



INALA COMMUNITY HOUSE

**Family
Intervention
Service**

38 Sittella Street Inala, QLD 4077
ich.org.au | (07) 3372 1711
| FIS@ich.org.au

WHEN YOUR KIDS ARE IN CARE

Important to remember:

It is important to remember that parents continue to be parents, no matter where their children live. Parents play a critical role in the development of their children's emerging identities even after separation.

Parent's Getting Support:

Feelings of grief, loss, anger and shame are widely reported among parents who are involved with Child Safety. Such feelings may leave parents to use or continuing to use maladaptive coping strategies, including disengagement or what may look to be a lack of motivation or interest, amongst other strategies.

It is therefore important for parents to get some formal support such as engage with their GP or psychologist and engage in informal support such as spending time with family and friends and engaging in activities that the parents enjoy. This (formal & informal) support system will help the parent process feelings such as loss, grief, anger and shame. Having support not only helps parents, but it also impacts on their children's ability to process feelings around separation from family members.

Parent Child Time Together:

Parent-child family time can lead to positive outcomes such as 1) it can help to support the child's emotional and developmental wellbeing, 2) it can help to maintain the child's identity and connection to family, and 3) it can help to strengthen the bond between the parent and their children. Even when reunification is not the current plan for some families, research shows that quality relationships can still be beneficial to the child's wellbeing.

Parent's Role:

The goal of parent-child family contact time is for the parent to be able to meet their child's needs such as emotional and developmental needs. See examples below.

- Parents can communicate feelings of hope about the future and believe things will get better.



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Parent's Role (continued):

- Parents can encourage their child to express whatever they're feeling by telling them it's perfectly OK to have the feelings they are experiencing and to comfort them in a way that makes them feel safe and supported. It is important that parents try hard NOT to lecture the child in the moment but instead simply listen, acknowledge and empathise with how their child is feeling. This will help the child feel heard and will help them to learn how to regulate their emotions.
- Parents can continue to spend quality time having fun with their child on a consistent and regular basis. This helps children feel a sense of safety due to predictability of knowing they will engage with their parent. Spending enjoyable time together also helps strengthen the bond between the child and their parent.
- Parents can work on giving their children their full attention. This may be difficult for parents to do especially when they have real life problems and worries. It may be helpful for parents to imagine (just before they are about to spend time with their child) opening an umbrella, that will help shield them from all their worries, so they can be fully present. When a parent is fully present and engaging with their child, they are better able to identify what their child is needing from them at that moment. When parents show interest in whatever the child is telling them about or doing then it helps the child feel valued, supported and loved – and that helps them to cope with stress and adversity better.

Regardless of the circumstances, parents with children in care, remain very important to their children's wellbeing. So, it is vital for parents to remember to look after themselves (emotional and physical wellbeing) so they can continue to take the necessary steps to be the best parents they can be for their precious children.

Your FIS Case Worker is here to support you. We can also help you link in with other avenues for support.