

Statement of standards

Conversation guide



Queensland
Foster and
Kinship Care

DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND



Queensland
Government

Acknowledgment of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the State of Queensland as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this Country and acknowledge the cultural and spiritual connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with the land and sea.

We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as two unique and diverse peoples with their own rich and distinct cultures.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present as well as the existing and emerging leaders who walk together in partnership on this journey to improve outcomes for children, young people, and families.

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Introduction

The statement of standards conversation guide was developed by Child Safety with Queensland Foster and Kinship Care (QFKC), foster and kinship carers, and foster and kinship service providers.

The statement of standards are part of law within the *Child Protection Act 1999*. There are 11 standards, and each one relates to how children and young people in care are to be looked after. This guide explains each standard and provides examples of these in action.

The aim of the guide is to bridge the gap between legislation, policy and practice with the understanding that the statement of standards are best met by everyone working together as a care team. The aim is to support communication, collaboration and shared understanding among carers, foster and kinship service providers, and Child Safety.

When everyone works together and the statement of standards are met, children in care can thrive.



The statement of standards are met by the child's care team, which might include foster or kinship carers, youth workers, Child Safety, a foster and kinship service provider, the Office of the Public Guardian and other specialists.

You are part of the care team and everyone within the team has a responsibility to meet the statement of standards for the child.



The story of the artwork

Growing strong together

I painted this tree to show how kids like me grow best when we have the right care and support.

The roots stand for the things every child needs to feel safe and strong – like love, stability, and rights. These are the foundations we all need to grow.

The trunk represents safety. When kids feel safe, it becomes easier for everything else – like learning and trusting – to grow too.

The branches show what helps us thrive – like health, belonging, and culture – the things that make us feel proud and connected.

I included Aboriginal symbols to honour culture and show what's important to kids in care. You'll see symbols for a long journey, love, home/shelter, star, and meeting place.

The dot painting around the tree shows how all our stories are different but connected. Every child has a story, and they all matter.

Just like a tree needs good soil, sunlight, and water to grow strong – kids need love, care, and safety to grow into who they're meant to be.

Conner

The child's dignity and rights will be respected at all times.

The child will be treated as a valued person. They will be supported to embrace who they are, feel good about themselves and experience acceptance.

How might this look?

The child is asked what they think about decisions that affect them. This doesn't mean the child makes the decision, but their views are considered important.

The child's personal story is kept private and only information people need to know is shared. Different people need different information, like a doctor compared to a babysitter.

In their home the child is treated fairly and encouraged to participate in activities alongside others in the home. If the child needs extra help to join in, the care team works together to see if this support can be provided.

The child is told, in an age-appropriate way, what is happening and why decisions have been made. They are given the chance to ask questions.

The care team works together to understand the child's identity, personality, interests, culture and what makes them feel safe.

Let's talk about it

Are the child's thoughts and feelings listened to and considered? Apart from words, how else could a child share how they're feeling?

Why is it important that the child's personal story is respected and not discussed with people who do not need to know?

If the child shares information about their identity or views, why is it important that they are listened to and supported without being judged?

Why is it important that the care team understands and respects the child's individual identity?

Does the child know about their rights including the Charter of rights for a child in care and the *Human Rights Act 2019*, and how these relate to them?

My rights in care – information for children (4-8 years)

www.qld.gov.au/myrightsincare

My rights in care – information for young people (ages 9+ years)

www.qld.gov.au/myrightsincare

Human Rights Act 2019

www.qld.gov.au/charterofrights-child-in-care

Child Protection Act 1999

www.qld.gov.au/charterofrights-child-in-care

The child's needs for physical care will be met, including adequate food, clothing and shelter.

The child will always have their physical needs met. They will have enough food, clothing that suits the weather, and a safe and comfortable home.

How might this look?

The child has regular meals and snacks that meet their dietary, cultural or religious needs.

The child has a home that is welcoming and comfortable, helping them to feel safe.

The child has clothes that fit well, are in good condition and suit the weather.

The child has their own safe space to sleep, privacy, and a place to store their belongings.

The care team makes sure that the child's home is physically safe. For example, the fire alarms work, dangerous items are stored away, and the pool is well fenced.

Let's talk about it

Some children will need certain food, clothing or housing. Who could be spoken to, to meet this standard? Consider how the child's family, a dietician, an elder, disability specialist or the child themselves could help.

In a busy home how could the care team make sure each child has their own personal space and privacy?

What is a Household Safety Study and how is it used to make sure the child's home is physically safe?

What does the care allowance pay for, what other supports are available, and who is responsible for applying for these supports to make sure this standard can be met?

All households are different, including what can be provided to children due to location or finances. Considering the variety of households across Queensland, when might concerns be raised that the child does not have enough food, appropriate clothing or safe shelter?

The child will receive emotional care that allows him or her to experience being cared about and valued, and that contributes to the child's positive self-regard.

The child will feel cared for as a valuable and respected member of their home and community. They will be encouraged to be proud of who they are.

How might this look?

The child experiences being cared for by people who are warm, kind and welcoming.

The care team speaks to the child about what they are good at, and their wins and milestones are celebrated.

The child can be themselves without worrying that they will be judged, shamed or criticised.

The child feels people are interested in them, their life, likes and dislikes and who they are as an individual.

The child feels they are listened to when they share their thoughts and feelings.

When the child has inappropriate behaviours, they are responded to calmly without aggression.

Let's talk about it

How can a child be shown that they are loved, valued and important?

How might a child feel if people around them are negative about their family, background, or their identity?

How could a child pick up on those feelings even if nothing is explicitly said?

How can focusing on what a child is good at help to improve their behaviour?

If someone does not have the information they need to care for a child, how will this impact their ability to meet this standard? Consider this in relation to a carer, a medical specialist, daycare provider, education staff or a therapist.

If extra help is needed to meet the emotional needs of a child, who could offer this?

The child's needs relating to his or her culture and ethnic grouping will be met.

The child's cultural background, traditions and ethnic identity will be respected and supported by maintaining the child's connections to their culture, language and community as part of their daily life.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children will be helped to connect to family, kin, culture, country and community to maintain their identity and support their wellbeing and healing.

How might this look?

The child is well connected to their family and community so that they can maintain and develop their cultural and ethnic identity.

Members of the child's care team talk with the child's family and community to learn about the child's cultural and ethnic needs, such as their connections to family, language, religion, traditions, protocols and spirituality.

The child has a Cultural Support Plan that includes information about their culture and ethnicity, as well as how the child's care team and others will support their identity.

Culture and ethnicity are part of the child's daily life through connections, conversations, routines, knowledge, books, toys and media.

The care team speaks positively about the child's culture and ethnicity to help the child be proud of who they are.

Let's talk about it

How can meeting a child's cultural and ethnic needs help a child's overall wellbeing, sense of belonging and confidence?

Why is it important to support a child's cultural and ethnic identity in their everyday life alongside formal events and activities?

If there are costs associated with meeting the cultural and ethnic needs of the child, who is responsible for these costs?

To meet this standard, why is it important that a Cultural Support Plan provides clear information on the child's cultural and ethnic identity and how their needs are to be met and by who?

For an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child, how does the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle help the child stay connected to culture?

What is the role of the cultural practice advisor and how can they help to meet the cultural needs of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

The Child Placement Principle guides how Child Safety works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families. It shows how culture helps keep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children safe and well. It also ensures Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, their family and community always have a say in what happens to them. The five core elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle are:



Prevention

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have the right to be brought up within their own family and community.



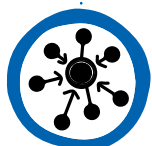
Partnership

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the right to join in important decision making, including the design and delivery of programs and services.



Placement

If an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child is to be placed in care, the child has a right to be placed with a member of their extended family group or community.



Participation

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their parents and family members have a right to participate in decisions regarding the safety, belonging and wellbeing of their children, under the *Child Protection Act 1999*.



Connection

An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child has a right to stay connected to family, community, culture, traditions and language.

Find out more: www.qld.gov.au/atsi-child-placement-principle

Cultural practice advisor

Cultural practice advisors help a child's care team to understand the child's identity and culture. They help connect family, look for kinship care options and find cultural support services.

Cultural practice advisors help ensure the child's cultural safety and wellbeing is a priority. They make sure the child's care is well planned and matches the child's cultural needs. They also help young people transition from care into adulthood.

The child's material needs relating to his or her schooling, physical and mental stimulation, recreation, and general living will be met.

The child will have what they need for school, learning, play and everyday life.

How might this look?

The child is helped to get ready for school and to have what they need to learn, like school supplies and uniforms.

The child has what they need to be active, spend time outdoors, play sports or join extracurricular activities.

The child has access to age-appropriate technology, toys, books, creative activities and games to help them grow and learn.

The child has the hygiene items they need and is taught daily routines that help them to stay healthy and clean.

The child keeps learning outside of school by reading, receiving help with school assignments and enjoying creative activities like painting or music.

Let's talk about it

How does having the items they need for school help a child participate at school? Apart from academic achievement, why is this important for the child socially and emotionally?

For a child who is new to a carer's home, how could the carer make sure the child has the hygiene items they need? When the child is shown around the home, could this include where to find soap, deodorant, sanitary items, or, could these items be placed in the child's room?

If the carer needs help to meet this standard, who is responsible for helping them? What does the care allowance pay for and what does it not pay for?

How can the care team help a child to increase their skills as they grow, so that they are able to meet their own material needs once they're an adult? Consider how a child learns about money, budgeting, and caring for their belongings.

What is the difference between a child having all the items they need verses all that they want?

The child will receive education, training or employment opportunities relevant to the child's age and ability.

The child will be supported to learn and take part in schooling, training or work that is suitable for their age and what they are able to do.

How might this look?

The child is supported by people who understand what they are good at, where they need extra help and what their interests are.

Depending on the child's age, they are either attending school, studying, working or participating in an alternate program.

Education staff have been provided with the information they need about the child, to care for the child and help them to have a successful day.

Consents and permissions are given so the child can be enrolled and engaged in their education program.

The child is helped to look at study, volunteer or employment options that interest them.

If the child is not in formal education or employment, the care team works together to connect them with a suitable program.

If relevant to the child's age, education and employment planning are included in their case plan.

Let's talk about it

How can education and learning be promoted within a child's day-to-day life?

How could a child's past experiences impact their engagement in education, training or employment?

Why is it important that the care team understands how trauma can impact a child's development?

How does education and employment planning help children when they transition to adulthood?

What is an Education Support Plan (ESP) and why is it important the child has one if they are eligible?

Education Support Plan (ESP)

If a child is on a child protection order, the Departments of Education and Child Safety will work together to develop an ESP for the child.

An ESP outlines how the child will be supported to participate in their education.

The child will receive positive guidance when necessary to help him or her to change inappropriate behaviour.

Techniques for managing the child's behaviour must not include corporal punishment or punishment that humiliates, frightens or threatens the child in a way that is likely to cause emotional harm.

Behaviour management strategies will support the child's positive behaviours and respond to inappropriate or high-risk behaviours without causing the child significant upset, worry or fear.

Physical discipline of any kind must never be used.

How might this look?

The child understands the rules and behaviour expectations in their home as they're responded to in a consistent and predictable way.

Discipline and consequences address the child's behaviour without making them feel unsafe or affecting their mental health and self-esteem.

The child sees others managing their behaviour and expressing their emotions appropriately, when frustrated or angry, allowing the child to learn through role modelling.

The child is praised for positive behaviour straight away, encouraging them to do this behaviour again. For example, 'that was so good that you chose to walk away when you became angry'.

The child's behaviour is seen as a form of communication. The child's care team work together to understand what the behaviour is telling them so they can help the child.

The child's Cultural Support Plan includes who can help the child and the child's care team with cultural advice and guidance when responding to behaviour.

Members of the child's care team, such as carers and teachers, have the information they need to understand the child's behaviour within the context of their life events.

Behaviour management of the child never includes smacking or hurting the child.

Positive Behaviour Support Plan

Positive behaviour support is an evidence-based approach to supporting children and young people who engage in at-risk or challenging behaviour in a range of settings. The development of a positive behaviour support plan:

- recognises that at risk behaviour is often related to environmental factors such as interpersonal relationships, the physical environment and the level of support and services being received
- is a holistic approach with a focus on understanding the purpose of the child's behaviour and increasing positive behaviours for the child through skill development rather than punishing negative behaviours
- uses proactive rather than reactive or crisis driven strategies. The focus is on skill development and modifying the environment or context to better support the child and reduce the need for them to engage in at risk behaviour.

Contact the child's Child Safety Officer to discuss further and determine if a plan should be developed.

Let's talk about it

If a child has high risk behaviours, how is the child kept safe? How are people around the child, for example the carer and other children, kept safe?

What help is available to those caring for the child so that they can be confident and calm when responding to inappropriate or high-risk behaviour?

If a plan is needed to better understand and respond to a child's behaviour, developing a Positive Behaviour Support Plan might help. Who could help the child's care team develop a Positive Behaviour Support Plan?

What forms of discipline could cause significant upset, worry or fear to a child in out-of-home care?

The child will receive the dental, medical and therapeutic services necessary to meet his or her needs.

The child will see the doctor, dentist and other health care services regularly.

How might this look?

The child's care team works together to make sure the child gets the health care they need. This might include organising the referral, deciding who will pay costs and getting consent.

Those caring for the child, including the carer and specialists, have the information they need about the child to give the child the right care.

The child's Cultural Support Plan has information about how the child's health can be supported through their culture.

The child attends their initial and annual comprehensive health assessments alongside dental, hearing, sight, general health, and therapeutic appointments when needed.

If there are concerns about the child's health these are shared with the child's care team.

Let's talk about it

To meet a child's health needs the child's care team needs to work together to share information and make decisions. Is it clear who makes which decisions about a child's health?

What is a Child Health Passport?

The Child Health Passport has information needed for a child to attend an initial or follow up health assessment. It is a folder given to carers by Child Safety, containing health information like the child information form, health reports, and Medicare card details.

The passport is kept up to date by the carer and stays with the child wherever they are living.

What services are available within the community to meet the child's health needs?

There is information about some statewide services available at the end of this booklet. However, each community will also have their own local services.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children can access free annual health assessments, known as '715 health checks', through Aboriginal Medical Services or bulk-billing clinics.

For non-Indigenous children, no single Medicare item covers a health assessment, so full payment may be required, as multiple items might be needed.

The child will be given the opportunity to participate in positive social and recreational activities appropriate to his or her development level and age.

The child can join in on activities that they enjoy and that suit their age and development.

How might this look?

The child participates in activities they enjoy, like free activities in their community or formal activities such as those offered by sports clubs.

The child is supported to spend time with their friends at their home or in their community.

If the child needs extra help to socialise with friends, the care team provides this help to the child.

The child observes others enjoying time with friends, helping them to understand how positive friendships can bring happiness and joy.

The child is supported to prepare for activities or for meeting new people, helping the child to feel more confident and comfortable doing new things.

Let's talk about it

How can life experiences impact how a child makes friends or behaves in new and unfamiliar situations?

How do children's connections to friends, other children their age and their community change as they grow?

How can someone help a child to learn how to make friends or prepare to try new activities?

Why is it important that children spend time in their community having positive experiences?

Where can information about local activities be found?

If people are worried that a child is not safe with their friends or in their community, what could be done to help the child stay safe?

The child will be encouraged to maintain family and other significant personal relationships.

If the chief executive has custody or guardianship of the child, the child's carer must act in accordance with the chief executive's reasonable directions.

The child will be supported to maintain relationships with their family, friends and other significant people in their life.

When a child protection order grants custody or guardianship of a child to the chief executive, the carer is required to follow the chief executive's directions, as long as it is reasonable (fair, sensible, and proportionate).

How might this look?

The child feels comfortable asking about their family and friends, planning how they could spend time with them and sharing memories.

The care team works together to plan who will help the child stay in touch with their family, friends and significant people through photos, social media, phone calls, text messages, visits and invitations to special events.

The child's kin network and their role in the child's life is maintained.

The care team understands that how they interact with and talk about the child's family and friends can impact the child's sense of self.

The child has ongoing and meaningful contact with their siblings if they are unable to live with them.

Let's talk about it

Why is it important that genuine support and encouragement be provided to a child to maintain their connections with important people in their life?

How could a child be included when making decisions about contact with family, friends and other important people?

How can a child's family help them understand their life story? Why is this information important?

How can a child stay connected to people if they can't spend time with them in person?

At times, the relationship between a foster or kinship carer and the child's family or significant people can be challenging. How can members of the child's care team help manage these relationships?

If the child has a disability, the child will receive care and help appropriate to the child's special needs.

A child with a disability will be given care specific to their needs.

How might this look?

Extra support is provided, as needed, to the child to make sure they can participate and develop to their full potential.

The child attends health and medical appointments and the specialists have the information they need about the child so they can provide support specific to the child's needs.

Each care team member understands they have a role in supporting a child with a disability, through caring for the child, following specialist recommendations arranging therapies, offering financial support or obtaining consent.

The child's care team is open and accepting of all disabilities and understand disabilities are not always able to be seen.

The child is seen as an individual with their own voice and feelings and is helped to express themselves via their preferred communication method.

The child's care team works together to navigate the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). They know access to the NDIS may provide support to meet the child's specific needs.

Let's talk about it

Why is it important that a child be supported to be an active participant in their home and community?

Why is it important that someone caring for a child with a disability has all the information they need about the child?

Who could provide help, if needed, to understand a child's disability and their specific needs?

Who are the extra people that may become members of a child's care team if the child has a disability?

Who makes decisions about a child accessing the NDIS? What could the care team do to ensure the NDIS has the information and consent they need to support the child?

The application of the standards to the child's care must take into account what is reasonable, having regard to the length of time the child is in the care of the carer or care service and the child's age and development.

Every child's situation is different, including what works best to meet their needs in out-of-home care. When thinking about the statement of standards, people will consider how long the child has been in their placement, their age, and their abilities.

How might this look?

It is recognised that each child has unique needs shaped by their life experiences, age and development, and these are considered when reviewing the statement of standards.

The child's care team knows that when a child has recently entered an out-of-home care placement their needs may be different to a child who has lived with one family or in one household for many years.

Expectations for care provided to the child as an infant change as they grow into an adolescent and become more independent.

Let's talk about it

Why is it important to be reasonable when considering the statement of standards, particularly the individual situation of a child, such as their age and length of time living in their home?

How could applying the statement of standards to all children in out-of-home care without considering their circumstances impact the child negatively?

How does a child's age, developmental needs or placement change the way the child's care team meets the statement of standards?

The *Child Protection Act 1999* outlines that the child's safety, wellbeing and best interests are paramount in all decisions affecting them. How might this relate to the statement of standards?

Why is a care teams' knowledge of the individual child and their relationship with the child important to meet the statement of standards?

Contact links to services and supports available to help the care team meet the statement of standards for a child in care.

Foster and kinship carer support

Foster and Kinship Carer Support Line (Child Safety)	1300 729 309
Carer Connect	www.qld.gov.au/carерconnect
Queensland Foster and Kinship Care	www.qfkc.com.au

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support

SNAICC	www.snaicc.org.au
13Yarn	13 92 76
Wellmob	www.wellmob.org.au
ANTaR	www.antar.org.au

Culturally and linguistically diverse support

AMPARO Advocacy	www.amparo.org.au
Refugee Council of Australia	www.refugeecouncil.org.au
Centre for Multicultural Youth	www.cmy.net.au

Children and young people support

The Create Foundation	www.create.org.au
Office of the Public Guardian	www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au
The Pyjama Foundation	www.thepyjamafoundation.com
Queensland Human Rights Commission	www.qhrc.qld.gov.au
Headspace	www.headspace.org.au

Parenting support

Raising Children Network	www.raisingchildren.net.au
Parentline	1300 30 1300
Family Relationships Online	www.familyrelationships.gov.au
Transforming Families	www.transformingfamilies.org.au
Evolve Therapeutic Services	www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/our-work/evolve-therapeutic-services

Contact links to services and supports available to help the care team meet the statement of standards for a child in care.

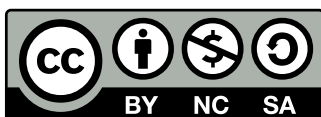
Health and disability support

Child Health Clinics	www.qld.gov.au/health/children/babies/clinics
13 HEALTH	13 43 25 84
Children's Health Queensland	www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au
National Disability Insurance Scheme	www.ndis.gov.au
Health Direct	www.healthdirect.gov.au
Child Dental Benefits Schedule	www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-dental-benefits-schedule
Spectacle Supply Scheme	1300 443 570

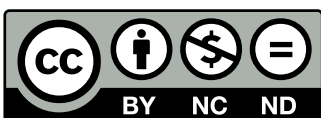
Financial support

Money Matters	www.qld.gov.au/fosterkinshipcarerallowances
Grandparent, Foster and Kinship Carer Advisers (Services Australia)	1800 245 965
Additional Child Care Subsidy	www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/additional-child-care-subsidy
Extracurricular activities boost payment	www.qld.gov.au/fosterkinshipcarerallowances
Play On! Sports Vouchers	www.qld.gov.au/recreation/sports/funding/playon

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