

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

The Local Authority has a policy that states that children who are looked after **will not be subjected to corporal punishment**. Each time you accept a placement your Foster Carer Agreement form, which you are asked to sign, includes:

"I/we understand that corporal punishment is not permitted by Leicestershire County Council Children and Young People's Service."

What am I forbidden to do?

- (a) Hit a child with any instrument.
- (b) Strike a child with your hand.
- (c) Impose punishments which ridicule a child, e.g. clothes which are too small or inappropriate, pyjamas in the middle of the day.
- (d) Deny a child meals.
- (e) Impose extremes of heat or cold.
- (f) Intimidate or belittle a child.
- (g) Intimidate or belittle a child's birth parents.
- (h) Lock a child in a cupboard or bedroom.
- (i) Stop contact visits or telephone contact with parents as a punishment.
- (j) Send a child to bed unreasonably early.
- (k) Wash mouth out with soap

What can I do?

- (a) Reasonably defend yourself or another child.
- (b) Shout or clap your hands to distract a toddler from dangerous situations.
- (c) Deny sweets, treats or TV for time limited periods. Do not make these punishments last too long, especially for a younger child.
- (d) Send a child out of the room or to his bedroom.
- (e) Stop evening activities or impose an earlier coming in time.

- (f) Impose a specific fine by stopping some of a child's pocket money. (Letting the young person earn back their stopped pocket money can be an effective way to improve behaviour). Obtain payment for a missing or stolen item
- (g) **Ask for help.** The department has access to a number of resources where help can be obtained to manage difficult behaviour. If you do not know if a particular course of action would be approved of seek the social worker's advice. You can ask for their agreement to be put in writing. Be wary of just obtaining a parent's consent. The Department and the parent may differ on what actions are involved in 'good parenting'.

No list is exhaustive, just because an item does not appear on the forbidden list it does not mean that the department would approve of it. Instead the intention is to offer general guidance about what we would consider inappropriate punishment.

We would also encourage you to seek advice before calling the police

Why have a policy?

1. Children who come into care have frequently suffered sexual, physical and emotional abuse. By placing them in foster care, we hope to provide a safe haven away from the abuse they have suffered.
2. Because children in care have suffered as they have, some can appear impervious to pain or punishment, no matter what you do the response is "that didn't hurt me", this can lead to an escalation of punishments before the foster carers realises the situation is out of their control.
1. Many of our foster carers are experienced parents with their own views on what makes a good parent. Though we appreciate and value this experience we are aware that children needing foster care come to your homes as strangers. At first there will not be the same bonds of love and affection that influence your actions with your own children. Initially, there is a lack of knowledge about what punishment is and is not effective with a particular foster child and there is not the same level of control that you have been able to build up over many years with your own children.
4. Recently, many cases have come to light of children being abused while being looked after by Children and Young People's Service. Leicestershire Children and Young People's Services is committed to ensuring the safety of all children who are looked after and has therefore developed procedures for investigating any allegations of abuse in Children's Homes or Foster Homes. Obviously nobody likes having accusations directed at them, and whether they are true or false it can still cause great anxiety. However, you will understand that any suggestion that a child has been ill-treated or neglected must be taken seriously and looked into properly. If you have any concerns about this you can get further advice from your fostering social worker, the Leicestershire Foster Care Association or Fostering Network.

If you need to restrain a child to protect them from self-harm the incident should be recorded and reported to your fostering social worker. Any difficult behaviour should be discussed with the child's social worker. At the child's review a behaviour management approach should be discussed and agreed.