

STEPS TO BECOMING A CARER

- 1 Consider what you might need to do** to prepare for how this decision will affect you, your life, lifestyle, family and friends.
- 2 Talk to the Department** of Children and Families, as well as other kin and foster carers to better understand the roles and responsibilities of carers.
- 3 Complete an Authorised Carer Nomination form.**
- 4 Apply for a Working with Children Clearance** (Ochre Card) – Everyone 18 years and above who lives at your household will need an Ochre card. You need 100 points of identification to complete this step.
- 5 Apply for a Police Check** – Everyone 15 years and above who lives at your household will need a police check.
- 6 Complete a child protection form** – Everyone 15 years and above who lives at your household will need to complete a child protection check form.
- 7 Have a home safety check** – Department of Children and Families staff will check your home to make sure it is safe and there is space for a child.
- 8 Have referee checks** – We will check references from two people who have known you for two years or longer, who can tell us more about you.
- 9 Undertake training** – As part of becoming a carer, you will need to complete training. This will be provided to you by the Department of Children and Families to ensure that you are supported to help meet the developmental, health and emotional needs of the child/children in your care.

SUPPORT

Additional support

The Department of Children and Families and the Foster and Kinship Carers Association of the Northern Territory support carers and the children in their care.

This includes:

- training
- respite care
- parenting advice
- connection to support services
- counselling and therapeutic support.

Aboriginal Carer Service

For carers wanting extra support from an Aboriginal-led organisation you can ask your case manager to connect you with an Aboriginal Carer Service who can provide you with support to care for a child. They can help you celebrate and connect young people to their culture and connect you with other kin carers.

Contact

You can make a huge difference to a child's life. If you are ready to take the first step in caring for a child, or would like more information, please contact:

Phone: 1800 FOSTER (367 837)

Email: becomeacarers@nt.gov.au

Website: www.nt.gov.au/becomeacarers

YOU CAN MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE TO A CHILD'S LIFE

Become a carer

Every child deserves an upbringing where they are safe, connected to their culture and identity, and supported to thrive, learn and grow.

Carers are needed when a child's parent or caregiver is unable to provide a safe and stable home for them.

TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF CARE

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Carers play a significant role in supporting these children and young people so they can reach their full potential.

Caring can be challenging, but also very rewarding. It requires patience, understanding and a commitment to the individual needs of the children in your care.

We are always looking for carers from a range of backgrounds. You may be suited to becoming a carer if you are:

- 18 years or older and live in the NT
- patient and relate well to children
- able to provide a healthy and supportive environment for children.

Our priority is to place children who require care with their own families and wherever possible in their own communities. It is important that Aboriginal children remain connected to their family, country and culture. If this can't happen, it is a foster carer's role to help with this.

FOSTER CARE

Foster carers look after children and young people when they are unable to remain with their own family. Foster care can be short or long term, depending on the circumstances of the child.

KINSHIP OR FAMILY CARE

This care is where a child or young person lives with a relative, someone they already know or someone closely associated with the child or another member of their family.

This includes people who are related through birth, adoption, marriage, de-facto relationship, or customary law and traditions.

In Aboriginal families, this includes members of the same language group, and skin group.

Carers receive an allowance to help with the costs of caring for children. They get paid different amounts depending on the child's age and their needs (such as a disability or behavioural problems).

The payment covers household costs such as food, clothing, medical and educational needs.

As a carer, you will also be eligible for some Commonwealth Government benefits, such as the Family Tax benefit, child care benefit, maternity payment or parenting payment.

For more information on financial support, refer to the carers current payment rates and information found on our website www.nt.gov.au/becomeacarers

You can be a carer in different ways, depending on what suits you and your family best

EMERGENCY CARE

Emergency placements are for children who need an urgent placement because there are concerns for their immediate safety. These placements occur during office hours but also after hours and on weekends. Due to the urgency of these placements there is minimal notice. Usually the child will have an alternative placement organised within 48 hours. Emergency carers need to be able to provide care at short notice.

LONG TERM CARE

Carers can be long term carers for children up to the age of 18 and beyond. Where a child is not able to return to their family, parents or community, we want children to have long term, stable and loving homes to live in.

RESPITE CARE

Sometimes a regular carer may require a break, and this is where respite carers take care of the child or children for a short time. This may be a few days or longer (such as school holidays).

