

Child Support Role

Policy

Lions Emergency Accommodation Centre Inc. (LEAC) recognises the special needs of children and will provide appropriate supports and/or referrals to meet those needs.

Procedure

The child support role focuses on supporting the parent in caring for their children, assessing children's needs, linking children to other services in the community, fostering the acquisition of skills, providing emotional support and allowing time specifically for child-oriented activities. This role may form part of the role of all staff members.

The parent's written permission will always be sought before children are referred to agencies for support or when staff engage in therapeutic activities with children. Duty of Care may provide an exception to this rule if a child is considered to be 'at risk'. Action will then be taken consistent with the Duty of Care policy and Notification of Child Abuse policy.

The child support worker will develop a support plan with the accompanying parent which includes goals for each child and for themselves as parents (e.g., parenting program). Wherever possible, older children will participate in this process and work on their own goals. All children in the shelter, over the age of five (5) years, will be given a copy of the welcome to the shelter booklet. The family support and child support workers will liaise in relation to the support of the whole family.

The assessment process for accompanying children will take into account the following:

- Age, maturity and developmental needs of the child
- Special needs e.g., education, childcare, contact visits
- The effects on the child if they have been involved in or witnessed domestic and family violence
- Child's relationship with parents
- Child's need for an advocate.

The Centre will provide and maintain a safe, well-equipped children's activity area, both indoors and outdoors, which meet the needs and interests of children.

Whilst clients of the Service, the care of children remains the responsibility of their parents. Child care may be provided if a parent is attending appointments, group activities within the Centre or in cases of emergency. (Refer Childcare – Unavoidable Absence of Parent/s policy.) This will be negotiated with child support workers to ensure there is adequate staff in attendance.