

MEDIA RELEASE

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creating a better life
for children and young
people in care

NEW PAPER AND RESOURCE LAUNCHED ON SIBLING CONTACT AND PLACEMENT IN CARE

Through consultations with children and young people in out-of-home care (i.e., foster, kinship, and residential care) CREATE Foundation has found that those in care say living with their brothers and sisters is very important, and that siblings are the people they most want to contact when they are not living together.

At a recent policy forum in Melbourne, CREATE launched its latest research report on **Sibling Placement and Contact in Out-of-Home Care**. Drawn from surveys and interviews with 1160 children and young people and 116 case workers, CREATE's research found over 35% of children and young people in placements did not live with brothers or sisters who also were in care, and in only 29% of care placements did children and young people live with all of their siblings (McDowall, 2015). The report reinforces the importance of the sibling relationship to children and young people in care and makes essential reading for carers, researchers, and policy makers.

During the forum, participants discussed ideas and strategies to improve the likelihood of siblings being placed together and to enable meaningful contact to keep families connected. The results of these discussions will be released later this month.

"Living with siblings, or having conversations and contact with siblings is what young people in care have told us is important to them," said Ms Jacqui Reed, CREATE Foundation's Chief Executive Officer.

To strengthen the community's understanding of the needs of children and young people in care, CREATE has developed useful resources about the importance of sibling placements and contact. CREATE's **Siblings Are Forever** video illustrates the importance of placing brothers and sisters together in care and where this is not possible, facilitating regular contact between siblings. CREATE have also developed resources for carers, children, and caseworkers.

"If I didn't go into foster care having my sisters with me, I probably would have gone off the rails," said Sharney in the **Siblings are Forever** DVD.

Russ, who also participated in the film, said *"I haven't seen my brother since my placement broke down about six years ago,"* and complained that when he called a caseworker to send birthday wishes to his brother, he was told that *"they can write a message for his file but won't pass on the message."*

To read the report use this link <http://create.org.au/publications/>

To see the video use this links: www.create.org.au and
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ia5iPzLC-AA>

Poster resources available via: <http://create.org.au/publications/>

Data source: McDowall, J. J. (2015). *Sibling placement and contact in out-of-home care*. Sydney: CREATE Foundation.

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Background information:

CREATE Foundation regularly consults with young people and through the consultation in 2009 revealed a somewhat bleak portrait of the reduced life outcomes experienced by children and young people growing up in, and transitioning from the care system. The [Report Card](#) indicated that if you've been in out of home care, you are more likely to be **undereducated, unemployed, to earn less, become a parent at a younger age**, be involved in the **juvenile justice** system, become **homeless** and be dependent on **social assistance**.

- 35% are homeless in the first year of leaving care
- 46% of boys are involved in the juvenile justice system
- 35% completed Year 12 (compared to that of the general population)
- 29% are unemployed (compared to the national average which is 9.7%)
- 28% were already parents themselves

Data source: McDowall, J. J. (2009). *Transitioning from care (CREATE Report Card 2009)*. Sydney: CREATE Foundation.

CREATE's 2013 Report Card revealed:

- 36% of children and young people are split from their brothers and sisters in care
- 31% attend 3 or more primary schools and have greater rates of suspension
- 35% have 5 or more caseworkers during their time in care
- 67% are not aware of having any official leaving care plan

Data source: McDowall, J. J. (2013). *Experiencing out-of-home care in Australia: The views of children and young people (CREATE Report Card 2013)*. Sydney: CREATE Foundation.

Click [here](#) to visit our website to download the full reports.