



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

# Who can say OK in WA?

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## Making decisions about a child in care



A guide to everyday decision-making for  
Family and Foster Carers in Western Australia

## Introduction

Caring for WA's most vulnerable children is such an important role.

Carers face everyday decisions that all families make about children and young people, and it's important that you feel confident to make these decisions in a regular, timely and appropriate way for the children in your care.

'Who Can Say OK in WA?' is a guide for carers, which provides general guidance about who can make everyday decisions about a child or young person in care.

It's designed for all Carers in Western Australia (WA), whether you are a family carer or foster carer through the Department of Communities (Communities), or if you provide care through a Community Sector Organisation (CSO) or Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO). This guide is for you.

The information contained in this document is general in nature. Not every decision in this guide will apply to every child in every situation. A child's personal circumstance, such as age, maturity, past trauma or disability may affect the way in which decisions about them are made. For some children, there will be circumstances that require specific approvals as a result of their Care Plan, or through a Court Order under the *Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA)*.

When in doubt, you should always speak with your primary professional contact. For Communities' family and foster carers, this should be your Child Protection Worker or Senior Child Protection Worker – Placement Services. If you are a carer with a CSO or ACCO, then you should contact your case worker in your organisation.

Communities, CSOs and ACCOs work together with you to support decision making about children in care where the child's voice is at the centre and their best interests are always paramount.

This is the first guide of its kind in WA. It is intended that future editions will also include appropriate information about what decisions that CSOs or ACCOs can make.

We want to know how this guide works for you. Please provide your feedback about how effective it is to [fostering@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:fostering@communities.wa.gov.au)

We're committed to keeping it current and useful.

To access the publications listed in this guide visit [wa.gov.au](http://wa.gov.au) and search the publication title, or visit the Foster Care Association of Western Australia's website [fcawa.com.au](http://fcawa.com.au).

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## Part 1 – How to use this resource

There are important considerations to keep in mind when using this resource, including:

- legal information impacting who can make decisions
- the best interests of the child
- the knowledge and experience held by carers
- the child's role and rights in decision making
- working in partnership to make decisions

### Legal information that impacts who can make decisions

The *Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA)* (the Act) gives decision making responsibilities about a child in care to the Department of Communities WA Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

This means that when a child is placed in the care of the CEO, the CEO becomes responsible for the care of the child, and decisions made about that child.

The Communities' employees who carry out child protection work, such as Child Protection Workers and Senior Child Protection Worker – Placement Services, Team Leaders, Assistant District Directors, and District Directors, have what is called 'delegated authority', which means these employees can carry out the statutory responsibilities (such as making decisions for children in care) on behalf of the CEO.

This is why there are some decisions that can only be made by, or with Communities.

The statutory responsibilities that the CEO has for children in care, are detailed in the Act.

### The best interests of the child

A key principle in decision-making for children in care, is that the best interests of the child is the paramount consideration. You can see how the Act describes how the best interests of children are determined by searching for it on [wa.gov.au](http://wa.gov.au).

### The knowledge and experience held by carers

Carers should be provided with significant support, training, education, and resources that equip them to carry out their important role as a carer.

New carers are likely to need more support and guidance, than carers who are more experienced.

This guide does not replace other information or resources that are available to support carers. It is an additional resource, that carers can draw upon when they are presented with an everyday family decision and are unsure if they need to consult their Communities caseworker before making that decision. If you are a new carer, you are likely to need to consult and seek more guidance on decision-making, than if you are a more experienced carer.

Important resources that provide information with further depth and clarity, include 'The Foster Care Handbook for Foster Families' (by Foster Care Association of WA), and the 'Family Care Handbook' (by Department of Communities).



## The child's role and rights in decision making

Children have better experiences, and better outcomes, when they are involved in decisions that are being made about them.

Some of the everyday decisions that this guide describes, are decisions a child may be able to make for themselves depending on their age and maturity. For example, a child who is 16 years old is likely to be capable of making their own decisions about personal preferences such as the clothes they wear. An early primary school aged child may still have a view about getting their clothes, but will rely on an adult to make an appropriate decision.

There are a few important considerations to be aware of, when carers are navigating how they include the child in decision making.

### Charter of Rights

In WA there is a '[Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care](#)' which provides detailed information about how children and young people should be treated when they come into the care.

### Advocacy

There is an Advocate for Children in Care available to children and young people, and the Advocate can also talk to Carers: [advocate@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:advocate@communities.wa.gov.au)

### The Gillick Principle

The Gillick Principle states that a child can give informed consent when they 'achieve a sufficient understanding and intelligence to enable them to understand fully what is proposed'.

In practice this means that the age of the child should not be the sole criteria in determining their maturity and competence. The child needs to be provided with appropriate and adequate information to help them understand what is being proposed, and the carer should consider whether the child can make their own decisions, in specific circumstances.

## Working in partnership to make decisions

Every child in care should have a 'Care Team' comprising a group of people significant and important to the child, such as their biological family, the child's carer, and other professionals focused on the well-being of the child. The child is always the most important member of their Care Team.

The Care Team may include:

- parents, siblings, and other family members (where appropriate) who hold and provide key knowledge about the child
- carers (and their family) who work with all members of the care team (including the child's parents)
- the Child Protection Worker who provides overall case management of the child and coordination of the care team
- the CSO or ACCO caseworker, who is usually the first contact point for CSO or ACCO carers
- safety network members and others in the child's community – such as teachers, neighbours or sports coaches – who play an important role in supporting the child's needs.

Care Team members must place the child at the centre of their thinking and interactions. They provide essential support to meet the needs of the child; keeping them strong, connected to family, community, and culture.

All members of the care team are expected to work together in a respectful and collaborative manner. This includes responding promptly to issues and challenges as they arise.

The case management team should aim to respond to all carer inquiries within 24 hours, wherever possible, and ensure carers are heard.

If a carer has not received communication from their case manager, they have the right to escalate the matter to a Team Leader or Assistant District Director.

Additionally, carers can seek advocacy or support through Fostering Connections, Foster Care Association of Western Australia (FCAWA) and therapeutic support from OurSPACE.



## Part 2 – Types of decisions: context and guidance

Who can say OK in WA? describes who can make everyday family decisions about children and young people in the following areas:

1. Identity and culture
2. Everyday decisions, household rules and discipline
3. Babies and toddlers
4. Education
5. Medical, general and mental health
6. Personal expression
7. Sexuality and gender diversity
8. Sleepovers and babysitting
9. Travel, sport and recreation
10. Family contact
11. Mobile phone and internet
12. Legal and financial
13. Preparation for adulthood
14. When a child or young person is unaccounted for or missing

### Context and guidance

This is a list of the more common decisions that carers are presented with; it is not an exhaustive list. 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 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.

**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 needed 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 that for children living in out-of-home care, that their birth family's culture is honoured, respected, and maintained.

Every child has a right to cultural safety and to develop a strong cultural identity and cultural connections. Cultural safety is about creating a space where a person can feel spiritually, emotionally, and physically safe, and able to practice and explore their culture without challenge, denial, or assault. Cultural connection is the extent to which a person feels connected to their culture.

Aboriginal people have a rich and ancient culture. For Aboriginal children in care, it is critical that they are connected to the culture and traditions of their family and community in meaningful ways.

Children from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) backgrounds need to be supported to develop a positive multicultural identity, which is beneficial for their self-esteem and identity.

All children will have a Cultural Support Plan as part of their Care plan. It is important that these are supported and put into action.

Carers will be supported by their Communities' Child Protection Worker, or CSO or ACCO caseworker, to ensure decision making about Aboriginal children and children from a CaLD background, include people who can ensure decisions are culturally safe. This might include an Aboriginal Practice Leader, a representative from an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation, or a Cultural Diversity Advisor.

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 a family funeral.		👍
Participation in a 'Return to Country' opportunity.		👍
Including a child in events, activities, and celebrations that recognise the child'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

Each household has different rules and ways of functioning. It is important that carers can make everyday decisions for children in their care, to keep them safe and supported and allow a household to keep running.

Carers are encouraged to talk to their Communities' Child Protection Worker, or CSO or ACCO caseworker, when everyday household or disciplinary decisions may become more complicated. For example, it is important that





a carer and child choose names to call each other together, so that they are both comfortable with those names. However, if a child's preference is to start calling their carer 'Mum' or 'Dad', a conversation with a Communities' Child Protection Worker or CSO or ACCO's caseworker is important, as the views of the biological family members need to be considered.

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.		
The 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 and transitioning from cot to bed.		





## 4. Education

It is the right of every child to access an education that meets their needs.

Receiving an education is vital for all children living in out-of-home care.

In WA, the law requires a child of compulsory

school age be enrolled in a school and attend every day. Generally, Communities expects that children attend pre-kindy from the age of three years where it is offered, or kindy (from four years old) in other areas.

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 name 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 school camp.		👍
Attending school incursions, excursions, or activities, including signing permission forms, where a legal waiver is not required. (These are called 'low risk' activities).	👍	
Attending school incursions, excursions, or activities, where a legal waiver is required. (These are called 'high risk' activities. For example quad biking, horse riding, kayaking).		👍
















## 6. 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.

It is important carers check with their Communities' Child Protection Worker or CSO or ACCO case worker regarding payment

arrangements prior to accessing physical or mental health treatment for children. It is also important that the child's Child Protection Worker has knowledge of, and is informed of, the outcome of any medical or health appointments.




In the event of an emergency, carers 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 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.		
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.		
Treatment programs for alcohol and other drugs.		
Immunisations if agreed within the child's annual Care Plan.		
Annual flu vaccinations.		
Administration of contraception, testing or treatment for Sexually Transmitted Infections		

## 7. 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. The age and maturity level of a child are important

considerations for personal expression, and children should be guided by their carer to make safe and informed decisions about their own body, and personal expression.

Decision	Carer	Child Protection Worker
Haircuts (where Communities 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).		






## 8. Sexuality and gender diversity

Carers play an important role in supporting children as they develop their sexual and gender identity. Carers provide a safe space for children to learn about sex, sexuality, and gender identity. Communities, CSO and ACCO psychologists are also an important support resource.

Some young people might be unsure of, or may be questioning, their sexuality and/or gender, or may experience fluid sexuality and/or gender which can change over time.

Gender and sexuality each exist on a spectrum and a young person may take some time to understand where they fit. They may feel more same sex attracted, more opposite sex attracted, or somewhere in between. These feelings, uncertainties and questions are perfectly normal, and some young people may need additional support and understanding at these times.

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.		

## 9. Playdates, sleepovers and babysitting

Carers can give consent for everyday activities, such as sleepovers at a friend's house. Prior to 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.

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 child so carers can go out.	👍	
Regular or ongoing babysitting, including engaging a nanny (day nanny or live-in nanny).		👍
A carer using their network, for example their own adult children, to provide babysitting.	👍	
Babysitting arrangements that require travel.		👍











## 10. Sport, recreation and travel

Sport, recreation, and travel are all important activities that support healthy development and community connection for children.

Carers should include children in their care on family trips and holidays, providing these plans

do not conflict with the child's care planning decisions. It is important that carers talk to their Communities' Child Protection Worker or CSO or ACCO case 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 region.		
Overnight travel outside of Western Australia.		
Travel outside of Australia.		
Relocating interstate.		









## 11. 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. Communities supports children's contact with significant others and makes appropriate contact arrangements.

Children may have many different feelings about spending time with others who are important to them. It is common for children to express their feelings through their behaviour, mood, or verbal communication, leading up to and following contact. Children benefit from sensitive care especially at these

times. Carers can support children with their contact experiences by acknowledging and accepting all the child's feelings, embracing the joyful aspects of the child's experience, and providing soothing, empathy, and support when needed. A child's experience of contact is also enhanced when their carers embrace, honour, and value the significance for the child of the relationships being supported through contact.

A child's reaction to contact can sometimes be confusing or worrying for carers. When this happens, it is important for carers to talk about their concerns with their Communities' Child Protection Worker, CSO or ACCO caseworker, about these worries.







Decision	Carer	Child Protection Worker
Who are the people that are safe for the child to have contact with.		
Family contact arrangements.		
Arranging family contact arrangements where this is agreed in the child's care plan.		
Cancelling family contact for any reason, including at the child's request.		
Planned 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.		



## 12. 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.		
Provision of 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.		

## 13. 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 birth certificates		
Application for Certificate of Australian Citizenship		
Application or renewal of a 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.		

## 14. Becoming an adult

Carers have an important role in guiding the development of children and young people in their care, particularly as young people mature to adolescence and approach adulthood.

A child's independence and preference to make their own decisions are very important when it comes to matters relating to becoming an adult.

Carers play an important role in supporting young people to make decisions aligned with their age group and developmental stage. Milestones such as a young person getting their first job, making decisions about higher education or other training opportunities, and starting driving lessons are important stages in a young person's life.

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 boyfriend or girlfriend.		
Moving out of carer's house into independent living.		




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

There are many reasons why a child might unexpectedly leave their care arrangement. These can be one-off situations or regular and repeated absences.

In most circumstances children return to their care arrangement and there is no need for a police response. Children in these circumstances are referred to as being 'unaccounted for'. It is important that the carer call their Communities' Child Protection Worker, or CSO or ACCO case worker (or Crisis Care after hours) to let them know. Carers, with support from the child's Communities' Child Protection Worker should make efforts to find

the child or young person including searching the home/local area and attempting to contact the child via phone, text message, or email.

There are some circumstances where a carer may feel that a child has left their care arrangement and is at immediate and substantial risk (such as if the child has said they may harm themselves). In these circumstances, it is important that carers immediately phone WA Police on 000. Following the call, you should immediately contact the child's Child Protection Worker, or if it is after hours, phone 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.		



## Important phone numbers

### WA Police

Only call **000** in an emergency or life-threatening situation, when urgent police assistance is needed.

Call **131 444** for police assistance or attendance and when it is not an emergency

Calls to 131 444 from most regional areas are automatically directed to the nearest police station.

### Speech or hearing impaired

If you have a speech or hearing disability the triple zero service (000) can be accessed via the National Relay Service, call **TTY 106**.

### Crisis Care

(08) 9223 1111

1800 199 008

### Carer Advocacy and Support

#### Fostering Connections

Tel: 1800 182 178

#### Foster Carer Association WA

Tel: 1800 497 101

#### OurSPACE WA

1300 381 581

### District Metro Offices

#### Department of Communities Fostering Connections

Tel: 1800 182 178

#### Armadale Office

Tel: (08) 6277 4333

#### Cannington Office

Tel: (08) 6277 4666

#### Fremantle Office

Tel: (08) 6277 3939

#### Joondalup Office

Tel: (08) 6277 4111

#### Midland Office

Tel: (08) 6277 3999

#### Mirrabooka Office

Tel: (08) 6277 4999

#### Peel District – Mandurah Office

Tel: (08) 6277 4777

#### Perth Office

Tel: (08) 6277 5222

#### Rockingham Office

Tel: (08) 6277 3888

### District Regional Offices

#### East Kimberley

##### Kununurra Office

Tel: (08) 6414 3300

##### Halls Creek Office

Tel: (08) 6277 3811

#### Goldfields

##### Kalgoorlie Office

Tel: (08) 6277 4222

##### Laverton Office

Tel: 0427 190 182



**Leonora Office**

Tel: 0427 190 182

**Esperance Office**

Tel: (08) 6277 3844

**Great Southern****Albany Office**

Tel: (08) 6277 4100

**Katanning Office**

Tel: (08) 6277 3322

**Murchison****Geraldton Office**

Tel: (08) 6277 5151

**Carnarvon Office**

Tel: (08) 6277 5050

**Meekatharra Office**

Tel: (08) 6277 3988

**Pilbara****South Hedland Office**

Tel: (08) 6414 3311

**Karratha Office**

Tel: (08) 6414 3322

**Roebourne Office**

Tel: (08) 6277 3887

**Newman Office**

Tel: (08) 6277 3911

**South-West****Bunbury Office**

Tel: (08) 6414 2777

**Busselton Office**

Tel: (08) 6277 3666

**Collie Office**

Tel: (08) 6414 2112

**Manjimup Office**

Tel: (08) 6414 2113

**West Kimberley****Broome Office**

Tel: (08) 6277 4888

**Derby Office**

Tel: (08) 6277 4224

**Fitzroy Crossing Office**

Tel: (08) 9193 8400

**Wheatbelt****Northam Office**

Tel: (08) 6277 4141

**Merredin Office**

Tel: (08) 6277 3881

**Narrogin Office**

Tel: (08) 6277 3838

**Moora Office**

Tel: (08) 6277 3855

**Advocate for Children in Care**

Tel: 1800 460 696

Mobile: 0429 086 508

**Foster Care Association of Western Australia (FCAWA)**

Tel: (08) 9242 4222

Country: 1800 497 101

## Glossary

### **Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO)**

ACCOs are controlled and operated by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and governed by a majority Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander governing body. Communities have service agreements with ACCO's, to provide out of home care services. ACCO's are usually the first point of contact for ACCO foster and family carers.

### **Aboriginal Practice Leader (APL)**

Aboriginal Practice Leaders are Communities staff members located in District Offices. APLs must be consulted prior to placement of an Aboriginal child in a care arrangement to ensure the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle is observed. APLs can provide cultural knowledge and support to the care team to ensure the child remains connected to culture.

### **Advocate for Children in Care (Advocate)**

The Advocate for Children in Care (Advocate) can help children and young people in care have their say. They can make sure children have a say in decisions that affect their life. They will:

- listen to children and young people, help them say what they want to say and help get adults to listen
- give information and advice about what children and young people are entitled to, and how they should be treated
- support children and young people if they want to have a decision reviewed or complain about things they believe are wrong
- speak to people in authority about what young people say about what works or doesn't work in their lives.

### **Best interests of the child**

The best interest of the child is the paramount consideration; this includes the child's participation in the decision-making process. This means that in performing a function or exercising a power under the Act relating to a child, the considerations of highest priority must be the best interests of the child and child participation. Section 8 of the Act details a number of guiding principles that must be observed when determining the best interests of the child and child participation.

### **Carer**

Foster, family, or significant other carers who care for a child in the CEO's care.

**Foster Carer** – An approved volunteer who is willing and able to care for a child in the CEO's care on a temporary or long-term basis.

**Family Carer** – An approved carer who is a relative of a child in the CEO's care (parent, grandparent, stepparent, sibling, uncle or aunt, cousin).

**Significant Other Carer** – A type of family carer who is not a relative of the child in the CEO's care but would be included in the child's ecomap, has known and demonstrated an interest in the child and/or family for a significant period and belongs to the same cultural group.

### **Care Plan**

A Care Plan is a written plan that identifies the needs of the child in the CEO's care. It has the information, plans and decisions created to meet the child's needs in nine areas: safety, care arrangement, health, education, social and family relationships, recreation and leisure, emotional and behavioural development, and identity and culture.

## Care Team approach

The Care Team approach is central to how Communities works with children, parents, and their families, carers, members of their community and professionals involved in their care.

## Child Protection Worker

Child Protection Workers are employed by Communities in the areas of child protection, family support and children in care, and have delegated authority under the *Children and Community Service Act 2004*.

## Community Sector Organisation (CSO)

CSO's are non-government organisations, funded by Communities, to provide out of home care services. CSOs are usually the first point of contact for CSO foster and family carers.

## Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) includes groups and individuals who differ according to religion, race, language and ethnicity, except those whose ancestry is Anglo-Saxon, Anglo Celtic, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

## Cultural Diversity advisor

The Cultural Diversity advisor will be notified in accordance of the CaLD Child Placement Principle in the event that the child is placed with a non-CaLD carer. The CaLD advisor will be consulted and involved in key events throughout case management.

## Cultural Support Plan (CSP)

A Cultural Support Plan is written documentation of how a child's cultural, ethnic and religious needs are identified and the plan for how Communities will develop and maintain that child's connection with the culture and traditions of their family or community. The CSP should be developed in collaboration with the child, their family, and other significant people in the child's life, and **must** include strategies for developing and maintaining these connections. The cultural support planning process **must** include consultation with internal and external stakeholders, which may include Elders or religious leaders from

the community, or representatives from Aboriginal Representative Organisations (ARO's) or other professional support workers, where appropriate.

## District Psychologist

The role of the District psychologist is to provide a clinical assessment on the mental health of the child in care and provide training, attend court, and provide therapy and assessments on the child and family's parenting capacity.

## Education Officer

Education Officers are located in child protection districts, metropolitan residential care homes and secure care and are available to support and address the educational needs of a child in the CEO's care.

## Gillick Principle

The Gillick Principle stipulates that a minor is capable of giving informed consent when they "achieve a sufficient understanding and intelligence to enable him or her to understand fully what is proposed". If these criteria are satisfied, then the child is considered to be Gillick Competent. The child's competence is viewed as being an emerging one. This means, the carer's authority decreases in proportion to the growth of the child's competence. In practice this means that the age of the child should not be the only criteria of their maturity and competence. Consideration needs to be given on a case-by-case basis to judge whether the child is Gillick Competent (capable enough) to give informed consent on each particular issue. To do this the child needs to be provided with appropriate and adequate information to help them understand what is being proposed.

## Senior Child Protection Worker – Placement Services

Senior Child Protection Worker - Placement Services, are sometimes known as Placement Officers, or SOCS (Senior Officer Care Services). These Child Protection Workers are usually the first point of contact for Department foster and family carers.

## Notes







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