

FOR
CASEWORKERS

SIBLINGS IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

Children and young people are in the child protection system through no fault of their own.

The majority of siblings in out-of-home care are separated from each other in some way.

Maintaining relationships with family, especially their brothers and sisters, is important to their wellbeing, now and in the future.

Keeping siblings together in care can often be difficult, but it's worth it.

STAYING TOGETHER IS IMPORTANT

Research tells us that when siblings stay together, children and young people:

- are happier
- have greater self-esteem
- achieve better at school
- have better relationships with their siblings
- form stronger bonds with their foster family and experience more stable placements
- are more likely to be reunited with their birth family

HOW CAN CASEWORKERS HELP?

- Try to organise placements with carers who can keep siblings together
- Support carers to keep siblings together



WHAT IF STAYING TOGETHER IS NOT POSSIBLE?

Staying in regular contact is the next best thing

- Even when siblings are separated, their brothers and sisters are the family members that children and young people contact most
- Caseworkers and Carers have a central role in influencing the frequency, quality and safety of contact with family members, including siblings

NEXT STEPS...

- Talk to children and young people to find out what they want
- Talk to carers about the importance of helping siblings to stay connected
- Talk to carers and children and young people together to work out a plan
- Work with carers to enable regular contact between siblings

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR OUT-OF-HOME-CARE

Standard 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities participate in decisions concerning the care and placement of their children and young people.

Standard 9: Children and young people are supported to safely and appropriately maintain connection with family, be they birth parents, siblings or other family members.

Standard 10: Children and young people are supported to develop their identity, safely and appropriately through contact with their families, friends, culture, spiritual sources and communities to have their life history recorded as they grow up.

<http://www.dss.gov.au/national-standards-for-out-of-home-care>



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