



My book
about
being in
care





My name is:





This book can help me to understand...

- ★ what it means to be in care
- ★ why I'm in care
- ★ where I live
- ★ things about my family
- ★ how I can have my say.



There are lots of children in care... I'm not alone.

What does it mean to be in care?



It means that the Department for Child Protection (usually called DCP) will look after **me**.

DCP is part of the Government. They care for children (like me) and try to keep them safe at home or in care.

Being in care means that DCP decides what happens in my life. Things like where I will live and go to school, visiting my family, and going to the doctor if I'm sick.

The DCP person I'll see the most is my **case worker**. This person will make sure that I am well looked after, stay safe and that I get the things I need. My case worker will make most of the decisions about my life. If I am not happy, I can talk to them.





My case worker is:

My case worker works in a district office. Other people also work there and help my case worker to keep me safe and make sure I'm looked after.

My case worker has a **team leader** who is in charge. I can talk to this person when my case worker is not there.





My team leader is:

The person who is the boss of the whole district is the district director. It's good to know their name as they will help my case worker make important decisions about my life.



My district director is:

If I'm Aboriginal, then I will also meet an Aboriginal officer. This person's job is to help DCP make sure that I keep in touch with my culture and my family.

My Aboriginal officer is:



There are people from lots of different cultures in Australia. DCP will help me stay in touch with MY culture.





Because I am special, I have the right to be loved, feel safe, have food, go to school, have somewhere to live and have people care for me.

Charter of Rights for children in care

There is a special Charter of Rights for children in care, and it is on page 20. I can talk to my case worker or the Advocate for Children in Care about this.

Advocate for Children in Care

This person is there especially to help me sort out problems with DCP and help me have my say.

The Charter of Rights helps me to be safe and healthy.



That's right!

Why am I in care?

Sometimes families have a hard time and need help to care for their children properly. This is what has happened to my family. This is **NOT** my fault. I have done nothing to make this happen.

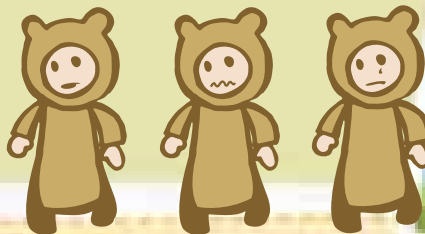
I am in care because it is not safe for me to be at home right now and I need to live somewhere else for a while. DCP will work with my parents to try and make sure it's safe for me to go back home.

I can talk to my case worker about why I'm in care if I want.



Children in care can sometimes feel happy, or sad, or worried or scared. Feelings like this are normal and I am not alone!

I can talk to my carer or my case worker about how I am feeling.



How long will I be in care?

Sometimes I will be in care only for a short time until it is safe for me to go back home.

Other times, even though my family and case worker try hard to get me back home, this may not be right or safe. So I may be in care for longer.

If I want to know more about why I can't live at home right now, I can talk to my case worker.





Where will I live?

While I'm in care, the place I live is called my placement.
There are different kinds of placements.

I may live with family members or friends.
These carers are called **relative** or **kinship carers**.

I may live with a **foster carer**. I may not know this person,
but they have chosen to look after me because they care
about me.

What do I call my foster carer? I can talk to my carer
and case worker about this. Whatever I choose is OK
just so long as I feel comfortable with it.



I may live in a **residential care unit** or **group home**
with a group of children, and adults who look after
us. I may stay there for a short time (maybe six
weeks) or longer.



About my family



I have the right to see my family and friends whenever possible. This is called **contact**, and it can happen in lots of different ways like visits, phone calls, emails and letters. Sometimes other adults may need to be there when I see my family to make sure I stay safe. I don't have to see anyone I don't want to.

I would like to have contact with:

Draw or write here

The people I have contact with are:

Draw or write here

Sometimes I may feel I'll hurt mum and dad if I like the people who are looking after me in care. But it's OK to care or love my carer as well as my parents. There are different types of love like 'mummy love' and 'aunty love', and they can all happen at the same time. It doesn't mean that I don't love mum or dad. Wherever I live, my parents and family will always love me.



Being my best

To be healthy, I may need to see a doctor or dentist.

To help me be my best, I may see people who can help me with my school work or the way I speak.

I may see a psychologist to help me deal with how I'm feeling about things. Sometimes it really helps to talk to someone who cares and will listen to me.

My doctor is called...

My dentist is called...

School

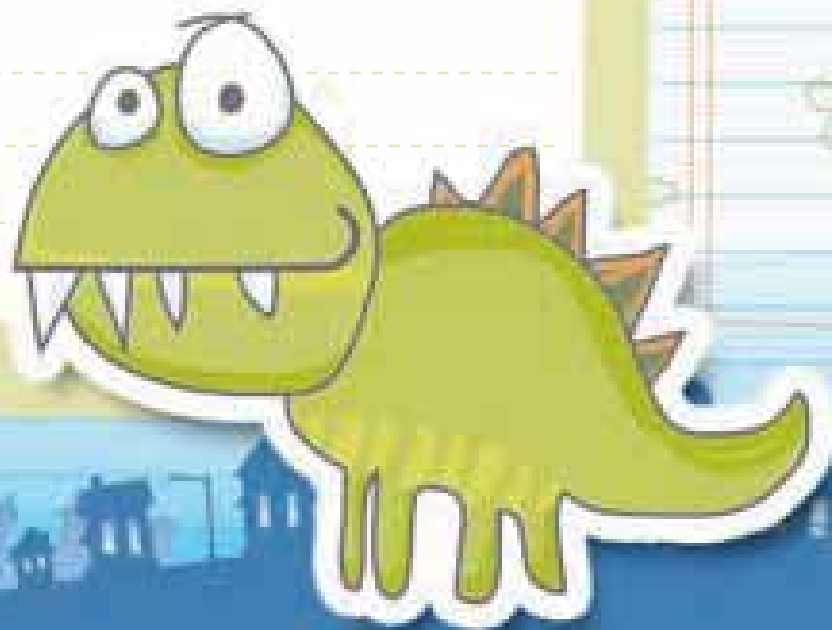
My case worker will try to make sure that I stay at the same school.

Sometimes my placement is too far from my school, and I may have to go to a new one. My case worker will talk to me about my new school.

Some people at school will need to know that I am in care. My case worker may talk to people like the principal and my teacher. But it is nobody else's business. It's up to me who I talk to about it. My case worker can help me choose who I tell, and what to say to the people I don't want to tell.

These are the people who are helping me:

A large rectangular area with a light green border, containing 15 horizontal dashed lines for writing.



Why do I have care plan meetings?

Care plan meetings are where everyone gets together to decide:

- where I will live
- where I will go to school
- how often I will see my friends and family
- what sports and activities I will do (like music, dance and art)
- what help I need.

I have the right to say what I want to happen. So, it's important I tell my case worker or carer how I feel about all these things.

The care plan is written down. My case worker will give me a copy of it so I know what's going to happen for me. I can get help to understand it if I want.

Care plan meetings happen to make sure I'm happy and safe, and I can be my best.

Quite a lot of adults can be involved in care plan meetings. They may all get together in one big meeting, or there may be lots of small meetings.

People who go to my care plan meetings can be:

- my family
- my case worker
- my carer
- my Aboriginal worker
- my psychologist, doctor or teacher.

A care plan is all about me. It's good if I can go along to tell people how I feel and what I want.

I can pick where my part of the meeting is held.
I can choose somewhere I feel safe and comfortable, like where I'm living or a park.

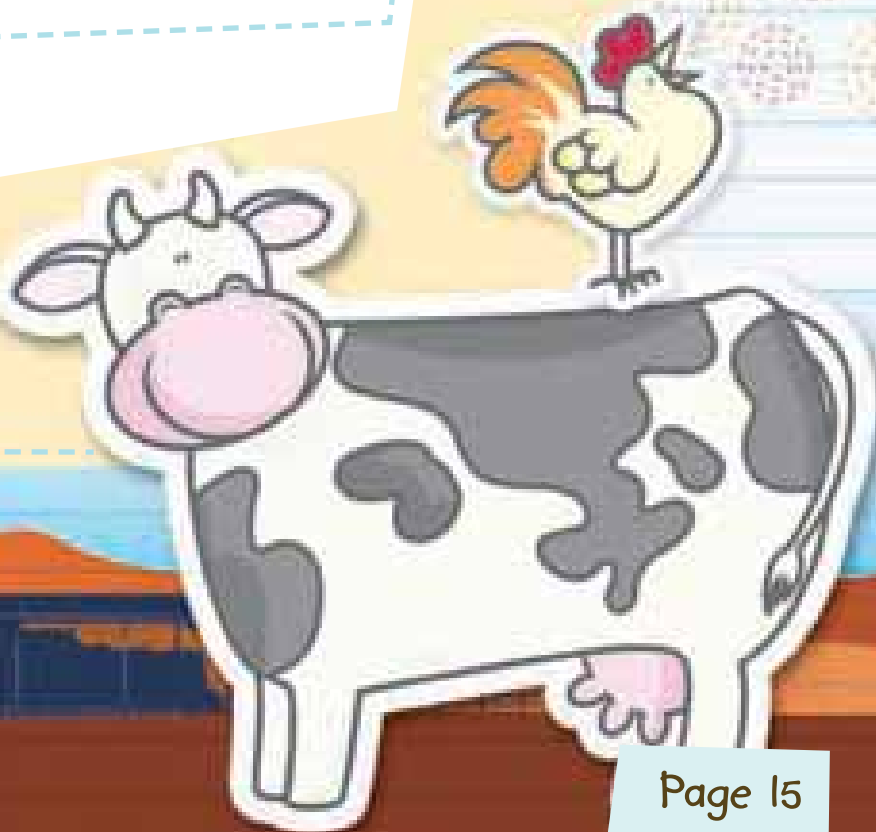
I can say if there is anyone I don't want to be there at the same time as me.

I can take an adult friend to the meeting for support or I can ask the Advocate for Children in Care to come with me.

It's really good if I go to the meeting. But I don't have to go if I don't want to. I can talk to my case worker about what I want to happen in my life.



My care plan
is all about me!

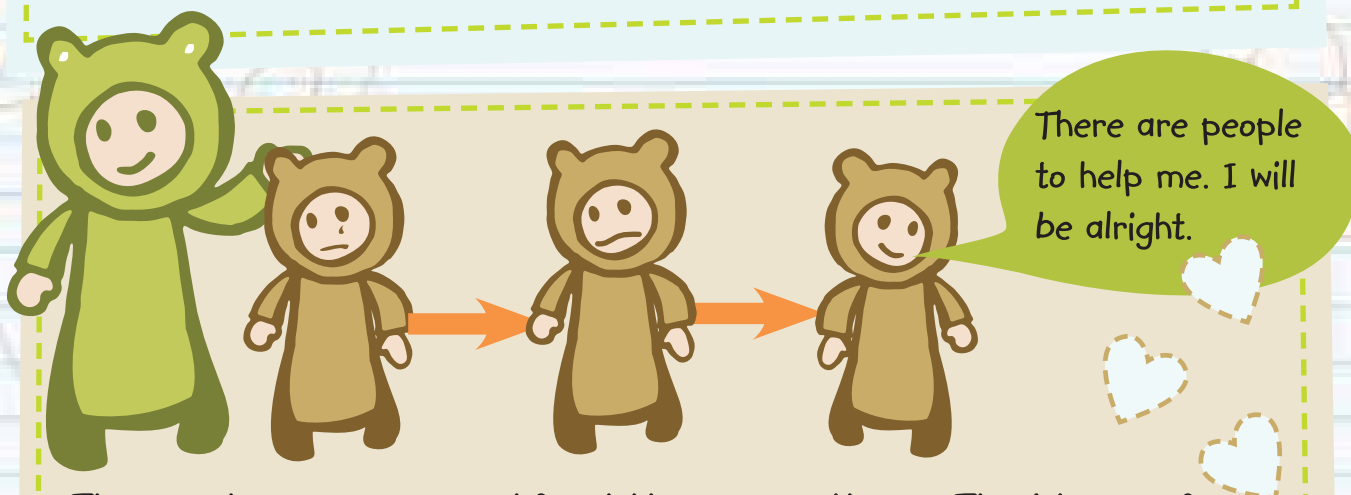


What if I'm not happy?

Sometimes children in care might not feel happy about things like:

- their care plan
- not getting heard
- not knowing what's going to happen
- not seeing family or friends
- where they live or go to school
- not getting enough help.

If I'm not happy about something, I can talk to my carer, case worker, team leader or teacher.



There is also someone special for children in care like me. The Advocate for Children in Care can help me sort out my problems and make sure I have a say about what I want to happen in my life.

My support contacts

My case worker's name is...

Office number:

Mobile number:

My team leader's name is...

Office number:

Mobile number:

My district director's name is...

Office number:

My carer's name is...

Contact number:



My support contacts

Advocate for Children in Care

Telephone: (08) 9222 2518

Mobile: 0429 086 508

Free call (not from mobiles): 1800 460 696

Email: advocate.for.children.in.care@dcp.wa.gov.au

Crisis Care Unit

I can call Crisis Care if there is an emergency or if I need help when my case worker's office is closed.

Telephone: (08) 9223 1111

Free call (not from mobiles): 1800 199 008

CREATE Foundation WA

CREATE is especially for children and young people in care. CREATE offers activities to help connect children and young people in care, like holding Christmas parties and fun days for children under 12, as well as some special programs and activities for all young people in care. All children and young people in care can become a Club CREATE member and receive a newsletter, prizes and a birthday card.

Free call: 1800 655 105

Website: www.create.org.au

Kids Helpline

Free call: 1800 551 800

(free from Optus mobiles only)

Website: www.kidshelp.com.au

My emergency contacts

Ambulance, Fire and Police	000
Police	131 444
Health Direct advice line (24hr)	1800 022 222
Poisons Information Centre (24hr)	13 11 26

Feedback

What do you think of this guide? The Advocate for Children in Care would love to know and hear your ideas and suggestions. Fill out the feedback form at the back of this booklet if you want to have your say.



Please give any
feedback to the
Advocate for
Children in Care.



Charter of Rights for children in care

1. I have the right to be healthy.

2. I have the right to go to school.

3. I have the right to be loved and
cared for.

4. I have the right to talk about
anything to my carer and case
worker.

5. I have the right to have
contact with my family
whenever possible.



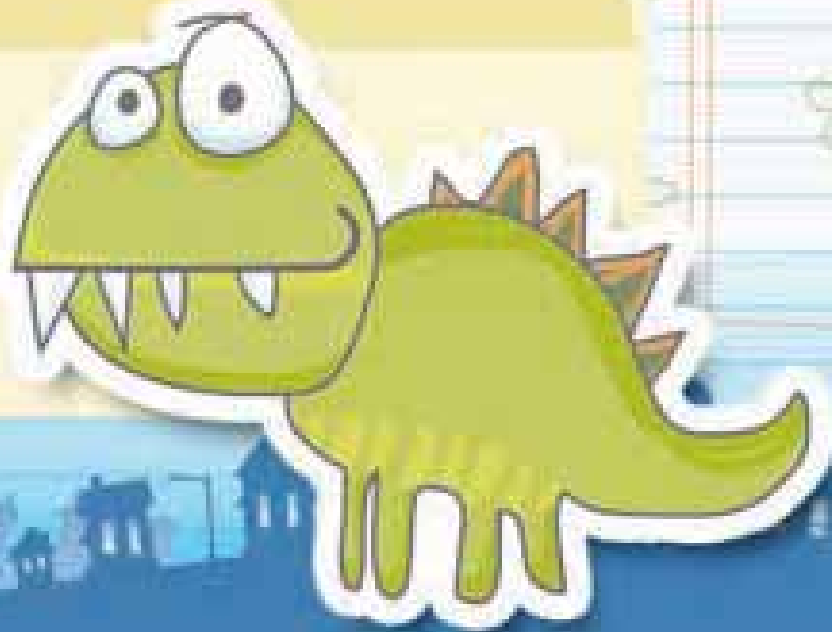
6. I have the right to be heard.

7. I have the right to privacy and to have my own things.

8. I have the right to play and have friends.

9. I have the right to my culture and religion.

10. I have the right to be safe.



Notes:



Acknowledgements

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