

CHARTER OF RIGHTS

for children and young people in care in the Northern Territory



INFORMATION FOR CARERS

Who is the Charter for?

This is a Charter of Rights for all children and young people in out of home care in the Northern Territory.

All children everywhere have rights as outlined in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. This is a convention in international law that has been agreed to by 191 countries, including Australia, and is about all the basic human rights that apply to children.

The Charter of Rights for children in out of home care in the Northern Territory draws special attention to and helps to promote the rights of children who are living in out of home care. It is consistent with the rights outlined in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the *National Standards for Out of Home Care*.

What is the purpose of the Charter?

The Charter builds on the work that Carers already do to ensure children and young people in out of home care are protected and have the best opportunities.

The Charter contains a list of 12 rights that every child in out of home care can expect to have, things they should be able to do and what they can expect from the people who care for them. Introduction of a Charter will help children in out of home care to know their rights, understand them and have their rights promoted by the people that care for them.

The Charter of Rights was written with children and young people in care and young people who have left care. Their voices are represented by the words used to explain the rights contained in the Charter.

How will a child or young person receive a copy of the Charter?

Under section 68A of the *Care and Protection of Children Act* it is a requirement that a copy of the Charter of Rights be given to all children and young people as soon as practicable after coming into out of home care and explained to them in age appropriate language. This is the responsibility of the Caseworker.

Some children will be too young to receive a copy of the Charter or discuss their rights. A copy of the Charter will still be provided to you as their Carer and the child's rights promoted through the care, planning and casework they receive, and development of their Care Plan.

What does this mean for a Carer?

Carers are the people who know the child best and what each day is like for the child and whether their rights are being met.

You can support the child or young person that you care for through the care you provide, opportunities you give them and helping them understand and have a say in decisions that affect them.

For a child or young person, rights can be a difficult thing to understand. As a Carer, you can help to explain what rights are and explain them to a child in a way they will understand. For example, you might explain 'privacy' to a child by speaking to them about where they keep their things and where they can spend time alone.

Questions?

If you have any questions or concerns about the Charter of Rights or the individual rights of a child that you care for, you can contact the Caseworker or DCF office.

