



MEDIA RELEASE

Immediate Release

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Tools to have ‘the talk’ with kids in care

This Foster and Kinship Carers Week, Family Planning Queensland (FPQ) acknowledges the excellent work that carers do and highlights the critical role they play in improving the sexual health outcomes for children and young people in care.

FPQ with the support of the Department of Communities, Child Safety Services is pleased to announce new tools to help foster and kinship carers have conversations about sexuality and relationships with the young people they support are now available.

Three information sheets specifically for carers are now available online, and provide tips on communicating about sexuality, relationships, puberty and supporting healthy sexual behaviours. Through this collaborative project, also released are specific training modules for foster carers focusing on how to promote self protection skills for children and young people, including those with a disability; a training module focusing on puberty; and another supporting healthy sexual behaviours in children and young people.

These resources are essential tools to support carers to have ~~the talk~~ because compared to other young people, children and young people with a care experience have:

- Higher rates of earlier onset of sexual activity;
- Higher rates of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and earlier pregnancy;
- Higher rates of experiences of sexual abuse; and
- Less recorded access to sexual health services and information.

In Queensland, there are more than 8000 children and young people in out of home care. Eighty per cent of these children and young people live with foster or kinship carers.

The 2011 theme for Foster and Kinship Carer Week of *Caring now for tomorrow* is particularly relevant given that we know that children and young people with a care experience have poorer sexual outcomes than their peers, says Holly Brennan, Manager of Research and Program Development at FPQ.

The good news is that we also know that when children and young people receive sexuality and relationships education they are more likely to make informed and healthy decisions later in life and that they are also more likely to feel comfortable with their changing bodies, feelings and relationships, explains Ms Brennan. It is important for carers to feel supported and have access to resources and training to help them have conversations about sexuality and relationships.

Family Planning Queensland urges all child protection partners to maintain their focus on meeting the sexuality and relationship needs of children and young people in care and providing support for carers

to continue to care for our young adults of tomorrow. Together we can help young people make safe and healthy decisions about their sexual health and relationships.

Caring now for tomorrow just makes sense.

Information sheets can be accessed at <http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/foster-care/resources-and-publications/carer-info-sheets>

To view the *Positive and Protective* training modules visit <http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/foster-care/carer-training/foster-carer-training/advanced-training/protective-behaviours-series>

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact Janelle Weissman, Director of Communications and Development on 0423 408 830.

www.fpq.com.au

Improving young people's access to information and services.