



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**

Facts about **Fostering**



It's not just the child's life
that changes

What is foster care?

When families are experiencing serious problems and children cannot live safely at home, they may come into the care of the Department of Communities (the Department).

Wherever possible we place these children with family members or someone who is close to them. When this is not possible, we consider foster care.

Foster care is an arrangement where a family or an individual is able to provide a safe and supportive home for children who are unable to live with their own families. Foster carers are willing and able to open their homes and include these children and young people as part of their family.

Children in care generally keep in touch with their birth parent(s), brothers, sisters and other family members. Foster carers help children keep in contact with people and places that are important to them.

Fostering is both a rewarding and challenging experience and takes a high level of commitment, patience and resilience.



Why do some children need foster care?

Most foster children have experienced some form of trauma, which can be a one-off event or ongoing. The Department will bring children into care when harm (physical, emotional or psychological) is occurring or there is evidence that potential for harm may occur as a result of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect.

Types of foster care

From the moment a child comes into care, a clear plan is developed which is guided by the need for stability. The Department's best hopes are that children who come into care can return to live at home with their parents. Some children will need care for just a few days; others, for a few weeks or years.





Could I be a foster carer?

Foster carers come from all walks of life. You can be single, married, in a same-sex relationship; you may or may not have children of your own, be working or retired.

What is important is your health and lifestyle, together with your ability to work as part of a team to provide a caring environment for a vulnerable child. You must be a citizen or permanent resident of Australia and living in Western Australia. New Zealand holders of a Special Category visa (subclass 444) can also apply.

What do we expect from you?

You need to be able to provide a safe and supportive home. You also need to participate in the assessment process, attend training, and keep information about the foster child confidential. You will need to work closely with the Department, the child's family and other professionals to plan and maintain the best care for the child.

Foster carers are expected to:

- provide emotional support and care to meet the child's everyday needs
- help the child communicate and behave in positive ways
- support the child in their schooling and recreational activities
- help the child maintain contact with their parents and extended family
- support the child's cultural and religious needs
- support the child's reunification with their family, when that is the plan
- work with all members of the child's care team.

What can you expect from us?

Foster carers are supported by dedicated staff from their local district office.

You will be part of a child's care team which will include those people who are important to the child, as well as specialist staff to support the child's cultural, educational and psychological needs and a dedicated case worker.

You will have access to financial support and on-going training.



Further support for foster carers

Foster Care Association WA

The Foster Care Association WA is a non-government organisation that provides support and assistance to foster carers.

Telephone: (08) 9242 4222

Country free call: 1800 497 101

Website: www.fcawa.com.au

Crisis Care Helpline

Crisis Care is the after-hours child protection service for Department of Communities.

Crisis Care receives after hours child protection concerns and provides support to the Family and Domestic Violence helpline

It operates 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Telephone: 13 11 14

Text: 0477 13 11 14

Country free call: 1800 199 008

What next?

Contact Fostering and Family Care on 1800 182 178 and we will send you an information booklet.

Or scan the QR code to lodge an online enquiry form.



You can also find information on our website at www.fostercare.wa.gov.au

Department of Communities

Telephone: 1800 182 178

Email: fostering@communities.wa.gov.au
www.communities.wa.gov.au

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