Carer Council | Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers | SA Inc

Cultural Connections for Children and Young People

Feedback for carers who participated in Carer Council consultation

Consultation conducted September 2024 – February 2025

About the consultation

The Carer Council sought feedback on cultural connections for children and young people for the purpose of informing its work in advising the Minister for Child Protection throughout 2025. Feedback was received from September 2024 to February 2025. We thank those who provided their input on this important topic.

Who participated

35 carers

Including foster carers (28) kinship carers (6) and long-term guardians (2)

Location

Carers from regional SA (15), Metropolitan Adelaide (17), Interstate (1), undisclosed (2)

Cultural background

Aboriginal carers (2), non-Aboriginal carers (27), culturally and linguistically diverse carers (1)

Questions and feedback

Problem areas



Carers had the opportunity to select problem areas from a prepopulated list, as well as write their own answers (survey) or elaborate on further feedback (small group consultation / phone call)

Responses highlighted the following problem areas:

- A lack of cultural awareness, cultural training, and personal knowledge of staff and stakeholders.
- Inconsistency in the knowledge of various staff members, carers, and other stakeholders.
- Inconsistent practice, including inconsistent funding to support return to Country trips.
- A history of systemic injustices, including colonialism, stolen generations, denial of cultures, and a contrast between western views and Aboriginal ways.
- Family genograms (including accurate and up-to-date genograms).
- Support for non-Aboriginal carers caring for Aboriginal children.
- Access/contact with kin connections, including siblings.
- Support from and access to Aboriginal workers.
- Return to Country trips, including accessibility and suitability.
- Aboriginal life story books.
- Family scoping and scoping of appropriate placements.
- Cultural events and activities.
- Culturally appropriate departmental policies and procedures.
- Quality of contact with kin connections.
- Cultural knowledge and training of workers.
- Incorrect or inaccurate identification of Aboriginal heritage.
- Positive programs being defunded or changed.
- Views of the child not being heard.
- Inactivity or low prioritisation of DCP in supporting cultural connections.
- Inadequate or non-existent financial support to support cultural connections.
- Voices of carers being absent in decision-making.

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Successes



Carers had the opportunity to select successes and/or areas going well from a prepopulated list, as well as write their own answers (survey) or elaborate on further feedback (small group consultation / phone call)

Responses highlighted the following successes and/or areas going well:

- Cultural camps for children, young people and carer families.
- Flexible access/contact visits.
- Cultural events and activities.
- Continuity of care (e.g. post-18 placements).
- Keeping Aboriginal families together where possible.
- Return to Country trips.
- Policies and procedures (carers acknowledged the policies are written well, but many comments related to policies and procedures often not being adhered to in practice).
- Support from agencies.
- Carers' own family connections.

Ideas



Carers were prompted to write their ideas in free-text form (survey) or explain their ideas (small group consultation / phone call)

Responses highlighted the following ideas to help carers feel better supported regarding cultural connections:

- Quality training and support for carers, including the ability to engage directly with Elders and Aboriginal community members.
- Policy changes to areas where there are gaps or a lack of practice guidance. For example, the process of deidentifying children and young people who are incorrectly identified as Aboriginal.
- Adherence to policies supporting strong cultural connections.
- Greater support for children and young people of other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Family contact support, including ensuring children and young people are connected to family and community, as well as resourcing to ensure contact can be meaningful and of a higher quality.
- Financial support to support cultural connections. For example, easy to access financial support that allow carers to facilitate family contact, Return to Country trips, and attendance at cultural events.
- Staff training on culture.
- Improvements to cultural events. For example, regular events and weekend events.
- Life story work for children and young people.
- Improvements to family scoping and developing genograms.

It is acknowledged that some areas identified as problems by some carers were acknowledged by other carers as areas going well. The differing views demonstrate the diversity of the carer voice and the complexity of this topic.

More information on the work of the Carer Council can be found on the Council Publications web page:

https://cfc-sa.org.au/carer-council/publications/