

A photograph of three women walking along a sandy beach. They are all smiling and looking towards the right. The woman in the foreground is wearing a black t-shirt with a yellow strap over her shoulder. The woman in the middle is wearing a blue and white patterned top. The woman in the background is wearing a black top. 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/young person in care. We support lots of 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 to describe any adult, whether known or unknown to the child or young person, who is approved to care for them under the state or territory's legislation. We also acknowledge that for cultural and personal reasons you may not consider yourself a 'Carer' per-se, but we still always want to offer opportunities and connection throughout your Journey.

Other members of your Care Team can include a Case Manager or Child and Family Practitioner, 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 key worker within your Care Team. Supervision is designed as an opportunity for you to openly ask questions and honestly talk about any concerns you may have. It's also an opportunity for us to continue building our relationship together.

The best part is, not only are you part of a local Care team, but you're also connected to our national community of Carers and practitioners as well! The Carer Experience Team can help you link up with Carers across the country, 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 and young people are at the heart of everything we do, and we only work in ways that evidence tells us makes a difference for them. To support the best possible outcomes for all children in out of home care, we have adopted an evidence based, trauma informed model called CARE.

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 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 via online courses and your key worker.

## 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. As we grow, we will be able to add and expand to this page, so you are always kept up to date and connected.

## 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 refresher and ongoing formal and informal training, suited to your level of experience and the needs of 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)

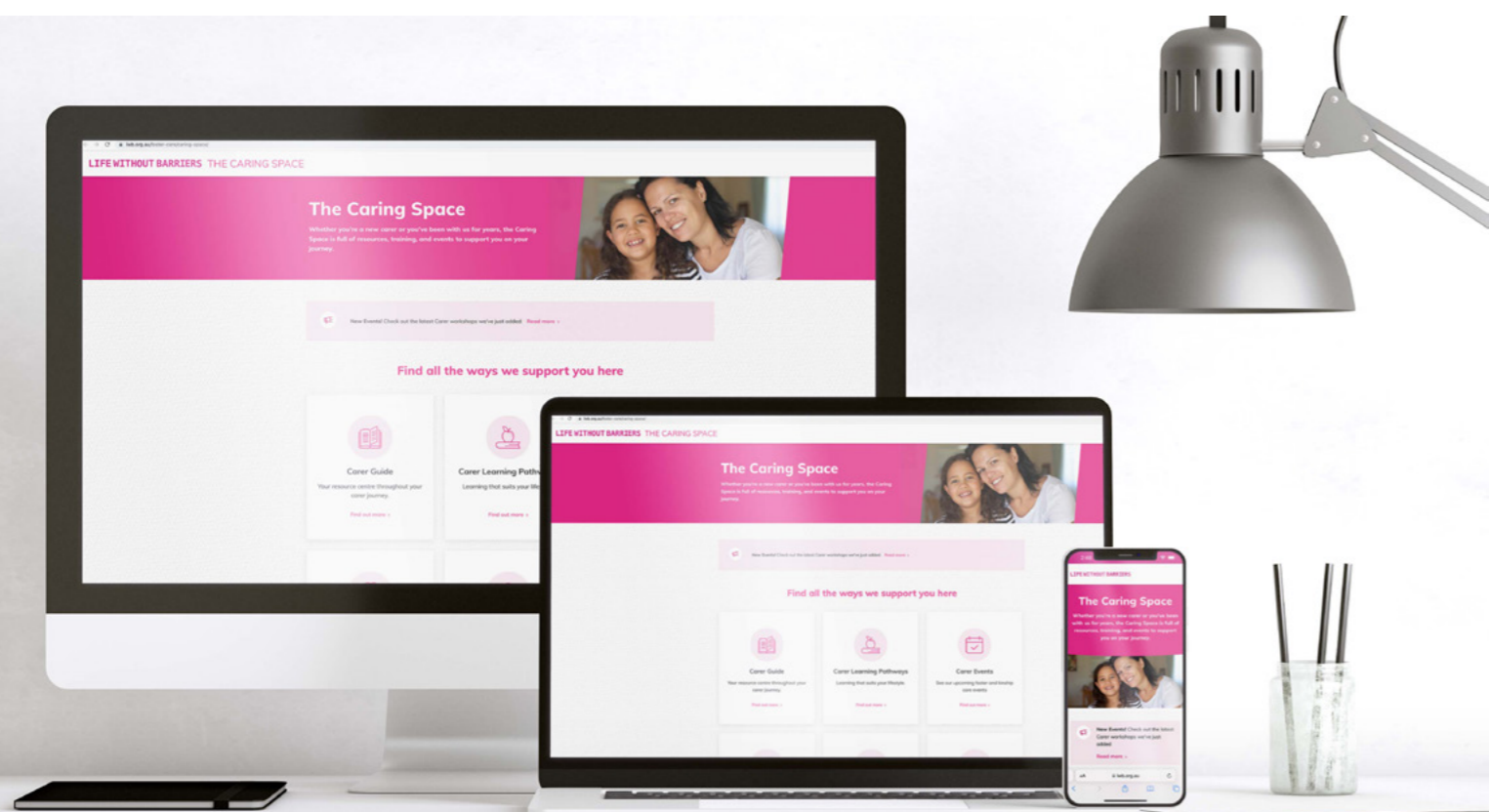
### Carer Networking

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 key worker will keep you in the loop about upcoming training and events, but 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 us how we can connect you to a Carer support group in your local area so you can get tips and advice from other experienced Carers.

“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 and young people 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](#). Just for current Carers of Life Without Barriers.

Meet other Carers across Australia

Safe, supportive space

Run by a former Carer and support contact

Stay up to date with latest Carer news and events

Open to all current Life Without Barriers Carers

Ask questions and support other Carers

THE CARING DAYS

## 24/7 On-Call Crisis Support

You'll have access to on-call crisis support at any time of the day or night for advice, support and direction in stressful situations. You'll find the number in the Your Care Team booklet in your induction pack, but you can also just ask your local team for the on-call number and keep it handy.

## Respite

For a night or a weekend, children in care may spend time with a respite Carer, an opportunity to strengthen social and family networks 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 key worker about what respite and support looks like for the child in your care.



## National Carer Magazine

Keep an eye out in your inbox for our quarterly National Carer e Zine, Carer Connections. Each issue you'll find the latest foster and kinship care information, Carer stories, and more.

## Counselling

All staff and Carers of Life Without Barriers have access to a free counselling service to assist with personal or life issues that may arise from time to time. Services are provided independently of Life Without Barriers, in complete confidence and at no cost. Carers can contact Drake directly 24 hours/ 7 days a week on 1300 135 600.

## Education Unit

Life Without Barriers has a dedicated team of Education specialists to help our Carers and young people meet their goals. You can access support from the Education Unit by emailing [lwbcarsers@lwb.org.au](mailto:lwbcarsers@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

Payments are made fortnightly direct into your bank account by either Life Without Barriers or relevant government department (depends on location).

Where extra expenses occurred beyond the ordinary cost of care, additional financial support may be available. You will need to discuss this with the trials Case manager before incurring these costs. Some expenses need to be approved as part of the child's case plan.

## 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 the advisor or your key worker about how to apply for a [foster child healthcare card](#), which is a concession card to get cheaper medicines and some discounts this is for a child in your care who is not your biological or adopt a child. Foster and Kinship care can be both formal and informal care arrangements.

## LWB Carer Benefits

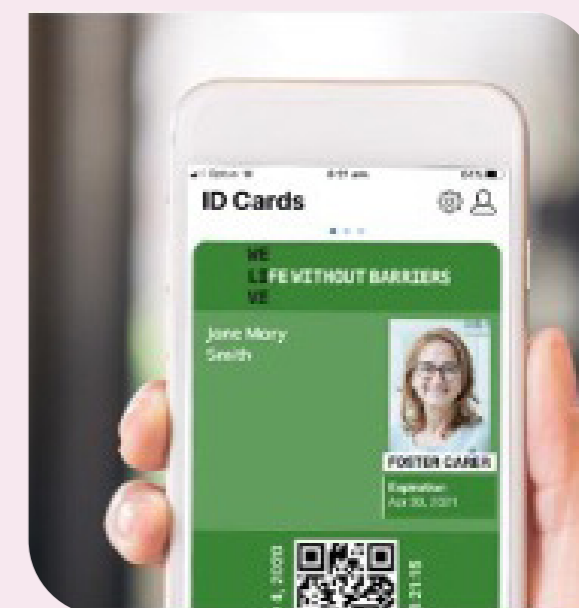
To recognise all of your awesome work, you have access to a range of discounts and services which you can take advantage of today including [health insurance, car servicing and counselling](#). We are also adding more benefits soon, so be sure to check The Caring Space for updates!

## How to set up your digital Carer ID

At times you may need to show proof of your status as a Carer with Life Without Barriers. This could be in relation to caring for children or accessing discounts and benefits.

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

1. Download the ID123 opp from the [App Store](#) (iPhone) or [Google Play store](#) (Android)
2. Open the opp and tap Register. Follow the prompts.
3. Click Tap to Add Card
4. Choose Business
5. Name of Business: Life Without Barriers, Country: Australia, Zip Code: leave blank and click SEARCH
6. Select Life Without Barriers. Do not create a new organisation.
7. Select Foster Carer
8. Enter your ID number and date of birth (you can get this ID from your local team member. It is your 'Aurion Person' number)
9. 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

When it comes to Foster and Kinship Care, there are lots of moving parts and we want to make sure your voice and ideas are included. There are lots of ways you can give us feedback, let us know what you want more of, what we need to do less of, great ideas, and the voices of the children in your care. You can provide feedback or make a complaint through the channels below:

### Getting involved

- Discuss your thoughts with your key worker (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, these organisations are run independently from out of home care providers and can provide 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

You've just been contacted about taking in your first child- it's an exciting time but we know it can be very nerve wracking too. Our goal is to help you be as prepared as possible and settle those nerves.

### Matching a child with you

Each child and their family have their own needs, so it is vital we carefully matched them with carers who can meet their needs. During the assessment process, you would have discussed your skills and experience. This helps you and us decide the type of care, age and number of children you are most suited for. It is okay for you to have ongoing discussions with the kids team about the children and young people that may be placed with you. You know your strengths and abilities and we invite you to have a say about children placed in your care.

**Remember, if you're asked about taking care of a child and feel you're not able to meet their needs it's okay to say no.**

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 burst if you get, 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. They will likely feel very nervous and potentially frightened. You can help children feel more comfortable and secure by taking steps to make sure your home feels welcoming.

A great place to start is by completing and our family introduction profile, which is provided to children (where possible) prior to arriving at your home. This is a creative, trauma informed way to help children and young people get to know you a little better prior to meeting you for the first time. You will receive templates as part of your induction, or you can ask your local team member for a copy.

Depending on their situation, children don't always have a lot of 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, cared for, and it is a great conversation starter.

## Preparing your family

All your family is no doubt excited about a child's arrival, please remind them the child may not feel the same way. They may feel scared, angry, or overwhelmed.

Consider discussing with your family how they can make the child feel more at home. They might take time on it sore of the house and show them their new room. Explain how your family functions such as i.e. is there a schedule for the week? Do you have any general guidelines like curfews, or how much time they can spend on technology? Are you aware that children may be coming from a home with a different set of values or rules and that you may need to look for ways to accommodate different experiences.

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

## Top tips to get started

- Ensure a clean room and bedding is available.
- You can make up 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 do come with some belongings, let them know their room is a safe space 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 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 of 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 age) 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 also be a

bit scary for you so just let me know what you'd like to do next" "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 you're 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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