

# OurSPACE WA

## Foster and Family Care Support Service

### What is OurSPACE WA?

OurSPACE WA is a new state-wide counselling, therapeutic consultation and support service for Department of Communities foster and family carers **where the placement may be under stress and/or at risk of breaking down**. The program provides culturally responsive, trauma informed support to empower carers to understand and meet the needs of the children in their care. OurSPACE WA also provides confidential counselling to carers around their own personal issues and stress.



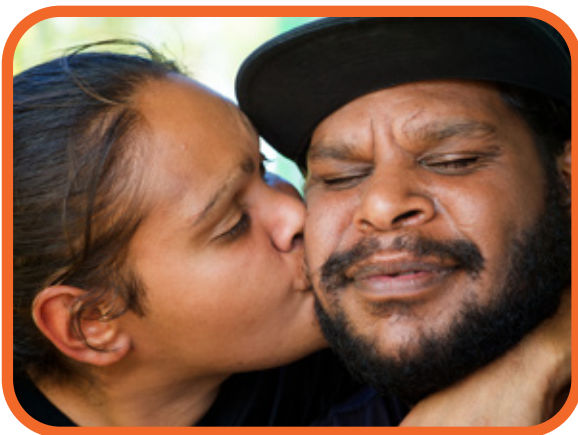
OurSPACE WA seeks to support carers to provide Safe, Predictable, Adaptive, Connected and Empowered placements.



Foster and family carers often talk about feeling overwhelmed and needing professional support and assistance to know how to respond to their children's sometimes challenging and complicated needs.

We understand that the children living in foster and family care have often experienced significant trauma in their young lives. They can have trouble managing their feelings and behaviour. They can struggle to settle or calm themselves when upset or angry. They can find it hard to trust others and difficult to resolve conflict. They can feel negative and hopeless about their lives. Their lives can feel scary, filled with fear and worry. As a result, they can sometimes behave in ways that are challenging or difficult to understand. These behaviours are often as overwhelming for children as they can be for their carers. It is not easy for children to change these behaviours. Their carers also need specialist support to understand how trauma has affected children's thinking, feelings, and behaviour. Without support, carers can find it increasingly difficult to look after these children and can feel isolated.

COVID-19 has added a range of concerns, uncertainty, and pressures to the lives of children and their carers, which may contribute to stress and challenges that affect their capacity to care for children.



### How do we help?

OurSPACE WA provides specialist therapeutic advice for foster and family carers and professionals who are involved with the care of children and young people. The program has a Senior Aboriginal Counsellor who provides culturally safe and responsive support for Aboriginal children and families. Our flexible and timely support enables carers to understand more about children's needs as well as receive specific strategies that may help strengthen the relationship between children and carers over time. Counselling for personal issues can help carers to process experiences of loss or change, reduce stress, gain confidence, and improve their quality of life and sense of wellbeing.



OurSPACE WA provides one off or up to 8 sessions of telephone or videocall counselling and support.



Australian  
Childhood  
Foundation

# OurSPACE WA



Our counsellors can set up regular sessions over the phone or by videocall with foster and family carers and professionals who are involved in supporting them. Face to face sessions can be negotiated in the Perth metropolitan area, depending on the needs of carers and the capacity of the service.

The service promotes a care team approach, involving Department of Communities staff, carers and OurSPACE WA staff working together to support therapeutic outcomes and consistency across services and settings through open communication, information sharing and planning. OurSPACE WA staff can attend case meetings in person in the Perth metropolitan area.

## Who can access OurSPACE WA?

OurSPACE WA offers therapeutic support and advice to Department of Communities foster and family carers **who require additional support around placement issues, understanding children's therapeutic and care needs, or personal issues and stress.**

## Referrals

OurSPACE WA operates Monday – Friday 9am-5pm (excluding public holidays).

OurSPACE WA accepts self-referrals from foster and family carers and referrals from Department of Communities staff and other professionals. OurSPACE WA staff can take the required details over the phone to ensure an easy and accessible intake process. An information sharing protocol has been developed between OurSPACE WA and the Department of Communities to enable us to work together to support placements.

All referrals will receive an initial response within 2 working days.

### To make a referral:



**Please call us  
on 1300 381 581**



**Or email us at  
[ourspacewa@childhood.org.au](mailto:ourspacewa@childhood.org.au)**

## Who is the Australian Childhood Foundation?

The Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF) provides therapeutic services and support to children and young people who have experienced trauma as a result of abuse, neglect and family violence. We also provide important support to the families, foster and family carers and other key people in the lives of these children. Through these important relationships, children can recover from the effects of the trauma they have experienced.

As a national leader in therapeutic support to foster and family carers, ACF is well positioned to provide high quality, evidence-based support to carers and the professionals who support them.

OurSPACE WA is a pilot program that has been made possible through the support of the Department of Communities and will run until June 2022.



**Australian  
Childhood  
Foundation**