

# LISTENING TO CARERS ABOUT EDUCATION

## At the National Kinship, Permanent and Foster Care Conference 2024

KCV sponsored two workshops highlighting the national “Fostering school attendance for students in out-of-home care” project. The project will identify the barriers preventing children and young people in OOH from attending school.

The workshops were facilitated by (see image from left to right) Emily, Kitty and Daryl. More than 150 conference delegates participated in a short survey, world café and/or general discussion. It was a privilege to listen, and we are grateful for their deep and valuable insights.



Almost 100 people completed the survey. Many included comments about their experiences:

*“There have been many behavioral issues at school; however I have advocated a lot and have a very good rapport with the teachers. His teachers have been amazing at helping him remain in the classroom as much as possible.”*

*“...hasn’t engaged since Year 10. School refusal returning from COVID and placement instability.”*

*“...has not engaged, lack of enjoyment, limited friends, feels isolated...just does not like going at times.”*

A survey question asked about the number of days the child had been absent from school in the previous four weeks (excluding school holidays). We asked conference participants to focus their answers in the survey on one school aged child in their care, and to let us know what grade that child was in.

Overall, about a quarter of the children had not been absent at all. This is great to hear and a reminder not to assume that all students in care miss out on school a lot.

Almost half of the students had missed between 1-4 days. The most common reason was health related: being ill, having a medical appointment, or due to a disability.

Just over a quarter of the students had missed 5 days or more out of the previous days of school.

For this group, the participants indicated the most common reason was that the child did not want to attend. This reflects the rise in school refusal (or “school can’t”) in Australia since the COVID-19 pandemic