

Family Inclusion Strategies in
the Hunter Inc.



building better relationships

PARENT WORKSHOP

about restoration

developed by parents for parents

- When?** Date negotiated with agency
Two-day workshop
10.00-3.30 each day
(other arrangements can be negotiated, e.g., more days)
- Who?** This workshop is for parents whose children are currently living in foster care or kinship care and who have a permanency goal of restoration. We cannot exceed 8 parent participants.
- What?** The focus of this workshop is specifically on preparing and planning for children to be restored to parents' care. Legal matters or individual questions will not be discussed. Participants will be advised to seek advice from a legal representative or service.

Principles promoted in this workshop

Children must always be at the centre of conversations and decisions.

It takes a lot of hard work for restoration to happen and a multi-staged process.

Parents should be proactive in restoration processes and not rely entirely on others.

Not every family's situation or experience is the same. Time and requirements differ.

Workshop design features include

- **Co-facilitated by two parents** with experience of the child protection system and whose children were returned to their care. A support worker is present for advice as needed.
- **Activity-based learning** that should translate into real work on restoration, e.g., starting plans and records that may help restoration assessment and decisions.
- **Other parents' stories** (co-facilitators) related to restoration experiences to show the work.
- **Parents receive a resource book** with information, activities, and templates.

Workshop content includes

Being child-focused. Importance of parents always thinking about what is best for their child. This includes parent behaviour change alone will not determine suitability of restoration.

Record keeping. Importance of parents keeping records, written by them and provided by others. Benefits include empowerment and accountability. We will promote parents' contribution to what their child reads - now and in the future.

Communicating and relationships
Importance of relationships between parents, workers, and carers. Acknowledgement of difficulties when other people have more power. Such relationships are parents' gateway to being heard and involved, and getting decisions made in their child's interests.

Planning Pt 1: Before restoration Importance of plans for actions and decisions, and parents actively involved in planning, which includes supporting parents to initiate planning, e.g., Family Action Plan for Change.

Planning Pt 2: Transition & post-restoration
Importance of understanding that once a decision is made to return children to parents care there is still a lot of work. Careful planning and adequate time are critical.

Family time. Making family time child-focused, organising it to support the child-parent relationship, demonstrating parenting (even if restoration is not the plan), and determining suitability for their child to return to their care. It will include caring for a child during family time, routines, balancing fun with routine, everyday parenting activities.