

# Statement of Commitment

Children and young people have the right to receive safe, nurturing and competent care that recognises and respects their identity and supports them to grow, develop and reach their potential. Children and young people are at the centre of everything we do, and must be empowered to make decisions about their own lives. Without the dedication and commitment of foster and kinship carers\*, this could not be possible.

We will provide the right supports for carers and respond to carers first and foremost as families who nurture children and young people in care. We acknowledge the emotional, social and financial impacts that caring may have on carers’ own lives and their families, and respect carers as individuals beyond their caring role. We respect the diversity of the many people providing care and the diverse cultures that carers bring to children and young people’s lives. We recognise the cultural strength and unique contribution that Aboriginal carers bring.

The Statement of Commitment recognises that we must work in partnership and value carers as an essential, respected and equal part of the care team for children and young people.

## We promise to:

### INFORM



- Provide clarity to carers around their role, responsibilities and entitlements
- Ensure carers have the information they need about the children in their care including their family, culture, kin, country, mob and language group
- Proactively and transparently communicate the legal rights of carers and empower carers to know how to report concerns and ask for decisions to be reviewed.

### SUPPORT



- Provide tailored support, guidance and training to help build on carers’ strengths and skills to meet the unique needs of children in their care including connection to culture, kin and community
- Provide carers with allowances, subsidies and reimbursements, in a timely, transparent and equitable manner to enable a sustainable placement
- Empower carers to make decisions for children to take part in everyday activities
- Understand carers’ needs and support their wellbeing.

### CONSULT



- Involve carers in collaborative decision-making about the children and young people in their care
- Be open and honest in our communication and honour agreements made with carers
- Create opportunities for carers to give feedback on policies and practices
- Collaborate with carers to improve processes, practices and services.

### VALUE



- Acknowledge the skills, expertise and knowledge that carers bring to their role
- Recognise carers as an integral part of the care team and celebrate the contributions carers make
- Listen to carers and seek their input on the needs and preferences of the child in their care
- Acknowledge carers’ cultural ways and practices that strengthen the care they provide to children.

### RESPECT



- Be culturally safe and respectful in the way we work with carers
- Recognise the significant relationship that carers have with the children in their care
- Respect carers as individuals beyond their caring role
- Acknowledge the ongoing impact of past government policies and practices on Aboriginal children, carers and families
- Treat the personal information of carers in accordance with the Information Sharing Guidelines.

## Roles and responsibilities

### Department for Child Protection

- Finding and approving suitable kinship carers
- Approving foster carers and placement matching
- Acting in the best interests of children and young people to maintain safety and wellbeing
- Working collaboratively with carers as integral members of the child’s care team
- Providing ongoing practical and financial supports and information that is responsive to what a carer needs to continue providing care
- Establishing policy and practice guidance for the child protection sector
- Consulting with carers on policy and practice reform relating to the carer role
- Genuinely listening to understand carers and respond to their needs
- Responding to carer feedback and complaints in an appropriate and timely manner
- Conducting timely carer and placement reviews
- Providing support to carers to uphold children’s connections to culture.

### Foster and kinship carers

- Providing safe care in a secure, nurturing family home environment
- Developing meaningful relationships with the children in their care
- Communicating respectfully with and about the care team and the department and contributing positively to the carer community
- Nurturing the child’s health and wellbeing, connection to culture and relationships with significant others
- Sharing their in-depth knowledge about the needs and preferences of the children in their care as part of the care team
- Supporting the child to develop independent life skills and transition to adult life.

### Foster care agencies

- Encouraging suitable individuals and families to become foster carers and supporting them throughout their care journey
- Providing quality training, assessment and support to assist foster carers to provide safe and stable care
- Ensuring practices comply with relevant legislation, regulations and guidance.

### DCP Kinship Care Program

- Supporting kinship carers so that they can continue to provide loving and stable homes for children
- Providing quality information and learning, assessment and support to assist kinship carers to provide safe and stable care
- Ensuring practices comply with relevant legislation, regulations and guidance.

### Aboriginal Kinship Care Support Program

- Supporting kinship carers of Aboriginal children so that they can continue to provide loving and stable homes for children
- Providing quality information and learning, assessment and support to assist carers to provide safe, stable and culturally safe care
- Ensuring practices comply with relevant legislation, regulations and guidance.

### Child and Family Focus SA

- Representing the interests of children, young people and their families
- Supporting children and carers by advocating for the sector, including carer agencies, in prevention, early intervention and out of home care services
- Promoting effective partnerships and building sector capacity.

### Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers SA

- Providing information and advice to foster and kinship carers
- Advocating for individual foster and kinship carers
- Connecting foster and kinship carers with each other for peer support
- Advocating on behalf of, and representing, carers and the carer sector with government and community stakeholders.

## We commit to support carers by:

- Partnering with all carers, and ensuring open, honest and respectful communication
- Being accountable, equitable and transparent in our work
- Supporting and maintaining an informed, skilled and responsive workforce
- Informing ourselves about cultural ways of knowing, being and doing so we can practice in culturally safe and responsive ways
- Ensuring policies, procedures and practices reflect carers as an integral part of the care team
- Meeting legislated requirements of the child protection system.

## South Australian Statement of Commitment to foster and kinship carers

This Statement of Commitment to South Australian foster and kinship carers is made by the Department for Child Protection, together with Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers SA Inc and Child and Family Focus SA.

The Statement of Commitment is a resource designed to empower carers in their roles, establish our commitments to best practice and communicate roles and responsibilities.



*Fiona Endacott*

**Fiona Endacott**  
Chief Executive Officer



*Melissa Gibson*

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Chief Executive Officer



*Jackie Bray*

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Chief Executive



*Hon Katrine Hildyard MP*

**Hon Katrine Hildyard MP**  
Minister for Child Protection

\*Foster and kinship carers are defined as those currently approved by the Chief Executive under section 72 of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*. Kinship care is provided by a person known to the child including a relative, extended family member, kin, teacher or family friend. Foster care is provided by someone who has no previous relationship with a child or young person.