



*A non-government, not-for-profit **Community Organization** committed to **Quality Care** for vulnerable Children and Young People of the Northern Territory.*

*Suite 10
82 Todd Street
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Alice Springs, NT 0871*

Dear Members of the Board,

On behalf of Foster Care NT we wish to submit the following dot point brief in relation to the recent Inquiry request.

If requested, we wish to discuss these below matters with your inquiry board at the forum booked for Darwin 16th April and Alice Springs 29th April when our Executive Committee is available.

Foster Care NT believes every child, irrespective of being in kin or alternate care has the right to be placed in a placement with carers that are adequately trained and supported to enable the placement to fulfill the child's needs.

Unfortunately the Department is falling short in the following areas:

- Inexperienced senior staff
- Staff employed under short contracts – 3 month contracts for case-workers does not enable the caseworker to familiarize themselves with the file notes let alone establish a relationship with the child
- Case planning is still not regularly reviewed for some children and the carers of children in long term care are still not actively encouraged to participate in case planning as per legislation
- Staff turnover or reassignment is very high
- Training has to be as per the training delivery (Our Carers for our Kids) with other Agencies involvement, so it's current, appropriate and transparent. This training delivery is not happening currently throughout the Territory
- Inadequate communication between NTFC and carers
 - Calls not returned
 - Calls screening – extreme concerns regarding front desk staff breaching privacy of child (front staff verbally requesting child's full name)
 - Treatment received by case worker/managers considered disrespectful by both carers and birth families

Carers often requested Foster Care NT to engage on their behalf as their efforts were repeatedly dismissed

- Lack of support
 - Dissatisfaction with the central intake number for support (out of office hours)
 - Calls not returned when carers leave messages regarding support needs or direct information
- Transparency between all regions within the Territory. All regions have to deliver the same policies. At present the culture of each region is very different
- Carers engagement around family contact
 - Lack of support for carer to implement family contact
 - Distress where family contact interstate and incarcerated
 - NTFC failing to communicate adequately with Carer to prepare
 - No follow through by NTFC when a process was set out for family contact
 - No consultation – carers feeling disempowered

Please do not hesitate to contact our Administration Manager for confirmation and request relating to these points.

Regards

Foster Care NT

*Foster Care NT is the peak funded body for Foster Carers in the Northern Territory.
Foster Care NT is a non-profit Community organization that exists to support, advice and
advocate for Foster Carers*