

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Legislative Scrutiny Committee](#)  
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Dear Committee,

I write to express my strong support for the *Care and Protection of Children Legislation Amendment (Every Child Matters) Bill 2026*.

I do so not only in a professional capacity, but from more than **30 years of personal experience as a foster carer**, supporting children with complex trauma backgrounds to heal, grow, and maintain connection to family and culture. Over three decades, I have worked alongside many children, families, and systems, and I have seen both what helps children thrive—and what causes them harm.

A consistent and deeply concerning theme throughout this time has been the **lack of certainty and stability for children in care**, and the lasting impact this has on their development and wellbeing.

### **The Critical Importance of Stability for Children**

Children in care do not experience childhood in the same way as their peers. Their lives are often shaped by decisions outside their control, delays in the system, and uncertainty about where they belong.

Across my years of caring, I have repeatedly seen how **prolonged uncertainty undermines a child's sense of safety**. Children need to know:

1. Where they will live
2. Who will care for them long-term
3. What relationships will remain constant

Without this, they cannot fully settle, attach, or thrive.

Even everyday childhood experiences can become inaccessible due to system delays and indecision. Simple opportunities—such as travel, participation in cultural events, or shared experiences with peers—are often denied or indefinitely delayed due to

unclear consent pathways or pending legal processes.

Over time, this creates a quiet but profound harm: children internalise that their lives are “on hold,” and that they are different from others.

### **The Harm of Delayed and Unclear Permanency Pathways**

In my experience, one of the most damaging aspects of the current system is the **lack of clarity and timeliness in permanency planning**, particularly in relation to reunification.

I have always believed strongly in fostering as a bridge to reunification where it is safe and possible. I have actively supported children to maintain relationships with their parents, extended family, and community—facilitating contact, building connections, and ensuring identity and belonging are preserved.

However, I have also seen how the concept of reunification can become **uncertain, undefined, or inconsistently applied**, leading to decisions that do not reflect the child’s lived reality.

Children can be thriving in stable placements, while maintaining meaningful and culturally appropriate connections to their families. Disrupting this stability—particularly through poorly planned or conceptually unclear decisions—can cause significant distress and retraumatisation.

What children need is not indefinite waiting, but **clear, well-considered, and timely decisions** about their future, grounded in their best interests and lived experience.

### **The Impact of System Gaps on Development**

Over 30 years, I have also seen how gaps in coordination and accountability across systems—child protection, education, and health—directly impact children’s outcomes.

For example, where planning and communication are inadequate, children can be left without appropriate educational supports, resulting in reduced school engagement or exclusion. In most cases, carers are left to manage complex behavioural and educational needs without the necessary system backing or timely intervention. Most often resulting in the placement breakdown and the child needing to be relocated to another strange family.

For children already dealing with trauma, these gaps compound disadvantage and significantly affect their long-term trajectory.

### **Why This Bill Matters**

The *Every Child Matters* Bill represents an important and necessary shift.

From my lived experience, reform is urgently needed to:

1. **Prioritise stability and permanence** in decision-making
2. **Reduce delays** that leave children in prolonged uncertainty
3. **Ensure accountability** across systems supporting the child
4. **Recognise the child's lived experience**, not just procedural requirements

After 30 years, I can say with confidence that **children do best when they are given certainty—early, clearly, and consistently.**

### **Conclusion**

Children in care cannot wait years for stability. Childhood is short, and the window for healing, development, and belonging is finite.

This legislation is an important step toward ensuring that children are not left in limbo, but instead are given the **certainty, stability, and support they need to thrive.**

I strongly support the passage of this Bill and commend its focus on placing children's lived experience at the centre of decision-making.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission.

Yours sincerely,

