

STANDARDS for Foster Care Services in Namibia



Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare
GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

Service providers engaged in developing these Foster Care Standards



Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Foreword	3
<hr/>	
Abbreviations	4
Definitions	5
The System of Foster Care in the Child Care and Protection Act	8
Minimum Legal Requirements for Providing Foster Care Services in Namibia	10
<hr/>	
INTRODUCTION	11
LIST OF STANDARDS	12
Chapter 1	13
ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES	
Chapter 2	17
MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING	
Chapter 3	21
ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE	
Chapter 4	23
FOSTER CARE SERVICE PROCESS	
Chapter 5	27
CARING FOR CHILDREN	
Chapter 6	43
STANDARDS FOR FOSTER PARENTS	
<hr/>	
Foster Care Resources – Overview and CD	48

Acknowledgements

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare thanks the following people and organisations for their contributions to developing these Foster Care Standards:

- The parents providing foster and kinship care, and the children in foster and kinship care, who gave their time and shared their knowledge and experiences as participants in focus group discussions.
- The civil society partners and foster parents who participated in the consultative workshops convened to develop the Standards.
- UNICEF, for providing financial and technical assistance for finalising the Standards.

It is our hope that these Standards will contribute to the development of outstanding foster care services in Namibia.



Directorate of Child Welfare Services
MINISTRY OF GENDER EQUALITY AND CHILD WELFARE

Trust Centre, Independence Avenue, Windhoek
Private Bag 13359, Windhoek, Namibia
Telephone 061-2833111
Fax 061-229569 / 238941
Email genderequality@mgecw.gov.na
Website www.mgecw.gov.na

A digital version of this document is available on the MGE CW website.

Printed in December 2011.

Printed by Printech cc in Windhoek.

ISBN 978-99945-72-73-1

Foreword



The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW) recognises that children and families in difficulty require support, and that social workers require guidance and standards on how best to support families caring for children.

We are pleased to make these Foster Care Standards available to all stakeholders engaged in the protection, care and support of children where foster care provision may be required. These Standards are intended to guide social workers and other service providers in carrying out the tasks of recruiting, assessing, training, matching, supporting, supervising and monitoring when providing foster care services. The primary aim of these Standards is to ensure that the best interests of the child are sought when a child is in need of foster care. The MGECW, as the guardian of children without adequate parental care, will monitor the implementation of these Standards. The MGECW has also developed Foster Care Guidelines which will assist in translating the Standards into day-to-day practice. The Guidelines are included on the Resources CD appended to this document.

The MGECW recognises the necessity of civil society partnerships for carrying the load of managing foster care placements, and for successful networking with foster care service providers. For this reason, these Standards are aimed at potential foster care service providers as well as the existing ones.

The Standards were developed using a participatory approach. In 2009, a study on foster care in Namibia was undertaken to identify the needs of the community and the means available to the MGECW to address these. In 2010, the study was followed up with further consultations to develop the Foster Care Standards and Guidelines. The Standards were developed and finalised through two workshops attended by experienced MGECW staff, foster care service providers and foster parents. Focus group discussions and key informant interviews were conducted in four regions of the country to gauge the opinions of foster parents, kinship caregivers, children and professionals (social workers, commissioners, managers of alternative care services) on the best way to implement the Standards.

We are optimistic that these Standards will lay the foundation for ensuring that foster care is a viable alternative care solution for children in need of protection, care and support. We thank UNICEF for providing technical and financial assistance to finalise these Standards.



Ms Sirkka Ausiku
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare

Abbreviations

ARV	anti-retroviral (treatment)
ACRW	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
CCPA	Child Care and Protection Act (Draft 2010)
ECD	early childhood development
FCSP(s)	foster care service provider(s)
GRN	Government of the Republic of Namibia
MGECW	Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare
MoHSS	Ministry of Health and Social Services
NFR	National Family Register
OVC	orphans and vulnerable children
POS	place of safety
RCCF	residential child care facility
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNGACC	United Nations Guidelines for Alternative Care for Children
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund



Children's needs identified by service providers in a workshop convened to develop these Standards

Definitions

The definitions here are laid down in the **Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA)**. Under some of the definitions, further clarification of the term is given.

“alternative care” means care of a child, either temporarily or long term –

- (a) *in foster care*;
- (b) in kinship care in terms of an order of the children’s court; or
- (c) in a place of safety, place of care, shelter, children’s home or education and development centre.

“care-giver” means any person other than a parent or guardian, who takes primary responsibility for the day-to-day care of a child, and includes –

- (a) *a foster parent*;
- (b) a kinship care-giver;
- (c) a primary caretaker;
- (d) a person who cares for a child whilst the child is in a place of safety;
- (e) the person at the head of a facility where a child has been placed; and
- (f) the child at the head of a child-headed household.

“child” means a person who has not attained the age of 18 years.

“community child care worker” means a child care worker contemplated in the CCPA.

“children’s commissioner” means a magistrate contemplated in the CCPA.

“children’s court” means the children’s court referred to in the CCPA.

“child protection hearing” means a hearing held to determine whether a child is in need of protective services.

“designated child protection organisation” means a child protection organisation designated by the Minister for the purpose of the CCPA or any part thereof in terms of section 28 to perform designated child protection services.

In this document, the **Foster Care Service Providers** are child protection organisations designated by the MGECSW to provide fostering services in the region mentioned in the certificate of designation issued by the MGECSW Head Office.

“designated social worker” means a social worker in the service of the State or a social worker in private practice who is designated by the Minister for the purpose of this Act or any part thereof in terms of section 28, or a social worker in the employ of a designated child protection organisation.

The Minister would give authorisation to **“designated social workers”** who meet particular qualifications to do various types of statutory work. In this document, this means the provision of foster care services through a designated FCSP and court procedures to place children in foster care. This means that private social workers can provide foster care services and conduct court procedures only when they are employed by an FCSP and registered with the Psychology and Social Work Council. The designated social worker could include both government and private social workers employed by a designated FCSP, but all reports compiled by private social workers in terms of the CCPA would be channelled through the Ministry for purposes of monitoring and supervision. The authorisation to perform specified foster care statutory duties would have to be renewed every two years as a mechanism for controlling misconduct and substandard professional work. The qualifications for performing various statutory duties (such as years of experience or participation in specialised in-service training) would be set by regulations and could be changed from time to time as necessary.

“family member” in relation to a child, means –

- (a) a parent of the child;
- (b) any other person who has parental responsibilities and rights in respect of the child;
- (c) a grandparent, step-parent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt or cousin of the child;¹ or
- (d) any other person with whom the child has developed a significant relationship, based on psychological or emotional attachment, having lived with a child or where a relationship exists, which resembles a family relationship.

“foster care” means care of a child by a person who is not the parent, guardian, family member or extended family member in terms of an order of the children’s court.

“foster care service provider” is a child protection organisation, designated and certified by the MGECW to provide foster care services.

“foster parent” means a person who has foster care of a child.

“foster care register” means the register of prospective foster parents who are assessed by the FCSP and approved by the MGECW.

The register, called the *National Family Register*, includes the register of adoptions, the register of prospective foster parents, the register of placements of children with foster parents and the register of people found unsuitable or unsafe to foster children.

“in need of protective services”, in relation to a child, means a child who is in a situation contemplated in the CCPA.

“kinship care” means care of a child by a member of the child’s family or extended family.

“kinship care-giver” means a person who has kinship care of a child.

“parent”, in relation to a child, means a woman or a man in respect of whom parentage has been acknowledged or otherwise established in terms of the CCPA, and includes the adoptive parent of a child, but excludes –

- (a) the biological father of a child conceived through the rape of or incest with the child’s mother;
- (b) any person who is biologically related to a child by reason only of being a gamete donor for purposes of artificial fertilisation; or
- (c) a parent whose parental responsibilities and rights in respect of a child have been terminated.

“parental responsibilities and rights”, in relation to a child, means the responsibilities and rights referred to in the CCPA.

“place of safety” means a facility referred to in the CCPA, and includes care of a child in a hospital or clinic, a registered children’s home or shelter, an approved private home or any other place where the child can safely be accommodated pending a decision or court order concerning the placement of the child in foster care, but excludes care of a child in a prison or police cell; and may be a foster home.

“primary caretaker” means a person other than the parent or other legal caregiver of a child, whether or not related to the child, who takes primary responsibility for the daily care of the child with the express or implied permission of the person who is the custodian of the child.

“probation officer” means a person who complies with the prescribed requirements, and who has been designated under the CCPA.

“protective services” means services aimed at providing care, protection or both care and protection for a child to safeguard his or her safety, security and wellbeing, or improving such care, protection or both care and protection.

“residential child care facility” means a place of safety, a children’s home or an education and development centre.

“shelter” means a facility referred to by this term in the CCPA.

“social worker” means a social worker registered or deemed to be registered in terms of the Social Work and Psychology Act, 2004 (Act No. 6 of 2004).

“social auxiliary worker” means a person who is registered or deemed to be registered in terms of sections 22 and 61 of the Social Work and Psychology Act, 2004 (Act No. 6 of 2004).

In the CCPA, provision is made for undesignated social workers or persons without formal social work qualifications (e.g. social auxiliary workers or community child care workers employed by the MGE CW) to carry out certain tasks under the supervision of designated social workers, to help alleviate the social work shortage and to free up designated social workers for the most important tasks.

The System of Foster Care in the Child Care and Protection Act

STANDARDS FOR FOSTER CARE SERVICES IN NAMIBIA

Foster care in Namibia will be regulated in the **Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA)**, from the moment that the Act comes into force. In the CCPA draft of 2010, foster care is regulated in Chapter 12. Care by family members or other people known to the child is no longer referred to in Namibia as “foster care”, but rather as “kinship care”, and this form of care will be regulated under a different chapter of the Act, in a manner differing to the regulation of foster care. Kinship care can be registered with the court record clerk, or it can be ordered by the children’s court after a court hearing has taken place. Placements on court orders may imply that there are unresolved difficulties related to the child’s situation and the need for placing the child in kinship care, which may require a social worker’s attention in the form of an assessment of the kinship caregiver(s) or an investigation as to whether the placement is indeed in the best interests of the child.

Foster care refers only to placements of children by court order with a person or family not related to them. All of these foster parents will be recruited, assessed, trained and approved by designated social workers¹ before children are matched and placed with them. There is a register of prospective foster parents who have been approved by the designated Foster Care Service Providers (FCSPs), from which designated social workers can draw when looking for a family for a child who cannot live with his/her own extended family. This register is called the *National Family Register (NFR)*.

To assist the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGE CW) – the Ministry responsible for the care of all children found to be in need of alternative care – **willing organisations may come forward to offer foster care services.** Based on the Ministry’s regional plan for the provision of alternative care for children in a specific region, the Minister may decide to delegate the provision of foster care services to one or more specialised governmental and/or non-governmental child protection organisations in that region, in accordance with the CCPA. These organisations are the “designated FCSPs” referred to above. In regions where there is no designated FCSP, the regional office of the MGE CW will act as such, and that office will appoint a social worker to perform the duties of a designated social worker for foster care.

¹ For an explanation, see the “Definitions” in this document (pages 5-7).

To streamline the process and ensure quality delivery of foster care services, the MGECW has developed **standards and guidelines for the appointment and registration of designated FCSPs**. Any organisation contemplating applying for registration as an FCSP must adhere to these standards and guidelines, and may not take any child into its care before being officially registered by the MGECW as the designated FCSP in the applicable region.

This means that **an organisation registered as an FCSP or a residential child care facility (RCCF) in a specific region may not expand its operation to another region without being registered in that other region**. The organisation must apply to the MGECW Head Office for registration for such expansion, and if expansion to more than one other region is envisaged, the applicant must clearly specify every region envisaged. This registration process is needed to ensure that the MGECW retains a clear overview of child protection organisations providing alternative care, and that the services available meet the needs of the regional communities, meaning that one cannot develop foster care or residential child care services where there is no expressed need for these in the applicable community. In turn this means that every application for registration has to be based on a needs assessment in the region or local community in which the organisation wants to operate. The MGECW has decided to delegate the provision of foster care services to as many child protection organisations as are needed per region, based on the needs assessment and the MGECW's regional plan. This also means that foster care services cannot be provided by individual private social workers who have not been designated or who are not employed by a designated FCSP.

The MGECW is responsible for monitoring designated service providers, both in its regional offices and in civil society organisations. The Ministry intends to carry out this task in the cooperative spirit in which the standards and guidelines were developed. **A Network of Alternative Care Organisations** will be established to support the development of foster care services, in conjunction with the development of residential and kinship care services, through the exchange of knowledge and experiences. In joining hands and cooperating, government and civil society can achieve the overall goal of ensuring that all children in Namibia, whether raised by their biological parents or in the care of others, have the means to reach their full potential as human beings and as citizens who can help to build a healthy nation.



Children identifying and ranking their needs



Service providers charting children's needs

Minimum Legal Requirements for Providing Foster Care Services in Namibia

All organisations and individuals wanting to provide foster care services must abide by these minimum legal requirements.

1. The organisation responsible for the FCSP must be **registered** with the responsible Ministry – currently the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) – as a Welfare Organisation in terms of section 19(1) of the National Welfare Act, 1965 (Act No. 79 of 1965).
2. The FCSP must be appointed by the responsible Ministry – currently the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGE CW) – as a **designated child protection organisation**, meaning a child protection organisation designated by the Minister for the purpose of providing foster care services in accordance with section 28 and section 12 article 150(2) of the Child Care and Protection Bill (draft 2011), and must comply with the accompanying regulations.
3. The FCSP must have employed a **registered social worker** designated by the Minister of Gender Equality and Child Welfare for the purpose of providing foster care support services in terms of section 28, and according to the roles described in the Child Care and Protection Bill (draft 2011).
4. In case there is no designated FCSP in a region, the **MGE CW Regional Office** in that region will act as FCSP, and the social workers employed by that Office will provide foster care services in terms of section 28 and according to the roles described in the Child Care and Protection Bill (draft 2011).
5. Social workers may delegate certain tasks to **auxiliary social workers** who are registered by the Social Work and Psychology Council, and who are supervised by designated MGE CW social workers or social workers working for a designated FCSP.

INTRODUCTION

This document, *Standards for Foster Care Services in Namibia*, is designed to guide all those responsible for planning and providing foster care services, and for registering and monitoring Foster Care Service Providers (FCSPs) in Namibia. The care provided can be measured and assessed against these Standards. These Standards are achievable outcomes for foster families caring for children, and the means to achieve them are detailed herein. The Standards are grouped into six categories, presented in six chapters as set out below.

1. Organisational Issues

These are the Standards for setting up and organising the services, including the legal requirements and documentation necessary.

2. Management and Staffing

These are the Standards for management arrangements and staff-related issues such as recruitment, training and development of staff, employment practices, and policies and procedures.

3. Finance and Fundraising

These are the Standards for financial management and fundraising.

4. The Foster Care Service Process

These are the Standards for planning foster care service provision. They cover:

- the issues of transparency and accountability in planning;
- the process and management of foster care, including the recruitment, assessment, training, matching, support and supervision of foster parents;
- the complaints procedure; and
- record-keeping procedures.

5. Caring for Children

These are the Standards for the following four areas:

- Admission and decision-making
- The care-taking process
- Leaving care
- Aftercare support

6. Standards for Foster Parents

These are the Standards by which foster parents must abide in order to provide a safe and loving family environment in which a child can develop to his/her full potential.



LIST OF STANDARDS

CHAPTER AND SUBJECT	STANDARDS FOR FCSPs	
Chapter 1 ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES	1	Background Information
	2	Identity and Name
	3	Needs Assessment
	4	Transparency and Accountability
Chapter 2 MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING	5	Management Attributes
	6	Management Procedure
	7	Staff Complement
	8	Staff Attributes
	9	Staff Training and Development
	10	Employment Practices
Chapter 3 FINANCE AND FUNDRAISING	11	Financial Management
	12	Fundraising
Chapter 4 FOSTER CARE SERVICE PROCESS	13	Foster Care Process and Management
	14	Complaints Procedure
	15	Administrative Procedure
Chapter 5 CARING FOR CHILDREN	16	Admission
	17	Care of Siblings
	18	Caregiving Responsibilities
	19	Child Participation
	20	Case Recording
	21	Progress Reporting
	22	Health
	23	Death of a Child
	24	Diet and Nutrition
	25	Education
	26	Contact with Birth Parents/Families
	27	Play and Leisure Time
	28	Physical, Social and Emotional Development
	29	Reintegration into the Family and Community of Origin
	30	Transition to Adulthood
	31	Follow-up Support and Contact
32	Adoption by Foster Parent(s)	
Chapter 6 STANDARDS FOR FOSTER PARENTS	33	Approval of Foster Parents
	34	Homes of Foster Families
	35	Caring for Children
	36	Safe and Caring Environment
	37	Working in a Multidisciplinary Team
	38	Own Development



Chapter 1

ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES

Standard 1 Background Information

The organisation or association wishing to be designated as an FCSP has a file (updated annually) which provides detailed background information.

Achieving Standard 1

1. The file should provide evidence of the good standing and reputation of the organisation or association, which would warrant its designation as an FCSP for the placement of children in the care of foster parents.
2. The file should contain information outlining the constitution, policy, management and regulatory arrangements, and structure of the organisation or association. It should also provide evidence of when and how the organisation or association was formed, its expertise and area(s) of competence.
3. The constitution should clearly outline what would happen to the assets, property, services and support structures for foster families and cluster foster care services should the organisation or association cease to exist or be dissolved.
4. The FCSP should have a clear statement of purpose covering its aims and objectives and the services to be provided. The statement should include aims and objectives and other information that clearly outlines the care and support to be provided, and how the overall wellbeing of the children and parent(s) will be achieved. It should also specify how special needs will be met.
5. The file should explain how referrals will be received and processed.

Standard 1 continues ►

6. The file should include financial records for the previous two years (or for the period since the organisation or association was formed if this is less than two years). These records should include an overview of the available funding and capital of the organisation or association.
7. In the case of cluster foster care services, the FCSP will purchase for its own facilities only immovable property which is legally for sale.
8. The file should contain certified copies of the registration and designation documentation of the appointed social worker and auxiliary social workers of the FCSP.
9. There should be no exclusion of children based on race, age, gender, disability, religious or political affiliation. Where the organisation or association providing or seeking to provide foster care services espouses a specific value outlook (e.g. a religious or social mission or vision), the file should clearly explain how that value will influence the recruitment and matching of foster families, and how children will be accommodated to practise their own religion and traditions should they so wish.
10. In the case of foreign (non-Namibian registered) organisations, evidence must be provided that all necessary legal permission to operate in Namibia is documented.

Standard 2

Identity and Name

The FCSP has a clearly defined legal and organisational identity and a name which clearly relate to its activities and to the community.

Achieving Standard 2

1. The name of the FCSP must not duplicate that of any other organisation/FCSP, unless providing foster care is additional to providing residential care, or the FCSP in the specific region is a branch of an organisation/FCSP in another region of Namibia.
2. The FCSP name (and image²) must not carry negative or discriminatory connotations or label children in any possible manner.
3. Proper justification must be provided when an FCSP is named after a particular individual.
4. The name of the FCSP should not be displayed at the foster homes or on the vehicles used to transport children.³

² In terms of the logo, other activities, popular understanding, etc.

³ However, the name must be used on official documentation.

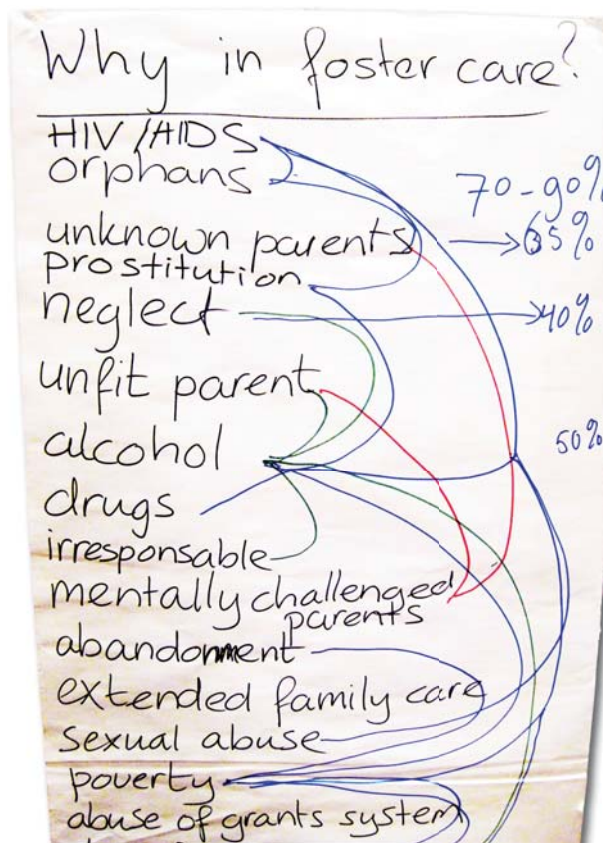
Standard 3

Needs Assessment

A Needs Assessment is carried out in consultation with the regional office of the MGECW, and a report of the Assessment is submitted together with the request to be appointed as a designated FCSP.

Achieving Standard 3

1. Evidence is available to show that, in consultation with the MGECW social worker, an analysis of the problem on the ground has been carried out to identify the type and number (statistics) of children in need of foster care in the region. This Needs Assessment will show that the services available in that region have been considered to avoid duplication.
2. The type of foster care services (foster care and/or cluster foster care) to be provided must be based on the Needs Assessment.
3. The reason for the request to be appointed as the designated FCSP is clearly spelt out and explained in relation to the needs identified.
4. Evidence is provided to show how the local community has been consulted, and that local, cultural and religious circumstances are being taken into account.
5. The Needs Assessment will reflect the situation analysis, the findings and recommendations, and the documented support of stakeholders (including child care and protection forums) of the initiative.
6. The organisation responsible for the FCSP should be able to adjust its purpose according to the needs of the community.
7. A Statement of Purpose is developed from the Needs Assessment results.



Standard 4

Transparency and Accountability

The FCSP operates in a transparent and accountable manner.

Achieving Standard 4

1. The FCSP has a strategic plan and updated annual plans which are reported on annually at an Annual General Meeting.
2. The FCSP produces an annual report including an audited financial report (audited by an external, Namibian, accredited auditor) which is sent to the MGECW and donors.
3. The FCSP maintains personal files for all children, approved foster parents and staff. The FCSP has appropriate procedures in place to ensure good practice with regard to file content, file accessibility and file security.
4. The names of foster parents successfully screened and trained by the FCSP will be submitted to the MGECW for inclusion in the National Family Register (NFR) of prospective foster parents.
5. The FCSP will advise the MGECW when any person or couple is found to be unsuitable or unsafe for fostering children, and will spell out the reasons for this finding.
6. The NFR of available prospective foster parents will be administered at the MGECW Head Office.
7. The database of the FCSP is open for monitoring and inspection by the MGECW.
8. A proper matching and introduction process is followed and recorded.

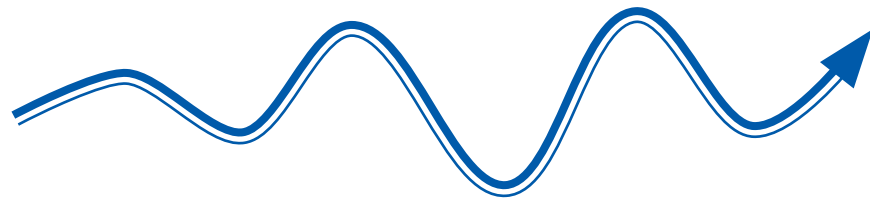


FCSP transparency and accountability include ensuring that foster parents are properly screened and included in the NFR if approved, and that a proper matching and introduction process is followed



Chapter 2

MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING



Standard 5

Management Attributes

The FCSP is managed by a person or persons who have the skills and experience necessary for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Achieving Standard 5

1. The Head of the FCSP has relevant professional qualifications and experience, or is an experienced manager.
2. The FCSP employs a person or persons with appropriate human resource, financial management and fundraising skills and experience to carry out their tasks.
3. For each management post there is an up-to-date job description, in which the required educational level or qualification and/or experience is clearly described, and the CV of each person employed in a management post is filed.
4. All of the managers have appropriate knowledge and experience with regard to the developmental needs of children and young people.
5. FCSP managers should maintain and develop their knowledge and experience.
6. All non-Namibian persons working for the FCSP and foreign foster parents must provide evidence of their legitimate residence and work status in Namibia.



Standard 6

Management Procedure

The organisation responsible for the FCSP has the required knowledge and experience of child care to ensure a professional service.

Achieving Standard 6

1. There is a clear description of the management structure and procedures of the FCSP, including clear explanations of the authority, roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors and/or the Management Board of the registered welfare organisation responsible for the FCSP and the FCSP's management staff.
2. A Code of Conduct is in place, and has been communicated to the Board of Directors and staff, the parents/relatives of the placed children, the foster parents and the applicable MGECW social worker.
3. A Quality Assurance Manual covering all policies, procedures and ethics is in place, and all employed staff have easy access to it. The manual is updated annually. It clearly describes the FCSP's policy on recruitment, assessment, training, matching, introduction, and support and supervision.
4. The staff and volunteer monitoring and supervision mechanisms are clearly described and communicated.

Standard 7

Staff Complement

The FCSP has an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff to provide foster care services.

Achieving Standard 7

1. The FCSP has adequate administrative capacity, and the Administrator has sufficient administrative and financial knowledge and skills to comply with all legal requirements and accountancy rules.
2. Where children with disabilities, special needs and behavioural problems are placed in foster care, the FCSP will, where possible, support the family with additional care in the form of cluster foster care services, respite care, child care workers and household support staff.

Standard 8

Staff Attributes

Every person⁴ working for the FCSP is suitable for working with children and young people, and able to safeguard and promote their welfare.

Achieving Standard 8

1. The FCSP has a job description, a CV and person specifications for every post.
2. The FCSP has put in place an open and transparent local recruitment procedure which offers current staff, foster parents and children living in foster families an opportunity to contribute.
3. Every person working for the FCSP has documented clearance from the police, i.e. confirmation that they do not have a criminal record and are fit to work with children and young people.
4. The FCSP takes up references from previous employers and clients for every person working for the FCSP.
5. Every person working for the FCSP signs and adheres to the Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement, which prohibit disclosure of information about the children and their background.⁵
6. FCSPs utilising foreign staff or volunteers should ensure that the foreigner has proof of professional and private insurance (indemnity). Obtaining such insurance is the responsibility of the foreigner.

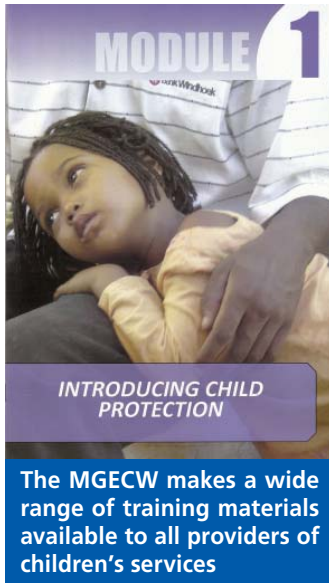
^{4 + 5} This applies to all staff, whether permanent, temporary, seasonal, consultant or unpaid (e.g. volunteers).



FCSP staff are well trained to recruit and work with families, and well suited to caring for children

Standard 9

Staff Training and Development



The FCSP has a good-quality training programme to enhance individual skills and to keep staff up to date with professional and legal developments.

Achieving Standard 9

1. The FCSP gives staff access to regular development and training opportunities.
2. All staff have personal development plans which are reviewed and updated annually.

Standard 10

Employment Practices

The organisation responsible for foster care services is a fair and competent employer, with sound employment practices and good support for its staff and foster parents.

Achieving Standard 10

1. The organisation has clear and transparent arrangements for contracts, salaries and benefits for all employed staff, in line with Namibian labour laws.
2. The organisation has documented human resource management procedures, with regular job evaluations, feedback, appraisals (annual job performance) and reporting.
3. All staff are familiar with the Quality Assurance Manual (refer to Standard 6(3) – policies, procedures and ethics).
4. Any staff member found guilty of seriously violating rights, or abusing or physically harming children, is dealt with in accordance with the relevant laws. The procedure for this is laid down in the Quality Assurance Manual, and in every staff member's work contract.



Chapter 3 FINANCE AND FUNDRAISING

Standard 11 Financial Management

The organisation designated to provide foster care services ensures that it is financially viable at all times, and has sufficient resources to fulfil its obligations.

Achieving Standard 11

1. The organisation can at all times prove its financial viability and sustainability (e.g. by donor commitments and/or secured capital sufficient to cover the running costs of the foster care services for a period of three years).
2. An annual audit of the FCSP's financial records and practices is carried out by an accredited Namibian accountant.
3. The audited financial report is added to the FCSP's annual report, and is sent to the MGECW by 28 February each year.
4. The MGECW will provide feedback to the FCSP on the audited financial report.
5. Subsidies are audited and monitored by the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN).
6. The FCSP's financial procedures and records accord with Namibia's Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (GAAP).
7. The financial records are maintained in accordance with clearly laid down financial policies and procedures.
8. The FCSP's Finance Department keeps all legal, financial and insurance details on file.

Standard 12

Fundraising

The FCSP has a transparent fundraising policy and strategy, and proper and accountable registration and spending of donations and government support.

Achieving Standard 12

1. The FCSP will have a fundraising policy, strategy and tools which accord with the legal restrictions for guarding the privacy of children.
2. All incoming donations are recorded and visible in the FCSP's financial records. A fundraising documentation file is in place, showing incoming donations and justifications of spending.
3. Children will not be misused⁶ in fundraising activities, and stories and pictures may not contain any information or details which may identify a child and his/her birth or foster family. Photos of children and families may not be accompanied by names or background information – unless permission for this has been obtained. Where permission has been obtained, it is recorded in the fundraising documentation file.
4. In the case of foreign/international donors, the donations are justified in accordance with the legal requirements of the GRN and the donor country.
5. In the case of donations linked to individual children or foster families, none of these children or families will be treated differently to those who have no individual donor.
6. The FCSP has an Anti-Corruption and Good Governance Policy.

⁶ Misuse implies fundraising through street shows, begging, tourist tours to facilities and foster families, etc.



Transparent donation: Prime Minister Nahas Angula and UNICEF Representative Ian MacLeod with children wearing crocs donated by Crocs Inc. to OVC in Namibia through a partnership with UNICEF.

7. Every placement is based on the individual needs assessment conducted for the child, the individual care plan formulated for the child, and a placement plan in which the roles and responsibilities of all persons involved in the care of the child are clearly explained.
8. The foster parent is responsible for all major care activities, e.g. personal care, meals, homework and recreation.
9. All foster parents receive regular support and supervision from the FCSP, both individually and in foster parent groups. Supervision of foster parents is carried out by the FCSP's designated social worker.
10. The FCSP's designated social worker writes reports on the supervision visits and interventions undertaken for each child and family, and maintains each case file according to the applicable placement plan ordered by the court.
11. The FCSP cooperates with the MGECW social worker in providing care for foster children who leave their foster home, and aftercare services after the age of 18.
12. There is prior agreement between the FCSP and the MGECW regional social worker regarding children's reunification with and reintegration into their family of origin, and the roles and responsibilities of both the FCSP and MGECW social workers in this regard.
13. Children in foster care may not be taken outside the borders of Namibia without the official permission of the legal guardian. When the Minister of Gender Equality and Child Welfare is the legal guardian, the FCSP must seek official permission from the Ministry for a child in care to be taken to another country on a holiday or school trip, and the FCSP must notify the Ministry when the child has returned to Namibia.
14. The FCSP must immediately notify the MGECW about the discharge, serious injury, death or unusual circumstances of a child in a foster family, and provide the details.
15. The role of the MGECW is to undertake annual monitoring and inspection visits during prearranged meetings with the FCSP.



Service providers have determined, arranged and finalised the steps in the foster care process

Standard 14

Complaints Procedure

The FCSP has a complaints procedure for children, parents, guardians, foster parents and staff. All involved are informed about this procedure at the time of the child's admission.

Achieving Standard 14

1. There is a complaints procedure in the Quality Assurance Manual. The procedure is communicated to the FCSP staff, (prospective) foster parents, relatives of the placed children, the children and the MGECW social worker.
2. The FCSP complaints procedure incorporates an appeal mechanism and provides the opportunity for the complainant to have his/her complaint reviewed by someone independent of the FCSP and the organisation responsible for the FCSP.
3. If the FCSP provides foster care services for more than 25 children, a committee is established by the Board of Directors of the organisation responsible for the FCSP to assess cases for appeal which cannot be dealt with between the supervision staff and the foster parents or the biological parents and the children.
4. Complaints lead to concrete measures to solve the situation, and the solutions promote the wellbeing and safety of the children and their rights.

Standard 15

Administrative Procedure

The FCSP follows appropriate administrative procedures and maintains records relevant to the running of foster care service provision as required by the relevant Act and Regulations.

Achieving Standard 15

1. A filing system is in place to ensure that all records are maintained and stored in line with the requirements of the MGECW and other legal authorities.
2. The FCSP management ensures that the staff and foster parents have access to the necessary information regarding emergency situations (reports of missing children, serious illness or the death of children in foster care, etc.).
3. Procedural guidelines and phone numbers of persons to notify or call in the event of an emergency are given to all staff and foster parents.



A poster depicting children's needs, produced in a workshop convened to develop the Foster Care Standards



Chapter 5

CARING FOR CHILDREN

5.1 ADMISSION AND DECISION-MAKING

Standard 16 Admission

The child and his/her family of origin receive support during the process of decision-making on admission, and during the admission and induction processes, and are involved in decision-making after admission.

Achieving Standard 16

1. The MGE CW social workers and the FCSP provide maximum support to the child and his/her family of origin (where known) during all processes of decision-making on admission into foster care, and during the foster care induction period.
2. Primary caregivers in the residential facility where the child was placed before being matched with a foster family are actively involved in the child's transition into the foster family.
3. The FCSP follows the national matching procedure which ensures that children are placed in a family whose race/tribe, culture, background and religion are as close as possible to their own. Children stay, when possible, in their region of origin, and the best interest of the child is paramount at all times.

Standard 16 continues ►



4. The matching of a child with a prospective foster family is carefully organised and guided to ensure that the child's needs will be met in the foster family, and to maximise the child's prospects of bonding with that family. The matching procedure and time frame take into account the wellbeing of all family members, including the foster parents' biological children and foster children placed earlier in the family.
5. Children are age-appropriately consulted about every step in the matching process, the admission process and the final decision on placement.

Standard 17

Care of Siblings

Siblings are cared for together and helped to keep in contact.

Achieving Standard 17

1. Unless there are reasons with which the MGE CW agrees, siblings are given every opportunity to live together, whether in the same foster family or a foster home which provides cluster services or another suitable home.
2. The maximum number of children in the care of a foster parent or foster family is six (including the foster parent's biological children). In exceptional cases this number can be higher, e.g. in the placement of a sibling group.
3. Where it is not possible, for justifiable reasons, for siblings to live together, the FCSP encourages and facilitates contact between them.
4. All financial and other resources and support are provided to enable siblings to maintain contact.



Unless otherwise agreed, siblings are given every opportunity to live together if placed in foster care

5.2 THE CARETAKING PROCESS

Standard 18

Caregiving Responsibilities

The foster parent's relationship with the child is based on affection, understanding and respect.

Achieving Standard 18

1. The foster parent pays individual attention to the child, and makes a conscious effort to build up trust with him/her and to understand him/her. The caregiver always communicates with the child openly, honestly and respectfully.
2. Foster parents are trained in respectful and effective behaviour management, and in alternative forms of punishment.
3. Respect includes recognition of the importance of the child's background. When possible, and if the child desires, he/she is given the opportunity to speak his/her home language and to undergo important cultural and religious rites.
4. Personal information about the child, including information about his/her family and health status, is treated in a respectful manner and not revealed to persons outside the primary family without the child's permission. Foster family members are trained to maintain confidentiality regarding all personal information about the children placed in their home, unless such information is needed to promote a child's safety. Foster family members are also trained to be positive advocates for all children in their home.
5. Foster parents sign a Confidentiality Agreement and a Code of Conduct, and the FCSP's Misconduct Policy clearly describes the penalty for foster parents who breach the agreements.
6. Media may not be given any information that makes it possible to identify foster families in the community without the consent of the foster families as well as the consent of the children placed in those families and the legal guardians of those children. Children are protected against abuse and exploitation.

Standard 18 continues ►

-
7. Children are made aware of their rights and responsibilities within the family context. These include rights and responsibilities pertaining to household tasks and other tasks that children are expected to carry out as members of the applicable family, as well as normal child rights and responsibilities.⁸
-

Standard 19

Child Participation

Children are included in decision-making on all issues affecting their life, according to their age and level of maturity. This includes decisions about their current placement, contact with and reintegration into their birth family, transition to any other placement, leaving care and preparation for independent living.

Achieving Standard 19

-
1. The FCSP shows that it encourages children to participate in decision-making on all issues relating to their living circumstances. This can be in the form of a children's forum with representatives elected by the children living in foster families (including the biological children of foster parents), and/or regular children's support groups organised by the FCSP. Children can freely express their opinions in these forums and support groups, and there is evidence that their opinions are taken seriously.

 2. Children are included in the development of their individual care plan, and they co-sign the plan when this is age and development appropriate. The implications of the care plan are explained to each child according to his/her age and level of maturity.

 3. The FCSP ensures that all children in foster care have opportunities to speak separately with the FCSP's designated social worker, so that they can report privately on the care they receive and their feelings about the family in which they are placed.

 4. Children are included in decision-making regarding contact with their birth family and relatives. Contact arrangements are made in their best interests.

 5. Children are given the maximum appropriate choice and involvement in decision-making regarding their immediate and future circumstances.

 6. Children attend the Child Forum meetings arranged regularly by the FCSP and the MGECW.

⁸ "Normal rights and responsibilities" means those laid down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Namibian child-related laws. See also Namibia's 2011-2016 National Agenda for Children for details..

Standard 20

Case Recording

The FCSP ensures that an up-to-date and comprehensive case record is maintained for each child in its care, which details the nature and quality of the care provided, and contributes to an understanding of the child’s life events. Relevant information from the case record is made available to the child and to anyone involved in his/her care.

Achieving Standard 20

1. The FCSP maintains a separate case file for each child, containing personal legal documents (the child’s birth registration certificate, the death registration certificate(s) of the parent(s) in the case of an orphan, court orders, and a background report including information on how to reach parents/relatives in an emergency). Foster parents receive copies of the legal documents and are informed about the child’s background where this is needed for everyday care.
2. The case file also contains a photograph of the child, the care plan devised for the child, all evaluation reports, updates of documents, copies of school progress reports and other available information. The originals of the school progress reports remain with the foster family in the foster home.
3. All case files must be kept in a safe place (fireproof, etc.) to which only authorised persons have access.
4. Children are informed about the background information and other documentation in the file according to their age and level of maturity. Information is shared with them in a sensitive manner.



Each child’s case file contains a photo and an up-to-date and comprehensive record of the child’s life events

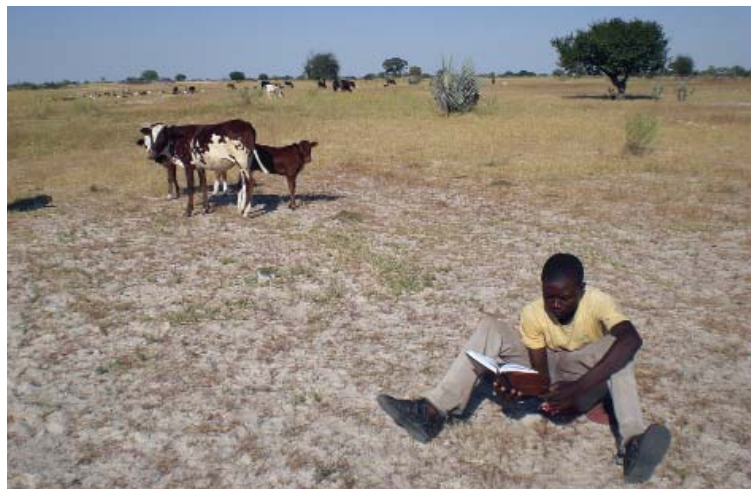
Standard 21

Progress Reporting

A system is in place for reporting on each child's progress to the MGE CW social worker, the child's family and other relevant stakeholders in the child's life.

Achieving Standard 21

1. The care of each child is based on an individual care plan. A multidisciplinary approach is adopted for developing an individual care plan.
2. Children are involved in the development and evaluation of their care plan according to their age, emotional development and level of maturity.
3. The FCSP's designated social worker is responsible for the development and monitoring of the individual care plans.
4. The care plan is evaluated regularly and updated, and progress is reported to the child's parent/guardian where relevant.
5. The foster parents are responsible for recording the child's developmental progress and reporting on this when the FCSP social worker visits the home. This recording includes the child's achievements and important life events.
6. When any change occurs in the child's life which may have an effect on the child's placement or future (e.g. the death of a parent/guardian, or serious illness or death of the child), the FCSP social worker will immediately notify the designated social worker in the MGE CW.



It is useful to include photos in the record of a child's developmental progress and achievements



Ensuring adequate health care includes ensuring that children are immunised at the prescribed times

Standard 22 Health

Children have access to and receive adequate health care.

Achieving Standard 22

1. The FCSP ensures that all children in its care undergo a medical check-up at the time of admission, and have access to medical treatment and health care thereafter.
2. Medical records are completed and kept in the child’s personal case file with strict confidentiality.
3. Foster parents are trained on issues related to HIV and AIDS, and are bound to strict confidentiality about the child’s HIV status.
4. FCSPs have to obtain permission from the MGECW to have a child tested for HIV.
5. Foster parents are trained to administer the appropriate treatment for any specific disability, disease or infection borne by a child in their care, and take all universal precautions to prevent any form of physical harm to the child and to themselves.
6. Medication is always safely stored and provided to the child by adult members of the foster family.
7. The FCSP social worker always informs the child’s biological parents or legal guardian of a serious accident, illness, pregnancy or death of a child.
8. The FCSP must obtain permission from the MGECW for a child in foster care to undergo surgery.
9. Children receive appropriate health education, including education on reproductive health, according to their age and level of maturity.

Standard 23

Death of a Child

The FCSP and MGECW ensure that provision is made for funeral arrangements upon the death of a child in foster care.

Achieving Standard 23

1. The foster parents immediately inform the FCSP when a child is diagnosed as terminally ill or has died.
2. The FCSP immediately notifies the Minister of Gender Equality and Child Welfare about the serious illness or death of a child.
3. When a child in foster care dies, the FCSP and MGECW share the responsibility for ensuring counselling for the foster and birth families, and contributing towards funeral costs.

Standard 24

Diet and Nutrition

Children enjoy a nutritious and balanced diet that is culturally sensitive.

Achieving Standard 24

1. Foster parents provide a nutritious and balanced diet to the children in their care, bearing in mind the children's cultural background.
2. The FCSP is responsible for monitoring the dietary situation of children with special dietary needs (e.g. due to being on medication or being prone to an allergy), to help ensure that the diet complies with those needs to promote the child's best possible health.
3. Where possible and age appropriate, children are encouraged to assist in preparing meals as a contribution to their own learning of household skills and independent living.

Standard 25

Education

Every child is unconditionally provided with appropriate and relevant education, suited to their capacity, circumstances and developmental needs, and is given assistance to make effective use of the education provided.

Achieving Standard 25

1. Children receive compulsory ECD, primary and secondary education which leads to optimal use of their capacities and potential. Where needed, children are encouraged to participate in extra/remedial classes to ensure that they can remedy any education-related deficits resulting from their situation prior to being placed in foster care.
2. Foster parents ensure that children have time, space and an appropriate environment for doing their homework, studying for tests/exams and preparing projects.
3. The FCSP provides to foster families the resources necessary for children to attend school (a uniform, textbooks, exercise books and other stationery), and monetary contributions for the children to participate in additional school activities such as excursions. The FCSP may organise these resources via community resources.
4. The FCSP closely monitors the children's learning process. It files copies of all school progress reports and certificates in each child's case file, encourages the children and praises their achievements.
5. If a child drops out of school, appropriate measures are taken to provide vocational or skills training to improve his/her chances when competing for job opportunities in the future.
6. Children have the right to freely express their plans for the future, and to decide on their own further education and career.
7. Scholarships for university students are actively sought to help guarantee completion of their studies, even if the student leaves the foster family to live independently during the course of those studies. The FCSP and MGECW social workers include a plan for tertiary education in the care plan of young people aged 18 or nearing the age of 18.
8. Children with learning difficulties or other special needs receive special education and the necessary additional equipment (Braille computer, hearing aid, etc.) to assist them to reach their full potential. The FCSP has to organise this in cooperation with the MGECW.

Standard 26

Contact with Birth Parents/Families

Unless prohibited by a court order or MGECW decision, children in foster care maintain contact with their birth parents and/or relatives. Each child's care plan specifies whether and how this contact is maintained.

Achieving Standard 26

1. Birth parents and/or relatives are actively encouraged to maintain contact with their children while they are in foster care, and are helped to ensure that the children's contact with their community, identity and traditions is maintained if this is in the children's best interest.
2. The MGECW social worker, who acts as the case manager, is responsible for ensuring counselling and support services to the child's birth family.
3. The MGECW social worker, as case manager, has to secure the safety of foster families when a birth parent's behaviour (e.g. violence) is a threat to a child's wellbeing.
4. The FCSP cooperates with the MGECW social worker in providing reconstruction and supervision services to the birth family to help facilitate the child's smooth reintegration into that family when possible. This includes facilitating the child's visits to the birth family home on weekends and during school holidays.
5. When direct contact with the birth parents or relatives is not in the best interest of the child, the case manager helps the parents or relatives to inform the child about the background issues and the reasons for his/her placement in foster care.
6. Parents and relatives are encouraged to give children the opportunity to bond with their foster parents to ensure the development of a positive relationship.



Service providers should encourage both contact with birth families and bonding with foster families



Play is essential for children's mental and physical growth and friendships

Standard 27

Play and Leisure Time

Children can play in a safe and stimulating environment which supports friendships and harmonious relationships with other children, as well as their individual and group developmental needs.

Achieving Standard 27

1. Foster parents ensure that every child in their care has access to play/leisure materials which are age appropriate and support all aspects of the child's development.
2. Children have sufficient time to play and meet with their peers in an atmosphere of fun and relaxation.
3. Play stimulates children's physical and mental growth. Playing with children is a component of the initial training programme for foster parents, and foster homes have sufficient space in which children can play on their own or with members of the family and community.
4. Children are supervised during their free time according to their age and abilities.
5. Children with special needs are given appropriate play materials and opportunities to play and relax.

Standard 28

Physical, Social and Emotional Development

Children are helped to achieve their optimum physical, social and emotional development.

Achieving Standard 28

1. Activities and assistance that support physical, social and emotional development are based on the individual needs of each child and laid down in the child's care plan. Foster parents are trained to treat children in a supportive manner, and to undertake activities that support children's physical, social and emotional development.
2. The FCSP ensures that children receive the support they need to overcome trauma and build self-esteem and resilience.
3. Where needed, children are referred to specialists/therapists or relevant programmes to help them to overcome trauma. They are also helped to make effective use of the assistance available.
4. Children receive support for making life books and/or memory boxes which help to ensure that their roots and background are known, and that they understand why they are in foster care.
5. Children are encouraged and given support to participate in community activities (e.g. club and church activities).
6. Foster parents are trained to talk with children about abuse, exploitation and neglect, and difficult moments in their lives.



Service providers are trained to help children to overcome trauma through participation and talking

5.3 LEAVING CARE

Standard 29

Reintegration into the Family and Community of Origin



FCSPs help to ensure that reintegration succeeds

Children receive support to enable their effective transition from foster care to their family and community of origin.

Achieving Standard 29

1. Children are involved in decision-making on their own reintegration, and are given the maximum number of appropriate choices and sufficient time for considering the choices, to ensure that they agree with the reintegration, and that they can bring forward issues that need to be resolved to support their reintegration.
2. When a child is ready to be reintegrated into his/her family and community of origin, and that family can ensure the child's safety and wellbeing, the FCSP and the foster parents prepare and support the child through a systematic process.
3. Children are given maximum assistance to prepare for the process of change, by means of visits, counselling and preparation of their personal belongings.
4. The foster parents ensure that the child leaves with a life book or memory box reflecting the period of stay in the foster family, and they have an open-door policy, with clear boundaries, to allow for the child to maintain contact with the foster family.
5. The FCSP and the MGECW social worker give the children telephone numbers and other contact details to enable them to seek any help they may need after the change of placement.
6. When children are reintegrated into their family, their parents or relatives are given support, advice and assistance.
7. The FCSP provides counselling to all members of the foster family during and after the child's transition from their care back to the birth family. If contact is maintained, they assist the foster family with contact arrangements.

Standard 30

Transition to Adulthood

Children and young people are continuously prepared for independent living, and empowered to cope with and adapt to life's challenges in the outside world.

Achieving Standard 30

1. Children and young people are supported in their efforts to become self-reliant, self-sufficient and participating members of society. While in foster care, they have access to education and opportunities to acquire life skills and sound values.
2. Foster parents ensure that each child and young person is aided in developing self-sufficiency, in accordance with the needs identified in his/her care plan. Foster parents focus particularly on involving children and young people in daily tasks according to their age and level of understanding.
3. Children and young people are supported in developing their daily care skills, i.e. dealing with money, legal matters, insurance and other such practicalities.
4. From the age of 18, young people are actively prepared for this development of daily care skills through special programmes, independent living training apartments or camps where they receive training to assume responsibilities, integrate values and norms, and develop life skills. FCSP social workers organise such programmes and cooperate with foster parents to encourage young people in their care to participate.
5. Foster parents explore the child's or young person's interests, and plan activities which support the further development of his/her knowledge and life skills.
6. Children and young people are supported in developing a social network and maintaining contact with the people in this network.
7. When foster parents and the child or young person in their care agree that the latter can continue to live in the foster family after the age of 18, the social workers of the FCSP and the responsible Ministry will assist the foster parents and young person to access support services for adults, scholarships for completing the young person's education, and assistance with special needs when required.



Young people may choose to remain in the foster home

-
- 8.** It is the responsibility of the MGECW and FCSP social workers to ensure that the needs of children and young people are met, be it in the foster home or after leaving the foster home (e.g. at age 18), through special services for young people with disabilities or special needs.

 - 9.** The FCSP cooperates with the MGECW social worker in managing all relevant information and ensuring confidentiality, proper documentation and access for all parties involved.

 - 10.** On reaching the age of 18, once all legal documents/procedures for the young person's discharge from foster care have been completed, he/she receives all of the personal documents held by the FCSP (birth certificate, death certificates of parents, school reports, ID card, etc.).
-

5.4 AFTERCARE SUPPORT

Standard 31

Follow-up Support and Contact

Having reached the age of 18, young people may still request ongoing assistance and support from the FCSP.

Achieving Standard 31

-
- 1.** The foster family has an open-door policy. Children and young people who have lived with the family must be allowed to return to the family for advice and support, unless this is not in the best interest of the family. In such a case, the child or young person must be offered a contact person in the FCSP who can provide advice and support. Where possible, the child or young person is invited to attend family events as a member of the foster family.

 - 2.** The foster family and the FCSP maintain contact with the child or young person after he/she leaves the foster family, and follow up on and monitor his/her progress.

 - 3.** FCSPs are obliged to maintain the files of children for at least 10 years after their discharge from foster care, after which the files are sent to the MGECW's National Archive. Children and young people can always return to the FCSP for information.
-

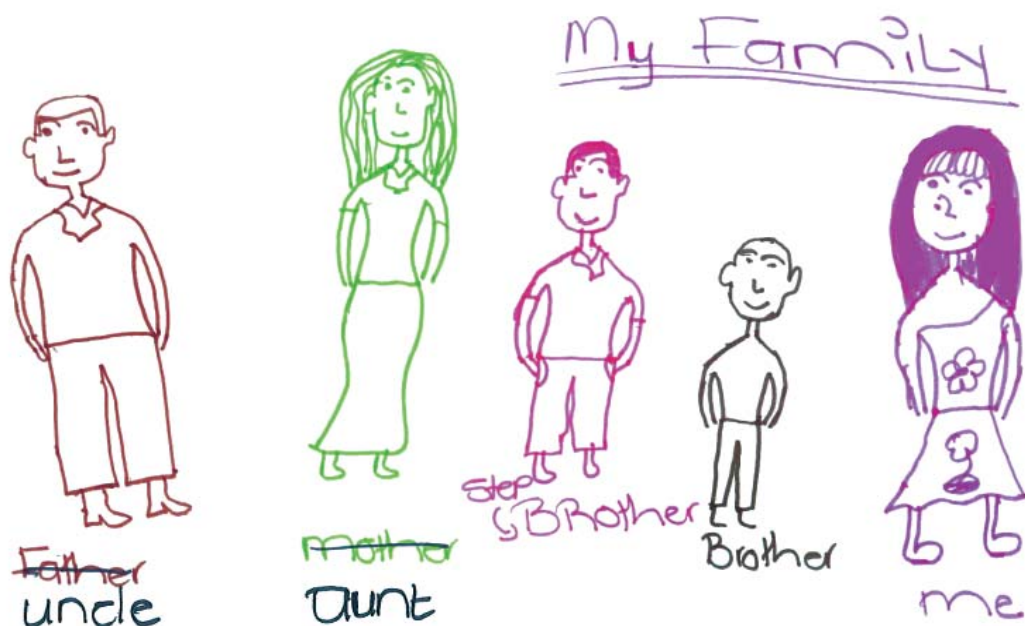
Standard 32

Adoption by Foster Parents

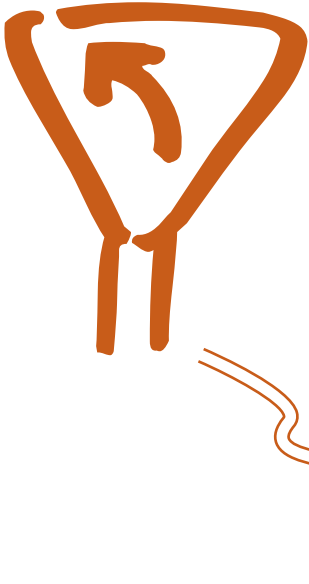
Where a child is permanently placed with foster parents, and it clear that reintegration into the child's (extended) family of origin will not be possible, adoption by the foster parents can be considered.

Achieving Standard 32

1. Foster families can express their desire to adopt a child once he/she has been placed with the family for at least two years.
2. The FCSP informs the MGECW social worker that the foster family wants to adopt the child, and requests that an investigation be conducted to ascertain whether all legal requirements have been met so that a court can be requested to issue an adoption order. Only a social worker in the MGECW can request such a court order.
3. Children are given the opportunity to freely express their willingness to be adopted by the foster parents, and children aged 10 or older have to give their consent. The biological and adopted children of the foster parents are also invited to express their opinion.
4. The foster family receives social and emotional support from the FCSP for an agreed period.



A drawing by one of the children who participated in the study on foster care in Namibia in 2009



Chapter 6 **STANDARDS FOR FOSTER PARENTS**

Standard 33 **Approval of Foster Parents**

Foster parents are “fit and proper”⁹ persons who can be entrusted with the care of children unrelated to them.

Achieving Standard 33

1. All foster parents (married or unmarried) must comply with the legal criteria for foster parents.

2. A foster parent must be a Namibian citizen or a person domiciled in Namibia and over the age of 21.

3. Unmarried people who share a household must be in a stable relationship, and the Foster Care Application is made in the name of one applicant only.

4. Foster parents have their own basic income to care for their own family members.

5. All persons who share a household with the foster parents have undergone a thorough assessment, and have been found to be able to care for children unrelated to them.

6. Foster parents have successfully completed induction training in all aspects of fostering children.

7. Foster parent training includes training in basic first aid and on issues relating to HIV and AIDS.

⁹ This is the term used in the CCPA. Whether or not a parent is fit and proper is established during the assessment process.

STANDARDS FOR FOSTER CARE SERVICES IN NAMIBIA

Standard 34

Homes of Foster Families

Foster parents provide a safe environment in which the children can live, play, do their school work and enjoy family life. The environment ensures privacy for the children and safety of their personal belongings.

Achieving Standard 34

1. The home of foster parents must be fit to accommodate their own family as well as the child placed with them. What is appropriate depends on the general living conditions of the people in the area.
2. Homes of foster parents may not differ from other homes in the community, other than that they may be larger or especially adapted to accommodate children with special needs.
3. The foster home should be a safe and healthy environment in which there is access to running water or a safe water point, access to sanitary facilities (toilet and bathing place), ventilation and light, and a safe place for cooking.
4. When more than one child is placed in the home, depending on their ages, the reasons for their placement and the cultural situation, boys and girls have separate sleeping areas, and each child has his/her own bed or mattress.
5. Children placed in a foster home have a secure place in the home for their valuable belongings and memories of their birth family.
6. In the case of cluster foster care services, the FCSP may provide appropriate housing to the foster families.



FCSPs hold training sessions for foster parents



Every child deserves a safe and caring home

Standard 35

Caring for Children

Foster parents are able to provide a good standard of care to each child placed with them, i.e. care which promotes healthy spiritual, emotional, physical, sexual and intellectual development.

Achieving Standard 35

1. Foster parents accept the child as he/she is, with no preference for or special treatment of either gender.
2. Foster parents care appropriately for the child as he/she is, and do their best to help the child to achieve his/her full potential.
3. Foster parents are open to the child's background, and to cooperating with the child's family of origin and other people who are important to the child, except when this cooperation is not in the child's best interest.
4. Foster parents are able to set boundaries and manage behaviour within those boundaries, without resorting to any form of abuse or inappropriate punishment.
5. Foster parents have knowledge of normal child development, and an ability to listen to and communicate with children in a manner appropriate to their age and level of understanding.
6. Foster parents are able to respect the child's biological parents and relatives, and the child's cultural and religious background.
7. Foster parents are able to understand and promote the young person's development towards adulthood and independent living.
8. Non-Namibian foster parents must have permanent residence in Namibia for at least five years, and no intention to leave the country before the child placed with them has reached the age of 18.



No preferences! Every child is precious!



Standard 36

Safe and Caring Environment

Foster parents provide a safe and caring environment for children.

Achieving Standard 36

1. Foster parents have the ability to ensure that children are cared for in a home where they are safe from harm and abuse, and where the child's best interest is prioritised.
2. Foster parents are able to help the children to keep themselves safe from harm and abuse, and the children know how to seek help if their safety is threatened.
3. Foster parents recognise that foster children who are orphaned, chronically ill and/or disabled, can be particular vulnerable to abuse and discrimination.
4. Foster parents are able to provide the medical care necessary to ensure the safety of the children and other family members, particularly when they are on ARV treatment.
5. Foster families will not allow children to be photographed, exploited or stigmatised for any media or fundraising campaign, in accordance with the legal requirements.
6. Children may not be exposed to anything that may result in their being labelled or stigmatised as children in foster care.

Standard 37

Working in a Multidisciplinary Team

Foster parents are able to work with other professionals, and to contribute to the planning of care for the child.

Achieving Standard 37

1. Foster parents are able to communicate effectively and to report successes and challenges in caring for the child.
2. Foster parents are able to work together with the designated social worker and other staff of the FCSP on children's individual care plans, and accept support services offered to them.
3. Foster parents know when and where to ask for assistance when they face challenges in caring for the children.

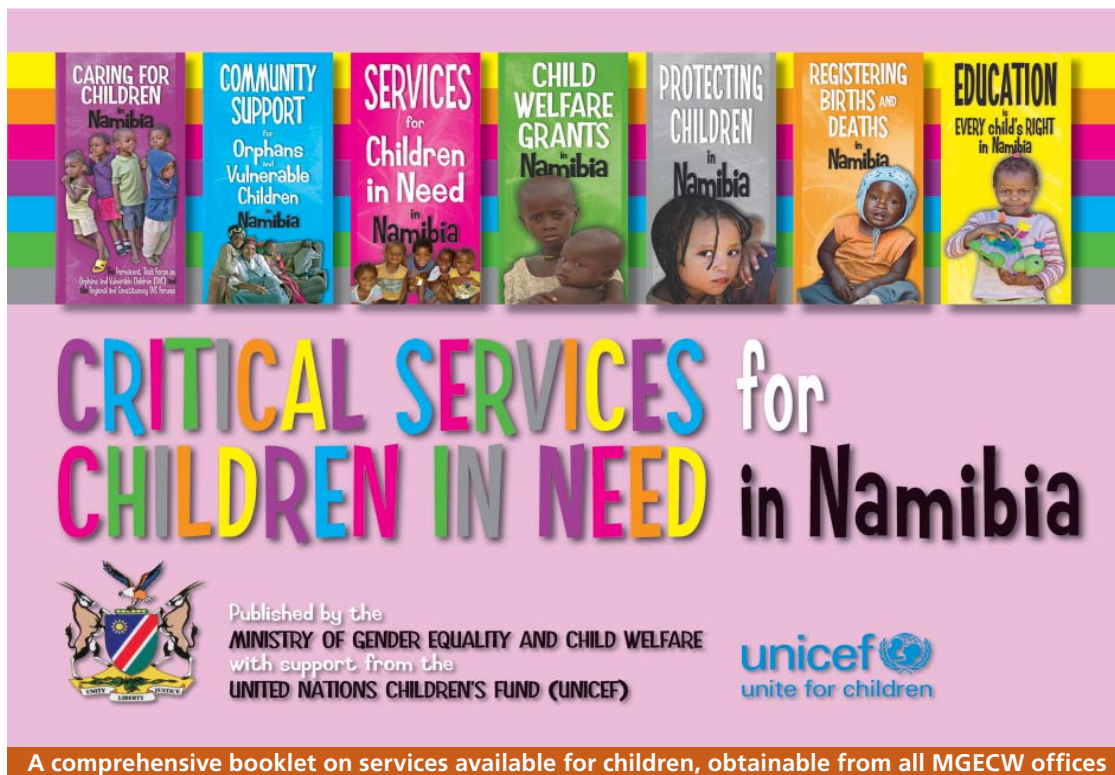
Standard 38

Own Development

Foster parents are willing to accept training and support services offered.

Achieving Standard 38

1. Foster parents appreciate and make use of the ongoing training opportunities and individual and group support offered to them. They must be prepared to assist each other and participate in and/or lead support groups.
2. Foster parents recognise that fostering has an effect on themselves and the other family members, and they encourage their own children to participate in children's support groups.
3. Foster parents have the ability to identify or ask for support services and specific training, and they actively participate in foster parent support groups, e.g. when they need this group support to better understand and help a child in their care.
4. Foster parents participate in the foster parent's forum or share information with their representatives about their experiences as foster parents. (Representatives are foster families or children selected to represent a group or an area.)



Foster Care Resources

Included in this document is a CD (see opposite) containing resources for foster care service providers in Namibia. The MGECW and consultants developed these resources for the implementation of the standards and guidelines for foster care services. They made use of materials from other countries as well as materials developed especially for use in Namibia, to streamline the introduction of formal foster care and to support NGOs who will work as FCSPs. These materials are working documents, and the MGECW invites users to provide feedback and additions to the manuals and the toolkit. This will help us all in the implementation of quality foster care services in Namibia. The documents are meant to serve Namibian practitioners and are not for publication purposes.

1. ***Guidelines for Foster Care in Namibia***

These guidelines describe the foster care process from the stage of FCSP registration to the final stage. Therefore, they cover the aspects of recruitment and assessment of foster parents, training of foster parents, matching of parents and children, support for foster families, and supervision and monitoring of families, children and FCSPs.

2. ***Training Manual for the Assessment of Foster Parents***

This training manual can be used to train social workers in the assessment of foster parents. The MGECW has trained trainers who can deliver this training to registered social workers who will be designated to provide foster care services in accordance with the CCPA. Use of this document is limited to these MGECW-certified trainers.

3. ***Training Manual for the Training of Prospective Foster Parents***

This manual for trainers, and the handbook for participants it includes, can be used by FCSPs to train prospective foster parents. The MGECW has trained trainers who can deliver this training.

4. ***Toolkit for the support groups of foster parents and children in foster families***

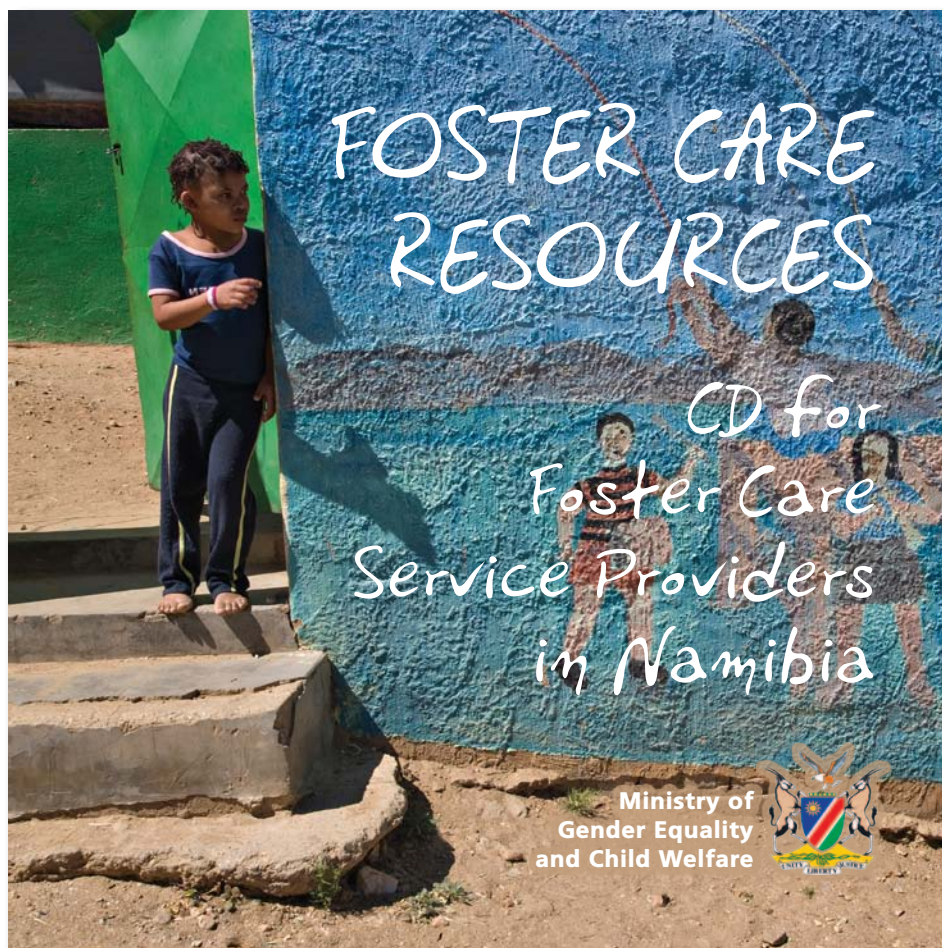
This toolkit provides guidelines for setting up and facilitating support groups, and includes input on developing programmes for the support groups.

5. ***Instructions for the use of the National Family Register***

The MGECW has developed an electronic system for registering prospective foster parents, adoptive parents and children waiting for placement, and placements of children with foster parents and adoptive parents. This national register helps the MGECW and FCSPs to find a family for every child in need of care in Namibia.

These resources were developed under the guidance of the MGECW. The Ministry hopes that these documents will inspire FCSPs to provide quality services. Should organisations based outside the country make use of these resources, they are asked to respect the document property rights by acknowledging the source and informing the MGECW that they are making use of the documents.

FIND YOUR CD HERE



NOTE: The CD should auto-run. If it does not, double-click on "Setup" or "Index" to view the contents.

UNICEF technical and financial support for the preparation and finalisation of this Foster Care Standards document and enclosed Foster Care Resources DVD facilitated the contributions of the following persons and organisations:

- Bep van Sloten Consultancy and Training, and her team composed of Bep van Sloten, Elize Coetzee, Jennifer Cousins and Sylvia Beukes, for the *Standards, Guidelines and Training Manual for Foster Care Service Providers*.
- Give a Child a Family (GCF) in South Africa, for permission to use their foster care training manuals on assessment and facilitation of training for prospective foster parents as the basis for the Namibian training manuals.
- Elize Coetzee (GCF) and Bep van Sloten, for the development of the toolkit for group support for children, foster parents and kinship caregivers.
- Jay Haase of Wire Car, for the development of the National Family Register.
- Perri Caplan, for laying out this document and assisting with editing.

