



What is Respite Care?

Respite Carers look after children for short periods of time to give their full-time Carers a break.

The break gives Carers the chance to recover from illness, respond to family emergencies or recharge their energy.

Respite Care can be regular and planned for the same child or children, or in response to emergency situations within the foster family.

Respite Carers look after children in their own home for a few hours, a weekend or a few weeks. The length of care is decided before placement.



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Who can be a Respite Foster Carer?

The best qualification is that you like being with children.

To be a Respite Carer you:

- may or may not have your own children
- can work part-time or full-time
- can be single or have a partner
- must be over 18
- may be retired or considering retirement
- can live anywhere in Western Australia
- need to have room in your home to accommodate a child.

What is the Respite Program?

The Respite Program supports full-time Foster Carers and the children in their care.

As a Respite Carer you work as part of a team. This includes the child's full-time Foster Carer and Department staff. A close working relationship helps ensure the needs of the child and carer are met.

All children needing respite are in the care of the Department for Child Protection.

The respite care team matches the child's needs with your experience and skills.

How do I become a Respite Carer?

Complete an Expression of Interest form (available online at www.childprotection.wa.gov.au) or phone Fostering Services on 1800 024 453.

Once we receive the form, a staff member from Fostering Services will arrange to come to your home to discuss the Respite Program. If this isn't possible due to distance, the staff member will phone you.

If you decide to go ahead, you need to apply, which includes giving the Department permission to check your criminal, Department and medical records. You will need to provide at least two references.

An assessor will then complete an in-home assessment over three or four visits. As part of the assessment, we have to consider your current family lifestyle, personal history and motivation.

You will also have to complete training during or after the assessment. This will give you a better understanding of why children come into care, their needs, and what to expect as a Respite Carer.

Your assessor will then write a report and submit it to an independent panel. Following panel and Director approval, you will be registered as a Respite Carer.

Respite Carers must also have a Working with Children Card. If you don't already have one, you can get an application form from your assessor.

What support will I get?

Support is available from the Department and the Foster Care Association. Respite Carers receive a subsidy towards the costs of looking after a child.

You can also get help with equipment and transport for children, training, group and individual support, information, advice and counselling.



**For more information, contact
Fostering Services on
1800 024 453
or visit
www.childprotection.wa.gov.au.**

