

MacKillop Family Services

OHC-P-052: Home Based Carer Assessment, Training and Accreditation

1. PURPOSE

To guide MacKillop staff in the accreditation of home based carers using the Department of Human Services training framework that includes Shared Stories Shared Lives Training and the Step by Step Assessment process and meet the following competencies required to be a carer

- Demonstrate personal readiness to become a foster carer
- Work effectively as part of a team
- Promote the positive development of children and young people
- Provide a safe environment that is free from abuse
- Understanding of trauma and attachment theory

2. SCOPE

Staff of MacKillop out-of-home-care programs in Victoria

3. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Accreditation	The process of formally approving an applicant as eligible to provide care
Assessor	A person who has completed the mandatory <i>Step by Step</i> familiarisation training
Trainer	A person who has completed the mandatory <i>Shared Stories Shared Lives</i> familiarisation training

4. PROCEDURE

This procedure describes Shared Stories Shared lives and Step by Step accreditation training as sequential processes however it is acknowledged that at times these processes occur concurrently. When this occurs trainers will ensure that sufficient time is given for carers to

absorb information and reflect on themes and issues raised in both Shared Stories Shared lives and the accreditation training.

- 4.1 Enrol applicants in the next planned *Shared Stories Shared Lives* training or organise individual sessions if required.
- 4.2 Conduct training with two trainers and cover the following modules of required competency:
 - Foster care in context
 - Bonding and Attachment
 - Grief and loss (power of past experiences)
 - Maintaining connection (working with families)
 - Experience of abuse
 - Responding to challenging behaviours
 - Team work
 - Moving on (relinquishment)
 - Sanctuary
- 4.3 Where carers are being recruited for specific programs add additional training modules including disability or the Circle program.
- 4.4 If at any time during the training the trainers are concerned about the applicant's ability to meet the requirements of the modules then discuss this with them and suggest how they might gain the competencies required or, in consultation with a Manager, make a decision not to progress with the applicant.
- 4.5 Any decision to not proceed with training will be verbally communicated to the applicant and formally documented. The grievance process and information will be sent to the applicant by the Manager.
- 4.6 Undertake the Step by Step Assessment with two assessors in accordance with the Step by Step Manual.¹
- 4.7 Undertake a Home and Environment Check and Fire Audit as part of this process.
- 4.8 Ensure that anyone over 18 years of age living in the home have undertaken Police Checks
- 4.9 Ensure that anyone over 18 years of age who will have a caring role with children and young people in care has a Working with Children Check.
- 4.10 Undertake referee checks.
- 4.11 Complete the Step by Step Assessment Record Checklist to ensure all checks and information have been collected and documented in the Carer Management System.

¹ Whilst at times due to the urgency of placement training of carers is expedited care needs to be taken that carers are given adequate time to process information contained within training.

- 4.12 Complete a formal assessment report in line with the *Shared Stories Shared Lives* requirements and structured around the core competencies.
- 4.13 Review the report with the applicant and amend any factual errors and note any feedback /disputed information in an addendum to the report.
- 4.14 Present the report to the formal Caregiver Accreditation Panel prior to the meeting to ensure they have time to read it. The panel will include at a minimum the following people:
- Program Manager or nominee who chairs the panel
 - Department of Human Service representative
 - A representative of an external community service organisation
- 4.15 Record the outcome of the panel that can be:
- Accreditation is granted (including age, gender, type of care accredited to provide)
 - Accreditation is granted with conditions (trial period with specific limitations/ boundaries) and returned to the panel for review
 - Accreditation is not granted
 - Decision to accredit is deferred pending further information that will be presented at a subsequent meeting
- The core membership constitutes a decision making quorum but additional representatives can attend.
- 4.16 Having made a decision the Chairperson of the panel will send the Approval Panel Recommendation and Minutes and the completed OHC-F-104 Home Based Carer Accreditation Process Approval form to the General Manager of Out of Home Care (Vic) with an accreditation recommendation.
- 4.17 The General Manager of Out of Home Care will review the OHC-F-104 Home Based Carer Accreditation Process Approval form to ensure that all required accreditation processes have been undertaken and sign off on the accreditation if satisfied.
- 4.18 The General Manager of Out of Home Care will only review the full report and decision in exceptional circumstances.
- 4.19 The General Manager Out of Home Care will send the approval form back to the program where it will be stored on the carer file. Carers will be informed of the outcome verbally by the assessing worker and formally by letter including the information on the grievance process.

REFERENCES

OHC-F-101 General Carer Accreditation Letter

OHC-F-104 Home Based Carer Accreditation Process Approval