

In the realm of out-of-home care, the importance of robust carer support and retention cannot be overstated. At Key Assets Australia, in NSW we have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of dedicated support systems on both carers and the children in their care.

Take the story of Toni and Russel, a couple from Blacktown. Initially, they struggled with the challenging behaviours of a child placed in their care and felt isolated due to a lack of support from their allocated social worker. Through our Carer Support and Retention Team (CSRT), they received comprehensive trauma training, learning to manage behaviours with empathy and responsiveness. By facilitating honest conversations and resetting their relationship with their social worker, we helped them feel confident, valued, and seen. Today, their placement is thriving, and the child in their care has made significant progress, feeling deeply connected to Toni and Russel. They openly express that without our crucial support, they wouldn't have been able to continue caring.

This success story is not an isolated case. Many of our carers who have accessed our support walk away feeling appreciated, seen, and heard. Even when placements end, carers leave with the assurance that our agency prioritises their wellbeing and invests in their learning to better care for the children.

Our revamped trauma training has also been a game-changer. Carers have responded overwhelmingly positively, gaining practical strategies to manage childhood trauma and behaviours. This training has not only equipped them with essential skills but also fostered a sense of community and reenergised their commitment to providing high-quality care.

Consider MA, a carer who felt disheartened after a child was restored to her mother. With our team's support, she reconnected with the agency, found renewed motivation to provide care, and became a strong advocate for our work.

Similarly, during a difficult placement end, carers W and K received immediate emotional support and guidance. This support was crucial in helping them process their experience and continue caring for other children in their care.

Kate, a first-time carer, initially faced challenges with her allocated social workers. Through relationship development and advocacy, we addressed her concerns, leading to positive outcomes. Encouraged to engage with all our offerings, Kate has formed meaningful relationships with other carers and transformed the child in her care, who has made remarkable developmental progress.

Our initiatives, such as Carer Hubs and "Cuppa with the Director," have provided opportunities for carers to connect, consult with psychologists, and senior leaders within KAA and have their voices heard. Additionally, organising and hosting carer appreciation events further reinforces our commitment to recognising and valuing their contributions.

These stories collectively underscore the profound benefits of carer support and retention. By investing in our carers, we not only enhance their well-being but also ensure that the children in their care receive the stability and nurturing they need to thrive.