

A guide for young family members (9–12)

# Being Part of a Fostering Family



LOCAL COMMUNITY  
**Fostering**  
GREATER LONDON EAST



Funded by  
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The Foster Carer Advisory Group (FCAG) was consulted during the development of this booklet. The FCAG brings together experienced carers from the four partner councils to give advice, feedback, and recommendations to help shape Local Community Fostering's policies and practices.

## Guide for parents How to use this resource

This resource is designed to help children of foster carers aged 9–12 understand fostering in an age-appropriate, honest, and supportive way. It encourages empathy, emotional expression, and a sense of inclusion in the fostering journey. It also provides practical advice and activities to help children process change, differences, and goodbyes.

### 1. Read together

Sit with your child and read the guide together. Pause after each section to check understanding and invite your child to share their thoughts or questions. Older children may want to read independently, but discussing the content together helps deepen understanding.

### 2. Encourage questions

Let your child know it's okay to ask anything, even tricky or sensitive questions. Answer honestly, using language that matches your child's age and maturity. If you don't know the answer, say so and find out together. This builds trust and openness.

### 3. Use the activities

#### Thinking about being away from family:

**Goal:** Help children explore how moving feels and imagine what a foster child might experience.

#### Share and tell:

**Goal:** Help start a conversation about sharing and respect.

#### Who can I talk to?

**Goal:** Help children think about who they approach when they want support.

#### My Foster Family Photo Album:

**Goal:** Help children process goodbyes and celebrate memories. Respect confidentiality—use drawings or symbols if photos aren't appropriate.



### 4. Talk about feelings

Use the explanations in the guide to talk about emotions, both theirs and those of foster children. Ask open-ended questions:

- “How do you feel about having another child in our home?”
- “What might be hard? What might be fun?”

Validate their feelings and reassure them that their place in the family is secure.

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### 5. Keep the conversation going

Revisit the guide whenever a new foster child comes.

Use it to help make fostering routine and ease anxiety.

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### 6. When to seek extra support

If your child seems overwhelmed or withdrawn, talk to your Supervising Social Worker. Ask your fostering service about resources and support groups available for children of foster carers. Seek advice from the Fostering Network.



# Understanding fostering

### What is fostering?

Sometimes, a child's family needs some help, and that means the child can't live at home for a while. So, they stay with another family, called foster carers, who look after them. These carers make sure the child has lots of care and kindness, nice food and a cosy bed. The child stays with foster carers until they can go back home or find a new “forever-family”. That's called fostering.

.....

### Why do some children need to live with a foster family?

Some children can't live with their own families for a while. This might be because their parents are sick, need help, or there are problems at home. Foster carers and families help children stay safe and cared for until it's safe for them to return home or move to a new home.

If you're part of a foster family, you might wonder, “Will I need foster care too?” The answer is no. Foster care is for children whose families need extra help for a while. You're already safe and cared for at home, and your family is helping others by being there for children who need it.

## Activity

# Thinking about being away from family

When you're away from family, it's normal to feel lots of different things. Think about a time when you've been away from your family and how it made you feel. Maybe it was a playdate at a friend's house, a school trip or outing or a stay in hospital. Write down a few lines or draw a picture of some of the feelings and thoughts you had.

### Being away from family made me feel...

.....

.....

.....

### Draw how you feel...



### What happens when a foster child moves away from home?

When children have to leave their home and family for a while, this can be hard and lots of things might be different.

They won't have the things they're used to around them

They might have to change school

They have to get used to a new home

### Can you think of other things?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



# Meeting for the first time

## What happens after the child arrives?

If your family says yes, a helper, called a “social worker” will help bring the child to your home. The foster child will eat meals with you, play with you, and sleep in your home. Your family will take care of them, help them feel welcome, and support them while they’re here.

## How many children might come to stay with our family?

It depends on your family and what the social workers think is best. Sometimes there is just one foster child, and sometimes there may be more.

## How long will they stay for?

Every child’s situation is different. Some stay for a short time, and some stay longer. They stay until it’s safe to go back to their own family or until a new home is found.

## What if I don’t want them to come at all?

It’s okay to feel unsure or even upset about having a foster child come to live with you. Your home is special, and it’s normal to worry about sharing it or how things might change. That feeling doesn’t make you a bad person, it just means you’re having big feelings, and that’s okay. You can take your time, ask questions, and talk to your mum or dad about how you feel.

## Activity

# Share and tell



Think about times you shared things with family or friends. Write or draw a few examples below, like games, books, the TV, snacks, clothes, or a favourite toy.

### One thing I shared:

### Who I shared it with:

### How it made me feel:

.....  
.....

### One thing I shared:

### Who I shared it with:

### How it made me feel:

.....  
.....

Children who come to stay with you will want to bring things that are important to them.

## How do you think they might feel about sharing their things with you?

.....  
.....

# Getting along

## Will the foster child feel like a brother or sister?

Sometimes foster children feel like part of the family, but it can take time. You might become friends or just learn to get along and support each other while they are here.

Often it's best to think of the children as your 'foster brothers and sisters or foster siblings'. This will help everyone to understand how and why children come and go in the family, which is also helpful if your friends might ask.

## Will I need to share my things with them?

You might need to share some things like toys, games, or space. But you will still have your own things that are just for you.

## What if they hog all my stuff or break things?

Sharing is good, but you should still have things that are just yours. If you feel like your foster sibling is taking over, talk to your parents so everyone's things are respected. Sometimes things get broken by accident. If that happens, tell an adult and try to stay calm. Everyone makes mistakes, and adults can help sort it out.

## What if I don't get along with them?

It's normal if you don't get along at first. And it's normal to like different things! You can try each other's favourite games or sometimes play separately. You might even find a new game you both like.

Families are different, and it can take time to get used to someone new. The important thing is to be polite, kind, and patient. Sometimes you'll become friends, and sometimes you'll just learn to respect each other.

## What if they're different from me, or come from another country?

It's totally normal for your foster sibling to be different from you, maybe they're a boy and you're a girl, or maybe they come from another country. Families can have boys and girls together. If you feel awkward, talk to your parents about privacy, like changing clothes or bathroom time.

These differences make families interesting! You can learn new things from each other, and everyone deserves to feel welcome and respected, no matter what they look like or where they're from.

## What if they have different religious practices or beliefs than me?

Sometimes your foster sibling might do things differently because of their religion, like needing to pray in a special place or keeping their hair uncut. If you notice these differences, it's okay to ask questions and learn more. You can talk about your differences and learn from each other. Just remember to be respectful and give them space when they need it.

**"I've learned a lot of things about caring for a baby... giving them cuddles, changing them, and feeding them." (Jemima, child of a foster carer)**



### What if I accidentally disrespect their religion?

Everyone's beliefs are important. If you're not sure about something, you can ask politely or check with an adult. If you make a mistake, just say sorry. What matters is that you try to be kind and learn about each other.

.....

### What if I want to ask them about their mum and dad, or about their life, but they don't want to talk about it?

Imagine if something really sad or confusing happened to you, and someone asked you about it before you were ready to talk. You might feel upset, right? That's how your foster sibling might feel too.

If they don't want to talk about their mum or dad or their life, it's not because they don't like you, it's just that some memories can be really hard.

.....

### What if they don't like our food?

You know how everyone has different favourite foods? Some people love spaghetti, and others don't like it at all. Your foster sibling might be used to eating different things, and that's okay. It doesn't mean they don't like your family, it just means they're still getting used to things.

Maybe you can help your mum or dad think of something they'll enjoy. It's a nice way to show you care, even if you don't eat the same things.

**"I like playing UNO and Dobble with my foster siblings, and we become friends easily."**  
(Oliver, child of a foster carer)



## Activity

# Who can I talk to?



Sometimes, when a foster child comes to live with your family, you might have questions or feel a bit unsure or upset. That's totally okay.

It helps to know who you can talk to when things feel confusing or unfair. Use this activity to think about who you can talk to. Fill this page with names or draw faces of people you can trust.

**You could ask your parents to help you fill this in if you like.**

### Helpful reminder for me:

It's okay to have more than one person to talk to.

### When I feel left out, I will talk to:

.....

.....

### Why I trust them:

.....

.....

**If I'm upset or angry, I will talk to:**



**What they can do to help**

(listen, calm me down, give space):

**If my foster brother or sister says something that worries me, I will talk to:**

**What I might say to them first:**

**When I need someone to listen, I will talk to:**

# Moving on



**"I'm glad we have been able to care for this little girl while she needed foster care."**  
(Jemima, child of a foster carer)

**Will they still see their own family?**

Yes, many foster children still visit or talk to their own family. How often depends on what is safe and best for the child. Your family will help make sure these visits happen if it's right for them.

**Where will they go when it's time for them to leave our home?**

They might go back to their own family if it's safe, or they might move to a new foster family or another safe place. Your family helps make sure their next home is good for them.

**What if the child gets homesick?**

It's normal to miss home. If your foster sibling feels sad, you can be a good friend by inviting them to play or just listening. Grown-ups are there to help too.

**Will I get to see them again?**

Sometimes yes, sometimes no. It depends on what is best for the child and their family. You can talk with your mum or dad or a social worker if you want to know what to expect.

**Activity**

# Foster family album

You might like to make a special photo album of all the children who have stayed with your family. This can help you remember the fun times you had together!

**You can:**

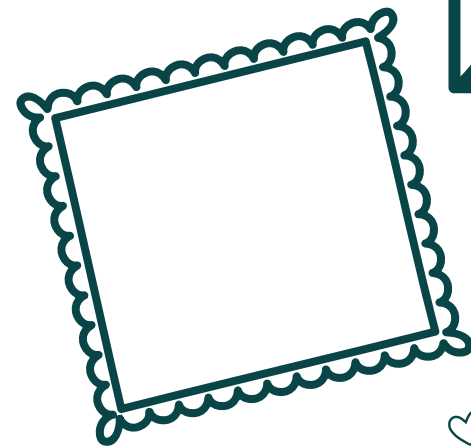
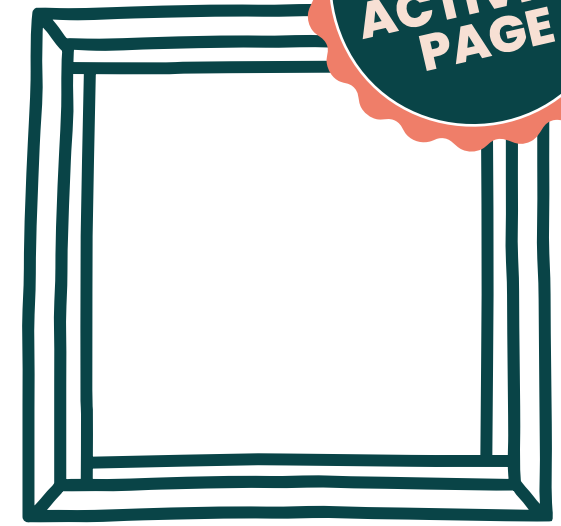
- Add photos or drawings of each child
- Write down fun memories or things you did together
- Decorate the pages with stickers, colours, or doodles
- Think about how you felt and what you learned

It's your way of remembering the children who were part of your family for a while. You can ask an adult to help you if you want!

**Foster child's name:** .....



**Add a memory or write a story**



**Add a photo or drawing of the foster child**



**How did you feel when they arrived?**

**How did you feel when they left?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

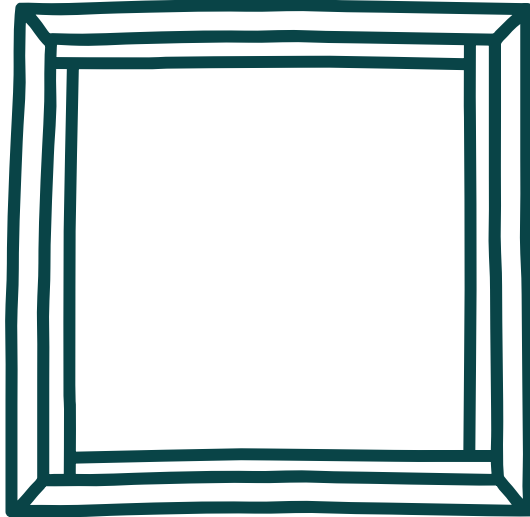
**Write how you felt here**



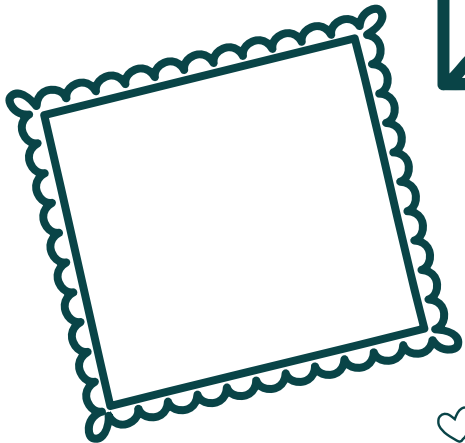
Foster child's name: .....



Add a memory or write a story



Add a photo or drawing of the foster child



How did you feel when they arrived?

How did you feel when they left?

Write how you felt here

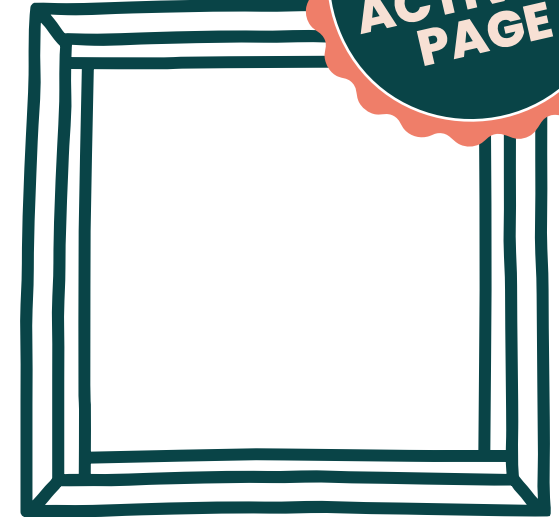


.....  
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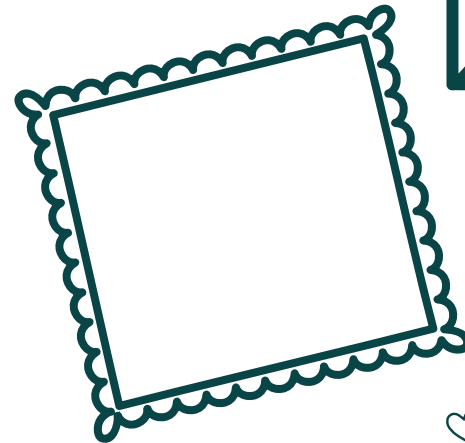
Foster child's name: .....



Add a memory or write a story



Add a photo or drawing of the foster child



How did you feel when they arrived?

How did you feel when they left?

Write how you felt here



.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Start your fostering journey today.**

**Whether you're looking for more information or you're ready to apply, we're here to help.**

 020 8496 3437

 [hello@localcommunityfostering.co.uk](mailto:hello@localcommunityfostering.co.uk)

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