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Service Stream	Families and Young People Services	Category	Foster and Kinship Care
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Purpose

- The welfare and best interests of children and young people residing in foster and kinship care is paramount.
- Quality foster care services should have respect for and recognition of the importance of ethnic and cultural heritage, religious beliefs and language of children and young people, their families.
- Quality foster and kinship care is 'needs-based, trauma-sensitive, and attachment-focused'. Carers and staff clearly identify, empathetically understand, and respond to the needs of each child/young person, are sensitive to the effects of the trauma they have experienced and seek to develop caring and nurturing relationships to facilitate the healing process.
- Equal opportunities and valuing diversity – children and young people, and their families, are provided with foster and kinship care which values diversity and promotes equality.
- Assessment of the child's or young person's needs – an assessment of the child's or young person's needs is made prior to any placement, communicated to all parties concerned and updated regularly. The depth and type of assessment undertaken is determined by the funding level and program type detailed in the Service Agreement.

Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, volunteers, and contractors engaged within Foster and Kinship Care (FKC) programs across Mercy Community (MC) Families and Young People Services (FYPS).

This procedure relates to general FKC placements, Intensive Intervention Placement Support (IIPS), High Plus support (HP), and Intensive Foster and Kinship Care (IFKC) programs.

Procedure

1. Child and young person induction – overview

- 1.1 A sensitive induction of children into a new placement is important for placement success and longevity.
- 1.2 Within general FKC services, the induction of children is primarily undertaken by the carer. MC has a responsibility to educate carers about how to best induct a child and ensure that they have appropriate resources to undertake this.
- 1.3 Within the IIPS, HP, and IFKC programs, the allocated FKC Practitioner (FKCP) will provide an additional induction for the young person.
- 1.4 MC FKCPs will work with carers to ensure that the delivery of an induction occurs in an age-appropriate manner. In some instances, this includes undertaking the induction process in partnership.

2. Induction to children and young people in general foster care placements

- 2.1 Where a child/young person is being placed in a general foster care placement, MC requests that the carer gives the child/young person a basic induction. This includes information about:
 - The MC program;
 - How to make a complaint;

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- Privacy matters; and
 - The Statement of Standards of Care;
 - The Time in Care Information Access Service offered by the Department of Child Safety, Seniors, and Disability Services (the Department) (including provision of the *Department's TICIAS Information Sheet*); and
 - The rights of children and young people (including provision of the child-friendly *Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) The Big Banter Children's Rights Information Flyer* based on the Convention of the Rights of a Child).
- 2.2 MC will provide a bookmark with organisational information to all MC carers to pass on to all children and young people placed with them, to ensure they are immediately informed of important information about MC.
- 2.3 It is crucial that this information is conveyed in a way that the child or young person can understand. It may be appropriate to convey this information over the first few days of the child's placement. Depending on the age of the child or young person, it may also be appropriate to provide MC brochures and other documentation.

3. Induction to children and young people in IIPS, HP, and IFKC placements

- 3.1 Children and young people who are supported by IIPS or HP will have more interactions with MC FKCPs. It is, therefore, appropriate that the allocated FKCP conduct an induction with children or young people supported by these services.
- 3.2 Upon commencement of the IIPS, HP or IFKC service, the allocated FKCP will arrange a home visit with both the carer/s and the child or young person to be in attendance. During this visit, the allocated FKCP will discuss with the child:
- The IIPS, HP or IFKC program information and how this is relevant (including the provision of a service brochure);
 - The MC complaints process (including the provision of the *MC Feedback and Complaints Brochure*);
 - The MC privacy policy (including the provision of the *MC Privacy Brochure* or the youth equivalent);
 - The Time in Care Information Access Service offered by the Department (including provision of the *Department's TICIAS Information Sheet*);
 - The rights of children and young people (including provision of the child friendly *AHRC The Big Banter Children's Rights Information Flyer* based on the Convention of the Rights of a Child);
 - Their rights to appeal decisions that are made about their care (including provision of the *Children in Care GFORCE Fact Sheet*); and
 - Any other documentation/information considered necessary.
- 3.3 The allocated FKCP completing the induction will record this in a *Case Note* on the child's Service File.

4. Records management

- 4.1 All evidence of induction will be recorded in a *Case Note* in the child or young person's file, linked to the carer's file.
- 4.2 A copy of any signed documents will be attached to the child or young person's file in relevant Service Events.
- 4.3 All documentation is to be uploaded to Penelope CMS within ten (10) working days. Where uploading is anticipated to take longer than this, FKCP Practitioners must negotiate this with their Line Manager.

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4.4 Refer to the *FS IP FKC Document Filing Guide* for further guidance on CMS recordkeeping requirements and naming conventions.

Definitions

Foster and Kinship Care Practitioner (FKCP)

The employee who has been delegated by the Line Manager to undertake specific case management or placement support tasks.

Line Manager

Employees with supervisory and program management responsibilities within the foster and kinship care service.

Regional Director (RD)

The manager with overall finance and program management responsibilities, who is a member of the leadership team.

References

AHRC The Big Banter Children's Rights Information Flyer (child-friendly)
Children in Care GFORCE Fact Sheet
Departmental Child Safety Practice Manual (CSPM)
Departmental TICIAS Information Sheet
FS DOC FKC Program Overview
FS IP FKC Document Filing Guide
MC Privacy Brochure
MC Feedback and Complaints Brochure

Related Documents

Penelope Forms:

Case Note

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