

'It all feels so hopeless'

When children have been removed from their home, parents and family members are often traumatised and in shock. It is an extremely stressful and despairing time. Parents often don't know what to do, who to talk to or who to trust.

Feelings experienced range from;

- Anger
- Shock
- Isolation
- Shame
- Failure
- Hopelessness
- Powerlessness
- Guilt

It is not uncommon to feel many of these emotions at the same time.

Can Fin WA Help me?

Our ultimate goal is to assist you to gain confidence in your negotiation with the Department. We can help:

- Provide advocacy and representation (attending Departmental and other meetings, writing letters and speaking with department authorities where you may be unable to)
- Provide emotional support and guidance; giving you information (i.e. child protection processes, court orders, assessments, agreements, etc) and assisting with problem solving
- Assist you to obtain legal representation and attend court proceedings with you
- Refer you to other agencies
- Invite you to information sessions/workshops and support groups
- Provide phone support and information to parents, family members and other service workers, metro and statewide.



How do I get in touch?

To talk with us or to make a referral for yourself or someone else you can call us on
(08) 9328 6434

We can talk with you over the phone or face to face.

or email **info@finwa.org.au**

You can also drop in each Friday
between 10:30am - 12:00pm

Outside of these hours please ring prior to visiting the office as it is often unattended.



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Working with families involved in the Child Protection System



Our Mission

*To have a child protection system that
is respectful and inclusive of parents,
family and community
as key stakeholders.*

Who Are We?

The Family Inclusion Network of WA (Fin WA) provides professional advocacy, advice, support and information to birth parents and their families who have had children removed from their care and placed in 'out of home' care.

Fin WA also provides these services to parents and families who are at risk of losing care of their children.

We are committed to helping families navigate the child protection system so they can participate with more information, knowledge and confidence. Fin WA has a community development and systems advocacy focus.



What We Hope

We hope our work with parents will:

- Help communicate more effectively between parents and departmental workers
- Ensure parents know their rights and responsibilities
- Assist parents in appeals and complaints
- Assist parents to understand departmental policies and procedures
- Identify other services for meaningful referrals
- Help raise parents' concerns and experiences so workers have more insight and understanding of the parents'/families experiences.
- Increase parents' confidences to work effectively with the department
- Uphold department practice that is inclusive and respectful
- Assist parents to be hopeful, child focussed and maintain meaningful contact with their children.



**YOU CAN CONTACT FIN WA FOR ADVICE,
INFORMATION AND SUPPORT**

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Systems Advocacy

We work with parents, families and stakeholder groups to inform decision makers about the need for respectful inclusion for families at all points in the child protection system; from prevention and early intervention to out of home care.

Some of the ways we utilise the lived experience voice to inform and influence system change include:

- Participation in departmental and cross sector forums and working groups
- Participation in new and emerging research on the child protection system
- Seeking funding opportunities to further the lived experience voice in service design e.g. peer support
- Undertaking consultations or contributing to submissions to departmental, government or other inquiries

If you would like to contribute to Fin WA's work in systemic advocacy please contact us.

Community Development

Community development at Fin WA seeks to make connections between our organisation and others, including Aboriginal community groups and organisations. Working in collaboration and partnership, in the hope of creating connections for families and creating referral pathways.

Activities include: coffee, craft and chat mornings, self-care, 'writing workshops', pamper days, information sessions, providing safe and relaxed opportunities for families under stress to unwind and meet other parents.

We also provide networking opportunities 'with a difference' for professionals – coming together to understand the work each other does, and share strategies of self-care amidst challenging work.

Family Partners

We call parents with lived experience, 'Family Partners', as they walk alongside families on their journey.

Fin WA values the participation of parents and families who have lived experience of the child protection system. Their voice is powerful, it can provide hope and renewed resilience to families who are currently navigating the system.

They are similar to mentors or peers, and provide emotional support and information which help families understand and engage in the process. They can provide a bridge between parents and the system to help build skills and confidence, including developing self-advocacy skills.

Family Partners can also work to inform and influence systemic change of the child protection system by participating in consultations, training and research.

Fin WA provides training and supervision for parents with lived experience.

Training

Fin WA delivers training to service providers on their resource '**Finding Your Way with the Department: Navigating the Child Protection System**'. This training is well regarded as providing valuable information and insight into how to work with the system more effectively.

Training is also provided to foster carers on the experiences of birth parents when children are removed and '**What Birth Parents Want Foster Carers to Know**'.

Presentations or information sessions can be provided to small teams as required. Where possible a parent with lived experience participates in the delivery of training and presentations.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities, please contact us.



Bringing Up Great Kids (BUGK)

BUGK is a parenting programme that helps parents develop strong, safe and nurturing relationships with their children. Developed by the Australian Childhood Foundation, BUGK is a trauma response, evidence based programme which reduces parenting stress and increases parenting confidence.

It is delivered in group workshops over 6 weeks, and is especially for parents with complex needs. Sessions include:

- Reflection on the origins of their parenting style
- Learn about brain development
- Understand the meaning behind their child's behaviour
- Get an insight into how they can enhance communication with their children
- Learn about mindfulness and reduce parenting stress so that they can become the kind of parents they want to be

BUGK is offered to families with children aged 0-12 years, and parents can join a workshop, attend a weekly supported playgroup or have a short term home visiting service if they require more support – parents can participate in all three activities if that helps meet their needs.

BUGK is funded through Communities for Children, Mirrabooka, so priority will be given to families living in Mirrabooka and surrounding areas.

This project is supported by the Australian Government Department of Social Services and facilitated by The Smith Family.