

## Better Care Network Toolkit Guide

We developed the Better Care Network Toolkit to support practitioners and policy makers around the world in planning for and delivering better care for children who require an out of home placement. It contains a selection of practical guides and manuals, chosen as examples of good practices and for their global relevance particularly for low resource settings. They cover the types of policies required to support a quality care system, and practice guidance and tools for the delivery of alternative care.

While the resources in this toolkit focus on the delivery of better care, we would like to emphasize that alternative care should only be used when it has been assessed that it is in the child's best interests and where family support services will not enable the child to remain safely at home.

### How was the toolkit created?

We developed the toolkit with the input of a broad range of professionals working on care related issues. We searched extensively for resources which relate directly to the implementation of quality care, and screened each potentially relevant document for technical accuracy. Specifically we looked for resources which emphasize best practices, such as gate-keeping, care planning for the individual short and long term needs of the child, prioritization of community based care which is of a high standard, the participation of the child or young person in decisions relating to their care, as well as strategies for supporting and working with caregivers and the child's original family. We also checked that the document is relevant for a broad range of settings.

### Who is the toolkit for?

We created the toolkit for people who want to know how to implement better care at policy and practice levels. It is for:

- **Social and community professionals and paraprofessionals** working with children at risk of requiring alternative care, those in care, their caregivers and birth families
- **Trainers** of staff and caregivers working with children and young people in care
- **Caregivers and those working in care settings** (e.g. institutions)
- **Children and young people in care**
- **Policy level staff in government or non-governmental organizations** who are in a position to influence policy development and resource allocation for children who require alternative care

When you scroll through the toolkit categories, you will see a list of each document title with a brief summary of the contents and a section outlining who the document is for (e.g. caregivers, trainers, social and community workers, policy makers).

**Word of caution:** Many of the practice documents in this toolkit assume basic knowledge of working with children and families. Anyone working with children and young people should attend training on child development, communicating with children, and basic child protection. They should also receive regular supervision from a trained professional. It is the responsibility of organizations employing staff to provide such training and supervision.

### What types of documents are in the toolkit?

This toolkit contains documents directly related to the implementation of good practices in care. This includes guidance on the policies, laws and structures required to effectively care for children, as well as manuals and tools on setting up and delivering quality care placements. The toolkit does not contain research or theoretical documents on child care as these can be found in the main BCN website: <http://www.bettercarenetwork.org>

When you scroll through the toolkit categories you will see the document titles listed with a brief summary of **what** is contained in the document and a section describing **why** this document is likely to be useful in your care work.

## What topics are covered in the toolkit?

The toolkit includes documents on topics directly connected to alternative care. These resources are divided into the following categories:

### Category 1: Developing an Informed National Care Strategy

Subcategories:

- Key principles for quality national care provision
- Reducing institutions/Increasing community based care
- Situation analysis/Program monitoring and evaluation

### Category 2: Standards and Policies for Quality Alternative Care

Subcategories:

- Standards for all forms of alternative care
- Kinship and foster care
- Adoption
- Institutional care (including boarding schools)
- Child protection guidance for agencies and staff
- Child and community participation in child care services

### Category 3: Individual Assessments, Care Planning, and Family Reunification

Subcategories:

- Assessment forms and guidance
- Care planning and family reunification forms and guidance

### Category 4: Supporting Children in Care, their Families, and Alternative Caregivers

Subcategories:

- Documentation, recruiting, assessing, and monitoring caregivers
- Training and support services for children, young people, and caregivers

### Category 5: Protection and Care in Emergencies

Subcategories:

- Registration, emergency care, and family tracing
- Psychosocial Support

**Limits of the toolkit:** In order to keep this toolkit focused on the delivery of alternative care, and a manageable size we have limited the range of documents to those that are most directly relevant. We have not included resources on the following:

- Child and adult therapy guides
- Social work training
- Primary (Elementary) or High School teaching

- Health care treatments

## What countries and regions are covered?

We selected the documents in this toolkit because they have been considered globally relevant. They may describe best practices which are easily adapted to other contexts, or they may offer a good example of a practice on which another country can base their work (e.g. an example country situation analysis). While this toolkit does not contain documents which can only be used in a specific country, it does include resources which relate to practices in particular countries.

When you scroll through the toolkit categories you will see the document titles listed with a brief summary of the contents and a section describing **where** this document relates to. This section will tell you what country the document refers to and any adaptations you may need to make to apply the information to a different context. If you are looking for a document for a specific location, you can go to the search engine and search by country name (insert the country name as a key word) or by region.

## Are only English language documents included?

The toolkit only includes documents which have an English language version. Where other translations of the document exist, these have been uploaded also. Unfortunately we do not have the capacity to translate documents, or to review documents which are not in English.

If a resource exists in a language other than English, this will be noted in the summary for the document.

## How do I search for documents?

There are several options for looking for documents depending on the type of search you want to do. We limited the size of the toolkit to include documents which we feel highlight best practices and therefore we would encourage you to look through each category as it is likely you will discover tools which should be very helpful for your practice. Each document appears only once in the toolkit, and is not copied into multiple categories. The options for searching include the following:

### Category search:

- Whole category search: If you are interested in seeing all the documents in a category then double click on the category heading. You can scroll down through all the subcategories and see each document title with a brief summary of its contents.
- Subcategory search: If you would like to view documents in a subcategory only then click on the category heading to see a drop down menu on the subcategories. Double clicking on a subcategory heading will take you to the document listings and a brief summary of each.

### Search engine:

- Exact search: If you know the name of the document, or would like to look for one covering a specific country or topic, then you can use the search engine and type in your requirements (e.g. Zimbabwe), children living and working on the street. Note that the more precise your search is, the fewer documents you are likely to find.
- Topic search: If you would like to look for resources on a specific issue, you can use the search engine and highlight the topic or topics you want to focus on e.g. child headed households.

## How do I search for definitions of care related terminology?

Click on the [Glossary](#) at the top of the page for definitions of key terms. These are listed alphabetically.

## How do I know if all the documents in a series are included in the toolkit?

All the documents in a series will be listed in the document summary. The ones that have been included in the toolkit will be highlighted in bold. If they are not included, then the reference and/or information on how to get the document will be included.

When you scroll through the toolkit categories you will see a list of each document title with a brief summary of the contents. There may also be a **N.B.** under each document listing to advise you of any other related documents or important information.

## Will the toolkit be updated?

We created this toolkit with the support and input of a wide range of BCN users and advisers. It is not a complete body of documents, but instead is our compilation of the best practice tools that are currently available and downloadable. This toolkit will be regularly updated with new resources and for this we ask that you submit to us documents which you feel would be a valuable addition to this site. All documents are screened for technical accuracy, global relevance, and for their emphasis on prevention, family based alternative care, and reunification or alternative permanency planning.

## Where do I go for additional information or to submit a document?

If you have any questions or have a document which you would like to submit, please contact us at [contact@bettercarenetwork.org](mailto:contact@bettercarenetwork.org) for more information.