



Helping
children thrive.

Out of Home
Care

Uniting



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Supporting vulnerable children and young people

Our Out of Home Care programs help vulnerable children and young people by ensuring they have a safe and secure home environment. We also offer support for young people to live independently as they transition from out-of-home care.

In this booklet, we provide general information on our programs to help you decide if you'd like to become a carer and what program may be suited to you.

Foster care

This program matches suitable foster carers with at-risk or vulnerable children or young people, to give them a safe and secure home. It can vary from a short-term emergency or overnight stay for a child or young person in difficulty, to long-term care when they're not expected to return to their family.

We can offer short-term care from a few days to a few months, depending on the child or young person's needs. We also provide weekend respite to look after children or young people in foster care for occasional or regular weekend stays.

Foster Care (Retainer)

Our on-call (Retainer) program gives vulnerable children and young people immediate short-term emergency accommodation. Unlike short-term foster care, our retainer program provides emergency care, while longer term options are sourced for the child or young person.

During this time, you'll be supported to help us provide care to vulnerable children and young people with an immediate need.



Adoption and permanent care

If a child cannot live with their family, they can find the safe and secure home they need through our Adoption and Permanent Care program.

Our program is for children up to 12 who need a permanent place to call home. Babies under 12-months who have special needs can also be placed in our program to receive the love, care and support they need.

Kinship care

Like foster care, kinship care provides a safe and secure home for children and young people who can no longer live in the family home. Our Kinship Care programs work with the child or young person's extended family or family friend to take on primary carer responsibilities.

Kinship First Supports

Our First Supports program assesses your kinship placement to help you with the child's safety, stability, development needs and connection to culture.

We help you to identify the support you need, develop you as a carer, and support you in meeting your immediate material and financial needs. Our family services component can offer support for up to 12 months from the date of placement.

Leaving Care

We provide support for young people as they prepare to leave their foster home. Our Leaving Care program connects young people leaving foster care with accommodation assistance, employment, education and other services that help them live an independent life.

Lead Tenant

Our Lead Tenant program helps young people aged 15-19 build confidence and learn the skills needed to live independently before leaving care. Our Lead Tenant volunteers live rent-free in a share house to provide a safe and supportive home environment as young people transition out of care. Case managers and youth workers support volunteers.

As a Lead Tenant volunteer, you'll be a positive role model and provide daily guidance to help young people understand how to conduct themselves in the home and the community.



Who can be a carer?

Carers come from all walks of life. Some of our carers are single, some are married. Some have children, some don't. Sexual orientation, religion and (dis)ability are not factors in becoming a carer.

What skills do carers need?

As a carer you'll have a rewarding role which can be challenging too. You'll need empathy, compassion, flexibility and the ability to work as part of a team.

Being a carer will also call on you to act as a mentor as you guide children and young people in your care to discover who they are as they grow. At times you'll need to work with people in the child's life like their parents and case workers. We'll help you throughout this journey with specialised training and round-the-clock support.

How to become a carer

The first step is to get in touch with us to register your interest. We'll then give you a call to discuss becoming a carer.

The next step is to attend an information session where you'll learn what is involved in becoming a carer and get the information you need to make an informed decision.

After the information session, you'll complete an accreditation process. This step ensures the safety of children in care and includes health, police, working with children and home and environment checks.

Once you have completed accreditation, you'll be sent information on fostering children, child safety and a range of in-depth resources to support you throughout your carer journey.

About Uniting

Uniting has stood with local communities in Victoria and Tasmania for more than 100 years, delivering services to people of all ages.

We work in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First Peoples and as the traditional owners and custodians of this land.

We celebrate diversity and value the lived experience of people of every ethnicity, faith, age, disability, culture, language, gender identity, sex and sexual orientation. We welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse and non-binary, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) people at our services. We pledge to provide inclusive and non-discriminatory services.

Where to get help

Our programs vary region to region. Call your local Uniting location to find out what is available to you.

Bayside Peninsula and Southern Melbourne

T 03 8792 8999

North East Metro Melbourne, Hume and Moreland

T 03 8470 5000

Gippsland

T 03 5144 7777

Kingston

T 03 9192 8100

Maroondah

T 03 8870 4020

West Melbourne and Central Highlands

T 03 9051 2000

Whitehorse

T 03 9692 9400

Whittlesea

T 03 9192 8100

Wimmera

T 03 5362 4000

Kinship Care Advice Line

T 03 8470 5000
Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Visit
unitingvictas.org.au/foster-care

Interpreters available on request.



unitingvictas.org.au

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