



News from the FCAV/PPSS Carer Help Line – July 2009

FCAV & PPSS Carer Help Line – Summary, June 2009

Calls/contacts received:	31	Average call time:	15 mins
No of issues identified:	45	Avg file handling time:	28 mins
% of calls resolved within 48 hours: 97%			

Top 10 issues raised by carers in June

Issue Category	Issue of concern	No of calls
FCAV – General Enquiries	Becoming a foster carer	6
Legal	Quality of care/allegations	3
Access	Birth family issues	3
FCAV – General Enquiries	Wishing to join FCAV	3
Financial - Centrelink	Family tax benefit	2
Agencies - Issues	Respite care	2
Challenging Behaviours	Lack of support services, counselling, dentist, paediatric assessment	2
Financial - Centrelink	Youth Allowance	1
Financial - Centrelink	Means testing of carers for Centrelink payments/tax refund eligibility	1
Challenging Behaviours	Placement breakdown (potential/actual)	1

Strategy recommendations for resolution of the Top 5 issues:

Issue #1: Becoming a foster carer

It is great to see so many prospective carers coming to us for information on becoming a foster carer. 20% of the calls received on the Help Line in June came from people wanting to foster children - sensational!

Issue #2: Quality of care/allegations

Each of these calls was quite different in nature, but there was a recurrent theme around the lack of information/knowledge carers have about quality of care investigations and the processes involved. The Help Line has commenced work on a quality of care 'fact sheet' which it is hoped will go some way in helping carers to navigate their way through a quality of care investigation. The fact sheet is due to be completed by December 2009 and will be drafted in conjunction with input from DHS, CSO's and carers.

Issue #3: Birth family issues

For reasons of privacy we will not detail the types of issues raised in this category this month, but suffice to say each was significantly different from the others. There is little FCAV can do to assist in these situations to secure change as the nature of each case varies so greatly. In these instances, we have offered advice and direction on possible strategies, hopefully empowering the carers to continue in their endeavours with re-newed direction and alternatives.

Issue #4: Wishing to join FCAV

Well what can I say – we are thrilled to receive calls from carers wishing to join FCAV – the more carers we have on board, the more weight we carry in to each and every negotiation and discussion with government and policy makers. To that end – tell a friend to join FCAV!

Issue #5: Family Tax Benefit

Negotiating Centrelink and understanding what entitlements and benefits are available can be daunting but don't give up! The Centrelink website at www.centrelink.gov.au is a great source of information, and if you get stuck, give me a ring on 9489 9770 – I've become quite the expert!, or call the Centrelink Customer Relations team on Freecall™ 1800 050 004.



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In brief...

Kinship Care Forum – *Making a Difference*

The first ever Kinship Care Forum was held on Thursday 25th and Friday 26th of June at the Clocktower Centre in Moonee Ponds. It was a great couple of days with carers well represented and more importantlyheard. Look out for a more comprehensive review of the two days in next month's FCAV Newsletter.

IFCO Conference – Linking Global Foster Care

Our EO Katie Hooper is attending the International Foster Care Organisation (IFCO) Conference in Dublin, Ireland this month for what promises to be a great international conference with speakers and presenters from twenty countries, including Australia. Check out next month's FCAV Newsletter for Katie's review of the conference.

Upcoming Events

Queensland Foster Care Conference

1 – 2 August, 2009

Sunshine Coast Function Centre

14 West Tce, Caloundra, Sunshine Coast, QLD

For further information contact fcq@fcq.com.au or visit the website at www.fcq.com.au/events.htm

Children's Week

24 October – 1 November 2009

For general information go to childrens.week@edumail.vic.gov.au

And for those who like to plan ahead.....

National Foster Carer's Conference

28 – 29 August 2010

Wrest point Casino, Hobart, Tasmania

This event is proudly sponsored by the Tasmania Department of Health and Human Services and the Australian Foster & Kinship Carers Partnership. To register for further information and newsletters contact conference@fcatas.org.au .

Fact Sheet Feedback

Many thanks to those of you who have submitted suggestions for the Permanent Care and Quality of Care Fact Sheets. If anyone has any further suggestions they would like to submit, there is still time – simply email Beth at b.parker@fcav.org or call us on 9489 9770.

Also, if you have moved or your contact details have changed, don't forget to let us know. Changes can be advised by phone on 9489 9770 or via email at admin@fcav.org .

Reminders

A quick reminder – the FCAV has all sorts of resource and reference material information on hand in the office. A list of these resources will be posted to our website (www.fcav.org) soon. If you need anything, give us a bell on 9489 9770 and we can send out whatever you need.

Coming up in next month's newsletter

Check out next month's newsletter for articles on:

- ✓ Review of the National Foster Care Conference held in Fremantle, WA from 27 – 29 March 2009
- ✓ Review of the Kinship Care Forum held in Moonee Ponds in June 2009
- ✓ Review of the IFCO Conference held in Dublin, Ireland in July 2009
- ✓ Information updates from DHS on the Carer Reimbursement Help Desk and revised caregiver reimbursement rates.....and lots more.

Next e-news due out on 14th September 2009 – encourage carers you know to send through their email address to us so they don't miss out!