

Supporting document to the Statement of Commitment with South Australian Foster and Kinship Carers

The [Statement of Commitment](#) with South Australian Foster and Kinship Carers recognises that the family based care system must work in partnership and value carers as an essential and respected part of the care team for children and young people.

The Statement of Commitment was launched in June 2020 by Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers SA Inc, Child and Family Focus SA and the Department for Child Protection.

Purpose

This document provides guidance on how carers and workers can use the Statement of Commitment to understand their roles and responsibilities, and work together to support children and young people in care.

Principles

The Statement of Commitment is comprised of five key principles: **informed**, **supported**, **consulted**, **valued** and **respected**.

INFORMED**SUPPORTED****CONSULTED****VALUED****RESPECTED**

As a foster or kinship carer, your role is to...

- Provide safe care in a secure and nurturing family home environment
- Develop meaningful relationships with the children and young people in your care
- Maintain children and young people's health and wellbeing and relationships with significant others
- Support children and young people to remain connected to culture, extended family, kin, language and spiritual beliefs to maintain their sense of self, identity and emotional ties
- Assist children and young people to develop their Life Story work
- Support children and young people to participate in cultural activities so that their cultural identity is not lost
- Encourage children and young people to live fulfilling lives and reach their full potential
- Support children and young people's educational needs and education plans
- Assist children and young people to develop independent life skills and transition to adult life
- Support family contact and reunification plans (where applicable)

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- Contribute your expertise and knowledge as a member of the child or young person's care team, including in [case planning](#)
- Share the needs and difficulties of children and young people with their care team
- Participate in transition planning at the start and end of any placement and support children and young people through placement transitions
- Report suspected child abuse or neglect to the [Child Abuse Report Line \(CARL\)](#)
- Maintain confidentiality and only share information as agreed with your case worker and support worker as set out in [Who can say OK?](#)
- Safeguard children and young people's personal records and property
- Participate in ongoing Carer Reviews and training
- Ensure all adult household members (including yourself) and regular guests maintain a valid DHS [Working With Children Check](#)
- Maintain a smoke-free environment at all times in the presence of children and young people.

As a foster or kinship carer, you can expect your agency and the Department for Child Protection (DCP) to...

- Provide quality assessment, training and support to assist you to provide safe and stable care to meet the needs of children and young people in your care
- Address any requirements outlined in your [Carer Agreement](#) and facilitate Carer Reviews
- Acknowledge the skills, expertise and knowledge that you bring to your caring role
- Ensure you have the information that you require to make an informed choice about a placement
- Provide you with the information and support you need to care for children and young people when they enter your care
- Provide you with a support worker who will be in regular contact, respond to your needs in a timely manner and support you in your caring role
- Support you to participate in planning and [decision-making](#) as part of the care team
- Recognise the significant impact that caring has on you and your family and encourage you to participate in self-care activities
- Treat your complaints and feedback seriously and deal with them fairly, promptly and without retribution
- Be transparent about and support you to understand your legal rights, how you can report concerns and ask for decisions to be reviewed (see [Complaints and internal reviews](#))
- Treat your personal information in accordance with the [Information Sharing Guidelines](#)
- Act in the best interests of children and young people to maintain safety and wellbeing
- Ensure practices comply with relevant legislation, regulations and guidance
- Ensure you are informed about [Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers SA Inc.](#), the peak body for foster and kinship carers for advocacy and support.

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Across all of these responsibilities, carers, agency workers and DCP staff are expected to work in partnership with a primary focus on the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person, and in accordance with the [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#), [Child Safety \(Prohibited Persons\) Act 2016](#), [Aboriginal Child Placement Principle](#), [National Out-of-Home Care Standards](#) and the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

Checklist

Carers and workers can use these questions to reflect on their role and interactions with each other.

For carers

As a foster or kinship carer, how do I...

- ☐ communicate my needs clearly and in a timely manner?
- ☐ seek support and assistance when I need it?
- ☐ focus on the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person in my care?
- ☐ raise issues respectfully when they arise?
- ☐ seek further assistance if required?

For agency and DCP staff

As a worker, how do I...

- ☐ provide the carer with the information they require to provide safe and stable care?
- ☐ behave in a professional, respectful and compassionate manner?
- ☐ value the carer's unique knowledge and expertise, and ensure they are supported to contribute to the decision-making process?
- ☐ consider the carer's needs and feelings?

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