

What is a Case Plan?

Your child's plan while they are in OOHC. It is developed by a caseworker or case manager, who may be from DCJ or a NGO.

You should be invited to case planning meetings. You should always be asked to contribute to the plan, even if you are not at the meeting. You should be given a copy of the plan, even if you did not attend.

Different agencies have different formats, but mostly the same headings.

The **domains of wellbeing** (see other section) are the main sections/subheadings in the plan and actions are determined for each. Before planning meetings, think about how you could contribute to each of the domains.

- Placement & Permanency
- Personal identity & Culture
- Family & Significant Relationships
- Health & Physical Wellbeing
- Education/Vocation & Training
- Emotional Growth & Healing
- Social, Living Skills & Peer Relationships
- Legal Issues & Victims Compensation

The plan should be **reviewed at least every 12 months**, and you should be part of the review process, e.g., attending a meeting and adding to the plan. [Communities and Justice](#)

When will a case plan be developed?

- **Initial case plan** is usually prepared **within 30 days** of the child entering statutory OOHC.
- **Case plan reviews** occur regularly; they vary by the permanency goal:
 - **Every 3 months** for a *preservation* goal (before removal).
 - **Every 6 months** for *restoration, guardianship or adoption*.
 - **Every year** for *long-term care* goals.
- After significant events such as:
 - **Change in placement**
 - **Death of a parent or carer**
 - Planned placement change.

These timeframes are part DCJ requirements; they help ensure case plans are up-to-date and progress is monitored. Sometimes case plans don't get updated, they are important for your child, if you are concerned your child's case plan is not up to date, contact your caseworker and their manager in writing and request a review.

If you feel a plan is not clear or doesn't reflect you and your child's needs, **ask your caseworker for clarification or to update it**, you can request meetings to make sure it reflects your perspective.

Always ask for a **copy of your child's case plan**.

Attend Case plan meetings wherever possible, be prepared, ask for the agenda prior to the meeting.

How to prepare

- Remember you can contribute to agenda items (what will be discussed).
- If you can send through your thoughts in advance, that's helpful. You could work out how you can support your child in each domain and write that down.
- Being on time is important as the meeting will run to a time schedule, you also don't want to miss important information. If you need support to attend ask your caseworker in advance.
- Bring relevant information you may have, e.g., medical information, school letters or awards
- Bring a healthy support person if possible
- Think about any questions you may have. Now is a good time to think about asking questions and expressing what you need.

If you have an issue after the meeting

If you have any issues after the meeting, or disagree with anything in the case plan, discuss this with your caseworker. If the issue remains unresolved, you can speak with your caseworker's supervisor or their manager.

If you wish, you can make an complaints.unit@dcj.nsw.gov.au or you can contact the Ombudsman <https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au>

"I wish I'd known the case plan meeting wasn't just a conversation or a chance to explain myself. It was a meeting where real decisions were being made about my child's future. I walked in thinking if I spoke honestly and showed I was trying, that would be enough. I didn't realise I should have prepared questions, brought someone with me, or asked for things in writing. By the time I understood how important that meeting was, the plan had already been written and I was left trying to catch up to decisions I didn't fully understand."



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