



## **Local foster care agency, OzChild is looking for families who might be interested in opening their homes, and their hearts to provide local kids with forever homes**

We recently learnt from local foster care agency, OzChild, that they are on a desperate search for individuals and families in Melbourne's western suburbs to consider becoming foster carers.

According to OzChild, there are children as young as eight who are currently living in group homes, with other children they don't know, and of varying ages, supervised by youth workers rather than having the attention of parental figures.

The agency is hoping to hear from anyone in a position to provide a child in Melbourne's west with stability, permanency, and love. With an increasing number of local children in need of forever homes, the organisation has reached out to us to put a callout for families who can help.

In Victoria there are almost 10,000 kids in care, some live with close family or next of kin, but many are placed into foster care. In fact, there might even be a child in your child's class who has, or still does live with a foster carer. Imagine the impact we could have as a school community if even a few families decide to become foster carers. We could offer a lifeline to children in need, giving them the chance to thrive academically, emotionally, and socially. Your decision to become a foster parent could shape the trajectory of a child's life and create a brighter future for generations to come.

Without the stability of a family home many kids become disconnected from school and the community leading to a lifetime of disadvantage. Foster carers play a pivotal role in providing children with a sense of belonging and the opportunity to thrive.

Carers receive initial training and ongoing education, along with financial assistance and access to a network of professionals and a village of carers who are there for one another, offering support and guidance, especially for new carers.

OzChild ensures that foster carers have the tools and resources they need to succeed, including access to school drop off and pickup services, babysitter reimbursements, school holiday programs and allowances to ensure caring for a child or young person can fit in with your personal circumstances. In addition, regular support groups and respite care options are available to help foster carers navigate the challenges and celebrate the joys of fostering.

Becoming a foster carer is a profound commitment that can change lives forever. Many foster parents find that fostering enriches their family life and teaches their children invaluable life lessons about empathy, kindness, and understanding.

To learn more about becoming a foster carer with OzChild interested individuals are encouraged to visit [www.ozchild.org.au](http://www.ozchild.org.au). The organisation's dedicated team is ready to provide information, answer questions, and guide potential foster carers through the application process.