Child Safety
POLICY

Title: Responding to concerns about the standards of care  
Policy No. 326-8

Policy Statement:
The Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (Child Safety) has a legislative responsibility to ensure children in care are cared for in a way that meets the statement of standards (Child Protection Act 1999, section 122) and the Charter of Rights for a Child in Care (Child Protection Act 1999, Schedule 1).

Child Safety has a responsibility to provide support to foster and kinship carers, provisionally approved carers and licensed care services, to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities under the Child Protection Act 1999. Child Safety will monitor the standard of care provided to children through proactive case work and support to address concerns and issues as they arise and prevent concerns from continuing or escalating.

Where concerns are raised that indicate that the standard of care provided to a child in care may not have been met, Child Safety will respond by conducting a standard of care review. Where concerns indicate that a child in care has been harmed, or it is suspected that a child has been harmed, the department will respond by recording a harm report and conducting an investigation and assessment.

When responding to concerns about the standards of care provided to a child in care, including reports of harm, Child Safety will work in a cooperative and supportive manner with carers and licensed care services. Responses to concerns will be undertaken in a sensitive, respectful and timely manner, which promotes the continuity of the child’s relationships and the stability of the child’s placement, as far as possible.

Children will be kept informed of matters affecting them, in a way and to an extent that is appropriate, having regard to their age and ability to understand. Children will have the opportunity to participate in the decision making that affects their lives.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, responses to concerns will also give consideration to relevant Aboriginal tradition and/or Island custom relating to the child and the Child Placement Principles in relation to the child.

Principles:

- The safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child, both throughout childhood and the rest of the child’s life, are paramount.
- A child has a right to be protected from harm or risk of harm.
• A child has the right to stable living arrangements, including arrangements that provide for the child’s developmental, educational, emotional, health, intellectual and physical needs.
• A child has the right to know, explore and maintain his or her identity and values, including cultural, ethnic and religious identity and values.
• Responses to concerns received about the quality of care provided to a child will be responded to as a matter of priority and within designated timeframes.
• The long-term effect of a decision on an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child’s identity and connection with the child’s family and community will be taken into account in responses to concerns about the quality of care provided to a child.

Objectives:
This policy aims to ensure that:
• the department is actively monitoring the standard of care provided to children in care and responding appropriately when concerns are raised
• the support needs of carers are prioritised and responded to as soon as issues are identified
• the department’s response to concerns about the standard of care provided to a child in care are undertaken in a manner that is collaborative, respectful and supportive, with the overarching aim of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children in care
• decisions made in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children promote their safe care and connection with family, community, culture and country.

Scope:
This policy and associated procedures apply to children who have been placed in care under the authority of the Child Protection Act 1999, section 82(1). It does not apply to:
• children subject to a child protection order granting custody to a member of the child’s family (Child Protection Act 1999, section 61(d))
• children subject to a child protection order granting long-term guardianship to a person other than the chief executive, unless the concerns relate to respite care provided by an approved foster carer or provisionally approved carer (Child Protection Act 1999, section 61(f)).

Roles and Responsibilities:
The roles and responsibilities of staff are outlined in the associated procedures in the Child Safety Practice Manual, Chapter 9.

Authority:
Child Protection Act 1999
Child Protection Regulation 2011

Delegations:
Refer to the instruments of delegation for decisions made under the Child Protection Act 1999.
Records File No.: 12/276/66773
Date of approval: 9 July 2013
Date of operation: 11 July 2013
Date to be reviewed: 11 July 2016 (minor update 18 October 2018)

Office: Operational Support, Child and Family Operations
Help Contact: Operational Support

Links:

Procedures
Child Safety Practice Manual, Chapter 9

Related policies
Carer learning and support (457)
Carer participation (460)
Critical incident reporting (391)
Foster care training (383)
Information exchange and service delivery co-ordination (403)
Participation by children and young people in decision-making (369)
Placement of children in care as part of an integrated child protection response (578)
Response to children and young people sexually abused whilst placed in care (627)
Decisions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people (641)

Related legislation or standard
Child Protection Act 1999
Child Protection Regulation 2011
Statement of Commitment between the Department of Child Safety, foster care services and the carers of Queensland

Rescinded policy
326-7 Assessing and responding to matters of concern

Margaret Allison
Director-General