

STEP 7

make a care plan

Have a plan for where your children can go if suddenly you can't care for them

Why?

Sometimes a crisis can happen and your children can be left without anyone at home to care for them. You might have an accident or become sick, or maybe you're arrested and taken to prison. A "Care Plan" will mean that you and your children can feel more confident they will be cared for safely while you're away. Reassure your children that hopefully they'll never need this plan, but it's good to have one ... just in case.

what territory kids say...

"I was OK, but I was worried about my dog." (boy aged 7)

"I never thought I'd need a plan like that, and then it happened." (girl aged 14)



story

kids suddenly left alone

15-year-old Sarah is at home with her younger brother and sister. Her mum left a short time ago to pick up another brother from footy training. The hospital rings to tell Sarah her mum's had an accident. Sarah is really scared and doesn't know what to do.



parent tips



If Sarah's family had a "Care Plan" for each child (see *Family Activity*), then Sarah would know who to contact for help, and her mum wouldn't need to worry so much about what would happen to the kids.

story

parents gone

11-year-old Elizabeth and 9-year-old Josh turn into their street to see flashing lights and people crowded around their house.

Their dad is being driven off in a police car and their mum is being put into an ambulance. They feel scared and sick. A neighbour rushes up to say she'll look after them. But they don't like her and don't want to go with her. They want Auntie Alice.



parent tips

Give signed copies of your child's "Care Plan" (see *Family Activity*) to the important people in it. They can then make sure that the people who care for your children are those chosen by your family.





make a care plan

Get together with your children. Make a plan of what you would like to happen if you suddenly can't look after them. You might need to make a plan for each child. Here are some tips to help you.



1. Ask younger children to put drawings or photos of people and things in their "Care Plan".
2. It might be OK for much older children to stay at home. Write down your home phone number or a mobile so your other children can call them.
3. If you have a mental or physical health issue, then it's possible you'll already know where you might have to go if you get sick. If you DO know this, then you can help your children to write these details in the "My parent(s)/carer(s) will be staying at" section. If you don't know, then this section could be filled in later.
4. If you have more than one child, it might not be possible for them to stay together. If you know where they'll be staying, write down the contact details so the kids can stay in touch with each other. If you don't know, this section could be filled in later.
5. If you have an existing illness, it's a good idea to tell someone you can trust at each child's school. They can then support your children if something happens.
6. Children can really worry about their pets, so make sure you decide how any pets will be looked after, and whether your child can take them with them.
7. Your children might feel really scared or worried about what's happening to you. If they've made a "Helper Plan" (see **Step 3: Feel Safe with People**), they'll know who they can talk to.
8. Help your children to choose someone they'd like to support them in putting their "Care Plan" into action if you suddenly are not able to care for them. Write their name in the spot before the "Signature" section on the last page of "My Care Plan".
9. Make sure you sign the "Care Plan" and write the date. Your children might like to sign it as well. If you have someone who works with your family (such as a counsellor or family support worker), ask them to sign it too.
10. Make sure everyone who is on your child's "Care Plan" has agreed to be on it and has a signed copy.



parent tips

my care plan

My name is: _____

I am ____ years old. My phone number is: _____

At the moment I live with: _____

My parent(s)' or carer(s)' names are: _____

My brothers' and sisters' names and ages are: _____

my family

If my parent or carer can't look after me, I can stay with either

name	relationship to me	home phone or contact	work phone or contact	have said YES to caring for me
1.				<input type="radio"/>
2.				<input type="radio"/>

To get to where I will be staying I would like to be

☐ picked up by the people I'll be staying with

☐ dropped off at their home

Other people who need to know (e.g. family, friends, counsellor)

name	phone	have a copy of "My Care Plan"
1.		<input type="radio"/>
2.		<input type="radio"/>

My parents(s)/carer(s) will be staying at

who: _____ where: _____ phone: _____

who: _____ where: _____ phone: _____

My brothers and sisters will be staying with

who: _____ child: _____ address/phone: _____

who: _____ child: _____ address/phone: _____

Important information

my school is called: _____ my doctor's name and phone number is: _____

phone number: _____

I can tell these people at school what is happening: _____ my medicare number is: _____

I have a medical condition: _____

I need to take these things to school: _____

current medicines I use are: _____

I have an allergy to: _____

Other people who need to know that my home situation has changed for a while
(e.g. person who takes me to sport or music)

name	contact details
1.	
2.	

While I am staying somewhere else it's important to take with me

favourite toys:

clothes:

medicines:

my favourite food is:

my pets are (name and type of animal):

they will be cared for by:

they will need (food, bowls etc):

things I need to take

my favourite food

my pets

I would like to be told what is going on with my parents by these people (e.g. counsellor/friend)

Other things I need to remember are

This is the person I have chosen to help me put my plan into action if something happens and my parent or carer can't look after me. I can call them if I need to.

name:	phone:
street address:	signature:

signature:

name in full:

child

parent/carer

parent/carer

support person

date: / /



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Sources

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COMIC (Children of Mentally Ill Consumers) South Australia 2003, *Supporting Our Family*, retrieved from <<http://www.howstat.com/comic>> on 23/2/05.

7 Steps to Safety aims to promote the safety and wellbeing of children. Material contained in the kit is intended for information purposes and cannot be taken as legal or medical advice.

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