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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 and kinship care is a partnership embracing parents and children, carers and their families, Department of Child Safety, Seniors, and Disability Services (the Department) staff, and other stakeholders and Mercy Community (MC) workers – all planning and working in the best interest of the child.
- 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)*.

Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, volunteers and contractors engaged within Foster and Kinship Care (FKC) programs across MC's Families and Young People Services (FYPS). This procedure relates to general FKC placements, Intensive Intervention Placement Support (IIPS) and High Plus (HP) programs.

Procedure

1. Carer training and development – overview

- 1.1 Carer training and development is an ongoing process that is informed by emergent issues and incidents, assessed needs and the ongoing needs of children and young people placed.
- 1.2 Training and development of foster carers occurs through ongoing support and monitoring (see *FS PROC FKC Carer Support and Monitoring*) as well as through formal training avenues.
- 1.3 This procedure does not address pre-service training requirements (see *FS PROC FKC Pre-Service Quality Care Training*).
- 1.4 MC is responsible for facilitating or referring out to training courses that will benefit and develop carers supported by the agency. This is best undertaken in partnership with the Department and, where appropriate, partner agencies.
- 1.5 MC workers will regularly consult with the Department regarding the training requirements for kinship carers and encourage these carers to access training as much as possible.
- 1.6 Training delivered by MC will be delivered in a way that meets the different learning styles of carers.
- 1.7 Where carers not supported by MC are attending training delivered by MC, a copy of the attendance certificate, and any of the carer's training documentation (including homework or activity sheets) is forwarded to the carer's regular support agency.
- 1.8 Where MC is co-delivering training with another agency, the MC worker conducting this training will obtain a copy of any attendance records and training evaluations and upload this into the sites Shared Drive (S:) under the 'Training' folder.

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Approval Date	02 Jan 2024	Implementation Date	02 Jan 2024	Review Date	02 Jan 2026
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2. Training calendars

- 2.1 Each service will regularly develop and publish an *Annual Training Calendar* which will outline:
 - Compulsory training being facilitated by MC (including *Quality Care* modules);
 - Non-compulsory training being facilitated by MC; and
 - Other training courses offered to carers (including whether the cost is covered by MC).
- 2.2 The Line Manager will have final approval of the training calendar to ensure that required resources can be met.
- 2.3 Each local service will develop a protocol for circulating this training calendar and clearly communicating any changes to scheduled events.

3. Compulsory training requirements

- 3.1 Within the first year of approval, foster carers are required to complete the three (3) 'Standard Training' modules of the Department's Getting Ready to Start Training. The curriculum for these modules can be found on the Department's website.
- 3.2 After the first year of approval, it is compulsory for carers to complete at least two (2) modules of the Starting Out Training within the next approval period. Starting Out training is also accompanied by Water Safety Awareness and Hope and Healing training.
- 3.3 MC will reasonably support the carer's attendance at compulsory training, by:
 - Ensuring that adequate training events are delivered at reasonable dates/times (e.g. during school hours);
 - Ensuring training calendars are published with ample time for carers to make attendance arrangements; and
 - As appropriate, supporting carers to seek child minding.

4. Carer development

- 4.1 As part of the *Foster Carer Agreement*, all carers must have an individual Development and Support Plan which outlines training goals during the approval period. Allocated Foster and Kinship Care Practitioners (FKCPs) will use this as a guide when planning training and support for carers.
- 4.2 Training needs may become apparent in response to emergent issues, including:
 - Specific needs of children or young people placed with the carer;
 - Needs identified in a Standards of Care review; or
 - Needs discussed during a *Foster Carer Agreement* review; and
 - Needs identified by the carer, the allocated worker or the Department.
- 4.3 At times, emergent issues may arise that suggest a need for either an individual carer or group of carers. In these instances, allocated FKCPs will source appropriate support or training options to address this emergent need. Where this requires resourcing, the allocated FKCP will liaise with their Line Manager.
- 4.4 Line Managers will also liaise with the Department regarding any legislative, policy or process changes that might affect foster carers and determine whether these changes are most appropriately conveyed through formal training or other means.
- 4.5 Where a carer has been approved to attend a specialised external training event, and MC is supporting this financially, this information is added to a Training Service

Approved By: FKC Regional Directors and FYP Quality Practice Director

Approval Date	02 Jan 2024	Implementation Date	02 Jan 2024	Review Date	02 Jan 2026
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Event as a *Case Note*. Any additional documents such as a certificate of attendance or competency can be uploaded to Attachments within the same Service Event.

5. Inviting carers to training

- 5.1 FKCPs will invite carers to all relevant training events being offered by MC. These invitations will be informed by the worker's ongoing support of the carer.
- 5.2 A *Case Note* must be recorded on the carer's Assessment and Approval Service file of any training invitation (including any follow-up invitation correspondence) and, where appropriate, the invitation can be inserted as a JPEG into the *Case Note* or alternatively added as an attachment to the same Training Service Event
- 5.3 Any correspondence from the carer, including confirmation or declining of training attendance is to be recorded in the Training Service Event.

6. Recording internal training in Penelope

- 6.1 Internal training being offered by MC can be recorded in Penelope, with RSVPs and attendance showing on each carers' file.
- 6.2 To book training in Penelope, it is necessary to add the training package first in the *Group List*, adding details about the Group name (training session), type, description, attendance limit, site location and allocated MC trainer. Additionally, the trainer will add Attendees to the training under the 'Members' tab.
- 6.3 To book individual dates of training, the trainer will select '*Book new*' and specify the Event date, time, duration and whether there is a video link for the training.
- 6.4 Refer to the Penelope Training Workflow on the MercyNet Portal for step-by-step instructions.

7. Records management

- 7.1 Any discussions about training, including invitations to attend training, must be documented in the *Case Note* or *Home Visit Record* documents .
- 7.2 An *Annual Training Calendar* will be maintained by each site and will include all details of training courses offered to carers. This will be uploaded into individual sites Shared Drive (S:) folder under 'Training'.
- 7.3 Where carers attend a training course delivered by MC, a training certificate will be awarded to the carer, with a copy of this placed in the carer's Assessment and Approval Service File in the Training Service Event.
- 7.4 Where carers attend training delivered externally, a copy of the attendance certificate, or proof of attendance, will be sought from the carer and attached to their file in the Training Service Event. Where no certificate is available, the allocated FKCP will complete a *Case Note* instead.
- 7.5 Any 'homework' or 'training activities' completed by carers/applicants and reviewed by the allocated FKCP or trainer is to be uploaded to the Training Service Event. For competency based training, file the completed and corrected worksheets, certificates and any other relevant documents in the same location.
- 7.6 Where the Department requests evidence of training completion, the carer will be notified of this request and this will be provided.
- 7.7 *Training Evaluations* are collated and uploaded to each the carers' Assessment and Approval Service File, in the Training Service Event.
- 7.8 All documentation is to be uploaded to the Penelope CMS or S Drive within ten (10) working days. Where uploading is anticipated to take longer than this, FKCPs must negotiate this with their Line Manager.

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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 for a Foster and Kinship Care program.

Regional Director (RD)

The manager with overall finance and program management responsibilities, who is a member of the FYPS Leadership Team.

References

Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)
 Departmental Child Safety Practice Manual (CSPM)
 FS DOC FKC Program Overview
 FS IP FKC Document Filing Guide
 FS PROC FKC Carer Support and Monitoring
 FS PROC FKC Pre-Service Quality Care Training

Related Documents

Penelope Forms:

Annual Training Plan
 Case Note
 Home Visit Record

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