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## Foster care

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### Summary

- Foster care is temporary care of children of any age up to 18 years, by trained, assessed and accredited foster carers.
  - Children are placed in foster care for a range of reasons.
  - Foster carers and foster care agencies have a critical role in caring for some of the state's most vulnerable children.
  - More foster carers are needed.
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Foster care is temporary care of children of any age up to 18 years, by trained, assessed and accredited foster carers. Children requiring foster care can come from various cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Children are placed in foster care for a range of reasons, and foster care can occur as a result of a court order, or through a voluntary arrangement between the child's parent and a foster care agency.

### Foster care agencies

Foster care agencies, also known as community service organisations, are funded by the Department of Human Services to operate 'foster care programs', including specialist adolescent and therapeutic programs.

Foster care agencies are responsible for supporting foster carers, for meeting the protection and care needs of children in foster care, and for working in collaboration with Child Protection and the child's family to make sure their best interests are met.

The role of foster carers and the provision of foster care services follow the objectives, principles and functions of *The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*, legislation that provides for the protection of all Victorian children.

Foster carers and foster care agencies have a critical role in caring for some of the state's most vulnerable children.

### Learning more about foster care

As a community, we rely heavily on volunteer foster carers. The care and support that foster carers provide is invaluable. It develops and changes the lives of some of the state's most vulnerable children.

More foster carers are needed. In 2011–12, 3,526 children entered out-of-home care in Victoria. Foster carers are well supported and receive a carer reimbursement and ongoing learning opportunities.

### Where to get help

- Victorian Department of Human Services Tel. 1300 650 172
- Foster Care Hotline Tel. 1800 013 088
- Local foster care agency

### Things to remember

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DHHS - Child protection

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