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| Birth registration and certificates |
| Information for Community Service Organisations (CSOs) and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) |
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# Background

It is important that every child has their birth registered and have a birth certificate. This is a human right and is an identity document that is required for official purposes such as enrolling a child in childcare or school. It is the first step in establishing identity and becomes part of a child’s history.

For some children in care, a birth certificate may form part of their connection to their birth family and cultural identity and can tell them things they may not know, for example where they were born.

Most Victorian children are issued with a birth certificate after their birth is registered by their parents. Following a child’s birth, the hospital, medical facility, or midwife gives parents a Birth Registration Statement. Parents then use the Birth Registration Statement to register their child's birth and apply for a birth certificate.

However, for some children, their birth has never been registered, while others do not have their birth certificate.

Only Child Protection (including Kinship Engagement teams), Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care (ACAC) or a person who holds parental responsibility for a child can apply for a birth certificate for a child in care.

Further information about registering a child’s birth and applying for a birth certificate can be found on the child protection manual.

## The role of CSOs or ACCOs

Where you are working with a family when a child resides at home, it is appropriate for you to support the parent to apply for a birth certificate for their child if they do not have one.

If you become aware of a child in care who does not have their birth registered or have a birth certificate, please inform Child Protection or ACAC, who will arrange for this to be addressed as soon as possible, by following the relevant procedure.

#### It is the role and responsibility of Child Protection or ACAC providers to register and apply for birth certificates for children in care. This function cannot be performed by CSOs or ACCOs.

### The role of Child Protection or Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care

When a child is in parental care or in care with the permanency objective of family reunification, Child Protection will support or arrange support for parents to obtain a birth certificate for their child in circumstances when they do not already have one.

When a child has been in care for 21 days subject to any order, Child Protection will, within the next 30 days, apply for a birth certificate for the child and retain this on the child’s CRIS file. Further information can be found in Applying for a birth certificate procedure. The birth certificate issued to Child Protection will be retained by Child Protection on the child’s paper file with a copy scanned and uploaded to CRIS.

Where it is found the birth of a child in care has not been registered, Child Protection will, to the fullest extent possible, engage the child’s parents and support them to fulfill their responsibility to register their child’s birth. However, if parents are unable or unwilling to do this, where the child is in care under a Children’s Court order, Child Protection will apply to register the child’s birth.

#### Carers

If a carer requires a copy of a birth certificate for a child they are caring for, the child protection practitioner is to provide a certified copy to the relevant agency which will provide it to the carer and retrieve it at the end of the placement. For kinship carers without agency involvement, Child Protection will provide the copy to the carer and arrange for it to be returned at the end of the placement. Child Protection will retain the original. For children subject to long-term care orders, a certified copy of the child’s birth certificate is to be provided to the long-term carer as a matter of standard practice.

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