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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
- Actions taken, whilst in the best interest of children and young people, seek to maintain family relationships and cultural connections.
- Continuity in the lives of children and young people in foster and kinship care is critical for psychosocial wellbeing. All efforts are taken to maintain continuity of relationships with family, friends, schools and communities that the child/young person has previous links to.
- Matching carers with children or young people – each child or young person placed in foster and kinship care is carefully matched with a carer capable of meeting her or his assessed needs and meets foster carer family agreed placement category as documented in carer agreements.

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 support (HP) programs.

Procedure

1. Kinship carer recruitment - overview

- 1.1 In line with the *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)*, MC is committed to the exploration of alternative placement options that see the child or young person placed most appropriately.
- 1.2 Kinship carer recruitment is to be continually considered throughout the child or young person's time in foster care. Workers should discuss potential kinship care options with child or young person regularly and sensitively.
- 1.3 Kinship carers can include:
 - Relatives of the child or young person;
 - Close friends; or
 - Members of the child or young person's community.
- 1.4 Potential kinship carer options may also be explored by the Department of Child Safety, Seniors, and Disability Services (the Department).
- 1.5 Kinship care placements can serve as the child or young person's primary or respite/short break placement, depending on the child or young person's needs.

2. Identifying potential kinship care placements

- 2.1 There are several sources of information that might inform whether an individual might be an appropriate kinship carer for the child or young person. These include:
 - Referral information;
 - Departmental file information;

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- MC file information;
- Discussions with the child or young person;
- Discussions with the current carer;
- Discussions with the Child Safety Officer (CSO); and
- Discussions with other family members and stakeholders.

2.2 Workers will discuss any potential kinship carer options with the child or young person's CSO to ensure that there are no issues/information that might preclude the placement option from being progressed. The *Ecomap Exploration Tool* will be used to document any investigation into potential kinship care options. The allocated Foster and Kinship Care Practitioner will attach this in the child or young person's Penelope Service File. For IIPS and HP children or young people, assessment into potential kinship support will be recorded on the child's Penelope file under an Initial Assessment Service File.

2.3 When exploring whether an individual might be an appropriate kinship carer, consideration is given to:

- The wishes of the child or young person in relation to potential placement;
- The individual's capacity and willingness to meet the Statement of Standards of Care;
- The type of placement that the individual could reasonably provide;
- The individual's ability to progress through an Application for Approval;
- The individual's capacity to obtain a Blue Card;
- The physical environment and whether this would meet the standards outlined in the Household Safety Study;
- The individual's willingness to participate in training and development; and
- The individual's willingness to partner with MC and the Department.

2.4 If, after consideration of the above, the worker and potential kinship carer wish to pursue the carer approval process, refer to *FS PROC FKC Carer Assessments and Approval*.

3. Records management

- 3.1 All documentation regarding the exploration of potential kinship carer placements must be filed in the relevant Service Events on the child or young person's Penelope file.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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 fostering service.

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References

Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)
Departmental Child Safety Practice Manual (CSPM)
Departmental How to become a kinship carer, available online at:
<https://www.qld.gov.au/community/caring-child/foster-kinship-care/foster-kinship-care-become-a-carer/how-to-become-a-kinship-carer>
FS DOC FKC Program Overview
FS IP FKC Document Filing Guide
FS PROC FKC Carer Assessments and Approval

Related Documents

Penelope Forms:

Ecomap Exploration Tool

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