



Caregiving Information



Introduction

We are a Child and Family Support Service with a wide range of services for families, including caregiver services for children and young people from 0-17 years old.

We provide care for a variety of circumstances including emergency/crisis care, respite care and short term care.

Many parents we work with have few family or community supports and their children may require extra support and understanding, depending on the nature of their particular circumstances.



Aims of Caregiving

- To help the child to maintain links with his or her family identity, and feeling of self worth.
- To help the child's family members during difficult times so that they can look after their own children themselves.
- To provide alternative life experiences to those which the child currently experiences.
- To provide a warm and nurturing environment where a child's needs are met in terms of shelter, food, care and emotional security.



Types of Caregiving

There are many types of caregiving.

Anglican Family Care provides care as part of its work with families. This includes emergency care, weekend respite care and short term placements.

Short Term Care

Short term care can range from one night to a period of three months. Such a placement is often appropriate when, for example, the child's only parent is hospitalised.

An out-of-home placement may be part of a planned intervention to prevent further breakdown of the family unit.

Weekend or Respite Care

Weekend respite provides care for children on a regular basis, of maybe one or two weekends per month for a period of time until intervention with the family is complete.

The respite arrangement is regularly reviewed and is underpinned by legislation (Child, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989).

Who Can Be A Caregiver?

There is not one particular “type” of person who is better suited to caregiving than any other. The real qualification is not whether you are in a relationship, have a big house or a car, nor is it necessarily to have children of your own – rather it is whether you are the sort of person who can commit yourself wholeheartedly to meeting the child/children’s needs, be honest, accepting and above all, flexible.

Good health is also an important factor since taking care of a child can sometimes provide challenges.

The Caregiving Family

Caregivers and their families need to be flexible enough to accept a child who is not related to them and who may behave in ways they find different.

The children from the caregiving family have to be prepared to share their parents’ affection and time as well as material items such as bedrooms and toys.

Some children fit into the family easily while others may take more time and require extra patience and support.

Caregivers need to be aware that a child in their care may have different experiences, abilities, skills or interests.

The Child

Children react in different ways to spending time with caregivers.

Often there will be careful preparation time with the child getting to know the caregiver family, but there still may be an adjustment period. The caregiver may experience the child behaving in ways that require careful management.

A common issue for the child is that the caregiving family will have different attitudes and ways of behaving from his or her own family. This can lead to confusion and may cause the child to feel left out.

It is important that a child is given the chance to settle in to the caregivers home gradually. Caregiving families need to be aware that changes may be slow and that it can take a long time for the child to become familiar with the caregiver's home and routines.

The Child's Family

All children who come into care have a family they feel is their own and which is very important to them.

In most cases, when a child comes into care, the aim is that he or she will return home and so any plans being made for the child will be discussed fully with his or her own family.

Where a child is placed in out-of-home care for a period of time, the child will still have some contact with his or her own family. Caregivers must recognise the importance of this family to the child and be able to relate to them in a supportive, non-judgmental manner.

When a child is placed in respite care, communication with the child's family is usually made by phone. However, the way in which contact will be maintained will be discussed before the child is placed so that caregivers will know what to expect.

The situation can sometimes be difficult to deal with and caregivers need to have a lot of understanding and tact. The social worker can offer support and guidance in this.

The Family's Social Worker

Every family with a child in the care of Anglican Family Care has a social worker. It is the social worker's responsibility to help make arrangements for the child and to generally look after his or her interests.

The social worker encourages both the child and his or her family to share as much information as possible with the caregiving family to help them understand each other and work well together.

In the case of an emergency during the time a child is in the caregiver's care, the AFC has an on-call service available.

Finding a placement for a child involves consultation with the family's social worker and the social worker for the caregiver to ensure the best possible fit.

In respite situations, the child and their family meet with the potential caregiving family prior to a placement being agreed to by all parties.

Occasionally a placement may not work out as planned. If this occurs support is provided to all parties.

Support for Caregivers

There is a social worker available for caregivers. It is the social worker's responsibility to guide prospective caregivers through the application process and to keep regular contact with, and provide support to, approved caregivers.

Caregivers should discuss any issues they have with their social worker so that they can sort them out together. For families new to caregiving, working with a social worker may be a new experience. However, caregiving is team effort.

It is very important that caregivers and their social worker be honest with each other and keep each other informed on matters affecting the child and broader issues that may impact on their caregiving role. Mutual respect and trust are essential to ensure the best interest of the child are met.



How Much Room Do You Need?

Children require their own bed and a place to keep their personal belongings. It is agency policy that a child over the age of six years does not share a bedroom with any child of the opposite gender.

Financial Support

A board payment to reimburse expenses is made to caregivers to cover the cost of food and board for the child. These payments are reviewed annually and are increased in line with rates set by Child, Youth and Family.

For example a board payment for respite care is:

0-5 years: \$25.00 per night

6-17 years: \$30.00 per night

Other rates will be explained as required.

Becoming a Caregiver

If you or your family is interested in caring for a child, please contact Anglican Family Care.

The approval process will be explained when you enquire, but it is important to remember that a child will not be placed until approval and training have been complete. This process can take time as training courses are only run when there are enough people ready to take that final step.

Application Process

After considering this initial information on caregiving and discussing it as a family, please return the completed application form in the envelope provide.

A social worker will then contact you for an initial interview, where the remainder of the application process will be explained. This will be followed up by a home visit.

The final stage of the approval process involves the following checks:

- Police check of all household members aged over 17 years
- Medical check of adults in the home
- Child, Youth and Family check
- Two referee checks
- Home safety check



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