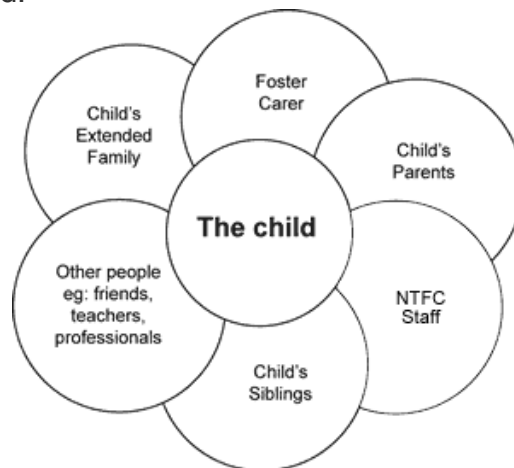


Who shares the care

People who become foster carers also become members of a team of many people given the responsibility to provide care, support and services to children in care. The number of people in an individual child's care team varies depending on the child's personal and professional needs. The diagram below is representative of a typical care team.

The child is represented in the middle as all of the partners in the care team have a shared responsibility and focus which is the care and protection of children and young people. The child is always the main concern and everyone must prioritise the best interests of the child.



All of the people in the care team will have different roles and responsibilities depending upon their relationship to the child. The following table demonstrates some of the key roles and responsibilities of foster carers and NT Families and Children (NTFC) Case Managers because other than the child's birth family, these are two of the most important people involved in the child's life.

Sharing the Care: Roles and Responsibilities

Foster Carers	NTFC Case Managers
<p>Providing a caring home and experiences that help the child's physical, social and emotional development.</p> <p>Help the child understand why they are in care and to assist the child express their feelings about this.</p>	<p>Assist in the selection of the best available placement for the child.</p> <p>Monitor the wellbeing of the child and ensure the placement is a safe place for the child's physical, emotional and social development.</p>

<p>Understanding the needs of children of different ages and to guide and instruct as necessary.</p> <p>Maintaining information about the child and / or their family in a confidential manner.</p> <p>Provide consistency and firmness appropriate to the age and maturity of the child.</p> <p>Not criticising the child's family or undermining the child's opinion of them.</p> <p>Support the efforts of the care team to work towards having the child return to live with their birth parents or extended family, unless otherwise specified.</p> <p>Seek help if the child's behaviour is difficult to cope with or if the child experiences problems with school etc.</p> <p>Encourage the child to continue with their religious or cultural beliefs.</p> <p>Always work with the child's best interests at heart.</p> <p>Participate in planning and decision-making related to the child.</p> <p>Discuss with the caseworkers any medical, health or therapeutic treatment prescribed for the child by a practitioner before the treatment commences.</p> <p>Some practical tasks undertaken by a carer may also include taking the child to the doctor or dentist; social or sporting activities; purchasing clothes; getting haircuts.</p>	<p>Ensure the child has access and contact with their immediate and extended family (unless otherwise specified) and monitor the impact on the child.</p> <p>Undertake the administrative tasks involved in the maintenance of a placement.</p> <p>Consult with other specialists and agencies as required.</p> <p>Ensure regular reviews and case conferences are held.</p> <p>To support the child and their carer throughout the placement.</p>
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Involvement of the Child's Parents and Extended Family



The child's birth parents and extended family remain a critical part of the child's life, irrespective of the reasons why the child entered care. They will be encouraged to remain actively involved in the child's life while s/he is in care to enhance the possibility that the child can return to live at home. Even if this is not possible, the family should remain involved to maintain important familial relationships throughout the child's life.

Things in which the child's parents and extended family can be involved are:

- planning and decision-making related to their child
- contribute to the care and support of the child eg purchasing items for the child, having the child stay for visits, unless this is otherwise specified
- notifying the Case Manager of any significant changes in their lives which could impact on their child in care
- maintaining constructive contact and relationships with their child, their caseworker and carer
- accepting the foster family as part of the child's life.