

1. What is the policy regarding the supervision provided to children in the care of the CEO of the Department of Children & Families?

Carers have a duty of care to provide reasonable and age appropriate supervision for a child placed in their care.

2. What is the policy and practice around providing supervision for children in the care of the CEO of the Department of Children & Families who have known behavioural problems?

Children are required to be placed with registered carers who have been assessed as being able to provide appropriate care for a child. Carers receive training and support from the department. Registration is subject to regular review and carers are required to meet specified standards of care.

Some children will be placed in residential care settings. Staff in these settings are assessed as suitable to provide appropriate care for children and receive training and support from the department.

It is a requirement that where children have challenging behaviours carers will be provided with additional support. Additional support and specific risk management strategies are included in the child's care plan. Care plans are a legislative requirement and must be reviewed initially at 2 months and thereafter every 6 months by the child's Case Manager.

Carers have a duty of care to reasonably respond to the individual supervision needs of a child in their care.

3. What is the policy around dealing with sexualised behaviours in children in the care of the CEO of the Department of Children & Families?

It is DCF policy that children or young people with a history of violence, sexual assault or who exhibit sexualised behaviours, which indicate a risk of offending against children, will not be placed in households where younger or vulnerable children are present.

It is a requirement that background information about the child or young person is provided to carers. Extra attention is given to ensure that carers fully understand what will be involved in caring for the child, their role in managing the behaviour, and reinforcing any therapeutic interventions.

The child's care plan will include treatment and behaviour management and strategies for monitoring risk of harm to other children.

4. How are these cases managed in terms of providing protection for other children, who may be subjected to the potentially dangerous behaviour of a child?

It is DCF policy that Case workers carefully consider and document the risk posed to members of a carer's family. Placement planning for these children needs to be based on a current and accurate assessment of the child's behaviours, with treatment and behaviour management strategies incorporated in the child's case plan.

It is a requirement that where children or young people who are considered at risk of violent or sexual offending are placed with foster carers, no additional children will be placed with that carer

In addition, the child's care plan will include treatment and behaviour management and strategies for monitoring risk of harm to other children.

5. What services are provided to children who perpetrate sexual offences against other children?

Where appropriate and based on client needs therapeutic support services are accessed to assist the clients.

6. Is every foster carer advised of the nature of the behavioural problem(s) of a child placed in their care?

Case managers are required to complete an Essential Information Record which is a form that informs carers what they need to know to care for the child and must be provided to carers within 3 days of the placement. There is always the option of discussion if the carer feels the need to speak with the case manager regarding a child's behavioural problem or matters contained in the record.

7. What assistance is provided to foster carers who are caring for a child with behavioural problems?

Case managers provide strategies to assist the carer in supporting the young person and the case manager can make a referral to the departmental Therapeutic services team or to an external provider for clinical support.

8. How many children in Alice Springs reside in group homes operated by the Department of Children & Families?

As at 30 August 2011, 22 children reside in Alice Springs group homes operated by the Department.

9. What is the staffing ratio of child per worker for these group homes and how is this worked out?

The staffing ratio is generally 1:2.

This is worked out on case by case basis. The needs of the children are taken into account when working out the staffing ratio. For children who have complex needs, such as risk issues, affects of trauma, behavioural and/or health issues, the higher staffing ratio may be applied.