

A background photograph showing three people from the chest up, walking along a sandy beach. On the left is a woman with dark hair in a black tank top. In the middle is a woman with brown hair wearing a blue and white patterned top. On the right is a young girl with dark hair wearing a black shirt and yellow overalls. They are all smiling and looking towards the right. The background shows the ocean and a clear sky.

**LIFE  
WITHOUT  
BARRIERS**

[lwb.org.au](http://lwb.org.au)

# Carer induction and onboarding

**Welcome**

We can't thank you enough for coming on board to support children and their families.



# Acknowledgement of Country

Life Without Barriers acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this country and their connection to land, water and community.

We pay our respect to them, their cultures and customs and to their Elders past, present and emerging. We believe that reconciliation must live in the hearts and minds of all Australians.

We are committed to an ongoing journey towards truth telling and reconciliation. We recognise and value the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, carers, people we support, peak bodies, organisations, their leaders, and communities across Australia as we continue our reconciliation journey together.

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# Our approach

## Part of the Care Team

Whether you're providing Foster or Kinship Care, short-term, emergency, respite or long-term care, you are an integral part of what we call the 'Care Team' that wraps around and supports a child or young person (child/ren) in care.

We support many different types of families and relationships, and it is important to know that the term 'Carer' is a catch-all word used in out-of-home care (OOHC) to describe any adult approved to care for children under state or territory child protection legislation.

Other members of your Care Team can include a Case Manager or Child and Family Practitioner (Carer Supervisors), Cultural Support Planners, Therapeutic Permanency Specialists, Education Specialists, Health Practitioners, and respective family members.

## Support and supervision

To help build your confidence and skills, you'll receive one-on-one support and supervision from your Carer Supervisor (generally a Case Manager or Child and Family Practitioner) within your Care Team. Supervision is designed as an opportunity to ask questions and openly discuss concerns. It's also an opportunity for us to continue building our relationship together.

The best part is that not only are you part of a local Care team, but you're also connected to our national community of Carers and practitioners! The Carer Experience Team can help you link up with Carers nationwide, attend events, and provide direction to the latest information and resources.



The Carer Experience Team

[lwbcarers@lwb.org.au](mailto:lwbcarers@lwb.org.au)

1800 573 184

## CARE

Children are at the heart of everything we do, and we only work in ways that evidence tells us makes a difference for them. Therefore, we have adopted an evidence-based, trauma-informed model called CARE to support the best possible outcomes for all children in OOHC.

We use the CARE model to guide our work with children and their families and to equip you with the skills needed to care for and nurture a child. The CARE model influences the way we think about children.

The six CARE principles below provide the foundation for all our interactions with children:



Relationship based



Developmentally Focused



Trauma Informed



Family Involved



Competency Centred



Ecologically Oriented

You'll receive training and coaching in CARE throughout your journey.



## Support and information

To help keep you in the loop, you'll have opportunities to connect, learn, and grow through local and national events and programs.

### The Caring Space

This website is your one-stop-shop to access important links, information, and support.

[The Caring Space](#) can be accessed as a standard web page on any internet platform, via desktop, mobile, and tablet.

## Training and information

Knowledge is powerful, so we provide plenty of learning opportunities to help you feel confident in your role.

As part of your induction, you'll receive formal training in:

- Introduction to Out-of-Home Care
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture
- Trauma related behaviour
- We Put Children First
- Disability Awareness for Out of Home Care
- Much more!

You'll also receive a refresher and ongoing formal and informal training suited to your level of experience and the needs of the children in your care. [You can read more about how this happens here.](#)

All Carers have access to lots of e modules which you can complete at your own pace. These can be accessed via your [mylearning](#) account, which is automatically created when you come on board. If you're having trouble accessing your account, speak to your local team member or reach out to [mylearning@lwb.org.au](mailto:mylearning@lwb.org.au)

### Carer networking

Talking to other Carers is sometimes just what you need. Through regular events, we create opportunities for you to share your experiences, celebrate successes, and provide feedback to the Life Without Barriers team. Your Carer Supervisor will inform you about upcoming training and events. However, you can also check out the [Carer Events page](#) for local and national meetups and our Facebook group, [The Caring Days](#).

### Local peer groups

No one gets it more than Carers, and it's even better when they're near you!

Ask your Carer Supervisor or email [lwbcarers@lwb.org.au](mailto:lwbcarers@lwb.org.au) to see how we can connect you to a Carer support group in your local area.

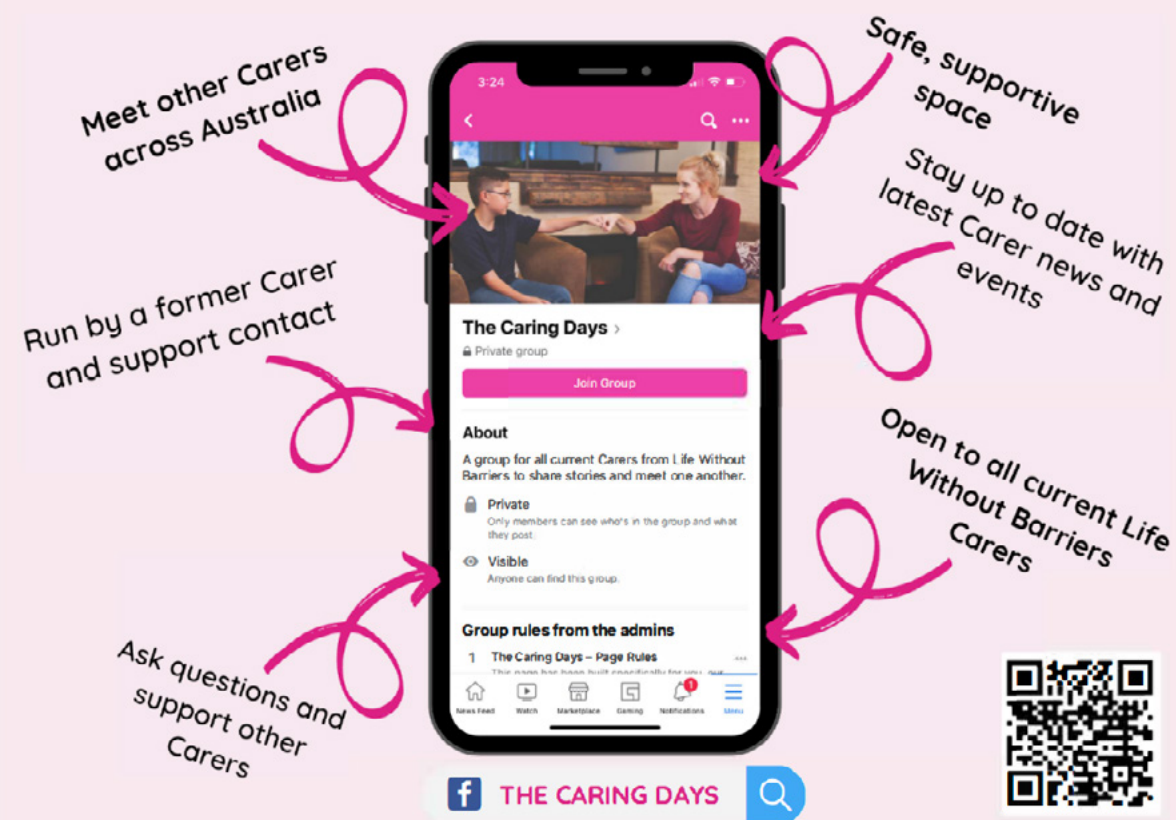
“Spend as much time as possible with other Carers, ask lots of questions, inform yourself and be patient.”



## The Caring Days

“Spend as much time as possible with other Carers, ask lots of questions, inform yourself and be patient.”

Caring for children is a big role - but you don't have to do it alone. Get to know other Carers, share your story, and help out in the closed Facebook group, [The Caring Days](#) (only for current Carers of LWB).



## National After-Hours Service (AHS)

The Child, Youth and Family National After-Hours Service (AHS) exists to provide efficient responses for events that arise after-hours and require a response before the next business day. These situations are of a critical, emergent and/or time-sensitive nature. The service provides support, advice, escalation assistance and guidance in a responsive manner. If in need, please call 1800 861 826.

## Short-break care

For a night or a weekend, children in care may spend time with another Carer while their Carer takes a short break. This type of care is only offered when it is in the child's best interest. Talk to your Carer Supervisor about respite and support for the child in your care.



## National Carer Magazine

Keep an eye out in your inbox for our quarterly National Carer Ezine, Carer Connections. Each issue provides the latest foster and kinship care information, Carer stories, and more.

## Counselling

All staff and Carers of Life Without Barriers (LWB) have access to a free counselling service to assist with personal or life issues that may arise occasionally. Professional services are provided independently of LWB, in complete confidence and at no cost. Carers can contact Converge directly 24 hours/ 7 days a week on 1300 687 327. The program provides up to four (4) professional counselling sessions per issue per year.

## Learning Without Barriers team

We have a dedicated team of education specialists to help Carers and the children they support meet their education and learning goals. You can access support from the Learning Without Barriers team by speaking with your Carer Supervisor or emailing [learningwithoutbarriers@lwb.org.au](mailto:learningwithoutbarriers@lwb.org.au).

## Allowance

As a carer you will receive a tax free allowance, which aims to help with essentials like:

- food
- health care
- activities
- transport
- schooling.

Please note, allowances do vary depending on:

- Which state or territory you live in
- The needs level of the child
- The number of children in the family group.

Carer allowances are made fortnightly, direct into your bank account, by either LWB or the relevant child protection department (depending on location).

Where extra expenses occur beyond the typical cost of care, additional financial support may be available. Always speak with your Carer Supervisor before incurring additional expenses for which you intend to seek reimbursement from LWB or a state child protection department.

## Centrelink

In addition to allowances, you may also be entitled to additional payments through Centrelink. We recommend calling the [grandparent advisors line](#). Although it's called the grandparent advisors line, this department also covers Foster and Kinship Carers who can help you to claim any additional benefits you may be entitled to.

Also ask your Carer Supervisor about how to apply for a [foster child healthcare card](#), which is a concession card to get cheaper medicines and other discounts for a child in your care who is not your biological or adopted child.

## LWB carer benefits

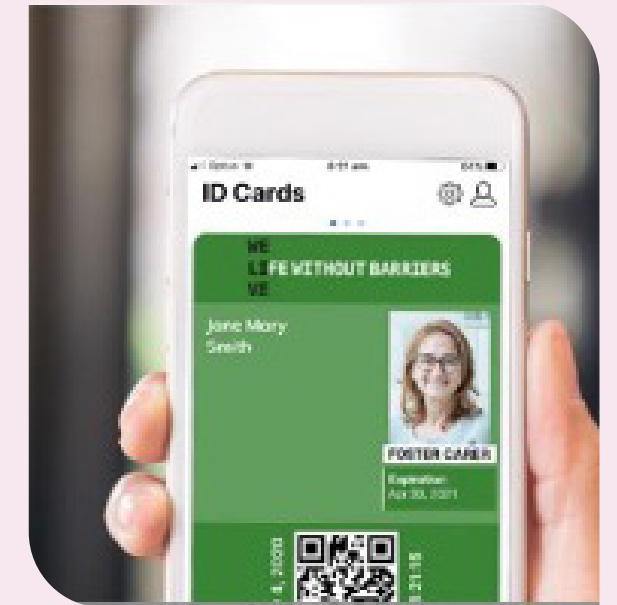
To recognise your awesome work, you have access to a range of discounts and services which you can take advantage of. These additional benefits include [health insurance](#), [car servicing and counselling](#). We always want to add more benefits, so check The Caring Space for updates frequently!

## How to set up your digital Carer ID

Sometimes you may need proof of your status as a Carer with LWB. We recommend following the instructions below to create your own LWB Carer digital ID.

### How to download your digital ID on your smart phone

1. Ask your Carer Supervisor or email [lwbcarers@lwb.org.au](mailto:lwbcarers@lwb.org.au) for your Aurion ID number.
2. Download the ID123 app from the [App Store](#) (iPhone) or [Google Play store](#) (Android)
3. Open the ID123 app, tap register and follow the prompts.
4. Click tap to add card
5. Choose business
6. Name of Business: Life Without Barriers, Country: Australia, Zip Code: leave blank and click SEARCH
7. Select Life Without Barriers. Do not create a new organisation.
8. Select Foster Carer or Kinship Carer
9. Enter your Aurion ID number and date of birth
10. Follow the prompts to take a photo of yourself and click save.



If you need any help accessing your digital ID, please contact the Carer Experience Team (CXT) via [lwbcarers@lwb.org.au](mailto:lwbcarers@lwb.org.au)



## Your voice

Providing care to children in OOHC can be hard. As such, we want to ensure that your voice is heard and work with you to improve how we support you, our staff and the children and their families we support. Share your voice with us through the channels below.

### Getting involved

- Discuss your thoughts with your Carer Supervisor (any time or during your support and supervision sessions)
- Attend local or National Carer focus groups or express your interest in being part of the Carer Advisory Group.
- Send an email to [lwbcarers@lwb.org.au](mailto:lwbcarers@lwb.org.au) Or call 1800 573 184 to reach out Australia wide Carer Experience Team.
- Complete this [online form](#).

## External support

If you'd like external support, the organisations below are run independently from OOHC providers and offer lots of advice and advocacy.

**NSW** – [my forever family](#)

**QLD** – [QFKC](#)

**VIC** – [FCAV](#)

**TAS** – [FKAT](#)

**SA** – [Connecting Foster and Kinship Carers](#)

**WA** – [Foster Care Association WA](#)

**NT** – [Foster & Kinship Carers Association NT](#)

## Preparing for a child to arrive

A staff member from LWB has just contacted you about taking in your first child. It's an exciting time, but we know it can be very nerve-wracking too. So we aim to help you be prepared and settle those nerves.

### Matching a child with you

Each child and their family have their own needs, so it is vital that we carefully match them with carers who can meet those needs. You would have discussed your skills and experience with the assessor during your application to become a carer. This step was important as it helps us decide the type of care, age and number of children you and your family are most suited for.

Remember, it's okay to say no if you're asked about caring for a child and feel you cannot meet their needs.

It's okay for you to have ongoing discussions with your local team about children that may be placed with you. You know your strengths and abilities, and we want you to share your voice.

Here are a few questions you can ask during a call about a child possibly being placed with you:

- How old is the child/children?
- Has the child been in care before?
- How long is the child likely to stay with me? (I.e. a few days, a few weeks, months or more)
- What arrangements are in place for the child to see their family? What is needed of me?
- Does the child have relevant documentation such as a Medicare card, or health care card?
- Does the child attend day care or school and where is there school located?
- Does the child have any medical needs? E.g. allergies or medication.
- Does the child have any appointments already scheduled? E.g. physiotherapy, dentist, paediatrician appointments.

## Preparing your home

As you learned during your assessment, when a child is placed in care, they experience a big transition in their life. As a result, they may feel very nervous, sad and frightened. You can help children feel more comfortable and secure by making sure your home feels welcoming.

A great place to start is by completing a family introduction profile of yourself and your family. Your Carer Supervisor or another local team member should provide you with the profile at your initial Carer induction session. The profile is a creative, trauma-informed way to help children get to know you better before meeting you for the first time.

Depending on their situation, children don't always have many belongings with them. We recommend you keep a supply of essentials available for them to use when they arrive, like a toothbrush, some toiletries, and a few clothing items (in varying sizes and genders). A welcome basket of goodies packed with a cozy blanket, some age-appropriate toys, books and other fun items are ways to make them feel at home and cared for, and it is a great conversation starter.

## Preparing your family

All your family is undoubtedly excited about a child's arrival; please remind them that the child may not feel the same way. Instead, they may feel scared, angry, or overwhelmed.

Discuss with your family how you can make the child feel more at home. For example, consider showing the child a tour of the house and their new room. Explain how your family functions, if there are general guidelines like curfews, or how much time they can spend on technology. Be aware that children may come from a home with different values or rules and that you may need to look for ways to accommodate different experiences.

Do remind your family that although the child needs to feel welcomed, they might also need personal space until they adjust to your home and environment.

Remember that children suffering from trauma may not retain everything they have been told. Therefore, keep the information simple, repeat it when necessary and be patient.

## Top tips to get started

- Ensure a clean room and bedding is available.
- Make a welcome pack with age-specific, clothing, games, books, pencils and toys, and a toiletry kit with a toothbrush, hairbrush, and bubble bath/shower gel.
- If children come with some belongings, let them know their room is safe and help make space for things important to them. For some children, their whole life has been packed into these bags, so be mindful not to throw anything out, even if their toys and clothes are damaged or too small for them. Be mindful of how you talk about these belongings too, and avoid disparaging comments, i.e. "This blanket looks ratty" or "None of these clothes fit you; you should have clothes that fit". Instead, try a strengths-based approach to model respect and empathy for their belongings, i.e. "This blanket looks cosy; is it your favourite?", "That shirt is great; as long as you're comfortable, that's all that matters."
- Focus on the child's immediate needs and, where possible, take their lead (what this looks like will differ depending on their age, experiences and needs), i.e. "We were going to have some lunch; are you hungry?" "I'll show you where the toilet is just in case you need to go" "We are so happy to have you, but it must be a bit scary for you, so just let

me know what you'd like to do next." Or, "would you like to put your things in your room, and you can show me your favourite toy/book?"

- Reassure the child by telling them you are here to help and are nearby if they need anything.
- If you have your own children, explain to them that the child may need space and to introduce themselves.
- One of our experienced Carers suggests leaving the bathroom light on at night for children new to your home to make them feel more comfortable or keep a night light handy just in case.

**It can take time for children to fully settle into a new space and with new people. Be patient and kind, and talk to your care team if you have any concerns.**



# You've got this!

## Your Care Team is only a call away

**Will be right beside you every step of the way with guidance, training, and support - where and when you need it.**

**Just remember:**

- you're learning and that can take time
- your team is full of experience practitioners to help guide you
- practice patience as it can take time to build trust in the relationship with children and their families
- you can't pour from an empty cup so make sure you're doing things that bring you joy.

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