

## Young People In Care

Young people in care are a diverse group who share a common experience of being unable to live with their parent(s) through no fault of their own. Young people in care may live in a range of places, such as in foster care, in kinship care, group homes or various forms of independent living.<sup>24</sup> Many young people in care face disadvantage that can affect their overall wellbeing. They may experience loss of self esteem and feelings of isolation and shame, particularly when disconnected from their immediate and extended family networks.

It is vital that these young people are supported by workers to have influence over the decisions that affect their lives. Workers must also assist these young people to access sufficient social and community support, so that they can be given the same life opportunities as their peers.

In this section you will find:

- Some tips for supporting young people in care;
- A service for young people in care; and
- Resources including more services, information and a date for your diary.

The following sections also contain resources for young people in care: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Alternative Education, Counselling, Family, Health and Sexual Health, Legal, Mental Health, Peak Body, Some Key Government Services, Youth Support and Youth Support in Secondary Schools.

## Ways of Working

### Supporting Young People in Care

What does it mean to have the ACT Government as parent? In the Out-Of-Home-Care System, the Territory takes on the duties, powers and responsibilities parents normally have by law in relation to their children. This includes personal appearance and grooming; assessment of physical and mental wellbeing, people with whom the young person may or may not have contact, day to day aspects of the young person's education, training and employment; medical treatment and other responsibilities set out in Section 20 and 21 of the Children and Young People's ACT.<sup>25</sup>

Young people in care may feel disconnected, isolated and poorly informed. They may experience a loss of power, inconsistency in caseworkers, a lack of participation in decisions and separation from family. Below are some tips on how you can better support a young person in care.

- Young people in care will experience a great deal of transition and change. It is important to support the young person to have consistency and familiarity. Ensure you keep connected to the young person, and support the young

<sup>24</sup> CREATE Foundation (Dec 2007) What is Out-Of-Home-Care? Accessed: [www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au)

<sup>25</sup> Vardon, C (2004) The Territory as Parent – Review of the Safety of Children in Care in the ACT and of ACT Child Protection Management.

person to strengthen other important and positive connections. The changes the young person may experience will not only include moving house and schools – the young person will see changes in their relationships, changes in the roles they assume in family and social environments, and subtle changes (such as a different daily routine)<sup>26</sup>. They may also see a high turnover of case workers.

- Do not try to ‘soften the blow’ and minimise the feeling of loss experienced by the young person, by talking about the benefits of change. Listen to the young person.
- Young people need to be involved in making choices, have access to information, and be allowed to have a voice<sup>27</sup>. Support the young person to participate in the process. Assist them to attend meetings, to be involved in decision-making, and to seek answers for their questions. Help the young person get access to their files. Ensure the young person remains the centre of attention in the process.
- Young people in care have priority access to health (including dental health) and housing. However this can be forgotten, or young people can get lost in the system. If advocacy does happen, they will get access to these services.
- Workers can access training and advice from Care and Protection Services (Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services). The Training Unit can also do in-services. Contact Care and Protection Services for more information.

**Phone:** 1300 556 728

## Services

### CREATE

Provides support and advocates on behalf of children and young people in out-of-home care.

<b>Phone</b>	(02) 6253 1451 or 1800 655 105
<b>Mailing Address</b>	PO Box 332, Belconnen ACT 2616
<b>Email</b>	create@create.org.au
<b>Website</b>	www.create.org.au
<b>Location</b>	Belconnen Commercial Chambers, Level 1 Suite K, Cnr Lathlain and Cohen Sts, 34 – 42 Cohen St, 58 – 69 Lathlain St, Belconnen

#### Who Can Access

<i>Gender</i>	Females and males
<i>Age</i>	Up to 25 years inclusively
<i>Young people under the influence</i>	Yes
<i>Income required</i>	No

<sup>26</sup> Queensland Government, Department of Child Safety (2006) Practice Paper: Supporting Children and Young People in Care through Transitions, p1.

<sup>27</sup> Mason J and Gibson C (2004) The Needs of Children in Care. Social Justice and Social Change Research Centre, Sydney, University of Western Sydney and Uniting Care, Burnside, p 71

*Disability access*  
*Children of clients*

Not to building  
Yes

**How to Access** By phone, email and drop in, 9am – 5pm, Monday - Friday. No referral required.

**Programs** Provides information, case management and Young Consultants training. Computer and Internet is available.

**Families** Family and support people can access some programs.

**The following services also provide programs for young people in care:**

- Children and Young People Focus Worker, Domestic Violence Crisis Service (Youth Support)
- Children and Young People's Workers, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (Youth Support)
- Galilee Education Service (Alternative Education)
- Galilee LIFT Project (Youth Support)
- Junction Youth Health Service (Health and Sexual Health)
- Marlow Cottage (Accommodation and Accommodation Support)
- Menslink (Youth Support)
- Open Family Australia (Youth Support)
- Richmond Fellowship Adolescent Program (Mental Health)
- Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Services (Health and Sexual Health)
- Youth Law ACT (Legal)
- See also Youth Centres section

## Resources

### More Services

#### **Barnardos**

Provides services to children, young people and their families who need support, including those involved in the Care and Protection System.

**Phone:** (02) 6241 5466

**Email:** canberra@barnardos.org.au

**Web:** www.barnardos.org.au

#### **Care and Protection Services (formerly Family Services)**

*Department Disability, Housing and Community Services*

Responsible for facilitating coordination across government for the care and protection of children and young people. See *Key Government Services* for more information.

**Phone:** 1300 556 728

**Web:** www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs/care\_protection.htm

#### **Foster Care Association ACT**

Provides support, advice, training and advocacy for foster and kinship carers.

**Phone:** (02) 6288 5994

**Email:** fcaact@bigpond.com

**Web:** www.fcaact.org.au

**Galilee Family Placement Scheme**

Foster care program for young people up to 18 years.

**Phone:** (02) 6290 2191

**Email:** galilee.inc@webone.com.au

**Web:** www.galilee.org.au

**Indigenous Unit (Care and Protection)**

*Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS)*

Promotes the care and protection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the ACT.

**Phone:** (02) 6207 0497

**Web:** www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs/ATSIS.htm

**Life Without Barriers**

Provides services to children and young people involved in the Care and Protection System.

**Phone:** (02) 6242 6222

**Email:** sforsyth@lwb.org.au

**Web:** www.lwb.org.au

**Marymead Child and Family Centre**

Provides services to children, young people and their families who need support, including those involved in the Care and Protection System.

**Phone:** (02) 6162 5800

**Email:** programs@marymead.org.au

**Web:** www.marymead.org.au

**Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA)**

*Department of Family and Community Services, Australian Government*

Helps with the transitional costs of young people who are leaving either formal or informal care arrangements.

**Web:** www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/youth-tila.htm

**More Information****About Being in Care**

*South Australian Guardian for Children and Young People*

Prepared for children and young people in care, by children and young people in care.

**Web:** www.gcyp.sa.gov.au

**ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Project**

*Institute of Child Protection Studies*

Aimed to enhance service delivery responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the Out-of-Home-Care System by gathering young people's views on their experiences within the service system and strategies for development. For more information on the project and its findings contact the Institute of Child Protection Studies.

**Phone:** (02) 6209 1225

**Email:** ICPS@signadou.acu.edu.au

**Web:** www.acu.edu.au/research/flagships/icps

**Every Child Matters: Cross-Government working with local partners to achieve better outcomes for children and young people (UK)**

Good practice guides developed to improve services for care leavers, including:

**Future Positive A Resource Guide for People Working with Disabled Care Leavers 2006.**

**Web:** [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00074/](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00074/)

**Care Leaving Strategies: A Good Practice Handbook**

**Web:**

[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/\\_files/2275052C18A9DB9894C6477F19E44859.pdf](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/_files/2275052C18A9DB9894C6477F19E44859.pdf)

**In their own words: Experiences of ACT children and young people in care**

*CREATE Foundation and the Office of the Community Advocate*

Published 2004.

**Web:** [http://svc250.bne115v.server-](http://svc250.bne115v.server-web.com/create_world/ctw2004/docs/CREATE_OCA_final_report.pdf)

[web.com/create\\_world/ctw2004/docs/CREATE\\_OCA\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://svc250.bne115v.server-web.com/create_world/ctw2004/docs/CREATE_OCA_final_report.pdf)

**Keeping Children and Young People Safe – Reporting child abuse: A shared community responsibility**

An ACT specific guide explaining mandatory reporting, legislation and procedures.

Published 2006.

**Web:** [www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs/services/care\\_and\\_protection#CIS](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs/services/care_and_protection#CIS)

**Leaving Care Guide**

*Association of Children's Welfare Agencies*

Information for young people – NSW specific.

**Web:** [www.acwa.asn.au/LCWP/ptlcsite](http://www.acwa.asn.au/LCWP/ptlcsite)

**Report Cards**

*CREATE Foundation*

**The Health Report Card** provides a comparative snapshot of the health of children and young people in care across Australia informed by the views of young people in care.

**The Education Report Card** provides a snapshot of the education issues confronting children and young people in care across Australia informed by the views of young people in care, and an analysis of policy and practice.

**Web:** [www.create.org.au](http://www.create.org.au)

**The Territory as Parent**

*Cheryl Vardon*

A review of the safety of Children in Care in the ACT and of ACT Child Protection Management. Published 2004.

**Young people leaving care and protection: A report to the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme**

*David Maunders, Max Liddell, Margaret Liddell and Sue Green*

The purpose of this research was to describe the experiences of young people discharged from State care and to identify factors which assisted and impeded their transition to independent living. Published 1999.

**Web:** [www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/youth-yplcp.htm](http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/youth-yplcp.htm)

## Date for your Diary

**2 - 8 September**

**National Child Protection Week**

Contribute to the growth in public profile and participation in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

**Web:** [www.napcan.org.au](http://www.napcan.org.au)