



Helping more families care for vulnerable kids with nation-leading parental leave entitlements

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Ministerial media release

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Minister for Families and Communities, Minister for Industrial Relations

The NSW Government has enacted major improvements to the parental leave arrangements for NSW Public Sector employees. These changes extend paid parental leave to include all foster, kinship, and relative carers, ensuring those carers can access leave entitlements that give them the time to help vulnerable children settle into a new home and family.

The NSW Government is Australia's largest employer, with around 450,000 employees, and is leading by example when it comes to encouraging more people to become carers.

The policy allows carers to access up to 16 weeks of paid leave, giving them the necessary time to help a vulnerable child adjust to their new environment. This could include arranging schooling, enrolments, medical appointments, and other critical aspects of settling into a new home.

This leave was previously only provided where certain court orders were in place but is now available for all court orders where a child is placed in the ongoing care of an employee.

The amendments also allow eligible employees to access their paid parental leave entitlements earlier. This will enable carers to take leave closer to the time of placement while legal orders are being finalised.

Paid parental leave is often associated with the birth of a child, but for foster, kinship, and relative carers, this leave time is just as crucial. The extension of this leave to carers will help them manage the significant responsibilities that come with welcoming a child into their care, ensuring the child has the best possible start in their new family.

The NSW Government remains committed to supporting all families and ensuring that every child in the state has the opportunity to thrive in a stable and nurturing environment.

These landmark amendments are part of a broader strategy to address the significant need for foster, kinship, and relative carers across the state. By offering these improved entitlements, the Government hopes to encourage more NSW public servants to consider becoming carers themselves, providing much-needed stability and support for children in need.

Relative or kinship care is a type of care that places a child or young person with a relative or someone they already know. This helps children avoid the trauma of being placed in unfamiliar environments. Unfortunately, not all children or young people have family or kin who can care for them, so foster carers from the wider community are vitally important.

For more information on the new parental leave arrangements, visit the **Administrative Requirements Portal** (<https://arp.nsw.gov.au/m2024-07-paid-parental-leave/>).

Minister for Industrial Relations Sophie Cotsis said:

“These changes reflect our commitment to working closely with the community and stakeholders to deliver policies that truly meet the needs of our workforce.

“Foster, kinship, and relative carers are essential to our society, and it is only right that they have access to the same parental leave entitlements as others.

“We recognise the challenges that carers face and in delivering these reforms we are helping to ease the burden, allowing carers to focus on what matters most – the wellbeing of a child.

“We’re urging more public servants to think about becoming carers – your support could change a child’s life.”

Minister for Families and Communities Kate Washington said:

“This nation-leading reform will truly make a difference to foster carers and vulnerable children.

“We are backing up the critical work of foster carers by extending paid parental leave entitlements for public servants.

“Foster and kinship carers play a critical role in our community. They open their hearts and their homes to vulnerable children and provide them with the love and the care they need and deserve.

“We desperately need more foster carers across the state so more children have a safe place to call home. We’re hoping these entitlements will see more public servants putting up their hands to become foster carers.”

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