Policy Statement:
The Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) will provide carers with appropriate opportunities for learning and support to enable them to provide children and young people with a standard of care consistent with the Statement of Standards as outlined in the *Child Protection Act 1999* (the Act).

The term carer within this document refers to approved foster and kinship carers, including provisionally approved carers.

Foster and kinship carers who are granted the long-term guardianship of a child under the Act are **not** approved carers in relation to that child. However, they may be provided with learning and support opportunities specific to the child subject to long-term guardianship, where the guardian requests support in order to maintain the quality and stability of the care arrangement for the child.

Principles:
Principles underpinning the implementation of this policy include:

- The welfare and best interests of a child are paramount.
- By providing all carers with an appropriate level of support, there is an increased likelihood of providing out-of-home care consistent with the principles and legislated standards of the Act and ensuring quality outcomes for children and young people.
- Child Safety Services has a responsibility to provide or ensure the provision of support and effective management processes to enable carers to fulfil their legislative responsibilities under the Act.
- Effective partnerships recognise the unique contribution of each participant and their commitment to and respect of each other.
- All carers have the right to feel supported and to receive support in a timely, consistent way.
- Foster and kinship carers granted the long-term guardianship of a child under the Act will be supported to the extent appropriate in the circumstance, in accordance with departmental policy and procedures, with a view to promoting the ongoing stability of the long-term guardianship care arrangement for the child.
Objectives:
This policy aims to ensure that carers are provided with appropriate opportunities for learning and support and where applicable, meet the legislative requirements associated with their approval under the Act.

Scope:
This policy relates to approved foster and kinship carers, including provisionally approved carers and suitable persons granted the long-term guardianship of a child under the Act.

Roles and Responsibilities:
Direct support to approved carers is provided by Child Safety Services staff, and where applicable, the staff of foster and kinship care services.
The Child Safety Officer for a child is responsible for responding to requests for support by a long-term guardian.

Authority:
Child Protection Act 1999
Child Protection Regulation 2000
Financial Accountability Act 2009

Delegations:
The following officers are able to approve the payment of carer learning and support funds:
Regional Director, Child Safety, Youth and Families
Manager, Child Safety Service Centre
Manager, Child Safety After Hours Service Centre
Senior Practitioner, Child Safety Service Centre
Team Leader
Child Safety Officer
Links:

Procedure
Procedural details to give effect to the policy are set out in the Child Safety Practice Manual, chapter 8 and chapter 3.

Related Policies
Dual payment of carer allowances (289)
High Support Needs Allowance (296)
Complex Support Needs Allowance (612)
Child Related Costs – Carer support (597)
Child Related Costs – Long-term guardian support (608)
Expenses – Fortnightly caring allowance and inter-state foster payments (365)
Placement of children in care as part of an integrated child protection response (578)

Related Legislation or Standards
Child Protection Regulation 2000
Statement of Commitment between the Department of Child Safety, foster care services and the carers of Queensland

Forms
Foster Carer Agreement
Placement Agreement

Rescinded Policy
457-3 Carer Learning and Support

Linda A Apelt
Director-General