



A Guide to Permanency and Stability in Care.

The Permanency and Stability Policy explains how we help children and young people be safe and stable if they cannot stay at home with their family.

What is stability?

Stability means things are predictable, and change is minimal. We know that having stability helps children and young people have a good life. Sometimes children and young people need to live somewhere else while their family makes home safe again. When Child Safety say it is safe, children and young people can go back to live with their families again.

We know that nothing is forever or guaranteed. Things change and we want to make sure we help children and young people through these changes. We work to support children and young people to feel stable while they cannot be with their family.

There are four things that help a child or young person feel stable:

1. **The people around them:** Relationships with safe family, friends, teachers and other trusted adults that stay the same. This helps children and young people feel like they know who they are and where they belong.

2. **Where they live and go to school:** A safe and stable place to call home and being connected to friends that matter.
3. **Having the right piece of paper:** A legal arrangement to support the child or young person be where they need to be.
4. **Connection to culture:** Keeping or growing culture, tradition and customs that are important.

The first thing we do is work with a child or young person's family to make home safe enough for them to stay there. It can mean the child or young person living with their extended family or friends while we work towards making home safe. We work hard to place Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children in line with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. This helps them keep their connection to family, community, culture and country.

If the child or young person cannot return home to their family, we will find them somewhere safe and stable to live short, medium or long-term.

What are permanency options?

Permanency in Out of Home Care (OOHC) is a framework of emotional, physical and legal conditions. It aims to give children and young people a sense of security, continuity, commitment, identity and belonging. Permanency is an important consideration for all developmental stages.

Permanency ideally takes the form of a nurturing adult-child relationship and has a legal component.

There are five ways we work to provide permanency for children and young people:

1. **Stay at home:** Working with parents and families as early as we can to keep children and young people safe at home.
2. **Return home:** When it is safe to do so, a child or young person who has lived with a foster carer or another placement can return to live with their family again.
3. **New guardian:** If the child or young person can't live with their family, a different family will look after them until they are 18 years old. The court makes a long-term order called a third-party guardianship to make sure the child or young person is safe and cared for until they are 18.
4. **Adoption:** The court makes a ruling so that a new family can look after a child or young person permanently. Their birth parents no longer have responsibility for them or a say in their life.
5. **In care until 18:** The child or young person lives in care (foster, kinship or residential care) and the department helps make decisions until they turn 18. The department also helps young people 18 to 21, get set up and have the skills they need to live independently.



We understand how important it is to consult and listen to children and young people to make sure they feel safe and stable. The child or young person's Care Team regularly talks with them to make sure things are still okay. We also listen to their families and their carers to make sure we are doing our best for the child or young person.

Feeling safe and stable can be a step-by-step process. A child or young person might feel stable and secure for a while and then not until things get back on track. Everyone's journey is different. We're here to help children, young people and their families on their journey to being safe and stable.

Need more information or want to talk to someone?

Child Safety Service (CSS)

Phone: 1300 737 639

Child Advocate

Phone or text: 0419 970 181

Freecall: 1800 549 725

Email: child.advocate@decyp.tas.gov.au

To learn more and see the full range of resources, visit decyp.tas.gov.au or scan the QR code.

