

## Attachment 4

### Youth Care Policies & Procedures Manual Section 2.2: Page 159-165 [Attachment 4]

#### 2.2 CARER TRAINING

##### YOUTH CARE UPA POLICY NO: 2.2

###### Policy

Youth Care UPA will provide all authorised carers with training which is relevant to their role, based on the developmental, cultural, identity and spiritual needs of children and young persons placed in Youth Care UPA's out-of-home care program.

###### Objective

All carers to attain a high level of skills for caring for children and young persons through training provided by Youth Care UPA

###### Principles of Youth Care UPA Policy No: 2.2

Prior to approval, all potential carers will be assessed as competent to be an authorised carer. Determination of training needs is a key part of the assessment process.

Youth Care UPA has adopted the carer initial training package "Shared Stories: Shared Lives", produced by the Centre for Community Welfare Training for the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA). The three principles underlying the training package are: -

- The needs of children and young persons are paramount;
- Participation of children and young persons in decision-making;
- Partnership between birth families, carers and professionals.

Potential carers are required to attend all training sessions, which form part of the Shared Stories Shared Lives package. Household members will be required to attend and actively participate in relevant training sessions as identified by the Program Manager and/or Service Coordinator. If the Shared Stories: Shared Lives training is not completed, the potential carer is not able to progress on to the assessment stage.

Training developed within Youth Care UPA policy guidelines will educate and prepare authorised carers to work in partnership with Youth Care UPA staff and other health and welfare professionals.

Licensed carers must attend at least four (4) training sessions per year to maintain their skills and knowledge and continue providing the best quality care and protection to children within the program.

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Certain training sessions may be mandatory as they are sourced specifically with certain carers or children in mind and therefore those carers must attend. Other training sessions can be sourced by the carer elsewhere or they can choose to attend ones provided by Youth Care UPA.

If training is not mandatory, carers do not have to attend but they must still have completed a minimum of four sessions throughout the year to retain their carer licence with Youth Care UPA.

This preparation is designed to enable them to:

- recognise that the needs of children and young persons in out-of-home care are the major consideration.
- recognise the need for participation of children and young persons in decision making that affects them.
- support and assist children and young persons to make sense of their life experience.
- understand the crucial role of the relationship between birth families, authorised carers and agency (professional) workers and how they can keep children and young persons connected with family and significant others.
- Understand the roles and responsibilities of authorised carers and Youth Care UPA as provided by the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*, Regulations and all applicable standards.
- Understand child development and age appropriate care;
- Understand how to respond to and recognise child safety issues;
- Understand the need to foster the general wellbeing of children and children and young persons;
- Understand the scope of caring for child or young person in a manner which promotes their welfare

and

- Understand the guidelines on the disclosure of placement information to parents and significant others to a child or young person's life and the implications for authorised carers.

Youth Care UPA training policy will:

- be relevant and up to date;
- ensure that the potential carer is supported in their training and preparation for their role as an Authorised Carer;
- ensure that all household members are supported in their training and preparation for their roles in having a child or young person in care placed in their family;
- allow for initial, ongoing and two way assessment of the authorised carer to ensure ongoing training needs are met;
- have the measures to determine if there are others within the household who will be required to attend training;
- remove or redress any barriers to training;

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- ensure the employment, wherever possible, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander accredited trainers where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young persons are being cared for;
- ensure consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- reflect the principles of participation, self-determination and placement as defined by the *Children and Young Persons(Care and Protection) Act 1998 No.157*;
- challenge the carer's resources and abilities to meet the diverse needs of children and young persons who may enter their care, to assess if the carer is willing and able to help them maintain family contact, language, cultural identity and community ties.

### Carer Profile Book

Youth Care UPA suggests that a "carer's profile" book be compiled which consists of a book or other visual representation of the carer family or household. This book will be given to children and young persons who are identified as requiring an out-of-home care placement, to enable them to gain an impression of the carer, their family and home, prior to being placed in their care.

### Carer's Information Folder

Carers are encouraged to have an Information Folder or record keeping system, which they can refer to when seeking information about all aspects of care.

Youth Care UPA provide carers with the "Carer's Handbook" and initial training package kit, which assists them to access information. Carers are also encouraged to join the Foster Carers Association of NSW, participate in local network meetings, and access the 24-hour crisis line if the need arises.

### Responsibility:

Program Manager / Service Coordinator

Case Workers

Authorised Carer/s

### Regulations:

- NSW Out-of-Home Care Standards, Standard 2

### Documents Relating To Policy No: 2.2

- ACWA Training Package – Shared Stories Shared Lives
- Carer Handbook
- Carer Information Folder
- Carer "profile" book
- Carer record keeping system
- Carer's Certificate

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### 2.1 Excerpt Step-by-Step Carer Assessment Program

The Step-by-Step Program is a Competency Based Assessment and recognises the important work carried out by authorised carers. It allows accredited assessors to explore the skills and experience of potential carers in order to make an informed decision on their competency to undertake the work of an authorised carer.

All applications from potential carers will be comprehensively assessed in a series of interview and information exchange sessions using the CCWT/ACWA Step-by-Step Program. This process allows prospective carers to withdraw at any stage in the process.

*The Step-by-Step program contains the following sections:*

**Course Outline** - A detailed outline for a training course for assessors on how to use Step by Step as a competency based assessment tool.

**Information Pack for prospective carers** – A resource sent to people after they have made an initial enquiry about being a Carer. It contains a flow Chart of the Assessment process, assessment and training process and a “Registration of Interest” form.

**Manual for Assessors** – a detailed outline of the assessment activities undertaken with applicants.

**Applicant booklet** – A collection of handouts and worksheets used by the applicant during the assessment interviews and includes a guide for completing a Life History.

**Assessment record** –It is commenced when a "Registration of Interest" has been completed and an appointment for an Information Exchange Session has been made. The Assessment Record contains the Assessment Record Checklist and becomes the basis for the decision to approve or decline the prospective carer. The Assessment Record can be used in any appeal process.

#### **Initial Meeting**

The Service Coordinator & Casework Specialist are present at the initial meeting with a prospective carer. This meeting is held at the home of the prospective carer or at another nominated venue.

#### **Post Training Assessment:**

Post training assessments (Interviews A,B,C,D, E found in the CCWT/ACWA Step by Step Package) are carried out by two of the professional staff members, and takes place over a number of home visits, at least one of which is an opportunity to talk to all family members of the primary carer. Once information is compiled, Competencies A, B, C, D, E (ACWA Step by Step Package) are completed by the Case Workers.

#### **Objectives of Assessment:**

The following list of objectives is contained in the “Applicant Booklet” (ACWA’s Step by Step Competency Based Resource Package) may be referred to by the carers during their assessment, as an outline for the interview.

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- To explore aspects of your life up till now which may impact on your abilities in this area;
- To look at your family situation as it is now, and its strengths and vulnerabilities regarding another person coming into your family;
- To look at your supports from friends and family and the wider community, and how they may be of best use to you;
- To flag, at this stage, any problems or issues which may arise in your family because of the presence of a young person;
- To discuss with you, areas which arose during the interviews and training so far which need more attention, discussion, or clarification;
- To explore with you, the areas which you will need least assistance in caring for a child or young person;
- To explore with you, the areas where you will need quite a lot of support, at least in the first stages of a placement;
- To explore your attitudes to parents who have abused and/or neglected their child, especially the child that you will be caring.
- Summary Report and Recommendations

A summary report and recommendations is be completed and signed by the Regional Manager of UPA and the Program Manager of Youth Care UPA.

### Authorisation of Carers:

Carers, who have completed the training and have undergone the assessment process successfully, are licensed by Youth Care UPA. Carers may also have specific conditions added to their authorisation; for example, number of children and young persons, or for children and young persons of a specific age range they are licensed to have placed in their care.

## 2.2 CARER TRAINING PROCEDURE

### Procedure relating to Youth Care UPA Policy No: 2.2

Youth Care UPA will provide relevant and up to date training and ongoing training for carers to enable them to provide out-of-home care, which meets the identified needs of children and young persons.

Prior to placement, prospective authorised carers who have progressed to the entry level training stage will have undergone probity, health and referee checks and have been assessed as competent as authorised carers.

Determination of individual training is a key part of the assessment process and so by this stage the program manager and Case Worker will have a valuable insight into the prospective carer's willingness and capability with regards to training. During this time the program manager will have determined if there are others within the household who will be required to attend training. All entry-level training is compulsory and no applicant will progress further until the entry-level training pre-requisites have been completed.

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On successful completion of all entry-level components the applicant will progress to a self-assessment process. This process will provide prompts, which will indicate strengths and vulnerabilities of the prospective carer and the carer's family and will redress any barriers to training

Once it is apparent that the application to be an authorised carer will go ahead the prospective carer will enter the intensive interview phase of recruitment.

This stage includes applicants being interviewed individually and as a family unit with all children of the carer family being part of this process, including adult offspring of the applicant. This session takes about 45 minutes with each child and explores family relationships; expectations of the rewards and challenges of being an authorised carer; and readiness for caring, all from the child or young person's perspective.

All relevant information exchanged in the intensive interview process will be accurately documented on the Authorised Carer's Assessment Record following ACWA's "Step by Step" process. (Refer Section 2.1)

### Training Program

Youth Care UPA training for prospective authorised carers is based on the Shared Stories Shared Lives Package.

Training developed within Youth Care UPA policy guidelines aims to educate and prepare authorised carers to work in partnership with Youth Care UPA staff and other health and welfare professionals.

This preparation is designed to enable them to:

- Recognise that the needs of children and young persons in out-of-home care are the major consideration.
- Recognise the need for participation of children and young persons in decision-making that affects them.
- Support and assist children and young persons to make sense of their life experience.
- Address the developmental, identity, cultural, spiritual and religious needs of the child or young person whom they will care for.
- Understand the crucial role of the relationships between birth families; authorised carers and agency (professional) workers and how they can keep children and young persons connected with family and significant others.
- Roles and responsibilities of authorised carers and Youth Care UPA as provided by the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 No.157*, Regulations and all applicable standards.

Youth Care UPA carer training will be delivered by a team, which will comprise of experienced and accredited Trainers; an experienced authorised carer (who remains present throughout the training); young person/s who have been in out-of-home care and a variety of guest speakers.

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These will include birth parents and representatives from other agencies and allied services. The opportunity to have a child or young person attend as a guest speaker will give carers insight into the expectations of care from the young person's point of view. In addition the child or young person will gain self-confidence from public speaking and their personal potential will be enhanced.

Wherever possible, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander accredited trainers will be employed whenever Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young persons are being cared for. The Program Manager will also arrange consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and ensure that training material and format reflects the principles of participation, self-determination and placement as defined by the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 No 157*.

### Training Format

The initial training is divided into nine sessions, each session containing one module. Modules are to follow in sequential order. The course is able to be run as nine separate modules or can be run in blocks, for example over two weekends one full day followed by 5 evening sessions (from Shared Stories Shared Lives Package)

Youth Care UPA Authorised Carer training is intended to be a positive experience for its participants and will allow them to:

- Be supported in their training and preparation for their role as an authorised carer.
- Have their personal resources and abilities challenged to meet the diverse needs of children and young persons who may enter their care.
- Practice skills and have learning reinforced over time.
- Experience differing learning styles.
- Receive and provide constructive feedback over time.
- Be genuinely affirmed.
- Evaluate whether being an authorised specialist carer is the right choice for them.

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The Shared Stories: Shared Lives training is comprised of the following modules:

- Module 1 - Foster Care in Context
- Module 2 - Bonding and Attachment
- Module 3 - Greif and Loss
- Module 4 - Abuse and Trauma
- Module 5 - Identity and Birth Family Contact
- Module 6 - Responding to Challenging Behaviours
- Module 7 - Team Work
- Module 8 - Maintaining Cultural Connection
- Module 9 - The Story Continues