



My parents are thinking about fostering:

A child's guide to foster care





Hello!

Your family is thinking about fostering a child, which is such an exciting time, but we also understand if you're nervous about foster care or aren't quite sure what's involved. That's okay. We're here to help.

We're Fostering People, an independent fostering agency that can help your parents become brilliant foster parents.

This booklet is yours to keep and tells you everything you need to know about fostering a child. From why kids in care need foster homes to the role you'd play in their lives, we should be able to answer all your questions and more. Plus, there are some fun activities to do to help you learn more about fostering along the way! We hope you enjoy reading and look forward to seeing you soon.

All the best,

Oliver & Cassie

Regional Managers



Welcome to the world of fostering

What is foster care?

Foster care is when a child lives with another family when they're not able to live at home. This could be because their mum or dad is poorly and can't look after them, or because there are bad things happening at home that make it unsafe.



Types of fostering

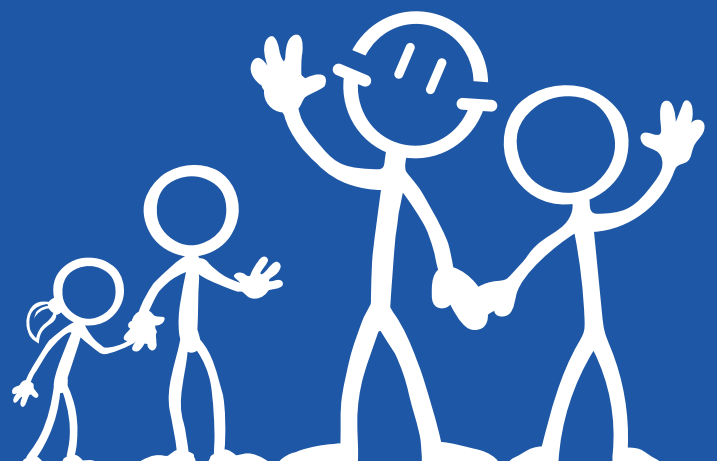
Some children only need looking after for a very short time, while others may need a foster home for several years. Here are the different types of fostering we offer at Fostering People.

- **Short-term** – a child will live with you for any number of days, weeks or months, and it can last up to two years.
- **Long-term** – a child will live with you for more than two years and often until they turn 18 or until they finish further education aged 21.
- **Respite** – this is where you look after a child from another foster family for a couple of nights or weeks, while that foster family takes a break.





- **Emergency** – a child will come to stay with you at short notice for a night or two, or maybe a little longer. It normally happens late at night or early in the morning, due to an emergency situation at home.
- **Parent and child** – a parent and their child will live with you for a number of weeks while your parents teach them how to care for their baby, toddler or young child. It's usually the mum but sometimes the dad will stay too.
- **Siblings** – two or more children will come to live with you who are brothers and/or sisters.
- **Asylum-seeking** – a child who has left their country, normally due to war, without parents or family will come to stay with you.
- **Teenagers** – a young person will come to live with you over the age of 13.
- **Disability** – a child with a learning disability or physical disability will come to stay with you, where your parents will provide extra special care.



Why children in care need foster homes



Sometimes, parents can't properly care for their children for a number of reasons. This means it's better for the kids to go into foster care where they can be looked after and kept safe. Here are some of the reasons why a child might need a foster home:

- They aren't being fed, cleaned or cared for.
- Their parents are addicted to illegal substances.
- They are being hurt by their parents or other family members.
- Their parents are poorly and can't look after them properly.
- Their mum or dad has sadly died, and no other family can take care of them.



Children who are in foster care have likely gone through a lot of trauma. This can leave them feeling very upset, scared or angry, which can make them do or say things you're not used to. What's important to remember is that it's not their fault. They need the love and support of a foster family to help them deal with their emotions and hopefully lead a happy life.



What it's like to be a foster family

It's such a wonderful feeling to be part of a foster family! You're giving a child in need a safe, loving home and helping them through this difficult time. It's different to being a regular family, in that you might have lots of different children come to stay with you, or you might look after one child for a long time. Your parents will be caring for another child alongside you, but that doesn't mean they love you any less. They just want to help other children by giving them the stability and safety they deserve.

Fostering a child does mean that your home life might change a bit. Mainly, you'll be sharing your home with another child who isn't

related to you. This can be hard to imagine but having a foster sibling can be such a fun and rewarding experience. You'll help make them feel part of the family and make life-long memories together.

Your parents might also put in place some new rules to make sure the child is comfortable. You'll be able to have your say though, and whatever is on your mind will be taken seriously. We want you to feel good and excited about being part of a foster family, so always speak to your mum or dad about any worries you have.

Find the Fostering Words!

The words can go up, down, across or diagonal. un
wordsearch. The words can go up, down or diagonal.
Check out what each word means too.

E	T	H	E	R	A	P	E	U	T	I	C	R	E
S	O	A	L	L	O	W	A	N	C	E	S	A	A
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Y	I	W	E	S	T	T	N	C	C	O	I	E	I
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Contact

Stability

Therapeutic

Allowces

Trauma

Care

Nurture

Support

Love

Family

Fostering

Training

Complex Needs



Fostering

Temporary care for children who can't live at home

Stability

Foster care provides kids in care with stability after they've experienced a lot of change

Love

All children deserve to be loved and feel loved

Care

All children need to be cared for by an adult who can give them what they need

Family

All children deserve to experience the love and warmth from a strong family unit

Contact

This is when foster children visit or speak to their birth family while in foster care

Trauma

The impact of a very distressing or disturbing experience

Complex needs

A child with complex needs may have behavioural challenges, learning difficulties or a disability that means they need specialist care

Therapeutic

Fostering in a therapeutic way helps children with complex needs, and teaches foster parents to understand the reasons behind certain behaviour

Support

At Fostering People, we offer lots of support to both our foster parents and the children of foster parents

Allowances

Money your parents will get paid to look after a child and reward their hard work

Training

All foster parents get excellent training to help them be the best at what they do

Nurture

The effects of trauma can last a long time, so foster parents need to nurture children to help them heal



The role you'll play in a foster child's life

You might not think it, but you'll play a big role in a child's life if you decide to become a foster family. Here are some ways you'll help a child enjoy their time with you:

Help them settle in

Joining a new family can be scary! That's why it's important to help a new foster child settle into your home and feel comfortable. You might want to show them your favourite things, show them around the house or play a game together.



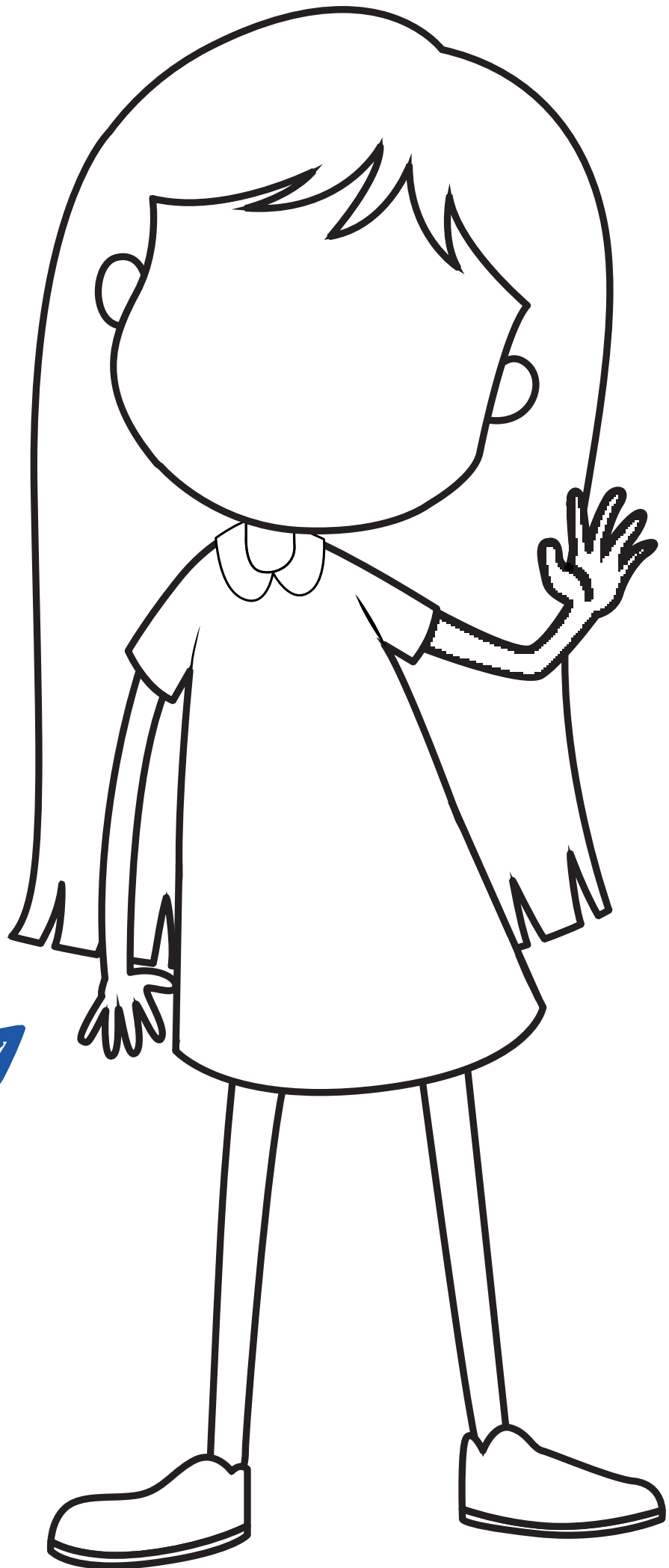
Show them what a loving family is

Many children in care sadly won't know what a loving family looks or feels like. You can help change that by showing them what it means to be part of a caring family. You might help each other with homework, do weekend activities together or cook dinner as a family.



Empathy Exercise

This is a fun exercise to help develop empathy. Empathy is when you imagine what it's like to be someone else and see things from their point of view. What do you think a child might feel when they join a new foster home?



Write down
words in here



The benefits of having a foster sibling

Fostering a child is a really selfless thing to do. You're giving a child in need a safe place to live as well as love and care when they need it most. But there are other benefits too – ones which positively impact you.

- **Learning to share** – sharing is an important life skill for everyone, and it can help you form bonds and friendships. Not only is this great for you, but it also goes a long way in helping foster kids feel welcome and part of a loving family.
- **Greater appreciation** – you're likely to develop a more appreciation for what you have in life after living with children less fortunate.
- **Friendship** – it's fantastic to see foster children being accepted by the children of foster carers, but it's even more special when close friendships are formed. These friendships can last a lifetime too.
- **Empathy** – living with another child who has gone through trauma can teach you a lot about empathy. You can learn to be more understanding and thoughtful of others, which gives you better social skills.
- **Meeting different people** – if your parents decide to foster, you may look after a variety of children from different backgrounds. This can help you become more accepting of others and see difference as a good thing and not something to fear.

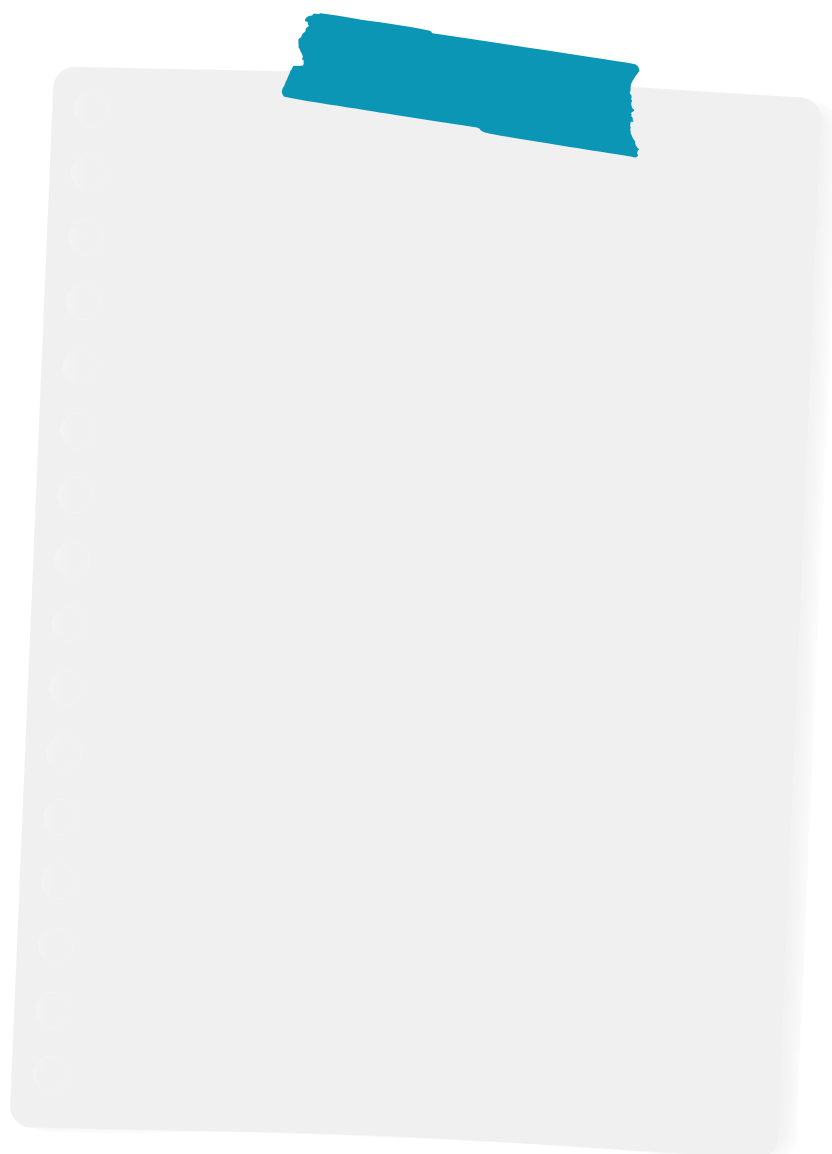


There might be some changes too...

When a foster child comes to live with you, there will be a few changes to get used to. But they're not that bad, really! Some of these include:

- Knocking on bedroom and bathroom doors, and asking permission to go in
- Making sure you're always fully dressed or wearing a dressing gown
- Making sure sharp items are stored away in your bedroom

Can you think of any other changes you might want to speak to your parents about? Write them here.





You never have to share your bedroom. In fact, it's against the rules. Your bedroom is your safe space, and it always will be. Every foster child needs to have a bedroom of their own, so everyone has a private place they can chill out in.

Sharing is caring

You might be wondering about what it's like to live with a foster child and what things you'll be expected to share. Mainly your parents' time and attention and your belongings. When a child first comes to live with you, your parents will probably be very busy, but they will always make time for you. If you're worried fostering a child will leave you feeling left out, talk to your parents about this now – they need to know how you're feeling. At Fostering People, we do everything we can to ensure the children of foster parents feel

included and that they're happy to be part of a foster family.

When it comes to your belongings, you don't have to share anything you don't want to, but it's important to remember that many children in care don't have that much. It's nice to let them borrow toys, games or clothes, as long as they ask permission. And if you want to use any of their stuff, you have to ask permission first too.

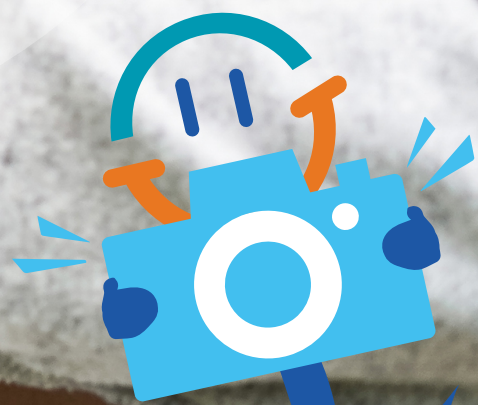
Excited about fostering?

We hope you are! It's a big decision for your parents to make, but they can't make it without you. You're a very important part of the decision making, so you must tell them what you're feeling – good or bad!

At Fostering People, you'll never be alone. Your parents' social worker will always be happy to talk to you and is there to support you as a family. We also hold lots of family events and days out, where you'll be able to meet other young people like yourself whose parents foster, whilst having lots of fun. Your happiness is just as important, so we do everything we can to make sure you feel good about fostering.

Hopefully we'll see you soon to welcome you into the Fostering People family.





fosteringpeople
let's change lives together