PROCEDURE

Title: Carer Participation
Procedure No.: CPD460-3

Purpose
These procedures will direct action regarding carer participation.

Process
- participation in developing and implementing aspects of the case plan for individual children (individual case-level participation as described in the Child Safety Practice Manual)
- participation in developing responsive policies, programs and practice that uphold children’s safety, rights and well-being (systems-level participation).

This policy focuses on processes to support systems-level participation, which is an ongoing process of engagement rather than a one-off event and may be informal or formal.

Informal opportunities for carer participation occur within a carer’s day-to-day contact with Child Safety Services staff and through the deliberate encouragement of opportunities to build positive relationships between carers and staff and carers.

Child Safety Services is committed to providing formal opportunities for carers to participate in the development of policies, programs and practice that impact their role as carers through:
- specific workshops and forums that focus on issues impacting the training, support and resourcing of carers and the partnership arrangements between carers, Child Safety Services, and foster and kinship care services
- engagement in service planning processes facilitated by the Regional Planning and Partnerships Officers
- facilitating their participation in consultation processes
- representation of their ‘voice’ in the Child Protection Statewide Partnerships Taskforce by Foster Care Queensland
- support for the Foster Care Conferences organised by Foster Care Queensland;
- support to ensure Queensland carers are represented in national level foster care conferences and forums and
- regular review of the ‘Statement of Commitment’ between Child Safety Services, foster and kinship care services and carers.

The approach to carer participation in decision-making will vary depending on the decision to be made and its context. The approaches are:
- Consultation – Carers’ views are taken into account. The information carers provide is one source, amongst others, that departmental and foster and kinship care service staff, take into account when making the decision.
• **Deciding Together** – Carers are involved in discussion about the issues and the options with staff of Child Safety Services and foster and kinship care services, and all parties come to an agreed decision. Staff of Child Safety Services and foster and kinship care services are responsible for actioning the decision.

• **Acting Together** - Carers share responsibility for decision-making with staff of Child Safety Services and foster and kinship care services, and for implementing the decision.

• **Supported** – Carers are supported to make autonomous decisions but may require assistance from staff of Child Safety Services and foster and kinship care services to action their decision.

Foster and kinship care services may develop their own mechanisms for carer participation in the development of their services and programs.
Records File No.: <If applicable>  
Date of approval: 19 September 2011  
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Office: Communities, Child Safety, Youth and Families  
Help Contact: Child Protection Development – 3235 9411  

Links  
Policy:  
460-3 - Carer Participation  

Related Legislation or Standard:  
Nil  

Related Government Guidelines:  
Child Safety Practice Manual  
Statement of Commitment between the Department of Child Safety, foster care services and the carers of Queensland  

Related Policy:  
Carer learning and support (457)  

Rescinded Policies/Procedures:  
Policy No. 460-2 Carer Participation  
Policy No. 251-2 Regional foster care committees and local foster care support groups  

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