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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.
- Foster care and care management practices are child-centered and family-focused.
- Children and young people need to be cared for within a healthy family environment that is characterised by 'positive-parenting-practices', including: structure and routine; reasonable rules, expectations and age-appropriate limits; guidance, support and encouragement; positive reinforcement; with fair, consistent, and reasonable discipline, and demonstrating tolerance for normal and/or symptomatic behaviour.
- Respect for foster carers as partners together with other professionals in the fostering team is critical, as is the provision of ongoing information, training, support and supervision.
- A safe and positive environment – the foster/kinship care home provides a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for the child or young person, in compliance with the 'Statement of Standards', *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)*.
- Safe caring – each child or young person in foster/kinship care is free from physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect or exploitation whilst in a foster care placement.

Scope

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

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

Procedure

1. Pre-service training – overview

- 1.1 Pre-service training comprises the first four (4) modules of the *Getting Ready to Start Training (GRTS)*, required by the Department of Child Safety, Seniors, and Disability Services (the Department) to be undertaken by all potential general foster carers. Whilst this is highly recommended and will be offered to all potential carers, this training is not mandatory for kinship carers.
- 1.2 Pre-service training occurs prior to a foster carer assessment. It serves to introduce potential foster carers to the basic principles of providing foster care, while also providing an avenue of assessment of the potential carer's capacity to meet the Statement of Standards of Care.
- 1.3 Pre-service training is delivered by MC workers and will be delivered in ways that meet the various learning styles of individuals. At times, pre-service training may be facilitated in partnership with other agencies.
- 1.4 Attendance at pre-service training is no guarantee that the potential foster carer will progress to the assessment stage.
- 1.5 Workers will provide potential carers with realistic and respectful feedback regarding their attendance at pre-service training.
- 1.6 Pre-service training and GRTS is used interchangeably and refers to the same training. This training was formerly known as "Quality Care Training" (QCT).

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- 1.7 Where a potential foster carer has previously been an approved carer, either with MC or with another organisation, Foster and Kinship Care Practitioners (FKCPs), in consultation with their Line Manager, will use their discretion when assessing the carer's requirement to recomplete the pre-service training. Where it has been over twelve (12) months since the date of attainment, it is best practice to request the carer to successfully recomplete the pre-service training or alternatively recomplete the assessment worksheets. Regional protocols will apply. Where it has been twelve (12) months or less since the date of attainment, FKCPs will use their discretion and consult with their Line Manager, if required.
- 1.8 Assessment and decision-making for either outcome must be clearly documented in *Case Notes*.

2. Pre-service training content

- 2.1 Pre-Service training is prescribed by the Department as part of the foster carer *GRTS* curriculum. It comprises of four sessions with each session having an assessment element attached.
- 2.2 When MC employees deliver the Department training package exclusively to potential MC carers, MC organisational policies may be explored in these sessions. Allocated FKCPs will liaise with their Line Manager and the Practice Development Team regarding the current curriculum to ensure that all appropriate information is included.
- 2.3 In exceptional circumstances, the Department may award Recognition of Prior Learning credit to a potential carer in place of attendance at pre-service training. Where the Department has advised that this is to occur, MC will honour this. This advice will be obtained in writing from the Department and attached to the Training Service Event.

3. Preparing for pre-service training

- 3.1 Delivery of pre-service training is generally planned for in the *Annual Training Calendar* but may occur outside of this at the discretion of the Line Manager. This training may be delivered by MC staff or outsourced to Social Care Solutions.
- 3.2 Where delivered internally, at least two (2) FKCPs will be allocated the delivery of a pre-service training course. In exceptional circumstances, the Line Manager may allocate this training delivery to an individual MC worker. Where possible, it is recommended that at least one (1) worker is a Practice Development Facilitator.
- 3.3 MC's GRTS package contains all required material in the GRTS Curriculum. The Practice Development Team is responsible for monitoring the currency of MC's GRTS and adjusting as necessary.
- 3.4 Allocated FKCPs will ensure that the most recent MC GRTS package is obtained from the Practice Development Team. Allocated FKCPs must liaise with their Line Manager and the Practice Development Team regarding the inclusion of any additional content.
- 3.5 After conducting an initial expressions of interest (EOI) intake call and completing the Departmental *Form 1*, the allocated FKCP will liaise with their Line Manager regarding who is considered appropriate to attend the training and determine a final list of potential attendees. These potential attendees will be given an invitation to attend the training that includes:
 - The location of the training and details of how the potential attendee can access the training facility (including public transport links, parking, disability access and any other entry information);
 - What the potential attendee will be required to bring with them; and

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- The start and estimated end time of the training.
- 3.6 A number of other administrative tasks must be undertaken prior to the delivery of the training, including:
 - Ensuring the training room is booked;
 - Organising catering if required;
 - Printing off required training resources (e.g., training folders, handouts, training attendance forms, etc.);
 - Ensuring training resources are booked/obtained (e.g., laptop, projector, etc.);
 - Inviting a Departmental representative to attend the training; and
 - Inviting a current foster carer to attend the training as a support.

4. Delivery of pre-service training

- 4.1 GRTS is designed to be delivered in a face-to-face group setting. Each training cohort is different, therefore MC workers facilitating this training should consider:
 - The size of the group;
 - The varying learning styles of the individuals in the group and the resources that may be required for this; and
 - The time, place and frequency of the training delivered.
- 4.2 All trainers must have successfully completed *GRTS Orientation Training*. In line with Departmental requirements to satisfy the assessable component of the course, the key trainer must have a current Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment or have been determined by their Line Manager to have equivalent qualifications based on the following considerations:
 - The individual's prior training and assessment experience;
 - Other training and educational qualifications;
 - Be deemed as also having adequate knowledge of, and experience working in, the child protection system; and
 - Should have the skills and knowledge required to deliver the training and assessment in the child protection sector.

The Line Manager's assessment of the allocated key trainer's capability to delivery GRTS will be documented in a *HR FORM Case Note* and uploaded to the *Training* tab of the allocated worker's file.
- 4.3 Experienced foster carers are invited to support the trainers during the panel section of session 3 of the GRTS, to provide practical examples.
- 4.4 During the first training session, attendees will be provided with a folder which will include:
 - Pre-service training worksheets;
 - A copy of training handouts;
 - Personal reflections; and
 - Any other documents required for the training.
- 4.5 Attendees are required to record their details on the *Training Attendance Record* and sign this during each subsequent session. These records are saved centrally by the Practice Development Team in the relevant S Drive folder.
- 4.6 Assessment activities are conducted throughout the GRTS, as outlined in the *Quality Care* curriculum. As is appropriate, training attendees will receive support from trainers to complete this assessment.

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5. Assessment during pre-service training

- 5.1 Trainers should take every opportunity during the GRTS training to assess the carer/s' capacity to meet the Statement of Standards (s122 of the *Child Protection Act, 1999 (Qld)*).
- 5.2 Over the course of the GRTS, the trainers will complete a *Participation Feedback Record*, which informs the potential carer/s' initial assessment. Both trainers will collaborate on this record although only one record needs to be completed.
- 5.3 At times, it may become apparent during the training that the potential carer will not be appropriate to progress to the assessment stage. Where this occurs, the trainer will discuss with the line manager following the session and raise the concerns with the potential applicant and, if appropriate, the Department.
- 5.4 All carer-specific information will be filed in the Training Service Event in the carer's Service File.

6. Concluding pre-service training

- 6.1 Following the completion of the four (4) training modules, carers will provide trainers with all completed assessment documentation. This assessment documentation is graded as outlined by the Department.
- 6.2 After the assessment has been graded, the attendee will be considered either competent or not competent.
- 6.3 If the training attendee is assessed as competent, the trainer completes the *Departmental Pre-Service Training Record of Attendance and Competency Outcome Form* and sends the attendee a *Departmental Statement of Achievement Certificate*. Copies of these documents will be uploaded to the Training Service Event.
- 6.4 Trainers will inform the designated program management and Business Support team of attendees assessed as competent so required application and probity documentation can be provided (as per each site's local processes).
- 6.5 The designated program management team will change the carer 'Status' to 'Pending' and, if required, a carer profile for other members of the 'Carer Entity' is created.
- 6.6 Upon receipt of completed application and probity documentation the line manager will arrange for lodgement of the paperwork with the Department, as per local protocols, and allocate the assessment to a FKCP.
- 6.7 If competency is not met, the trainer/s and/or allocated FKCP will meet with the attendee to discuss the issues that prevented the attendee from achieving competency. The attendee will be given the option to:
 - Be supported by the agency to meet the competency requirements;
 - Withdraw from the assessment and approval process; or
 - Withdraw from the MC program and liaise with the local PS.
- 6.8 All of the attendee's personal documentation is collated and filed on the attendee's Training Service Event. If the attendee is not progressing to the assessment stage, the Service File will be closed by the allocated Business Support Officer (BSO).

7. Records management

- 7.1 All documentation pertaining to attendees will be filed under a Training Service Event in each attendee's file. The allocated FKCP is responsible to ensure that training

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	certificates and relevant marked homework is provided to the Business Support team for upload.
7.2	Any other information can be entered into the attendee's file under <i>Case Notes</i> .
7.3	<i>Participation Feedback Records, Attendance Records</i> and any other general training information (which may include curriculum and assessment templates) are stored centrally by the Practice and Development Team within the relevant S Drive Folder.
7.4	All documentation is to be uploaded to Penelope within ten (10) working days. Where uploading is anticipated to take longer than this, FKCPs must negotiate this with their Line Manager.
7.5	Refer to the <i>FS IP FKC Document Filing Guide</i> 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 fostering service.

Regional Director (RD)

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

References

Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)

Department's Child Safety Practice Manual (available online at <https://cspm.csyw.qld.gov.au/>)

Department's Quality Care: Foster Care Training (available online at www.childsafety.qld.gov.au)

Departmental Form 1

Departmental Pre-Service Training Record of Attendance and Competency Outcome Form

FS DOC FKC Program Overview

FS IP FKC Document Filing Guide

FS PROC FKC Carer Assessment and Approval

GOV POL Privacy

Related Documents

Penelope Forms:

Case Note

Participation Feedback Record

Training Attendance Record

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