

*Life Without Barriers provides out of home care services including authorised care for children and young people. In your role as an authorised carer for Life Without Barriers it is important that you are aware of your rights and responsibilities.*

## **Your rights and responsibilities**

As an authorised carer, you are one of the most important people in the child's or young person's life for the time they are in your care.

The key aspects to remember when caring for a child or young person, is that their family relationships are paramount, and that you as the carer, along with LWB, family members and other professionals, need to work together to support the child or young person.

## **IN ADDITION TO THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OUTLINED IN THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CARERS, YOU ALSO HAVE THE RIGHT TO:**

- Be given information about the child or young person in order for you to decide whether you can accept the placement.
- Say “no” to a proposed placement.
- Participate in the decision making process, e.g. attend case conferences.
- Make certain decisions regarding the day-to-day care and control of the child or young person.
- In some circumstances, be indemnified if the child or young person in your care causes deliberate or accidental loss or damage to property or personal injury to you as a carer.
- Receive information about community services or local supports that can assist you in your role as a carer.
- Be informed about how LWB decisions may be reviewed and how you can make a complaint.
- Be regularly visited by your LWB Case Manager to support you and your family during a placement.
- Be reviewed after the first year of providing care and annually thereafter, according to the experience gained and the type of care you provide. This review is to identify strengths and areas where skill development might be necessary to meet the needs of the child or young person in care. Reviews may also be required after significant events or changes in your household and you may also request a review.
- Be paid a reimbursement to meet the needs of the child or young person placed in your care.
- Have your family's privacy respected so that your details are not disclosed to any party not directly involved in the care or responsibility for the child unless there are specific reasons to do so. For example, in situations where there has been a report or allegation of abuse in foster care, there may be legislative obligations to disclose carer details to investigate the matter.

## **IN ADDITION TO THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OUTLINED IN THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CARERS, YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES ARE TO:**

### **General care**

- Provide a caring home and experiences that meet the needs of the child or young person.
- Work as part of the care team to ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child in your care including implementing recommended strategies and approaches when required.
- Attend care team meetings when required and training sessions when offered.
- Seek guidance from your Case Manager when you are not sure what to do. Also seek guidance if you experience problems supporting children and young people including working with other agencies such as schools and health services.
- Treat information about the child or young person's family respectfully and as confidential.
- Allow your Case Manager and other care team members as required to visit and support you on a regular basis and to see the child or young person on their own.
- Help the child or young person understand why they are in care and express their feelings about their own family.
- Help the child or young person retain their own sense of identity and culture, including religious beliefs.
- Understand and respond to the child or young person's key developmental milestones.
- Avoid criticism about the child or young person's family. Always speak and behave respectfully in relation to the family.
- Actively encourage the child or young person to participate in recreational activities.
- Cooperate positively with contact arrangements with the child or young person's birth family.
- Participate in regular reviews of the case plan for the child or young person.
- Uphold the principles of the charter of rights for children and young people in care and ensure your foster child is also familiar with their rights.

### **Health care**

- Arrange and consent to medical and dental treatment which doesn't involve surgery. Facilitate medical checkups and routine medical care as required.
- Contact your Case Manager if the child or young person needs a general anaesthetic for any purpose.
- Contact your Case Manager if a medical practitioner recommends the administration of any drug of addiction or psychotropic medication<sup>1</sup>.

### **Life Story work**

- Maintain records, for example keep a diary or scrap book of key events, photos, school and health records on the child or young person's progress in your care. This material will belong to the child or young person.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Office of Children-Children's Guardian defines psychotropic medications as drugs that have an effect upon the individual child's or young person's mental state and whose prescribed intent is to affect or alter thought processes, mood or behaviour.*

- Record any relevant information about the child or young person while they are in your care, such as any injury the child may experience in your home, no matter how minor.

### **Care team involvement**

- Give your Case Manager clear information about the child's progress and behavior; their strengths and needs.
- Inform your Case Manager as soon as possible in the event of a critical event, e.g. the child or young person suffers a serious accident, injury or illness.
- Inform your Case Manager if the child or young person makes any disclosures of abuse, or if you become aware that a child or young person in care has suffered abuse.
- Inform your Case Manager if you or anyone in your household is charged or convicted of an offence.
- Inform your Case Manager about any significant changes or events in your family including new people coming to live in, or spend significant time in, your home.
- Inform your Case Manager well in advance if you intend to travel or move interstate or overseas.

### **Personal responsibilities**

- Attend ongoing training and talk to your Case Manager about any seminars or courses that may assist you in your role as a carer.
- Work in the best interests of children and young people, including supporting them in their care journey, which may include transitioning to other care environments, or restoration to their family.
- Cooperate with the Case Manager and discuss any areas where you disagree with a case plan or other plans.
- Accept that a different home may be more suitable for some children and young people.

### **WHEN THERE'S A PROBLEM YOU CAN:**

#### **Use the Life Without Barriers' complaints management system**

- Talk to your Case Manager or other care team members.
- Complaints are recorded and resolved as locally and quickly as possible.
- Talk to the worker's supervisor, or if it involves a contractor, the Regional Manager.
- Ask for your complaint to be reviewed by senior management including your Regional Manager, the National Operations Manager or our Chief Executive Officer.
- We can call in the assistance of an independent (external) person to help us resolve a problem.
- Alternatively you can log your concerns via our website by clicking on Contact Us.

**Northern TAS Regional Office:** 3 Archer Street, Rocherlea 6327 5000

**North West TAS Regional Office:** 2 Spring Street, (PO Box 12) Burnie 6432 5903

**South TAS Regional Office:** 175 Collins Street, Hobart 6232 8750