



Lighthouse  
Foster Care

# Paving a new way forward for fostering



[www.lighthousefostercare.org.au](http://www.lighthousefostercare.org.au)



Lighthouse Foundation provides homes and therapeutic care programs to children and young people impacted by long-term neglect, abuse and homelessness. Our focus is to create caring communities where kids can feel safe, form meaningful relationships and begin to heal from traumatic experiences. For the past 30 years, our proven Model of Care has successfully transformed the lives of over 1,000 young people using a range of trauma-informed, evidence-based strategies. We now also educate and support foster carers in the same way, so that they too can take care of some of Australia's most vulnerable children.

## **Our Mission**

We provide therapeutic homes and create a caring community for homeless kids and foster families. Through the Lighthouse Model of Care, our kids receive the level of support required to achieve a lifelong sense of belonging, the opportunity to heal and the capacity to thrive.

## **Our Vision**

A safe home and community for homeless kids and foster families to belong, heal and thrive.

## **Our Values**

We are respectful, kind, courageous, thoughtful and committed.

## Lighthouse's Foster Care Program

We provide tailored support, therapeutic care and a sense of community for our foster carers

### Our Model of Care

Lighthouse provides a unique Model of Care that is trauma informed, therapeutic in its approach and designed to address the complex needs of children and young people impacted by neglect, abuse and homelessness.

With 30 years' experience providing homes and therapeutic care for traumatised children and young people and babies, Lighthouse is paving a new way forward in foster care. We provide therapeutic care and continuous tailored support to help young people grow.

Our Model of Care ensures that foster carers are guided to care for young people using trauma-informed approaches, attachment theory, and contemporary psychoanalytic theory.

Our unique model works by uniting foster carers around a central 'Hub Home', where trained Lighthouse therapeutic carers offer regular respite, sleepovers, access to trauma informed support and advice to the entire foster family.

Our program aims to put an end to 'revolving door' out-of-home care experiences and instead, allow new generations of children to create lifelong relationships, a sense of identity and belonging.



### Hub Home



With strong relationships at its core, the Lighthouse Hub serves like a home away from home.

At the centre of the program is the Hub Home, a space to facilitate therapeutic support and care for foster children, carers and siblings.

Facilitating regular social activities for families and local volunteers to connect, reflect and enjoy their new lives together. This helps to create a 'village' of extended support for each child, allowing them to develop positive, healthy attachments with adults who care about their safety and wellbeing.

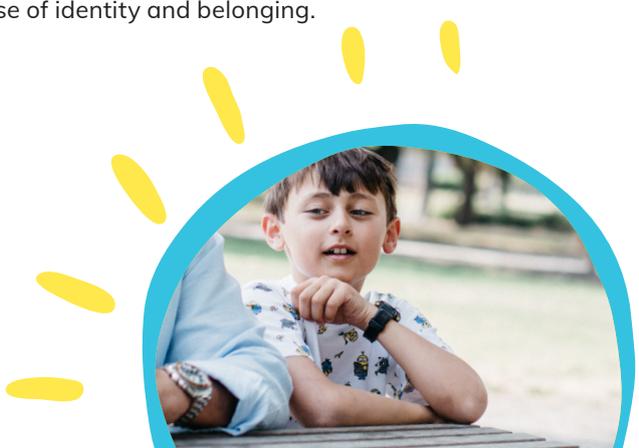
Lighthouse believes this strong sense of community will help to improve the overall stability in placements, continuity in care, and gives foster carers quality, tangible support they need to thrive.

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Having that additional home that children can go to respite for – and if they need to go there because can't be at home for whatever reason – that has been really valuable. I can't think of a time when I've had to tell a foster carer they can't have respite.

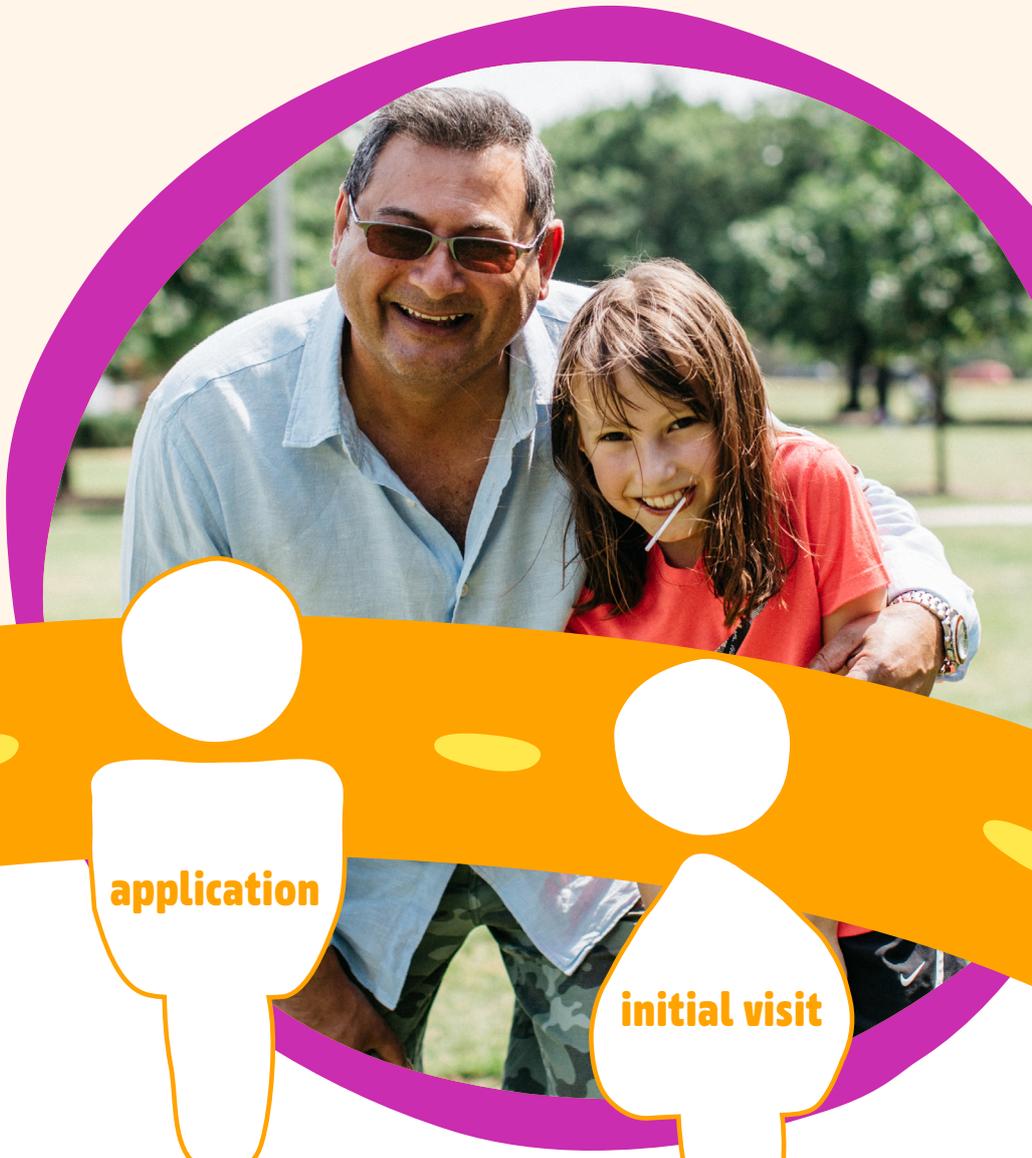
Lighthouse Foster Care Team Member

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## Your foster care journey



**enquiry**

**application**

**initial visit**

The very first step is getting in touch with us. We'll explain our foster care program, the process to becoming a foster carer and ask you some initial eligibility questions.

If you're keen to move to the next step, we will send through the application pack and if you need any help we can go through these with you.

A member of our team visits you in your home. This is a chance for us to get to know each other, learn about the Lighthouse Foster Care program and address any questions you might have.



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Together, we'll guide you through the 'Shared Lives' foster care training program. The training will help you prepare for real-life fostering experiences.



In a series of interviews, we'll explore your motivation, attitudes, values and beliefs. We'll also look at your skills and strengths and identify how Lighthouse can best support as a carer.



A Foster Care Assessor prepares a written report about your household which they present to a Panel of Lighthouse team members and stakeholders. The panel considers the report and decides your accreditation outcome.

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In trying to support children and young people in foster care, we support foster carers to gain insight into their internal world first, then they can do the same with the child/young person.

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# Frequently Asked Questions

## Q: What is foster care?

**A:** Foster care is provided by people in their own homes for children and young people who cannot live with their families. Where it is in their best interest, children and young people are reunited back with their family as soon as possible.

## Q: What are the types of foster care placements?

### **A: Respite care**

Respite care involves having a child in care for short stays. This could be regular weekends, school holidays or one-off overnight stays.

### **Emergency care**

Emergency Care is required when there is immediate and urgent need for care because of safety concerns. This may last a day or be extended if required. Carers who provide emergency care can be contacted at short notice, any time of the day.

### **Short-term care**

Short-term care can last from two weeks to two years. Children may return to family if it is safe to do so, or they may require long term care. The child may then return to their birth family if it's appropriate, or they may be placed in long term care.

### **Long-term care**

For some children, returning to their birth family is not possible. Long-term care is provided until family circumstances change or until the child turns 18.

## Q: Who can become a foster carer?

**A:** Foster carers come from all types of backgrounds. Foster carers can be individuals, couples and may or may not have children of their own. Foster carers are culturally, religiously and ethnically diverse and come from a range of age groups. What is essential is that foster carers are over the age of 21 and they can provide a safe and nurturing environment for children and young people who need care.

## Q: What makes a good foster carer?

### **A: A good foster carer has these skills and traits:**

- + Empathy, warmth and nurturing (and the ability to offer these even when the child appears to reject them)
- + Flexibility and the capacity to manage loss, change and grief
- + The ability to ask for help and support
- + Openness and a willingness to learn and be cooperative
- + The ability to be open and accepting of difference
- + Realistic expectations of themselves and the child
- + Being playful and the ability to have fun and enjoy spending time with children
- + Good sense of humour
- + Ability to regulate when stressed



Our promise is to provide foster families with the genuine therapeutic care, sense of community and consistent circle of support they need to care for some of Victoria's most vulnerable children.

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The change and growth you see in these little people even in just the short period of time you have them is so fulfilling and rewarding.

Lighthouse Foster Carer

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I think the respite is really great when it's provided, especially for any placements that are longer than a week or two. For my work I have to fly to Canberra once a month for 3-4 days, so having coverage for those trips when I have children is very important. Without that, I wouldn't be able to foster.

Lighthouse Foster Carer

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Foster Care has brought my house to be a home, having someone to share meals with, assist Leah to learn life skills and independence that she was denied. Watching her learn to express who she is. Taking holidays, outings and generally having what is now a (small) family has really changed my life positively.

Lighthouse Foster Carer

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We read every night...so that was probably a big fundamental thing. I read every night with them Monday to Friday... Just that time of sitting down together, for forty-five minutes to an hour, I think really started to build some calm time and some sort of getting-to-know-each-other time, and really it was that, that probably laid the foundations for us because they eventually started to trust that I was a kind person that wanted to help them and wanted to care for them and had their best interests in mind.

Lighthouse Foster Carer

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To find out more visit our website  
[www.lighthousefostercare.org.au](http://www.lighthousefostercare.org.au)  
email [fostercare@lighthousefoundation.org.au](mailto:fostercare@lighthousefoundation.org.au)  
call (03) 9093 7500

