



Easy Read guide

NSW Department of  
Communities and Justice

**If your child can't come  
home to live with you**



## How to use this guide



The NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice wrote this guide.

When you see the word 'we', it means the NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice.



We wrote this guide in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

**Bold**  
Not bold

We wrote some important words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 31.



This Easy Read guide is a summary of a booklet.

This means it only includes the most important ideas.



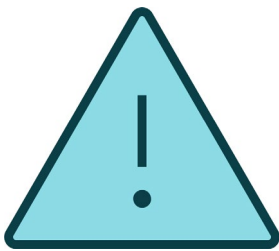
You can find the booklet on our website.

[www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/children-and-families/nsw-child-protection-guide-for-families/if-your-child-cannot-come-back-to-live-with-you.html](http://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/children-and-families/nsw-child-protection-guide-for-families/if-your-child-cannot-come-back-to-live-with-you.html)



You can ask for help to read this guide.

A friend, family member or support person might be able to help you.



This guide includes photos of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It might contain photos of people who have passed away.



We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of the land we live on – Australia.

They were the first people to live on and use the:

- land
- waters.



This guide is quite long.

It includes a lot of information.



You don't need to read it all at once.

## What's in this guide?

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## What is this guide about?



We deliver **child protection services**.



This means we work with families and communities to make sure children are safe.

We can decide if a child is not safe in their home.

We always aim to:



- keep your child safely at home with you



- treat families and communities with respect



- work with you and your community to build skills and knowledge.

We also aim to:



- be honest



- listen to your ideas and respond when you ask for help



- connect you to supports.



This guide is about what happens if your child can't come home to live with you.



We explain where your child could live instead.



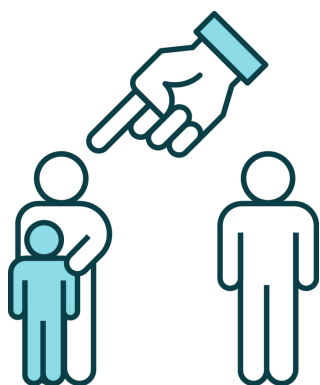
We also explain some supports that can help you.

# What happens if your child can't come home?



Every child deserves to:

- live a safe and happy life
- be part of a family that loves them.



The **Children's Court** will decide whose home will be best for your child to grow up in.



The Children's Court makes legal decisions about children.

They don't work for us.

This means they make their own decisions.



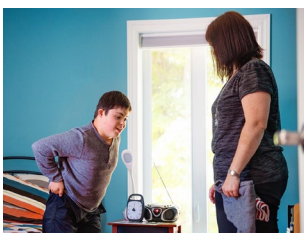
In this guide, we call them the Court.



The Court might decide that your child should:



- live with a **guardian** – who makes decisions for your child about things like their education



- live with a **kinship carer** – who is a family member who we believe can care for your child



- go into **adoption** – where they can become part of a different family by law.

If there's no one in your family or community, we will look for a **foster carer**.



A foster carer is someone who:

- has trained to care for children
- we believe will care for your child in the right way.



If you have more than one child, we might need to make different decisions for each of your children.

This is because each child might need different things.

## If your child lives with a guardian



A guardian can be:

- a friend or family member
- your child's foster carer.



Guardians must be:

- at least 18 years old
- able to give your child a safe and happy home.

They also need to:



- make sure your child has contact with you



- support your child to understand and take part in their **culture**.



Your culture is:

- your way of life
- how you think or act now because of how you grew up
- your beliefs
- what is important to you.



Your child's guardian will be able to make decisions about your child's life.

For example, decisions about their health and school.



They also need to make sure your child feels:

- loved
- safe
- healthy.



You are still your child's parent.

You can:

- spend time with them
- be part of important days, like birthdays.



We might stop working with you and your child if they have a guardian.



If things change and your home becomes safe, you can apply to bring your child home.

You'll need to go to Court to do this.



You'll need to get legal advice to find out if you can do this.

We have a list of legal services on page 25.

## If your child lives with a foster carer



The Court might decide that it's best for your child to live with a foster carer.



If your child's foster carer is a member of their family or community we call that carer a 'kinship carer'.



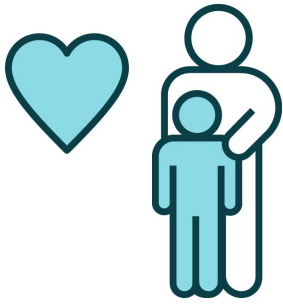
Your child might already be living with a foster carer.  
The Court might decide to keep your child with that foster carer.



But we'll need to find a different carer if the foster carer can't support your child until they are grown up.

This includes giving your child:

- love and support
- the home they need.



When your child has a foster carer, you're still their parent.

You can have a happy and healthy relationship with them.



You'll be able to:

- spend time with your child
- know about decisions that their foster carer makes about them.



If things change and your home becomes safe, you can apply to bring your child home.



You'll need to go to Court to do this.



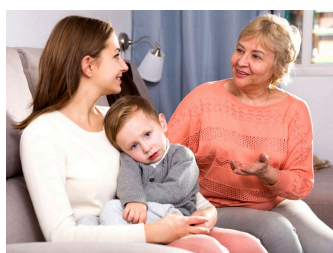
You'll need to get legal advice to find out if you can do this.

We have a list of legal services on page 25.

## Foster carers from other services



Some foster carers get support from other services.  
For example, Anglicare or Barnardos.



Our **caseworkers** can support you to:

- care for your child
- live safely.



If your child lives with one of these foster carers,  
you'll work with:

- a caseworker from the service supporting the foster carer
- one of our caseworkers.



If you go to Court, we will still be involved.

## If your child goes into adoption



If your child can't come home to live with you, they might be able to go into adoption.

Before we put your child into adoption, we will help you understand what adoption means.



We will:

- explain it to you
- give you information.



If your child is younger than 12 years old, you can give **consent** to put them into adoption.

When you give your consent, you say it is okay for someone to do something.



Your child's other parent can also give consent.





Some people choose adoption for their child.

This can be to make sure their child lives in a safe home where they are happy.



We'll also ask if you'd like free **counselling** so you can make the right decision for your family.

Counselling is when you talk to someone about how you think and feel.

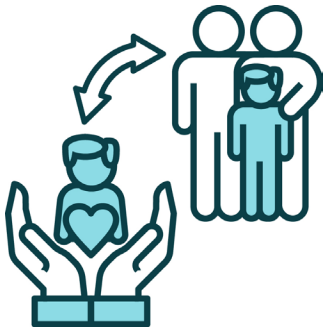


If your child is 12 years or older, they can make their own decision about adoption.



A court called the Supreme Court will decide if a family can take care of your child.

If this happens, the new parents will be your child's parents by law forever.



Your child will still be able to know you and your family.

We call this 'open adoption'.



Adoption is always the last option if your child is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.



We'll think about other places your child can go to be safe.

For example, living with a member of their family or community.



The leader of our organisation must agree before we decide that an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child should go into adoption.

## Creating an Adoption Plan

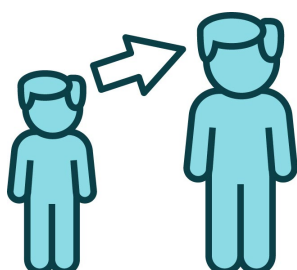


If you are thinking about adoption, we will work with you and your family to create a plan.

We call this an Adoption Plan.

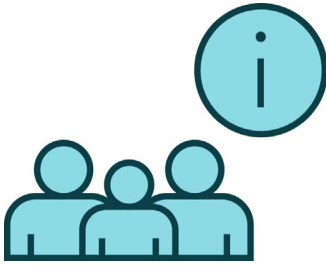


When you create the Adoption Plan, you and your family need to think about what's best for your child.

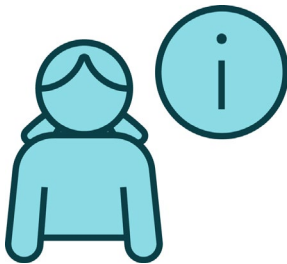


This includes what's best for them as they grow up.

Your child's Adoption Plan includes:



- how your child will get information about you and your family



- how you will get information about your child as they grow



- when and how your child can see you and your family



- the ways your child will understand and take part in their culture.

## What your child's carer must do

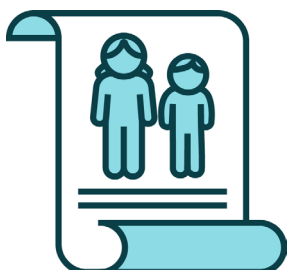


Your child's carer is the person who will care for your child while they're living away from you.



Your child's carer must give them love and care.  
And they must do all the day-to-day things your child needs to be safe.

For example, taking them to school or the doctor.



Carers must follow a document called the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.



Some people call it the Charter of **Rights**.

Rights are rules about how people must treat you:

- fairly
- equally.



The Charter of Rights explains the rights of children.

This includes their right to:

- know their family
- be safe.



If your child is at least 7 years old, we will give them a copy of the Charter of Rights.



A caseworker and your child's carer will work together to explain your child's rights to them.

## If you or your child are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person

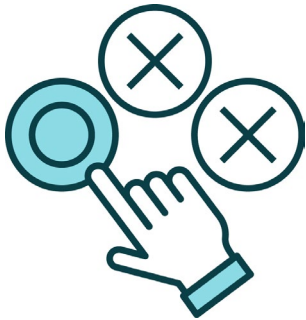


If you or your child are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, we'll try to place them with their:

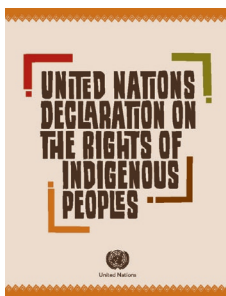
- family
- community
- culture.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have the right to grow up on country with their family and culture.



We will only place your child in different care if we don't have any other choice.



We will share the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples with your child's carer.

It's a document that explains the rights of Indigenous peoples everywhere in the world.



A caseworker will explain what this document means for your child and their carer.



You have the right to ask us if an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person explained this document to:

- your child
- your child's carer.

## Managing your feelings



It's hard when your child can't come home to live with you.

It's normal to feel sad.



Be kind to yourself and ask for support.

Share how you feel with a:

- friend or family member
- support person.



If you have feelings about hurting yourself, talk to someone who can help.

You can get support through Lifeline.



You can call them.

**13 11 14**



Remember that your child needs you in their life.

You're important to your child and they'll always need you.



# Legal services

## Aboriginal Legal Service



You can contact the Aboriginal Legal Service for legal advice.



You can call them.

**1800 733 233**



You can visit their website.

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

## Legal Aid NSW



You can contact Legal Aid NSW for legal advice.



You can call them.

**1300 888 529**



You can visit their website.

[www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au)

## Women's Legal Service



You can contact the Women's Legal Service for legal advice.



You can call them.

**1800 801 501**



You can visit their website.

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

## Disability Advocacy NSW



You can contact Disability Advocacy NSW for support to speak up for yourself.



You can call them.

**1300 365 085**



You can visit their website.

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

## Intellectual Disability Rights Service



You can contact the Intellectual Disability Rights Service for support:

- to speak up for yourself
- if you have an **intellectual disability**.



An intellectual disability affects how you:

- learn new things
- solve problems
- communicate
- do things on your own.



You can call them.

**02 9265 6300**



You can visit their website.

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

## Contact us

Asking for help can show that you:



- are a strong parent



- want your child to be safe.



If you want support, you can visit our website.

[www.dcj.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au)

## Your caseworker



You can also contact your caseworker for information about how to get support.

You can write their contact details below.



Your caseworker's name:

---



Your caseworker's phone number:

---



Your caseworker's email address:

---

## Your local Community Services Centre



You can contact your local Community Services Centre for information about how to get support.

You can write their phone number below.

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## Make a complaint about our services



When you make a **complaint**, you tell someone that something:

- has gone wrong
- isn't working well.



If you want to make a complaint about our services, you can contact the Enquiry, Feedback and Complaints Unit.



You can call them.

**1800 000 164**



You can also send them an email.

**[complaints@facs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:complaints@facs.nsw.gov.au)**

## Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this guide mean.



### **Adoption**

Adoption is when your child can become part of a different family by law.



### **Caseworkers**

Our caseworkers can support you to:

- care for your child
- live safely.



### **Child protection services**

Child protection services work with families and communities to make sure children are safe.

They can decide if a child is not safe in their home.



## Children's Court

The Children's Court makes legal decisions about children.

They don't work for us.

This means they make their own decisions.



## Complaint

When you make a complaint, you tell someone that something:

- has gone wrong
- isn't working well.



## Consent

When you give your consent, you say it is okay for someone to do something.





## **Counselling**

Counselling is when you talk to someone about how you think and feel.

## **Culture**

Your culture is:



- your way of life
- how you think or act now because of how you grew up
- your beliefs
- what is important to you.

## **Foster carer**



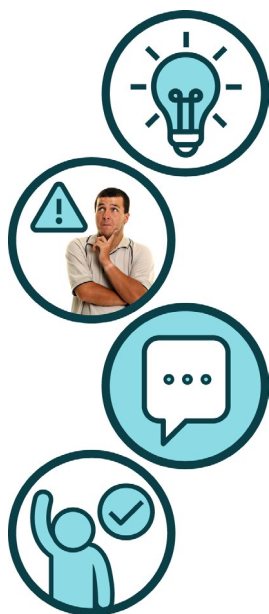
A foster carer is someone who:

- has trained to care for children
- we believe will care for your child in the right way.



## **Guardian**

A guardian makes decisions for your child about things like their education.



## Intellectual disability

An intellectual disability affects how you:

- learn new things
- solve problems
- communicate
- do things on your own.



## Kinship carer

A kinship carer is a family member who we believe can care for your child.



## Rights

Rights are rules about how people must treat you:

- fairly
- equally.



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