

FOSTER CARERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To Provide Care for a Foster Child

This means the day to day caring - providing love, comfort, listening, patience, food, clothing and warmth. It means encouraging interests and hobbies. Foster carers should remember that children placed with them come from a variety of different backgrounds and experiences. It is important that any child placed has a positive image of himself and anything you can do to promote this will be helpful.

2. To Promote Positive Health Care

This involves consulting the doctor, the hospital as necessary and the dentist and optician regularly, as you would with your own child. Also, there are the wider issues associated with health such as promoting exercise, ensuring children have a balanced diet and are educated about the negative effects of smoking, alcohol and illegal drugs etc. A statutory medical assessment is arranged shortly before or after placement and usually the foster carer accompanies the child to this.

3. To Promote a Positive View of the Child's Family and Background

You may feel very angry with the child's parents but it is still important to acknowledge the feelings that a child will have for their parents. This means respecting the things that are brought from home. Allowing a child to have contact with their parents, without making the child feel that they must choose between them and you and trying to understand the feelings of parents seeing you doing a better job of bringing up their children. Some parents will need as much parenting as their children and you can play an invaluable role by working with them.

4. To Promote a Foster Child's own Race, Culture and Religion

The Local Authority tries to place any child in care with a family that can match his/her own race, culture and religion. At times this is not always possible and then the "best available" placement is made. We hope that through the foster carer assessment process this issue has been discussed thoroughly with you and a commitment made by you, the foster carers, to help meet the needs of a child who is not of the same race, culture or religion as yourself. The department should have resources available to help you meet some of the child's needs, but you will need to consider issues of appropriate reading material, music, decorations in the home, as well as places to visit, films and entertainment and places of worship.

5. **To Promote Education**

When young people come into care they are often behind in their educational attainment due to their life experiences. Foster carers can do much to promote a child's education by taking an interest in homework and school events, listening to them read and reading them bedtime stories.

Every school in Leicestershire has a designated teacher for looked after children and each child will have a personal education plan.

Try to promote your child's attendance by: -

- Not keeping them off school for minor ailments
- Not making appointments during school time if at all possible
- Not arranging holidays and outings during school time.

6. **To let Children & Young People's Service know immediately of any Serious Incident**

For example, any accident, illness, abduction, absconds, prosecution by police.
Please also see the section Missing from Care.

7. **To Notify the Department of any Change of Address**

Please ensure you do this before you actually move.

8. **To Ensure the Safety of any Foster Child whilst they are in your care**

We ask that foster carers are safety conscious within their homes and when transporting foster children. To comply with the seat belt laws you must ensure that children are securely and correctly seated in your car. This may limit the number of children you can care for but ensuring the safety of all children (including your own children) is of paramount importance. Deciding at what age children can take some responsibility for themselves is also very important. Allow children to learn by making mistakes as you would with your own children.

9. **To keep Confidentiality**

Please ensure any information given to you about children placed with you (and their families) is kept safely. **Please also see the section on confidentiality.**

10. **To Accept and Ensure that Corporal Punishment is Not Permitted to be used on any Child Placed with You**

This includes not belittling children or using inappropriate punishments. Try to reward and praise good behaviour

11. To ensure that Young People receive Sex Education appropriate to their needs

Young people need opportunities to discuss their concerns about sex. The Children Act reminds us that "gay young men and lesbian women may require very sympathetic carers to enable them to accept their sexuality and to develop their own self esteem". Also children and young people who have been sexually abused will need counselling and opportunities to talk about appropriate sexual behaviour.

12. To Permit any person authorised by the Department to see the Child/Young Person

This may include an Independent visitor for the child.

13. To Allow the Child/Young Person to be Removed from the Foster Home when so requested by a Person Authorised by the Department

14. To Provide Information to the Children & Young People's Service and the Courts if they request it, Information about the Child's Behaviour and Development

On many occasions the child's social worker will either be completing an assessment on the child and their family or will be writing reports for the court. This will influence the future plans for the child. Your input into this process can be invaluable. If you are asked to give evidence in court we will help and support you.