



## NSW-P-009: Foster Carer Recruitment

### 1. PURPOSE

To outline the process, responsibilities and strategy involved in recruiting foster carers to MacKillop

### 2. SCOPE

This procedure relates to all MacKillop programs providing Foster Care services to children and young people

### 3. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Foster Care Recruitment	The process of promotion of the organisation/program and responding to enquiries designed to increase to number of foster carers available to provide care for children and young people
Recruitment Worker	Employees with the responsibility for recruitment processes within a program
Community Relations Unit	A central MacKillop unit responsible for organisations publicity and external communication. This unit supports local program recruitment
Foster Carer Database	A record of all details of potential and authorised carers maintained by each program

### 4. PROCEDURE

#### 4.1 Recruitment Plan

- 4.1.1 A Recruitment plan must be developed by each MacKillop foster carer program, incorporating both central MacKillop strategies and local strategies tailored to the social and cultural make-up of the catchment area.
- 4.1.2 Components of the recruitment plan include strategies for publicity, recruitment, retention and annual review / evaluation of the plan. At the completion of evaluating the strategies, information is fed back into the next recruitment plan, with suggestions for modified recruitment strategies as appropriate
- 4.1.3 Recruitment strategies include word of mouth; advertising; targeted mail outs; publicity (including utilising carers in the activities): radio, local newspaper, local events, public speaking (including use of DVD); specific recruitment; cross agency information sharing; within agency cross over; regional campaigns.

#### 4.2 Enquiries

- 4.2.1 If the enquiry progresses to an application, the enquiry becomes the first stage of the assessment process.

- 4.2.2 Enquiries are responded to by the worker/s with responsibility to carry out recruitment tasks who will explain the range of volunteering options at MacKillop, including becoming a foster carer.
- 4.2.3 If the enquirer expresses interest an information pack is supplied. The information pack contains:
- A cover letter/note
  - Information about MacKillop Family Services and the specific program
  - Information about fostering, and the competencies required
  - Details of the assessment process
  - A registration of interest form
- 4.2.4 If the registration of interest forms are not returned to the service, the recruitment worker will send a follow up letter, highlighting other options for volunteering as previously discussed.
- 4.2.5 If the registration of interest forms are not returned, the enquirers' name remains on the foster carer database for a set period of time, with hard copies of the person's details destroyed in line with privacy requirements.

### **4.3 Information Exchange Session**

- 4.3.1** Upon return of registration of interest forms, an information session/home visit must be arranged within 2 weeks by the recruitment worker and if appropriate a secondary assessor.
- 4.3.2** The purpose of the information exchange session is to inform the enquirer of
- The foster carer role
  - mandatory checks that are undertaken
  - expectations about the minimum standards of the core competencies
  - information about the way placements are made
  - the processes of training, assessment and authorisation.
- 4.3.3** The workers will provide and explain the context of a range of forms that the potential caregiver will be required to complete in order to commence training:
- An application form
  - Information required to prepare a life history
  - *Charter of rights for children and young people in out-of-home care in NSW*
  - *Code of Conduct for Authorised Foster, Relative and Kinship Carers*
  - MacKillop Foster Carer Agreement (to sign)
  - MacKillop confidentiality form (to sign)
  - Consent to Police Check form (to sign)
  - Health checklist (to complete)
  - Medical check form
  - Consent for medical practitioner to release information (to sign)
  - Application form for Working with Children Check (Copy of receipt to be returned to MacKillop)

### **4.4 Receipt of forms**

- 4.4.1** Once the forms are returned the recruitment worker will process the information in order to determine whether it is appropriate to continue with the application.

- 4.4.2 If the potential carer has previously been involved as a foster carer with another agency, the recruitment worker will post a form requesting consent to speak with the previous agency. If the form is not returned, the recruitment worker or manager will follow up with the applicant by telephone. Once the consent form is returned, the information can be gathered from the previous agency and the application may then proceed
- 4.4.3 Some services may contact the applicant's referees at this point
- 4.5 Decision to continue application**
- 4.5.1 Once all the forms and additional information are processed, a decision is made by the recruitment worker in consultation with the manager as to the appropriateness of continuing with the application.
- 4.5.2 Any concerns that result in a decision to cease the process are made by the recruitment worker in conjunction with the manager and/or team leader.
- 4.5.3 If the process is ceased at this point the applicant will receive verbal feedback from the recruitment worker and a formal letter from the program Manager outlining the reasons for the cessation based on the current lack of demonstrated evidence of meeting the core competencies. The letter will inform the applicant of the grievance processes available to them and the suggested actions necessary in order to meet the required competencies. The foster carer data base is updated to reflect the outcome
- 4.6 If the application is assessed to be appropriate, then the applicant is invited to attend the *Shared Stories Shared Lives* training.

## REFERENCES

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- NSW-P-010 Pre-service training and assessment for foster carers