

Partnership Agreement

between Family & Community Services and carers

The Partnership Agreement was introduced in 2007. Since then, the principles of the Agreement have been continually strengthened by new initiatives aimed at improving support for carers and achieving the best possible outcomes for children and young people in out-of-home care.

We work best together when we have good communication and a common understanding of the support carers should receive in their day-to-day dealings with the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS).

FACS and carers are working together to achieve consistency, cooperation and improved communication through the operation of 7 Carer Reference Groups across NSW- where carer and staff representatives from FACS and non-government organisations meet with representatives from carer organisations to work together to implement this Agreement across the state.

FACS and carers communicate by:

- ♦ responding promptly and courteously to one another
- ♦ contacting one another to share information and feedback
- ♦ listening to and respecting each other's point of view
- ♦ working together to resolve concerns
- ♦ working together to protect the confidentiality of sensitive and personal information.

FACS and carers support placements for children and young people by:

- ♦ caseworkers giving carers relevant information as soon as it becomes available
- ♦ caseworkers and carers working together to meet children and young people's support needs and case plan goals
- ♦ caseworkers phoning carers to check how things are progressing in the first week of the placement

- ♦ helping children and young people to understand their identity and supporting contact with their family and community
- ♦ telling one another about concerns and asking for help when needed
- ♦ participating in training to continually expand knowledge and skills in looking after children and young people in care.

FACS includes carers' views by:

- ♦ recognising the importance of the views of carers in decision-making concerning children and young people, and including them in case-planning processes
- ♦ giving clear reasons why decisions are made
- ♦ respecting and celebrating diversity of culture and beliefs
- ♦ consulting with carers and families, taking their needs and those of any other child in the placement into consideration when making arrangements for a child or young person in care.

FACS management systems support carers by:

- ♦ giving feedback to carers about the care they provide
- ♦ giving carers written policies and information
- ♦ telling carers about FACS processes and how to follow them
- ♦ having accessible complaints, appeal and carer feedback processes
- ♦ making carer payments promptly and accurately.

Family & Community Services values and appreciates the contributions that carers and their families make every day to support children and young people. The actions identified in this Agreement are monitored so we can continue to improve the way we work together.

For Further Information

- visit: www.community.nsw.gov.au
- contact your caseworker
- contact your local CSC

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