

you be  
**YOU**  
HELPING THEM BE THEM

For over 25 years,  
our dedicated foster  
care team has been  
helping people just  
like you to make a  
real difference to the  
lives of foster kids.



Empowered by  
**Anglicare**  
Southern Queensland



# You

Almost anyone who wants to make a difference in a child's life can become a foster carer.

Many people rule themselves out and think they can't apply. It doesn't matter if you are single, male or female, in a same sex partnership, have other children at home or no children at all.

What matters is your passion to make a difference. We'll chat with you about your personal situation during the application process to see how you can best support children in need.

## What types of foster care can I provide?

You don't have to be a full-time carer to make a significant impact in a child or young person's life. There isn't a one size fits all approach. We work together to find out what would work for your lifestyle.

You can choose to offer short-term, long-term, emergency or short breaks (also known as respite care, in which you are giving other long-term carers a break).

Many foster carers start with **short break (respite) care** and become full time foster carers after gaining some experience.

**Emergency care** is where children or young people urgently need a safe place to stay for a short period of time. This may happen when a child first comes into care or while they are waiting to move to a new family. Emergency carers are often skilled in helping children who have experienced abuse and trauma.

**Respite carers** can look after children for a weekend or a few weeks so that their long-term carers can have a break.

**Short-term carers** look after children for weeks or months, up to a maximum of two years while longer term plans are being made.

**Long-term placements** are for children who can't return to live with their families. Carers provide a safe and stable home until they turn 18 years old and start adulthood.

# Your Journey

Becoming an approved foster carer is a deeply personalised journey that we take with you. The application process is relatively straight-forward, but understandably thorough and can take up to 6 months. Although it involves interviews, safety checks and skills training, we're here to support you at every step along the way.

A foster carer can help provide a sanctuary and stability to those that are caught in a situation beyond their control. Here are steps you can take through Anglicare Southern Queensland to become a foster carer and help make a positive change in a child's life.

## Step 1: Contacting us

Register your interest in fostering by filling out our online enquiry form at [youbeyou.org.au](http://youbeyou.org.au) and we will provide you with essential information about being a foster carer.

## Step 2: Meeting us

Come and meet our team at an **information session** and discuss any questions you have about being a foster carer. When you're ready, we're here to take you on the journey.

## Step 3: Knowing you

We really want to get to know you and ensure your home environment is a secure and **safe place for a child**. This will include home safety and background checks.

## Step 4: Training you

Foster care training will help you to understand the role of the foster carer and **provide you with the skills you need** to be a great carer.

## Step 5: Reviewing you

We will commence a **full assessment** to determine your suitability for foster care.

## Step 6: Ready you

Once the assessment has been completed successfully, you will receive approval to become a foster carer and **your journey begins**.

“If you're interested in finding out more, the first thing to do is speak to one of our experienced team who can talk you through how it all works.”



# Your Home

## Do I need my own home?

It's a common misconception that you need to own your own home. You don't need to be a homeowner. If you are renting you might need approval from your real estate agency or landlord to have another child or young person in the home.

## Do children in care need their own bedroom?

Yes. Having their own bedroom helps children and young people feel they have a safe space. What they need the most in a time of transition is a sense of belonging and feeling welcomed. A space they can call their own for that moment in time. Siblings can share a bedroom but we ask that children who aren't related have their own bedroom. It is possible for children to share a room, which is assessed when you apply.

During the application process, we'll talk about what kind of space you need at home to accommodate children and young people in your care.

## We're in this together

When you become a foster carer, you are partnered with a dedicated case practitioner to provide the support you need to make caring for a foster child a rewarding and fulfilling experience. You also become part of a wider community of Anglicare carers in Queensland.

We're here to connect you to the extensive support that we offer that includes ongoing training programs, resources and access to wider community groups at each step in your journey with us.

We know that sometimes you just need someone to talk to. And this could be at any time of the day or night. So, we also provide 24/7 phone support for you to call us at any time.





## Our Story – Ruth & Peter

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I saw people who were foster carers when I was growing up and it had a big impact on me so much so that we made the decision 25 years ago to become foster carers.

We had a home and thought we could make a difference for children in need. We went through and did the training and next thing we knew we were foster parents. Over the years we've probably cared for over a hundred children and raised our own kids too.

I think it's about seeing the difference you can make in a kid's life. If people have a nurturing environment in their home it brings so many benefits to the child.

The aim is always for the children to return to their biological parents, and being a foster carer helps give the child a safe and secure home in the meantime.

There are so many kids out there that need help.

Our advice is to be tolerant. Be prepared that some of these children are coming to you with issues, so you're not going to be able to change them overnight.

“ It brings us a lot of joy, being able to feel the love in our home ”

*Peter, Anglicare Foster Carer*

\*To protect the identities of the children and carers in these stories, names and images have been changed.



# Your Support

## What financial support do carers receive?

At all stages, we're here to help you fulfil your role as a carer, however, it's important that you are still able to financially support yourself and your family.

The financial support available for your foster child includes Queensland government payments like the Fortnightly Carers Allowance. The amount you get will depend on a number of factors such as the child's age. The payment would be expected to meet the basic day to day costs for things like shoes, clothing and so on.

We will work with you so it's clear from the start as to who has financial responsibility for costs that fall outside the Fortnightly Carers Allowance.

## What support will Anglicare provide?

It's important to know that we're in this together. When you become a foster carer, you are partnered with a dedicated case practitioner to provide the support you need to make caring for a foster child a rewarding and fulfilling experience. You also become part of a wider community of Anglicare carers in Queensland.

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## Will I be connected to other carers?

Yes absolutely! We'd love you to get involved and meet your fellow carers. The wealth of experience, support and advice from the community is so valuable.

There are lots of celebrations and events during the year where you will have the opportunity to meet fellow carers. You're more than welcome to join our events, we have a number of community groups and even training opportunities that are tailored to foster and kinship carers.





“ This is by far the most rewarding thing I’ve ever done. ”

*Renae, Anglicare Foster Carer*

## Our Story – Renae & Jay

We became foster carers 15 years ago. In that time, we’ve probably looked after more than 50 kids. Some because their parents weren’t quite able to care for them, others because they had been pulled from their homes by police, because they were in danger, abused or neglected.

This is by far the most rewarding thing I’ve ever done. Seeing the happiness in their faces makes it worthwhile.

Especially with the younger ones at Christmas time. All of a sudden they wake up in the

morning and they’ve got presents to open. It’s that smile they get when they realise they’re stable. They’ve got a roof over their head. They get food. Simple things like being able to go to the fridge and get an apple.

We always talk to our kids before taking anyone in. When a new child arrives, I’ll make sure they have photos of their families in their room so they feel connected. We celebrate their big milestones, the first steps, their first birthdays and so on. It makes them feel cared for and in a stable home.

It’s one of the most rewarding things you could ever do. I wouldn’t give it up for anything. But you need to take the time to sit down and think about it. Talk to your own kids. Talk to your extended family.

Do your research. Have an understanding of what being a foster or kinship carer involves. Go in with your eyes open.



# Maintaining connection to country

Our cultural support workers play a vital role and are committed in ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are in out-of-home care keep connected to their family, kin, community and culture.

Noel Doyle is one of our cultural support workers and has the important role of assisting all young people in care to identify, verify and connect with their traditional country and that the country identified by Queensland Child Safety is correct.

He investigates by talking to key people within the young person's life, like their mother, carer, grandparents and close family friends to build their family tree.

"My aim is to connect a young person to their great great great grandparent and beyond," Noel said.

"With the naming and identification of a great great great grandparent, I can then go and view their native title extract to view a list of the identified apical ancestor."

"The great great great grandparent surname should match up with an identified apical ancestor, when I find this match I am able to verify and make connection to country."

Noel said explaining his process of gathering information to non-indigenous carers is important as he brings forward the young person's language, cultural information, map of country, song, dance, connection to other family members and community.

"Engaging the carer is crucial to the young person's development as it will be the carer who will encourage the use of their language, art and culture in daily use," he said.

"The connection process and cultural information I provide for each young person is family and cultural knowledge and through the young person's journey we can build a strong cultural sense of identity, which will build on their self-esteem, pride and emotional wellbeing."


"My drive to bring forward Family & Cultural Knowledge for each young person in care and their carer inspires me to attend work daily.

**"All Aboriginal People are Traditional Owners, not all Aboriginal People know their Traditional Country."**

"Through my process each young person will know who they connect through to connect to their Traditional Country."







“ My case worker at Anglicare has been so supportive throughout it all. Nothing’s too much trouble for them. There is always support there and they are onto any issues quickly ”

*Alan, Anglicare Foster Carer*

## My Story – Alan

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Seven years ago I was working as a teacher’s aide in the special education unit of a high school. It was there that I met children who were in foster care.

I’m a single dad myself, I have a teenage son. And I decided I could do something to help.

I offer help and care in a number of ways for a mix of kids including short term, respite and emergency care when it’s needed. It’s a chance to give other carers a break and the kids really enjoy coming over for a weekend to stay with my son and I.

The most fulfilling part of being a foster carer is watching the children move on and return to their families. Also seeing them grow into adults, living independently and working.

The ultimate goal is to get the children back to their families where they should be. It’s hard to see them go but knowing they are back with family and everything is okay – that’s the goal. You give them guidance and then stand back and see them move on – that’s fantastic.

My case worker at Anglicare has been so supportive throughout it all. Nothing’s ever too

much trouble for them. They are really good and they also match the kids with my son really well. If there are any problems, there is always support there and they are on to any issues quickly.

I found the process to become a carer very thorough. The application process was pretty long and took about six months and there was a lot to go through but I understand why. They have got to make sure people are doing it for the right reasons.





“ The most rewarding part is knowing you’ve helped a young person in need to have as normal a life as possible ”

*Sarah, Anglicare Foster Carer*

## Our Story – Sarah & Tom

Tom and I have almost lost count of exactly how many children have come into our home.

We’ve cared for approximately 30 children over the last 17 years. And that was in between raising our sons and completing my degrees in teaching.

It’s a team effort. My work involves teaching children with a disability so Tom is the primary carer for our family. He’s really a great dad.

Our first contact with the care system was through my family. My five nieces (the youngest was 5 at the time) needed help. They were

placed in three different houses as no one was able to take the five girls together. They just needed to all be together as a family.

It’s important to keep families together, so we decided to continue on as foster carers. Some kids have been with us temporarily for respite or because of an emergency.

Because I work as a special education teacher, we often accept children with additional needs. Kids with additional needs just need a little bit more nurturing and attention. You have to work at building relationships with them.

The most rewarding part is knowing you have helped a young person in need to have as normal a life as possible. That’s precious. It may not be obvious at the time but you will see the results in the long term. Seeing the reunification with their families when it works is very rewarding.

We still keep in touch with the children we’ve cared for in the past. It’s special when the children tell us they appreciate what we did for them and say ‘I know I wasn’t particularly nice to you back then’ but they now appreciate it.





## Join an Information Session

The best way for you to learn more about foster caring is to join one of our regular Information Sessions. You can learn and ask questions directly from our foster care team on topics including:

- How and why children come into care and the different placement types they need
- The role of a foster carer, the supports available and the steps to become a foster carer

Learn more and sign up at [youbeyou.org.au](http://youbeyou.org.au)



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