

# Links



Government of South Australia  
Department for Education and  
Child Development

Families SA | Foster and Kinship Carers Newsletter

Issue 17 2016



**FOSTER & KINSHIP  
CARERS DINNER**

**New location: National Wine  
Centre Australia**

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### Contact:

decdfamilies@sa.gov.au

## WELCOME MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



As parents, we make many decisions for our kids on a daily basis – everything from what they take for school lunches and whether they can sleep over at a friend's house, to bigger decisions such as whether they need medical treatment.

For foster and kinship families, some of these decisions can be more complicated and involve other people in the process. Knowing who can make those decisions can be confusing.

To better guide foster and kinship carers through these decisions, Families SA has recently updated the consents and decisions information booklet.

Who Can Say Ok – Making Decisions About Children In Care is a useful go-to guide for navigating the day-to-day and the not-so-common decisions affecting children in care. The update includes new information on emerging areas like social media, body piercing and changes to laws that may affect children in care, as well as simple, more flexible travel policies presented in a clearer layout and with clearer language.

The booklet also provides a single shared resource for both carers and Families SA staff, which means we are all working from the same information, and decisions are transparent and consistent.

A vital part of the update of this booklet was feedback from you – our all-important carers. Your input – as the people living the day-to-day experience of foster caring – was essential to making the booklet a better and more useful resource for all carers.

You devote a lot of time and energy to ensuring the children in your care can lead a pretty 'normal' life with all the usual day-to-day activities other kids enjoy.

I hope you find this booklet supports you better by providing easy and clear explanations of who can say ok.

Thank you for giving your time to provide feedback, and thank you for all you do for the kids in your care.

**Susan Close**

Minister for Education and Child Development

## MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE – CHILD PROTECTION



You will have read on the front page about the new-look, updated 'consents and decisions' booklet. We hope you find it more informative and easier to use than the previous version – please do send us your suggestions or feedback so that we can continue to improve our content to make your lives a little easier. In particular the inclusion of some modern-day issues are important additions to the booklet.

I am also pleased to report that our work to increase other-person guardianship orders is making progress.

Other person guardianship (OPG) means that eligible carers can become the legal guardian of the child or children in their care, giving carers the day-to-day parenting responsibility and decision-making authority.

Work is underway to improve our current processes and practices so we can give more vulnerable children the benefit of safe and stable homes.

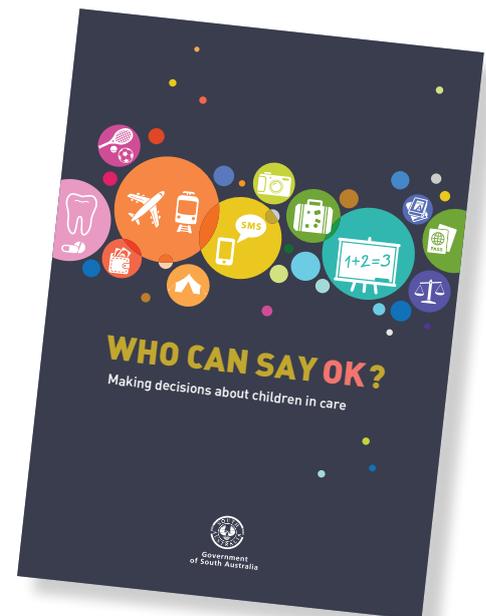
Thank you to all of you who provided feedback on current OPG practices. Your feedback is valuable and will contribute to improving the program.

You can find further information on OPG at [www.families.sa.gov.au](http://www.families.sa.gov.au).

A new campaign will soon be launched to encourage South Australians to consider fostering a child. Research shows that people are more likely to consider and enquire about fostering after hearing from carers. You can help by referring friends and family to the website [www.fostercare.sa.gov.au](http://www.fostercare.sa.gov.au)

Thank you for your continued commitment to children and young people in your care.

**Etienne Scheepers**  
Office for Child Protection



Available at [www.families.sa.gov.au](http://www.families.sa.gov.au)

## PROTOCOL SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENT LIVING

An operational protocol has been developed to ensure agencies work together to provide quality services and support to young people aged 15 to 25 as they transition from living under the guardianship of the minister to independent adult living.

The protocol is an agreement between Housing SA, Families SA, Disability Services and Disability SA.

It aims to ensure early planning occurs for young people exiting guardianship in relation to their housing and support needs.

If you have a young person in your care aged between 15 to 17 years, please discuss with your Families SA case worker how the protocol may help their transition planning.

## MORE THAN 13,500 BOOKS DELIVERED TO CHILDREN IN CARE

Since the Read to Me project launched in October last year, more than 13,500 books have been delivered to children under the age of 5 in South Australia.

The Read to Me Project was established by Raising Literacy Australia under the Little Big Book Club to support children aged 0 to 5 years who have been placed in out-of-home. The initiative is designed to help children develop literacy skills and languages. Children receive an initial start-up library featuring:

- 10 picture/board books
- a 'Read to Me book bag
- a DVD – rolemodelling reading practices and a 1-hour of book readings
- an activity/information booklet for carers.

Every 3 months children receive an additional 3 books to supplement their home library, along with specially designed activities that complement the books.

There is no cost to carers for the books and resources and distribution of the packs is managed by Families SA to maintain the privacy of all children and families.

For more information on the project you can contact Michelle from Raising Literacy Australia Inc on phone **8362 6066** or by email [michelle.littleboy@raisingliteracy.org.au](mailto:michelle.littleboy@raisingliteracy.org.au)

**Please consider participating in a survey to support the future development and expansion of this important project by visiting their website [www.littlebigbookclub.com.au/read-to-me](http://www.littlebigbookclub.com.au/read-to-me)**



## FOSTER MUM BRIMMING WITH PRIDE

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### **Pam Kent is one proud foster mum.**

Her foster daughter Rachel Jackson has been named a finalist in the prestigious South Australian Training Awards, for her commitment and dedication to her studies.

For 19-year-old Rachel, life has been challenging.

From the age of 12 she was placed in a number of foster homes, before living independently from 16 years of age through Muggy's Accommodation.

Rachel was initially placed with Pam for 4 months. At that time Rachel was in primary school and Pam was her school principal. Due to work commitments, Pam was unable to offer full-time care for Rachel but she continued to provide interim care, guidance and support as a stable role model.

Pam encouraged Rachel to study and enrol in the Jobs for Youth program where she successfully gained a traineeship, working in Families SA doing administrative work in child protection.

"I'm so pleased for Rachel, as she deserves recognition. She's shown impressive qualities of resilience, evident in her determination to better herself at every opportunity. This is proven through her current studies in Certificate III in Business and Certificate III Government, and in her strong commitment to her work at Families SA," said Pam.

"Being shortlisted for this award is an acknowledgement of her commitment to her studies. Rachel has faced extraordinary challenges all her life, and truly deserves success."

Rachel said she wants to be a positive role model for other young people to believe in themselves and to reach their full potential.

"I want young people to know that regardless of what life throws at you, you can aspire to achieve positive things in life," Rachel said.

*"I'm so pleased for Rachel, as she deserves recognition. She's shown impressive qualities of resilience, evident in her determination to better herself at every opportunity. This is proven through her current studies in Certificate III in Business and Certificate III Government, and in her strong commitment to her work at Families SA."*