Carer Learning and Development Framework

Nov 2024

Queensland Foster and Kinship Care

Queensland Government
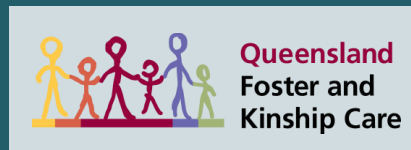
Carer Learning and Development Framework

An Educational Pathway.

The Carer Learning and Development Framework is an educational pathway that acknowledges that carers all bring different knowledge to the role and develop over time. It shows that not every carer starts from the same foundation, with kinship carers and foster carers with approval for a specific child often having very limited information and knowledge about the system and their roles prior to their family or child coming to live with them. Foster Carers holding general approval have undertaken prepatory training prior to approval and professional carers have deeper knowledge from the outset.

A Care Team Approach

The Learning and Development Framework recognises that each part of the care team bring their own knowledge to the role and each part of this knowledge is essential to ensure the child is cared for. For example, a Child safety officer may bring professional knowledge as well as knowledge about the case plan or services. The agency will bring specialist knowledge as well as advocacy and support to the carer household. The carer brings a spectrum of knowledge from their own professional and personal life experiences as well as detailed knowledge of the child. The key is that each part of the care team will contribute knowledge, and each part of the care team will learn and grow together, and this will ensure the child's needs are best met.

A Proportionate and Tailored Response

By recognising where carers are on their learning journey, it enables the system to respond better to their needs including tailoring support and targeted learning and development opportunities. It also means then when worries arise, they can be considered in line with where the carer is at on their learning journey. For example, we would not expect a carer to know how to peg feed a child if they had not undertaken specific training. We also need to ensure we have proportionate expectations and a proportionate response to other worries such as a carer being able to respond to a child's trauma originating behaviours.

Carer Learning and Development Framework

Learning and Development Resources

A Carer Learning and Development Strategy is one element of the department's broader commitment to carers and the pivotal role they hold in the care system. Other elements of the department's broader approach include the 'carer recruitment and retention workers' employed by the peak body Queensland Foster and Kinship Care (QFKC) and hearing the voices of carers through stay and exit interviews.

The strategy starts with a framework which:

- identifies a range of "point in time" opportunities and resources to support carers to grow in the role. New recourses can be added at any time in response to changing content and emerging issues or needs. In addition to those materials funded or developed by the department, the framework can include learning opportunities accessed through other providers such as Emerging Minds, COPMI, ATF. Pathways to accredited training through TAFE and other RTOs also compliment materials directly funded or delivered within the statutory child protection system.
- Guides capability building for carers as they develop in the role. The framework reflects both the shared and different needs of general foster carers, kinship carers, foster carers of specific child/ren only, carers who need specialist skills such as peg feeding, and carers who provide care at very short notice in an emergency. The pathway into the carer role for general foster carers provides opportunities for preparation which differ to the pathways for kinship carers- the framework reflects these differences. The framework provides the flexibility carers need as people bring many different qualifications and skills and experience to the role of carer and are at different stages of their own lives.
- Sits within the overall supports provided for carers and delivers opportunities for carers to acquire knowledge and skills to fulfill their responsibilities and to develop and extend in the role.

Layers of Learning

The Carer Learning and Development Framework is designed to improve the carer experience from engagement to conclusion by continuous building on a solid foundation.

- **Equip:**. Provide the basic information needed by foster and kinship carers to start in their role as an approved carer and to operate in the child protection system.

- **Enable:** Provide opportunities for carers to use the information they have gathered and begin to apply it. Enable carers to build on emerging skills and knowledge and use it to navigate their way around the child protection system with guidance.

- **Embed**: Provide opportunities for continuous learning and reflection. Assist carers to embed learning, identify the knowledge they draw on and the skills they use to contribute to better systems.

- **Enhance:** Provide opportunities for continuous learning and reflection. Support carers to deepen and enhance their learning by sharing their knowledge, skill and experience with others.

- **Extend**: Provide carers with in-depth information to enable them to be responsive to the specific needs of a child, specialise in the type of care they provide or in a related role such as advocacy or peer support. Carers apply their expertise to improve systems.
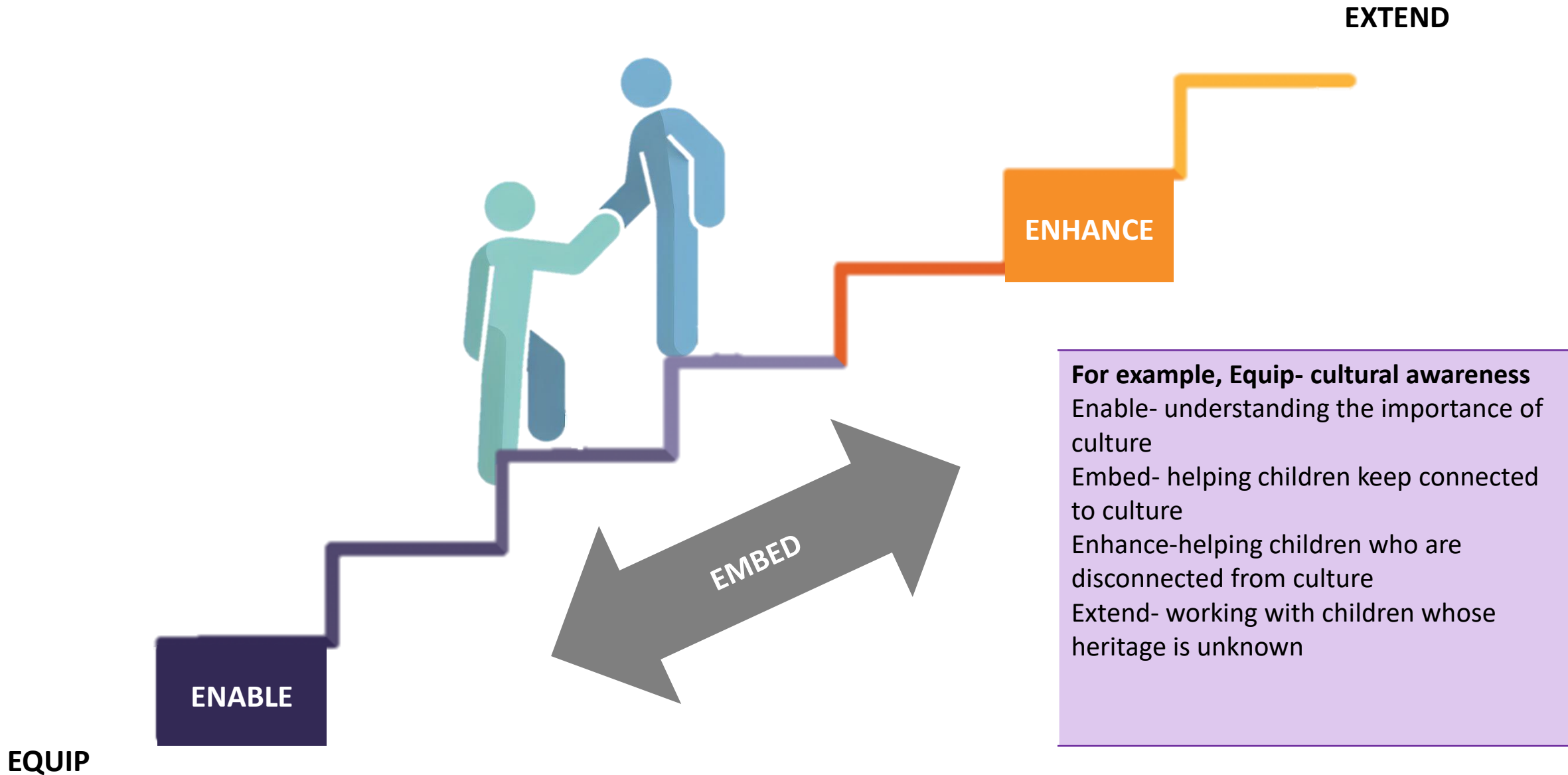
Modes of Learning

Effective Learning and Development opportunities are delivered in multiple modalities, responsive to the variation in carers capacity, availability, access and learning styles.
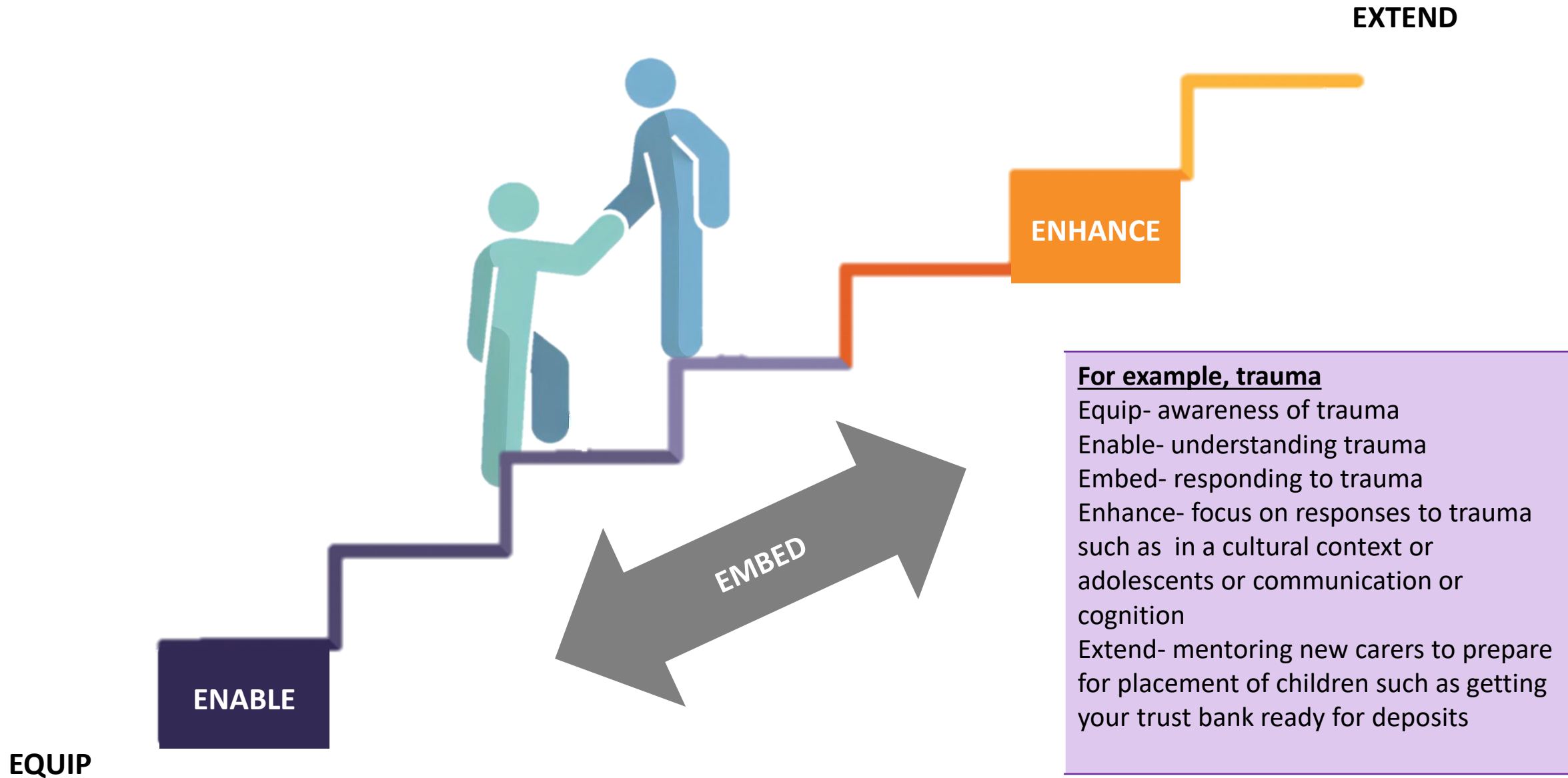
Examples include:
- Face to Face
- In Groups
- One on One
- Online
- Self-Paced
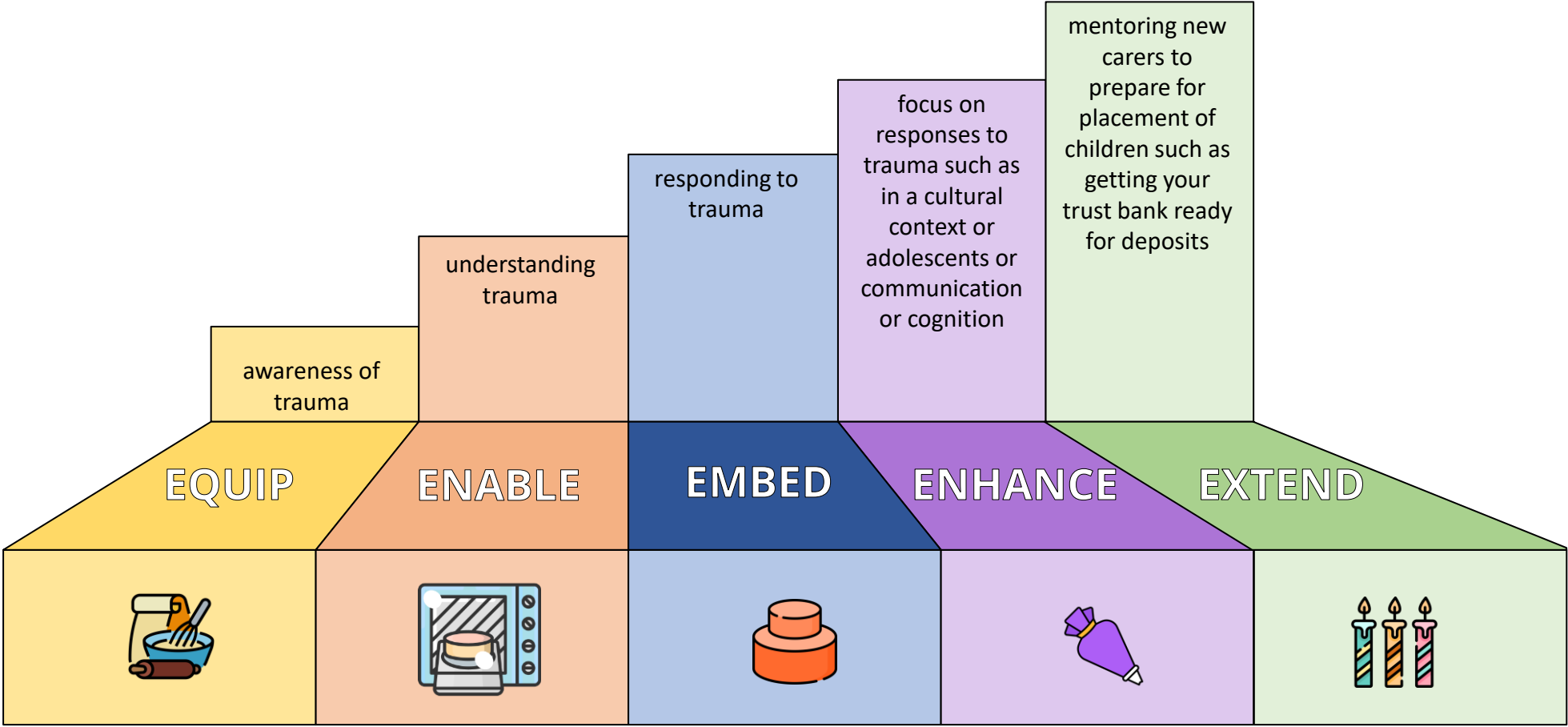- Podcasts and Audio Learning
- Real Life Stories (QLD Context)

Resources include materials ranging from awareness to basic competence and mastery (across the five levels of learning- from development of awareness, through to understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation).

Carer learning and development opportunities contain a base of materials created by the department and also those of other providers. Specific packages can be tailored and designed for specific individual needs as required.

Visual

EXTEND

ENHANCE

EMBED

ENABLE

EQUIP

For example, Equip- cultural awareness
Enable- understanding the importance of culture
Embed- helping children keep connected to culture
Enhance-helping children who are disconnected from culture
Extend- working with children whose heritage is unknown

EXTEND

ENHANCE

EMBED

ENABLE

EQUIP

For example, trauma
Equip- awareness of trauma
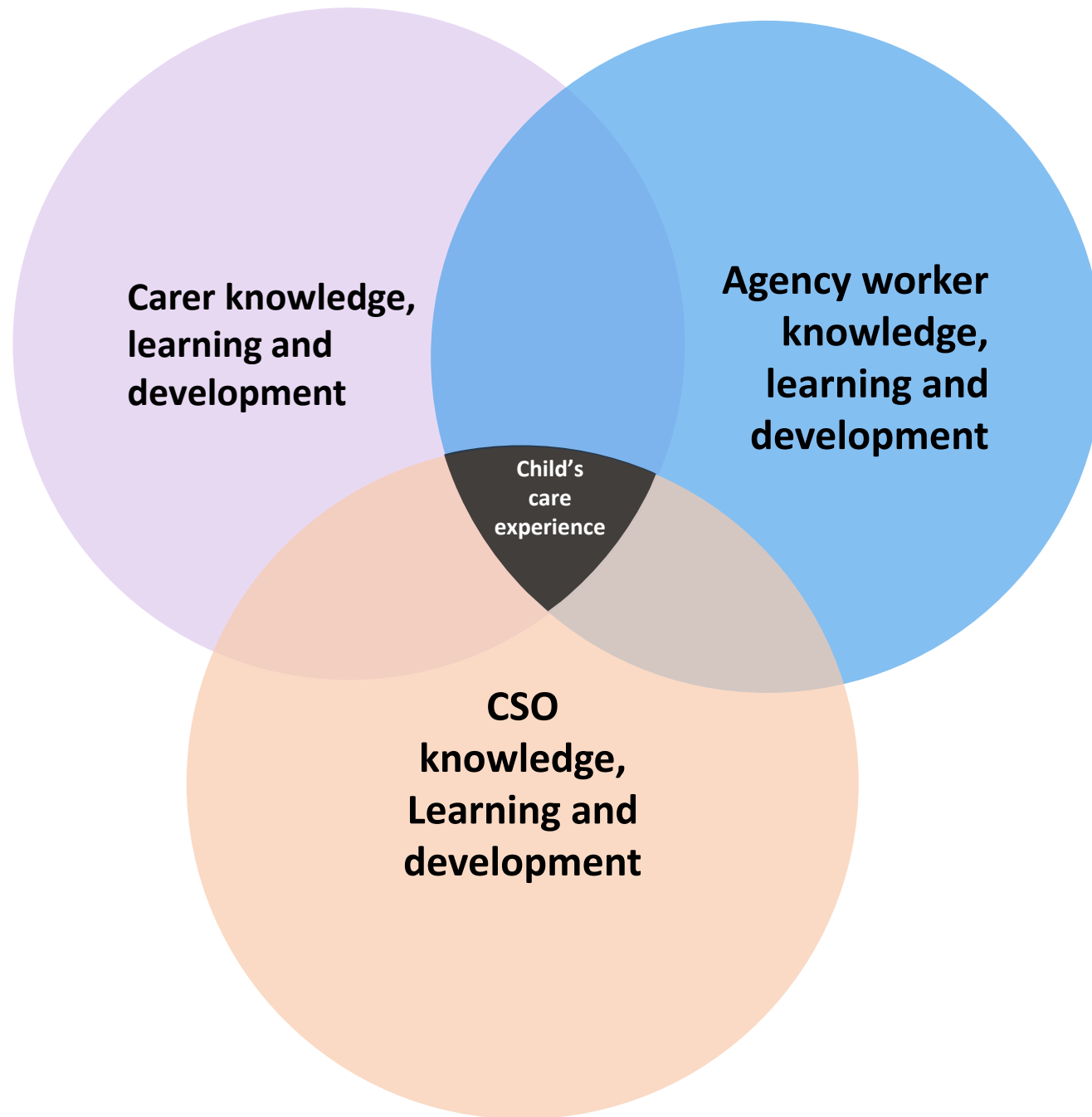Enable- understanding trauma
Embed- responding to trauma
Enhance- focus on responses to trauma such as in a cultural context or adolescents or communication or cognition
Extend- mentoring new carers to prepare for placement of children such as getting your trust bank ready for deposits

awareness of trauma

understanding trauma

responding to trauma

focus on responses to trauma such as in a cultural context or adolescents or communication or cognition

mentoring new carers to prepare for placement of children such as getting your trust bank ready for deposits

EQUIP

ENABLE

EMBED

ENHANCE

EXTEND

Carer Support Worker

Carer

Child Safety Officer

EQUIP
awareness of trauma

ENABLE
understanding trauma
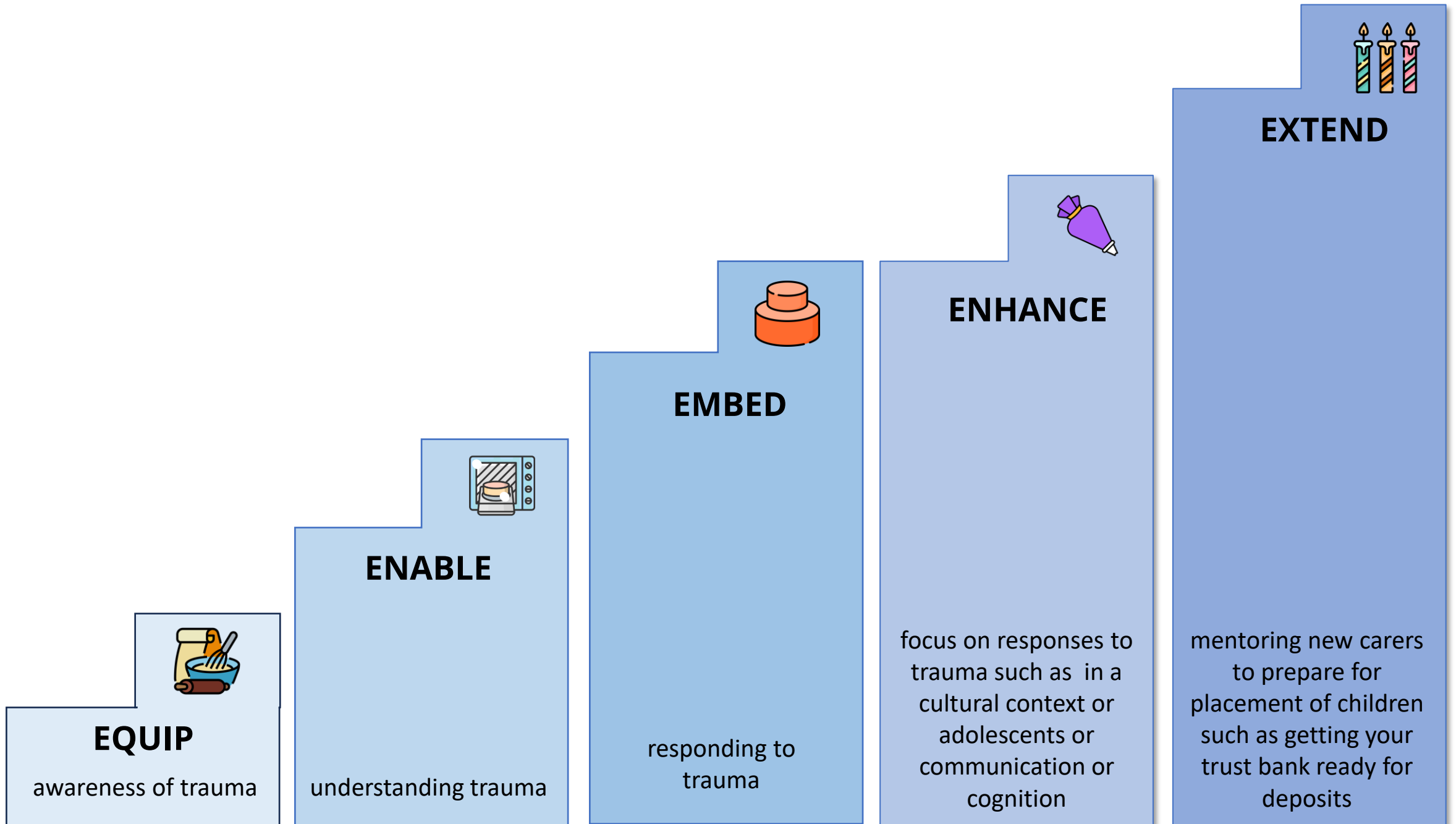
EMBED
responding to trauma

ENHANCE
focus on responses to trauma such as in a cultural context or adolescents or communication or cognition

EXTEND
mentoring new carers to prepare for placement of children such as getting your trust bank ready for deposits

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mentoring new carers to prepare for placement of children such as getting your trust bank ready for deposits

ENHANCE

focus on responses to trauma such as in a cultural context or adolescents or communication or cognition
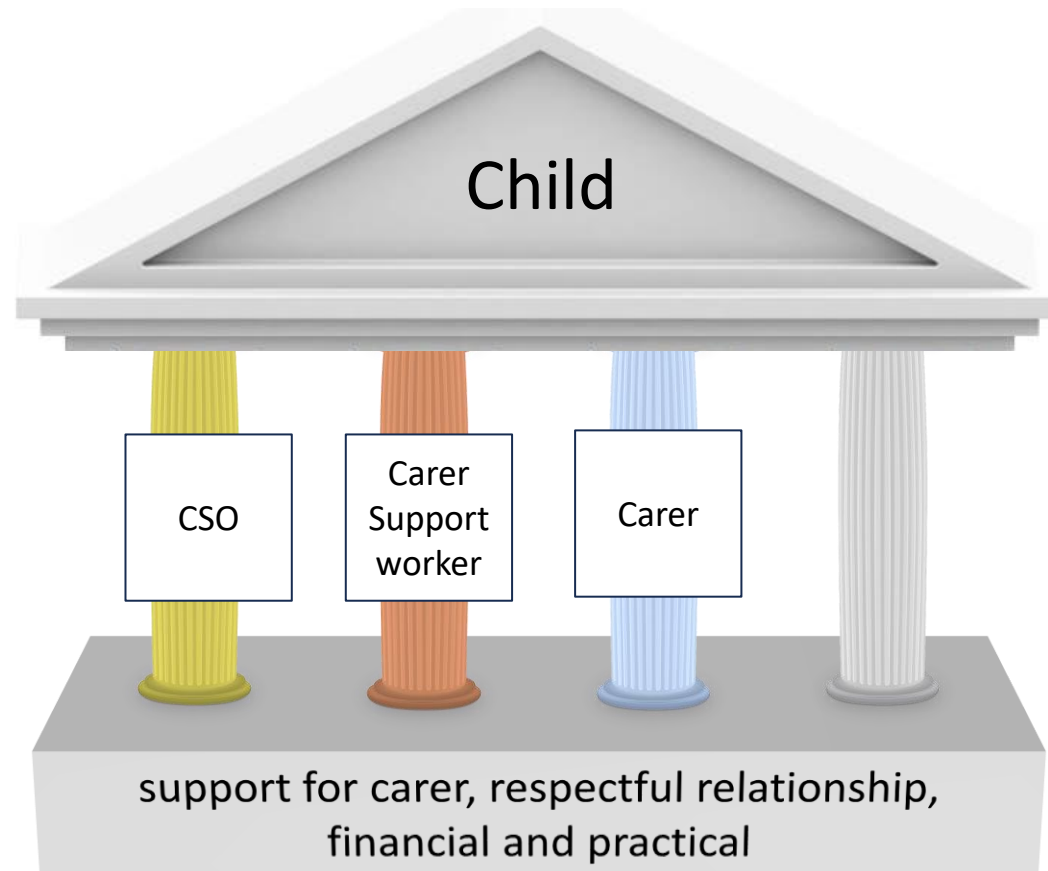
EMBED

responding to trauma

ENABLE

understanding trauma

EQUIP

awareness of trauma

Top is the child who we need to hold up safely

Foundation is support for carer, respectful relationship, financial and practical

3 columns are CSO Carer and Carer support worker and learning and development is required for each of them to thrive in the role

Child

CSO

Carer Support worker

Carer

support for carer, respectful relationship, financial and practical

	Equip (awareness & prior to approval)	**Enable** (during first twelve months, understand and begin to apply)	**Embed** (first 2-5 years, consistently apply and navigate)	**Enhance** (ongoing development and or specialist)	**Extend** (as needed, guide others, coach and support)
Kinship Care	Being equipped to start- using the Family Caring for Family Guide as a start to understand kinship care in the statutory child protection system Educate / Awareness / Information Sharing through assessment about: • the specific child & their needs, • their role as a carer & the CP system • Their changed role within their family • Decision-making • parenting children with trauma • Intergenerational trauma. • Cultural awareness, • Carer Connect, • NDIS, • Financial Information including Child Care, Care Pay, CRC, understanding Centrelink, childcare benefits, birth certificates, Medicare, • Statement of Commitments – Roles, Responsibilities and rights • Community services – what is available inclusive of QFKC Change in carer circumstances and responsibilities i.e household members • QCAT rights • Complaints escalation process • Charter of Rights for parents	Water Safety Awareness and access to the modules available to general foster carers as "bite size" modules that can be delivered one on one by agency support workers to cover topics including: Understanding/Parenting Children w/ Trauma Roles , Responsibilities and Rights as a Carer Understanding the System Navigating the Practice Manual – provide carers with the tools to advocate and find answers for themselves Development of Placement agreements Navigating Health and Education QFKC Positive Behaviour support training Decision making Statement of Commitments – Roles, Responsibilities and rights – QFKC online training already available Centrelink Community services – what is available inclusive of QFKC services Change in carer circumstances and responsibilities i.e household members QCAT rights Complaints escalation process Charter of Rights for parents	Trauma Managing your changed role within the family Managing behaviours – child specific Inclusion and Diversity Decision making Statement of Commitments – Roles, Responsibilities and rights – QFKC online training already available Centrelink Community services – what is available inclusive of QFKC services Change in carer circumstances and responsibilities i.e household members QCAT rights Complaints escalation process Charter of Rights for parents	Continuous Learning Modules provided by QFKC, agency and/or available in the community Child specific specialist knowledge (e.g. peg feeding or EVOLVE) Cultural Awareness and Capability (where relevant) Decision making Statement of Commitments – Roles, Responsibilities and rights – QFKC online training already available Centrelink Community services – what is available inclusive of QFKC services Change in carer circumstances and responsibilities i.e household members QCAT rights Complaints escalation process Charter of Rights for parents	Peer models of support that carers can extend themselves to support others including: • Mockingbird model used by LWB • QFKC support Team • Other models of carer support (ie Retention workers spoke about providing opportunity for retired carers to have an ongoing role in the life of carers by acting as a mentor)
Foster Care (Child Specific)	Foster Carer Manual As above As above As above	Water Safety Awareness and access to the modules available to general foster carers as "bite size" modules that can be delivered one on one by agency support workers to cover topics including: Understanding/Parenting Children w/ Trauma Roles , Responsibilities and Rights as a Carer Understanding the System Navigating the Practice Manual – provide carers with the tools to advocate and find answers for themselves Development of Placement agreements Navigating Health and Education QFKC Positive Behaviour support training	As Below Managing behaviours – child specific	As above and below	Peer models of support that carers can extend themselves to support others including: • Mockingbird model used by LWB • QFKC support Team • Other models of carer support (ie Retention workers spoke about providing opportunity for retired carers to have an ongoing role in the life of carers by acting as a mentor)
Foster Care (general approval)	Foster Carer Manual Getting Ready to Start (Pre-Service Training) Module 1 – Context of Foster Care Module 2 – Understanding the past for a child or young person Module 3 – Early Days in a placement Module 4 – Quality Care - working together Cultural awareness, Carer Connect, CP system, NDIS, Child Care, Care Pay, CRC As above	Starting Out (Mandatory Training) Module 5 – Promoting Positive Behaviour; and Module 6 - Carer Support and Advocacy Water Safety Awareness Hope and Healing Cultural Awareness and Capability Navigating the Practice Manual – provide carers with the tools to advocate and find answers for themselves Development of Placement agreements Navigating Health and Education QFKC Positive Behaviour support training	Responding to Trauma Working with the family and family visits Managing behaviours Managing technology Inclusion and Diversity	Continuous Learning Modules provided by QFKC, agency and/or available in the community	Peer models of support that carers can extend themselves to support others including: • Mockingbird model used by LWB • QFKC support Team • Other models of carer support (ie Retention workers spoke about providing opportunity for retired carers to have an ongoing role in the life of carers by acting as a mentor)

	Equip (awareness & prior to approval)	Enable (during first twelve months, understand and begin to apply)	Embed (first 2-5 years, consistently apply and navigate)	Enhance (ongoing development and or specialist)	Extend (as needed, guide others, coach and support)
Specialist Care (Ready Response, sibling group, reunification, permanency, disability, CALD etc)	Being equipped to start- using the Family Caring for Family Guide as a start to understand kinship care in the statutory child protection system Plus	Water Safety Awareness and access to the modules available to general foster Plus Navigating the Practice Manual – provide carers with the tools to advocate and find answers for themselves Development of Placement agreements Navigating Health and Education QFKC Positive Behaviour support training	Responding to Trauma Working with the family and family visits Managing behaviours Managing technology Inclusion and Diversity Plus	Continuous Learning Modules provided by QFKC, agency and/or available in the community Child Specific specialist knowledge Partners in parenting for reunification Enhancing Permanency Experiences for children Provision of ready response emergency care	Peer models of support that carers can extend themselves to support others including: • Mockingbird model used by LWB • QFKC support Team • Other models of carer support (ie Retention workers spoke about providing opportunity for retired carers to have an ongoing role in the life of carers by acting as a mentor)
Professional Care (OzChild, new government trials)		Navigating the Practice Manual – provide carers with the tools to advocate and find answers for themselves Development of Placement agreements Navigating Health and Education QFKC Positive Behaviour support training	Responding to Trauma. Working with the family and managing family visits Managing behaviours Managing technology Inclusion and Diversity	Continuous Learning Modules provided by QFKC, agency and/or available in the community Working with Kinship and Foster Carers Supporting transitions for young people Hope and Healing	Peer models of support that carers can extend themselves to support others including: • Mockingbird model used by LWB • QFKC support Team • Other models of carer support (ie Retention workers spoke about providing opportunity for retired carers to have an ongoing role in the life of carers by acting as a mentor)