

**LIFE  
WITHOUT  
BARRIERS**

**CARE**

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**How is it important to be  
“Developmentally Focussed” when  
caring?**

Being Developmentally Focussed is a core principle of the CARE Model, our guide to how we care for children and young people. We know that children and young people in care have complex histories that can impact their growth and development. With this in mind, we know that strategies for positive change are best when matched with where a child is at in that moment, presenting a challenge but not overwhelming the child. Step by step, with Carers understanding where a child is developmentally, we can help shape the environment for success.

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Being developmentally focused requires Carers to have the time and availability to sit, observe, recognise, and respond to where children's development is at. This means that a Carer can support and create opportunities to engage their innate capacity for growth and development, while being flexible and adapting expectations when needed. For some children this is as simple as recreating opportunities for learning through play, something they may not have yet experienced. Play can be a useful time to connect, but also guide development through engagement, learning and relationship building. Carers can help children develop and learn by giving tasks that challenge but do not overwhelm children, and through providing them with support so they can learn and master new skills.

## **Children need experiences that promote their development & provide opportunities for success.**

In considering your readiness to start the journey of becoming a Carer at Life Without Barriers, it's helpful to think about your understanding of children's development, the differences for children entering care and how this might shape what you consider to be reasonable expectations.

### **Some questions to consider are:**



Think of an experience where you were required to do something that was well beyond your ability. How did you feel? Compare this to the feeling of successfully completing a challenging activity.



What day to day tasks might be challenging but achievable for children in care and which might be overwhelming?



Are there times when a reasonable expectation for a child is no longer reasonable and needs to be changed or dropped? Think of an example.




When was the last time you were involved in play with a child? What did you do? What did it feel like?



How could you build playing alongside the child into a weekly routine? What ideas do you have for children and young people of different ages? What new skills might they gain?



A photograph of three teenagers outdoors, smiling and posing for a photo. A young man with curly hair is in the center, wearing a blue t-shirt. A young woman with long blonde hair is on the right, wearing a plaid shirt over a purple top. A third person is partially visible on the left, also smiling. The background is a blurred green forest.

Challenging one's self to grow is never easy. CARE offers us new and different ways to create the conditions for change in children and young people. We focus first on understanding a child's developmental needs then matching our expectations to support positive change. Are you ready to help a child grow and thrive?

# LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS

## Contact us

For more information on any of the services provided by Life Without Barriers, please contact us on:

**1300 592 227**



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