



Fostering fact sheet - respite care

What is respite care?

Respite carers look after children for short periods of time to give their full-time carers a break.

This provides a chance for the foster carers to recharge their energy, respond to other family needs and maintain their general well being.

Respite carers look after children in their own home. The length of care is decided before placement and can vary from one day to a few weeks.

Respite care is most effective if it is planned and regular, however respite care can be in response to emergency situations e.g. sudden illnesses.

Who can be a respite foster carer?

To be a respite carer you:

- may or may not have your own children
- can work part-time or full-time
- can be single or have a partner
- must be over 18 years of age
- may be retired or considering retirement
- can live anywhere in Western Australia
- need to have room in your home to accommodate a child.

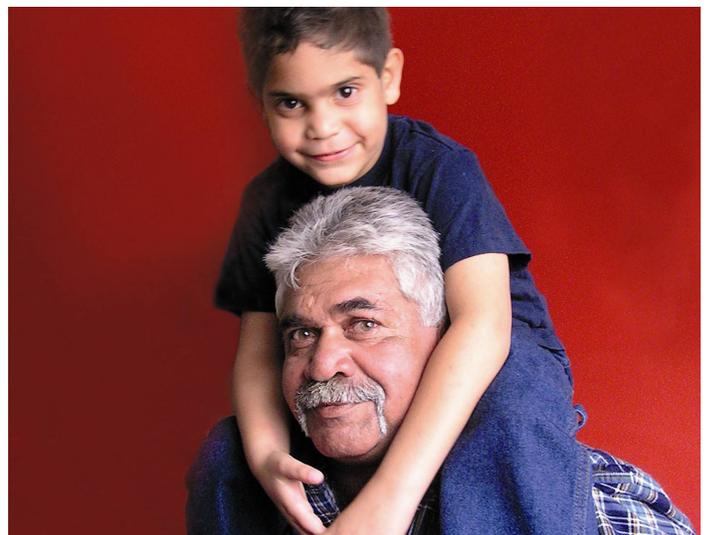


What is the Respite Program?

The Respite Program supports full-time foster carers and the children in their care.

As a respite carer you work as part of a team. This includes the child's full-time foster carer and Departmental staff. A close working relationship helps ensure the needs of the child and carer are met.

All children needing respite are in the care of the Department for Child Protection. The respite care team matches the child's needs with your experience and skills.



How do I become a respite carer?

Complete an Expression of Interest form (available at www.childprotection.wa.gov.au) or telephone Fostering and Adoption Services on 1800 182 178.

Once we receive the form, a staff member from Fostering and Adoption Services will arrange to come to your home to discuss the Respite Program. If this isn't possible due to distance, the staff member will telephone you.

If you decide to go ahead, you need to apply, which includes giving the Department permission to check your criminal, Department and medical records. You will need to provide at least two references.

An assessor will then complete an in-home assessment over approximately four visits. The assessment is to ensure you meet the competencies set out in our regulations and considers your current family lifestyle, personal history and motivation.

You will also have to complete training during or after the assessment. This will give you a better understanding of why children come into care, their needs, and what to expect as a respite carer.

Your assessor will then write a report and submit it to an independent panel. Following approval, you will be registered as a respite carer.

Respite carers must also have a Working with Children Card. If you don't already have one, you can get an application form from your assessor.

What support will I get?

Support is available from Senior Staff from the Respite Program and the Foster Care Association. Respite carers receive a subsidy towards the costs of looking after a child.

You can also get help with equipment and transport for children, training, group and individual support, information, advice and counselling.

For more information, contact Fostering and Adoption Services on 1800 182 178 or visit www.childprotection.wa.gov.au.

