

POLICY

Title:	Responding to concerns about the standards of care
Policy No.	CPD326-8

Policy Statement:

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (the department) has a legislative responsibility to ensure children in out-of-home care are cared for in a way that meets the statement of standards (*Child Protection Act 1999*, section 122) and the Charter of Rights for a Child in Care (*Child Protection Act 1999*, Schedule 1).

The department has a responsibility to provide support to foster and kinship carers, provisionally approved carers and licensed care services, to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities under the *Child Protection Act 1999*. The department will monitor the standard of care provided to children through proactive case work and support to address concerns and issues as they arise and prevent concerns from continuing or escalating.

Where concerns are raised that indicate that the standard of care provided to a child in out-of-home care may not have been met, the department will respond by conducting a standard of care review. Where concerns indicate that a child in out-of-home care has been harmed, or it is suspected that a child has been harmed, the department will respond by recording a harm report and conducting an investigation and assessment.

When responding to concerns about the standards of care provided to a child in out-of-home care, including reports of harm, the department will work in a cooperative and supportive manner with carers and licensed care services. Responses to concerns will be undertaken in a sensitive, respectful and timely manner, which promotes the continuity of the child's relationships and the stability of the child's placement, as far as possible.

Children will be kept informed of matters affecting them, in a way and to an extent that is appropriate, having regard to their age and ability to understand. Children will have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making that affects their lives.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, a recognised entity must be given an opportunity to participate in:

- decision-making about the appropriate response to concerns received about the quality of the care provided to children in out-of-home care
- decision-making about the outcome of standard of care reviews and investigation and assessments of harm reports.

Principles:

- The safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child are paramount.
- A child has a right to be protected from harm or risk of harm.
- A child has the right to stable living arrangements, including arrangements that provide for the child's developmental, educational, emotional, health, intellectual and physical needs.
- A child has the right to know, explore and maintain his or her identity and values, including cultural, ethnic and religious identity and values.
- Responses to concerns received about the quality of care provided to a child will be responded to as a matter of priority and within designated timeframes.

Objectives:

This policy aims to ensure that:

- the department is actively monitoring the standard of care provided to children in out-of-home care and responding appropriately when concerns are raised
- the support needs of carers are prioritised and responded to as soon as issues are identified
- the department's response to concerns about the standard of care provided to a child in out-of-home care are undertaken in a manner that is collaborative, respectful and supportive, with the overarching aim of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children in out-of-home care.

Scope:

This policy and associated procedures apply to children who have been placed in out-of-home care under the authority of the *Child Protection Act 1999*, section 82(1). It does not apply to:

- children subject to a child protection order granting custody to a member of the child's family (*Child Protection Act 1999*, section 61(d))
- children subject to a child protection order granting long-term guardianship to a person other than the chief executive, unless the concerns relate to respite care provided by an approved foster carer or provisionally approved carer (*Child Protection Act 1999*, section 61(f)).

Roles and Responsibilities:

The roles and responsibilities of staff are outlined in the associated procedures in the Child Safety Practice Manual, Chapter 9.

Authority:

Child Protection Act 1999

Child Protection Regulation 2011

Delegations:

Director-General
 Deputy Director-General, Strategic Policy and Programs
 Regional Executive Director
 Regional Director, Child Safety
 Manager, Child Safety Service Centre
 Manager, Child Safety After Hours Service Centre
 Team Leader, Child Safety Service Centre
 Team Leader, Child Safety After Hours Service Centre
 Child Safety Officer, Child Safety Service Centre
 Child Safety Officer, Child Safety After Hours Service Centre

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Office: Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

Help Contact: Child Protection Development

Links:**Procedures**

Child Safety Practice Manual, Chapter 9

Related policies

Carer learning and support (457)

Carer participation (460)

Critical incident reporting (391)

Foster care training (383)

Information exchange and service delivery co-ordination (403)

Participation by children and young people in decision-making (369)

Placement of children in care as part of an integrated child protection response (578)

Response to children and young people sexually abused whilst placed in out-of-home care (627)

Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities (610)

Related legislation or standard

Child Protection Act 1999

Child Protection Regulation 2011

Statement of Commitment between the Department of Child Safety, foster care services and the carers of Queensland

Rescinded policy

326-7 Assessing and responding to matters of concern

Margaret Allison

Director-General