

about
**being
in care**



If you are reading this book or having it read to you, you are probably in care.

This book will help explain some things that are happening.

Remember...

What is happening to you is not your fault.
You are not alone and you have the right to feel safe and supported.





Jodi is eleven and has been in care for two years. She lives with her foster mum and two other children.

She still feels scared at times and angry.

If you feel scared or angry you can tell someone you trust.

When your mum or dad cannot care for you there are other people who will look after you.

You probably know these people already. Sometimes it will be someone else from your family or cultural community, or it may be a foster carer or a residential worker.

You have a social worker too.

Court orders and guardianship

Tom is eight and has been in care since he was a baby. He has a court order that says he is under guardianship until he turns 18.

Tom writes to his dad sometimes and sends photos. His dad writes back.



A judge in the Youth Court has made a decision that other people need to help you to be safe. The judge writes that decision down in a court order.

The court order will probably make the Chief Executive of the Department for Child Protection your guardian. This means that the Chief Executive will make important decisions to keep you safe and well cared for. Other people help them do this. Most times this will be a social worker from the Department. Your social worker will help find a safe place for you to be, to go to school and to keep in touch with your family. Your carers will also help with this.

Sometimes the court order will say that you cannot see your family or can only see them at certain times and places. The judge believes this is a way to keep you safe.

If you want to know about the court and your court order ask your social worker. You can talk to them if you don't feel safe seeing your family.

Remember Jodi? She is feeling scared and angry sometimes. Other times she is happy. Some days she wonders why this has happened to her. Jodi talks to her carer and her social worker about some of this.

There's also a counsellor at her school who is good to talk to. Think about the people you know.

You don't have to be feeling scared or angry to talk to someone.

Your social worker and carer will make some important decisions for you, like where you will go to school, when you need to see a dentist, whether you can travel interstate and how you can see your brothers or sisters.

They will ask you for your views on these decisions and they will consider your views.

my
worker

support

my
teacher



Your rights

You have rights. This means that you can expect to be treated well and cared for properly. Everyone who looks after you is expected to do their best in caring for you.

The Charter of Rights is a way of telling you about your rights and what you should expect when you are in care.

Ask your social worker for your copy of the Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care. Also ask your social worker or carer to explain these rights.

Clinton is ten and Clinton is cool. He knows that he should feel good about himself.

He won't waste time with people who make him feel bad.

He tells his social worker or his carer when people make him feel bad.



It's OK to complain

Things don't always go so well for children and young people who live in care.

Sometimes things get pretty messy and even when people are trying their best, you won't always get what you need.

If you feel that things are not going well for you, you need to let your carers, social worker and other important adults in your life know right away.

Adults should listen to you and try to understand. If the people you complain to don't do anything or if that adult is part of the problem, there are some other places you can go.

If you are made to feel afraid or if you are threatened or abused, this is never OK. It is never your fault.

You can call the Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78.



If you have a complaint or concern about the care you are receiving or if something is worrying you, the first person to talk to is your social worker.

If you have a complaint about your social worker or key worker, talk to the supervisor or manager at the social worker's office.

If you have a complaint that has not been attended to by your social worker or others, you can get help by calling the Department for Child Protection Customer Relations on 1800 003 305 (free call).

You can also call or email the Office of the Guardian on 8226 8570 and gcyp@gcyp.sa.gov.au.

If you are still unhappy with a decision or services you or an adult you trust can call the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner on 1800 23 2007 (free call).

If it is after hours and urgent you can phone the Department for Child Protection Crisis Response Unit on 13 16 11.



Questions for you.

If you have some time you can answer some of these questions. You can do this by yourself or with the person who is reading the book with you. You can do it now or at another time.



Who are the special people in your life?

Who would you talk to when something is bothering you?

When you get angry or upset what helps you to feel better?

When do you feel safe?

If you feel unsafe what helps you?

Are there any questions you have about what is happening to you?

www.gcyp.sa.gov.au