



# Child Safety POLICY

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**Title:** Placement of children in care

**Policy No:** 578-5

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## Policy Statement:

The Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety (Child Safety) has a legislative responsibility to place a child assessed as being in need of protection in a care arrangement, when this is required to ensure the child's safety or wellbeing. Placement in a care arrangement is a means of providing a child with a safe and therapeutic living environment. It will not be used if less disruptive strategies can resolve the child's need for protection.

Child Safety may place a child in care during the assessment of a notification to determine a child's need for protection, or during ongoing intervention while working towards the child's reunification with their family or an alternative permanency option for the child.

Child Safety also has a legislative responsibility to ensure children and young people are provided with meaningful and ongoing opportunities to participate whenever a power is exercised, or a decision is made under the *Child Protection Act 1999* (the Act) that affects, or may affect, them (section 5E of the Act). Child Safety will uphold a child's right to participate in decisions about their care arrangements, having regard to the child's age and ability to understand.

Child Safety is committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights. Under the *Human Rights Act 2019*, Child Safety has an obligation to act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and, when making a decision, to give proper consideration to human rights.

The safe care and connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with family, community, culture and country will be a key consideration in Child Safety decision-making.

## Principles:

- The safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child both throughout childhood and the rest of the child's life, are paramount.
- Active efforts will be made to apply the five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection) outlined in the section 5C of the Act, to all processes, decisions and actions for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child.
- Child Safety staff will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and obligations under the *Human Rights Act 2019*.



- In deciding whose care the child will be placed, proper consideration will be given to placing the child, as a first option, with kin.
- Placement and support responses take into account the age and developmental level of the child and their cultural needs. Family based options are preferred for all children particularly those under 12 years of age.
- In accordance with the Act, children and young people have a right to be provided with genuine opportunities to have their voices heard and considered in decisions that affect or may affect them. They should be supported to meaningfully participate and their views will be recorded and considered in the decision (taking into account the child's age and ability to understand).
- The child's parents and kin are given the opportunity to participate in decision-making about the child and to have their views heard.
- All decisions for a child in care will be timely and facilitate the prompt receipt of services, or participation in activities, that will enhance the child's safety, belonging and wellbeing.
- Placement and support services will be evidence based and informed by established theories of child development, attachment, trauma, grief and loss.

### **Objectives:**

This policy aims to ensure that:

- the placement of children in care will prioritise the child's safety, belonging and wellbeing active efforts must be made
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are placed in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (section 5C(2)(c) of the Act and section 83 of the Act.

### **Scope:**

This policy relates to all children placed in care. A child in care is defined as a child subject to:

- an assessment or child protection care agreement, or
- an assessment order, or
- a temporary custody order, or
- a child protection order that grants custody or guardianship to the chief executive, and
- the care arrangement is made under section 82(1) of the Act, where a child is placed in the care of:
  - approved foster carers, approved kinship carers or provisionally approved carers
  - an entity conducting a departmental service
  - a licensed care service, including residential care services
  - another entity that a delegated officer is satisfied is most appropriate for meeting the child's particular protection and care needs (for example, a particular medical or residential facility may be the most appropriate entity for a child with a disability), and
- the care arrangement is approved by a delegated officer.

When making a decision about where or with whom an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child will live, Child Safety will, in consultation with the child and family, arrange an independent Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander entity for the child (independent person) to facilitate the child's and family's

participation in decision-making. This requirement applies when an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child is subject to:

- a child protection care agreement, or
- an assessment order, or
- a child protection order granting custody or guardianship to the chief executive under section 83(2) of the Act.

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

Child Safety recognises its responsibility to ensure:

- all children in care receive quality care, consistent with the charter of rights for a Child in Care and the Statement of Standards in section 122 of the Act
- a child who has experienced disrupted attachments, trauma and loss, will receive care arrangements and support services that are therapeutic and responsive to their relational, behavioural and emotional needs
- children in care will receive similar life chances and opportunities to their peers, thus maximising their ability to successfully transition into adulthood
- children in care maintain positive family relationships, where possible and appropriate, and are supported in their individual rights and ethnic, religious and cultural identity and values
- active efforts are made to apply the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle including the principle, that if an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child is to be placed in care, the child has a right to be placed with a member of their family group
- a child who does not have a parent able and willing to provide ongoing protection in the foreseeable future has the right to a long-term stable care arrangement or another permanency option that meets their best interests and ongoing welfare, including safety, belonging and wellbeing needs.

Care arrangement decisions will be based on the child's case plan and comprehensive assessment of the child's needs, to the extent that is reasonable based on the length of time in care. These decisions will be informed by:

- all relevant information gathered about the child, including their child protection and placement history
- the child strengths and needs assessment, which describes a child's current development and functioning in nine domains
- the child's education support plan, if relevant
- the cultural support plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- any specialist assessments of the child and information provided by service involved with the child.

Child Safety will partner with foster and kinship carers, non-government services, and other government agencies to ensure quality care, that takes into account the need for support and continuity of relationship for children through transitions.

Child Safety recognises its responsibility to implement licensing and quality assurance processes as appropriate to ensure that funded non-government services provide high quality placement and support services to children in care.

**Authority:**

*Child Protection Act 1999*, sections 5C, 5E, 51ZE, 82, 83(2) and 84.

Child Protection Regulation 2023

**Delegations:**

Refer to instruments of delegations related to the placement of children in care.

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<b>Records File No.:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Date of approval:</b>	29 October 2024
<b>Date of operation:</b>	10 April 2025
<b>Date to be reviewed:</b>	10 April 2027

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**Office:** Office of the Chief Practitioner

**Help Contact:** Child Protection Practice

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**Links:****Procedures**

Child Safety Practice Manual

**Related Legislation or Standards**

*Child Protection Act 1999*

*Child Protection Regulation 2011*

*Human Rights Act 2019*

Statement of Commitment between the Department of Child Safety, Foster Care Services and the carers of Queensland

**Related policies**

Responding to concerns about the standards of care (326)

Decisions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (641)

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

Placement of children with Child Safety employees (36)

Residential care (603)

Transition to adulthood (349)

## **Rescinded Policies**

578-4 Placement of children in care

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Deidre Mulkerin

Director-General