

Snapshots for Carers

Out-Of-Home Care Education
Commitment: A Partnering Agreement

The Centre respectfully acknowledges that we work on the traditional land of the Kulin Nation, and we acknowledge the Wurundjeri people who are the traditional custodians of this land. We pay respect to Elders past, present and those of the future. We acknowledge that we work on stolen land that was never ceded.

We appreciate and celebrate diversity in all its forms. We believe diversity of all kids makes our teams, services and organisation stronger and more effective.

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Before you begin

Defining Out of Home Care (OOHC)

Within this document, Children in Out of Home Care refers to children who are not living with their parents and are subject to child protection investigation, protective intervention, or a Children's Court Order. This includes kinship, foster, residential, lead tenant or permanent care arrangements.

Permanent Care Order: Children who have been placed on a permanent care order within the last 12 months are able to receive support from LOOKOUT.

Excluded from this are children and young people who are in informal care, and who have transitioned from OOHC to adoption or family reunification.

Different systems, different words:

The Partnering Agreement aims to support children in Government, Catholic and Independent schools. Different school systems use different terminology to describe some of the elements of care. Below is a quick guide to some of the terminology used:

Government Schools	Catholic Schools	Independent Schools
Student Support Group (SSG)	Program Support Group (PSG)	Independent Schools must provide the same processes as Government and Catholic. However, they will use different terms across different schools. It is best to talk to your case manager if you need help advocating for supports in school
Individual Education Plan (IEP)	Personalised Learning Plan (PLP)	
Educational Needs Analysis (ENA)	Same, see guidelines here	
Student Support Services (SSS)	Learning Diversity / Learning Adjustments	

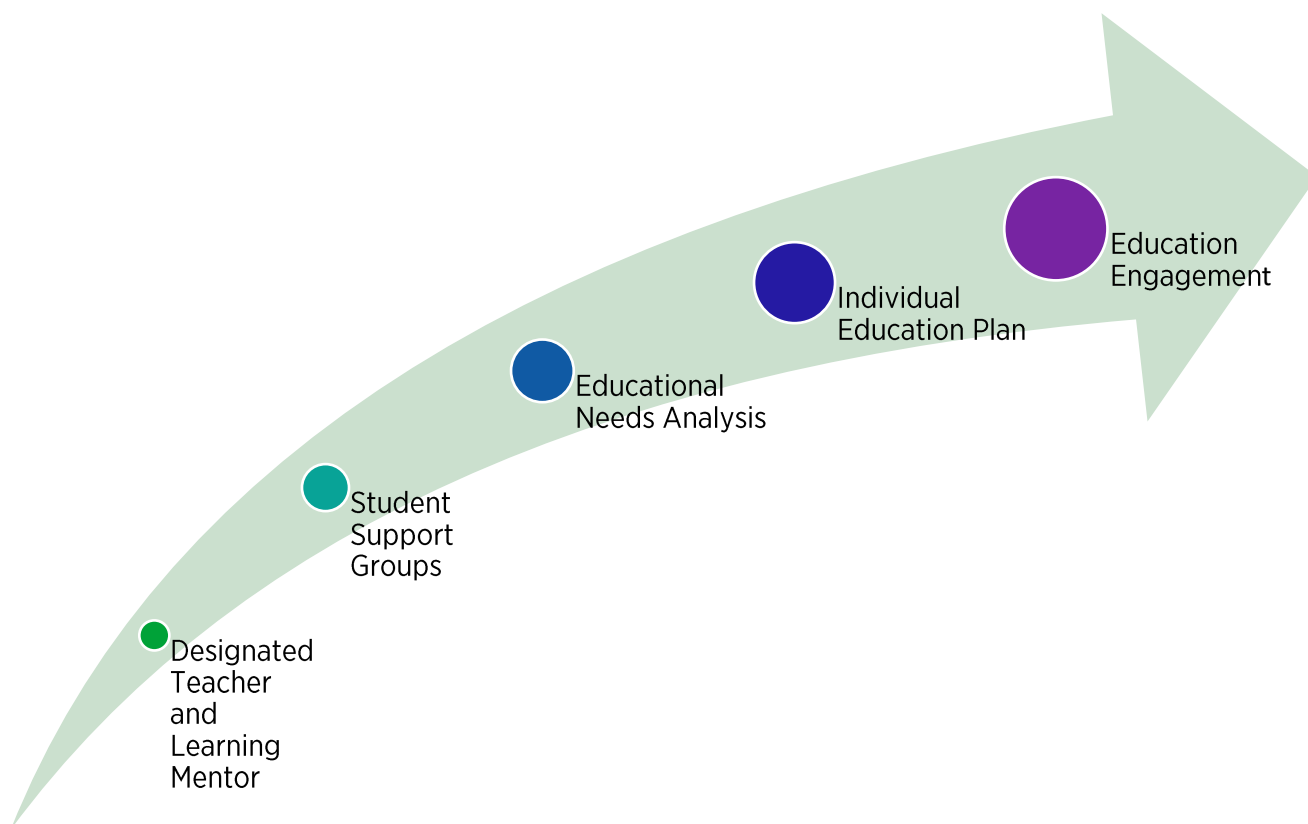
Introduction

This document was designed for carers of children and young people, intended to support you to advocate for your child in school to get the best educational opportunities.

Under the Out-Of-Home Care Education Commitment: A Partnering Agreement (The Partnering Agreement), all children in Out of Home Care are entitled to specific supports for their education. The document is designed to show how all aspects of the Partnering Agreement fit in with one another.

When you talk to your case manager or school, you can use this document as a basis to advocate for your child to receive the appropriate support for their education.

This is a guide for what you can expect for your child (children) when they are in primary / secondary school in the Government, Catholic and independent systems. Additional resources for children in Early Years, and further information are available on the Centre's website: www.cfecfw.asn.au/education-resource-hub



Out-Of-Home Care Education Commitment: A Partnering Agreement

What is the Partnering Agreement?

The Out-Of-Home Care Education Commitment: A Partnering Agreement (the Partnering Agreement) outlines the roles and responsibilities for people supporting children in care. It was created to make sure everyone works together and provide the appropriate supports to children in care for the best education, health and wellbeing outcomes. This includes schools completing the following:

Assign a Learning
Mentor

Student Support
Group, with
termly meetings

Individual
Education Plan

Educational
Needs Analysis

Appoint a
Designated
Teacher

LOOKOUT Centres

LOOKOUT Centres are teams of experienced educators and allied health staff lead by a Principal who help schools, child protection practitioners, contracted case managers and carers to support children in care to achieve the best educational outcomes.

LOOKOUT Centres have specialist roles: Koorie Cultural Advisors, Learning Advisors, Early Childhood Learning Advisors, Psychologists, Careers Advisors and Youth Justice Advisors.

LOOKOUT Learning Advisors can support schools to increase their knowledge and awareness of the Partnering Agreement, put in place plans to support students, and help case managers and carers navigate the education system.

What can you contact the LOOKOUT Centre for?

You can contact your local LOOKOUT Centre if you believe your child's school is not providing the necessary supports for your child.

You should always speak to your school's Principal first, to address any concerns you have. If you are not satisfied with the school's response you can contact the LOOKOUT Centre in your region for information and advice. For information or advice, contact the LOOKOUT Centre in your region:

South Western
Victoria Region

lookout.swv@education.vic.gov.au

South Eastern Victoria
Region

lookout.sev@education.vic.gov.au

North Western Victoria
Region

lookout.nwv@education.vic.gov.au

North Eastern Victoria
Region

lookout.nev@education.vic.gov.au

Roles in Schools

Designated Teacher

All Government, Catholic and Independent schools must have a trained Designated Teacher. LOOKOUT Centres provide training to Designated Teachers, including Trauma Training.

Designated teachers take the lead responsibility within schools for children in care. They make sure your child has all their requirements under the Partnering Agreement:

- Student Support Group
- Individual Education Plan
- Educational Needs Analysis
- A Learning Mentor

The Designated Teacher is the key contact at your child's school for LOOKOUT, DFFH and other agencies involved with your child. They play an important role behind the scenes, with various administrative duties. This means they may not necessarily have a strong relationship with your child. That is the role of the Learning Mentor.

Learning Mentor

Schools should provide your child with a Learning Mentor. Learning Mentors are a school staff member who:

Meet regularly with
your child

Support the
educational needs of
your child

Help them stay
connected to their
education and
school

Support them to
overcome barriers in
their learning

Act as a role model,
guide and advocate
for your child

Get to know your
child well and take
an interest in their
life and learning

It is important your child is involved in choosing a Learning Mentor, with input from the principal and school staff. The relationship between your child and their learning mentor is key.

Learning mentors provide your child with unconditional positive regard and shouldn't play a disciplinary role in your child's education. They are a significant adult for your child; someone your child has a good connection to, helps them feel safe, and who has the skills to support your child.

For more information on LOOKOUT Centres and the Partnering agreements:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/supporting-students-out-home-care/resources>

Student Support Group and Meetings

WHY

- Student Support Group meetings help make and maintain connections between young people and families, and school staff
- The aim is to make sure the people with the most knowledge of your child work together to develop and work towards shared goals
- A chance to celebrate the successes and achievements of your child, you and educators
- Raise the student voice

WHO

- Everyone involved in your child's education can be invited to attend and contribute. Think about who are the most important people to be part of the meeting
- For example: Your child, you, Koorie Education Support Officer, Psychologist, Contracted Case Manager, Child Protection, School staff, Youth Worker
- Schools are responsible for scheduling meetings, taking minutes and providing minutes to the Student Support Group
- You can bring an advocate, support person and/or an interpreter

WHAT

- A team of people who support your child's education, with meetings once per term (or more if required) to:
 - Develop and review your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) (Personalised Learning Plan in Catholic Schools)
 - Set expectations and goals for your child
 - Discuss and review Educational Needs Analysis (ENA)

WHEN

- A Student Support Group should be arranged within one week of a young person entering care
- Student Support Group meetings **should occur at least once per term**. Extra meetings can be held if requested by the school, case manager or carer
- Tip: Ask to schedule the next meeting in advance, perhaps at the beginning of term to plan ahead and make sure everyone is available

HOW

- Meetings might be held at school, online or in a culturally safe space
- Everyone is an expert in their area, including you as the carer of your child
- Everyone gets a chance to talk, including you and your child
- Focus on strengths!
- Professionals sometimes use abbreviations or jargon, it's ok if you need something explained

HELP

- LOOKOUT Staff are available to support in more complex cases
- Contact your local Learning Advisor for additional guidance on SSGs
- DET Resources: www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/supporting-students-out-home-care/resources

Individual Education Plan

WHY

- Children in care sometimes need additional or different help in school. An Individual Education Plan outlines what support your child needs, making sure all staff know how to help

WHO

- Every student in care must have an Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- The Student Support Group is responsible for developing and agreeing to the Individual Education Plan

WHAT

- An Individual Education Plan is used to plan how to help and ensure success in learning for your child
- There should be two short term goals and a long term goal for your child's education
- It is a good chance to show off your child's strengths, and learn how to use those to set high aspirations and expectations

WHEN

- At the first Student Support Group meeting, the team should develop an Individual Education Plan
- During each following Student Support Group meeting, the Individual Education Plan should be reviewed to make sure the plan still meets the needs of your child, and updated when it no longer suits your child's needs

HOW

- Consider how your child learns best:
 - Do they need one-on-one support, or tutoring to catch up
 - Are they being challenged in their learning?
 - If your child has a cultural support plan, this should be included into the individual education plan
- Use short term goals to set your child up for success
- Celebrate when goals are achieved!
- Use realistic goals. For example:
 - If you think your child might struggle with a full day at school initially after a long absence suggest a gradual transition
- Professionals should avoid using jargon or acronyms. It's ok to ask for something to be explained

HELP

- Call your local Learning Advisor for more guidance on Individual Education Plans
- DET resources: www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/individual-education-plans-ieps/resources

Educational Needs Analysis

WHY

- Young people in care often live in many different homes and attend many different schools and it's important to know where they're at with their learning and development
- An Educational Needs Analysis helps to guide and plan changes to support your child's education

WHAT

- An important collection of health and educational information that lead to a report, completed by Student Support Services (SSS)
- Information collected for an ENA can be different, depending on each child.
- The report helps to guide and make recommendations to support your child's education
- The recommendations should include ways to support your child's interests, wellbeing, culture and identity, in order to support their education

WHO

- Every student who has been in care for 3 months (all together) must have an ENA
- Schools make the referral for your child's ENA to Student Support Services (SSS)
- Schools, Student Support Services and DFFH work together to provide existing information. Student Support Services may suggest additional information needs to be gathered
- All people and services supporting your child can contribute information to the ENA, including case managers and carers
- Student Support Services write a report with recommendations to support your child's learning

WHEN

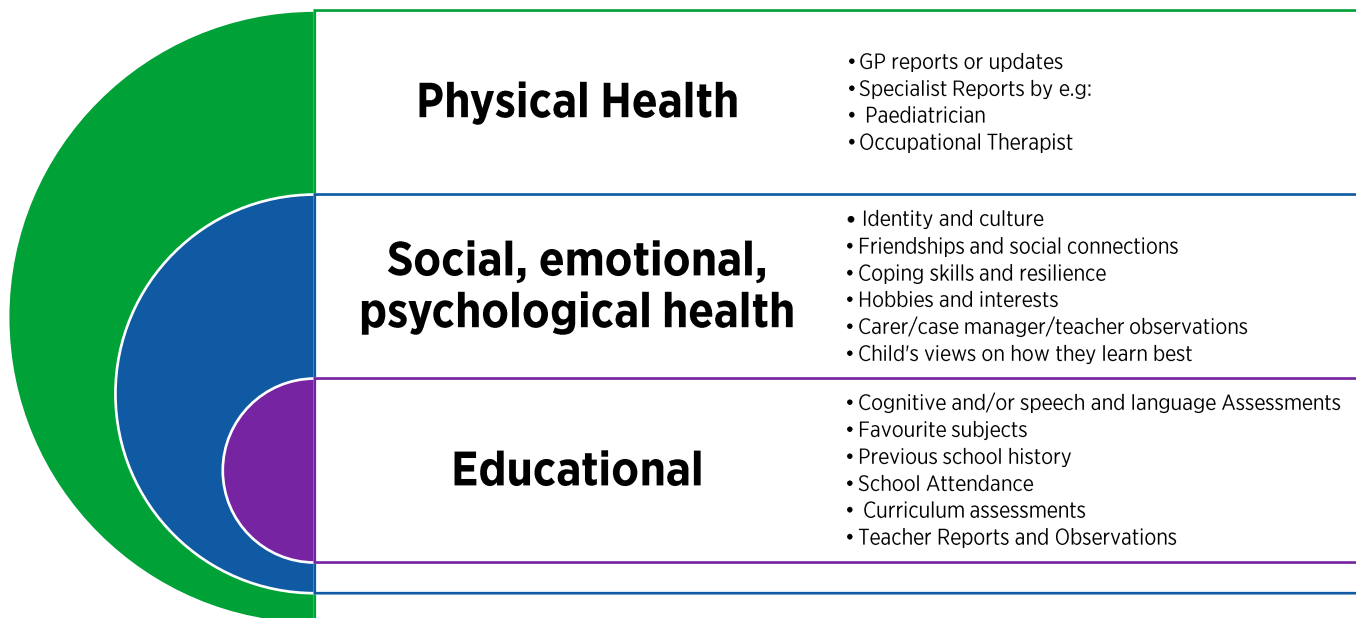
- Schools must make a referral for your child if they have been in care for 3 months. This can be three months all together, or spread over a period of time
- If there are immediate concerns, you can ask the school to make a referral sooner
- TIP: Ask your case manager if your child has had an ENA completed in the past

HELP

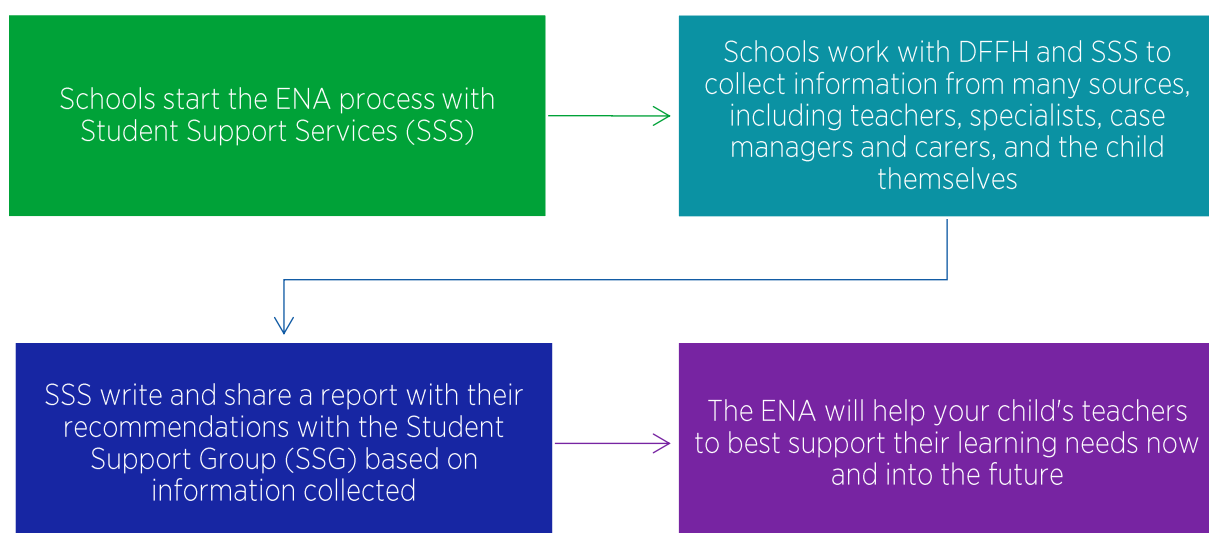
- If you think an ENA should be completed more quickly, or for any other questions about an ENA, please contact your local LOOKOUT Learning Advisor for support
- DET Resources: www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/supporting-students-out-home-care/resources

What information can be collected?

The following is an example of some types of information collected for the Educational Needs Analysis. These aren't mandatory for the completion of an ENA, as the information gathered is specific to your child.



Educational Needs Analysis Process



Important Note: An Individual Education Plan (IEP) can be developed prior to an ENA being completed.

Questions to ask and things to think about

Who is my child's learning mentor, and what support can they provide?	Who is the designated teacher, and what support can they provide?	Who is the Koorie Education Support Officer, and what support can they provide?
Is Aboriginal history and culture embedded within the curriculum?	Does the school do an acknowledgement of country?	Has my child had an educational needs analysis completed in the past?
How do I let the school know if my child is absent?	(Reduced timetable) What is our re-engagement goal and timeline?	Are there any learning supports available? My child needs help with _____
Can we schedule the next SSG meeting today? I like to have things planned in advance.	What are my child's strengths?	What are my child's aspirations? Doctor, mechanic, astronaut, teacher, plumber?
Are there any local sport or recreational clubs that you would recommend?	Who can I ask for support with homework or tutoring?	How can I let you know if they might have a rough day?
These things help them feel safe and supported _____	What are the triggers (if any) that may lead to distressed behaviours?	(Primary moving to secondary) Do you know when secondary school tours start at our local schools?
(Secondary school) Has my child started their career action plan?	Who do I tell if there are changes in support eg. workers or needs?	