



**CHILDREN
ALWAYS FIRST**
Fostering Agency

Children's Guide

(up to 10 Years Old)



An information
guide for
children and
young people
aged between
0 and 10 years.





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Welcome

Hello and welcome to Children Always First Fostering Agency.

Inside this booklet there is lots of information that will help you understand what fostering is and how lots of people are here to help you.

This booklet is designed to help you through your fostering journey and understand some of the things going on around you. It will also help your foster carers support you better.

Remember to ask your social worker, foster carer or youth worker to help you answer some of the questions if you need help!





What is fostering?

Foster carers look after children when they are not able to live with their own families.

Sometimes families can't take care of their children for many reasons and they need other people to help them, like your foster carers.

Foster carers are people who like children and want to help look after them. Lots of different people can become foster carers, so your social worker will try to find the best one for you.

Your foster carers should do their best to protect you and make you feel safe and happy in their home. Some foster carers live on their own and others live in families and will have their own children as well.

Foster families can help you in lots of different ways:

- They will listen to you and support you
- Help you with any problems you might have
- Keep you safe
- Help you out with school
- Have fun with you
- Help you have time with people you care about, if possible



All About Me

My name is:

I am ____ years old My birthday is: _____

My foster carer(s) name(s): _____

My address is: _____

Things I like:

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Things I don't like:

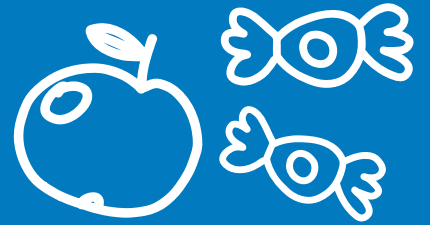
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This is a picture of me



Things I like to eat:



Things I don't like to eat:





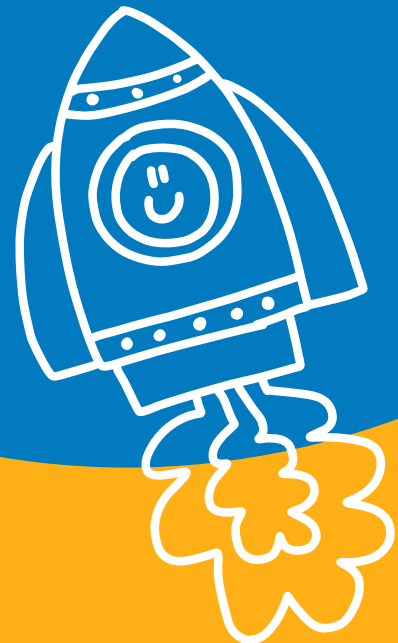
Did you know?



It is a good idea to share with your foster carers what your favourite foods are, talk about how you would like things to be done, or how you would like things to run in the house. Talk to your carers about what your interests are or what clubs you would like to attend.

It's a good idea to share with your foster carers if you are religious because if you want to go to a place of worship they can help make this happen for you.

You also get pocket money! How much pocket money you get can depend on how old you are, it's up to you how you want to spend or save it. Your carers can set up a bank account for you.



Meetings

While you're staying with your foster carers there will be lots of meetings held by Children's Services (which they have to do by law). Your social worker will arrange these meetings. There are lots of people at these meetings like your parents, your social worker, your teacher and maybe even your youth worker. All of these people have a meeting to make sure that everything is going well for you in care and to plan for the future. You can choose to go to meetings too if you want to but you don't have to. It's really important that we all understand how you feel. If something isn't right for you, we need to know so that we can make changes to make things better. You can talk to your carers, youth worker, teacher or social worker about these things.



Family Time



In most cases, you will get the opportunity to and are helped to see your families as often as possible. Sometimes this might not be possible and these reasons should be explained to you. Talk with your social worker about contact with your family and how you will see and talk to them. You may have contact in person or it may be over the phone or over a video call, there are lots of different ways contact can happen.



Where you live

Every fostering household has what's known as a "Safer Caring Policy" which is there to keep you safe. It might also have some "house rules" including getting up times, bed times, meal times, playing with pets, and going out/coming in times. You can ask your foster carers or social worker to explain to you about your household and Safer Caring rules.

Everyone has a right to space and privacy which means you will have your own bedroom whilst you are staying with your foster carers. Generally, members of the household will knock before entering anyone's bedroom and you shouldn't touch each other's things unless you have permission. Just remember that your carer may have to come in to your room to tidy up or clean.

If you are living with your brother or sister and want to share a bedroom you can talk to your foster carers about this.





Bullying



Bullying happens when people don't understand why another person is different. Bullying can include:

Bullying can happen to anyone which is why it is important to treat everyone you meet with kindness.



- Name calling and teasing
- Threats and theft
- Physical violence
- Damage to belongings
- Leaving people out of activities deliberately
- Spreading rumours
- Bullying by mobile phone, text message, e-mail or social networks
- Isolation

If you are being bullied it is important that you tell someone right away. This could be your teacher, your carer, social worker or youth support worker. Any one of these people can support you. Your foster carer might report any bullying to their supervising social worker and support you by encouraging friendships with other young people. They will be available to listen to you if you want to share your worries with them.





Who is there to help you:

My foster carer(s):

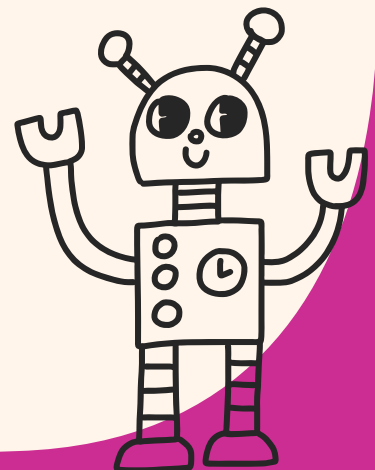
My Social Worker:

I can contact them by calling:

My Youth Worker:

I can contact them by calling:

Is there anyone else
you might want to
talk to if you are
feeling worried?





There are some other people who can help you too!

Did you know your foster carer has a social worker too?

They are called a supervising social worker. They will talk to you to ask how things are going with your foster carers.



Your foster carer's supervising social worker's name is:

I can contact them by calling:

Another important person to help you is called an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).

The IRO likes to check that things are going ok for you. Your Social Worker, your foster carer and maybe some other grown-ups who know you meet together with you to make sure you are doing alright. This is called a review. You can speak at this meeting if you want or ask your Social Worker if you can contact your IRO anytime.



Your IRO is called:

I can contact them by calling:



You can talk to an independent person called an Advocate.

Being independent means that they don't work for Children's Services or CAF; their job is to make sure that your views and feelings are listened to and understood. They will talk to you about how you feel and what you would like to happen. They will listen to any worries that you might have about being fostered. You can access Advocates through the Childrens Commissioner (Contact details at the end of this guide).





Youth Team

You will be given a youth worker who will come out and visit you at home or take you out. Your youth worker is another trusted person that you can talk to about anything and is there to listen to you and support you. Their job is to help you be the best version of you that you can be! They will take time to get to know you, listen carefully to your worries and also make sure you have lots of fun together.

Youth workers can also attend meetings with you if you are feeling a bit worried, or you can tell them what you are worried about and they will say it for you so you don't have to.

The youth work team also hold youth clubs every month and organise trips and activities that you can attend with other young people in foster care!

What things do you like to do?





Your Rights

Whilst living in foster care you have certain rights. These rights include:

- Being listened to and consulted on decisions affecting your life.
- Being able to follow your chosen culture and religion
- Having contact with your family and friends (if it is safe to do so) you can talk to your social worker about this
- Calling or seeing your social worker if you need to
- Eating a special diet or food that is part of your culture or religion
- Having pocket money
- Seeing a doctor or a dentist if you need to
- Going to school and having an education

If something happens that makes you uncomfortable or unhappy, you need to tell somebody. You can talk to your social worker, your carers, the youth team or somebody at Children Always First. On the next page is the complaints process with instructions on how to use it.



What is a complaint?

If you have a problem with your foster carers or you aren't happy with how you are being supported, you can make a complaint. This means you are telling people that you are not happy and want something to change.

Who will see my complaint?

The Registered Manager will look at your complaint. They may need to share this with your social worker to make sure that it is looked into and they will talk to you too.

Will I get into trouble?

NO! Absolutely not. We want the best possible care and outcome for you. We want you to tell us how you feel so that we can change the way we work or help your foster carer to support you more. Never be afraid to tell us if something is going wrong.

How do I make a complaint?

On the next page is a complaint form that you can fill out. You can give this to a trusted person, like your youth worker, who will give it to the Registered Manager to look at.



Complaint Form



What is your name?

What is your Foster Carer(s) name?

What is your address?

How can we contact you (mobile/email)?

What is your complaint?

You can send this to Children Always First by sharing it with your social worker, youth worker or Supervising Social Worker or send it by email to info@childrenalwaysfirst.co.uk or post to:

Children Always First, Office 1 Ladybird Barn, Old Burcot Lane,
Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B60 1PH



Children's Commissioner for England.

Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street,
London, SW1P 3BT

General Enquiries: 020 7783 8330

Advocacy: Help at Hand

Tel: 0800 528 0731

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/>

Email: help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

ChildLine

24 hour helpline for children
in distress.

Call: 0800 1111 (freephone)

Email: www.childline.org.uk

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street,
Manchester, M1 2WD

Call: 0300 123 1231

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



**CHILDREN
ALWAYS FIRST**

Fostering Agency

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Old Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B60 1PH

Call: 01527 917888

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