicly available at

childprotection.sa.gov.au/soc



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S: The Statement is available online at this link.

Your rights as a carer



To be involved in decision making processes about the child in your care



To be given certain information about the child in your care to help you provide the best care and keep them and yourself safe



To have access to the right support from the department, including learning and development during your time as a carer



To have access to external advocacy and support from Connecting Foster and Kinship Carers SA (CF&KCSA)



To speak out if things aren't working and when you have concerns



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Read slide

s: The Statement of Commitment describes our commitment to work in partnership with you and is closely linked to your fundamental rights as a carer. Some of your rights are actually set out in legislation, like the right to certain information about the child in your care. Other rights are set out in our policies and procedures.

Connecting Foster and Kinship Carers SA

advocate • support • connect • inform



CF&KCSA advocates for carers at an individual level, helping carers have an effective voice in matters that affect them and the children and young people in their care



They also advocate at a systems level, influencing positive changes to attitudes, policies, systems and laws



They have a lot of information and resources on their website <https://cfc-sa.org.au/>



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S: *The peak body for carer support and advocacy is Connecting Foster and Kinship Carers SA.*

Their vision is to ensure the voice of all South Australian Foster & Kinship Carers is represented and their rights upheld, whilst they care for our children and young people.

Their mission is to ensure carers are recognised, valued and supported to remain focused on their families - with the confidence and continued capacity to raise children and young people to recover from trauma, regain their potential and enjoy a positive future. They gather and share information to improve carers' capacity and experience. CF&KCSA also works with various groups to help them provide relevant and useful services.

Membership is free and has a range of benefits, including advocating for your rights as a carer and connecting you to other carers in your community.

Your support worker can help you join, or you can sign up online. You can also let your support worker know you are happy for your contact information to be shared with CF&KCSA when developing your Carer Agreement or during your carer review. They will contact you directly about becoming a member.

The rights of children



The child in your care has the same rights as other children, but children in care also have a special Charter of Rights



it's important you know these rights to be able to effectively advocate for the child in your care



Guardian
for Children and
Young People



Government of South Australia
Department for Child Protection

S: *The Charter of Rights is developed by the Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People. The Guardian, and the advocates who work at the office provide individual and systems level advocacy for children and young people in care.*

The Charter of Rights state:

- *The kids in your care have the right to be safe and well cared for*
- *They have the right to have information about their care arrangements and know why they are in care*
- *They have the right to be listened to and have a say in decisions that affect them*
- *They have the right to be themselves and to be treated with respect*
- *They have the right to connect with their culture*
- *They have the right to have contact with people who matter to them*
- *They have the right to good health, fun and play*

- *They have the right to privacy*
- *They have the right to a good education*
- *They have the right to get the support they need so they are ready to leave care and feel good about their future*

Information sharing and confidentiality

As a carer, you have the right to have certain information shared with you that enables you to understand and meet the needs of the child in your care.



The *Information checklist for family based carers* is designed to act as a reminder of the specific information you can ask for, such as, the DCP case worker's contact details, the child's health and education plans and needs, background information and routines



You can always discuss details about the child in your care with departmental staff as their needs change



You may share certain information with others in the care team (such as a teacher), however there are guidelines about what information we share and when




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S: Your support worker will discuss information sharing and confidentiality with you. It is important to maintain the confidentiality of the child in your care, however it's sometimes necessary to share information. Every member of a child's care team needs to carefully consider what information needs to be shared prior to doing so.

You may share certain information about a child or another person, with others (for example a school teacher, child care staff member) if it is necessary for the child's protection and wellbeing, or to perform your duty as a carer. Only disclose as much information as necessary to help that person understand and meet the child's needs.

Before sharing information, ask yourself "does this person need to know the information I am about to share?"

If in doubt, ask your support worker about what information can be disclosed.




Things don't always go to plan

When there is a reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed or is likely to suffer harm due to standards of care not being met, a care concern can be raised

There is a unit in the department responsible for managing care concerns and determining outcomes. This is the Care Concern Management Unit (CCMU)

We acknowledge that going through a care concern process is extremely stressful and we are committed to managing these processes as quickly as we can and supporting you during the process



Read slide

S: A care concern is a report to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) where the following criteria have been met:

The child or young person was, or is in care, pursuant to the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 at the time of the allegation AND:

The concerns relate to the care provided by:

an approved carer and/or

registered or approved household member; or

temporary carer (pursuant to section 77 of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017); or

Department of Human Services, custodial staff; or

Department for Child Protection (DCP) employee and/or DCP volunteer, providing direct care and/or contracted carer; AND

There is a reasonable suspicion that:

A child or young person has been harmed; or

There is a risk that the child or young person will suffer harm; or

The carer, DCP employee or DCP volunteer, has failed to meet the DCP Standards of Care, to a degree that the child or young person has been harmed or there is a risk that they will suffer harm.

- *CARL receives all reports of suspected child abuse, neglect or deficit in care. If the information provided to CARL meets the criteria for a care concern, a care concern is raised. The care concern is then forwarded to the Care Concern Management Unit (CCMU) who assess all the information available and make a decision regarding the best way to respond to the concern(s).*
- *Care concerns are categorised into four different response pathways to support the process of managing the care concern. These response pathways focus on the actions required to respond to the harm or risk of harm to the child or young person, issues that may have contributed to the care concern, the behaviours of individuals and the action required to address the risks. There are different steps depending on the response pathway*
- *The categories are no action, minor care concern, moderate care concern and serious care concern.*
- *We don't have the time to go into further depth in this module, but you will be provided with detailed information about care concerns and can always discuss this with your support worker.*

If you are subject to a care concern, you should expect:

- *Timely advice that a care concern has been raised*
- *An invitation to discuss the allegations, hear the allegations in full and an opportunity to respond. It is noted that for some care concerns, particularly serious ones, there may be a delay in discussing allegations but the Dept will always aim to discuss with you as soon as possible.*
- *Support throughout the process from your support worker*
- *An opportunity to discuss any additional learning and development needs, and supports you consider would be important to improving the level of care or capacity to care*
- *Advice of an outcome finding and rationale (for moderate and/or serious matters)*

- *Correspondence to advise of the closure of the care concern process*

Something isn't working – what do I do?



You might disagree with a decision that's been made. You have a right to have your concerns heard and considered



Wherever possible, you are encouraged to speak directly to your support worker and the DCP case worker to resolve an issue. You can also ask to speak to a supervisor, or the manager of the local DCP office



If this doesn't resolve the issue to your satisfaction, you have a right to make a complaint. Depending on the decision, you may also be able to seek an internal or external review of that decision



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S: DCP Complaints & Feedback Management Unit

After talking to a supervisor and/or manager, if you feel as though your complaint is not satisfactorily resolved, you may consider submitting a formal complaint through the DCP Complaints & Feedback Management Unit. The Complaints & Feedback Management Unit oversee all complaints made. Each complaint is allocated to an Assessment & Resolution Officer to review and address with fresh eyes. There are two platforms for submitting a complaint to the Central Complaints Unit:

1. *Completing the online complaints form found on the DCP website*
2. *Telephoning the Complaints & Feedback Management Unit on 1800 003 305:*

It may take up to four weeks to receive a response regarding the formal complaint, as the investigation process is more in-depth. If you do not receive a response after four weeks, you are encouraged to telephone or email the Complaints & Feedback Management Unit.

Internal Review

If you believe the complaint is still not resolved or suitably acknowledged, you may elect to pursue it further. If the decision is reviewable under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 you may pursue the internal review process, thirty days from being informed of the decision in writing.

If the decision is not reviewable under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act

2017, you may make an application to the Ombudsman.

Reflect and Review

As we come to the end of this learning and development program, we recognise that this is a huge amount of information to take in. We really want this learning to be meaningful for you, so before we leave today, we would like each of you to tell us what is the most important thing you learned from today's session



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Ask all participants to share a key learning from the program.

Thank you for everything you do!



S: As we wrap up today's learning and development program, we would just like to say the most heartfelt thank you for everything that you do as a carer.

Our commitment is to always work in partnership with you, and if you ever feel like that's not happening, we welcome you letting us know through the channels we have discussed today. We hope today's program was valuable to you and we also welcome your feedback on how it can be improved.

Thank you for joining us today and being generous with your time – we know how difficult it can be to make the time for something like this.

Any
questions?



If you have any further questions after you leave today, make sure to follow up with your support worker, or the DCP case worker

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*Working in Partnership with DCP
Strategic Projects
Strategy, Partnerships and Reform*

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