

Our involvement in the child's life becomes limited, and we no longer make decisions about the child's care and upbringing. We'll only have contact if:

- we are requested to review the case plan
- we have yearly contact with a child on a long-term guardianship order
- the child or a member of the child's family makes a complaint about the level of care being provided.

This means that many of the things we do now will become your responsibility, including (but not limited to):

- informing the parents where the child is living and providing information about the child's care (if it's safe to do so)
- supporting contact with family and other people who are important to the child
- informing the child about their rights and making sure their rights are upheld
- maintaining the child's connection to their culture
- providing for the child's health needs
- making decisions about the child's education.

## What support is available to guardians?

Long-term guardians and permanent guardians receive the fortnightly caring allowance to help meet the financial costs of the child's care. We may also provide other financial support depending on the child's needs.

Long-term guardians can ask for our help:

- to resolve issues with the child's contact with their family
- if a situation emerges that will impact on the child's long-term care
- if an emergency arises that temporarily impacts the guardian's ability to care for the child and there are no alternative options available.

For permanent guardians, ongoing support is limited. If you need help to care for the child, you can ask for a review of the child's case plan. We'll consider the reasons for the review and discuss with you how we may be able to help, for example, making referrals to support services.

### More information

Phone: **1800 811 810** (free call)

Go to: **[www.dcssds.qld.gov.au](http://www.dcssds.qld.gov.au)**

 Permanency

# Providing long-term care for a child

Information for guardians



To grow up happy and healthy, children need to live in a safe and stable home with people who care for them.

If it's not possible for a child to be cared for at home, we'll make a decision about the best alternative living arrangements for their long-term care.

We'll talk to the child, their parents, their carer and the important people in the child's life to hear their views about who would be suitable to become the child's guardian until they reach 18.

If you've been caring for the child for some time, we may ask you to consider becoming the child's guardian.

## How do I decide if I want to be a guardian?

Being a child's guardian and providing for their long-term care is a big step. Guardians take on the role of a parent, so there are some important questions to ask yourself, such as:

- Am I prepared to maintain the child's contact with their family?
- Am I able to keep the child connected to their culture?
- Would I be willing to continue caring for the child after they turn 18 (for example, if they are unable to live as an independent adult)?
- Can I support the child in exploring their identity (including sexual orientation, gender diversity, language, and religion) even if this differs from my own?

- What impact would there be if I want to continue being a foster or kinship carer for other children?

## How do I become the child's guardian?

If it's proposed that you become the child's guardian, we'll assess your ability and willingness to meet all the child's needs and the legal obligations of being a guardian.

The assessment will inform the Childrens Court about your suitability to be a long-term guardian or permanent guardian for the child.

Once a plan has been made for the child's long-term care, an application may be made to the Childrens Court for:

- a long-term guardianship order to another suitable person, or
- a permanent care order to another suitable person.

These orders make sure that the child has a secure home to live in with someone who cares about them, without severing the child's legal relationship with their parents or changing their legal identity.

For Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children, the court must also consider Aboriginal tradition or Island custom and be satisfied that the case plan provides details on how you will maintain the child's connection with culture, and community or language group.

## What's the difference between the orders?

The difference between the orders is that under a long-term guardianship order:

- the child will continue to have contact with their Child Safety Officer once a year
- the parents can request a review of their child's case plan if there has been no review within 12 months
- we can provide emergency support, if needed
- a parent can apply to the Childrens Court to revoke the order if their circumstances have changed.

A permanent care order will only be made by the Childrens Court if the proposed guardian:

- is able and willing to permanently meet the child's needs
- is committed to preserving the child's identity, connecting to the child's culture and supporting their relationships with members of their family as outlined in the case plan
- has been caring for the child for at least 12 months (or less if they're already caring for a sibling).

## What are my responsibilities as a guardian?

Once a long-term guardianship order or permanent care order is made, you'll be responsible for the daily care of the child and make decisions about the child's long-term care, wellbeing, and upbringing until they turn 18.