Carers as Custodians of Children's Connections

Safe and meaningful connections with birth family

The custodian role includes:

Understanding who the child's family is and nurturing those relationships



Speaking warmly and respectfully about family members



Understandina that these relationships are important



Finding out what the child thinks and feels about family time and helping them to communicate their preferences





When children are in out-of-home care, maintaining relationships with children's family members can be complex and challenging but it's important not to give up and disconnect.

Children who are disconnected from family members can feel grief, rejection, curiosity and a yearning to know more about them. Without efforts to mend relationships, the distress of disconnection can become intergenerational.

> Meaningful family relationships can help children heal from emotional trauma and develop a strong sense of who they are.

Carers are the custodians of children's connections to their family members when they are in out-of-home care.

Carers need to hold these connections so they can be passed on to the child and they can carry those relationships with them over their lifespan.

The custodian role includes:



Honouring and celebrating these relationships including displaying photos



Sharing special photos and stories about the child with family members that the child would like to share



Committing to a routine for keeping siblings in touch that matches their changing needs



Keeping the lines of communication open so that as the child aets older, they have the option to pursue these relationships for themselves

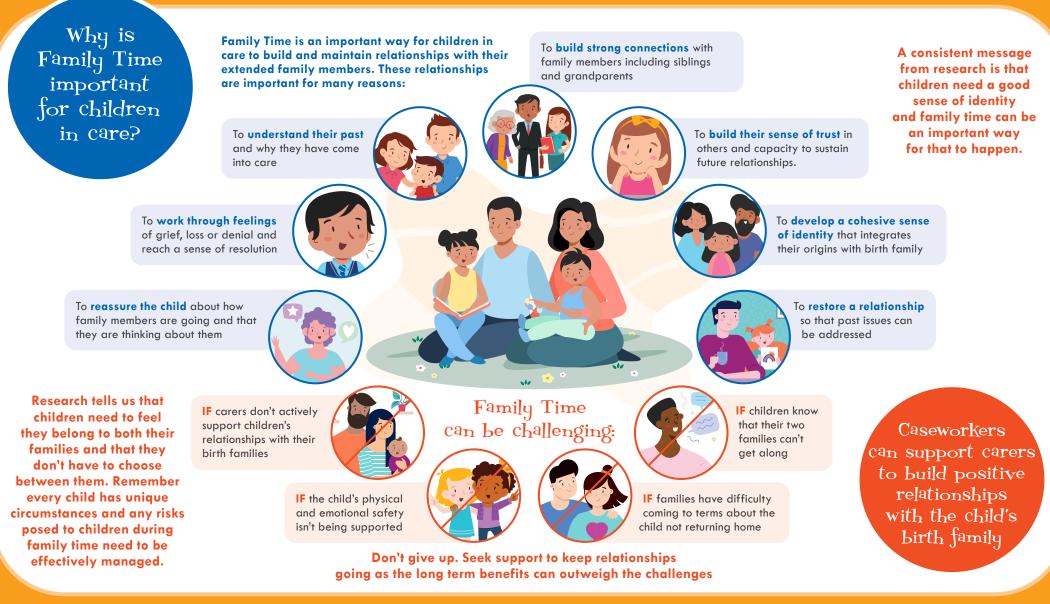


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Safer meaningful connections with family





For more information contact: Research Centre for Children and Families, Sydney School of Education and Social Work e rccf.research@sydney.edu.au w sydney.edu.au/arts/our-research/centres-institutes-and-groups/research-centre-for-children-and-families.html Developed as part of the ARC Linkage project Fostering Lifelong Connections for Children in Permanent Care (LP180101332)

