



CARING
HEARTS
FOSTERING

A Guide to Fostering for Young Children



Hi and Welcome!

I am your Caring Heart and I will guide you through your book so that you will know more about fostering.

This book belongs to you so keep in a safe place like your bedroom. You can read it on your own or you can ask someone to help you read it like your foster carer, your social worker or a social worker at Caring Hearts Fostering. You can read this book as many times as you like and ask as many question as you want to.

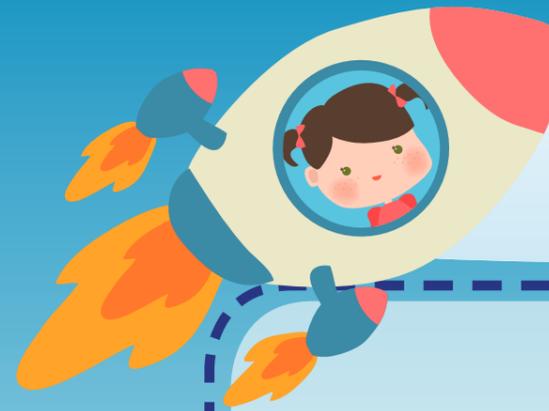


Write your name below and keep your guide in a safe place.

My name is

I am years old

You will find fun activity pages to colour and fill in as you go along. These activities will help you to understand what fostering is all about.



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What is Fostering?

Fostering is when people who are not your parents choose to look after you. These people are called Foster Carers. They behave like parents because they keep children safe. A foster family will have some rules in their home just like at school.

Your foster carer will tell you what the rules are and will help you to join in with their family. Foster carers will welcome you into their home and help you to settle into their family.

Here are some of the things that your foster carers will do for you!

Make sure that you have clothing.

Keep you safe.

Tell you what to do if you feel unsafe.

Make sure that you eat well.

Help you with your schoolwork.

Take you to the doctor if you are unwell.

Ask you about the things you like and do not like.

Help to enjoy the things you like doing.

Give you a room you can call your own.

Help you to stay in touch with your family.

Listen to you.



Why am I living with foster carers?

There are many reasons why some children live with foster carers, but it is usually because they cannot live with their parents. Your social worker will tell you the reason why you are living with foster carers. If you are bit confused and would like to know more tell us and we will help you to find out.

In the space below tell us what you would like to know. 

I would like to know...





Talking about your wishes and feelings..

All children have wishes and feelings. The wishes are what you would like to happen. The feelings are what you feel inside. Sometimes feelings could make you happy, sad, angry, worried, upset or confused. You might also feel as if you don't know what to do. Caring Hearts is here to help you sort out your wishes and feelings. We will do this by listening to you. Don't be afraid to tell your foster carers or your social worker how you are feeling and what you want them to do to help you.

Circle the face that shows how you are feeling:



Happy



Ok



Angry



Surprised



Sad



Worried



Upset



Confused



Who is a social worker?

A social worker is a person who has decided that they really love working with children. Your social worker is there to answer your questions, make plans for you and decide where you will stay. Your social worker will visit you in your foster home and talk to you to make sure that you are safe. You can tell your social worker about anything you feel worried or upset about.

What does the Caring Hearts Social worker do?

Caring Hearts chooses the foster carers that look after you. A social worker from Caring Hearts is there to support your foster carer. They will visit them regularly and will speak to you when they visit. If you are unhappy, sad, or feeling bad on the inside you can tell a Caring Hearts social worker and they will help you talk to your foster carer and your social worker.



When you want to ask your social worker or a Caring Hearts Social worker a question write it in this book so you that you won't forget.

You can contact us at any time on our telephone number: **020 8810 6380**

What type of Foster Carers will I go to live with?

At Caring Hearts we will do our best to place you with foster carers from a similar background to your own. They will speak the same language as you, have the same religion as you and come from the same cultural group as you. At times it may not be always possible to find a family that is an exact match for you, but we will do our best to take care of your needs.



What rights do I have?

You have a right to:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| ✓ Be kept safe and protected | ✓ Supported to achieve |
| ✓ Express your views and opinions | ✓ Go to school |
| ✓ Be treated fairly | ✓ Given information, advice, support |
| ✓ Be listened to | ✓ Be loved |
| ✓ If you are disabled you have the right to be treated the same as other children who do not have a disability | ✓ To have a warm and caring home |



What responsibilities do I have?

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| ✓ Follow rules | ✓ Talk to someone like you social worker or Caring Hearts Social worker if you feel upset or worried |
| ✓ Not to swear at others | |
| ✓ Attend school | |

Who decides what will happen to me?

It will be your social worker; along with other people she/he will write up a 'care plan' for you. A care plan is a written record that tells everyone about the plans that have been made for you. You will be asked your views about the plan and your views will be included in the plan. Remember! It is your plan.

We want to know how you feel about the plans that are being made for you. You can say what you are thinking and feeling. You can write it down or draw a picture which ever makes you feel most comfortable.

I am happy about my care plan because...

I am unhappy about my care plan because...





What type of rules do I have to follow?

All families have rules. Rules are the way we will expect a foster carer to behave towards you and you towards your foster carers. When you first go to a foster family they will welcome you to their home and tell you about their rules. You can add your rules to the list and then you can agree on the rules you both want.



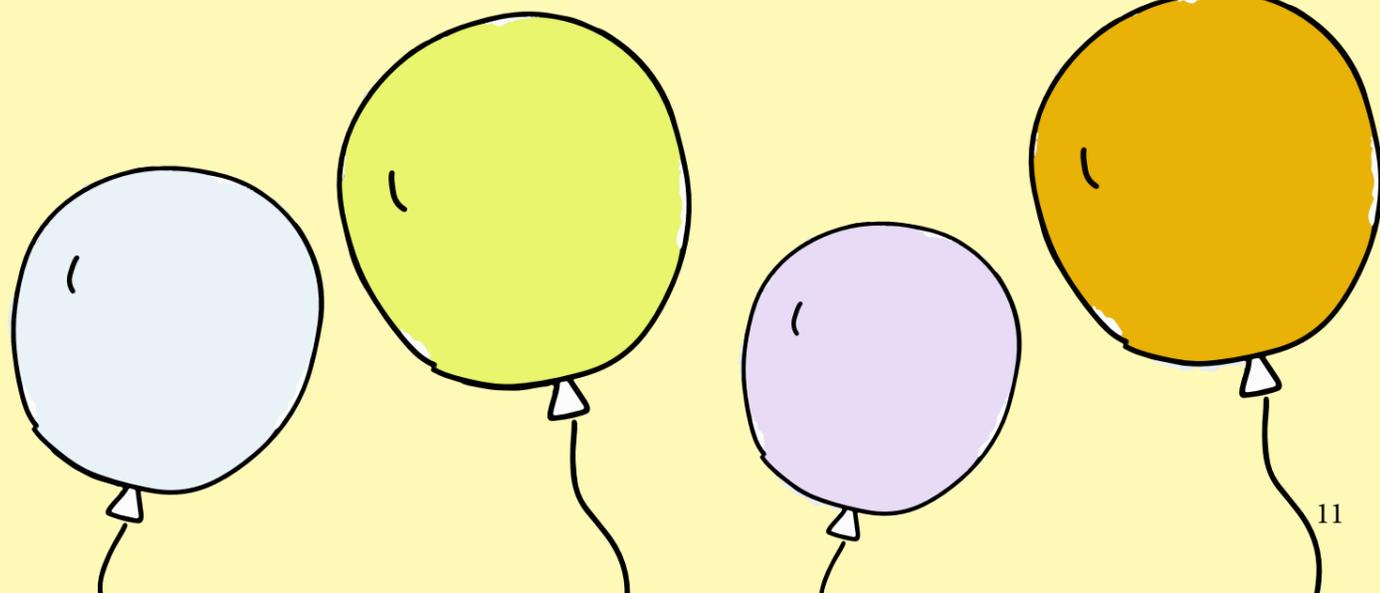
Use this space to write your rules. You can share them with your foster carers. 

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



You are special because no two children are the same. So take the time to write down what makes you special. **Use the balloons to write what makes you special.** You can share your special interests with your foster carers.

 I'm special because...



All children must go to school but sometimes when children move to a foster home that is a long way from their school we can do two things:

1. Provide transport so that you can attend the same school.
2. Change to a school nearer your foster family's home. This will depend on your care plan.

If you are attending a special school because you have a disability we will keep you at that school because it will be best for you.

Your teacher will know that you have moved to a foster family, but you can choose who else you want to tell. We will keep your information safe and only tell people who need to know.

What about going to School?

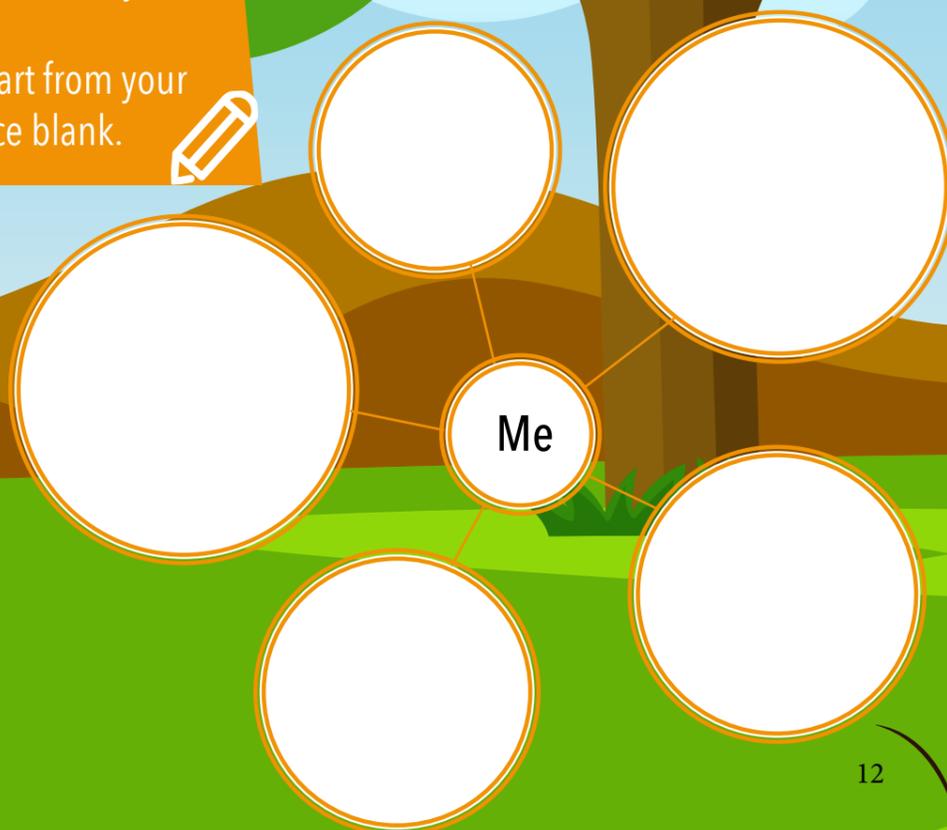
When can I see my family?

Your foster family cannot replace your family. We know that you will want to see your family so that you can talk to them and share with them what is happening to you. It may not always be possible for you to see your family on your own.

This is what we will do to help you stay in touch with your family:

- Talk to your social worker and find out what plans they have for you to see your family.
- Ask your foster carers to help you see your parents and other family members.
- Your foster carers will help you before you go to see your family and they will help you to settle down when you return to your foster family.
- You can talk to your social worker and explain to them who you want to see. They will arrange it for you.

Write down people in your circle who you would want to know.
If you do not want anyone apart from your family to know leave this space blank.



How long will I stay in foster care?

It depends on the reason you are being looked after by foster carers.

Do you remember the 'Care Plan'? Well, this is where we will find out how long you might stay in a foster home.

Sometimes foster placements can be short, but they can also last for a long time. Your social worker will explain what your plan is and how long you will stay with one of our foster carers.



You can ask your foster carer to help you write any questions you want to know about how long you will stay in foster care.



Write your questions on the bubbles.



What if I have a problem?

If you have a problem the best persons to speak to about it is your social worker and your foster carers. If you find that you are not being listened to, talk to your Caring Hearts social worker and we will talk to the people who can help you to sort out your problem. We are here to help you.

If someone has hurt you or touched you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable you have the right to tell someone about it. Your foster carer will tell you how to keep safe all the time.

You can ask your foster carers as many questions as you want to about keeping safe. They won't mind and will do their best to help you.

They want you to be happy, healthy, safe, achieve, and have your say.





People who can help...

It is important that you talk to someone who will listen. So here are some useful numbers for you to contact if you need to:

♥ Your Social Worker is _____

♥ Caring Hearts Social Worker: 020 8810 6380

♥ National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC): 020 7825 2500

♥ Childline: 0800 1111 (call free)

♥ Ofsted: 0300 123 1231

We have come to the end of your book. Thank you for reading your guide and keeping it safe. We hope that you will be happy in your foster home.



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Questionnaire

My name is I am years old.

Were you given a Children's Guide? Yes No Can't remember

If you were given a Guide did you read it? Yes No

Did you read it on your own? Yes No

If you couldn't read it on your own it did someone like your foster carer help you to read it? Yes No

Do you know how to tell someone if you are unhappy? Yes No Not Sure

What are your hobbies? (the things you like doing)

What do you like about your school?

What types of food do you like eating?

Do you know who to tell if you do not feel safe? Yes No Not sure

Do you feel safe with your foster family? Yes No Not sure

Do you feel safe at school? Yes No Not sure

Who would you like to help you keep safe?

How do you use your pocket money?

What do you like about the home where you are living?

What do you think about the area where you are living?