

## Role of the mentor

- » Pray for the family and children in its care
- » Provide guidance and support to a new foster or kinship family
- » Be available to talk about system barriers
- » Help the new carer to navigate the out-of-home care system, health system, Department of Education, legal and court systems
- » Support the new carer through placement transitions
- » Help the new carer to understand shared parenting rules and expectations, how access visits work, how to respect and honour birth families
- » Maintain and encourage absolute confidentiality in all information discussed
- » Provide information about services and supports available

## Duties

- » Mentor a new foster or kinship carer family for six to 12 months
- » Establish a personal and working relationship with the family
- » Meet face-to-face at least once a month
- » Be available on the phone or via email
- » Report back to Fostering Hope as needed.

## Role of the new carer

- » Be open to mentors advice and expertise
- » Willingly share concerns and questions as they arise
- » Provide feedback to Fostering Hope about your experience

## To be a buddy you can either:

- » Fill in the attached form and contact Fostering Hope on [contact@fosteringhope.community](mailto:contact@fosteringhope.community)
- » Email your answers to [contact@fosteringhope.community](mailto:contact@fosteringhope.community)
- » Submit an online application from our website [www.fosteringhope.community](http://www.fosteringhope.community)



[www.fosteringhope.community](http://www.fosteringhope.community)

Wellspring Anglican Church, 43-47 Grosvenor St  
Sandy Bay TAS 7005

03 6240 4834

[@fosteringhopecommunity](https://www.facebook.com/fosteringhopecommunity)  
[contact@fosteringhope.community](mailto:contact@fosteringhope.community)

Foster and Kinship  
Care Buddy Program

Entering the world of foster and kinship care is exciting, messy, and daunting. As Christians we enter it relying on God for our motivation and trusting Him to put the right child into our home, the right people around us and the child.

At the same time, the world of fostering is totally out of our control. We have no control over the workers, the legislation, the decisions of birth families, and even some decisions for the children in our care. Each journey is unique and often only other carers understand it; they can hear your frustrations knowing you aren't judging, can see your tears for the child in your care knowing you aren't over-attached, can hear your concerns for your own family knowing you still trust God with the process. This is why Christian mentors – buddy foster carers – are so important.

### Vision for the program

All new Christian foster or kinship carers are matched, and then supported, by a current Christian foster or kinship carer for their first 12 months as a carer. All the mentors have been through a training program and are supported by Fostering Hope.

### Fostering Hope will:

- » Run face-to-face training of current carers. To include,
  - » buddy roles
  - » expectations and boundaries, including time
  - » confidentiality
  - » out-of-home care, Department of Education, health system, courts and legal issues
  - » information on resources available
- » Recruit current carers
- » Link new and experienced carers
- » Develop a bank of resources on mentoring and pass this on to participants to share and learn from
- » Maintain an up-to-date database of services available to carers and children in care
- » Be available to talk to either buddy if the match isn't working
- » Evaluate the program

### The buddy program

The program offers 12 months of monthly face-to-face catch-ups between buddies. The new carer can contact their buddy by phone or by email as needed. The purposes of the program are to:

- » Help carers to feel part of a team
- » Enable carers to learn from each other and get support from someone who is "in their shoes"
- » Recognise that carers are already serving as informal mentors to each other.

### Mentors will:

- » Listen with purpose and empathy
- » Answer questions as they arise, linking new carers to services and information
- » Develop their skills in reflective practice and support
- » Support new carers with understanding their role as foster carers.

### New carers will:

- » Feel accepted, valued and understood
- » Receive spiritual support in fostering
- » Be supported in relying on God and his plan for them as carers.

### Qualities of a mentor:

#### Mentors:

- » Are committed to a positive approach
- » Are currently providing foster or kinship care
- » Have strong communication and interpersonal skills
- » Have had experience with hardships
- » Are good problem solvers
- » Are aware of services available in their local community for both carers and children
- » Have time to give to the program
- » Are committed to maintaining confidentiality
- » Have access to the internet and email.

