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# Media Release



## CatholicCare agencies participate in major out-of-home care reform

For most children who cannot safely live with their own families, either on a temporary or more permanent basis, a foster home is the best possible caring environment in which to grow safely and learn how to trust and love, says Maureen Eagles, Director of Family, Children and Youth Services at CatholicCare Sydney.

With 31,527 children involved in confirmed cases of child abuse in Australia according to recent figures released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Catholic social welfare and care agencies play a vital role in helping children to heal.

CatholicCare Sydney, along with fellow CatholicCare/Centacare agencies across NSW, provide hundreds of foster family and residential group care placements for vulnerable children and young people each year.

“Since the March 2011 election the current NSW government has acted on its pre-election commitment to continue the roll-out of the policy reform agenda known as “Keep Them Safe,” Ms Eagles said.

“It aims to support families early and as close to home as possible, preventing the need for children to be removed into care.

“In recent years, the Australian Government’s focus has shifted to place more emphasis on access to early intervention support for children and families most at risk, and a renewed emphasis on education as a key factor in later life success,” Ms Eagles says.

With a combined 150 year history of caring, CatholicCare Sydney and other diocesan Catholic agencies as well as those founded by religious congregations, share a rich heritage of commitment and skill in supporting foster carers to continue providing quality care.

With three children of their own, Marisa and Lawrence who have been fostering for the past 14 years supporting children in need of crisis and short term care, know all too well of the assistance CatholicCare’s Sydney branch provides.

“It’s a shared responsibility of caring between us, the child’s family and CatholicCare,” said Marisa describing the care they provide as being a “bridge for children” helping restore them back home or to other relatives such grandparents or to a more permanent situation that is safe and secure.

“You need the support of your family, but with every new journey with each little person that comes to us I can always call CatholicCare to get the support I need.

“It’s important because the children we care for have extra needs which require follow-up and attention. We’re here to help them to grow and develop,” she said.

The number of child abuse cases continues at an alarming level with 6.1 cases substantiated for every 1000 Australian children aged 0–17, according to the annual Child Protection Australia 2010–11 report released on the 20 January.

The number of notifications of abuse have declined, but with more than 30,000 children involved in substantiated cases, the number of children in out-of-home care continued to rise by 5%.



CatholicCare Sydney, together with CatholicCare Hunter-Manning, CatholicCare Wollongong and Centacare Broken Bay are working closely with the NSW government to assist with the commitment to fund the transfer of foster care services to accredited and licensed non-government welfare agencies.

To find out more about fostering a child and making a lasting difference to a child's life  
[www.catholiccare.org](http://www.catholiccare.org) or phone 8709 9333.

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