



# Who can say OK in Tasmania?

A Reference Guide for Carers

Department for Education,  
Children and Young People

# Introduction

**This Guide provides information about decisions you can make for children and young people in your care, and which decisions must be made by the Child Safety Service. This Guide is for foster carers and formal kinship carers.**

We acknowledge all carers in Tasmania for their important role and how much they contribute to the lives of children and young people they care for. We are all committed to improving wellbeing outcomes for children and young people in Out of Home Care.

Children and young people in Out of Home Care routinely participate in activities, interact socially with friends and connect with family, community and culture.

We have heard from children and young people that long approval processes can make them feel uncertain, frustrated, different to others, and to sometimes miss out.

**This is some of what we heard:**

**“I lost contact with my Pop, Brother and Nan, it took me three years to get permission to see them again and stay at Pop’s”.**

---

**“Every time my carers went on holiday, or went to stay in a hotel, I would need permission. It would take months to do”.**

---

**“I almost didn’t go on school camp because I couldn’t get the consent form done in time. It was really frustrating”.**

---

**“If the carers have been trained and have care of us, they should be given responsibility to make decisions about whether a holiday is appropriate”.**

---



## Purpose

**This Guide provides information about decisions you can make for children and young people in your care, and which decisions must be made by the Child Safety Service. The topics covered in this Guide are intended for children and young people in foster and formal kinship care and are based on key frustrations we heard from children and young people.**

- It is not intended to be a full list of every decision you can make. Please refer to the [Foster and Kinship Carers Association Handbook](#) for more detailed information.
- You must ensure that the type of Order for the child or young person in your care allows you to make the decisions listed below. For example, Voluntary Care Orders and Assessment Orders, where there has not been sufficient time for the child to establish a supportive relationship with their carer, both require parental permission.
- If you need further guidance, feel uncomfortable, or have concerns about the risks involved with making a decision, please contact the Child Safety Service or the Care Team, if there is one in place.
- The information in this Guide should be read in the context of the decision-making principles on the next page.

**This guide is correct as of September 2024. Information about the decisions you can make will be regularly updated. To view the latest version and to access the full range of links, visit: [decyp.tas.gov.au/who-can-say-ok](https://decyp.tas.gov.au/who-can-say-ok)**

# Decision-making principles

All decisions that impact children and young people must consider the developmental age and individual circumstances of the child or young person and must be guided by the following principles:

**1. Decisions are made in the best interests of the child or young person, in a timely, individualised, and consistent manner.**

---

**2. All children and young people have the right to have their voice heard and valued when adults are making decisions that impact them.**

---

**3. All children and young people in Out of Home Care have the right to be treated equally and have the same opportunities and social experiences as other children in the community.**

---

**4. The rights of children and young people are promoted and upheld and safeguarding them from harm is at the centre of all our actions and decisions.**

---

**5. Ensure the cultural wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people by respecting the role and decision-making contributions of Aboriginal families, kinship groups, communities and organisations.**

---

**6. Everyone in the child or young person's Care Team work to share decisions and make plans together to ensure the child or young person's wellbeing needs are met.**

---

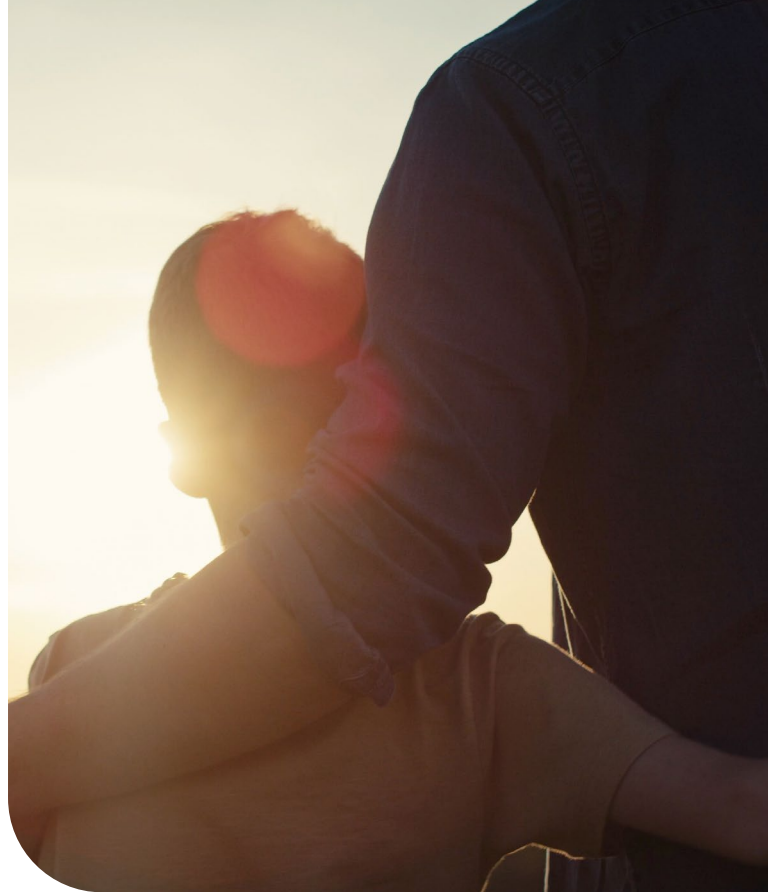




## Being loved, safe and valued

### Contact with family and others

It is important for children and young people to maintain safe connection with extended family members and other people that matter to them (including messaging, phone calls and face to face contact). This must first be approved by the Child Safety Service. Where possible, you are encouraged to support and enable the child or young person to build or continue these safe connections.



### Use of babysitters

The Child Safety Service must approve the use of a babysitter for periods that exceed ten hours within one week.

You can make decisions and exercise judgment when arranging who will be the babysitter for children or young people in your care. Where possible, selecting a babysitter should include a discussion with the child or young person about who they feel comfortable with.

You must ensure that the babysitter knows the child or young person's routine, medical needs/allergies and appropriate strategies for supporting positive behaviours. You must ensure that the babysitter is contactable, can contact you at all times and knows how to contact Child Safety Service if there is an emergency.

You must always have a plan with the child or young person so that they can contact you or another safe person if they need support at any time.



## Having material basics

### Personal documents

Only the Child Safety Service can organise Birth Certificates and Medicare Cards and provide you with relevant details.

Once a young person is aged 14 years or over, they can create their own MyGov account.

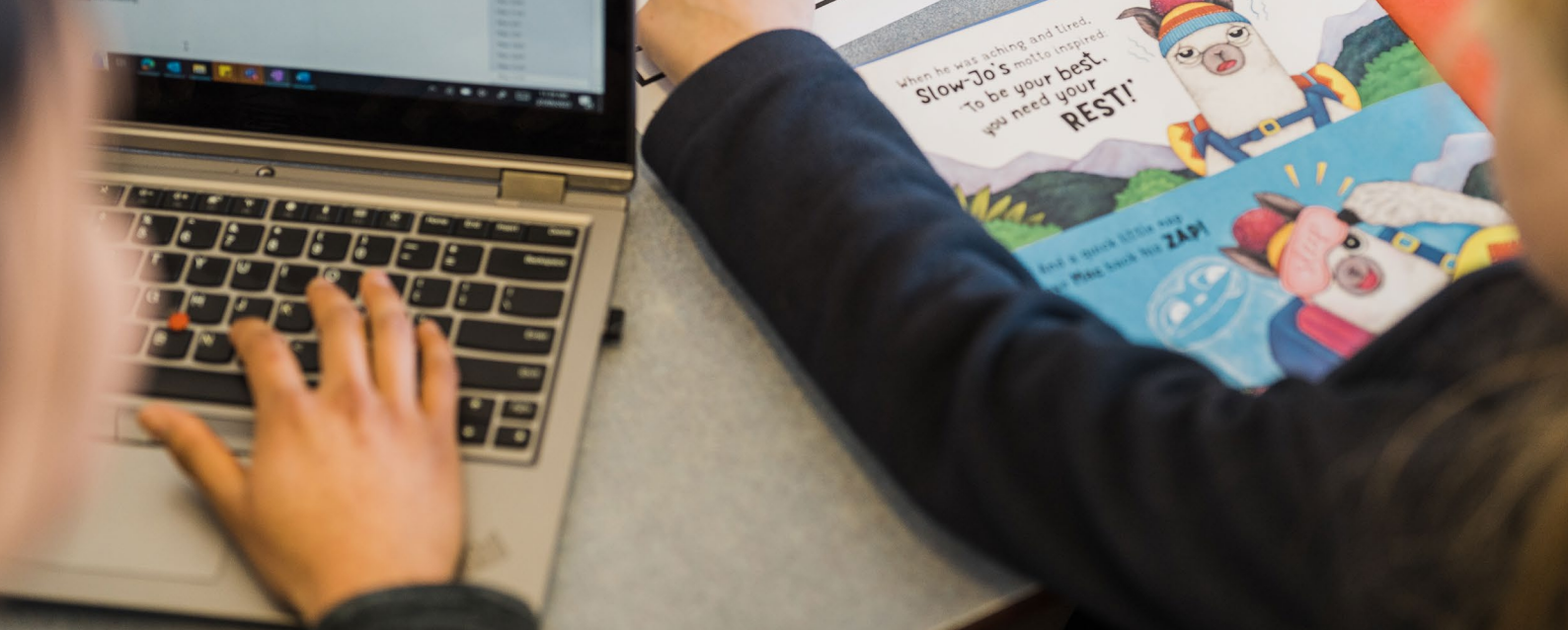
Once a young person is aged 16 or over, they can apply for a Tax File Number without needing guardian permission and can open an online bank account, with financial institutions that allow this without guardian permission. Where needed, you should support the young person to obtain these items.

You can sign forms for children and young people applying for a Health Care Card, claiming benefits from Medicare, opening an online bank account (where the financial institution requires guardian permission), Personal Identification Card, Youth Allowance (or other appropriate Centrelink assistance).

### Money

If the child or young person receives pocket money or money from other sources (Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY, Disability Support etc.), you can support them to understand how to budget and manage their money. This may include the child or young person saving for a particular item, purchasing something for themselves, a day out with family or purchasing gifts for friends or family members.

► *Continue over page.*



## Mobile devices and phones

You can decide when to purchase a mobile device (laptop, iPad or tablet) or phone for a child or young person, if they do not already have one.

You can make decisions in relation to parental controls, screen time, supervision, and ensuring safe and appropriate use.

You must discuss the rules, responsibilities, benefits, risks and consequences of using mobile devices and social media with the child or young person. These decisions and discussions must consider the child or young person's developmental age, maturity and individual circumstances.

Any need to remove a mobile device or phone because of misuse must be managed carefully, including discussing with the child or young person the reason why the device is being removed and for how long. Mobile devices and phones should not be permanently or indefinitely removed from children or young people.

For challenging issues managing screen time, serious concerns of online behaviours or questions about costs, you must contact the Child Safety Service or Care Team, if one is in place.

## Social media

You can decide when and what social media accounts are safe and appropriate for a child or young person in your care. Photos shared on social media (on your account, a family member's account or the child or young person's account) must not identify:

- yourself as a carer
- the child or young person
- whether the child or young person is in care
- any other personal details (such as address, family history, or school they are attending).

**Helpful online safety resources:**  
[www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)  
[www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)

**We have esafety training available for all carers, you can register or find out more information by contacting:**  
[foster.carers@decyp.tas.gov.au](mailto:foster.carers@decyp.tas.gov.au)





# Being Healthy

## National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The Child Safety Service will be the child or young person's representative in relation to the NDIS.

You can request that the Child Safety Service provide the NDIS with consent for you to support the child or young person with a NDIS access request, using their existing plan or speaking with NDIS support coordinators and providers.

## Smoking and vaping

E-cigarettes and vapes are treated the same as tobacco cigarettes under Tasmanian law. It is illegal for a child or young person under the age of 18 to smoke or vape.

You have an important role in protecting a child or young person in your care from smoking and vaping. The most important thing you can do, is to talk to your child or young person about smoking, vaping and other drugs.

For more information and advice relating to smoking and vaping please refer to [Vaping: Information and advice for parents and carers](#), [The Facts About Vaping](#), or [E-cigarettes and Vaping](#).

For culturally sensitive support Quitline has Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander counsellors who are able to provide support, please refer to [Quitline for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities](#) or call 13 78 48.

## Sex and contraception

In Tasmania no one is legally allowed to have sex with anyone under the age of 17 years. For more information relating to sex and the law, please refer to [What is consent? eSafety Commissioner](#).

There are no age restrictions to accessing contraception such as condoms and spermicides at the supermarket or pharmacy. There are also no age restrictions to a young person seeking medical advice for contraception without parent or guardian consent, and may be prescribed contraception if deemed appropriate to do so by the doctor, without parent or guardian consent.

You can talk to children and young people about understanding their bodies, gender, puberty and sexuality. When doing this you must consider the developmental age, maturity and individual circumstances of the child or young person when having these conversations.

For more information and advice on these conversations please refer to [Talk Soon Talk Often Booklet](#) and [Respectful Relationships – Bullying Stops Here](#).

If you have concerns, queries or need further guidance, please contact the Child Safety Service or Care Team, if one is in place.

► *Continue over page.*





## Medical appointments

While a child or young person is able to see a doctor without needing consent from a parent or guardian, a doctor can only provide medical treatment or prescription medication if a person is able to provide informed consent (except in emergency situations).

In most cases, informed consent must be provided by a parent or guardian. However, a child or young person under the age of 18 may be able to provide consent for medical treatment, if they are deemed to be a mature minor by a doctor. This will depend on their level of maturity and understanding, and other factors. For more information please refer to [Young people's rights at the doctor in Tasmania](#).

Where a child or young person is not deemed a mature minor, or is unable to provide consent themselves, you can make appointments for general medical needs (including immunisations, taking the child or young person to a doctor and specialist appointments).

You can provide consent and permission for the child or young person to have minor and low-risk, non-invasive health services, such as blood tests or x-rays, and can have prescriptions filled and you can administer medications as prescribed.

You must inform the Child Safety Service about all appointments, medical treatments and any medications that have been prescribed.

Planned significant medical treatments and invasive procedures, such as operations or other procedures involving admission to hospital, must be approved by the Child Safety Service.

## Emergency care

In an emergency where there is risk of death or serious injury if medical treatment is not immediately provided, you can provide consent for the child or young person. A medical practitioner can do whatever is necessary to avoid death or serious injury without needing to seek consent from anyone and may proceed, even if a parent or guardian refuses consent.

Where it is not reasonable or possible to contact the Child Safety Service in an emergency situation, you must inform the Child Safety Service of any emergency or urgent care required/ provided for a child or young person in your care, as soon as possible.

## Dental appointments

You can make appointments and sign forms for general dental requirements (cleaning, fillings, x-rays), but major dental or orthodontic treatments (extractions, root canals) must be approved by the Child Safety Service. You must inform the Child Safety Service about all appointments and dental treatments.



## Learning

### School-based activities and excursions

The Child Safety Service must enrol the child or young person into school and must approve all school excursions or activities that involve travelling outside of Tasmania.

Where School Validation Forms are sent to you at the beginning of each school year, you can sign and provide consent for children and young people for decisions such as:

- school camps, excursions and activities (within Tasmania)
- school-based activities and sports outside of regular school hours, and outdoor education activities (within Tasmania)
- school photos
- use of photos by the school
- graduation dinners and socials
- allergy forms
- school science laboratory forms.

You must inform the Child Safety Service of any overnight school excursions, dates and the location. You must always have a plan with the child or young person so that they can contact you or another safe person if they change their mind or need support at any time during overnight excursions or camps.



### Learning to Drive

Once a young person is 15 years and 11 months, they can complete the learner driver knowledge test and apply for their Learner Driver Licence. Where needed, you can provide support for the young person with this.

You can teach the young person to drive (this includes taking the young person for driving lessons and signing permission forms for the young person if they are taking professional driving lessons).

# Participating

## Sleepovers

The Child Safety Service must approve:

- the first sleepover at a new household (you can provide permission for all subsequent sleepovers at that household **for up to two nights**) for all children under the age of six (6)
- sleepovers **of more than two nights** for all children and young people in care
- all sleepovers for children and young people on Voluntary Care Orders (as parental permission is required) and Assessment Orders (where there has not been sufficient time for the child to establish a supportive relationship with their carer).

For all sleepovers, you must have confidence that the home where a sleepover is to occur is safe, that the responsible adults are known to you and are contactable, and can contact you at all times.

You must always have a plan with the child or young person so that they can contact you or another safe person if they change their mind or need support at any time during their sleepover.

## Activities

You can make decisions relating to children and young people participating in activities, such as spending time with friends, participating in sports, community activities, and routine activities with you and your family.

You must ensure that all activities are safe and appropriate for the age and development of the child or young person.

The Child Safety Service must approve activities that involve a high risk of injury or death. For activities approved by the Child Safety Service, you can then sign the legal waiver or disclaimer. If you are unsure if an activity involves high risks, you must contact the Child Safety Service.

## Travel and holidays

You can make decisions for travel and family holidays that are within Tasmania.

To the fullest extent possible, activities and travel dates should ensure children and young people don't miss out on time with their natural family or school. You must provide the Child Safety Service and Care Team, where one is in place, with details of any planned travel.

The above guidance relating to permission for children and young people participating in high risk activities applies, even when you and your family are present or where the activity is part of your holiday.

## Passports

The Child Safety Service must approve all international travel plans, including location, dates and any relevant insurances and vaccinations, before an application for a passport can be completed. Once approved, the Child Safety Service will lodge the passport application.

This process may be long and you should submit travel plans as early as possible, allowing up to four months to obtain a passport.

You must hold the child or young person's passport, as the responsible adult, whilst traveling with the child or young person. You must return the passport to the Child Safety Service, once you have returned to Australia.





# Having a positive sense of culture and identity

## Connection to culture

It is important for children and young people to find out about family and personal history, maintain connection to their culture and to engage with cultural or spiritual practices. This is particularly important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

You must ensure, as much as possible, that children and young people do not lose connection with their family, community and culture. It is important to work with the Care Team on ways to support the child or young person to make or maintain these important connections.

## Haircuts and piercings

You can approve haircuts, including hair style changes and colouring, and body piercings, in line with the [Tasmania Police, Tattooing Body Modification and Body Piercing of Youths Poster](#), and as long as the procedure is safe and is not permanent.

You must consider what is age appropriate, the views of the child or young person, whether there are any school limitations on hair styles, colours and body jewellery, and if the procedure can be guaranteed to be safe. You can consult with the Care Team for further guidance where this would help with the decision.

**For more detailed information relating to daily care decisions for children and young people in foster and kinship care, please refer to the [Foster and Kinship Carers Association Handbook](#).**



# Quick reference guide



Decisions must consider the voice of the child or young person when it impacts them.



## Being loved, safe and valued

	Young People	Carers	Child Safety Service
Approve contact with family and others			
Support and enable contact with family and others			
Babysitting (more than ten hours per week)			
Babysitting (less than ten hours per week)			



## Having material basics

	Young People	Carers	Child Safety Service
Apply for Learners' driver license			
Apply for Student Card			
Apply for Tax File Number (age 16+)			
Create own MyGov account (age 14+)			
Open online bank account			
Birth Certificates and Medicare Cards			
Apply for Health Care Cards			
Claim benefits from Medicare			
Apply for Personal Identification Card			
Apply for Youth Allowance/other Centrelink benefits			
Budgeting and managing money			
Applying for a Passport			
Mobile Devices and Phones			
Social Media			

## Quick reference guide (continued)



Decisions must consider the voice of the child or young person when it impacts them.



### Being Healthy

	Young People	Carers	Child Safety Service
NDIS			
Sex and Contraception			
Emergency/urgent care			
General medical needs			
Low-risk, non-invasive medical needs (x-ray, blood tests etc)			
Fill prescriptions & administer as prescribed			
General dental needs (cleaning, fillings, x-rays)			
Major dental or orthodontic needs (extractions, root canals etc)			
Major medical and dental needs and procedures (operations, orthodontic needs etc)			



### Learning

	Young People	Carers	Child Safety Service
School Enrolment			
School Validation Forms			
School Photos			
School camps and excursions (within Tas)			
School camps and excursions (outside of Tas)			
Other school-based activities/forms			
Teaching a young person to drive			



## Quick reference guide (continued)



*Decisions must consider the voice of the child or young person when it impacts them.*



### Participating

	Young People	Carers	Child Safety Service
Activities (visiting friends, sports, community activities)			
Activities involving high-risk			
Sleepovers (at an already approved household)			
Sleepovers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at a new household</li> <li>• for a child under six (6)</li> <li>• for more than two (2) nights</li> </ul>			
Holidays and travel (within Tas)			
Holidays and travel (outside of Tas)			
Passports			
Approval for International Travel			



### Having a positive sense of culture and identity

	Young People	Carers	Child Safety Service
Maintaining connection to culture			
Haircuts and hairstyle changes, including colour			
Body Piercings			



Tasmanian  
Government