

A Fair Go For Kids in Foster Care

The National Foster Care Sustainability Group

Ensuring every child in foster care has a healthy, sustainable and supportive family home experience.

WHO WE ARE

Families Australia provides policy advice to the Federal Government and Parliament on ways to increase the wellbeing of families, especially those experiencing the greatest vulnerability and marginalisation. It does so on behalf of over 450 member organisations around Australia who work to advance family wellbeing and participation.

The **National Foster Care Sustainability Group**, established by Families Australia, is a coalition of NGOs and foster carers working to shift strategic federal levers to unlock meaningful improvements in state and territory child protection systems.

Our mission is simple: to provide more equitable support for children in care and for foster carers through small but impactful changes to health, finance and workplace policies.

THE PROBLEM



There is a **decrease** in foster carers entering the child protection system



And an **increase** in foster carers leaving the child protection system



Resulting in an **increase** of children entering residential care

Every child deserves to grow up in a safe and nurturing home. However, for many Australian children, this is not their reality. There are nearly 45,000 children across Australia in the out-of-home care system. As the demand for care remains, the number of active and new foster carers is rapidly declining. This leaves vulnerable children without the home-based support, stability and care that is critical for their recovery and development and sees an overreliance on residential care.

This places immense financial pressure on governments but, more importantly, can lead to poorer outcomes for children, young people, and their carers, families, and communities.

Caring for Australia's children is a shared responsibility. We must act now to improve access to healthcare, reduce the financial strain on foster carers, and ensure equitable workplace entitlements.

Without implementing these necessary changes to policy, the number of foster carers across the country will continue to decline, leaving vulnerable children without a home-based environment or a foster family to care for them.

Together, we can ensure every child in foster care is given a fair go.

A FAIR GO FOR KIDS IN FOSTER CARE

OUR ASKS

All children in care deserve a fair go, and so do the foster carers who support them. We are asking the Federal Government to improve access to healthcare for all kids in care, ease the financial burden on foster carers, and provide fairer workplace entitlements to carers, so that every child in foster care can access the support they deserve.

1

Prioritise access to medical and therapeutic support

National 'Health Access Card' for immediate no- or low-cost medical and therapeutic services for all children in care.

2

Reduce financial pressure

Clearer ATO guidance on carer allowances, to give jurisdictions confidence to increase payments without unintended tax burdens.

3

Equitable leave entitlements

Adjust the National Employment Standards to help foster carers in paid employment start or continue fostering.

44,868

Children were in out-of-home care as at 30 June 2024

+88%

The % increase in the number of children and young people entering residential care since 2017

-21%

The % decrease in the number of children and young people with foster carers since 2017

OUR GROUP



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