



Editorial



In December 2010, State and Territory Ministers responsible for child protection and out of home care approved a set of national standards for out of home care.

The national standards and overarching principles are outlined on pages three and four of this edition of the newsletter. I trust that all carers will be guided by the standards.

The Deputy Secretary of Human Services, Alison Jacob, resigned in December 2010. Alison was a strong advocate for reforming child protection services. The 2006 report into child protection services in Tasmania was written by Alison and David Fanning, the former Commissioner for Children, and has been the platform for the major reform of child protection over recent years.

One of Alison's final tasks was to present evidence to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Child Protection. Alison, together with myself, three Area Directors, a manager of Child Protection Services and the Assistant Director spent approximately three hours providing evidence to the Committee. Alison wanted the Committee to know how much blood, sweat and tears have been given by staff to achieve many of the improvements that have taken place over the past five years.

The Auditor-General is currently conducting an audit into out of home care services in Tasmania. I anticipate that the findings of the Select Committee and the Auditor General will shape the direction that we will take during 2011. Although we have worked hard to improve services for children where there are care and protection concerns there is still more that we need to do.

An important initiative commencing in 2011 is the implementation of the Pathway Home Program. The Program will support children and young people in care to reunify with their families. We believe that there are a reasonable number of children who could be successfully reunified with their families if there were additional supports during the reunification stage. The Program will be managed by Anglicare in the North West, Unitingcare in the North and Centacare in the South. If you would like more information about this program, please ask your worker or out of home care manager.

Regards

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Disability, Child, Youth and Family Services

ISSUE 10: Summer 2011

NEWS

Real Carers Really Needed

A foster carer recruitment campaign will be run again in the near future.

It will be based on the previous Real Carers Really Needed campaign. The advertising agency that was engaged to develop the material for the last campaign has recently run some focus groups to make sure that the messages are still relevant.

Although there is a need to promote the message that more carers are needed one of the best recruitment strategies is by 'word of mouth'.

As carers, you have the capacity to recruit suitable carers by spreading the message that more carers are needed and that despite the challenges there are many rewards.

The House of Assembly Select Committee on Child Protection

The Parliamentary Select Committee has received written submissions and taken evidence during November and December 2010. Several carers including John Flanagan, the President of the Foster Carers Association of Tasmania, have appeared before the Committee. As a consequence, the Committee has a good understanding of many of the concerns facing carers.

There has been a lot of coverage in the press and it is clear that there is a high level of interest in improving Child Protection Services in Tasmania.

The Committee's report will be released soon.

CREATE News

The CREATE Your Future Program

For eight weeks, participants aged 15-25 who are in care or have a care background learn what it means to leave care. The program is an action packed learning experience that takes a holistic approach to developing life skills, according to the real needs of young people. Included in the program are lots of fun activities and outings including laser skirmish, taiko drumming and high / low ropes courses.

The modules cover Health and Wellbeing, Life Skills, Job Readiness, Education and Training Options, and Finance. Young people leave the course with practical resources and skills including a resume and how to prepare and present for a job interview, conflict resolution skills, computer skills, self confidence, goal setting, an action plan for life, a Medicare card, their ID, and how to cook more than just spaghetti bolognese.

The program will be run twice per year for three years. For 2011 it will be run in the following months;
South – January / February

North / North West – April / May

The Workshops

Four independent workshops are delivered periodically between program delivery. The workshops are designed to complement the CREATE Your Future program. Participants who have attended and require additional support, more information, or to enjoy a connection activity with other young people have an opportunity to do so. The workshops are as follows:

- **The Great Race** workshop is a team event to help young people find services and agencies that they may need to use once they leave care. Teams compete against each other to complete fun challenges!
- **Think outside the square** challenges young people's view of learning, and what they think they can or can't do.
- **Pathways to independence** teaches young people some really practical stuff like how to fill out a TILA application, what help they can get with bond, how to deal with Centrelink, how to bargain shop, credit cards, mobile phones, how to buy their first car and heaps more.
- **How to get a job and keep it** teaches young people how to decide on what job to apply for and the steps you need to take to make it happen. They will learn about goal setting, resume writing, how to address a Key Selection Criteria, how to dress for an interview and loads more.

These workshops will be run in all regions over the next three years.

Young Consultants Training

Young Consultants Training is a two day training course for young people in care or with a care experience, aged 14 – 25. The modules include public speaking, advocacy, media interaction, workings of the Child Protection system and personal stories.

This training is all about providing young people with the skills they need to advocate on behalf of all young people in care and ensure their voices are heard. By doing this training, young people will be called on by CREATE to attend conferences, sector meetings, consultations, forums, events and provide training support.

Young Consultant training will be run four times per year across Tasmania.

Youth Advisory Groups

The Youth Advisory Group is a program that brings young people aged 12 and above together to discuss care issues and explore solutions. Youth Advisory groups are in each state and territory and provide feedback which activates change for the better. The Youth Advisory Group also tells CREATE how best to represent the opinions of children and young people in care. In Tasmania, Youth Advisory Groups are run in the on the second Tuesday of every month and are co-facilitated by experienced Young Consultants. At this stage the Youth Advisory Group program is only run in the south.



Three young people finishing the Great Race in Hobart

Connection Days

Throughout the year, CREATE holds numerous Connection Days/Fun Days for young people in care, or with a care experience between the ages of zero to 25. These include our Easter party, Christmas party and Halloween party. In early 2011 we will also be holding a day with the Hawthorn Hawks Football team, Laser Skirmish and an under 12's costume party.

club.CREATE

Children and young people are encouraged to sign up to be a club.CREATE member. It's free. Club members receive a welcome pack in the mail, quarterly club.CREATE magazines, Christmas and Birthday cards and invites to all CREATE events in their area. They can join by ringing CREATE on 1800 655 105 or <http://www.create.org.au> or by visiting us at 260 Macquarie Street, Hobart.

Dates for the calendar

Date	Event	Activity
January		
11 Tues – 3 March.	Create Your Future	8 week program in Hobart
18 Tues	Connection Day	Laser Skirmish in Launceston
February		
2 nd Wed	Connection Day	Hawthorn Hawks Football Team in Hobart
4 Fri	Create Your Future Cooking Workshop in Launceston	
8 Wed & 9 Thurs	Young Consultants Training Launceston	
10 Fri	Create Your Future	The Great Race in Launceston
12 Sat	Youth Advisory Group Hobart	
March		
12 Sat	Youth Advisory Group Hobart	
19 Sat	Young Consultants Training Hobart	
25 Fri	Create Your Future	Pathways to Independence Workshop Launceston
31 ^s Thurs	Create Your Future	Job Readiness Workshop in Hobart
April		
6 Wed – Fri 27 May	Create Your Future	8 week program in Launceston
21 Thurs	Connection Day	Easter Party NORTH

For more information and to sign up to our mailing list, please contact the CREATE Tas Team on 62249822 or 62237749.



CREATE Office
260 Macquarie Street Hobart
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The Charter of Rights – making a difference for children and young people in care

The Charter of Rights for Tasmanian children and young people in out of home care makes clear statements about what a child in care can expect. For instance, children in care have a right to have an education and to gain life skills.

Although individual students in care can and do well educationally the general pattern is that children in care are not achieving as well as their peers.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Department of Education (DoE) are working together to improve educational outcomes for children in care. Under the Partnering Agreement signed in December 2008 students who are on child protection orders for twelve months or more are expected to have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The Plan should address the child's educational needs. It should be developed by the school in collaboration with the student and child's case manager and the carer.

If you are caring for a child who does not have an IEP you should discuss the need for an IEP to be completed with the child's worker.

Calendar of training opportunities for carers during 2011

DCYFS is developing a calendar of training sessions for new and approved carers. The calendar will include when and where Shared Lives Shared Stories sessions will be held including sessions that are managed by non-government providers such as Kennerley.

The calendar will also include ongoing training sessions provided by the Foster Carers Association of Tasmania.

Any other training opportunities that are relevant to carers will also be listed.

The calendar will be available in first quarter of 2011. The calendar will support training opportunities for carers. Carers are encouraged to attend training sessions, especially those carers who have been caring for some years.

Ministers approve National Standards for Out-of-Home Care

Standard 1

Children and young people will be provided with stability and security during their time in care.

Standard 2

Children and young people participate in decisions that have an impact on their lives.

Standard 3

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities participate in decisions concerning the care and placement of their children and young people.

Standard 4

Each child and young person has an individualised plan that details their health, education and other needs.

Standard 5

Children and young people have their physical, developmental, psychological and mental health needs assessed and attended to in a timely way.

Standard 6

Children and young people in care access and participate in education and early childhood services to maximise their educational outcomes.

Standard 7

Children and young people up to at least 18 years are supported to be engaged in appropriate education, training and or employment.

Standard 8

Children and young people in care are supported to participate in social and/or recreational activities of their choice, such as sporting, cultural and community activity.

Standard 9

Children and young people are supported to safely and appropriately maintain connection with family, be they birth parents, siblings or other family members.

Standard 10

Children and young people are supported to develop their identity, safely and appropriately, through contact with their families, friends, culture, spiritual sources and communities and have their history recorded as they grow up.

Standard 11

Children and young people in care are supported to safely and appropriately identify and stay in touch with at least one other person who cares about their future, who they can turn to for support and advice.

Standard 12

Carers are assessed and receive relevant ongoing training, development and support, in order to provide quality care.

Standard 13

Children and young people have a transition from care plan commencing at 15 years old which details support to be provided after leaving care.

Overarching principles

Children and young people in out-of-home care have their rights respected and are treated in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Care provided to children and young people living in out-of-home care is focussed on providing a nurturing environment, promoting their best interests, and maximizing their potential.

Children and young people living in out-of-home care are provided with opportunities for their voice to be heard and respected and have a right to clear and consistent information about the reasons for being in care.

Care provided to children and young people will promote the benefits of ongoing safe, meaningful and positive connection and involvement of parents and families and communities of origin.

Carers and their families are key stakeholders and partners in the care of children and young people, and their role is to be respected and supported.

Children and young people living in out-of-home care are provided with a level of quality care that addresses their particular needs and improves their life outcomes.

Continuous system improvements are designed to achieve better outcomes for all children and young people living in out-of-home care.

Out-of-home care for children and young people is measured, monitored and reported in a transparent, efficient and consistent manner over time.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are to be involved in decisions in accordance with the aboriginal Child Placement Principle.

Medication guidelines

As advised in recent carers' newsletters changes have been made to the *Poisons Act*.

As a result the Department was required by law to issue Medication Guidelines for foster carers. These were drafted in collaboration with the Foster Care Association of Tasmania, the Commissioner for Children, CREATE Foundation, Child Protection Managers, and the Chief Pharmacist in the Department of Health and Human Services.

To assist foster carers to understand the guidelines, sessions will be held around the State by the Pharmacy Guild of Tasmania. Foster carers will need to attend a session to ensure that they are familiar with their obligations.

So far three sessions have been held and the feedback has been positive. Sessions will be held throughout 2011 and you will be advised via this newsletter of the times but can also check the DHHS website at this address:

http://www.fostercare.tas.gov.au/information_for_foster_carers2 or via the FCAT website: <http://www.fcata.org.au/>

If you know of any issues relating to carers being required to give medications to a child while the child is in respite care, please contact Diane Caney on 0407001717. Thanks