



The First Supports Program

The First Supports Program supports newly established kinship care placements through the provision of comprehensive assessments, brokerage, and access to increased supports for children/young people (0-17 years of age) and their carers in statutory kinship placements.

Statutory kinship placements occur when a child protection intervention has occurred and the child or young person is placed with relatives or a significant friend and may also involve an order made by the Children's Court

Referral for First Supports are made by child protection, authorised Aboriginal agencies or kinship engagement teams (where endorsed). Referrals are made to providers within the kinship carers' local area to ensure support and service provision is delivered locally.

Kinship placements will be eligible to receive the First Supports program where:

- The Placement/s is established for no more than three months and expected to last longer than three weeks.
- The placement has been endorsed by child protection or authorised Aboriginal agency including completion of the mandatory safety screening such as national police and checks of all members of the household aged over 18 years, consultation with an Aboriginal Child Specialist Assessment and Support Service where applicable and checking and/or initiating an application for a Working with Children Clearance for the carer/s.
- An assessment has been undertaken by child protection or authorised Aboriginal agency and recorded in the Part A assessment.
- Child protection or authorised Aboriginal agency has assessed that the placement is expected to last three months or longer, and the carer is willing to provide care for longer than three months.
- Placements were not initially expected to last three months or longer but there was a subsequent determination or change of circumstance that the placement will be three months or longer.
- It is that child's first kinship placement or has re-entered care.

Agencies delivering First Supports will implement a range of interventions and approaches to support each kinship care placement. Family Services support will seek to enhance family capability and parenting skills, improve the caregiver/s relationship with children, promote safety, stability and development of children and young people, and enhance social connectedness.



These interventions and approaches may include:

- assisting the kinship carer to adjust to having a child (or another child) in their home and to deal with any emerging issues (for example relationship difficulties or family conflict)
- assisting the child to settle within the placement and respond to the child's developmental needs (health care, school, age-appropriate activities)
- assisting with explaining to the child the reasons for the kinship care arrangement
- promoting the child's connection to community and culture, and where applicable, supporting and assisting the carer to understand their role in this
- skills enhancement, including helping the carer to manage difficult and or trauma related behaviour
- participation in the child's care team
- assisting the kinship carer to navigate child protection processes and understand Children's Court orders and processes
- liaising with the allocated case manager to assist the carer to obtain an instrument of authorisation
- identifying documentation required for the child such as birth certificates and Medicare cards and liaising with the case manager to obtain these documents

- providing general emotional support to the carer
- assisting kinship carers to access other services such as Centrelink
- assisting carers to understand the importance of contact and their role in supporting children to have contact with their parent/s and/or other family members where this is appropriate and in line with court orders and case plan goals.
- assisting carers to understand their role in supporting reunification where this is the case plan goal
- practical support and/or material aid
- information, advice and advocacy
- linking the kinship family into sustainable and longer-term community and peer supports
- providing necessary information to child protection or authorised Aboriginal agency for court proceedings when requested
- attending, providing reports and or evidence in Children's Court proceedings when subpoenaed to do so.



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