

## RECORD KEEPING AND THE USE OF A DIARY

When you are first approved as a carer you will be given a foster carer's diary. Once you have children in placement you will quickly find that you have a number of appointments to record. You will have visits from the child's social workers and your fostering social worker, dental and medical appointments, reviews and planning meetings.

You will also be provided with recording logs to record significant events about the children you are caring for. How much and what you record will vary a lot from child to child. The child's social worker may ask you to record details about specific incidents, but as a minimum you should record

- The day the child came to you and left you
- Any days the child is not in your care on respite or with parents
- Visits by social workers, doctors, psychologists etc.
- The dates of reviews and planning meetings that are held in your home or you attend.
- The times and dates of contact visits by parents. If parents are due at one time and come at a different time. Record the two times and the reasons for the difference.
- If a child goes missing even for brief periods
- Any 'sanctions' you might give e.g. stopping pocket money, grounding.
- Health issues and your response e.g. a child refusing to eat, looking very pale, unable to sleep, feeling sick, tummy aches (especially if they are just before school)-**see medical records below**

Carers have the opportunity to attend training on record keeping soon after they start fostering.

### **Try and record something every day, even to note it was a normal or quiet day**

All these are factual occurrences that you will find useful to be able to refer back to. You will however also find it is useful to record other more difficult topics. These will include: -

- The behaviour of a child both good and bad. This may help you and others to see if there is a particular pattern to difficult behaviour.
- The responses of a child to contact. Are children nervous/excited before contact happens is their behaviour much worse afterwards or much better? Does a child sleep well /have nightmares/have disturbed nights? Is there a pattern to them?
- Any comments a child makes about life at home that causes you concern.

**Remember: Never agree to keep secrets for a child. If a child discloses any information to you about past abuse, do not question them further. Accept what they say and seek help from the child's social worker as quickly as possible.** Record what they have said to you as soon as possible after the event.

In certain circumstances foster carers records could also be called upon under the Departments Access to records procedures.

From time to time foster carers are asked to attend court to give evidence in care proceedings. This will seem very daunting but you will be given help, advice and support by the social workers and by our legal representatives. Your diary and notes will be very valuable at this stage. Those foster carers who have given evidence have really helped the children in their care and have proved valuable witnesses because of their day to day knowledge of the children in their care.

If you do go to court both sides of the case will see your notes. It is therefore important for you to record in a factual way. For example, rather than saying

"Ben's mum came- late as usual - on the war path again"

It is better to record

"Ben's mum came half an hour late. Ben at the window, watching for her arrival. When she came in she ignored Ben whilst she complained to me about the latest actions of the social worker, eventually settled down to play with him"

### **Medical records**

In the health care section you will find information about our expectations for recording the medications that you give to a child. These include both prescription and 'over the counter' medications