

Inquiry Secretariat,

As foster carers we struggle with:

Lack of consistency:

Team leaders and case workers telling you different things.

Depending on who your caseworker is makes a difference to how much they push for different things. e.g. changing schools, how much support you're given.

Depending on Case workers mood on the day affects how they relate to you and how they handle the situations/requests.

Lack of respect

A lot of the time we feel spoken down to and spoken to as if 'we don't know what's best for the children', 'case workers know best' Case workers don't seem to take onboard what we or specialists, child counsellors or child psychologists have to say.

Being told we're 'too attached'.

Lack of support

No phone calls to see how we're going.

Respite only given at breaking point and only if we insist upon it.

A big push to take on more than we can handle.

Lack of communication

Not being informed of access/appointments. e.g. FACS picking child up from day care to have access with family or to have their immunisations then returning them without the carer knowing. (Resulting in child nearly getting two shots of immunisation within two weeks).

Being told we would receive a case plan and be a part of a case plan meeting and never seeing anything or being told what's happening.

Suggestions

When signing up full time foster care's make it mandatory to give them regular respite to prevent getting burnt out. e.g. 24-48hrs every two months.

Call foster carers once a month to have a chat and see how they're going.

Show appreciation for what we do day in day out.

To end we would like to say that over the time we have been fostering our foster children we have had some great times and also some very challenging times. We would do it over and over again for the children but having to deal with the department of FACS really makes us think twice about taking anymore on. We have had to push and push and jump through hoops to try and do best by these amazing children. We will continue to fight for them to get them the best support/opportunities available which we believe is every Childs rights.

Thank you for taking the time to read our submission,