



NSW-P-010: Foster Care pre-service training and assessment

1. PURPOSE

To ensure a consistent approach to quality training and assessment of foster carers that meets community standards.

2. SCOPE

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

3. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Step by Step Training	The standard framework by which foster care agencies train potential carers. It consists of eight core modules
<i>Shared Stories Shared Lives (SSSL)</i> Assessment	The standard framework by which foster care agencies assess potential carers Assessment is structured around four core competencies considered essential in providing care for children placed outside of their family home. The competencies are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Demonstrate personal readiness to become a Foster Carer B. Work effectively as part of a team C. Promote the positive development of children and young people D. Provide a safe environment that is free of abuse

4. PROCEDURE

4.1 Training

4.1.1 If the application is assessed to be appropriate, then the applicant is invited to attend the *Shared Stories Shared Lives* training.

4.1.2 All prospective carers are expected to attend all the sessions of training. In the event that the primary carer can not attend all sessions, consideration will be given to providing the module/s on an individual basis, ensuring the competencies are covered.

4.1.3 Training based on the *Shared Stories Shared Lives* framework is run by Recruitment and Training workers throughout the year, as the need arises. There are always two facilitators (either two workers or a worker and a carer) running the training sessions,

as well as additional specialists and carers as appropriate. Trainers must have completed *Shared Stories Shared Lives* training themselves prior to delivering training.

4.1.4 Training is based around the core competencies, and includes modules on:

- 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)

Information about MacKillop Family Services is also provided during the training.

4.1.5 Additional modules may be included when training potential carers for a disability specific program, or for a specific placement of a child with a disability

4.1.6 Training is run over a number of sessions, either evening or week-end, as determined by the workers and the availability of the applicants. The length of training may vary, but all competencies will be covered within it.

4.1.7 Any concerns that arise for the training workers during the training process about whether an applicant will meet one or more of the competencies should be addressed with the applicant. Where appropriate, strategies will be developed with the applicant to assist their growth in the identified area/s (eg external training, some additional volunteer experience, reading etc)

4.2 Assessment

Once the applicant has successfully completed the *Shared Stories Shared Lives* training the *Step by Step* Assessment process commences:

- 4.2.1 The assessment is conducted by two workers, including the Recruitment and Training worker where the position exists.
- 4.2.2 Assessment is guided by the format set out in the *Step by Step* manual, structured around the core competencies.
- 4.2.3 Assessment takes place over 4 – 5 meetings during which assessment modules based on the core competencies are completed.
- 4.2.4 The assessment process includes individual assessment of all family members as well as reviewing the life history record that the applicant has developed.
- 4.2.5 If there are any other members of the household over the age of 14 who are not directly involved in caring, a police check needs to be conducted, as well as a screening interview to assess any potential risk concerns for foster placement.
- 4.2.6 In the course of the assessment process, the assessing worker carries out a Fire Audit and a Home & Environment Safety Check at the applicant's house.
- 4.2.7 The Assessment Record Checklist (part of the *Step by Step* manual) must be completed during the process of the assessment to ensure that required processes and information has been collected.

- 4.2.8 If the referee checks have not previously been carried out, then they are completed during the assessment.
- 4.2.9 The assessing worker should compile an assessment report, structured around the core competencies, in relation to any applicant that has successfully completed the training and assessment processes. The assessment report becomes part of the accreditation process.
- 4.2.10 Concerns by the assessing worker that the applicant does not meet one or more of the competencies as described in the assessment modules will be discussed with the Team Leader and/or Program Manager.
- 4.2.11 In the instance that a decision is made not to continue with the application, this information will be fed back to the applicant verbally by the assessing worker with regard to the suggested actions to be undertaken to meet the required competencies. A formal letter will also be sent in the Manager's name, with this correspondence informing the applicant of grievance processes available to them.
- 4.2.12 Once the assessment report has been completed, it is shown to the applicant. Any comments that the applicant has about the report will be fed into the authorisation panel as an addendum to the assessment report. The assessor will amend any information that is identified as factually incorrect in the assessment report

REFERENCES

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- NSW-P-011 Foster Carer Authorisation Procedure