



# The Victorian Foster Carer Charter

The Victorian Foster Carer Charter (the charter) is for accredited foster carers in Victoria.

The charter will help you to understand your rights and responsibilities as a foster carer and member of the care team, and help those who work with you to understand their responsibilities to you. You and other members of the care team should refer regularly to the charter, which is designed to promote teamwork to advocate for and support the child or young person in out-of-home care.

## As a foster carer, your responsibilities are to:

- put the best interests of the child or young person first<sup>1</sup>
- provide a safe and nurturing home
- respect and proactively maintain a child or young person's connections to family, community and culture, according to their case plan
- support the permanency objective for the child or young person
- provide culturally appropriate care to children and young people who are Aboriginal or from culturally diverse backgrounds
- encourage the child or young person's learning and educational achievement
- support the child or young person's wishes and views and advocate for their healthy development
- maintain open communication with other care team members to keep them informed
- uphold the child or young person's, and their family's right to privacy
- fulfil your role within the care team and understand the role of other care team members
- actively seek opportunities to develop your skills and knowledge to care for the child or young person
- actively participate in developing the Care and Placement Plan, and other Looking After Children tools

## As a foster carer, you can expect your agency and/or the department to:

- action your needs as soon as possible, to assist you in caring for the child or young person
- include you in planning and seek your views in care team meetings
- consider and respect the health and wellbeing, culture and religion of you and your family
- consider your safety when planning about the disclosure of your address to parents of the child or young person
- provide timely information to you about court decisions and other issues that affect you and the child or young person in your care
- establish regular channels of communication with you and provide you with important documentation, such as the instrument of authorisation and cultural plans
- give prompt advice to you about changes to contact arrangements
- provide all relevant available information to enable you to make an informed choice about caring for a child or young person
- respond to issues and complaints in a timely manner, and treat you fairly
- manage quality of care matters with sensitivity and understanding of the emotional impact on you and your family

1. The Children, Youth and Families Act states that the best interest of a child or young person must always be paramount when making a decision, or taking action. When determining whether a decision or action is in the child's best interests, there are a number of needs that must always be considered:

- the need to protect the child from harm
- the need to protect the child's rights
- the need to promote the child's development (taking into account his or her age, stage of development, culture and gender).