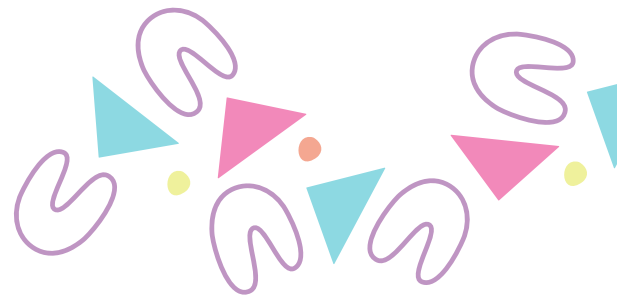




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SERVING CHILDREN, FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES



Fostering Matters

For caregivers with experience





We are Key Assets Australia

Key Assets Australia has been operating in Australia since 2007 and is connected with the Martin James Foundation, an international not-for-profit organisation. We share our knowledge and experience which is mutually beneficial.

During this time we have developed a strong reputation as an innovative leader in the child and family welfare sector.

As a not-for-profit we are passionate about delivering outstanding services that enable all children and families to achieve their potential.

We can draw on our group's wealth of knowledge, safeguarding and child protection practice, therapeutic models of intervention, academic research and qualitative programs to continually strive to improve the support and services we offer our carers and families.

When we meet and talk with foster and kinship carers across Australia where Key Assets Australia (KAA) operates, we hear such powerful stories that motivate people to become carers. We are always inspired by the

positive impact that our carers have on the lives of each and every child or young person in their care.

Good caring requires preparation, training, and assistance from your support team to stay connected. Celebrating the big and the small wins together with your friends and family.

We look forward to supporting you on your carer journey, creating positive and lasting outcomes for children, young people and families together.



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Important Considerations about this document

To protect the privacy and confidentiality of children and young people, all names in this document have been changed, and stock images are used in the stories shared. These stories aim to reflect the experiences and impact of foster care without revealing personal information. Throughout this document, "Kids in care" refers to children and young people in foster care; "Carer" refers to foster carers, who provide support and care for these children and young people; "KAA" stands for Key Assets Australia.





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Why are we called Key Assets Australia?

The name 'Key Assets' reflects our belief that carers are the agents of change for children in their care and, therefore, each of our carers is a 'Key Asset'.

Good carers nurture a child's or young person's strength and resilience to grow. Carers can and do make a positive contribution to supporting children in achieving their potential.

We believe children and young people should have the opportunity to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy life and achieve their goals.

Our logo mirrors our purpose by a structured geometric pattern that repeats and strengthens each time a new piece is added. Each colour and piece represents the diversity of our services as well as the contribution each individual makes. The "heart shape" of our logo reinforces the message that people are at the very "heart" of what we do and why we exist.

The gap in the heart reminds us that no matter

how far we have come there is always more we can do. Key Assets Australia continues to be committed to finding the solution to complete the shape.

Our culture and core values make us Key Assets Australia:

- ▲ Recognising everybody counts and is accountable.
- ▲ Providing high quality and safe services.
- ▲ Achieving excellence through continuous improvement.
- ▲ Cultivation of knowledge, innovation and learning.



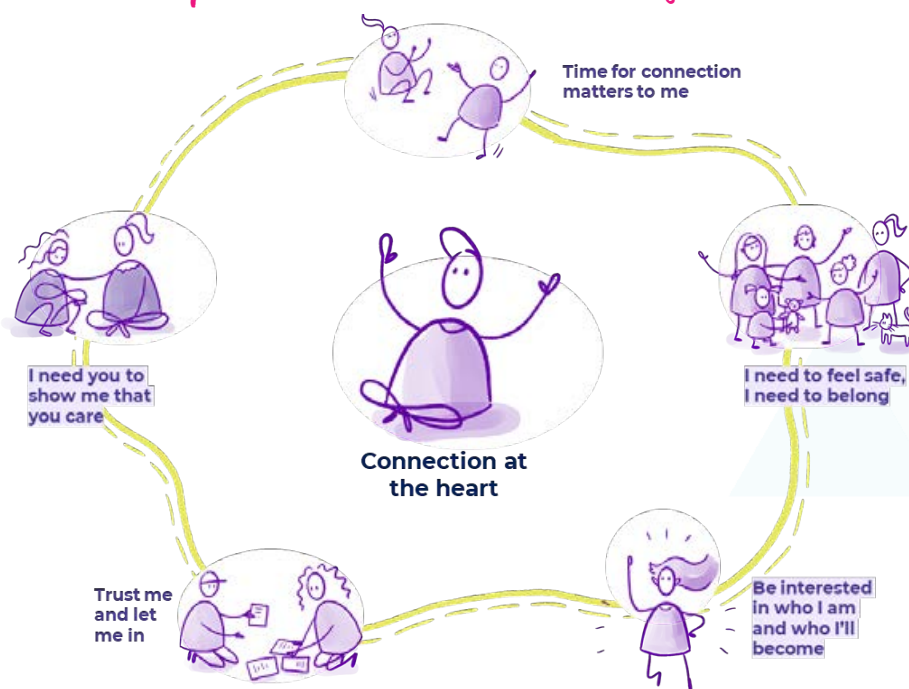
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SERVING CHILDREN, FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES



All children and young people thrive and connect to family, community and culture.

The vision of what matters to young people in care.



STRATEGIC ROADMAP

2025 - 2030

Our plan for the next 5 years, from the perspective of children and young people.



Why become a carer with Key Assets Australia?



We believe that our carers have the opportunity to cherish children and young people, help them to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy life and achieve their goals.

As a carer with Key Assets Australia you will be part of a community that:

- Values the role of the carer and family
- Places the carer and the child at the centre of practice
- Commits to working alongside carers
- Provides tailored support from a dedicated Social Worker
- Focuses on supporting carers through training
- Is inclusive and welcomes children, young people and carers from the LGBTQIA+ communities
- Is welcoming of all faiths and religions that value and respect children or young people's rights to choose their beliefs.

We will achieve our purpose by upholding the following pledges:

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

1. Set high **standards** for ourselves and the **care** and **support** we provide for you
2. Be on your side and **accept** you for who you are and what you want to be
3. Prioritise your **safety**, connections and build your **resilience**
4. Be **passionate**, **caring** and **respectful** in everything that we do
5. **Listen** to and **learn** from you so that we can do things better

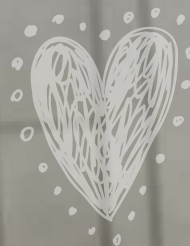
CUSTOMERS, CARERS AND STAFF

1. Deliver **excellence** through **quality** service provision, **collaboration** and **measuring outcomes**
2. Act with **honesty** and **transparency**
3. Deliver **innovative** services in **cost effective** ways
4. **Challenge** the norm, ask questions and keep our promises
5. Conduct our business with financial **integrity** to achieve sustainability and **value**

COMMUNITIES

1. Build a **socially responsible** and **friendly** presence in each of our communities
2. Value **diversity** and **inclusion** and act with **cultural sensitivity** and **respect**
3. Be **creative** and **flexible** to respond to each community's unique **needs**
4. Recruit, train, support and retain the best **people** to deliver services
5. Contribute to **shared** learning through **research** and **partnerships**

**Our purpose is to achieve positive and lasting outcomes
for children, families and communities.**





What our carers say about us

“I am very happy to be a part of the KAA family. Thank you for having me” - Joshua

“I cannot speak highly enough about everyone at Key Assets Australia, they make you feel welcome and are always there for us no matter how big or small something is.” - Sylvia

“I feel mine & my children’s voices are heard whenever we have an issue. So happy I moved to Key Assets Australia & getting the support we need” - Alisha

“I feel grateful for such amazing support. Thank you” - Patrick

“Keep up the good work and look after your wonderful staff they are an asset to your organisation.” - Alex

“Thank you for being such a fantastic organisation to care for. I have thoroughly enjoyed my journey so far as a foster care and the staff have been very supportive and incredible in every way” - Tammy

“We love KAA and the support you give us, the organisation has improved from good to great over the past few years” - James

“It’s always wonderful dealing with Key Assets Australia. I always feel heard, even if I’m just venting” - Brianna

”

The Key Assets Australia Frameworks

The Framework for Excellence

KAA believes children everywhere deserve excellent care and this framework outlines the overarching aims and outcomes which we hope will be achieved for all children placed in our care. We are committed to working together with our children, our fostering families, the Department and other significant partners to strive for excellence, to build resilience and a sense of belonging for all children growing up in foster care.

The Key2Care Practice Framework

KAA introduced the Key2Care Framework to improve the way we work with KAA carers through their fostering journey. The Key2Care Framework will give more structure to the way social workers and carers collaborate to work on things that matter to them and so achieve the best outcomes for their families and the children they care for.

The Key Care Team

A team approach that achieves the best outcomes for children and young people in care. The Key Care Team Model is made up of the necessary and important services and people who work collaboratively to create a nurturing, caring and therapeutic environment to achieve safety, stability and well-being for the child.



Key Assets Australia's Framework for Excellence

Children and young people everywhere deserve excellent care. This framework outlines KAA's aims and outcomes for the work we do with children and young people in our care. The Framework provides clarity for Carers of their role and responsibilities. KAA is committed to working with our carers to strive for excellence, to build resilience and a sense of belonging for all children growing up in care.

Standard one - Promoting children's safety
Every child or young person will be placed in a foster home that is safe and secure, where they will be protected from abuse or exploitation of any kind.

Standard two - Promoting health and wellbeing
The physical, emotional and psychological health and ongoing developmental needs of every child will be provided for in the foster placement, maximising their potential to live a healthy and fulfilling life.

Standard three - Promoting growth and development
Every child or young person will be fully supported to realise their potential for learning and growth - taking account of age, developmental stage, ability, learning styles, culture, language and communication needs.

Standard four - Promoting belonging and kinship
Every child should be encouraged to have knowledge of their birth family, culture and

origins, and when contact with family and friends is in the child's best interests this will be actively promoted and supported.

Standard five - Promoting culture
The diversity of every child in relation to their ethnicity, culture, community, language, faith, spirituality and personal values will be supported and promoted.

Standard six - Promoting skills for life
Every child will be supported to develop skills and personal strengths which will build resilience and enable positive transitions throughout their lives.

Standard seven - Promoting participation
Every child will be given an ongoing opportunity to genuinely and actively participate in all matters affecting their life, contribute to the work of Key Assets and undertake their rightful position as active members of their community.

We believe

- Every child deserves a childhood.
- Every child deserves a family life.
- Every child deserves to belong.
- Foster carers are our 'key assets'.
- Working together best serves children and families.
- Strengthening families strengthens communities.
- Evidencing our impact is our responsibility.
- People are more than labels.



“I am extremely happy with Key Assets Australia and am grateful for everything they have done for my family I highly recommend to any foster family needing any guidance.” - Drew

Who is eligible to care with Key Assets Australia?

At KAA, the carer, whether single or in a relationship, needs to be available to meet the individual needs of the child or young person and have a connection with them.

We focus on your ability to:

- provide a safe, caring and supportive environment for children and young people
- to work as part of a team and the local legislation.

We welcome enquiries from people from all cultures, sexual orientation and gender identities. Carers can rent or own their own home, be married, partnered or single. A carer is required to have an appropriate space for children and young people.

Our preference is for children to have their own bedroom and we can assess if it is suitable for children to share, for example, a sibling group.

Being a carer takes commitment, enthusiasm and a genuine desire to make a positive and lasting difference.

Once approved, KAA carers experience the satisfaction of knowing that they support the child to remain connected to their family, culture and community.



The process of transferring from another Agency

KAA welcomes enquiries from carers with or without children in their care.

- 
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- 
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- 1** Call us to discuss your individual circumstances.
 - 2** Arrange a time to have an in-person or online home visit with you.
 - 3** Sign a Release of Information & Consent form and return it to us – this can happen at the home visit.
 - 4** We gather your information from your current agency and review it to see if there are any additional requirements.
 - 5** Once all the required documentation, checks and references are received, we'll present your information to an authorisation/recommendation panel.



This process usually takes from 1-2 months, providing all the information is shared promptly.

Key Assets Australia is committed to keeping your personal information safe in line with the Privacy Act 1988. Ask for our information sheet if you would like to know more about our commitment to you.



Types of Care

All children and young people are unique, so the care they require is different as well.

Emergency

Sometimes, we need to find a safe place for a child to stay at very short notice. Emergency care can be for a few nights, to a few weeks. Sometimes emergency care is needed in the middle of the night or on weekends.

Short-term or Restoration Care

Short-term care can be anything from a few months to two years. These arrangements are made for children for whom the plan is to return home to their families. Often carers assist the child's family to make the changes they need to be able to safely resume care of their child.

Permanent or Long Term Care

It isn't always possible for children to be returned to their families, so they'll need to stay in care until they reach the age of 18 years. This is the age young people usually leave

care, however, all states now offer the option to remain in care for a few years longer, so that they are mature enough and have the skills and supports required for them to safely live independently.

Children with Disabilities

There are many children and young people with disabilities who need a caring family. This can include children with physical or learning disabilities, sensory needs or a combination of these.

Occasional or Respite Care

Caring does not have to be full-time. Occasional carers look after a child on weekends or for a few days while their regular carer has a break. It can be difficult for a child to go to different people so we try to arrange for the child always to go to the same carer so they can get to know each other.



Supporting connection with Family

KAA carers often meet the child or young person's family or important people to them. Time with family and kin can be reassuring for children and young people while they are in care. It shows them that their parents have not forgotten them and that they are still part of their lives. It can help if they have had difficult relationships and want to learn new ways of interacting. Time with family can maintain a loving and caring bond with their siblings even if they cannot live with them.

The carer's role in supporting family time includes encouraging children and young people to engage in these occasions. The carer may be the best person to take them to and from family visits. Where appropriate and where the carer feels comfortable to do so, it is best if they can attend or facilitate time with family or kin, or overtime aim towards achieving this. When the relationship between carers and members of the birth family is positive and strong, children and young people can continue their connections without the possibility of feeling like they're being disloyal or hurting someone they care about.



Shane's story of fostering Sunny (they/them)

I'm a 44-year-old male single carer who fosters Sunny, aged 13. I became a carer about 2 years ago. I guess there were a couple of things that made me decide to become a foster carer. I'm a teacher so I felt that I had a lot of experience with young people which I could put to good use. I also wanted to try and make a difference in the life of a young person.

When I researched fostering, I realised that there was a huge shortage of carers and really felt for these young people. I picked Key Assets Australia as I wanted to be considered to care for a young person from any background. KAA was the first agency I called, I got a really good vibe from them, and I didn't end up calling any other agencies.

My situation is probably unique as I have only cared for Sunny. Sunny came to me almost 2 years ago and initially, it was a short-term arrangement with a view of it becoming long-term. At present it looks like Sunny will stay with me until they are 18.

Seeing Sunny settle really keeps me going.

Sometimes when I step back and look at how far they have come, it makes me feel really proud. It's nice hearing Sunny talk about the future of living with me, asking me if I can teach them to drive when they get older and asking if I will help Sunny buy their first car. It's a lovely feeling and Sunny probably doesn't realise how much it means to me.

I have loved being supported by Key Assets Australia. The team is amazing, and my worker Omar gets along well with Sunny. We have always had Omar which has been fantastic for stability. If I need any advice or support, he is always there. At a practical level, he helps with getting Sunny to various appointments which is a massive help.

Often it is just having that one person who believes in you that makes the world of difference in the young person's life. If you are considering becoming a carer, think about the shortage of carers across Australia, and if regular people like you and I don't put our hands up, then who will do it.



“It is an absolute pleasure being a Carer for Key Assets Australia.” - Rose.



Jenni and Eric's story

Jenni and Eric recently made the decision to join the Key Assets Australia family. Here is their story:

"We had been foster carers with the Department for 5 years. We decided that we would get a different type of support if we transferred to a non-government agency. We did look at our options and decided to pursue caring with KAA."

After having an informal discussion with Key Assets Australia, we felt that their vision and values aligned with ours and what we were looking for in terms of support.

At the time we were facing some challenges with David's (14 years) education. David was being suspended regularly, on a reduced hours timetable at school. Key Assets Australia's commitment to working with us to address the education issue was an important part of why we decided to transfer. The transfer process was easy. After informing that we wished to move, the Department convened a meeting and KAA attended. KAA gave an outline of what their service provided and we had an opportunity to talk about what we needed in terms of support. At the end of the meeting, we all agreed that a transfer was possible. KAA took responsibility to review our fostering experience and this was reflected in a review report which was presented to the authorisation panel. Once the transfer was finalised, we were allocated a social worker and had access to the support structures that KAA offered.

Our family and David have really benefited from the support KAA has offered. David is now attending school more than he had previously. We credit KAA for this shift because they really took on an advocacy role for us and David, we now have the ongoing support to carry him through the rest of his schooling.

Our advice to people thinking about caring or changing agencies is that you really need to consider what can be offered to you and your foster child/ren. It is important to find an agency that has similar values to you, we wanted an agency that values the LGBTQIA+ community and supports First Nations children to have a strong connection to their culture. Moving to KAA has meant that we had access to additional support such as attending training, support groups and having regular monthly Support & Coaching meetings with our social worker.

For our family, it has been a good decision and our children have enjoyed the social events with other KAA carers. These opportunities have been helpful for our children to meet other children in the same position as they are. KAA made our birth children feel special and valued as they provide support to them too. At KAA all the professionals work together which has increased the support available to our fostered children. This has improved the stability in our household, and we feel listened to! **We recommend Key Assets Australia to you!**

Key Assets Australia's Therapeutic Approach

Recognising the importance of carers is a primary focus at Key Assets Australia (KAA) so that they can provide the best care to children and young people.

We offer the following supports:

1. Therapeutic support - Our staff are skilled and knowledgeable in the needs of children who have experienced trauma. We have therapists who can support children or carers directly.
2. Out-of-hours support - We provide KAA carers with 24 hours 7 days a week on-call service with one of our KAA social workers.
3. Carer buddy - KAA carers can be matched with a mentoring carer in their area to provide additional support and guidance.
4. Support workers - A pool of workers that may be utilised for additional support.
5. Respite - All full-time KAA carers are encouraged to access respite care.
6. External counselling and support are available when needed.
7. Financial support - A carer allowance is provided.
8. Carer Training - Online and face-to-face training arranged to meet the needs of KAA carers plus access to child specific resources.
9. Cultural Practice Lead - to provide support to carers to meet the cultural needs of First Nations People.
10. Carer Events - Family days for KAA carers with their children and activity days just for the children to give the carers a break in the holidays.
11. Carers' coffee mornings - We offer regular groups for KAA carers to get together and connect with each other, these can be offered online.
12. Recognition and awards - KAA likes to acknowledge achievements, milestones and anniversaries of KAA carers and children.
13. We consult with KAA carers regularly so we can constantly improve the services we provide including carer reviews, regular carer surveys and carer groups.



Learning and development

We are committed to ensuring that our carers have the skills necessary to provide the best care possible for children and young people. We provide development opportunities that enable carers to continually increase their knowledge, skills and confidence. We provide monthly Support and Coaching meetings with their allocated social worker.

Our training provides

Children and young people who are in care have often experienced trauma and abuse. It is important that carers are able to continuously improve their understanding of best practices to provide intuitive and personalised care to each child in their care. We ensure that our training and learning materials are accessible and relevant to the knowledge and experience of each carer. The training is provided to:

- Help carers continue to improve their skills of caring for children with a trauma experience
- Improve knowledge, develop and refine their skills
- Promote positive values and inclusive practice
- Recognise that we care for children in the context of a wider society
- Be competent and confident in safe caring and protecting children from harm
- Enable responsibility for professional development

Key Assets Australia acknowledges the experience and wealth of knowledge of experienced carers and encourages them to share and learn from each other. Carers often reflect on the benefits of this during training, as they understand the important role carers play and can offer proven strategies, compassion and insights.

Key Assets Australia offer training opportunities in a variety of different arrangements:

- Individualised development plans
- During your personalised Support and Coaching sessions
- Our eLibrary through the Libby App or website
- Online through our Care 2 Learn platform
- Carer Information Sheets (available through Care 2 Learn or printed upon request)
- Online webinars and community of practice presentations.
- Face to Face in our offices
- Small Carer groups with specialised presentations
- Through external training providers

Some of the areas Key Assets Australia encourage further development include:

- First Aid (mandatory for carers who have a swimming pool)
- Health and Safety
- Safe Caring
- Managing a child who has been sexually abused or abused others
- Promoting Positive Behaviour
- Digital and eSafety
- Trauma Informed Care
- Virtual Reality training
- Therapeutic Crisis Intervention
- Standard of care or Reportable Conduct
- Supporting Family Time
- Cultural awareness





Janine's Story

My household consists of my foster son Jason, myself and my partner (Ash) who we see on weekends. We really enjoy taking Jason to various outings, whether it is a day at the park or the beach. We always try to become involved in any activities Jason is interested in. I also have three beautiful grown-up children (not living at home) and two amazing respite carers, who are so much more than that.

I became a foster carer 5 years ago, it was something I had always wanted to do. I was approached by a family friend who wanted her child, to go to a family member. When she asked me, I was very happy to say yes and I knew I would need support to meet his cultural needs.

I decided to care for Key Assets Australia as I liked the fact that they can see the potential in someone who doesn't always 'fit the mould'.

It took time for Jason to settle and for me to understand how to meet all of his emotional needs. I thought if I loved him as much as I did, he would feel the same. It was so special when

we made progress and he started to trust me. When I talk with my social worker, we often reflect on how far we have come and celebrate our successes.

Jason has become a valuable member of my family, he still sees his birth family regularly as they love him too. We talk about how fortunate he is to be part of two families and have so many extra people in his life who care for him.

"Having an additional child in your family adds so much more to your life that I could not imagine family life without him now. When you know that they feel safe, are part of your family and unconditionally loved, it is the best feeling in the world."

Whenever I speak with my social worker, I feel understood and listened to. They see things from my point of view which means I feel so supported.

Sometimes my friends say 'You are so good to be a foster carer' and this always surprises me, because I honestly think that I am so lucky to have been chosen to care for Jason. What an honour it is!



"They really do see things from your point of view which means you feel so supported."

What next?

If you would like to take the next step towards becoming a carer with Key Assets Australia, then contact us at:

Tel: 1800 WE CARE (1800 93 2273)

www.canifoster.com.au

*Scan to
learn more*



If you have any feedback we would love to hear from you:
feedback@keyassets.org.au



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