Standards of Alternative Care in South Australia

An Alternative Care Partnership
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Glossary of Terms
“The standards promote a ‘child first’ approach and a collaborative partnership of all members of the care team.”
Acknowledgements

Special appreciation is extended to the Alternative Care sector for their support and participation in the consultation and development of the Standards of Alternative Care in South Australia.

Consultation occurred with the following services:

- Connecting Foster Carers SA
- Create
- Aboriginal Family Support Services
- Anglican Community Care Inc.
- Anglicare SA
- Baptist Community Services
- Centacare
- Life Without Barriers
- Lutheran Community Care
- Southern Junction Community Services Inc.
- The Salvation Army - Muggys Accommodation Service
- Uniting Care Wesley Port Pirie
- Port Lincoln Aboriginal Health Service
- Department for Education and Children’s Services
- Disability SA
- Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People
- Families SA.
Introduction

Development of the Standards

The Standards have been developed jointly by key people and organisations involved in the care of children and young people including:

- carers
- non-government organisations
- CREATE Foundation
- Families SA
- Disability SA
- Connecting Foster Carers SA
- Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People

The development of the Standards is congruent with Keeping Them Safe - In Our Care (2006), the State Government’s agenda of reform in alternative care. They are consistent with the current National out of Home Care Standards (1996), the National Plan for Foster Children, Young People and their Carers (2004-2006) and the National Framework for Creating Safe Environments for Children-Organisations, Employees and Volunteers (2005).

In summary the Standards document sets the overarching benchmark for delivering quality services for children, young people, families and carers across the Alternative Care sector. The Standards incorporate the aims and principles of the Charter of Rights for Children and Young People and the Foster Carers Charter.

Definition of Standard

‘An agreed level of quality or attainment. Something used as a measure, norm, or model in comparative evaluations.’ (Web Oxford English Dictionary 2007).

Purpose of the Standards for Alternative Care in South Australia

- to set the bench mark for quality care provision to children and young people
- to ensure consistent outcomes for children and young people in Alternative Care
- to promote working in partnership across the Alternative Care sector
to articulate the core elements of effective governance for the south Australian Alternative Care sector

• to inform monitoring and compliance systems that ensures the attainment of the Standards.

Who are the Standards for?

The Standards are relevant to all contracted service providers, caseworkers and carers who have direct or indirect contact with children and young people in all forms of Alternative Care. The standards promote a ‘child first’ approach and a collaborative partnership of all members of the care team. Families SA aims to provide carers with the necessary support to meet and exceed the standards.

The standards are to be read in conjunction with the relevant policies, practice guides and procedures.

The Standards are relevant to:

Children and Young People in Alternative Care: all children and young people in alternative care including family-based care, non-family based care and Relative/Kinship care. The standards are about ensuring that children and young people are treated well, cared for properly and afforded the same opportunities as children who are not in out of home care. The Standards specify what service providers, caseworkers and carers need to do to achieve the goals of the Charter of Rights for Children and Young People.

Families SA Employees: all employees who have direct or indirect contact with children and young people in all forms of alternative care. The standards aim to guide valued employees in the delivery of quality and consistent care for children and young people.

Family Based Care - Relative and Kinship Carers: Relative and Kinship Care is a valued part of alternative care services in South Australia and has an important role in maintaining children in their familial networks and connected to their communities and culture. These standards are applicable across the Families SA relative and kinship carer population and the Relative and Kinship Care Program which support these carers. The aim of these standards is to promote a consistent level of quality care for children living in relative and kinship care through a collaborative and continuous improvement approach across the Care Team.

Family Based Carer - Foster Carers: Foster carers and foster parents are our valued partners who share our responsibilities for the safety and well
being of children. The standards are applicable to all carers in home based settings. The standards aim to provide carers with the requirements of delivering quality care, information on carer training and supports.

**Non-Family Based Carers:** Non-Family based care is an essential care option for some children and young people. Non-family based care includes carers in residential and transitional accommodation. The standards will aid the non-family based carers in providing professional care for children and young people in residential care.

**Non-Government Organisations (NGOs):** NGOs licensed under the Family and Community Services Act 1972. The service providers and family based carers are required to act in accordance with the Standards. The NGOs are valued partners in building and providing a range of care options for children and young people in care.

**Non-Government Organisations not licensed under the Family and Community Services Act:** Commercial care services provide for emergency accommodation placements. The commercial service providers and the commercial care workers are required to act in accordance with the Standards.

**Legislation that governs alternative care services**

*The Family and Community Services Act 1972* provides governance for licensing and monitoring of alternative care services in South Australia. The licensing arrangements assist the Minister to fulfil the statutory obligation to ensure that alternative care services provided to children and young people are consistent with the requirements of the legislation.

*The Children’s Protection Act 1993* establishes the Adelaide Youth Court jurisdiction to deal with applications relating to children in need of care and protection. Provision is made for orders to be obtained from the court to assist in investigation and assessment in cases where abuse and/or neglect is suspected. The Act also provides for family care meetings which offer an opportunity for the child’s family, in conjunction with other professionals, to make informed decisions regarding the care and protection of the child and to review those arrangements.

*The Adoption Act, 1988* allows for a child who is unable to return to the care of birth parents to be adopted by alternative caregivers, where such an action is deemed to be in the best interests of the child, where the child’s cultural identity will not be lost, and where appropriate, the child’s wishes are able to be expressed.

Families SA and support workers seek to work in partnership with the biological relative/kinship carers or the foster family to strengthen their
Principles

supports and ability to provide quality care for children and young people. The Alternative Care sector is guided by Principles of Good Practice that underpin these Standards.

Preserving and strengthening families

An active effort is required to keep children and young people within their birth family wherever possible and to make every effort to reunify a child or young person who is separated from their family. Where this is not possible, connections to family of origin and community need to be maintained and strengthened. This includes efforts to restore children or young people to disrupted placements. Where this is not possible, efforts should be made to maintain best connections or to heal those that are fractured.

Active participation of children and young people

The interests of the child or young person are to be the focus of decision-making. Children and young people will be given a voice in decision-making and will be involved in the design and delivery of services. It is about making it comfortable and appropriate for them to be involved and for adults to really listen to what they say and give their views due weight in the decision. Children and young people may choose not to participate but they must be given the opportunity.

Adherence to the Child Placement Principle and Aboriginal Child Placement Principle

When children or young people require placement in alternative care, placement planning must follow in accordance with the Child Placement Principle and the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle. The Principles require relatives and kin to be given appropriate consideration as placement options for children and young people recognising the importance of preserving connection to family, communities and culture.

Planning that facilitates settled and stable care for the child or young person

Ongoing placement planning is required to secure settled and stable care for the child or young person. Care environments should promote a sense of security and belonging in order to ensure their optimal development. Where settled and stable care cannot be achieved with the child or young person’s birth family, efforts are made to supplement the care of the birth family with care provided by a family, or significant others, that can offer the child or young person love, security and life-long relationships. The
goal of placement planning should follow the emotional lead of the child or young person and be guided by permanency planning and attachment theories. Children and young people should be returned home or settled into alternative care dependent upon this.

**Child focused within a family-centred service**

This involves ensuring that all caring efforts are focused on the needs of the child or young person, who is viewed in the context of their birth and foster, relative/kin carer families. A good standard of care is achieved by providing support to the birth family, foster family or relative/kin carer family while never losing focus on the child or young person’s best interests and unique needs.

**Recognition of the critical importance of nurturing relationships**

A secure attachment relationship to a consistent and loving caregiver is essential for a child’s optimal development. Impairment or continual disruption of a child’s attachment relationships will damage a child’s physical, emotional and cognitive development. All members in the Care Team need to ensure a focus on the child’s attachment needs. It is the role of the caseworkers, support workers and carers to promote existing attachments to birth family and relatives with regular family contact.

**Fostering resilience**

Children and young people need secure attachment relationships, good educational attainment, the ability and opportunity to make and sustain friendships, the opportunity to pursue talents and interests, to learn social behaviour and acquire social skills.

**Strengthening cultural identity**

This recognises the importance of a child or young person’s cultural expression, cultural heritage, and culture as an integral part of identity formation. Culturally sensitive and inclusive practice must be maintained to ensure cultural needs are supported.

Children and young people, their families of origin, and carers are often dealing with grief and loss. Sensitive and non-judgemental responses to the impact of grief, loss and trauma are required. Children and young people are able to achieve some level of recovery through the positive aspects of belonging, emotional connectedness, respect and love.

**Promoting the rights and opportunities of children and**
**young people**

Children and young people in care should be afforded the same rights and opportunities that other children in the community have. The child or young person in care may require extra efforts to redress the disadvantage they have already experienced. Extra care is required to prevent further harm through the child or young person’s experiences of the process of alternative care itself.

**Partnership between members of the Care Team**

For the State to fulfil the parenting role it is essential that all care team members work together. The care functions of a parent remain with the birth family or are transferred to alternative carers. Care Teams are comprised of the child, carer, birth family, service provider, caseworker and other relevant services or individuals that are involved in case planning. There is recognition of each party’s responsibility and a mutual understanding of roles. The service provider agency and caseworkers share responsibility for supporting the child or young person and the carer. The child or young person’s wishes and feelings should be considered and have increasing say with advancing age and maturity. Carers are encouraged and supported to attend case conferences and to implement case planning actions.
Monitoring and Compliance of the Standards

Non-Government service providers

Monitoring of the Standards will be a collaborative process between NGOs and Families SA. Service provider agencies will use the Standards to undergo an internal continuous organisational improvement process. They will be required to submit evidence that demonstrates their attainment of and compliance with specific standards. This evidence will be assessed by the Families SA Guardianship and Alternative Care Directorate who will determine the licensing of the agency.

Families SA will assist the service provider agency in meeting identified gaps by:

- providing advice on Standards requirements and service development
- encouraging the sharing of resources between service provider agencies (e.g. policies, procedures, and templates)
- holding information sessions
- assisting service provider agencies to establish mentoring relationships
- encouraging the sector to contribute to the continuous improvement and evaluation of the standards program.

Non-Government Organisations not licensed under the Family and Community Services Act 1972

Families SA may periodically enter into service agreements with Non-Government Organisations (the service provider) that are not licensed under the Family and Community Services Act. All service agreements state, the service provider must ensure that the service is provided in accordance with and is consistent with the Alternative Care Standards, specified guidelines and policies.

Families SA will use the Performance Management Framework and other assessment tools to monitor and evaluate these service agreements to ensure the service provider meets the guidelines and policies in operation during the terms of the service agreement.

Note: In exceptional circumstances where District Centres have sourced a private placement that is not subject to an existing service agreement the following will need to occur:
• Consultation with Families SA Contracts and Licensing before and during entering into written contracts as a risk minimisation and quality assurance measure.

• District Centres to recommend an interim 3 month placement with a written contract that is ‘in accordance with and consistent with Alternative Care Standards’, and must be approved by the Regional Director.

• All private placement referrals to be referred to and processed by Placement Services Unit.

Where funding is available and the placement is to exceed 3 months then District Centres refer to Families SA Contracts and Licensing in developing a service agreement on behalf of Regional Directors. Where possible this process is to occur at the commencement of the placement to meet the 3 month timeline.

Formal approval of the placement rests with the relevant Regional Director.

**Families SA**

The Monitoring of the Standards will be a primary responsibility of Families SA managers, supervisors and caseworkers. The monitoring and compliance of the Standards is applicable to all Families SA staff who are directly or indirectly involved in the delivery of Alternative Care Services, including District Centres, Relative and Kinship Care Program, Residential Care, Transitional Accommodation and Independent Living Team. Families SA will work in partnership with all care team members to ensure the Standards are met. Families SA will monitor compliance with the Standards through existing case reviews, internal audits and Performance Enhancement processes. Families SA will ensure recommendations results from reviews and audits are addressed through case planning and communicated to all care team members. Review and audit outcomes should be utilised to inform strategy and policy development for service improvement.
Core Standards

The following core standards define the overarching requirement of the Alternative Care sector to achieve quality of care for children and young people:

**Standard 1  Entering Care**

All contracted service providers within the Alternative Care sector will provide individualised placement planning and matching for all children and young people entering care to ensure placement suitability, stability and continuity.

**Standard 2  Case Management**

Families SA caseworkers will ensure their work with children, young people and their families and carers is based upon an ongoing assessment and planning framework. Monitoring and review of casework will ensure children and young people are provided with all identified opportunities/services to allow them to realise their full potential.

**Standard 3  Care Provision**

(Family-based care:- Foster Care, Relative and Kinship Care, Non-family based care:- Residential Care, Transitional Accommodation, Commercial Care workers, Congregate Care and Independent Living).

All contracted service providers within the Alternative Care sector will provide children and young people with a safe and secure living environment appropriate to their specific needs. Service providers will be subject to regular monitoring and review to promote quality care provision for children and young people in care.

**Standard 4  Participation**

Children, young people, birth families and carers will be supported to actively participate in decision-making and to make choices in case planning.

**Standard 5  Care Records**

The Alternative Care sector will have well-managed records that are accessible and confidential.

**Standard 6  Customer Relations**

All inquiries, complaints and allegations will be heard and responded to in a confidential, responsive and fair manner.
Standard 7  Transition Planning
Transition planning will occur for children and young people from the onset of entry into care through to leaving care.

Standard 8  Sector Partnerships
All service providers within the Alternative Care sector, both government and non-government, will work in partnership to deliver accessible and effective services for children, young people and their families.
Alternative Care Access Pathways

Core alternate care standards in South Australia

Specific Standards, Policies and Practice Guidelines stemming from Core Standards

- Entering Care
- Case Management
- Care Provision
- Participation
- Customer Relations
- Transition Planning
- Sector Partnership

Alternative care
Internet and Intranet gateway
Hard copy ring binders
Format and Structure of Standards

Each core standard is divided into the following sections:

*Core Standard:* describes the overarching practice requirements for the Alternative Care sector and provides the theme for specific standards to be grouped together.

*Overview:* provides a summary of each section and defines the core standard areas.

*Specific Standard(s):* sets out specific requirement that enables the Core Standard to be achieved.

*Expected Outcome:* defines the key outcomes that each standard aims to achieve.

*Roles and Responsibilities:* defines the different roles of specific services and positions to ensure that the standard is achieved.

*Practice Criteria:* key requirements of each standard to ensure quality practice is delivered

*Policies and Procedures:* Families SA documents that provide guidance and procedural requirements for each Standard.

Families SA policies and procedures can be accessed on the Families SA Intranet. The policies and procedures provide guidance on how to achieve the Standards. Non-government organisation can utilise Families SA policies and procedures to inform their practice and operating procedures. Families SA are able to provide the Alternative Care sector with copies of the nominated policies and procedures. For further inquiries or to access information contact the Guardianship and Alternative Care Directorate - Strategy and Policy Team on 8226 6662.
Example

**Standard 1.1: Health of Child or Young Person**
Children and young people have their health care optimised through preventative services, regular assessment, monitoring and treatment.

**Expected outcome**
Children and young people have their medical, developmental, optical and dental health needs assessed and case managed to ensure they receive regular preventative appointments and treatment as required

**Roles and Responsibilities:**
Families SA caseworkers to ensure all children and young people in alternative care have a Case Plan and an Alternative Care Agreement that addresses their health needs.

Families SA and Placement Support Workers will provide support to carers to address children and young people’s health needs. Caseworkers will maintain Basic Information Records and provide these records to service providers and carers. Carers’ views will be sought regarding the health needs of children in their care.

**Practice Criteria**

1.1.1 Carers will ensure that the child or young person attends health care appointments as required in the Case Plan.

**Policies and Procedures**
Guardianship and Alternative Care Manual
Specific Standards
1. Entering Care

Core Standard 1: Entering Care

All contracted service providers within the Alternative Care sector will provide individualised placement planning and matching for all children and young people entering care to ensure placement suitability, stability and continuity.

Children and young people in care have the right to:

- understand why they are in care
- express their opinion about things that affect them
- be treated like other children and young people who do not live in care.

Overview

This section sets out the standards and practice criteria of entering care and outlines the importance of placement matching. These standards are applicable to all service providers, Families SA caseworkers and all carers.

Placing a child in Alternative Care will be a planned process that focuses on the individual needs of the child. The process commences with locating a suitable placement, by matching the child to the carer. The preferred placement for a child or young person is:

- culturally, age and developmentally appropriate
- least disruptive to the child, their siblings and family
- able to sustain a connection with family and community and give priority to maintaining the child in the same geographic area
- able to meet the physical, social and emotional needs of the child and young person, provides stability, and achieves the case plan goal and outcomes
- inclusive of the views of children, kin and carers in decision-making, planning and intervention.
Caregivers must be provided with sufficient information to ensure that children and young people experience a successful transition into care. There is a fine balance between maintaining privacy and confidentiality of individual children and their families whilst providing caregivers with sufficient information to assist them in their care giving role. In summary caregivers require the information that will assist them to provide the best care for children and young people. Caregivers are a crucial part of the Care Team and are bound by the same confidentiality principles as departmental employees.
**Standard 1.1: Access to and Assessment of Placements**

Children and young people in need of care and support will have timely access to appropriate services based on a thorough assessment of their needs and family situation.

**Expected Outcome**

All children and young people requiring alternative care will be matched to a suitable placement and provided with services that meet their specific needs.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Families SA caseworkers will liaise with service providers, cultural consultants/service/forums and other key professionals to ensure children and young people have access to suitable placements and other required services. Caseworkers will share assessment results of the child or young person with the identified services.

**Practice Criteria**

1.1.1 Assessments of placements are carried out prior to the placement of a child or young person, or in emergencies, within 7 days after the placement has commenced.

1.1.2 Where siblings are being assessed and placed, the collective needs of siblings are considered, as well as the individual needs of each child and young person. Where it is possible and appropriate siblings are placed together.

1.1.3 All placement assessments and referrals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle.

1.1.4 A child with a disability is placed with a carer who has training or experience or is willing to receive training/support in caring for a child with disabilities.

1.1.5 Prior to making a recommendation about placing an additional child with a carer the service provider consults with all the relevant caseworkers to consider the effect on the identified children and young people. The placement assessment should consider the capacity of the carer to provide care for another child and to determine if there are too many children in the one placement (Families SA term for this issue is ‘Exceed Numbers’).
1.1.6 A placement checklist is completed for each child prior to entering the placement.

1.1.7 Children and young people are provided with information about being in care and their views are sought. This includes providing and explaining printed information such as the ‘Charter of Rights’ and the ‘Being in Care’ booklet (as appropriate).

**Policies and Procedures**

Carer Assessment Manual
Guardianship and Alternative Care Manual
Families SA Relative, Kinship and Specific Child Only Care: Policy, Practice Guideline and Procedure
Keeping Them Safe - Initial Placement Checklist
Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People Resources - Contact Card, Social Worker Checklist and ‘About Being In Care’ booklet
Standard 1.2: Placement Matching

Children and young people have their needs matched with the profile of potential carers.

Expected Outcome

The attributes of potential carers will be considered and matched to the needs and characteristics of the child or young person.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Alternative Care sector is responsible for ensuring placement matching occurs and meets the needs of children and young people in care. Families SA caseworkers will provide all relevant information, in a timely manner to service providers to assist the placement matching process.

In the event of suitable emergency accommodation arrangements, transition plans will be developed to ensure transfer to a stable placement.

Practice Criteria

1.2.1 There is close matching of the needs of the child or young person with the placement type.

1.2.2 The service provider recommends placement matches that are consistent with the carer’s approval status, the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle, Child Placement Principle and the needs of the child and young person.

1.2.3 The child or young person is given information about the authorised carer before entering their care appropriate to their age and cognitive ability.

1.2.4 Where possible the views of child or young person, parents, caregivers, relatives/kin about the placement are obtained and recorded on the child’s records.

1.2.5 Where possible children and young people experience minimal disruption to established routines, schooling, child care, relationships, community supports or employment arrangements.

1.2.6 Where possible entry to a placement is planned, so that the child or young person is best able to adapt to the new environment.

1.2.7 Where a child or young person is placed in Alternative Care, the caseworker or a significant person will accompany them to the placement and settle the child into the placement.
1.2.8 All children and young people are telephoned by their caseworker within 24 hours of the start of a placement and have face to face contact with their caseworker within one week. For children with a disability alternative means of communication may be required. Caseworkers to consult with disability caseworkers on alternative communication strategies.

1.2.9 Children and young people are provided with contact numbers for their caseworker and will be provided with emergency contacts.

1.2.10 The service provider ensures that carers are only approved for a maximum of three children or young people. Exceptions may be made in the case of sibling groups or relative/kinship care or specific child only placements.

1.2.11 Caseworkers use the ‘Placement Information Checklist’ to ensure that all relevant information about the needs of the child or young person is provided to the carer.

1.2.12 On entry to placement carers are provided with a copy of the ‘Verification of a Child in Care’ form.

1.2.13 Carers are provided with the following information needed to care for the child or young person: (where available)

- medical/dental needs
- health care plans
- risk issues
- behavioural issues
- disability specific information, including eating and drinking plans, behaviour plans etc
- dietary requirements,
- emotional wellbeing issues
- familiar routine details
- family contact
- court requirements and a copy of the court order.
- emergency contact details
- appointments
- school details.

Policies and Procedures
Guardianship and Alternative Care Manual
2. Case Management

**Core Standard 2: Case Management**

Families SA caseworkers will ensure their work with children, young people, their families and carers is based upon an ongoing assessment and planning framework. Monitoring and review of casework will ensure children and young people are provided with all identified opportunities/services to allow them realise their full potential.

Children and young people in care have the right to:
- have their thoughts and opinions asked for and considered
- be involved in what is decided about their life and care
- regular support and contact from their worker
- a plan which shows how and where they will be cared for
- keep in contact with the people who help them feel good about themselves
- understand where the family is
- know who they are and their history
- have people supporting them who have special training about their needs

**Overview**

This section sets out the Standards and practice criteria of Families SA case management and outlines the roles and responsibilities for the delivery of case management. Case Management Standards are applicable to all Families SA caseworkers responsible for the care and protection of children in Alternative Care.

Families SA case management aims to maximise the safety, stability and wellbeing for children and young people in care. Case Management includes comprehensive assessments of children’s needs and strengths and providing coordinated services.
Case management includes assessment across the key life domains of health, education/employment, family and caregiver relationships, connection with family/kin, identity, emotional/behavioural adjustment, social and peer relationships and life skills. Caseworkers will assess the life domain areas through their work with the child/young person, birth family, caregiver and other key services/professionals.

Case planning will maximise the participation of children and young people in all decisions which concern them.

Case planning is delivered by the allocated caseworker in conjunction with each member of the Care Team.

Case management will focus on addressing the needs of children and young people and enhancing their strengths. The care of children will be regularly monitored and reviewed. Exchange of information and a partnership approach will enable services to be responsive to the changing and emerging needs of children and young people.
**Standard 2.1: Caseworker**

A caseworker is allocated to each child and young person in alternative care.

**Expected Outcome**

Every child or young person in care has an allocated worker who is responsible for case management, maintains regular contact and is a key support to the child or young person.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Families SA Supervisors/Line Managers will ensure that every child or young person in care has an allocated worker. Line Managers will implement quality assurance mechanisms within their teams to ensure regular contact occurs between the worker and child.

**Practice Criteria**

2.1.1 The supervisor allocates a caseworker to each child and young person in Alternative Care.

2.1.2 Aboriginal children and young people have access to a caseworker/community person/volunteer from the same cultural background. Refer to local Aboriginal community advisory/forums or community groups regarding access to suitable support person.

2.1.3 Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have access to a caseworker/community person/volunteer from the same cultural background.

2.1.4 If a child or young person is unallocated to a caseworker, the supervisor ensures that the child is allocated to the responsible team with a senior caseworker as the contact person.

**Policies and Procedures**

Supervisor CIS Manual

Guardianship and Alternative Care Manual
Standard 2.2: Caseworker Contact

Every child and young person in care will have face to face contact with their allocated worker a minimum of once a month.

Expected Outcome

Every child and young person in care will have regular contact with their caseworker focused on working in partnership with the carer and child to address the child’s needs and enhance their strengths.

Roles and Responsibilities

The caseworker is responsible for contacting the child or young person. Caseworkers will visit, meet and communicate with the child or young person. Caseworkers may need to seek assistance to aid effective communication with a child or young person with a disability (e.g. significant other, interpreter, use of equipment etc.) Caseworkers will maintain regular contact to address the life domain areas and any other issues that may arise. The caseworker will communicate with the carer about key issues that arise from their communication with the child or young person.

Practice Criteria

2.2.1 Contact with the child/young person explores and addresses key areas of the child’s life.

2.2.2 Contact with the child and young person occurs separately and with carers.

2.2.3 The child/young person’s views are sought and encouraged.

2.2.4 The child/young person’s participation is demonstrated, encouraged and documented in case notes.

2.2.5 All contacts are recorded in case notes.

2.2.6 Observations are recorded in case notes for non verbal children or for children with disabilities

Policies and Procedures

Child Protection Manual Volume 1 and 2
Guardianship and Alternative Care Manual
Case Recording Guidelines
Standard 2.3: Families SA Placement Decision Making Framework

Every child and young person will have a thorough and timely assessment of their placement options, with decisions supporting the need for settled and stable long term placements.

Expected Outcome

Every child or young person will have a thorough placement planning assessment to determine the best care options for settled and stable long term placements. Placement outcomes will enable children and young people to define themselves as belonging to a family, develop trusting relationships and connection to community.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA is responsible for ensuring a placement planning assessment occurs for every child or young person in care. Families SA caseworkers will work with the Alternative Care sector, cultural advisors and other key professionals to assist the placement planning assessments. Families SA will consider all the placement planning options and the cultural considerations impacting on the child.

Practice Criteria

2.3.1 Families SA Placement Decision Making Framework considers the range of placement options including:

- remaining at home with family and additional support
- restoration to the care of family of origin (Reunification)
- placement with a member or members of a child’s relative or kinship group
- long term placement with:
  - an authorised carer (where guardianship may be transferred), or
  - within an authorised non family based care environment, or
  - supported semi-independent living environment, or
  - independent living, or
  - Adoption
2.3.2 Placement planning assessments are informed by the permanency planning theory: raising children in a family setting, child centred - including child attachment & development and the significance of the biological family in individual identity and connectedness.

2.3.3 Placement planning is discussed as part of case planning development and at case conferences, Family Care meetings or a specific meeting for placement planning.

2.3.4 All relevant information is explained verbally and in writing to children and young people, authorised carers and parents, as part of the process of establishing long term placement.

Policies and Procedures
Families SA Placement Decision Making Framework
Guardianship and Alternative Care Manual
**Standard 2.4: Reunification**

All children and young people who enter care will have a reunification plan, unless it is assessed that reunification is not a viable or safe option.

**Expected Outcome**

Caseworkers and care team members will work towards returning a child or young person home to the permanent care of their family resulting in one of the following outcomes:

1. **Child reunification with parents:** the reunification of a child who is in the Minister’s care for protection reasons to the full time care of parent/s.

2. **Child reunification with relatives:** the reunification of a child who is in the Minister’s care for protection reasons to the full-time care of relatives. This can include reunification with an adult sibling, a grandparent/s or another relative/kin.

3. **Shared Care:** the reunification of a child who is in the Minister’s care for protection reasons to their family through a shared care arrangement between parents and/or relatives and/or another party.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Families SA and Reunification Services will work in partnership to determine the best reunification outcomes for the child or young person. Families SA are responsible for developing reunification plans in consultation with child, young person, birth families, carers and reunification services. Families SA will refer all reunification families to contracted Reunification Services.

**Practice Criteria**

2.4.1 Every child and young person under a Family Care Meeting Agreement (FCM), Voluntary Custody Order (VCA), a one-year Custody or Guardianship order has a **written reunification plan** within the first 2 weeks of the finalised FCM Agreement or the Order being granted.

2.4.2 Reunification plans ensure the child’s cultural, ethnic and religious identities are taken into account when determining the best interests of the child. The safety of the child however, must remain the central focus.

2.4.3 Reunification planning is informed by the following theories and...
principles particularly Permanency Planning and Attachment theory, the value of raising children in a family setting, child centred approach-, child development and the significance of the biological family in forming individual identity and connectedness.

2.4.4 The reunification plans are reviewed in line with the case planning process. They will be reviewed every 3 months.

2.4.5 All reunification families are referred to the nominated reunification service within the first two weeks of the care and protection order being granted.

2.4.6 Caseworkers develop the Reunification Plan in consultation with the Care Team members.

2.4.7 Caseworkers and placement support workers work with authorised carers to assist them to positively support the reunification process.

2.4.8 Post Reunification supports: Ongoing support and contact is provided to the child, young person and their family for an agreed period of time where reunification has successfully occurred.

2.4.9 Concurrent planning occurs simultaneously in the event that reunification is not successful. This is to ensure that the child has settled and stable long term care arrangements and key areas of their life are addressed and nurtured.

Policies and Procedures
Draft Reunification Policy and Practice Guidelines
Guardianship and Alternative Care Manual
Standard 2.5: Case and Care Planning

Every child and young person who enters care must have a case plan that is based upon a comprehensive assessment that considers his or her safety, stability and wellbeing.

(Note: the term care plan and case plan may be used interchangeably however the purpose and function the plan will depend on your job role. Further direction to be sought from specific Practice Guidelines related to the caseworker’s job role. This section is a generic approach to case planning across Families SA services inclusive of residential care settings and transitional accommodation).

Expected Outcome

All children and young people in care will have a current case plan that addresses all life domain areas. The case plan will promote a ‘child first focus’ and is inclusive of all participants of the care team.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA is responsible for ensuring that a case plan is completed in partnership with carers and revised for every child and young person in care. Care team members are all responsible for actioning specific goals/tasks of the case plan.

Practice Criteria

2.5.1 A current case plan is on the child or young person’s records.
2.5.2 Case/care plans are revised every 3-6 months.
2.5.3 A three generational genogram is on the child or young person’s records. Kinship relationships can be included in the genogram with clear articulation of their connection to the child. Alternatively an Eco Map can be used to demonstrate kinship and community supports.
2.5.4 Case planning is informed by the use of existing tools and processes such as Case & Care Plan templates, Alternative Care Placement Agreements, Life Domain Assessments, Education Plans, and Psych Assessments.
2.5.5 The Case Plan has child focused defined goals, actions and timeframes. Roles and responsibilities of all care team members are specified.
2.5.6 A current and comprehensive Alternative Care Agreement is on file and updated every three months.

2.5.7 Case/care planning actively seeks and consider the views of the child or young person. Views are recorded and updated regularly.

2.5.8 Case/care planning actively seeks and considers the views of birth family/relative/kin, carer(s) and representatives from relevant services. Views are recorded and updated regularly.

2.5.9 The case plan is signed by the caseworker, supervisor, child/young person, birth family and the carers. The case plan is explained to the child/young person by all care team members.

2.5.10 All parties involved in the planning process receive a copy of the case/care plan and any amended versions.

2.5.11 The effectiveness of care planning is promoted through collaboration between other agencies across government and non-government.

2.5.12 The Families SA caseworker assesses all client files, with long term orders, in relation to eligibility for Victims of Crime VIC compensation.

**Policies and Procedures**

Guardianship and Alternative Care Manual

Residential Care Practice Guidelines

Emergency Accommodation casework, case plan practice guidelines

Guardianship case plan practice guidelines

Victims of Crime - Statutory Compensation for Children and Young People under Care and Protection Orders
**Standard 2.6: Guardianship Case Plan**

Caseworkers to ensure that each child/young person under the Guardianship of the Minister to 18 has a Guardianship Case Plan that is developed, monitored and reviewed as part of a regular six monthly planning cycle.

(This standard is specific to social work practice for children under the Guardianship or Custody of the Minister, inclusive of 12 month orders and Guardianship of the Minister until 18 year orders).

**Expected Outcome**

All children and young people in care will have a current case plan that addresses all life domain areas. The case plan will promote the ‘child first focus’ and is inclusive of the participation of the care team.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Families SA is responsible for ensuring that a case plan is completed and revised for every child and young person in care. Care team members are all responsible for actioning specific goals/tasks of the case plan.

**Practice Criteria**

2.6.1 The Guardianship Case Plan is developed in consultation with the child/young person, the caregiver and the birth parent(s) (where possible).

2.6.2 The child/young person’s Guardianship Case Plan is developed and completed within 28 days of the child/young person starting in an alternative care placement. Where a child/young person already has a Guardianship Case Plan this will be updated and completed with new information (e.g. placement details) within 28 days.

2.6.3 A copy of the Guardianship Case Plan will be provided to the key people involved within 14 days of the Guardianship Case Plan being completed by the Families SA social worker.

2.6.4 In the case of placement break-down where a child/young person moves placement (without time for prior planning), the caseworker:

- makes contact with the new caregiver within 24 hours to provide the necessary information (may be verbal) to ensure they are able to provide appropriate care for the child/young person
• meets with the caregiver, placement/relative/kinship support worker, and the child/young person to discuss the Guardianship Case Plan within seven days of the child/young person moving into the new placement.
• advises birth family of change of placement

2.6.5 **Within 28 days of the change of placement** the caseworker makes contact with the other key people involved to discuss the Guardianship Case Plan, making adjustments as required based on the feedback from these people.

**Policies and Procedures**

Guardianship Case Plan Policy and Practice Guide
**Standard 2.7: Life Domains Areas**

Caseworkers to ensure children and young people have their health care, education and employment, emotional wellbeing and mental health, identity, social and self-care needs met in order to support them to reach their full potential.

**Expected Outcome**

From the onset of entry into care through to post care all children and young people will have their life domain areas addressed by all care team members.

All care team members to work with children and young people about their aspirations for the future.

To encourage children and young people to have hopes and a vision for their future. Visionary aspirations will aid all care team members in care planning for children and young people in care.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Families SA caseworkers and care team members are responsible for ensuring all life domain areas are assessed, managed, addressed and progressed.

**Practice Criteria**

2.7.1 Life Domain Assessment are included in case and care planning. The caseworker ensures that the Life Domain Assessment is completed at six monthly intervals.

2.7.2 A referral for the Initial Health Assessment occurs within 2 months from the time of Order being granted.

2.7.3 Caseworker and carers ensure that the child or young person attends health care appointments as required in the Case Plan and is accompanied by an adult.

2.7.4 Caseworker and carer ensures the child or young person attends Dental Health Care appointments as required in the case plan and is accompanied by an adult.

2.7.5 The caseworkers and carers assist children and young people to understand their own health needs and to be proactive in addressing their needs.
2.7.6 The caseworker ensures that the child receives developmental assessments if required.

2.7.7 The caseworker ensures the child or young person receives and/or attends relevant therapy appointments.

2.7.8 The caseworker supports the carer to meet the expectations outlined in the child or young person’s Individual Education Plans.

2.7.9 The caseworker works in partnership with the carer and child to liaise with the school to address a child/young person’s education and behaviour needs in the school environment.

2.7.10 The allocated caseworker keeps a copy of school reports on the child’s records. The carer keeps a copy of school reports as part of their Life Story Collections.

2.7.11 The caseworker works in partnership with the carer to ensure that the child or young person is provided with opportunities to learn social, self care and independent living skills.

2.7.12 The caseworker works in partnership with the carer to ensure the child or young person is provided with opportunities to form their identity through community connections and activities, informing of family history and creating new experiences. The care team is responsible for Life Story works and collections.

2.7.13 Children and young people in care maintain their birth name, unless they make an informed choice to change their name and it is considered in their best interests to do so.

2.7.14 Children and young people in care are provided with information regarding their entitlements about being in care and the processes by which they can make their views known.

Policies and Procedures
Life Domain Guidelines and Prompts
Life Domain Assessment Tool
Dental Agreement for Children and Young People under the Guardianship of the Minister
Health Standard for Children and Young People under the Guardianship of the Minister.
**Standard 2.8: Family Contact and Community Connections**

Children and young people in Alternative Care will be supported in the development of positive identity through ‘family contact’ and community connections.

Family contact incorporates the child’s contact with siblings, parents, extended family and community members, persons of cultural or ethnic significance and other persons of significance in the child’s life.

**Expected Outcome**

Children and young people in Alternative Care will be provided with opportunities to have family contact and maintain community connections.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Families SA caseworkers are responsible for developing family contact plans. Care team members to assist the child or young person to understand their place in the world and to develop a sense of belonging through their family, history, community and friendships.

Family contact is required unless determined not to be in the best interest of the child. The child’s views are always considered when arranging family contact.

**Practice Criteria**

**2.8.1** When planning family contact the caseworker:
- seeks the child’s views about contact
- assesses a child’s contact needs and ensure that they are considered in the context of case planning, ongoing monitoring and subsequent reviews and
- refers to the child’s case plan when making practical arrangements for family contact.

Children with significant intellectual impairment may require specific assistance and support in coping with separation associated with contact visits. i.e. with visual tools, social stories etc.
2.8.2 Since family contact is also a fluid process that requires continuous monitoring and re-assessment, consideration is given to:

- who will have contact with the child
- purpose of the contact
- form the contact will take
- frequency and duration of any contact
- location of any contact
- supervision requirements
- role the carers will take
- monitor the child’s reaction to the contact
- are any other practical considerations
- ensure the court ordered contact requirements are met, and
- maintaining and building attachment.

For children with disabilities, (in particular communication and cognitive impairments) any planning and decisions around contact need to take into account these children’s particular vulnerabilities, especially when contact and transportation to contact is unsupervised.

2.8.3 The caseworker works in partnership with the care team to promote ‘Community Connections.’ Community connections can be promoted via the following:

- life story collections including: information/photos of previous kindergarten(s), school(s), carers, relatives. collection of mementos to promote memories i.e. photos, cards, important toys, books, crafts.
- helping the child to understand why they are in care, with age appropriate explanations.
- involving the child or young person in activities, sports, groups, clubs, and music or dance lessons.

**Policies and Procedures**

Practice Guidelines for Contact

Families SA Relative, Kinship Care and Specific Child Only: Policy, Practice Guidelines and Procedure
Standard 2.9: Duty Of Care

The standard of care expected of a Families SA employee is that of a reasonable, careful, prudent employee, to a standard in accordance with the employee’s level of responsibility, experience and training.

Expected Outcome

Providing care to children and young people in alternative care is guided and informed by duty of care responsibilities. Children and young people are in a care environment that will enable them to thrive and experience the world with guidance and support.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA caseworkers, carers and service providers are all bound by duty of care requirements for children and young people in alternative care placements.

Practice Criteria

2.9.1 Reasonable Care

In all steps of service delivery, Departmental employees consider the following when making a reasonable decision:

- the risk and seriousness of harm to the child or young person
- the availability of precautions to reduce or eliminate the risk of harm to the child or young person
- the powers that mandate the Department to act in a particular situation
- the usefulness of the activity which involves risk
- any statutory requirements or specific directions e.g. standards and guidelines
- the prevailing standards of the relevant profession
- any other factors relevant to a particular situation must also be considered.

All factors are considered together to determine what is reasonable.

Policies and Procedures

Duty of Care Policy and Practice Guide
**Standard 2.10: Reviews**

There is regular monitoring of the placement, review of the case plans and files for all children and young people in care to ensure placements meet their individual needs.

**Expected Outcome**

The circumstances and opportunities for children and young people in alternative care will be reviewed at a minimum annually so that progress is made to helping them reach their full potential.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Families SA is responsible for conducting annual reviews in line with the *Children’s Protection Act 1993*. Reviews are conducted in partnership with carers, birth families, relatives and relevant services.

Families SA is responsible for reviewing the circumstances and outcomes of the child and young person to ensure the child or young person is afforded every opportunity to reach their full potential.

Families SA caseworkers are responsible for communicating the outcomes of the reviews to all care team participants and incorporating the review recommendations in case planning.

**Practice Criteria**

2.10.1 The review process is a statutory requirement. *Section 52* of the *Children’s Protection Act 1993* requires that the Department review children under the Guardianship of the Minister to the age of eighteen on an **annual basis**.

2.10.2 Reviews include:

- a thorough assessment is made of the child or young person’s individual circumstances.
- the review process draws information from significant people in the life of the child or young person to inform the understanding about their current needs.
- cultural advisors are consulted for all Aboriginal and CALD children or young people.
- recommendations contained in psychological assessments will be reflected upon in the annual review
- records relating to all casework activities are maintained and complete.
• case plans identify the goals and actions that will be undertaken between formal case reviews.

As stated in the *Children’s Protection Act 1993, Section 52*, participants in the case review process, including the child and young person, carer(s) and the guardians receive a written record of the review considerations, unless it is deemed not to be in the best interests of the child or the whereabouts of the person cannot be ascertained.

The caseworker ensures that the Case Plan is amended to incorporate the recommendations from the review process.

2.10.3 Children and young people to be actively encouraged and supported to participate in the review process.

**Policies and Procedures**

Annual Reviews - Guardianship Practice Guide

Annual Reviews Practice - Draft Templates
Standard 2.11: Care and Protection Court Matters

Care and Protection decisions to occur in a timely manner and in the best interests of the child or young person involved.

Expected Outcome

All care and protection matters will occur in the best interest of the child or young person to ensure safety, continuity and wellbeing.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA caseworkers to conduct social work assessments and consult with other key professionals and services to inform care and protection decisions.

Practice Criteria

2.11.1 Court applications are considered within the permanency planning and child attachment theory. Decisions are clearly documented in all Care and Protection applications.

2.11.2 Social workers are familiar with the following Procedures, (relevant to their job role and duties):

- Family Care meetings
- powers of the Youth Court in Child Protection
- application for Care and Protection Orders
- Crown Solicitors Office procedures
- rules of the Youth Court
- preparation and giving of evidence in court
- procedures with Family Court
- the role of professional advice and services (e.g. Psychological opinion, Reunification Services).

2.11.3 Caseworkers are familiar with and understand the philosophy and intent of the following Legislation governing Care and Protection matters and the Alternative Care sector.

- Adoption Act 1988
- Children’s Protection Act 1993 (as amended in 2006)
- Family and Community Services Act 1972

2.11.4 Children and young people have an independent legal representative in all care and protection matters.
2.11.5 Caseworkers inform families of how to obtain legal representation and access advocacy services.

2.11.6 Caseworkers inform carers of court requirements and discuss how they may impact on the children in their care and what role carers can play to support the child in care.

Policies and Procedures

**Standard 2.12: Supervision, Consultation and Support for Families SA Employees**

All Families SA employees are provided with supervision and support to facilitate better outcomes for children and young people in care.

**Expected Outcome**

All employees will participate in supervision processes that promote performance development within the context of our legislative requirements and professional practice.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The supervisor and supervisee are both responsible for participating in the supervision process, developing supervision contracts and ensuring that supervision occurs when scheduled.

**Practice Criteria**

- **2.12.1** All employees enter into a supervision contract with their line manager.
- **2.12.2** Regular supervision occurs and is recorded between the worker and line manager.
- **2.12.3** Consultation and mentoring occurs between the senior practitioner and caseworker, as an essential support and quality assurance function.

**Policies and Procedures**

Performance Enhancement Policy
3. Care Provision

Core Standard 3: Care Provision

All contracted service providers within the Alternative Care sector will provide children and young people with a safe and secure living environment appropriate to their specific needs. Service providers will be subject to regular monitoring and review to promote quality care provision for children and young people in care.

Children and young people in care have the right to:

- live in a place where they are not hurt or made to feel bad
- know that people care about them
- be treated with respect
- have someone to talk to
- live in a place where
- live in a place where they get nutritious food
- live in a place where they get decent clothes
- live in a place where they have their own bed
- live in a place where they have their own ‘space’ or a place where they can have some time on their own if they want it
- not have to move too much
- if they are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, know about their cultural and spiritual identity and their community
- have the right to talk to an Aboriginal person, if they are Aboriginal
- have their cultural needs respected
- live in a place where people understand and respect their culture
- medical, dental and other care when they need it
- a good education
- preparation for employment and to live independently
- extra support if they have a disability
- extra support if they have special education needs
- know and be confident that personal information will not be shared without good reason
- develop their talents and interests, like sport or art
Overview

This section sets out the standards and practice criteria for Service Providers and Carer.

The Care Provision Standards will promote safe and appropriate placements for children and young people under the care and Guardianship of the Minister.

The Standards are applicable to all non-government and government alternative care services providing foster care, relative and kinship care, non-family based care, residential care and all carers. The Standards are not applicable to secure care facilities.

The licensing and monitoring process is related to the contractual obligations of non-government services. As such, government service providers will not be required to engage in the monitoring process but are still subject to the requirements of the Alternative Care Standards, related policies and internal reviews. Non-government organisations not licensed under the Family and Community Services Act 1972 will be required to demonstrate compliance with the Standards through service agreements and an internal and ongoing evaluation process.

The Care Provision Standards do not attempt to define statutory case management responsibilities, but rather focus on service provider agencies and the carer requirements. However, current Families SA policies and procedures are documented as they relate to each set of standards to assist in their implementation.

For brevity in this section the term placement Support Worker refers to NGO placement support staff and Families SA Relative and Kinship Care Program staff. The term service provider refers to NGOs providing family and non-family based care and Families SA Relative and Kinship Care Program.

Each Care Provision section begins with a statement of shared values. This paragraph summarises the responsibilities shared between Families SA and the service provider.
Section 3.1: The Needs of the Child or Young Person

Statement of Shared Values

The section of the Standards reflects the commitment of alternative care services across South Australia to provide child/young person-focused, family-centred services. In practice, this means ensuring that all aspects of care are focused, listening to and acting on the needs of the child or young person. All life domains of the child or young person are addressed in this section, as well as specific individualised needs relating to culture, identity, special needs, disability and leaving care. Continuity of services, community connections, relationships and interests will be considered and planned for. Meeting the child or young person’s needs will depend on case management that is collaborative in nature and ensures each member of the Care Team is able to contribute his or her view. The service provider will play the key role in assisting carers to attend case conferences, contribute to case planning and in the implementation of the outcomes.
**Standard 3.1.1: Health of Child or young person**

Children and young people have their health optimised through quality care, preventative services, regular assessment, monitoring and treatment.

**Expected Outcome**

Children and young people have their medical, developmental, optical and dental health needs assessed and case managed to ensure they receive regular preventative appointments and treatment as required.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Families SA caseworkers to ensure all children and young people in alternative care have a Case Plan that addresses their health needs.

Families SA and placement/relative/kinship care support workers will provide support to carers to address children and young people’s health needs. Caseworkers will maintain Basic Information Records and provide these records to service providers and carers. Carers’ views are to be sought regarding the child or young person’s health needs.

**Practice Criteria**

3.1.1.1 Carers ensure that the child or young person attends health care appointments as required in the Case Plan.

3.1.1.2 Carers ensure that each child or young person is accompanied when attending appointments. Carers provide transport, emotional support and ensure the transfer of accurate information. Where this is not possible, alternative arrangements are made with the statutory caseworker.

3.1.1.3 Carers ensure that the child’s Health and Medicare cards are accessible when required and are given to the statutory caseworker or new carer in the event of a placement move or planned respite.

3.1.1.4 Carers provide children and young people with daily nutritious meals that optimise their health.

3.1.1.5 Carers observe and provide for the child or young person’s health needs on a daily basis and inform the caseworker of any ongoing, unresolved or new health concerns.

3.1.1.6 Carers act as advocates on the child or young person’s behalf for access to appropriate health services.
3.1.1.7 Care team members assist the child or young person to learn about their health needs and to be actively involved in their health choices and decisions. Children and young people are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle and make informed health choices.

**Policies and Procedures**

- Guardianship and Alternative Care Manual
- Operational Guidelines for non-family based care options
- Health Standards for Children and Young People under the Guardianship of the Minister
- SA Dental Agreement
Standard 3.1.2: Education, Training & Employment

Children and young people in care receive educational, training and employment opportunities that promote each child or young person’s strengths, abilities and individual preferences.

Expected Outcome

Children and young people in care will be supported in their education, training and employment to achieve success and reach their full potential.

Roles and Responsibilities

The case management process ensures that children and young people in care undertake an assessment of literacy and numeracy skills and they have an Individual Education Plan developed as required. The case management process considers continuity of education, training or employment and ensures that uniforms, equipment, school outings/activities are financed to enable the child to meet their educational, training or employment outcomes.

Each child or young person in care will have an Individual Education Plan (IEPs). The IEP describes strategies to address the particular educational needs of the child or young person, including preschool/school attendance, behaviour management and strategies to enhance their achievement. The IEP is developed by preschool/school staff (e.g. school counsellor, director or principal) in conjunction with the child or young person, their caregiver, caseworker and professionals involved in providing services for the child or young person (Families SA Individual Education Plans Guardianship Practice Guide).

Families SA will support Carers to provide suitable resources to support study. This may involve a discussion with the carer regarding where the child can study in the home and how these pursuits will be supported.

Practice Criteria

3.1.2.1 The service provider supports the carer to meet the expectations outlined in the child or young person’s IEP.

3.1.2.2 The service provider supports carers to provide an environment in which learning is valued and expectations regarding school attendance are firmly established. Care team members promote lifelong learning, encouragement of reading and encouragement of partnership with schools by carers. Carers assist children and young people to develop aspirations for the future in terms of employment/career through education.
3.1.2.3 The service provider assists carers to manage a child/young person’s suspension or exclusion from school in consultation and collaboration with DECS and the caseworker.

3.1.2.4 The service provider provides carers with information and support in regards to school related problems.

3.1.2.5 Carers work in partnership with the caseworker and the school to address education and behaviour needs.

3.1.2.6 Carers provide children and young people with an appropriate place to study and support them to access information technology.

3.1.2.7 Carers assist and support children and young people with homework and access to school support services as required.

3.1.2.8 Carers provide an environment in which learning is encouraged through reading and creative play opportunities.

3.1.2.9 Carers encourage the child or young person to participate in educational trips and extra curricular activities in accordance with the young person’s wishes. Expenses will be negotiated with the caseworker.

3.1.2.10 Carers keep a copy of school reports and ensure that in the event of a placement move, these documents move with the child. The carer provides the caseworker with the original school report.

Policies and Procedures

Families SA Education-Individual Education Plans, Guardianship Practice Guide

Families SA Education - Suspension and exclusion, Guardianship Practice Guide

Families SA Education - Change of School at Time of Placement, Guardianship Practice Guide

Families SA Education - TAFE SA, Guardianship Practice Guide
Standard 3.1.3: Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health

Children and young people have their emotional wellbeing and mental health needs met in order to support them to reach their full potential.

Expected Outcome

The care experience of children and young people in care will promote their emotional wellbeing, positive mental health and prepare them for adulthood.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA will ensure as part of the case planning process that children and young people have access to appropriate emotional supports and mental health services. Carers to provide support and encouragement promote the child or young person’s wellbeing and self-esteem. Carers to provide the environment to enable children and young people to feel and experience sense of belonging.

Practice Criteria

3.1.3.1 The service provider assists the carer in developing appropriate attachment relationships that are nurturing, consistent with safe caring practices, and take into account the child/young person’s birth family attachments.

3.1.3.2 Through training and support, the service provider ensures that carers are equipped to provide children and young people with factual information about emotional wellbeing, mental health issues, alcohol and other substance abuse, relationships, sexuality and sexual health, including how to access relevant services.

3.1.3.3 The service provider and Families SA give carers access to information, training and support to care for children and young people who are having suicidal thoughts or displaying self-harming behaviours.

3.1.3.4 Carers encourage children and young people to form appropriate emotional connections with their birth families, carers, their peers and their communities that are based on a sense of belonging and being appropriately cared for and nurtured. These relationships are respected and preserved throughout the placement and beyond.
3.1.3.5 Carers provide children and young people with opportunities and assistance to access sporting, leisure and recreational activities that target their needs, interests and ability.

3.1.3.6 Carers treat the child or young person with fairness, respect and dignity, at all times taking into account their wishes and feelings.

3.1.3.7 Carers are assisted by the service provider to recognise the implications of the child and young person’s previous experiences and assist with the resolution of personal difficulties and development of problem solving skills.

3.1.3.8 Carers support therapeutic strategies as recommended in the Case Plan.

Policies and Procedures

Interim Practice Guide, Suicide and Self Harm Behaviour, Emergency Accommodation

Life Domain Assessment Tools
Standard 3.1.4: Indigenous, Cultural And Spiritual Heritage

Each young person’s Indigenous, cultural, spiritual and religious heritage is respected, strengthened and maintained.

Expected Outcome

Children and young people in care will experience a strong connection with their Indigenous, cultural, and spiritual heritage.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA will ensure placements adhere to the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle as enshrined in legislation, in which placement within the family, kinship and community networks is of priority without compromising the child or young person’s safety or best interests.

Cultural maintenance plans will be developed on entry to care for all Aboriginal children and young people.

Practice Criteria

3.1.4.1 Families SA and the service provider support case planning that includes developing Cultural Maintenance Plans with input from local Aboriginal Services/Groups/Forums and Gazetted organisations.

3.1.4.2 Families SA and the service provider support relative, kinship and community carers with timely and helpful information to fulfil their role as carers. These services are delivered in a culturally sensitive manner including use of interpreters and cultural consultants.

3.1.4.3 The service provider has guidelines and procedures in place to support carers of children from Indigenous backgrounds and ensures that the child or young person’s cultural and linguistic needs are met. This includes providing information about culture, celebrations and links to appropriate community resources.

3.1.4.4 Caseworkers and carers support the child/young person’s cultural needs with day-to-day support such as transport to cultural events, respect for religious laws, attendance at funerals, providing appropriate food and access to religious celebrations, as agreed in the Case Plan.
3.1.4.5 Carers and caseworkers assist children and young people in developing skills to address racial discrimination and advocate on the child or young person’s behalf as appropriate.

3.1.4.6 Indigenous children and young people have access to a caseworker/community person/volunteer/relative from the same Indigenous background.

**Policies and Procedures**

Families SA Relative, Kinship and Specific Child Only Care: Policy, Practice Guideline and Procedure
**Standard 3.1.5: Cultural And Linguistically Diverse Heritage**

Each child or young person’s cultural and linguistically diverse heritage is respected, strengthened and maintained.

**Expected Outcome**

Every child or young person in care will have the opportunity to remain connected to their cultural community.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Families SA will ensure placements contribute to the maintenance of cultural identity, as enshrined in legislation. Care planning will ensure placements with family, relatives and community networks is undertaken without compromising the child’s or young person’s safety or best interests.

Cultural maintenance plans will be developed on entry to care for all children from culturally and linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds

**Practice Criteria**

3.1.5.1 Families SA and the service provider adhere to the placement hierarchy, where placement within the family, kinship and community networks is of priority without comprising the child or young person’s best interests or safety.

3.1.5.2 The service provider, statutory agency, and carers work in partnership to implement the Case/Care Plan and connect children with their cultural communities, activities, events and celebrations. Children and young people’s wishes and feelings are taken into account regarding their cultural and religious needs.

3.1.5.3 The service provider ensures that supervision and support is appropriately tailored to meet the immediate needs of carers who are recent arrivals in Australia. This may involve increased assistance accessing community resources and ensuring that the carers own needs are met to enable a safe placement to be provided.

3.1.5.4 The service provider ensures that training is appropriately tailored to meet the needs of carers who are recent arrivals in Australia. This may include training regarding the increased use of home based one on one training, linking with community services, language assistance and training that is gender specific when undertaking safe caring discussions.
3.1.5.5 The service provider assists carers to enable children and young people in their care to address identity issues associated with living in Australia.

3.1.5.6 Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have access to a caseworker/community person/volunteer/relative from the same cultural background.

**Policies and Procedures**

Families SA Relative, Kinship and Specific Child Only Care: Policy, Practice Guideline and Procedure

Family Contact Practice Guidelines

Transitioning from Care Policy (metro)

Transition Planning for Young People Leaving Care practice guide (metro)

Memorandum of Understanding between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of South Australia in relation to Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors
**Standard 3.1.6: Connections With Family, Kin And Significant Others**

Children and young people are encouraged to strengthen or maintain connections with their birth families, extended relatives, former carers and significant others, peers, clan, and community.

**Expected Outcome**

Children and young people under the care and protection of the Minister will remain connected to their birth families and communities.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Relative care and specific child only options will be given priority consideration before seeking an alternative care placement.

Contact with birth families, relatives, significant others, peers, former carers, clan and community are considered as part of the development of the Case Plan and specific actions required are negotiated and recorded as part of the Alternative Care Agreement. Continuity of peer contact and the existing social network and community will be considered prior to the child coming into care. When developing plans regarding contact the wishes and feelings of the child or young person will be paramount and feedback from carers will be sought regarding the child or young person’s behaviour before and after contact visits.

Families SA recognise that relative kinship carers require intensive support in managing family issues that can be exacerbated by family contact and reunification plans. Relative carers will be listened to and concerns addressed by Families SA regarding the role they play in supervision of family contact as this can place them in a compromised position within their family.

**Practice Criteria**

3.1.6.1 The service provider ensures the carer is supported to facilitate contact, including being debriefed in the event of critical incidents and forwarding of relevant information to the caseworker.

3.1.6.2 Carers actively promote birth parent, sibling, extended kinship and community contact through participation in Families SA case planning and the Alternative Care Agreements and assisting with day-to-day arrangements.
3.1.6.3 Where appropriate carers promote the continuity of social, educational and recreation activities that existed prior to the child or young person coming into care.

3.1.6.4 Carers, in conjunction with Families SA, promote and encourage connections with former carers in accordance with the Case Plan and child or young person's wishes or feelings.

3.1.6.5 Carers ensure that birth families are talked about in a positive way and are treated with respect at all times.

3.1.6.6 Carers observe the child or young person before and after contact visits and forward any significant information to the caseworker.

3.1.6.7 Carers support children and young people to visit their friend’s homes, or have friends visit their home, including overnight visits, with appropriate parent/carer and departmental permission.

3.1.6.8 Carers who are involved in the development of contact plans are provided with clear information of their role, purpose and boundaries of contact.

Policies and Procedures
Relative. Kinship and Specific Child Only Care: Policy, Practice Guidelines and Procedure
Practice Guidelines for Contact
Standard 3.1.7: Identity

Children and young people will be supported in the positive development of their identity and self esteem and be allowed individual expression.

Expected Outcome:

Children and young people in care will develop a strong sense of themselves within their community that will provide a foundation for adult life.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Each child or young person’s Case Plan addresses the child or young person’s unique needs and plans to develop their sense of personal history and cultural identity, interests, strengths and life choices. All children and young people on short term and long term orders will have a Life Story Book for documenting significant events in their lives.

Practice Criteria

3.1.7.1 The service provider supports carers to value diversity and meet each child or young person’s needs and personal interests in terms of gender, religion, language, culture, disability and sexuality as identified in the Case Plan and the Alternative Care Agreement. These issues are addressed in training and home visits.

3.1.7.2 The service provider and carers ensure that children and young people are clothed in a manner that complies with community expectations and allows the young person age appropriate choice and self-expression.

3.1.7.3 Carers encourage the child or young person to develop a strong sense of their own unique qualities, family, personal history, as well as an understanding of their own skills and interests. This is reinforced through carers providing a nurturing environment and positive day-to-day interactions.

3.1.7.4 The service provider provides training and support to carers to ensure they participate in life story work, including the use of geno-grams, eco maps and the preservation of significant photos and keepsakes.
3.1.7.5 Carers provide children and young people with age appropriate spending money and earning opportunities where appropriate.

3.1.7.6 Carers and caseworkers work with cultural advisors, community groups/forums/elders to promote identity, connection to family and community.

Policies and Procedures
Guardianship and Alternative Care Manual
Standard 3.1.8: Disability and special needs

Children and young people with disabilities and special needs are cared for in a safe and supportive environment that promotes personal growth and participation, maximises developmental potential and ensures quality of life.

Expected Outcome

The special and unique needs, talents and interests of each child and young person in care will be considered and planned for, ensuring they have access to equipment, therapy developmental activities and life opportunities which enable their nurturance, development and participation in the community.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA will support all members of the Care Team to work in partnership in a collaborative case planning process that recognises the unique roles, skills and relationships that each member plays in the life of the child.

Practice Criteria

3.1.8.1 The service provider ensures that the day-to-day arrangements to address the child or young person’s disabilities and special needs are discussed and planned with the carer. This will include working with specialist disability support agencies to ensure the child or young person receives appropriate support, developmental, therapeutic and recreational activities.

3.1.8.2 The service provider ensures that the carer receives information and training regarding the child or young person’s disability and special needs and is supported to manage their specific care needs.

3.1.8.3 The service provider assists the carer to work in partnership with appropriate agencies and services within the disability and community sector and to develop specific skills required such as appropriate communication between the child or young person and the carer.

3.1.8.4 Carers work with all members of the Care Team to advocate for a young person to have access to educational and developmental opportunities which take into account their special needs or disability.
3.1.8.5 The service provider supports the carer to plan for the young person to transition into independent living or alternative accommodation when independent living is not appropriate, working collaboratively with disability services. Please Note: It should be recognised that many young people with a disability (particularly those with an intellectual disability) are not ready for independent living at a chronological age of 18 years. In such cases, transition from care planning and alternative supported accommodation arrangements will be required.

3.1.8.6 The service provider assists the carer to implement care strategies that maximise developmental potential, support independent living and skill development, behaviours and appropriate communication skills. Planning for transition to independent living is negotiated in accordance with the Case Plan.

3.1.8.7 Carers implement agreed crisis management strategies as stated in the Case Plan.

3.1.8.8 Families SA and Service providers provide respite support to carers.

3.1.8.9 All care team members enhance the child’s abilities and provide opportunities to enable children with disabilities to reach their full potential.

Policies and Procedures

Department for Families and Communities Equity of Access to Health Services for People with Disabilities: Policy Statement and Strategic Directions

Department for Families and Communities Disability Action Plan.
Section 3.2: The Management of the Placement

Statement of Shared Values

This section addresses the minimum expectations regarding the management of the placement whilst the child or young person is in care. In developing this section, the sector acknowledges that providing quality placements for children and young people requires the statutory agency, the service provider and carers to work together as part of a ‘Care Team.’ The Care Team works collaboratively to ensure the voice of the child or young person is listened to and to observe that good practice is delivered at all stages of the placement including matching, ensuring child or young person participation in case planning and managing transitions. In addition, issues associated with privacy, confidentiality, behaviour management require agreed standards to determine practice. Providing quality service is a shared responsibility that results from clear communication and transparent decision-making.
**Standard 3.2.1: Participation**

Children, young people, birth families and carers are supported to participate and make choices in case planning and decision-making.

**Expected Outcome**

Children and young people in care will know and have evidence that their wishes and feelings have been considered in all decisions relating to themselves.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Families SA will ensure all members of the Care Team work in partnership with the child or young person to develop the Case Plan and Alternative Care Agreement that reflects the views of all participants. The case plan will outline goals developed with the child or young person. The Alternative Care Agreement will outline agreed roles and responsibilities to respond to the education, health and wellbeing of the child or young person.

All children and young people will be involved in decisions about placements, present and future planning.

Families SA acknowledges the significance of enabling the participation of relative and kinship carers. They bring extensive knowledge and understanding of a child or young person’s family background.

**Practice Criteria**

3.2.1.1 The service provider supports the carer to attend case conferences, participate in case planning and assists the carer to understand the relevant Departmental processes and systems.

3.2.1.2 The service provider ensures that the carer’s views, capacity and ability are considered in case planning and negotiated agreements with regards to the child’s best interests. This may include providing assistance in self-advocacy and representation.

3.2.1.3 The service provider assists carers to develop skills in listening to children and understanding their perspective by eliciting their views through a variety of mechanisms.

3.2.1.4 Carers ensure that children and young people are involved in key decisions about day-to-day life that are age and ability appropriate.
3.2.1.5 Carers support the child or young person to attend case conferences, reviews and other planning forums and facilitate access to the caseworker.

3.2.1.6 Carers support and advocate for the child and young person at case conferences, reviews and other planning forums.

3.2.1.7 Carers are included and acknowledged as an active participant of the Care Team

Policies and Procedures

Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care

Foster Carers Charter: *Our Commitment to Relative, Kinship and Foster Carers*
Standard 3.2.2: Privacy and Confidentiality

Children and young people in alternative care placements have their privacy respected and confidentiality observed.

Expected Outcome

Personal information regarding children and young people in care will not be made available to the wider community unless assessed to be in the best interest of the child or young person i.e. sharing the child’s medical information with required health services.

Roles and Responsibilities

The service provider works in partnership with the Department to ensure that all personal information about the child or young person, their birth families and their carers is treated with sensitivity and complies with Departmental and legislative requirements.

Practice Criteria

3.2.2.1 The service provider provides information and training to staff, carers, contractors and volunteers regarding mandated notification requirements and the way this may influence confidentiality.

3.2.2.2 The service provider ensures that promotional publications (photographs and information) do not identify children or young people under the Guardianship of the Minister or any other placement authority without express written approval by the Department and in accordance of the wishes of the child or young person.

3.2.2.3 The service provider ensures that each child or young person in care has their own bed in a bedroom and no more then 3 children sleep in the same room on a permanent basis. For relative carers, if this is not possible, the Service Provider Agency assists the carer to take steps to meet these requirements

3.2.2.4 Carers are prudent in protecting confidential details regarding the child or young person and ensure that they are not released to the community. Other household members are to be informed on a ‘need to know’ basis only. Any written information is stored securely in a designated space, and returned the Department when the child or young person leaves the placement.
3.2.2.5 Carers ensure that there are household rules in place regarding protecting privacy including knocking before entering bedrooms, and private use of the bathroom.

3.2.2.6 Carers ensure that each child or young person is provided with adequate secure storage room for personal belongings to prevent damage, theft and to allow for privacy.

3.2.2.7 Carers ensure that the service provider agency is informed of any planned changes to sleeping arrangements.

3.2.2.8 Carers use observational logs in residential care and other non-family based care settings.

Policies and Procedures
Families SA, Information Sharing and Client Privacy Statement Regarding Children and Young People under Guardianship
Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care
Families SA Draft Photo and Media Involvement Practice Guide
Standard 3.2.3: Positive Parenting

Children and young people in care experience positive parenting that promotes the wellbeing of the child or young person and complies with Departmental requirements.

Expected Outcome

Children and young people in care experience parenting techniques that strengthen positive social interactions and promote self-esteem. Age appropriate boundaries will be set and maintained which take into account the child’s developmental level.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA will assist carers and service provider agencies via the case management process in managing difficult behaviour and preventing placement breakdown. Families SA will work in partnership with the carer to develop strategies to manage any identified behaviour issues, disorders, health needs, and developmental issues.

Practice Criteria

3.2.3.1 The service provider provides training for the carer regarding parenting and behaviour management that reinforces positive behaviour and builds the child or young person’s self esteem.

3.2.3.2 The service provider ensures that each carer is aware that corporal punishment is unacceptable; this includes hitting, punching, pinching, slapping, shaking and all other forms of physical punishment. Other forms of inappropriate discipline such as withholding food, deprivation of basic needs and liberty and emotional abuse are also unacceptable. This information is in written form and is provided to each carer.

3.2.3.3 The service provider has an organisational policy and training program to instruct carers in the use of restraint. The use of restraint is only permitted when the Department has given express written consent, is monitored and reviewed by the facility’s management.

3.2.3.4 Carers make their needs known when they require further support to address challenging behaviour.

3.2.3.5 Carers ensure that they only use behaviour management techniques that comply with service provider guidelines and procedures.
3.2.3.6 Carers attend relevant skill development regarding behaviour management and positive parenting as requested by the service provider or other Departmental recommendations.

Policies and Procedures
Guardianship and Alternative Care Manual
Section 3.3: The Roles and Responsibilities of the Service Provider and Carer

Statement of Shared Values

This section is based on the understanding that providing high quality alternative care placements is reliant on the personal suitability, skills and experience of carers. Carers are unique contributors in the Alternative Care sector as they provide for the child on a day-to-day basis. Carers make crucial yet immeasurable contributions to the life of a child or young person. Safety, stability, nurturance, and love all provide a necessary foundation from which the child or young person can grow and develop. We all acknowledge the role of the carer is a difficult one. It requires personal suitability and readiness, an appropriate environment as well as considerable skill. It is the joint responsibility of the Department and the service provider to ensure that carers are able to meet adequate care standards. This section attempts to define the minimum expectations for carers, as well as document the support they can expect in order to undertake this
Standards of Alternative Care in South Australia
- caring for our children and young people

Standard 3.3.1: Recruitment

Carers are recruited to provide a range of placement options for children and young people in care.

Expected Outcome

All parties work in collaboration in order to promote the value of alternative care and the role of carers. These efforts will be co-ordinated and reflect a commitment to diversity.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA will provide research and data to assist service providers in their recruitment campaigns. Data will include a profile of children in care to assist with targeted recruitment. Families SA to work in partnership with services to deliver recruitment information sessions.

Practice Criteria

3.3.1.1 The service providers who recruit foster carers have a ‘Recruitment Campaign’ that is planned and delivered in partnership with Families SA. The strategy is evidence based and takes into account demographic data, the cultural needs of children requiring care and the structure of the carer population.

3.3.1.2 The service provider ensures that campaigns are culturally sensitive and respectful of cultural differences.

3.3.1.3 Service Providers to consult with Aboriginal/CALD community groups/forums regarding the identification of community members as potential carers.

3.3.1.4 The service provider and Families SA - Relative Kinship and Community Care Program demonstrates a process of recruitment founded on the child or young person’s community connections and networks for relative, kinship and community carers.

3.3.1.5 The service provider provides a timely response to potential carers.

Policies and Procedures

National Standards from National Plan for Children, Young People and their Carers

Carers Assessment Manual
Standard 3.3.2: Safety Screening

Children and young people in care have access to safe and appropriate placements that ensure physical, sexual and emotional safety.

Expected Outcome

Children and young people will be safe from harm while in care.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA will obtain police and Justice Information Checks on applicants seeking approval and registration as foster carers. Families SA will determine if an applicant meets the standards of approval and advise the service provider in writing.

Families SA and service providers will ensure that carers are supported through the police check process and that the context of a past offence is discussed as part of the assessment process and this is taken into consideration.

Practice Criteria

3.3.2.1 The service provider ensures that all carers, staff, volunteers and contractors undergo police checks every three years. (Note: Families SA ‘Registration and Licensing’ JIS checks all agency and service provider staff on an annual basis).

3.3.2.2 The service provider works in partnership with Registration and Licensing to ensure that police checks which reveal crimes of violence, sexual offences or crimes against children will preclude the applicant from being approved as a caregiver (unless additional evidence or factors reduce the risks to the child or young person).

3.3.2.3 The service provider ensures that police checks which reveal any other criminal history will be considered as part of the assessment process and may preclude the applicant from becoming a caregiver.

3.3.2.4 The service provider ensures that concerns, such as child protection or domestic violence recorded on the Justice Information System or a history of having a child placed in the alternative care system may also preclude the applicant from becoming a caregiver.
3.3.2.5 The service provider ensures that applicants who have previously been de-registered by the Approval and Registration Service will be precluded from eligibility for assessment unless otherwise authorised at Families SA at Director level or above.

3.3.2.6 The service provider informs Registration and Licensing within 5 working days of becoming aware of any new criminal charge against a carer.

3.3.2.7 The service provider ensures that a carer will not receive any new placements while ‘on hold’ as a result of a Special Investigation. The commencement of a Care Concern will not prevent further placements however this decision rests with Families SA at case management level.

3.3.2.8 The service provider provides training on ‘Safe Caring Practices’ and ‘Safe Care of Infants’ as compulsory topics in Induction Training for all new foster carers.

3.3.2.9 The service provider ensures that all staff, volunteers and contractors are assessed, according to Departmental guidelines, regarding their suitability to work with children placed in the alternative care system.

3.3.2.10 Carers inform the service provider of any previous and current criminal history or contact with child protection services during the assessment process and immediately following any subsequent charges or contact.

3.3.2.11 Carers should immediately advise Families SA, through the caseworker, of any changes to the household, such as new people joining the household, any person staying over on a regular basis, anyone who may provide care for children or someone in the household being charged with a serious offence.

Policies and Procedures

Families SA Relative, Kinship and Specific Child Only Care: Policy, Practice Guideline and Procedure

Families SA CARS Service Procedures

Carers Assessment Manual

DFC Screening and Licensing Branch CrimTrac Security Policy
**Standard 3.3.3: Assessment of the Carer**

The applicant’s ability to provide safe, quality care for children and young people is thoroughly and comprehensively assessed.

**Expected Outcome**

Carer assessments will be of professional standard and provide assurance of the applicant’s personal suitability to care.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The Registration and Licensing will ensure all assessments are based on evidenced caring competencies, together with Police and Departmental screening checks, home and environment checks, as well as consideration of personal history that identifies values, skills, relationships, community supports, grief and loss, and an understanding of discrimination, motivation to provide care, the ability to communicate with children and young people and work as part of the Care Team.

**Practice Criteria**

3.3.3.1 The service provider conducts the full assessment with a minimum of three home visits and is completed within five months.

3.3.3.2 The assessment worker, on behalf of the service provider, interviews all members of the household and ensures participation in the assessment process as appropriate.

3.3.3.3 The service provider uses the Departmentally approved carer assessment tool to a professional standard.

3.3.3.4 The service provider engages cultural consultants and interpreters to ensure that assessments are culturally sensitive and take into account diverse cultural customs, history and trauma, grief and loss.

3.3.3.5 The service provider ensures that a health check is undertaken on each adult carer applicant by a medical practitioner who is in a position, through knowledge of the applicant’s health issues, to comment on the applicant’s ability to provide suitable care.

3.3.3.6 The service provider includes two written reference checks by people in a position to give an informed view. Face to face or telephone interviews may be further undertaken particularly if clarification is required regarding an adverse reference.
3.3.3.7 The service provider ensures that the carer is of an age and ability to meet the developmental needs of the child or young person in accordance with Departmental guidelines (25-70 years of age).

Policies and Procedures
Carers Assessment Manual
Families SA Relative, Kinship and Specific Child Only Care Practice Guideline and Procedures
Families SA, Duty of Care Policy
Standard 3.3.4: Assessment of the Care Environment

Children and young people are cared for in a safe and nurturing environment that meets their specific needs.

Expected Outcome

Children and young people in care will live in safe and appropriate environments. The care environment is personalised to meet the individual care needs of a child or young person.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Carer Registration Service will ensure all assessments document safe living conditions. Families SA staff will work in partnership with service providers to ensure placements meet the specific needs of children and young people. Assessment will be part of an ongoing process, through regular visits by caseworkers and support workers.

Practice Criteria

3.3.4.1 The service provider ensures that the carer’s home is a comfortable, clean and hygienic environment that meets safety and council requirements, is in a good state of repair with no obvious dangers.

Smoke alarms are installed and operational.
Medicines and toxic materials are kept in child safe storage.
Registered firearms and weapons are locked up at all times and not accessible to children or young people.

3.3.4.2 The service provider ensures that stairs are in good repair, swimming pools and spas comply with council regulations, the property is adequately fenced and any pets are child friendly or secured adequately.

Rural properties and homelands will be assessed in accordance with cultural guidance and community/council requirements.

3.3.4.3 The service provider and the carer ensure that the care environment is able to ensure the safety and maintain the independence of a child or young person with a disability (i.e. The home is fitted with ramps and safety rails (etc) and can accommodate the appropriate equipment, wheelchairs etc.
3.3.4.4 The service provider ensures that bunk beds are safe and only used by children and young people where it is appropriate to their age and developmental ability.

3.3.4.5 In the case of facility based care, the service provider ensures that the living environment is similar to that of standard homes in the community.

3.3.4.6 The service provider ensures that the carer’s home allows for age appropriate private space.

3.3.4.7 The service provider and the carer ensure that the child/young person’s room is furnished in a similar manner to the standard of the remainder of the home.

3.3.4.8 The service provider ensures that the carer’s vehicle is registered, has seat belts, baby capsule and child car seats as required. The carer will have a current driving licence and appropriate vehicle insurance. Motor bikes are not considered a safe form of transport for a child or young person in care.

3.3.4.9 The service provider provides clear guidelines regarding smoking to encourage that all household members smoke outside of the home and not in the presence of children or young people.

3.3.4.10 The service provider ensures that, if a child or young person is sharing a bedroom, all children or young people are of a similar age and developmental stage, are of the same gender or are siblings. Carers and Service Provider will ensure that sleeping arrangements are not improvised.

Policies and Procedures

Carers Assessment Manual

Departmental and agency OHS & W policies and procedures.
**Standard 3.3.5: Registration and Approval**

The Department will register and approve carers. Approval decisions will be transparent and based on the ability of the applicant to provide a safe and nurturing environment.

**Expected Outcome**

All carers providing care for children and young people under the care and Guardianship of the Minister will be registered and approved by Families SA.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The Registration and Licensing Service will ensure that the registration and approval of carers will comply with Departmental and legislative requirements.

**Practice Criteria**

3.3.5.1 The service provider ensures that completed assessment and review reports are forwarded to Registration and Licensing to be held centrally.

3.3.5.2 The service provider ensures that a copy of the completed assessment is provided to the carer stating the conditions of approval, agency expectations, carer responsibilities, support and entitlements.

3.3.5.3 The service provider ensures that the carer is registered with one agency at a time.

3.3.5.4 The service provider is obliged to obtain a carer reference or a summary of caring history prior to accepting the transfer of a carer. A new assessment or an update of the carer’s circumstances is also completed via the Review process, as negotiated with Registration and Licensing.

3.3.5.5 The service provider has documented eligibility criteria for carer selection and associated decision making documentation is available to carers on request.

3.3.5.6 The service provider provides a rationale for non-approval to unsuccessful applicants and informs them of their rights for an administrative review process. However when Families SA makes the final decision for non approval there is no avenue for appeal/review.
‘Prospective Caregivers do not have the right of appeal for non approval Foster Carers’ (Assessment Manual Approval Section pg 2 1998).

3.3.5.7 The service provider ensures that if an applicant is not approved, and an appeal not upheld, the applicant must wait 2 years, or provide proof of change of circumstances to the Department prior to commencement of the re-assessment.

Policies and Procedures
Carer Assessment Manual
Families SA, CARS Service Procedures
**Standard 3.3.6: Support**

All carers are provided with sufficient support to enable them to provide safe and appropriate placements for children and young people in care.

**Expected Outcome**

Children and young people under the Guardianship of the Minister will experience high quality placements as their carers will be well supported and included as valuable members of the Care Team.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Families SA caseworkers will work in partnership with the service provider agency to ensure the carer is receiving emotional and practical support. Families SA will support service provider agencies in meeting a carer’s needs through service development, contract management, licensing and standards monitoring.

**Practice Criteria**

3.3.6.1 The service provider ensures each carer is allocated an appropriately qualified Placement Support Worker for supervision and support.

3.3.6.2 The service provider visits the carer’s home on a minimum eight weekly basis for support and supervision. Home visits will increase in frequency if required by the carer, service provider agency or Families SA.

3.3.6.3 The service provider ensures that during the home visit the following topics are discussed and actions are identified:
- child or young person’s life domains cultural considerations, and special needs
- care environment, personal circumstances and interpersonal issues
- adequacy of carer support, critical incidents,
- relationships with birth family and the impact of contact
- partnership with the Department and other agencies.

3.3.6.4 The service provider ensures that the Placement Support Worker observes the child or young person on a regular basis and is in an informed position to comment on the relationship between carer and child.

3.3.6.5 The service provider documents all home visits and provides a copy to the carer.
3.3.6.6 The service provider and Families SA work in partnership to provide extra support to carers who have children or young people in their care with identified special needs or disability as per the Case Plan and the Alternative Care Agreement.

3.3.6.7 The service provider makes telephone contact with the carer at a minimum of four weekly intervals and returns calls as soon as possible.

3.3.6.8 The service provider supports, informs and advocates for the carer regarding their rights and entitlements.

3.3.6.9 Professionals in the Care Team ensure that the carer is aware of their rights and responsibilities under the Foster Carers’ Charter and work with the carer in a manner which protects the carers’ rights and assists them to meet their responsibilities.

3.3.6.10 The service provider and Families SA have a management system and procedure for providing a 24-hour emergency support to the carers.

3.3.6.11 The service provider provides the carer with written information about peer support activities including support groups and peak bodies.

3.3.6.12 The service provider ensures that respite is made available on a planned basis, in accordance with the child or young person’s Case Plan/Care Plan.

3.3.6.13 Carers ensure they are available for home visits and agree to cooperate with the Case Plan and the service provider.

3.3.6.14 Carers maintain contact with other carers through peer support and group activities.

3.3.6.15 The carer ensures the Families SA caseworker and the Placement Support Worker are able to talk with and see the child or young person as required.

3.3.6.16 Service providers ensure that non-family based carers (Agency staff, Residential carers) are provided with supports in accordance with Operational Guidelines. Examples of required supports are use of log books, access to mobile phones, attendance at care/case plan meetings.

Policies and Procedures
Service Level Agreements with Service Provider Agencies
**Standard 3.3.7: Training**

All carers are provided with and participate in appropriate training in order to develop and maintain the necessary carer competencies to fulfil their caring role. This includes induction and ongoing training.

**Expected Outcome**

Carers will be skilled and able to meet the demands of the caring role.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Families SA will work with service provider agencies to ensure training is flexible and includes a range of adult learning techniques including competency based, one to one and home visits. There are clear carer participation requirements. Accessibility is considered through careful planning of venue, times, dates, childcare and transport. Training opportunities are documented and monitored.

Families SA recognises that relative carers require training that is flexible and oriented towards validating the carers changing life experience, promotes strengths and leads people to identify their own learning needs.

**Practice Criteria**

3.3.7.1 The service provider and Families SA ensure carers are provided with training that corresponds with approval status and the age, developmental stage and any special needs of children in their care. All carers providing placements for children aged 0 to 2 years are provided with training regarding Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, Safe Infant Care and childhood developmental needs prior to placements being made.

The service provider ensures that carers have access to training to ensure that they understand and have the skills to care for children with special needs/disabilities.

The service provider works with specific disability agencies to ensure appropriate training and information be provided regularly to carers.

3.3.7.2 The service provider ensures that all training is delivered in partnership with carers and facilitation is shared between trained carers and Placement Support Workers.

3.3.7.3 The service provider ensures that each individual carer’s personal
skill development needs and the needs of the child are discussed with the carer and an agreed action plan is developed and documented.

3.3.7.4 The service provider provides a range of flexible training opportunities based on adult learning principles including formal training sessions, 1:1 training in the home, peer training, conferences and workshops.

3.3.7.5 The service provider considers the potential barriers to carers attending training and takes steps to address these. This includes consideration of venue, times, school holidays, providing child care and reimbursement of transport costs incurred.

3.3.7.6 The service provider ensures that applicant carers from Indigenous and culturally diverse backgrounds are provided with culturally appropriate training led by suitable trainers.

3.3.7.7 All carer training is evaluated by participants and this information is used to inform the further development and improvement of ongoing training.

3.3.7.8 Training is available to carers who have cross cultural placements.

3.3.7.9 The service provider develops policies, procedures and training programs for ‘Child Safe Environments’.

Policies and Procedures

Families SA Child Safe Environment Training Package
**Standard 3.3.8: Carer Review**

Reviews will occur at a minimum of annually to provide opportunities for mutual feedback, identify learning needs and to ensure carers are appropriately approved and supported to provide safe and appropriate care for children and young people.

**Expected Outcome:**

The carer’s skills, experience, circumstances and personal suitability will be reviewed annually to ensure they are well equipped to provide ongoing high quality care.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

Families SA via Registration and Licensing will support service provider agencies in processing carer reviews before the registration end date. Service Providers will be informed of the outcome of the review in writing.

**Practice Criteria**

3.3.8.1 The service provider ensures that all carers are reviewed at 12 monthly intervals and also immediately following a Special Investigation. This review will involve feedback from all stakeholders including the child and the caseworker and considers the appropriate approval criteria for continuing re-approval.

3.3.8.2 The service provider has a Review process which is thorough, based on the Alternative Care Standards, considers the behaviour of the carer and child in context and supports the natural justice rights of the carer.

3.3.8.3 The service provider to seek information from Families SA to inform the reviews.

3.3.8.4 The service provider ensures that the carer’s ability to meet the specifications in the Alternative Care Standards is discussed. Any breaches of the standards are discussed and documented and an action plan for addressing issues is developed and documented, including training needs.

3.3.8.5 The Service provider ensures the annual carer review considers all placements with more than three foster children (termed ‘Exceeds Numbers’) and comments on whether the original approval category needs to be revised.
3.3.8.6 Based on the review outcomes the service provider must make any required recommendations for further training and development is made.

3.3.8.7 The service provider considers and acts on all recommendations from a Special Investigation Report and develops an action plan to ensure that identified carer and or systems issues are addressed. The action plan is to be completed prior to a further placement being made.

3.3.8.8 The service provider provides the carer with a copy of their Annual Review Report.

3.3.8.9 The carer participates in the Annual Review.

3.3.8.10 The service provider conducts carer exit interviews when carers leave.

Policies and Procedures
Carer Assessment Manual
Families SA, CARS Service Procedures
Section 3.4: The Service Provider
Organisational Management

Statement of Shared Values

Families SA recognises that our partnerships with non-government agencies are crucial in delivering high quality services to children in care. Our non-government partners provide community based support that is crucial in supporting individual carers. Our contracted service providers must be of sound quality and be able to deliver on contractual obligations. The following section details minimum requirements for alternative care service providers including organisational planning, a commitment to continuous improvement and compliance with financial reporting requirements. This section attempts to be simple in its application in recognition of other organisational service improvement programs currently in use.
Standard 3.4.1 : Organisational Planning

Each service provider has in place mechanisms for effective organisational planning.

Expected Outcome

Service Provider Agencies will offer alternative care programs that are of high quality, meet legislative licensing requirements and reflect a commitment to organisational planning.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA seek to support service provider agencies improve their service via service development, contract management and standards monitoring.

Practice Criteria

3.4.1.1 The service provider has operational plans, including program and service plans, linked to the strategic plan.

3.4.1.2 The service provider has mechanisms to review and update the plan.

3.4.1.3 The service provider has an established risk management framework and supporting procedures.

3.4.1.4 The service provider has an established change management framework.

3.4.1.5 The service provider works in partnership with Department for Families and Communities to achieve standards of good practice in management operations and service delivery outlined under the Service Excellence Framework (SEII)

Policies and Procedures

Keeping Them Safe-In Our Care Consultation and Implementation.
Current strategic agenda for the Department for Families and Communities
Current Families SA Business Plan
South Australia’s Strategic Plan
Service Excellence Framework - (SEII)
Standard 3.4.2: Commitment to Service Improvement

There is a demonstrated commitment to monitoring, evaluating and continuous improvement of alternative care services and programs for children and young people.

Expected Outcome

Families SA and Service Provider Agencies will offer alternative care programs that are of high quality and reflect a commitment to ongoing improvement.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA seek to support service provider agencies improve their service via service development, contract management and standards monitoring.

Practice Criteria

3.4.2.1 Families SA and the service provider have processes in place to involve children and young people, carers, young people, staff and other stakeholders in decision making, evaluation, development and delivery of agency plans.

3.4.2.2 The service provider conducts exit interviews and carer satisfaction surveys. Information about children, carers and staff is gathered, data collated and analysed and is used for ongoing service planning and development.

3.4.2.3 Families SA and service provider demonstrate organisational compliance with the Standards of Alternative Care and participate in all quality assurance mechanisms as requested by the Department.

3.4.2.4 Families SA and the service provider work with carers to facilitate cooperation with the Alternative Care Standards.

3.4.2.5 The service provider provides service data in accordance with Departmental requirements.

3.4.2.6 Families SA and the service provider demonstrate a commitment to the on-going development of a child safe organisation.

3.4.2.7 Families SA and the service provider work in partnership with Department for Families and Communities to strengthen, build and facilitate service improvement as outlined under the Service Excellence Framework (SEII).
Standards of Alternative Care in South Australia - caring for our children and young people

Specific Standards

Policies and Procedures
Australian Business Excellence Framework
Service Excellence Framework - (SEII)

Standard 3.4.3: Management and Governance

Management and governance processes of Families SA and non-government organisations support high quality alternative care service provision.

Expected Outcome
Families SA and alternative care service providers in South Australia will have management and governance structures that function effectively and meet the needs of children and young people.

Roles and Responsibilities
Families SA seek to support service provider agencies via service development, contract management and standards monitoring.

Practice Criteria
3.4.3.1 Families SA alternative care services and NGO service providers are managed by appropriately qualified and experienced staff with a commitment to children and young people and knowledge of alternative care issues.

3.4.3.2 Families SA alternative care services and NGO service providers are subject to regular reviews participate in performance development and improvement processes.

Policies and Procedures
Australian Business Excellence Framework
Service Excellence Framework - (SEII)
Standard 3.4.4: Premises and Equipment

The service provider has premises and equipment that are safe and suitable for a well functioning alternative care service.

Expected Outcome

The Service provider agency is well equipped to deliver services to children, young people and their carers.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA seek to support service provider agencies through service development, contract management, standards monitoring and licensing.

Practice Criteria

3.4.4.1 The service provider ensures that the premises comply with Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare regulations and legislation.

3.4.4.2 The service provider has premises that are accessible to, and suitable for, people with disabilities.

3.4.4.3 The service provider has a designated First Aid officer and First Aid kits are available in the office.

3.4.4.4 The service provider has facilities that support efficient and effective implementation of services which meet legislative requirements and standards.

3.4.4.5 The service provider has policies and procedures relating to the use of equipment such as cars and mobile phones.

3.4.4.6 The service provider ensures all staff vehicles are registered and insured.

3.4.4.7 The service provider gives staff access to communication and support systems when working after hours or away from the office.

3.4.4.8 The service provider has public liability and professional indemnity insurance in accordance with Departmental requirements.

3.4.4.9 The service provider ensures that an asbestos register exists if required.

3.4.4.10 The service provider has a current Facilities License

Policies and Procedures

Risk and Hazard Management Guidelines
Standard 3.4.5: Fund Management

Funds are managed in a responsible manner and reported about in accordance with Departmental requirements.

Expected Outcome

The financial management of the service provider agency supports the deliver of high quality services to children, young people and their carers.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA seek to support service provider agencies through service development, contract management, standards monitoring and licensing. Funding reporting mechanisms will be clearly specified in service level agreements.

Practice Criteria

3.4.5.1 The service provider uses allocated funds in a manner that complies with their service agreement specifications and has delegated responsibility for budget expenditure and monitoring.

3.4.5.2 The service provider ensures proper and prudent management and accounting practices are in place in order to deliver contracted obligations.

3.4.5.3 The service provider ensures that funds can be accounted for and distinguished from other funding sources in accordance with Departmental requirements.

3.4.5.4 The service provider’s expenditure and financial systems are subject to audit by Families SA

Policies and Procedures

Treasurer’s Instructions relating to Grants Management
**Standard 3.4.6: Information and File Management**

Case records are documented, maintained and secured.

**Expected Outcome**

The service provider agency’s information and file management practices support the delivery of high quality services to children, young people and their carers.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Families SA seek to support service provider agencies through service development, contract management, standards monitoring and licensing.

**Practice Criteria**

3.4.6.1 The service provider ensures that case files are accurate, current and reflect policy and procedures regarding information management.

3.4.6.2 The service provider has a filing system in place that ensures sensitive handling of carer records and procedures regarding secure storage.

3.4.6.3 The service provider has procedures regarding file transfers that ensures confidentiality and tracking of file movements.

3.4.6.4 The service provider has policies and procedures relating to confidentiality, storage and archiving of client and carer information, release of information and maintenance of carer and young person information.

3.4.6.5 The service provider ensures that information about children and young people is handed back to the statutory agency in the event of a placement ending, including information held by the carer.

3.4.6.6 The service provider has an efficient and secure system for the collection of service data including collection, retrieval and reporting of information.

3.4.6.7 Service providers ensure that non-family based carers use information and file management systems in accordance with operational guidelines such as observation logs.

3.4.6.8 Information and File management systems are subject to audit by Families SA.
3.4.6.9 A daily logbook is maintained and kept secure in non-family based care/residential care settings.

3.4.6.10 Carers are encouraged to keep a diary or log containing factual accounts of significant daily events.

Policies and Procedures

Case Recording Guidelines and Standards

Operation Guidelines for Emergency Accommodation - Observation log, diary and running sheets no.20.
**Standard 3.4.7: Human Resources**

Human resources are managed in a way that ensures recruitment and retention of high quality staff and a positive working environment.

**Expected Outcome**

Service provider agencies will be staffed by employees, contractors and volunteers that are appropriate for their roles and are well supported.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Families SA seek to support service provider agencies through service development, contract management, standards monitoring and licensing.

**Practice Criteria**

3.4.7.1 The service provider keeps appropriate personnel files that reflect qualifications of staff, previous experience and training requirements.

3.4.7.2 The service provider has a policy on staff orientation, including induction training.

3.4.7.3 The service provider, staff, carers, contractors and volunteers work in a way that facilitates respect, co-operation and teamwork.

3.4.7.4 The service provider has safety procedures regarding carer home visits, including the monitoring of staff movements.

3.4.7.5 Each staff member has an appropriately qualified allocated supervisor. Supervision sessions, performance management, appraisals and critical incidents are documented and filed.

**Policies and Procedures**

Occupational, Health, Safety and Welfare policies

Human Resource policies and procedures
4. Participation

**Core Standard 4: Participation**

Children, young people, birth families and carers are heard, supported to actively participate in decision-making and make choices in case planning.

Children and young people in care have the right to:

- have their thoughts and opinions asked for and considered
- express their opinion about things that affect them
- be involved in what is decided about their life and care

**Overview**

This section sets out the participation standards and practice criteria for participation and is applicable to all service providers, Families SA, caseworkers and all carers.

**What does participation mean?**

Participation means that everyone gets to take part in discussions, express their views, and have their opinion considered in the case planning and decision-making process.

It also means that where Families SA makes decisions or takes action, the people whose lives are affected are given reasons for those decisions or actions, as well as the opportunity to respond.

**Why is participation in case planning important?**

A case plan is more effective if it has been developed with the participation of all parties. Participation is about inclusion for families, children and young people and carers and ensuring that they are involved in the decisions that affect them.

Where effective and cooperative relationships are established with families during the case planning process, better outcomes are achieved for children and young people.
Who should participate in case planning?

Wherever possible, case plans are developed with the participation of the child or young person, their family, carer and other significant members of the care team.

Specific strategies are required to ensure the participation of children and young people, people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

(Participation in Case Planning 2007, NSW Department of Community Services)
Standard 4.1: Participation In Decision Making

Children, young people, birth parents and carers have the opportunity to participate in case planning and are included as significant members of the care team.

Expected Outcome

Child or young person and care team members will be active participants in all related decision making.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA has the responsibility for ensuring all care team members are consulted and have the opportunity to have their views listened to. All care team members are responsible for participation and expressing their views in a respectful manner that is inclusive of others. The significant role of carers is recognised and acknowledged as they are often the primary carers who have knowledge about the child or young person’s needs. Carers are consulted and encouraged to participate in decision making.

Practice Criteria

4.1.1 There are strategies to support the direct involvement of children, young people, carers and their families in case planning.

4.1.2 Children, young people, carers and birth parents understand all aspects of the case plan.

4.1.3 Carers’ views are sought about the child’s or young person’s needs and are actively included in case planning.

4.1.4 Children and young people are engaged and consulted when there is a change in a caseworker or carer.

4.1.5 Where any participant in the planning process does not have English as their first language interpreters should be considered, even if their language skills seem well developed. Cultural support persons must also be considered.

4.1.6 Families SA and service providers must ensure children and young people with special needs, their families and carers/staff are trained and supported in specialist communication techniques that meet the needs of the children and young people.

4.1.7 Carers support the child or young person to attend case conferences, reviews and other planning forums and facilitate access to the caseworker.
4.1.8  Children, young people, birth parents and carers are included and acknowledged as an active participant of the Care Team.

4.1.9  The child or young person, birth family and carers will have the option of a support person to accompany them to case conferences/meetings.

**Policies and Procedures**

Guardianship and Alternative Care Manual  
Charter of Rights for Children and Young People  
Foster Carers Charter
5. Care Records

Core Standard 5: Care Records

Alternative Care sector has a well-managed records system to document casework, which is appropriate, accessible and confidential.

Children and young people in care have the right to:
- add information to their personal life
- have all of their personal things kept safe - like photographs, school reports and special belongings.

Overview

This section sets out the requirements of best practice in recording and maintaining care records and is applicable to all service providers, Families SA caseworkers and all carers.

The process of recording and retaining information about children and young people’s lives cannot be left to chance. A child or young person in Alternative Care is entitled to access records that accurately reflect their life history.

The Alternative Care sector is required to ensure that the records of children and young persons placed in Alternative Care contain sufficient information necessary to provide quality care. These records should also assist children and young persons in establishing independent lives once leaving care and to respond to queries later in life about their time in care.

Care records need to be comprehensive and contain sufficient information to answer the child or young person’s questions about their history and demonstrate the quality of care provided.
**Standard 5.1: Case Management System**

There is a well-managed case management system to document casework, which is appropriately accessible and confidential.

**Expected Outcome**

The case management system will provide a structure for all case recordings concerning children and young people in Alternative Care.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Families SA caseworker is responsible for maintaining the case management system and ensuring the information is accurate and current.

**Practice Criteria**

5.1.1 Caseworkers responsible for the care and protection of children and young people are trained and proficient in utilising and maintaining the case management system.

5.1.2 Appropriately qualified people undertake a random audit at least annually regarding the appropriate use of the case management system and to provide written feedback to staff for ongoing development and training purposes.

5.1.3 Confidentiality of records is kept at all times using a ‘need to know’ principle to determine access.

**Policies and Procedures**

C3MS Information (To be released once system is implemented)
JIS manuals and procedures
Case Recording Principles and Guidelines
**Standard 5.2: Content of Care Records**

All Records of children and young people in care contain the information necessary to provide quality care and assist them in establishing independent lives when they leave care.

**Expected Outcome**

All children and young people in alternative care have access to accurate and current care records.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Families SA caseworker is responsible for maintaining care records and ensuring their confidentiality.

**Practice Criteria**

5.2.1 The record system for each child or young person is a comprehensive collection of electronic, printed and handwritten documents organised for the purpose of retaining a history of the department’s and the caseworker’s involvement with a client. They are a legal and statutory requirement. A case record includes, but is more than case notes. For example the case record includes:

- Minutes of meetings
- Day to day records
- Consultation sheets
- Case plans
- Court reports
- Structured Decision Making
- Electronic recording
- Medical Records

- Reports
- Referrals
- Correspondence
- Placement history
- Life Story Records i.e. Photos
- Genogram
- Birth Certificate
- Court Orders

5.2.2 Each entry requires the recorder’s name, position, signature, date of entry, time of contact, purpose of contact, summary of issues discussed and child/young persons views and caseworker to sign each case note.

5.2.3 Care records to distinguish between fact, hearsay Facts, description or direct observations and professional opinions.

**Policies and Procedures**

Case Recording Principles and Guidelines
Standard 5.3: Life Story Collections

All children and young people in Alternative Care will have a life story collection.

Expected Outcome

Every child and young person in care will have a life story collection that accurately reflects their life in care, family history and community connections.

Roles and Responsibilities

All care team participants are responsible for contributing and maintaining life story collections.

Practice Criteria

5.3.1 Caseworkers and carers to work in partnership with child or young person to develop their life story work.

5.3.2 The collection of records of significant events, special moments and objects from a child’s life that should be kept and looked after. The collection may include photos, drawings and mementos, and may be kept in a box for safe keeping.

It is a chronological account of the child or young person’s history, and should be started when the child enters Alternative care and maintained throughout their time in care.

Policies and Procedures

Families SA Aboriginal Life Story Book
6. Customer Relations

Core Standard 6: Customer Relations

All inquiries, complaints and allegations will be heard and dealt with in a confidential, responsive and fair manner.

Overview

This section sets out the requirements of managing inquires, complaints and allegations in accordance with the confidentiality requirements and customer service standards.

This section is applicable to all service providers, Families SA caseworkers and all carers.

Families SA seeks to provide its customers, stakeholders and partners with the best service possible including high quality intervention, fair and transparent processes, collaborative decision making and accountability.

The standards aim to promote consistent customer relations across the Alternative Care sector by providing a set of specifications on what a service must provide to Alternative Care customers.

The Standards aim to reduce the number of complaints by ensuring all services work towards a common set of standards and practice criteria. In the event that customer complaints arise the Standards will assist in addressing the customer complaints in a fair and transparent manner.

The customer complaints process is an appropriate way to encourage customers to express their concerns about service delivery and to have them heard and addressed in a safe and transparent manner. Customer complaints help to shape service delivery standards and assist Families SA to assess its performance as part of its continuous quality improvement agenda. Customer Complaints Handling Policy (20/06/2005)
Standard 6.1: Rights Of Children, Young People, Families and Carers

The rights of children, young people, families and carers in the Alternative Care system are promoted and they are assisted to exercise these rights.

Expected Outcome

All customers involved in alternative care will be informed of their rights and provided with avenues to exercise their rights.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Alternative Care sector is responsible for ensuring customer service to all alternative care participants. Families SA works in partnership with the sector to ensure children and people in care are informed of their rights and have access to the Charter of Rights for Children and Young People. Carers are included as valued partners who have the right to be informed, be involved, provided with adequate support, respected and treated in an open and fair manner. Birth families are informed of their rights and are provided with supports to be involved and have their views heard.

Practice Criteria

6.1.1 Families SA caseworkers provide age appropriate printed material or other forms of information to children and young people in care (with an appropriate cultural context) to inform them of their rights. All children and young people are provided with a copy of the ‘Charter of Rights.’

6.1.2 Families SA caseworkers inform families of their rights in relation to complaints and appeals.

6.1.3 Families SA caseworkers ensure children and young people receive information and support to access an independent advocate or an advocacy organisation. This can be especially relevant for children and young people with special needs.

6.1.4 Families SA caseworkers inform children and young people in alternative care about the role of ‘Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People.’

6.1.5 All carers are informed about the role and function of the Foster Care Liaison Officer, are provided with a copy of the Foster Carers Charter and are informed of their rights.
Specific Standards

Policies and Procedures
Guardianship and Alternative Care Manual
Foster Carers Charter
Customer Complaints Handling Policy
Customer Complaints Resolution Procedures
Customer Service Standards and Practice Guidelines
Standard 6.2: Confidentiality

The right of confidentiality for children, young people, birth families and carers will be supported in all alternative care matters.

Expected Outcome

Confidentiality principles and practice requirements will be adhered to across the Alternative Care sector.

Roles and Responsibilities

All participants of the Alternative Care sector are responsible for maintaining confidentiality. Families SA caseworkers and service providers will ensure, where required ‘exchange of information forms’ are signed by the relevant parties. All confidentiality issues will be guided by the best interest of the child, in accordance with Children’s Protection Act 1993 and Freedom of Information Act 1991.

Practice Criteria

6.2.1 All employees know their responsibilities concerning confidentiality as stated in legislation, Children’s Protection Act 1993, Section 13, 58 (1) and the Public Sector Management Act 1995, section 6(c).

6.2.2 Personal information about children, young people, birth families and carers is kept secure. Release of any personal information must be in accordance with current Child Protection and Freedom of Information (F.O.I) legislation.

6.2.3 Release of foster carer’s personal details is in accordance with Child Protection legislation Section 51 (3) and in consultation with carers.

6.2.4 Interviews/meetings/case conferences with children, young people and their families occur in a chosen place that respects privacy and the rights of confidentiality.

6.2.5 Limits of confidentiality are explained to children, young people, birth families and carer. Examples are duty of care responsibilities or reporting of any disclosures involving criminal activity.

Policies and Procedures

Families SA Freedom of Information Manual
Standard 6.3: Complaints

Children, young people, birth families and carers are able to express dissatisfaction with an aspect of their alternative care experience. Their complaints will be heard and dealt with in an open, responsive, fair and considerate manner.

Expected Outcome

Complaints will be a valuable feedback mechanism for service improvement and will contribute to better outcomes for children and young people.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA and service providers will comply with Departmental complaint resolution mechanisms. In instances were carers, children or young people have made a complaint regarding a service provider agency, Families SA will work to resolve the issue from a service development perspective. Appropriate supports will be provided to carers, birth families and children or young people during complaints process.

Practice Criteria

6.3.1 Families SA and the service provider assist carers, children and young people resolve complaints by informal means at the earliest opportunity and utilising conflict resolution/mediation strategies wherever possible.

6.3.2 Families SA and the service provider ensure that when handling a complaint they comply with all relevant legislation and act in accordance with Customer Complaint Resolution Procedures.

6.3.3 Families SA and the service provider ensure that the management of complaints are conducted respectfully by appropriately trained staff.

6.3.4 Families SA and the service provider ensure that carers are given the opportunity to talk about their view of the complaint.

6.3.5 Families SA and the service provider ensure that all complaints are recorded, outcomes monitored and that recommendations are taken into account in service development and continuous improvement initiatives.

6.3.6 The Families SA, service provider and the carer, assist children and young people to access the Children’s Guardian and or other appropriate advocacy services.
6.3.7 All Care Team members ensure that all children and young people in out of home care are aware of the Charter of Rights for Children and Young People and work with children and young people to understand and exercise their rights in this Charter.

6.3.8 The service provider ensures that carers are made aware of their rights to make a complaint and the avenues to do so. The Service Provider Agency assists the carers to make a complaint.

6.3.9 Carers lodge complaints using the appropriate service provider and/or government grievances procedures and systems. All foster cares have access to the Foster Care Liaison Officer to provide support and advice regarding complaints processes.

6.3.10 There are regular reviews of complaints and their outcomes to inform the further improvement of policy and practice.

6.3.11 If families are not satisfied with a decision or services, they can be referred to Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner.

Policies and Procedures
Customer Complaints Resolution Procedures
Customer Complaints Handling Policy
Standard 6.4: Allegations

Children and young people are able to make allegations regarding their alternative care experience. The child/young person, carers and others will be supported during this experience.

Expected Outcome

Children and young people are safe while in care.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA will comply with Special Investigations policy and procedures. Families SA will make all appropriate referrals to ensure children and young people are safe and supported. All necessary information will be made available to service providers to ensure carers are supported during the investigation process.

Practice Criteria

6.4.1 The service provider assists the Department in the investigation by providing information and records regarding the carer and their care experience.

6.4.2 The service provider keeps the carer informed regarding the progress of the investigation.

6.4.3 The Special Investigations Unit, Families SA and the service provider ensure that staff conducting Special Investigations or Care Concerns are appropriately qualified and ensure that Care Concerns are conducted respectfully, fairly and transparently.

6.4.5 The service provider assists carers to access an independent advocate or an advocacy organisation. Mechanisms for ongoing communication will be agreed and monitored.

6.4.6 The service provider ensures that when the Care Concern or Special Investigation is complete, steps are taken to assist the carer to address the effects of the investigation process and implement any associated recommendations.

6.4.7 Carers participate in the investigation as appropriate.

6.4.8 Families SA ensure child’s safety and emotional wellbeing is managed and supported during a Special Investigation or Care Concerns investigations.

Policies and Procedures

Families SA, Special Investigations Policy and Procedures and Unit Fact Sheet.
7. Transition Planning

Core Standard 7: Transition Planning

Transition planning will occur for children and young people from the onset of entry into care through to leaving care.

Children and young people in care have the right to:
- a special plan for when they leave care
- support and a place to live when they leave care
- be included and have a say in all placement changes
- to be informed and supported during critical transition periods in their lives.

Overview

This section sets out transition planning, leaving and post care standards for best practice and is applicable to all service providers, Families SA caseworkers and all carers.

Transition planning commences from when a child enters care through to when they leave care. It is about assisting children and young people to adjust to new care environments, to forming reconnections with family during the reunification process, to planning for the future and ultimately preparing our children and young people to function as independent adults. The term transition planning is broad and occurs at every stage of a child’s or young person’s development.

Transition planning in relation to young people leaving care will occur for each young person from 15 years and will gain clarity and intensity as the young person approaches 18 years and/or their planned exit from care. Transition planning will involve a significant degree of flexibility and will be an ongoing process that is likely to change over time.

Transition planning focuses on a specific range of issues, activities and goals dedicated to a young person’s effective transition into adulthood that takes place within the broader case planning and review framework. Transition planning will be specific to the individual needs of the young person and will be developed in collaboration with care team members and relevant services.
There is no expectation a young person will be ready for independent living at 15 years. The rationale for early engagement with transition support services is to provide young people with a greater opportunity and more time to develop the knowledge, skills and supports required to live independently and assist in making their transition smoother and more successful.

Families SA Post Care Services can assist care leavers to access services to help strengthen or reconnect with their family and community, access personal records, access community services and programs to meet individual needs.
Standard 7.1: Placement Transitions

Children and young people experience carefully planned placement transitions.

Expected Outcome

Children and young people will experience certainty, stability and wellbeing in care.

All placement changes will occur in a timely manner with transitions supports in place.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA will lead all members of the Care Team in working towards well planned transitions and the prevention of placement breakdowns. Settled and stable care will be seen as a priority.

If a placement transition is unavoidable, the Care Team will work co-operatively to ensure that the transition needs of the child or young person and carer are sensitively addressed. This may include debriefing and ensuring that timelines are considered.

In non-family based placements or emergency accommodation settings care plans will be developed to ensure the carer has all the required information documented for successful placement transitions and day to day care requirements.

Families SA recognises that placement breakdown for children and young people in relative care can often represent the potential severance of ties for a child or young person to their extended family unit. Hence support to maintain best connections are imperative in maintaining a child or young person’s connections to family/kinship group.

Practice Criteria

7.1.1 The service provider and caseworker work in partnership to ensure placement transitions are planned and implemented according to an appropriate timeframe for the child or young person.

7.1.2 Caseworkers ensure that if there are any indications that a placement could be disrupted, a case conference is convened to identify strategies to preserve the placement.

7.1.3 The service provider ensures that the child or young person is not moved from placement without consultation and authorisation.
from Families SA caseworker. If there is disagreement amongst the parties the matter can be referred to the Children’s Guardian or Foster Care Relations Officer as appropriate.

7.1.4 The service provider and Families SA ensure that a rationale for a placement transition is negotiated and explained in partnership with the carer.

7.1.5 In the event of a placement transition, the service provider works with the carer to ensure that all the child or young person’s belongings are moved with the child or young person to the next placement.

7.1.6 In the event of a change of placement, the service provider gives priority consideration to the continuity of the child or young person’s relationships, attachments, community and education. The option of placement with former carers is explored.

7.1.7 In the event of difficulties that could lead to placement disruption a carer notifies their support agency within 12 hours.

7.1.8 Carers assist children and young people in transition through planned placement endings. This may involve
- giving care until another placement is found
- giving time to say goodbye
- giving photos and keepsakes, life story collections
- helping to pack belongings into the child or young person’s suitcase or travel bag (if child or young person does not have a suitable bag Families SA will purchase a suitcase for the child or young person).

These factors are considered in the context of the wellbeing and safety of the carer family and other children in placement. Information about the child or young person’s day to day needs is passed by the carer to the caseworker to assist with the continuation and care of the child.

7.1.9 In accordance with the child or young person’s wishes, the carer and young person’s time together is acknowledged and celebrated if appropriate.

7.1.10 Carers in non-family based settings are familiar with Operational Guidelines for managing emergency situations.

7.1.11 Where possible children and young people participate in the selection of any new placement.
7.1.12 Where possible there is a staged process of introduction and contact with new carers, birth parents, relative carers or kinship carers and caseworkers.

7.1.13 In planning for a placement transition priority is given to continuity for the child or young person in their significant relationships, life experience and attachments. Where appropriate, caseworkers should request a Psychological assessment to inform transition planning.

Policies and Procedures

Families SA, Leaving Care, Transitioning and Post Care Policy
Guardianship and Alternative Care Manual
Emergency Accommodation Operational Guidelines - behaviour management, crisis response management and critical incidents
**Standard 7.2: Leaving Care**

Children and young people are prepared for adulthood via the development of a transition plan that reflects the unique needs of the young person.

**Expected Outcome**

Families SA will provide planned and ongoing support for young people leaving care. Preparation for leaving care will begin at 15

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The District Centre case manager will facilitate the transition planning process in accordance with the case planning and review framework. The case manager is responsible for ensuring that other agencies will provide assistance and/or case management post 18 years and are also actively involved in the various stages of the transition planning process.

Youth Support Teams will provide the practical life skills supports such as life skills training and development, access to education, assistance with employment and housing supports.

Families SA Anti Poverty Services are committed to providing support to young people transitioning from care to ensure they have access to opportunities to develop financial management and life skills required for independence and adulthood.

Carers will be involved in joint planning with Families SA to ensure they are involved in early transition planning and have the necessary supports to prepare the young person for independence and adulthood.

**Practice Criteria**

7.2.1 Preparation for leaving care begins at 15 years and involves:
- transition planning
- referral to Youth Support Services
- referral to Anti-poverty services
- referral to other support services as required.

7.2.2 Every young person aged 15 years and over is provided with My Stuff - Leaving Care Kit.

7.2.3 Case planning is undertaken with the young person and significant others to plan for the transition to independent living or other appropriate accommodation placement.
7.2.4 When a young person's order has expired, they can expect the following to have occurred:

- have fully participated in the transition planning process to the best of their ability
- have accommodation and are provided with the required practical and financial support in establishing and maintaining their accommodation
- have been appropriately referred and are receiving the required adult case management services (e.g. Disability SA)
- where required, prior to the expiry of the Guardianship Order that other orders have been put into place for the young person's protection e.g. Administration Order with the Guardianship Board
- be linked into adult health services (e.g. GP, Dentist, therapeutic service), and know how to access them when required
- have a Medicare card
- have an income
- be linked into educational and training opportunities, or know how to get the information and services when required.
- have maintained or re-established links with their family or know who to ask for support when they are ready.
- understand why they have been in care
- have been provided with copies of:
  - their birth certificate
  - care order
  - medical records
  - other relevant documentation
- be aware of the legal implications in relation to the expiry of their Guardianship order.
- be aware of Freedom of Information processes and have been offered the opportunity to peruse their file prior to their order completion or to later engage Post Care services to undertake this process.

7.2.5 In addition, case managers will:

- Support and assist the young person with any queries or concerns they may have about leaving care
• Reinforce that post care services are available to them, even after their involvement with Youth Support Services ends.

7.2.6 Where required, Disability SA or Novita Children’s Services are involved in the transition planning at 15 years for all young people with disabilities transitioning from care.

(Note: Disability SA continues to give support into adulthood, whilst Novita would support the planned transition of the young person to Disability SA once they turn 18 years of age).

7.2.7 Where appropriate, Case managers ensure that the young person has been provided with the opportunity to pursue a Victims of Crime VIC application. Note: Current legislation enables a young person to pursue VIC application after they turn 18 years. Best practice should ensure the application process occurs well before they turn 18 years.

Policies and Procedures
Transitioning from Care Policy
Families SA, Transitioning from Care Policy and Post Care Policy
Victims of Crime - Statutory Compensation
Standard 7.3: Post Care

Post Care support will be provided to all care leavers*, regardless of age.

*see definition of care leavers in Transitioning from Care Policy and Post Care Policy

Expected Outcome

Post Care services provided by Families SA will promote and advocate for persons previously in care to receive assistance and support in:

- developing opportunities to re-establish and/or strengthen their connection to family and community
- accessing their personal records
- accessing community services and programs including health, housing, medical, education, housing and financial management, counselling, therapy, life and parenting skills and identity and relationships.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA will assist care leavers in accessing the relevant services and supports to enhance their emotional and physical wellbeing.

Families SA caseworkers are responsible for informing young people about post care supports.

Practice Criteria

7.3.1 Ongoing post care supports, financial or case management are at the discretion of the District Centre and require support from the District Centre Manager.

7.3.2 Where the necessary service and supports are of a transitioning nature (e.g. accommodation supports, life skills) and the care leaver is under 25 years, a referral to Youth Support Teams may be given.

7.3.3 Where the necessary service and supports include information, advocacy and referral service, a referral to Post Care Services may be given. There is no upper age limit to this service.

Care leavers can self refer to Families SA Post Care Services.
Policies and Procedures

Transition Planning for Young People Leaving Care Practice Guide
Transitioning from Care Policy
Post Care Policy
Rapid Response Housing SA, Families SA and Disability SA service delivery guidelines for housing assistance for young people under the Guardianship of the Minister
8. Sector Partnership

Core Standard 8: Sector Partnership:
All service providers within the Alternative Care sector - both government and non-government will work in partnership to deliver accessible and effective services for children, young people and their families.

Overview
This section sets out the working in partnership standards and procedures for best practice across the Alternative Care sector and is applicable to all service providers, Families SA caseworkers and all carers.

Keeping Them Safe-In Our Care Implementation 2007 promotes Collaborative Partnerships with the Alternative Care sector and states the following:

‘Families SA will work with government agencies and non-government partners to find integrated ways of directing resources to deliver better outcomes for individual children and young people in our care - and for providing an environment that creates success’.

This statement of Collaborative Partnership is intended to:

- reflect the partnership between department, approved carers and service providers
- identify the shared principles that inform activities and relationships within the partnership
- clarify the roles of the department, approved carers and service providers in the context of the partnership
- establish the responsibilities and rights of approved carers.
The primary objective of the partnership between Families SA, foster carers and service providers is to work together effectively to promote and ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who require alternative care services (Statement of Commitment QLD-Department of Child Safety 2006).

All parties of the Alternative Care sector share the responsibility of sector partnership and constantly seek ways to ensure that it is imbedded in our daily practice. The Alternative Care Standards in South Australia provides the foundation for sector partnership to forge ahead and demonstrates a shared commitment for effective partnership to benefits our children and young people in care.
Standard 8.1: Partnership with Other Services

All agencies will work in partnership to ensure maximum benefit/services for children, young people and their families.

Expected Outcome

The Alternative Care sector, government and non-government, will work in partnership to plan and provide optimal services and supports for children and young people in Alternative Care.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Alternative Care sector is responsible for promoting partnership. Families SA will work in partnership with the Alternative Care sector to develop partnership practices via Memoranda, Protocols, Service Agreements, joint programs and training.

Practice Criteria

8.1.1 There is a file record of agencies involved with each child or young person and their families.

8.1.2 Identified agencies are included as participants of the Care Team.

8.1.3 Communication is regular between agencies involved in individual cases.

8.1.4 Consistent protocols and procedures are followed in working with other service providers in referral, assessment, case planning and review.

8.1.5 There is regular contact with other agencies in monitoring the progress of case plans.

8.1.6 There is active participation in interagency meetings for Alternative Care.

8.1.7 Service Agreements exist between the Department and non-government agencies providing Alternative Care Services.

8.1.8 Interagency Code of Practice guidelines or Memoranda of Understanding exist between key government Departments/Divisions such as Health, Housing, and Disability to ensure maximum benefits for mutual customers.

8.1.9 Relevant agencies and peak bodies are assisted to develop policies, procedures and training programs for ‘Child Safe Environments’.
Policies and Procedures
Guardianship and Alternative Care Manual - Interagency Coordination and Collaboration Section.
Standard 8.2: Rapid Response

All children and young people under the Guardianship of the Minister have prompt access and a coordinated response to services providing a Rapid Response. (The term Guardianship is used as a generic term to include children and young people under custody and guardianship of the Minister, under the Children’s Protection Act 1993 section 38, and unaccompanied refugee minors).

Expected Outcome

All care team participants will work in partnership to support children and young people under Guardianship of the Minister to have supported, coordinated and prompt access to government supports and services.

The Alternative Care sector will have a working knowledge of the established protocols and agreements for children and young people accessing services under Rapid Response.

Roles and Responsibilities

Rapid Response services are responsible for ensuring that services are provided in accordance with Rapid Response Memoranda of Understanding, Standards, Service Agreements and Practice Guides. Families SA caseworkers are responsible for accessing or referring to services providing a Rapid Response. Carers and caseworkers will work in partnership to determine what the child’s needs are and access services providing a Rapid Response.

Practice Criteria

8.2.1 Families SA caseworkers and alternative care providers support carers to attend health appointments and education planning appointments provided under Rapid Response

8.2.2 Families SA caseworkers provide the information necessary to facilitate a good services response to children and young people under Guardianship.

8.2.3 Families SA and Alternative Care providers engage in local and regional across sector planning forums relating to the planning and providing of services to children in alternative care.

8.2.4 Families SA and carers adhere to the Health Standards for Children and Young People under the Guardianship of the Minister.
8.2.5 Families SA and Carers and participate in Individual Education Planning for pre school, primary and secondary school students for children and young people under the Guardianship of the Minister.

8.2.6 Families SA caseworkers and carers ensure young people have the skills, knowledge and supports necessary to live independently when they make the transition from care and demonstrate knowledge and use of Rapid Response Housing SA, Families SA and Disability SA service delivery guidelines for housing assistance for young people under the Guardianship of the Minister, January 2007.

8.2.7 Families SA and Carers adhere to the commitments made in the SA Dental Agreement for Children and Young People under the Guardianship of the Minister.

Policies and Procedures

Rapid Response Housing SA, Families SA and Disability SA service delivery guidelines

Dental Agreement for Children and Young People under the Guardianship of the Minister

Health Standards For Children And Young People Under Guardianship of the Minister

Initial Health Assessment Practice Guide

Individual Education Plan Guidelines
Standard 8.3: Sharing Information

Relevant information about children and young people under guardianship is shared across government and non-government agencies and with other persons.

Expected Outcome

Sharing of information about the child or young person between approved services will occur in accordance with acting in the best interest of the child.

Roles and Responsibilities

Families SA caseworker will ensure that sharing information forms are signed by the relevant parties and a record of the form is stored on the child or young person’s 85 file.

Practice Criteria

8.3.1 Caseworkers demonstrate knowledge of Information Sharing and Client Privacy Statement and Guidelines 2005.

8.3.2 The disclosure of information is always:
- in the best interests of the child, and
- necessary for some purpose, such as making arrangements for the child’s education or a medical or professional examination under section 51 of the Children’s Protection Act 1993.

Policies and Procedures

Information Sharing and Client Privacy Statement and Guidelines
Glossary of Terms

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander: A person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which he or she is associated.

Agency License: License for a registered foster care agency to provide alternative care services for Families SA.

Alternative Care Placement Agreement: An outline of the responsibilities of the child/young person, birth family, caregiver(s), Families SA Social Worker, ACSP Placement Support Worker and others involved at the outset of the placement. This agreement should be regularly reviewed including when the child or young person’s circumstances change and the agreement needs to be renegotiated. Any of the stakeholders involved can request that the Agreement be reviewed.

Alternative Care Placements: These include respite, short and long-term foster care, specialized family or foster care, shared care, residential and congregate care.

Alternative Care Service Provider (ACSP): Agencies engaged in providing alternative care services, includes services within Families SA and non-government agencies funded through Families SA

Assessment: The process of collating accurate information, making observations, analyzing and drawing conclusions to make an appraisal of the functioning of a particular family and the child/young person’s circumstances and needs.

Birth Family: The child’s immediate and extended family of origin. Also known as the Biological Family.

Care Team: The Care Team is the group of people who share the responsibility for the care and development of the child or young person. The Care Team includes the child or young person, the foster/relative carer, the Families SA caseworker/Supervisor, the service provider agency, placement or Relative Care Kinship Support Worker and other key professionals.

Carer: A person who has the responsibility of providing day-to-day care of a child or young person. It includes carers who are relatives, foster carers, residential care workers, childcare workers and youth workers. Also known as Foster Carer and Foster Parent.
Case Management: The process of assessment, case planning, implementing, coordinating and reviewing of the Departmental intervention plan. The Supervisor has the delegated legal responsibility for children and young people who are under a custody or Guardianship order. Case management is a process that ensures that the strategies in the case plan are coordinated and acted upon in a timely manner. While a range of agencies may be involved in providing services to the family the Families SA case manager has the lead role in monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the Case Plan and the achievement of best outcomes for the child/young person and family.

Case Planning & Case Plan: Case Planning is the process of establishing agreed goals and outcomes to meet the identified needs of the child or young person and their family. The child or young person, birth parent(s), Families SA staff, foster carers, alternative care provider staff and other involved agencies should be included in the case planning process. Case planning ensures both immediate and long term needs of the child or young person across the life domains are addressed whilst they are in care. The Case Plan is the agreed goals and outcomes of the case planning process. The Families SA caseworker documents the Case Plan which is placed on the child or young person’s file.

Care Plan: Case work in emergency accommodation are the actions that the carer undertakes, in consultation with the allocated Case Manager, in implementing elements of the Case Plan that are relevant to the young person’s placement. A Care Plan is used to organise and document the implementation of these actions.

Caseworker: The social worker, youth worker, caseworker or case manager in Families SA who has the role of providing direct service, and coordinating interagency intervention, across care and protection to case closure.

Duty of Care: The obligation to ensure that the standard of care provided to the child or young person accords with the requirements of law and the expectations of the community. The means creating an environment that promotes the conditions necessary to provide effective services for and prevent harm to children and young people.
Emergency Care: Emergency care is provided when an initial assessment results in an immediate recommendation for placement. This recommendation may be for safety reasons, e.g. removal of a child following allegations of abuse or neglect, a family crisis or homelessness.

Exceed numbers: Families SA term used for a foster family caring for more than three children. The Family and Community Services Act 1972 states the legislative requirement of, ‘A foster parent is not permitted to have more than three foster children in his or her care unless the children are all of the same family, or unless the Chief Executive Officer is of the opinion that special reasons exist for permitting a greater number.’ - Section 43(3).

Facilities License: License for residential care facilities to provide alternative care services for Families SA.

Family Contact: Any form of contact between the child or young person and their birth family, including face to face contact, and contact by telephone or letter.

Foster Care: The care of a child who is living apart from his or her natural or adoptive parent(s) in a private household with one or more adults who act as substitute parents. The substitute parents, normally referred to as foster carers are paid a regular subsidy for the child’s support by Families SA.

Foster Carer: A foster carer is an approved and trained person (not being a guardian or relative of a child) who, with the assistance of a regular subsidy, provides care and support for a child or young person in their own home. Also known as a foster parent. A foster carer from the Aboriginal community may also be referred to as a ‘community carer’.

Guardianship: Where assessed to be necessary the Families SA allocated Social Worker makes a submission to the court to have a child or young person come under the Guardianship of the Minister for Families and Communities. The Minister delegates the duties of the guardian to the Families SA Supervisor. Orders can be for 12-months or up to 18 years of age.

Legislation: For the purposes of this document there are three main Acts providing the legal mandate for the delivery of services to children, young people and families. These are: the Children’s Protection Act 1993, Family and Community Services Act 1972, Adoptions Act 1988 and Young Offenders Act 1993.
**Long Term Care:** The placement of children and young people who are in need of long term alternative care with care providers. The care providers must be assessed and trained by the alternative care service provider (ACSP) and then approved by Families SA. The intention of this care is to promote long-term placement stability for the child or young person where reunification is assessed as not possible.

**Placement Authority:** Provides the authority for a child or young person to be placed in alternative care. There are a range of authorities that come under this category including: Voluntary Custody Agreement (facilitated through Families SA), Juvenile Justice Order (such as a Bail or Obligation), Family Care Meeting Agreement and Custody and Guardianship Orders (court ordered - see Guardianship).

**Placement Checklist:** A tool used by the foster carer and caseworkers to ensure carers have all the information required to care for the child or young person due to come into placement.

**Placement Support Worker:** The worker in the Alternative Care Service Provider agency who is responsible for supporting the carer(s) in caring for a child and/or young person.

**Registration and Licensing:** Registration and Licensing is responsible under requirements of the Family and Community Services Act, 1972 for registration of carers and licensing of foster care agencies and facilities in South Australia. Registration and Licensing has the central quality assurance role through screening, assessment and approval of foster and relative carers and informal respite services as well as through assessment of appropriateness of foster care agencies and facilities.

**Relative Care:** The placement of children and young people in need of care, with relatives or with any person held to be related to the child according to Aboriginal kinship rules, or Torres Strait Islander kinship rules. Where this process has been formalised through Families SA relative carers will be approved by Families SA and will be provided a regular allowance for the care of the child or young person.

**Request to Exceed Placement Numbers:** Carers are approved to care for a certain number of children and young people up to a maximum of three. Where an Alternative Care Service Provider wants to place above the approved number a request to exceed placement numbers must be approved by Placement Services Manager and or in some cases Director level.
Respite Care: Alternative care placements that are provided on a planned temporary basis. Respite may occur from the birth family as a means to support the sustainability of the child or young person within the family or from a foster/relative carer in order to sustain the placement.

Review: A Carer Review is completed annually to ensure that the carer approval status is appropriate, that the carer is able to meet standards of care and the motivation for fostering is suitable.

Reunification: Families SA recognises the following definition:

The planned process of reconnecting children in out-of-home care with their families by means of a variety of services and supports to the children, their families and their foster parents or other service providers. It aims to help each child and family to achieve and maintain, at any given time, their optimal level of re-connection - from full re-entry into the family system to other forms of contact, such as visiting, that affirm the child’s membership in his or her family. (Pine, Warsh and Maluccio, 1993)

Service Agreement: This is a document that reflects the Parties’ commitment to a relationship in which both have rights and responsibilities that are upheld and respected. A business contract or agreement that provides the costs for the services, key performance indicators and reporting requirements.

Short Term Care: The placement of children and young people in need of short term care with care providers. The short term placement may be used while the longer term plans for the child or young person are being determined (i.e. reunification).

Special Needs Loading (SNL): There are two types of loading made to foster carers over and above the standard carer loading: 1) Physical/Intellectual and 2) High Intervention. Loadings are for children with physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, medical problems or significant behavioral problems.

The Physical/Intellectual Needs (Special Needs) Loading In situations of significant physical or intellectual disability, this loading can be applied to the regular subsidy to offset the extra hidden and direct costs associated with the care of such a child. The extent and complexity of the child’s special needs is the essential element in determining the need for a loading.
**The High Intervention Needs Loading** is for children and young people who do not have a diagnosed physical/intellectual disability, but who do exhibit emotional and behavioral problems that generate continuing behavior management problems for the carer.

These loadings are normally reviewed annually. The rate of loading may rise or fall in accordance with any alterations to the child’s/young person’s assessed level of need.

**Stakeholders:** For the purpose of this document the primary stakeholders are children and young people, carers, Alternative Care Service Providers, Agency Support Workers, Families SA caseworkers. Other stakeholders may include the child or young person’s birth family, mentors, education workers, therapists, health workers, disability workers and other advocates.

**Statutory Responsibility:** Statutory responsibility is the delegated legal responsibility of Department for Families and Communities - Families SA to ensure a reasonable standard of care for children and young people for whom the Minister for Families and Communities has guardianship or custody as prescribed in the relevant acts (see Legislation)

**Statutory Annual Review:** A statutory requirement (see Statutory Responsibility) for the Families SA Supervisor to ensure that an annual case review takes place for all children and young people under Guardianship of the Minister to 18 years of age.