



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

# Who can say OK in WA?

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## Quick Guide

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This Quick Guide is  
intended to support carers,  
once carers have read  
'Who can say OK in WA?:  
Making decisions about  
a child in care'.  
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## Context and guidance

This is not an exhaustive list of the types of decisions carers are presented with but includes some of the more common ones.

The guidance provided in this resource will not be right for the child you care for in every situation. When in doubt, carers should always speak with their Department of Communities' (Communities) Child Protection Worker, or CSO or ACCO case worker.

When you make a decision directly with the child, you are encouraged to let their CSO, ACCO or Communities Child Protection Worker know about this decision at the earliest opportunity, so that the care team and relevant people in the child's adult network are all aware of decisions being made about the child.

**First column:** Provides basic examples of everyday decisions that carers are presented with.

**Second column:** A 'thumbs up' in the 'carer' column indicates this is usually a decision that can be made by the carer directly with the child.

Carers are encouraged to let their CSO, ACCO or Communities caseworker know about this decision at the earliest opportunity, so that the Care team and relevant people in the child's adult network are all aware of decisions being made about the child.

**Third column:** A 'thumbs up' in the Child Protection Worker column indicates this is a decision that must be made by Communities.

It is important to know that just because Carers can make a decision, it doesn't mean they must make the decision alone. Remember that your Communities Child Protection Worker, or CSO or ACCO case worker, is always here to help you make any decision that is needed.

## Quick Guide – Types of decisions

### 1. Identity and culture







Children living in out-of-home care, even those that come into care at birth, enter care with the culture of their birth family. It is vital for children living in out-of-home care, that their birth family's culture is honoured, respected, and maintained.

Decision	Carer	Child Protection Worker
Arranging for a child to have a haircut, when cutting hair holds cultural significance for the child and their family.		👍
Attendance at family funerals.		👍
Participation in a Return to Country opportunity.		👍
Including a child in events, activities, and celebrations that recognise the Carer's culture and/or religion.	👍	
Changing a child's Cultural Support Plan, by either including or removing events, activities and celebrations that recognise the culture and/or religion of the child and their biological family.		👍







## 2. Household rules and discipline

It is important that carers can make everyday decisions for a child or young person that assists in the running of a household.

Decision	Carer	Child Protection Worker
General household rules, such as contributing to chores, having dinner at the table, and keeping bedrooms tidy.		
Watching age-appropriate TV shows.		
The name a child will call a carer.		
Bedtime arrangements.		
Time a child needs to be home (curfew).		
Safe ways to discipline children and/or correct behaviour. Physical discipline is never ok.		










## 3. Babies and toddlers

Being intimately involved in a baby or toddlers' life, means that carers are well placed to support and make decisions on when to transition through stages of development.

Decision	Carer	Child Protection Worker
Use a dummy or other comfort toy.		
Progressing a baby from milk or formula to solid foods.		
Starting toilet training.		
Safe sleep practices.		

## 4. Education

Receiving an education is vital for all children living in out-of-home care. It is the right of every child to access an education that meets their needs.

Decision	Carer	Child Protection Worker
The school that a child is enrolled in, including home schooling or boarding schooling.		
Informing the school that a child is in the care of the CEO.		
The surname that will be used to enrol a child in the school.		
Transport to and from school, such as a child riding, walking, using the school bus, or using public transport.		
Missing school when there is no health or medical reason.		
Attending parent-teacher interviews.		
Attending a school camp.		
School incursions, excursions, or activities, including signing permission forms, where a legal waiver is not required. (These are called low risk activities).		
School incursions, excursions, or activities, where a legal waiver is required. (These are called high risk activities).		

## 5. Physical and mental health

Children living in out-of-home care will often have greater physical and mental health needs than other children. As children living in out-of-home care, they are entitled to priority access to a range of health supports. It is important that children get early and responsive health support.

In the event of an emergency, the carer should contact 000 immediately for an ambulance response, and follow any instruction provided by paramedics until the ambulance arrives.

Decision	Carer	Child Protection Worker
Application for a Medicare card.		👍
Daily support with health and medical needs, including visiting a general practitioner.	👍	
Provision of over-the counter and doctor prescribed medication.	👍	
General or once-off dental, optometrist, audiologist, or allied health appointments.	👍	
Ongoing dental, optometrist, audiologist, or allied health appointments.		👍
Specialist medical appointments or assessments.		👍
Application to National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).		👍
Assessments for neurodevelopmental disabilities.		👍
Local or general anaesthetics.		👍
Minor or major surgery.		👍
Mental health supports, such as counselling, psychology, or psychiatry appointments.		👍

Decision	Carer	Child Protection Worker
Treatment programs for alcohol and other drugs.		👍
Immunisations as part of the school-based Immunisations Program.		👍
Annual flu vaccinations.	👍	
Administration of contraception, testing or treatment for Sexually Transmitted Infections		👍

## 6. Personal expression

Every child will want to express themselves in some way. Carers play a vital role in providing a safe space for children to explore and demonstrate personal expression.

Decision	Carer	Child Protection Worker
Haircuts (where the caseworker has confirmed there are no cultural considerations).	👍	
Ear piercings or body piercings.		👍
Fashion preference (including types of clothes a child would like to wear, painting their nails, wearing jewellery, using makeup, and how they like to style their hair).	👍	



## 7. Sexuality and gender diversity

Carers play an important role in supporting children as they develop their sexual and gender identity. It is important that any decisions about a child's sexuality or gender, are being initiated and driven by the child.

Decision	Carer	Child Protection Worker
<b>Sexuality</b>		
Conversations and teaching about sexual health.	👍	
Approvals for sleepovers with boyfriends or girlfriends.		👍
<b>Gender diversity</b>		
Using certain pronouns or new names that affirms their gender identify, where the child has initiated this option.	👍	👍
Legally changing a child's name.		👍
Undertaking gender affirming medical treatment.		👍



## 8. Playdates, sleepovers and babysitting

A carer can give consent for everyday activities, such as sleepovers at a friend's house. Before giving consent, a carer must make all efforts to ensure that a child will be cared for in a safe environment. This should include meeting with the adults who will be responsible for caring for the children where they are going.

Decision	Carer	Child Protection Worker
<b>Playdates and sleepovers</b>		
The child spending time with friends on playdates or outings.	👍	
Once-off or occasional overnight stays for up to two nights with members of the carer's family.	👍	
Once-off or occasional overnight stays for up to two nights with people who are not members of the carer's family.	👍	
Once-off or occasional overnight stays for three or more nights.		👍
Regular or ongoing overnight stays with anyone.		👍
<b>Babysitting</b>		
Babysitting of the child so carers can go out.	👍	
Regular or ongoing babysitting, including engaging a Nanny (day nanny or live-in nanny).		👍
A carer using their natural network, for example their own adult children, to provide once-off or occasional babysitting.	👍	
Babysitting arrangements that require travel.		👍



## 9. Sport, recreation and travel

Sport, recreation, and travel are all important activities that support healthy development and community connection for children. It is important that Carers talk to their Communities Child Protection Worker in advance about any travel plans.

Decision	Carer	Child Protection Worker
<b>Sport and recreation</b>		
General activities such as school sports or after-school sports, music, theatre, crafts, where a legal waiver is not required (low risk activities).	👍	
Sports or activities that require a legal waiver (high risk activities).		👍
<b>Travel</b>		
Overnight travel within Western Australia, where the child will be staying outside of their home region.		👍
Overnight travel outside of Western Australia.		👍
Travel outside of Australia		👍
Relocating interstate.		👍

## 10. Family contact

Every child has the right to have contact with family members and friends whenever possible. Contact between a child and a parent, sibling, extended family member, or other important person for a child can help to support a child's psychological wellbeing and identity. A child's contact arrangements with their family, should be recognised in the Care Plan.

Decision	Carer	Child Protection Worker
Who are the people that are safe for the child to have contact with.		👍
Family contact arrangements.		👍
Cancelling family contact for any reason, including at the child's request.		👍
Unplanned phone, social media, or face-to-face contact with biological family, where this is supported in the child's Care Plan.	👍	
Unplanned phone, social media, or face-to-face contact with biological family, where this is not in the child's Care Plan.		👍



## 11. Mobile phone and the internet

Mobile phones, tablets, laptops, and other devices are important for children to learn and remain connected with each other and the world. Carers play a vital role in teaching children how to safely use this technology.

Decision	Carer	Child Protection Worker
Teaching children about online safety.	👍	
Applying parental controls, or other restrictive practices, on a child's device.		👍
Providing a mobile phone, tablet, or laptop for a child.	👍	
A child having an email account.	👍	
A child having social media accounts.	👍	
A child using a mobile phone or other technology to maintain contact with family members.		👍



## 12. Legal, financial and criminal

Carers have an important role in supporting children with their financial and legal affairs.

Decision	Carer	Child Protection Worker
<b>Legal</b>		
Application for a birth certificate		👍
Application for Proof of Australian Citizenship		👍
Application or renewal of child's passport		👍
<b>Criminal</b>		
Applying for, and signing, a Responsible person undertaking (Bail)		👍
Attending a police interview where the child is suspected of an offence.		👍





### 13. Becoming an adult

Carers have an important role in supporting children as they mature to adolescence and approach adulthood.

Decision	Carer	Child Protection Worker
<b>Financial</b>		
Application for a Tax File number.		👍
Opening a personal bank account.		👍
Starting part-time or full-time employment.	👍	
Providing pocket money to a child.	👍	
<b>Driving</b>		
Enrolling to sit a driver's license theory and/or practical test.	👍	
Taking driving lessons.	👍	
<b>Moving out</b>		
Moving in with a boyfriend or girlfriend.		👍
Moving out of a carers house and into independent living.		👍

### 14. When a child is unaccounted for or missing

When a child is unaccounted for or missing, a carer should call their Child Protection Worker, or CSO or ACCO case worker (or Crisis Care after hours) to let them know.

Where a carer believes a child is at immediate and substantial risk, the carer should immediately phone WA Police on 000. Following the call, the carer should immediately contact the child's Child Protection Worker, or if it is after hours, inform the Crisis care unit on 9223 1111 or 1800 199 008 (country free call).

Decision	Carer	Child Protection Worker
Talking to people the carer would usually engage with in the child's network (such as the parents of the child's school friends), to find out where the child may be.	👍	
Sharing photos of the child with the media, or via social media platforms.		👍
Media notifications or media campaigns for missing children.		👍





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If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech  
impairment, contact

us through the National Relay Service.

For more information visit:

[www.communications.gov.au/accesshub/nrs](http://www.communications.gov.au/accesshub/nrs)

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