

SIBLINGS IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

FOR CASEWORKERS

Children and young people in the child protection system are in care due to 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 children and young people's brothers and sisters is really important to their wellbeing, now and in the future.

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 for sibling contact to occur on a regular basis.
- 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>.

There are also other documents in each state and territory called, 'A Charter of Rights for Children in Out-of-Home Care'. These charters have a lot of information about rights for children and young people in out-of-home care.



To find out more call 1800 655 105 or head to:



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