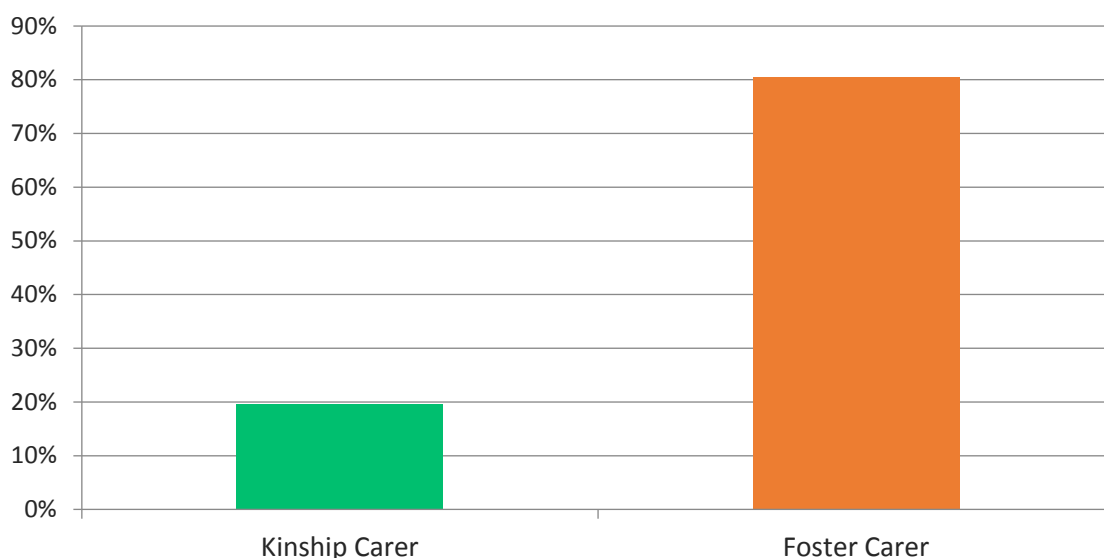


**Queensland Foster and Kinship Care** undertook a quick survey to gather information relating to carer household experiences during the unprecedented times that have come with COVID-19.

The COVID-19 crisis has brought with it uncharted territory in the Child Protection System and QFKC wanted to know what has been difficult and what has actually worked well for the carer community.

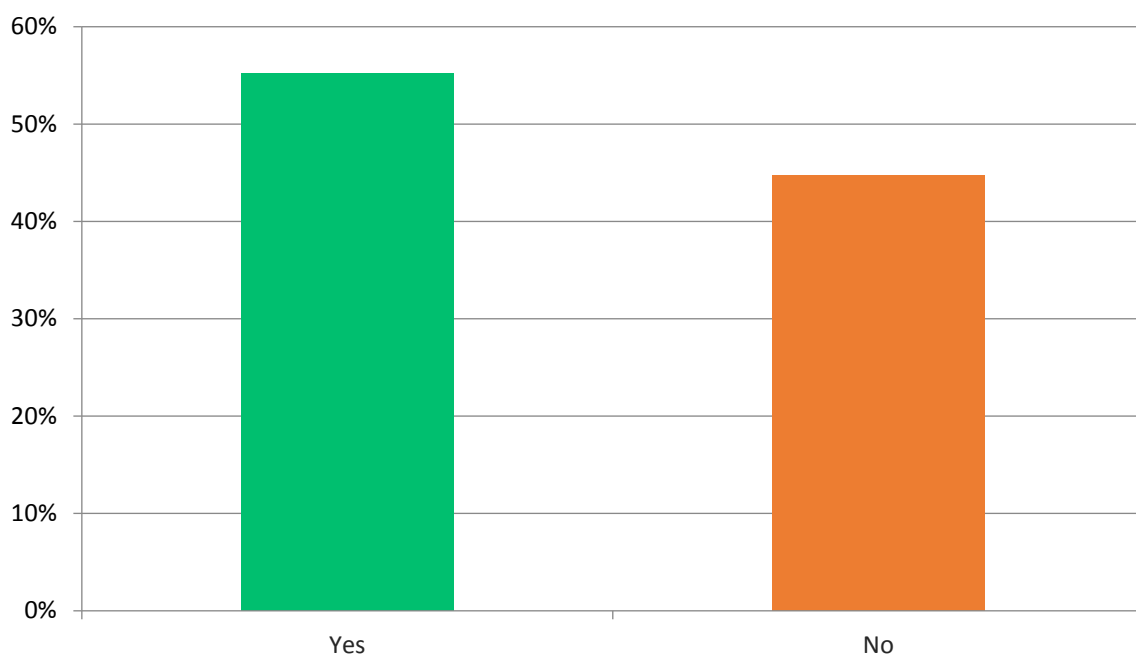
Thank you to all the carers who provided this valuable feedback – here are the results.

## Q1: Please identify type of carer



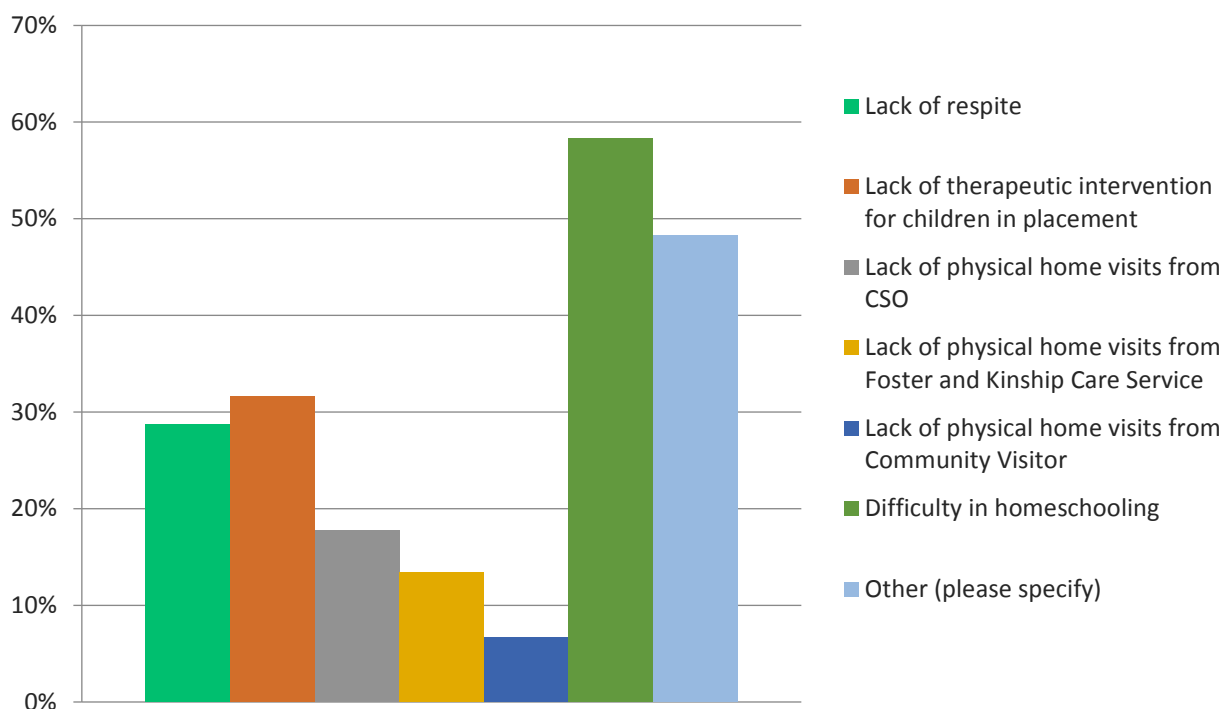
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Kinship Carer	19.55%	78
Foster Carer	80.45%	321
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>399</b>

Q2: Has your carer family struggled more than usual during COVID-19?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	55.22%	222
No	44.78%	180
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>402</b>

**Q3: If you selected Yes to Question 1 please select the reasons why**  
(multiple answers can be selected)



ANSWER CHOICES (multiple answers provided)	RESPONSES	
Lack of respite	28.71%	60
Lack of therapeutic intervention from children in placement	31.58%	66
Lack of physical home visits from CSO	17.70%	37
Lack of physical home visits from Foster and Kinship Care Services	13.40%	28
Lack of physical home visits from Community Visitor	6.70%	14
Difficulty in homeschooling	58.37%	122
Other (please specify)	48.33%	100

OTHER RESPONSES	
1	The sudden stop of therapeutic services.
2	Cabin fever with 2 active teenage boys.
3	Dramatic change or routine for intellectually impaired foster child.
4	Lack of things the children can do - like visiting friends, sport and other activities including social outings (church etc.).
5	Mental health- not going anywhere.
6	Trying to understand the home schooling requirements by the school.
7	Difficulty with family contact.
8	Very very little communication from CSOs, difficulty with skype family contact.

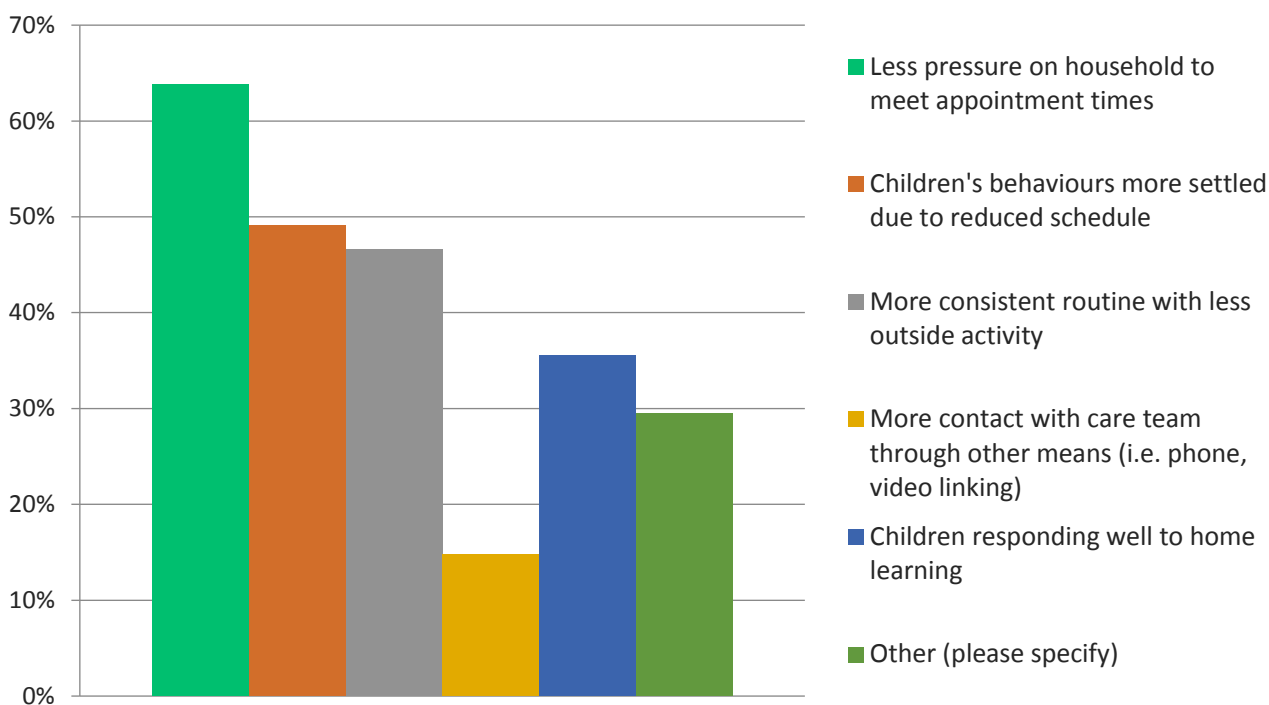
9	Not getting any down time to myself.
10	Out of routine - no break - home-schooling has been challenging and a full time job for both parents!! Not getting anything else done around the house.
11	Just difficult getting time to go to shops without the 3 kids.
12	As first placement during Covid, children dropped off by last carer and very limited information provided about children, their routines or needs. Left on our own.
13	Family support less due to elderly parents and concerns from siblings around COVID. No cleaner to help.
14	Communication breakdown with how visitation is to happen.
15	Phone contact with parents instead of physical contact (I care for infants and toddlers so I do most of the talking).
16	Complex needs they all just walked away he went nuts with isolation and no contact from people who have supported for a long time he only lived with me for 6 months also had all other family members home and children.
17	Lack of appreciation of physical distancing rules from some - not all - department workers.
18	Child is high risk so hasn't been able to go to day care or respite Have only received two emails from CSO so no support there.
19	Not able to visit parks and friends aren't allowed over.
20	Costs, increased internet costs, online movies, home schooling, purchasing devices, mental health of carers and children. Lack of space, for children & carers to have separate zones they can chill out/calm down. Stress about job security, increased workload, working from home whilst caring for children. Financial stress, lack of support regarding trauma/therapeutic parenting during this time - yes lots of craft ideas for small children, nothing for teens or trauma/therapeutic parenting during this time. Same for home schooling, how do you get a 16 year old boy to home school - no support/ideas?
21	Not coping with the change of routines at school.
22	Unable to go anywhere.
23	Isolation and trying to relate that to children.
24	Behaviour was so bad. Destroyed so many things. Had medical issues of head banging on glass doors, walls, tiles then punching head with her fists. Urinate on carpet & furniture.
25	Just understanding the whole COVID thing and how it can affect our large family if we come into contact with it.
26	Decrease in family income due to only income earner getting less hours at work and not bring eligible for Centrelink because our foster child gets Centrelink.
27	The 9 yr. old became too depressed to accept that she couldn't go to school.
28	Household tension leading to more frequent (though minor) escalations.
29	It's been a very expensive time, in terms of having to buy laptops, etc. to comply with home schooling. Team Leader of (de-identified) DOCS – (who moved office to de-identified a couple of years ago) told me categorically that their particular office work very 'differently' from other DOCS offices, and that no payments for anything (including medical, school trips & equipment, etc.) is ever approved - let alone the Complex Needs I was receiving from (de-identified) DOCS for a year before being put with (de-identified) office.
30	Trying to work and home-school at the same time and also trying to settle bio parents in times where we were unable to physically see them.
31	Not seeing family members.

32	We haven't had children placed during this time, due to my health (I have had to self-isolate and still receive medical treatment in Brisbane every 6 weeks). Agency and our Case Worker have been exceptionally supportive and understanding.
33	Pressure from other grandmother for visitation and we live at (location de-identified) and need to take public transport so we have had to change the way we travel.
34	Everything changed with Dad cancelling contact too.
35	Such a significant change in routine, inability to lead normal life, inability to take kids outside to play etc. all lead to increased behaviours and regression.
36	Keeping children home from Childcare / lack of a break / unable to use informal support for babysitting like friends and grandparents etc. We don't have any formal respite arrangements. My foster care agency have been good at ensuring regular contact and communication but the CSO I think would have otherwise just forgotten about us!!
37	Financial - wages cut in half due to having to be at home with home schooling, expenses in stationery etc. for home schooling, paper, printer ink etc. etc.
38	Cessation of sport etc. activities.
39	Has been harder to purchase products otherwise all ok.
40	Just general boredom and lack of routine.
41	Not enough physical play options out of the home. Children interactions deteriorating.
42	No P.J. Angel/No horse riding/No Line Dancing/ and no school.
43	Having to take weeks off work to support children at home.
44	Lack of policy/procedures from Child Safety in regards to keeping a carer safe during contact visitation!
45	CSO rocked up to house while isolated. No warning.
46	Managing things like grocery shopping with so many children.
47	Difficulty for everyone being trapped inside 4 walls.
48	Unable to access parks and open spaces for young children.
49	Total change in routine.
50	Difficulties in accessing in the shops for basic things such as food. Difficulties in able to maintain employment.
51	Increased phone contact due to no person to person contact.
52	Increased behavioural issues.
53	Challenging behaviours.
54	Financial due to school, bills like electricity.
55	With the whole household at home so much, relationships began to fray at the end of the Easter break.
56	The struggle for me has been the home-schooling as I have 3 children in school and a teething baby. 2 of my children need fulltime supervision with school work so that's been the hardest part. I've had constant contact with CSO and my support agency either via phone or emails.
57	Financial support stopped during COVID-19.
58	Due to medical conditions of 1 of the children, it meant 9 weeks isolation with 7 children and I was the only adult. 1 child is level 2 complex care needs, 1 is level 2 autism, ADHD, OCD and anxiety so home-schooling, lack of therapies, change of routine and just the fact of 8 people in isolation 24/7 added to the challenges.
59	Feeling trapped. Not normal dynamics living together all of the time.
60	Foster child missing visits with older family members. We have managed counselling with Zoom but face to face is always better.

61	The need to increase sibling contact via FaceTime which has caused increased stress/anxiety for child in our care.
62	Increased emotional stress. Lack of contact with usual supports in community and family and friends.
63	New meds.
64	More similar to most families, just not being able to take children out to do different activities we are a very outdoor & adventure family discovering new places, this was a challenge & just not being able to have a couple of hours to ourselves, having that feeling of no escape. But we have managed. Home schooling was a challenge with one of our children in care as she has learning difficulties so at times this was very testing.
65	4 different school pickups and drop offs difficult while bus is not an ideal route of transport.
66	Simply no getting away from each other.
67	My young foster son (12 years) missed being able to visit and play with his friends after school. He also really missed being able to visit his family. He struggled to stay focused on his school work at home and missed the physical interaction with his peers and even some of his teachers. He also missed going to the gym. All of this caused him to have more behavioural issues e.g. getting frustrated, angry and hyperactive.
68	Our Foster and Kinship Care Service decided to stop home visits and although we asked for them to Skype in that never happened. That was on the 20th March and we still haven't had a visit. Just a couple of phone calls. We could and would not send our children in care back to school and not our own children so made the decision to home school all of them. We will be so glad when they are all back at school as we are not teachers and our children really need the social aspect of their school as well as academic learning.
69	Extra expenses in relation to self-isolation with multiple children with disabilities. There are no educational resources for disabled students on line. Also therapy was impossible via Zoom/ phone for deaf children. Disabilities also meant that we had to be extra cautious.
70	Keeping kids occupied and stimulating activities over such a long period without being able to go out or get resources.
71	Personal financial situation.
72	Child missing physical contact with his siblings. He is only 2 1/2 and doesn't understand. It makes each day tough when he keeps asking for them.
73	When you care for totally dependent children and get no breaks in the day you lose your entire day.
74	Difficulty in getting child approved to stay home.
75	Behaviours have become much more intense without our daily activities and outings. Being a toddler, she doesn't understand why we don't go anywhere anymore. She's also thriving on all the attention she gets from having a house full of people home all the time too. Whether it's positive or negative.
76	Too much contact from CSO, multiple weekly calls, when I'm busy with work from home and home schooling and just need to be allowed to give my attention to the children.
77	New behaviours. Children with autism not coping with change. No support when child runs away multiple times. No face to face contact with bios. Impossible to get quotes for repairs for property damage. Child Safety did not provide NDIS codes to get home delivery from the supermarkets. Stress over them saying carers can't automatically keep kids home for remote learning.
78	Was unable to utilise day care due to the centre closing. Unable to visit playgrounds, libraries etc. Master 2.5years didn't understand why so much had changed. Meanwhile reunification is happening at a rapid pace so lots of losses and gains for little guy to process.

79	Lack of support from Department and foster organisation.
80	Costs for home-schooling, printer, ink etc. plus extra food with kids home all day, plus cost of food with cheaper brands not being available.
81	Lack of support from agency.
82	Lack of support from Child Safety.
83	Home schooling and working at same time with limited support from Child Safety. Especially financially. We didn't qualify for job keeper and didn't get additional support in any other way. Had to take on a cleaning contract to survive.
84	CSO still continuing face to face contact visits even when family members were sick and having no regard for children's or foster family safety.
85	Having to maintain video calls for contact visits for babies and toddlers.
86	A child we had in care with us was reunified (date de-identified), very rushed and transition was poor. Then the flow on affect for the rest of the family whilst normal routines where halted.
87	Childcare availability was reduced. Loss of income.
88	Deafening silence from Dept. Inequity of treatment of carers from various agencies. ie hampers, computers and iPads, cash per child etc. others zippo. Vic Govt. gave carers \$600 per child.
89	Extra costs of kids at home.
90	Lack of in home support has had a major impact on me as a carer.
91	No family contacts.
92	Abuse and manipulation by parents of foster baby. Trying to home-school our 2 x biological children and juggle telehealth and medical appointments for foster baby.
93	An active 4 year old, a clingy baby, no day care, studying for a masters and hubby working extra hours from home!
94	The stress of having a high needs baby and trying to keep her safe and still doing contact.
95	Lack of strategic leadership by Child Safety in ceasing face to face contact and then re-instating it without consultation or care for Foster Carers and the children in care.
96	Extra costs, groceries and activities for home learning.
97	Whole behaviour is horrible. Contacted support worker to talk about relinquishing.
98	Out of routine causing behavioural issues.
99	Change in routine causes extreme behaviours. New diagnoses for both children but no support given at this time.
100	Lack of family contact.

**Q4 If you selected No to Question 1 please select the reasons why (multiple answers can be selected)**



ANSWER CHOICES (multiple answers provided)	RESPONSES	
Less pressure on household to meet appointment times	63.80%	104
Children’s behaviours more settled due to reduced schedule	49.08%	80
More consistent routine with less outside activity	46.63%	76
More contact with care team through other means (i.e. phone, video linking)	14.72%	24
Children responding well to home learning	35.58%	58
Other (please specify)	29.45%	47

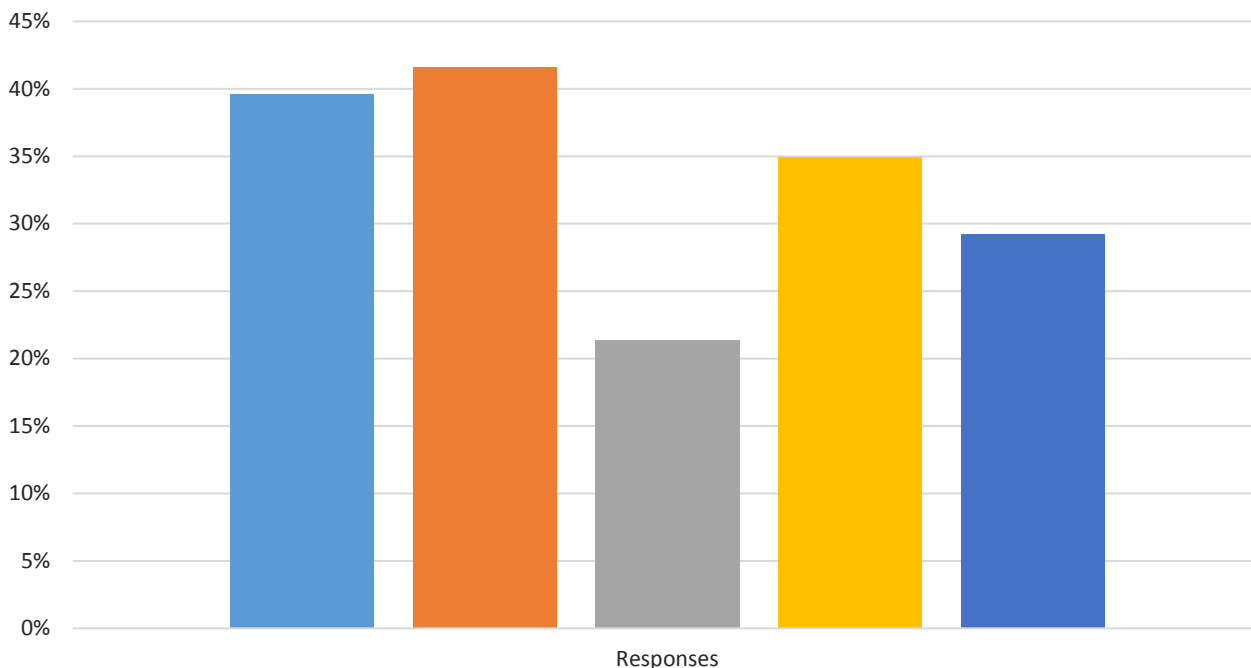
OTHER RESPONSES	
1	No current placements.
2	More family time. Children went to school and the younger children went to school and this enabled them to get the best attention. Older child worked from home- private school system worked very well and they were able to be independent. We continued to work, in fact we got more work which removed financial pressure.
3	Learning new things about each other. The children actually hang out together now instead of just tolerating each other.
4	Child has bonded even more with family while in isolation.
5	Children have loved home isolation.
6	Foster children were allowed to go to school.



7	3 babies under 2 1/2 just changed some things; made a playground in the backyard and only food shopped the day they went to day care.
8	Our routine barely changed regarding school and vacation care. The kids still went, albeit doing online learning at school. There extracurricular activities were postponed from February so they had time to adjust/accept before the other restrictions came into play. Contact moved from face to face to video call. The kids were more in control of when they 'had enough' through video which helped them be less distressed re contact.
9	We are working from home, which allows us to be more flexible and available for children during this difficult time.
10	Young person has been attending school and enjoying the increased attention due to low student attendance.
11	For the most part it was easier as much less unnecessary pressure on families. Phone contact is a much better option for this family as there is much less interruptions to daily routines. However, getting calls several times a week from different agencies asking the same questions, caused issues at work. These calls would start around 9.30am and finish around 7pm.
12	Children difficult at school. Refused to work at home. Hired a tutor who had worked every school day with them. Children should return to school with improved problem solving skills.
13	Did not have any respite children, or any children in my care.
14	Miss 16 with PTSD is more settled because not having to deal with lots of people and with me 24/7.
15	Child still attending school due to being essential workers.
16	Both carers considered essential workers so remained working full-time. Children continued to attend school and maintained routine. Weekends were a little easier as less pressure to go outside and do other activities - settled into a nice weekend routine. Extra supports were cancelled though which hugely impacted work - Luckily my work is more flexible but if this was not the case we would really have struggled to continue with F2F therapy appointments.
17	Child still attending day care as usual, not much of a change in routine.
18	I have not had foster children in my home because I have not been officially sanctioned by the Department.
19	No school pressure for kids that are educationally behind. No homework etc. They loved that we home-schooled and based our curriculum around Aboriginal themes.
20	Youngest child is able to go to school. And the one in Year 10 is working well at home.
21	No physical contact with parents.
22	Respite for children with known carer. They know our family well and see the respite as a 'holiday' so they enjoy their time here. Well-behaved and fit in well with our routine.
23	Our routine did not change except for travelling to school.
24	It gave children more time to feel real family bonding time. As normal as you can get, without being constantly reminded they are foster kids by the multiple people they must see each week or month. That they know our kids don't have the same interactions.
25	Lower costs, e.g. petrol.
26	All round, glad that there are less visits, it takes the pressure off our family. We are more available to do more family type activities, instead of waiting for people to arrive taking a 2 hour chunk out of our routine. We have asked the children and they also agree.
27	Less contact with parents that children don't want to see.
28	Not much has changed other than we spend more time playing on our playground at home rather than in public spaces.

29	With less CSO, Community Visitor, pyjama angel, and Evolve visitors the young people have been able to be relaxed at home without the usual ups and downs in behaviour. One of my kids who has a history of self-harming has not done so once since being in self iso at home.
30	No change...Child is attending school due to carers being essential workers.
31	Children still going to school.
32	Overall the answer was 'No', however our child with ASD and ADHD did struggle with the changes and behaviours were a bit more challenging at times (especially with no access to respite), but overall everyone has worked well with each other to get through the 'newness' of our world.
33	Children were consistently settled and happy to be at home. There was no rushing to work, school, sporting activities and appointments. Family visits were limited to FaceTime and phone calls, which resulted in very settled and contented cherubs. There was time for board games, cards, craft activities, cooking, long yarns, night star gazing and afternoon bike riding. We accepted the lock down as a gift!
34	Still attended day care, and school.
35	I'm an emergency carer and it's been easier to manage having new kids coming in knowing we don't have to navigate going out anywhere and we can keep life very simple.
36	Kids better without constant visitors and appointments.
37	Biggest thing was our rushing to appointments was gone. We have 3 with disabilities. Yes we had challenging behaviours, yes we had resistance to schoolwork, but that was nothing compared to the family atmosphere of building things together, eating together, playing together. Our kids seemed to thrive.
38	Live on a large property with lots to do. Other children from essential parent families were isolated with us. Kids did their set school work and spent their other time swimming, fishing, on swings and playgrounds in the house yard, and on their devices.
39	No face to face bio contact has resulted in a more settled and stable child.
40	Not over stimulated by environment and people. Sensory processing challenges were at a high before lockdown. During lockdown I noticed a huge reduction in behaviours related to sensory overload. Our therapists have also been blown away by the significant changes that they have all agreed they wish to continue to keep all supports in home and not in clinic in the future.
41	Less home visits worked better for us as a family. Zoom was effective and way less intrusive.
42	Fulltime worker. So children went to school and kindy as normal.
43	No face to face contact, so no behaviours after phone contact and we were able to keep kids in day care to keep their routine as normal as possible.
44	No family contact.
45	No visits from CSO, or agency or Community Visitor.
46	Our new placement happens to be two great kids with excellent behaviours, we are very lucky and enjoying being home. The only downside has been our inability to visit playgrounds, movies etc.
47	Less financial pressure. Petrol bill has dropped from \$300 a week to almost zero.

**Q5 What has worked well for children and young people in your care during COVID-19 that you would like to see continue**  
(multiple answers can be selected)



- Ability for home visits to be conducted virtually (mixed with in person)
- Ability for some family contact to be supported through FaceTime, video conferencing etc.
- Ability for therapeutic intervention to be available to children virtually (Skype, Zoom etc.)
- Ability to negotiate homeschooling or at least a mix of schooling and homeschooling for children with complex needs whereby the mainstream education system does not meet their needs
- Other (please specify)

ANSWER CHOICES (multiple answers provided)	RESPONSES	
Ability for home visits to be conducted virtually (mixed with in person)	39.60%	137
Ability for some family contact to be supported through FaceTime, video conferencing etc.	41.62%	144
Ability for therapeutic intervention to be available to children virtually (Skype, Zoom etc.)	21.39%	74
Ability to negotiate home-schooling or at least a mix of schooling and home-schooling for children with complex needs whereby the mainstream education system does not meet their needs	34.97%	121
Other (please specify)	29.19%	87

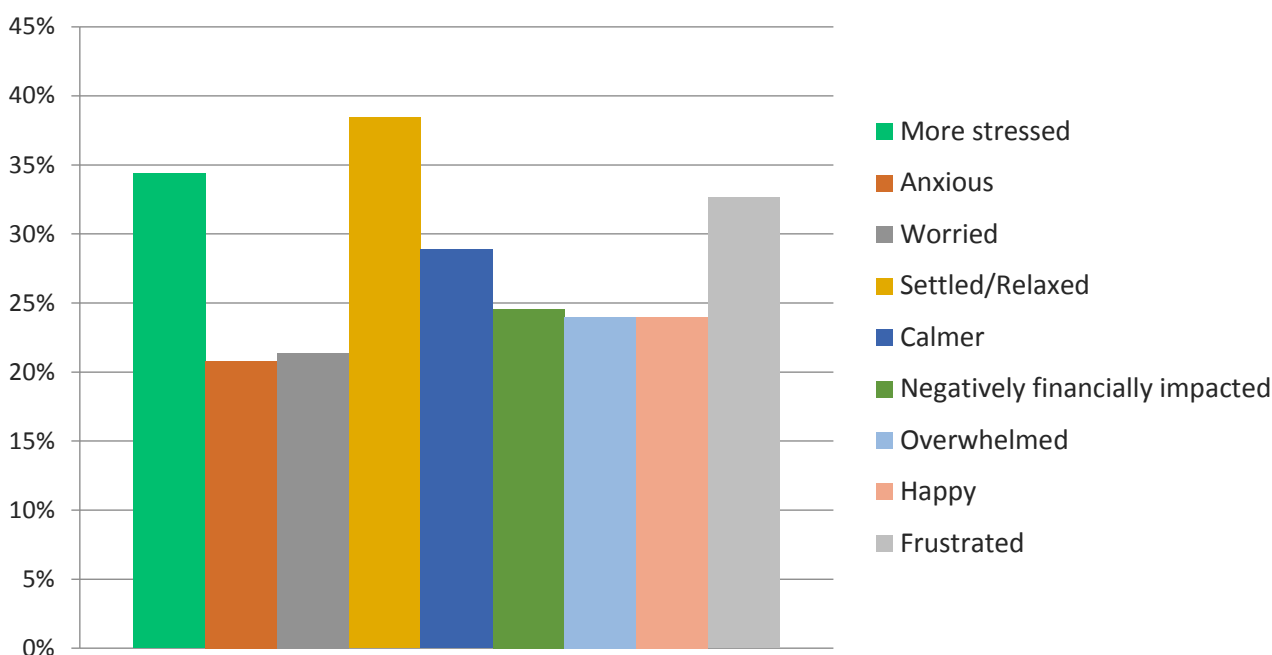
OTHER RESPONSES	
1	Youth worker support.
2	General home schooling has been difficult due to poor systems in place and over complicated school instruction that the kids, let alone carers have difficulty to interpret.
3	Less pressure of appointments.
4	Ability to mix home-schooling for my child with complex need has proved very beneficial. It has been an opportunity to include Therapists recommendations which we struggle to find time for during the week. Also reading / sounding words which the school doesn't provide. In turn this has proven extremely beneficial to my child's speech.
5	Therapeutic therapies did not work well with Zoom for my youngest. There has been some family contact with a cousin who is in care with a different agency but this has been managed and is working well. All children went back to school.
6	More of an understanding of where children were with the schooling.
7	Not having to conform to their 'norm'.
8	My boy having a complex medical condition and special needs, isolation has been safe and calm for our family.
9	We enjoyed home schooling.
10	None apply to my situation.
11	Home-school while difficult with five children may be beneficial for one if the need is there. It is good to have options.
12	With our work arrangement during COVID-19 we have been able to give more time to caring and being with the children.
13	Flexible learning really suits our children who have special needs.
14	As my care child is only a baby virtual didn't work well so none of the above apply.
15	Kids more in control of timing and interactions with bio family via video than they are during face to face.
16	He wouldn't do FaceTime does some school work but doesn't do all of it.
17	Our foster child wanted to go to school and did not like home schooling as it was a massive change in routine. It was great that the school allowed foster child to attend school.
18	The same.
19	Great family time. Awful home-schooling slower children of younger age who struggle with learning and causes so much stress. Kids loved being able to take regular breaks. Really took the fun out of what should be their home environment. By week 4 I decided to allow kids to make our home, our home and not pressure kids. I am convinced they did much more work at home than at school as I sat with each year class and did the work step by step with each child. They don't get that much at school.
20	Since my husband was laid off due to COVID, it meant he was available at home every day for the children.
21	Not seeing their family. Staying home (with us) lots.
22	Nothing has worked well. Video chats are no good for our kiddos they lose interest and babies don't really interact.
23	Needs to be in her routine.
24	Ability to remain at school to help keep some form of normality for the children.

25	Ability for children to say no to visits without being bullied, coerced and forced to have visits. Many of these visits make the kids feel they are being intruded upon. Phone and video calls put control back onto the kids and they feel a lot less pressure.
26	Case Workers and agency workers being available on email whenever needed.
27	For some CSOs to understand that we know our kids better than anything you can read in a file that at times is so outdated or not complete.
28	The ability to send young children to day-care for respite.
29	Having babies none of these really apply.
30	We have worked so these things have not happened.
31	I appreciated the phone service, whereby phone calls were monitored by Child Safety. There was some conflict on the parental contact I needed to complete on my own, and would have felt easier had the call been monitored.
32	My grandson went to school but found it difficult because he got lessons, not teaching on computer. He has ASD and is not technical plus with behaviour plan he couldn't do music when upset and they shut the music room. Negotiated 2 times a week with them but difficult.
33	Ability to make choice as to when to re-commence at the childcare centre myself based on our circumstances and the childcare centre's preparedness. We have maintained home visits for the children but with great communication I have felt comfortable that they were being as cautious as could be around Covid which reduced the level of anxiety around that. CSO was of little help/not involved in that decision or discussion.
34	Highlighted that children in my care are extremely behind in education level and desperately need extra tutoring.
35	White schools teach white curriculum with a splash of 'token culture'. I have 9 Aboriginal children that thrived when I taught white curriculum but through an Aboriginal lens.
36	There has been less need for kinship care support as they are staying home with next to no appointments outside the home.
37	Day cares were still open so schedule was not interrupted.
38	Respite.
39	There hasn't been much difference with family contact as we meet at (de-identified). Which is good for her and for the family to be in more regular contact.
40	Been able to see her friends on Skype and to talk to them on the phone/ been able to send friends letters. Allowing agency support worker to work from home with more frequent phone calls/ to be able to do more cooking/ and learn more personal hygiene/ no bullying from the bus or school at all.
41	Children classed as vulnerable...children being able to attend school...having that one on one with teachers, has been beneficial, to children.
42	Skype was successful (much safer) however parent wanted physical contact which was granted!
43	The children benefitted from not having to go to all the appointments etc. They want more time to be at home and relax.
44	It's been nice hearing the encouragement towards each other including workers and others and seeing the resilience that everyone has shown during the virus changes in everyone's daily lives.
45	Youth worker support.
46	Young person attended school but was often not given support at school - was told they were meant to be self-motivated and self-directed. Many days the child returned home having done NO work at school. Teachers said it would give him an unfair advantage if they were to assist. I think it is reasonable to expect teachers to prompt child to do work, particularly when they are

	severely academically challenged. School expected essential workers to then do school work with child after school hours and on weekends causing enormous stress on entire family.
47	All negotiations fine through schools. There was no departmental assistance or questions on how we were.
48	Child Safety being so flexible in their approach to things.
49	Back to normal.
50	I found ours did more at home school wise but missed the friendships.
51	Everyone in the house is 'healthy' no other positives for us.
52	Family contact via phone is a lot less mentally and emotionally stressful for child who is settled in a long stable placement. When contact is scheduled very regularly to cater to the rights of the adult relatives, having phone calls has really lessened the upheaval, teaching us that face to face is in child's best interest to be less often and phone and letters etc. great for as often as possible.
53	Ability to use Zoom to continue piano & dance lessons when face to face is not available.
54	There has been times where I wasn't sure how to do something and the eldest children have stepped in and helped explain things. It's been great seeing that interaction between the children.
55	The freedom of choice to attend school regardless of carers being essential workers or able to provide home-schooling. My foster daughter's ability to attend school has been excellent for her mental health.
56	Setting up a classroom within the house to try and maintain some routine.
57	Was given a directive for children to attend school and not stay at home.
58	Was able to work on toileting of one of the children without any outside appointments so toileting was consistent. We enjoyed the time together outside playing, drawing, reading and not feeling rushed.
59	Nothing worked well.
60	For difficult children, the more settled routine of learning at home has had significant improvements in children's reading and learning. Kids who the school tell me won't do any work, worked fine for me at home.
61	Ability to still attend school, providing social stimulation for child and personal space for carer.
62	Only have a baby so staying home a lot more. Not having to travel made baby more settled.
63	CSO arranged laptop.
64	We have seen a vast improvement in school related behaviour, compliance to activities etc. not to mention not being rung to pick up kids due to meltdowns has been awesome.
65	My young fellow is much more comfortable being with people in person.
66	We were able to navigate Skype and FaceTime contact for some of our children very well and all but one of the parents appreciated very much the ability to be able to see their children. One birth mother however was very abusive and we had to stop contact this way as the children got very upset. All in all a pretty good experience.
67	Nothing has really changed.
68	Simpler life routines for me means less outside things to think about and more time and headspace to care for the kids.
69	Remember earlier comment all this put pressure on our caring.
70	Nothing really, she wasn't having any family contact or anything.
71	One of our weekly therapeutic workers has suggested that we do a fortnightly visit to their centre and the other to continue through Zoom.
72	No school suspensions. Children playing better with each other.
73	Less meetings, and demands on our time.

74	Ability for therapeutic interventions to be completed in home or via Zoom. Minimal clinical appointments as possible.
75	Less home visits worked for us.
76	Therapy should be in person and going to school allows for normality and give them normal socialisation with their friends and working with educators.
77	The ability to have some me time.
78	It has been wonderful to have the freedom to just stay at home, no meetings, no therapies. Just one FaceTime contact weekly. I have enjoyed the release of being the "taxi" driver. For my family the virtual meetings and therapies wouldn't work. My kids have enjoyed the home learning, walks, baking, staying in PJs.
79	Zoom activities ballet, story time, play date all over Zoom platform.
80	My ability to work from home.
81	Access to childcare.
82	FaceTime every weekday worked fantastic. Mr 4 year old loved the one-on-one and the 10 month old was engaged for 10 minutes or so also.
83	Having babies, and neither parent were turning up to contacts before Covid, so there was no contact, face to face or virtual for us which made it easy to maintain a routine for the little ones and enjoy time at home and naps.
84	We have had two phone calls only from our CSO during lockdown - one to see if we needed a device and the other to advise a family member wanted contact.
85	Home-school has been great for our year 7 boy but we couldn't understand grade 4 work for his brother so he's only been using reading eggs.
86	For the first time in 4 years these children (3 & 4) were able to be children. No extra people coming and going, no contact with family that causes extreme behaviour changes. They were able to relax and just play and enjoy each day. Less tired and no racing from place to place to be on time for all things needed for children with extra needs.
87	Time for carer to further build relationship with children through cooking together, reading together rather than always running running running.

**Q6 What has been the overall impact of COVID-19 on your carer family as it relates to your role as a Foster or Kinship Carer**  
(multiple answers can be selected)



ANSWER CHOICES (multiple answers provided)	RESPONSES	
More stressed	34.39%	119
Anxious	20.81%	72
Worried	21.39%	74
Settled/Relaxed	38.44%	133
Calmer	28.90%	100
Negatively financially impacted	24.57%	85
Overwhelmed	23.99%	83
Happy	23.99%	83
Frustrated	32.66%	113



**Q7 We are keen to hear any additional feedback about what the Child Protection System can learn from carer families during the COVID-19 crisis. Please provide further comments.**

RESPONSES	
1	Younger child refusing family contact (Skype, phone). Adolescent struggling with new boundaries around contact and social distancing.
2	Ensure structured processes in place for kids with difficulties from the Education Department that is simple and easy for the kids, not requiring the carer to be actually with the child the whole time whilst still trying to work from home.
3	It has been very challenging for children to have video meeting with mum and dad every second night. It is upsetting that they are unable to see their parents.
4	Allowing foster kids to return to school sooner was a good option. Thank you.
5	The CPS could learn to respect and appreciate dedicated carers. Acknowledge carers have their children's best interest in mind at all times. Also that carers are capable of making decisions in the child's best interests especially in times like these.
6	Our family just responded really well to home learning and as Miss 13 has been very unhappy with the school she attends so these past few weeks have really made life easier and happier for her. Our concerns are now around school resuming next Monday.
7	Family contact should be on a case-by-case basis rather than complete shutdown.
8	Carry on as normal as is practically possible, keep up same routines and pastimes, ensure that there is always something to do....games....gardening...cooking...building.
9	Having a background working with children made it easier for me but for carers not used to working with children it could be a struggle and stressful.
10	Less is best. Moving away from the norm works better for these children. Out of school, out of society, restricted family contact gave them a chance to slow down and relax. It was quiet and peaceful. I honestly don't care if they don't go back to school for the rest of the year. But part time would be good.
11	More contact via phone or Zoom (etc.) from cost would be nice. We had no contact from CSO unless we initiated it.
12	My agency has been brilliant supportive, generous which has been great. Child Safety I feel has let us down, we are in a pandemic I think the occasional check in would be appropriate, especially for those of us who have very vulnerable children.
13	For our babies, the lack of physical family visits has been wonderful, as they've been able to maintain a good routine and sleep much more than usual. But for our older child with autism, the lack of respite and change of routines has not been well received, though the ability to do Zoom appointments instead of face to face appointments would be great sometimes (to suit our work shifts).
14	We really didn't get any support during this time. We did it on our own.
15	My boys contact continued as previously. Found it strange that his CSO was changed at beginning of outbreak, new one still unknown to us.
16	We built a fireplace and undercover area so we could continue outdoor type activities. This worked well. Also, the children did craft activities. Keeping busy is the key rather than sitting down watching TV etc. for many hours.

17	After a trip overseas we were in quarantine for 2 weeks, Child Safety had no interest in how we were or how the trip went. No contact was made during quarantine (apart from carers email update on trip). Lots of support from Case Worker but none from CS.
18	I feel like a lot of focus has been put into COVID-19 and that has overshadowed our ongoing needs and struggles as a carer family. We have been unable to communicate, or feel heard, regarding regular issues as everything is COVID focused at the moment.
19	Having five children home-schooled has been a full time job for both my husband and I. It has gone beyond a volunteer job and it would have been good to be financially supported for taking on this additional role especially with children with learning difficulties. My husband gave up work to help support the children full time and I couldn't have done this on my own. Sending them to school was not an option as I am high risk to this virus.
20	Children have thrived during home isolation, no ups and downs with mental confusion. Routine was followed and children were less stressed.
21	Latest changes to the system have not been shared with agencies so poor communication about costs and process. For example: new requirement for GP medical statement.
22	They missed leaving the house to go to just normal things like the store.
23	Slower response to financial claims which has dramatically impacted on our ability to fund supports.
24	This has been good to see how the children are going at school so that we can maybe help to bring them up to speed at school and help their behaviour.
25	A clearer understanding of how contact between the kinship care home and the child's family is to be done. A clearer explanation as to why things that were not previously allowed when it comes to visitation but is now being allowed. More communication from the CSO or team leader. A wellbeing check from Child Safety to the care home.
26	Communication started coming weeks after COVID restrictions in place.
27	Their legal guardian walked away for a month and just left us to cope.
28	Our foster child was not worried by COVID-19 which was amazing due to foster child's severe anxiety. Other than discussions on social distancing and hygiene, we did not mention it much and tried to remain as normal as possible and foster child really benefited from us not exaggerating the risks or worrying.
29	We have not heard from Child Safety at all no one has contacted us to see if we are all okay do we need anything nothing at all not even an email.
30	Nothing really changed that much for us. Older kids who home schooled a little but first back to school.
31	We were very lucky to have constant contact with our agency and our kids CSO's were making constant contact without it impacting our family too much. Skype and phone calls take up less time than the actual face to face and didn't leave my kids anxious or hyped up by the 'normal' visits. I did feel weird about Skype family contacts as it felt (for me) like I had invited the parents into my house while they were on, nothing negative happened but just an odd feeling. When the whole pandemic started I was very concerned that we were just going to be left unsupported and with no one to turn to for advice/support/guidance but I was pleasantly surprised as all the services my family uses were only a phone call/video call away.
32	One of our kids was struggling at school prior to COVID-19 but seems to be learning better at home and has been more keen to learn although his 'school hours' are shorter at home. He had been having problems with other kids at school and was becoming uncooperative with his teacher.
33	Please please please give carers a choice during times like this to protect and have a say in how they and their family keep everyone safe.

34	Offer more support to carers rather than shut them out, other departments offered food hampers or fruit hampers but not our local one they just offered nothing, no support around home-schooling basically told just to deal with it, children are very disappointed there CSO offered no support.
35	Support home schooling. Kids were really happy at home but home-schooling was just so hard for a larger family to do properly. Even my grandchildren said it was terrible as there are too many things they didn't understand and these kids do not have trouble learning.
36	Sadly most of the discussions were around how difficult it was for NGO and Dept. staff to work from home and the stress they were facing.
37	Child Safety has just disappeared.
38	Less home visits from Child Safety was much better and my kids have been in care nearly 18 years, they enjoyed phoning their mother instead of going to her unit. They actually asked if it was possible to mix the visit schedule around phone one month, visit face to face the next month.
39	Nothing can be done if there's no face to face then all you have is video chat.
40	We are all in the same position so they had done everything that they were allowed to do.
41	Funding for family's needs to be addressed as financially the isolation means children at home more, which means electricity higher and food bills higher as well. That has been our biggest struggle.
42	CPS should learn to communicate, they need to learn to listen. CPS and other agencies have a terrible habit of dictating to a carer and hiding facts that are going to impact a child's life, health and wellbeing. CPS do not do anything to help children with disabilities and do not have the best interest of those children. (Some information redacted due to possible identifying information).
43	Small things like with the shortage, we can use this to our advantage to say rubbish foods we don't want children to eat are unavailable.
44	Technology not always working and too many Zoom family contacts during week.
45	Conflict of information. Our child attended year 12 first day of Term 2 because she was having trouble logging in to online learning, to be told by Principal she shouldn't be there. We were told she was classed as a vulnerable child.
46	When there is not as much face to face visits, children with higher needs become calmer. They also enjoyed using technology to communicate.
47	At first it was a little stressful being single and taking 4 children to multiple shops looking for essentials when shops ran out e.g. baby formula, other than that it hasn't impacted us greatly.
48	Remember even more at this time carers know the kids so much more that what CSO does by reading file as at this time we literally have them with us 24/7.
49	I only have positive feedback. We have been well supported by both our agency and Child Safety through this whole crisis. Emails have always been answered in a timely manner and followed up with phone calls when needed.
50	Reduced family contact time may cause foster child some distress.
51	No real change except for inability for respite with child's extended family. Don't see the case worker anyway so no change there. Some contact with support works via phone has been good rather than a visit.
52	Definitely less home visits for those carers who have children whom have been in their care for many many years and there are no issues - less visits or phone calls/Zoom/FaceTime are by far the best mode of communication. Home visits seem to take up so much time - especially when carers work and then a visit takes up homework, family quality time and afternoon/night routine. Make it easier for carers and families that are doing well and no issues.
53	We have really enjoyed this time with family.

54	I understand the need to maintain parental relationships, however there is also the household management that needs to be considered. I just feel it is somewhat unreasonable to be expected to monitor FaceTime contact with parents several times a week, when parent only had monthly contact prior to Covid-19. I am concerned that this expectation will continue post Covid-19, leaving little or no time for household interaction, or children's extracurricular activities.
55	They have been great in supporting the children in my care. It has been a difficult time but the support hasn't faltered. Fantastic job on the CSOs part and staff at the department. Job well done.
56	Earlier updates for carer families from Child Safety. Particularly in regards to planning in the event of contraction.
57	I feel my CW was not there but my foster care support person was.
58	Not all children bode well with face to face contact visits just as some don't do well with without them. I think it is now more important than ever to look at how each carer family and young person has coped and if it seems that the young person has had a better outcome with visit via technology then this needs to be looked at in terms of case planning. I also think that support to carers could have been done a lot better in this time. I saw on social media that all their carers were getting a food hamper, well let's just say I am not the only carer that didn't get one. If you are not equally distributing don't put it on social media.
59	I have only felt worried as I have not been able to have children placed with us during these difficult times - our agency has been incredibly supportive.
60	It would be helpful and less upsetting for the department to make it clear to all parties involved about stopping visitation and the alternatives that are put into place. There was not enough direct individual formal information and it lead to accusations of me taking it upon myself to stop visitation instead of it being clear that it was out of my hands. It caused tension between us and some of the people wanting visitation.
61	I have been very happy with the speed of reply from our CSO from any emails. There has been nothing they could be doing to ease the stress on the children or carers caused by this crisis.
62	I have 4 children in care, my eldest had a hard time. If this kind of thing happens again, we should be told before school can be recommenced for vulnerable children, if it is our decision to send the children to school or if it is the department's decision. I had the DOCS telling me she had to go to school, the school telling me she had to stay home because she is in a stable environment therefore not vulnerable. I had been saying throughout the holidays that she could stay home until the Friday before they went back, THEN DOCS told me she had to go. It was very upsetting for my foster daughter. She didn't want to go because of the virus but then had to go. It was extremely difficult. I thought the daily decisions were our responsibility? She went to school after all of this because I wasn't going to say she could now stay home!
63	I was very appreciative of the Department of Child Safety emails. They were very timely and had better information in them than state government or federal government announcements particularly re: home visits and childcare/school. I think early on I did receive a call from the local CS office to check in (not the CSO) which at the time I was ok. But there was no follow up or any further local communication and like I said, our CSO was particularly unhelpful/ absent. My husband is due to do the module 5-7 full day training and I'll be interested to see how the foster agency handles that remotely or in person in a safe way. It's so important that things like training continue to happen.
64	QLD should have provided financial support to carers like NSW did. I believe this should have been provided with evidence that children were indeed learning from home.
65	Wasn't getting agreed respite prior, now zero available.
66	The less interventions and house visits the more 'normal' the children became. If they are in a safe and stable placement then back off and let them be like 'normal' kids as much as possible.

67	I don't think there is anything else that could be done, my support has always been great and readily available. It has just been very stressful with an overactive child that doesn't like being inside.
68	Keeping a regular routine is important, and we have been able to do that. Having the youngest at school has been the biggest help.
69	It's been less stressful on the children as home visits haven't been as frequent, which has made the children more relaxed and settled. Only having virtual visits where the children can voice their opinions and then go back to their daily routines with minimal interference.
70	Ask carers about their concerns and then formulate good policies and procedures to help carers struggle through the pandemic!
71	When our concerns as carers about anything we think needs mentioning is heard, we feel listened to and understood as a result. Then anything can be managed well and the process usually runs smoothly as a result.
72	More intense with foster kids.
73	CSOs have been overwhelmed and have not been able to be responsive or organise therapeutic supports for young person (detail redacted as possible identifying information).
74	To act promptly on specific needs.
75	There was mixed messaging from the Director of Child Safety and the CSO information from her direct area.
76	Carer families and biological children living with carers don't matter. When illness or vulnerability is not directly related to children in care the department officers do not consider them as important or worthy of consideration and ignore isolation rules.
77	Hard to contact.
78	Carers need more income. Child Protection could also help with paying for extra activities for children e.g. cooking lessons, music lessons, sewing lessons any lessons that help them now and in future. I have an anxiety affected child, where music helps calm but Child Safety won't help with payment for guitar lessons for her.
79	We were really pleased they kept day-care centres open, this allowed the children lots of outside play.
80	Make sure biological families have been isolating and following guidelines before visits.
81	In times like this Foster Carers should be able to have online shopping with individual codes so limits on food items can be increased. It was impossible to work and get to the shops every day to get basic foods. By the time you get there nothing is available. The cost of groceries increased considerably, increased fuel costs as more time traveling to the shops and no compensation was offered.
82	The lack of CSO visits has been beneficial for ourselves and the children, the children during this period have been allowed to feel more like family and not a foster child. This is very important!!!!
83	Our kids thrive on routine ....we realised quickly that a new routine was needed ....and that all the kids adapted fast.
84	Been frustrated that you could not always get people you needed to talk to as they were more busy it seemed doing phone calls and meetings online. Anxious due to our girl having a low immune system and gets everything goes around. But overall, I think more encouragement to use the network group you have with other foster carers to be used more often and supported by Child Safety. Not telling carers if you go see the foster family to check in on them you might get a SOC put on you. But maybe to encourage to use Skype and other media to check in on their network.

85	That as there is no training on how to cope in a pandemic, carers were left with increased workloads, often doing the departments jobs for them plus taking on all other therapies & supports for children with little to no intervention from others in care team.
86	More of a child centred approach rather than relative centred approach is needed. A differentiation of the needs of children in shorter term care to long term care. Huge gaps in children's rights to permanency looks even starker during a crisis when so much is uncertain already, and putting their needs before relative's needs (for kids whose families have not recovered or rehabilitated within 2 yrs as expected to come with legislation). We now think it's crucial to brain development and avoiding children growing up to becoming perpetrators themselves. We think looking at kids who are already traumatised being impacted by crisis trauma, is a good opportunity to put in place actions that will break the cycle of further generations of child removal.
87	Sometimes it is easier to complete set tasks in your own time & without distractions. Access to social groups via social networking is a must to maintain relationships - extra time needs to be allowed.
88	This whole experience has been great in so many ways, I have had more time with my children and I have had the chance to teach them and see firsthand how they are doing with learning. It's been frustrating because things are taught so different now from when I was at school, but it's been great learning how it's done and it gives me a better understanding now of the expectations for each of my children. Thanks COVID-19 for giving me this experience.
89	I think this highlighted that the amount of home visits are needed, which there can be phone calls or other FaceTime type calls. During this time, we have received more phone calls from strangers (not the regular SOC or CSO or Case Manager) which makes it difficult for the children to connect with. We have seen closer bonds form between our two children and our older out of care children, who value their roles as 'sisters' and being a 'family'. This has been very rewarding to watch and be involved with.
90	What more can be done, it's just one of the things that we all abide by; what the government is doing is in our best interest.
91	Contact with CSO and support agency was difficult at times with most working from home some days but the staff themselves were very supportive as such.
92	I am currently caring for a 3 month old and it has been so nice to be able to stay mostly at home like most new parents with bonding and developing a relaxed routine and not having to disrupt baby continually with contacts and appointments. I have cared for lots of children and so far this baby is the most settled and content I have cared for and I put it largely to the fact we have been able to have this quiet time at home.
93	Check to see if we need anything.
94	Help carers financially during these times.
95	The children need connection to their voice/ person assisting their voice. School going back was a relief in getting a break. For our teenagers they and youth workers should be exempt from isolation.
96	If you approve a carer, then trust that they know what they are doing. Carers don't need lots of visits to improve the level of care they provide. A happy, unstressed carer will always do more for young people than a stressed carer. Quite frankly, if there were less demands and a zillion appointments and visitors, we would consider taking on more children in what is already a large family.
97	I loved the agency support for my children but felt a bit alone when it comes to the department.
98	The biggest challenge has been sibling contact. Our child does not have a great relationship with his sibling as contact had been challenging prior to Covid. Covid presented an opportunity to

	increase contact virtually however it has increased pressure on our child (who is too young to really engage and then our encouragement and expectation is hard for him to understand) and also on our family.
99	I feel there has been a mixture of emotions for everyone, the children adapted well to being home all the time and having FaceTime for visits, I think they have quite enjoyed this time. As a foster mum much as I love them yep busting for a quiet cuppa ha-ha. While our main source of shopping is home delivery and click and collect I found it extremely expensive shopping at little food stores to supply a large family while staying out of big supermarkets. But delivery back on we all happy.
100	This situation has reinforced to us how good our relationship is with our CSO and Support Agency, as not much changed at all for us and we never felt unsupported. I hope this might be a good example of how important a good relationship is with open communication, as when life takes an interesting turn, things can still keep working in a positive way for everyone involved in the children's lives...especially the children.
101	We have experienced positive & negative from the experience, financially we lost a few weeks of my husband's income as I needed his support for home-schooling as we have a very demanding toddler with 2 primary school students then our own daughter trying to do yr. 10 with so many distractions around the home environment. The positive is we all built a bond beyond possibility as we had so much time to spend together as a family, the children had a better change in behaviour as they had no visitation apart from FaceTime. We found the children learnt so much faster & absorb information a lot easier without stepping backwards with FaceTime contact. It's also been a blessing to have all this quality time as a family together and as challenging as it was at times, there were some very special moments and memories made.
102	Disappointing to see some agencies have sent support packages to carers. Some states have received stimulus funds, we are employed so not entitled to anything but we still have 3 kids in care we need to shop for.
103	Our time spent communicating with Child Safety is limited due to being ignored. It's been great not having to communicate and have that constant frustrating feeling of being dismissed, disregarded and ignored.
104	For some families virtual contact may work much better than face to face at times as parents on the whole appeared more relaxed and less anxious. The children were also more relaxed and tended to sit and talk to the mothers without distraction.
105	Communication has always been an issue with CSO's and unfortunately still is. I don't expect weekly chats BUT would appreciate an acknowledgement of emails just as a courtesy. It would also have been nice to be given some financial support (without us begging) in acknowledgment of the extra financial urgency that this has placed upon us. And, if we are shooting for the moon, a token of appreciation for all that we have done and do e.g. flowers or dominos vouchers.
106	Kids are more settled without all the extra visitors.
107	Lack of educational support from CSO.
108	Carers should have ability to make choices of the primary children in care schooling and around other ways of contact to reduce pressure. As it's important for the carer to be happy as well.
109	Alternative ways to have contact with children and carers can work well and alternative for family contact can be used more as a means to keep families connected.
110	I think they have done a good job under the circumstances. Our financial impact is not huge but requires closer monitoring. The regular updates from the DG are good. I personally like reduced visits. Having three visits a month, that must be conducted during work hours, when you have been a long term foster carer who is working and managing kids and visits etc. is quite demanding and I believe unnecessary. I could contact my support worker if I need support they shouldn't have to visit every month, the CV reduces over time which is good and I think once a child is on a long

	term order of any kind the home visits from the department could be reduced unless there are concerns. The demand on your personal and working life for years upon years is quite burdensome.
111	Not having all the extra commitments for the children has relieved stress and anxiety in the children. Having the option to catch up with support workers via video link has been less intrusive for them.
112	More communication from local service centres, look at protecting children and carer families earlier by switching to virtual contact arrangements instead of putting families at risk by going against government requirements of social distancing.
113	Just enjoy the time together. Less stress on everyone.
114	Didn't get a code for food delivery until 12/5/19 rather pointless now.
115	Closer contact with sibling groups via Zoom/Skype more often would be good. In addition to normal weekly contact.
116	Carer family able to operate more like a normal family without the constant need for fostering appointments. Less financial pressure due to less petrol cost travelling to appointments.
117	Respect wishes of carers without making their job ridiculously harder.
118	We didn't hear from Child Safety at all until about 4/5 weeks into the crisis. No response to emails or phone calls at all. Then there was another 3 weeks without any responses. They weren't urgent things but still disappointing. Our foster carer support worker though has been great and has called us once a week to check in on us.
119	There was a surprisingly positive impact on a child's emotional health after not having to have departmental/agency visitors in our home. Our preteen was less stressed about school work working at home without the strain of her social challenges she has with peers at school.
120	The children are a lot more settled the children's not having 6 to 10 people coming and going every week or being taken to see people they don't want to see or affected by people who send them into a meltdown.
121	Focus appears to be on risk management and meeting department's needs, not child's needs. It's been difficult that department has required limited range of video call options, rather than what child was using and comfortable with.
122	We need to be kept informed from what's happening at our Service Centre. We should have a weekly email from our Service Centre Manager during the crisis.
123	Better financial support when it comes to the required technology for home schooling and video conferencing.
124	Financially compensated.
125	Children want to feel settled and in a normal living environment. Whilst we understand the need for children to be checked and monitored for health and safety etc. we need to find the correct balance between them to allow the children to feel some well earned downtime. Foster children's lives are hugely intruded upon and overly scheduled not leaving room for them to naturally find a calmer rhythm. With less intrusion, there has also been less escalation in behaviours and children have managed to regulate well.
126	This has been a mixed blessing. The shopping limitations have been a problem - the boys were able to go to the barber, but we couldn't always get the groceries in quantities we need. Some agencies provided hampers or support to carers. Mine offered nothing. One child here was offered a laptop to help with online schooling and never received it, the other was offered nothing. System inconsistency has been highlighted here. We've been providing respite, but my kids can't have contact with their families, while child on a short term stay here is having contact with her family twice a week.
127	Extra cost having a teenager home 24/7.



128	We are glad that you have brought these points up because it is evident that we can operate as a family without all the other intervention. Thank you for doing this. May be something positive will come from it.
129	Our family has proven throughout COVID-19, we are self-reliant and work well as a complete unit. Whilst it has been challenging home schooling a special needs child (who we don't get extra financial aid for) along with his two younger sisters, we have made the most of this time together. I am considered "essential" so the bulk of this has fallen to my amazing husband. Bonds which were already strong, have strengthened.
130	Help with devices to home-school would have been appreciated.
131	Virtual visits opened up contact for a child in our care who hadn't had any contact with biological family since Christmas, she is so happy this is happening.
132	One of our CSO has been in contact regularly with emails and phone calls. Answers emails quickly with answers and I have felt that she would be there at any stage with support if I needed.
133	Less interference from foster agency.
134	I did have to purchase extra resources, craft activities, toys, for 1 child a bike etc. to keep family entertained. I think the learning at home was not pitched at suitable realistic expectation for parents let alone parents of kids who have learning difficulties. I know I had the option to send them to school but felt their health issues made them vulnerable. We have 1 lap top in the home for 3 learners. I think the updates from Director were too late in communicating latest updates. It seemed the first few weeks that definitive direction around contact, court matters, home visits etc. was interpreted differently by sites and workers. I thought we would have had extra calls to see how everyone was holding out given we volunteer and the expectations around that role changed very quickly. I think it is great that this survey has been created.
135	We are strong in times of crisis but require back up to keep going.
136	Just a quick call once a week to see if we are all ok and to have emails answered would be good.
137	Please listen to the concerns and worries of foster carers and consider the impact decisions made for children in stable placements.
138	Financially it's been a struggle. Having up to 6 children at home for weeks on end the budget has blown out due to food and essentials etc.
139	There was no additional support for carers. No financial support or practical support. I believe family contact was prioritised before the health of the child and carer. Carers who were high risk were ignored with contact still occurring.
140	Things can be done differently! Less people coming through our home is a good thing. Kids adapted to the changes and so long as we (carers) are in a good place, they can be too.
141	Less intrusion, less added visits to home (CV, agency), less demanding schedule for after school activities.
142	Better communication.
143	NEED: Better protocols. Better respect to carers. More accountability. More follow up. We have had a dreadful experience with Child Safety and our agency. The child in care was absolutely dismissed. Family contact was cancelled but respite visits continued!!! Lack of communication. This was our own experience.
144	Information earlier and support would have been appreciated.
145	Additional resourcing needed - e.g. Victoria \$ for children in care. Consistency would be helpful e.g. contact, Child Safety expectations re visits, school, respite, agency responses. Communication from dept. slow to start. More practical help during school holidays needed.
146	It has been really nice to not have a constant stream of people through the house in the afternoons. The kids are more settled. What has been difficult has been loss of respite and some support services and most therapy stopping.

147	CSOs don't understand that schooling, therapies, visits, contacts and all the other necessities around being a carer are now done by us and their expectations around adding additional contacts even if it is by Zoom etc. adds extra stress to the household. We have to be present with a young child when these are occurring - 2/3 year olds are not able to manage a 30 + mins phone call even with support!
148	Foster Carers just simply can't afford to raise and care for the children. Our resources are very low.
149	CSOs have been very non-responsive in general. Very little contact via any means. Lack of communication particularly through Child Safety.
150	We haven't had any real support from our CSO during this time only a quick placement meeting for one YP in care with us - nothing about our second YP.
151	More consultation. We understood that it was a fast moving situation, but there was very little asking, just a lot of telling!
152	We have contact 4 days a week. Less stressful on the new baby as not being past from person to person. 2 and 3 yr. old settled in routine not disrupted. Having contact 2-3 times a week and FaceTime the other days in the future would be ideal for children as they are not emotionally drained by the end of the week.
153	Updating agency and Child safety through pictures and phone calls worked really well for us.
154	Be more understanding about abiding by restrictions and the importance of them.
155	I have not seen or heard from anybody from Child Safety since Covid restrictions. It's been fantastic!
156	My biggest concern was that we were not informed of what the plan was regarding contacts and department visits etc. The letter we received from the Minister was not clear. We were told all contacts would be cancelled for 8 weeks and then when the CSO contacted us it was for children over one.
157	Very disappointed in the lack of communication from Child Safety at school at a critical time. We heard more from Woolies and Coles and every other business.
158	Maybe some youth work for generalist kids as well as complex kids, this would assist to give carers a break. I would love time just to do groceries by myself. I am a single carer so that's been a bit more difficult, either leaving the boys with my daughter or getting her to do my shopping.
159	Engage with foster carers as a key stakeholder. The job we are doing is worthwhile and should be shown some respect. Child Safety Team Leaders and Managers make decisions in a silo with limited information. Yet their impact is profound. They are the reason good foster carers step away. This is a not a culture of Child Safety - it is a culture of bruised egos and poor leadership.
160	Despite the fact that I do all the liaising with the Dept., it was my husband who was receiving the DG emails. I was/am not receiving any. We discovered after many had been sent that I was not getting them. It has been sooooooo good not having contact with the department. Our agency called me a couple of times to check in, as did our CV. But no visits. It has been heaven.
161	While this virus has brought extreme changes to life in general, it has given us time to relax and see the children, for the first time, calm and able to be just children. No extra pressures for them. No appointments or racing from one thing to another. It also brought stress and anxiety for us as carers as making sure the children were safe and well and didn't get the virus so we went into self-isolation for 8 weeks.
162	It would have been highly beneficial to receive an additional payment for home schooling supplies or for purchase of iPad for counselling sessions no option at all for this.
163	Children weren't stressed with rushing to meet deadlines for school, appointments etc. Didn't HAVE to be physically close to parents for contact.
164	They should have the same rules across the board, one service centre has resumed contact whereas the other hasn't.

165	Parents adapt to virtual contact as well.
166	More intervention is NOT necessarily good for children. Virtual home visits and phone contacts give the children more control on when they are “over it.” My children have had parents make more contact through virtual means due to less expectations on them. If someone is a carer, they should be trusted and listened to. One of my young people who is a major self-harmer, had not done so once during Covid as she feels safe having no real home visits, as Child Safety is a trigger for her.