

# Information sharing for foster carers

## Why is there a Law to share information?

Information Sharing is designed to help people and organisations work together for child safety and wellbeing.

Part 5.1A of the *Care and Protection of Children Act* enables individuals and organisations to share information that will assist them in their role of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of a child.

This is because we need to work together to care for and protect children, and that no one organisation or individual has all the information needed to do this.

## Who are Authorised Information Sharers?

People who can share information under the legislation are called Authorised Information Sharers (AIS).

Some of the people you speak to everyday in your role as a Foster Carer are an AIS (for example – the child’s doctor, the child’s school teacher). A list of more familiar AIS is provided at the end of this fact sheet.

As a Foster Carer you play a very important in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of a child or children in your care. Under the legislation, as a Registered Foster Carer, you are an AIS.

## How do I share information?

Information sharing is when **you tell** another AIS information about the child or children in your care OR when another AIS **tells you** information relating to the child or children in your care. The information shared can be either verbal or written.

## When do I share information?

You share information with another AIS when it will assist them to do a job or function that relates to the safety and wellbeing of a child.

## What do I do when I have given or received information about a child in my care?

You need to tell the Case Manager when you are requested to share or have been told something complex or sensitive about the child in your care, as it may have an impact on your care plan or case management decisions relating to the child.

## Do I need to write the information down?

You are not legally required to document any information sharing exchanges, however if the information is important or sensitive you should make a note and then pass it onto the child’s Case Manager, or call the Case Manager to tell them what has occurred. The Case Manager can then document the information on the child’s file.

## Resources

Information Sharing Guidelines, Fact Sheets and Frequently Asked Questions are available at <https://territoryfamilies.nt.gov.au/publications-and-policies/guidelines-for-information-sharing>

## If you are not sure about whether you should provide information

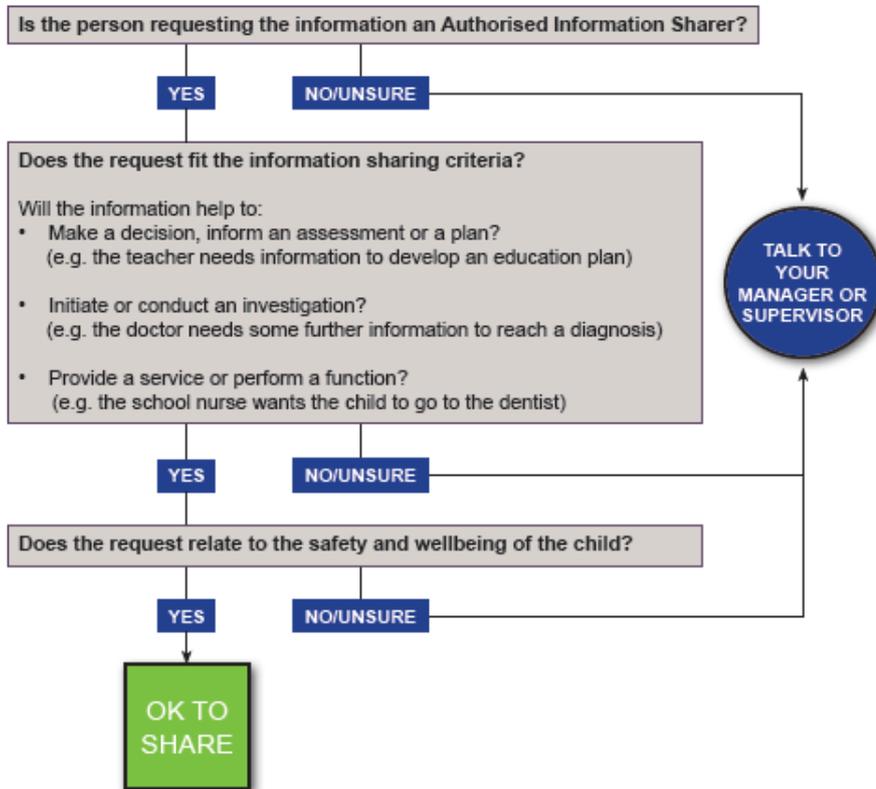
You can refer the enquiry to the child’s Case Manager or you can call the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities on 1800 565 935 and discuss your concerns.

**If you do not feel confident or do not want the responsibility of providing the information you can refer the question to the child’s Case Manager.**

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## How do I decide if I can share information?

In deciding if it's okay to share information about a child or young person in your care, you need to think about the following:



## Who is an Authorised Information Sharer?

### Authorised Information Sharers include:

- Registered foster carers
- School principals and registered teachers
- Registered child care services
- Doctors, nurses, allied health workers and other health professionals
- Hospitals and approved mental health treatment facilities
- Providers of drug or alcohol treatment services that receive funding from the Northern Territory Government
- NT Government employed frontline staff who provide a service to children or in connection with children
- Service providers that receive funding from the Australian or Northern Territory Governments to provide a service for children;
- These include non-government organisations (NGOs – for example Catholic Care or Anglicare,) and local government (after school care or school holiday programs).
- Police officers
- Lawyers.