

# What is Voluntary out-of-home care?

Voluntary out-of-home care (VOOHC) is an arrangement between a parent and an organisation for their child to receive overnight care away from their usual home.

VOOHC is not a specific service. It is a type of care arrangement which may include:

- overnight or short-term accommodation in a group home or respite environment
- overnight stay with another family in a 'host family' arrangement
- longer term residential care
- camps that focus on respite or behaviour support
- Bail Assistance Line

VOOHC may be provided as a one-off emergency placement or on a regular or long-term basis.

## Principles of VOOHC

VOOHC promotes a family-centred approach, where the focus of support is on the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people. To uphold these principles, VOOHC agencies must:

- involve children, young people and their families in decisions about their care
- assess the needs of a child, young person and their family to ensure VOOHC is the most appropriate type of care
- ensure children and young people are placed in VOOHC with peers of compatible age, developmental capacity and interests
- maintain children and young people's family relationships while they are in VOOHC
- work collaboratively with other organisations to ensure consistency in care
- respect the cultural needs of children, young people and families
- have a fair and easy process for children, young people and their families to provide feedback

## Role of the Children's Guardian

Organisations that provide or arrange VOOHC must be registered with the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) before arranging or providing care. The OCG:

- regulates VOOHC agencies to ensure they comply with legislation
- monitors and assesses policies, procedures and practices of VOOHC agencies.
- monitors the number of times a child or young person accesses VOOHC

More information about VOOHC is available on the OCG website: [www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/voluntary-out-of-home-care](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/voluntary-out-of-home-care)