

Carers' voices drive change: MacKillop launches support initiatives during Children's Week

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In response to direct feedback from its foster and kinship carers, MacKillop Family Services has developed a series of initiatives aimed at providing more meaningful, practical support to those caring for children and young people. These initiatives are designed to raise practice standards and initiate similar improvements across the foster care sector.

The announcement coincides with **Children's Week (18–26 October)**, a time dedicated to celebrating children and their right to thrive—something foster carers champion through their support and care. MacKillop's initiatives reflect a commitment to transforming care practices and ensuring carers feel heard, valued, and supported.

These changes come about as a direct result of a comprehensive review that included carer surveys, exit interviews, complaint insights, sector research, and focus groups with carers and staff. From this, ten key practice areas were identified and are now being implemented across NSW, Victoria, and Western Australia.

Ten Key Practice Areas:

- Regular high-quality carer consultation
- Increased support during allegations or investigations
- Emotional and psychological support when children leave
- Carer-specific learning and development platform
- Training on navigating the child protection system
- Foster carer Peer Mentoring initiative
- Development of a carer feedback loop
- Case Manager familiarisation with carers' histories and assessments
- Comprehensive case management induction training
- Maintain meaningful relationships with part-time carers and carers on-hold

The ten key practice areas aim to improve carer wellbeing, strengthen relationships between carers and practitioners, and ensure carers feel supported, respected, and empowered.

Jasmine Perry, MacKillop's National Leader of Foster Care Development, says, "These initiatives have been developed to refine and enhance that experience for carers. We believe it is testament to this consultation and collaboration that our carer survey data tells us that carer satisfaction has risen by 20% in two years.

"Our hope is that these enhancements - which prove to be working - can improve the sector more broadly and not just practice at MacKillop. Carers are not just consulted; they're kept informed every

step of the way," Ms. Perry adds.

Key learnings from the project highlight the importance of relational interactions over transactional ones, systematic tracking of carer feedback, and targeted training to support a skilled and stable workforce. Where workforce instability is unavoidable, MacKillop is investing in systems to reduce the impact on carers.

What sets this project apart is its unwavering focus on carers, not just as providers of care, but as partners in the care system. Their voices shape the initiative, and their experiences continue to guide its evolution.

For more information about foster care, visit mackillop.org.au

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[MacKillop Family Services](http://mackillop.org.au) is a national child and family welfare organisation with extensive experience delivering therapeutic and trauma-informed services. We operate residential care, foster care, family support, disability support, youth homelessness and education programs across NSW, VIC, WA, the ACT and the NT.