



**Caldecott
Fostering**



CHILDREN & YOUNG PERSONS GUIDE

Helping Children Build a Future



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WELCOME TO CALDECOTT

Welcome to Caldecott Fostering. We hope that this book will be helpful and answer some questions you might have about living with a foster family.

If there is anything in this book that you don't understand, we or your foster family will help to explain things to you. No question is a silly question, so please do not worry about asking.

WHAT IS FOSTERING?

Foster Carers look after children who need somewhere to live for a while that is not their own family. Sometimes children stay for a few days, sometimes longer. You may hear this being called "going into care".

Fostering is your Foster Parents job. They look after children who are going through a difficult time leaving their own families. There can sometimes be other children living with your Foster Parents. They can be other fostered children, like you, or their own children. It might be only you that lives with your Foster Parents.

No matter how long you live with them, you will always be treated as part of the family.

WHO ARE CALDECOTT FOSTERING?

Caldecott Fostering are people who find Foster Parents for children and teenagers who need somewhere to live. We are an agency that employs people to look after and care for children and young people.

Caldecott Fostering has Supervising Social Workers who work in the fostering team and their job is to help Foster Carers to look after you.

They will visit and ring your Foster Carers to check everything is okay and they will come and see you every few weeks. Our fostering team and carers want to provide you with the best care possible. This means that to look after you the best we can, we need you to agree to be looked after. This means you have to be okay with being in a foster home and agree to let us know if things start to feel not okay, so we can all work together to make it better.

We know children and young people can feel lots of different things about being in care and this is normal. Nobody expects you to tell them everything you are thinking and feeling, but if you are unhappy or upset, worried or anxious we would like you to tell us so that we can work something out together.

Caldecott also run training days for Foster Carers to make sure that they are the very best at their job. We can also provide training for children and teenagers, such as First Aid, teaching you about the dangers of alcohol and drugs or how to be safer online.

We also plan Holiday Clubs and Activities all year round, like parties, BBQs, picnics, dog walks and lots of others. You will always be invited to join in with us. We will make sure you are introduced to other people at these, so don't worry if you don't know anyone yet.

Nobody expects you to tell them everything you are thinking and feeling, but if you are unhappy or upset, worried or anxious we would like you to tell us so that we can work something out together

MOVING IN

Your Foster Carers will welcome you into your new home, you should feel safe. They will understand that you may need some space or time on your own to settle in and they will be supportive of this. Remember that it will be important for them to know that you are happy in their home and that they are providing you with the things that you need and like. Some things will take time to get used to and everyone will have to change a small part of their own routine, it is about working together and talking things through.

YOUR BEDROOM

Your bedroom should be warm and welcoming, it should have space for you to store your clothes and other personal belongings. Remember although this is your space you should still take care of it. Keep it clean and tidy and take pride in having a nice place to relax.

HOUSE RULES

We encourage our Foster Carers to have some house rules for everyone in the home. These will be things like, what time you return home, knocking on doors, speaking to each other respectfully etc. Your Foster Carers will discuss these with you and you can express your views and feelings. Everything should be open to discussion, but you should respect your foster family's views as they will respect yours.

WHAT IF I AM NOT HAPPY WITH SOMETHING?

If there is something which you are not happy about and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with your carer you can speak to your Social Worker or the Caldecott Supervising Social Worker. Caldecott will ask you to complete feedback forms from time to time – be honest, we will keep them confidential and we WILL read them and take action where needed.

Some more information on what you can do on page 9 and 10.

WHAT DOES CALDECOTT KNOW ABOUT ME?

In order to look after you properly, Caldecott and your Foster Parents need to know a lot about you. These are some of the things that they will know about you:-

- *Your birthday*
- *Your likes & dislikes*
- *How you are feeling*
- *Any big changes that happen in your life*
- *How you are getting on at school*
- *Information about your health & general well being*
- *What is going on for you*

We keep this information very safely on our computer systems. Getting to know you better will help us to make you happy and safe. If you want to see this information, you can ask your supervising Social Worker, Foster Parents or your Independent Reviewing Officer.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Here is an explanation of some of the words & phrases you might hear:-

Foster Parent/Foster Carer – A person who looks after children and teenagers who cannot live with their own family

Contact – When you hear adults talk about ‘contact,’ they are talking about when you meet up with, speak to or write to your family. At Caldecott we are trying to call this what it is - for example a visit, phone call, facetime - rather than call your family time ‘contact.’

Care Plan – Your Social Worker will write up a plan for your care while you are being fostered. This plan says how your needs can be met and how we can help you to feel happy and healthy

Supervising Social Worker (SSW) – These Social Workers create a link between the Foster Parent and your own Social Worker. We want to make sure that your Foster Parents have everything they need to be able to look after you. You will see your SSW often. They will visit your foster home to chat with your Foster Parents and make sure everything is going well.

Placement – When you hear adults talk about a foster ‘placement,’ they are talking about when a child goes to stay with a foster family. At Caldecott we talk about going to stay with a foster family, rather than using the word ‘placement.’

Looked After Child Review – When you hear adults talk about a Looked After Child review (or sometimes they’ll say LAC review) - they are talking about a meeting where everyone involved with a child who is in care gets together to listen to you about your wishes and feelings. Your review meeting is chaired by your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO.)

Placement Planning Meeting – This meeting will usually happen within 7 days of you moving in with your foster family and it is likely that you will be asked to attend. This meeting helps explain the care plan and day to day arrangements, and you can ask questions about things you don’t understand.

Social Worker – Your Social Worker works for your local authority (the area that you are from). The law says that your Local Authority has to look after you and make sure that you are safe. Your Social Worker’s job is to listen to you and help you make the right decisions.



WHY DO I HAVE TO LIVE WITH A FOSTER FAMILY?

Children live with Foster Carers for all sorts of reasons, but it's not because of anything you have done wrong. When a child cannot live with their own family, they can live in a foster home for a while. Moving into a new and different family is not easy, but your very own Social Worker and your Foster Carers want to make sure you are in a safe, caring and happy home.

It is important to remember that just because you are in foster care it does not mean that your family do not love you.

You should never feel like you are different or unusual because you are living in a foster family. There are over 65,000 others just like you who are currently living with Foster Parents in the UK.

YOUR FOSTER PARENTS

Your Social Worker will talk to you about the Foster Family they have found for you. They may also show you a booklet that has photographs inside of your Foster Family and their home. If possible you will get the chance to meet the family before you move in with them. Your Social Worker will usually try to organise a visit to the family home, perhaps for tea.

This may happen several times before you move in with your new Foster Family. This will help you get to know each other a little better and may help you to feel less worried about the move. When going to live with your Foster Family your Social Worker will take you to your Foster Carer's home and where possible will try and make sure that you have all of your things that you need with you. Your Foster Carer will show you around the house and introduce you to everyone who lives there. You will be able to ask any questions you like about your Foster Family and their home.

While you are staying with your Foster Family there will be lots of chances to have fun. This could be with activities such as days out, picnics, swimming, dancing, going out with friends or going to the cinema. You could tell your Foster Family the things you like to do and maybe even try something new.

What about school? You may be worried that you have to move school. If possible your Social Worker will try and make sure you can stay at the same school. Everyone will make sure you are asked what you want and will help you if there are any changes. Your Foster Carer will make sure that things are going well for you at school.

YOUR SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER

Your Foster Carers have their own Social Worker to help them. This person is called a Supervising Social Worker. You will probably see the Supervising Social Worker quite often

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because they will visit you and your Foster Carer regularly. The Supervising Social Worker will be talking to your Social Worker and to people concerned with your health and your education. This is so that everyone knows what is happening and what you need.

If you have any questions or just want to have a chat, you can ask the Supervising Social Worker when you see them – or you can call or text them if you like.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Your Social Worker will ensure that your family or anyone important to you know how you are and that you are safe. You may stay in touch with members of your family in different ways, this could be visits, phone calls, video calls or letters. It is important to remember that this has to be arranged by your Social Worker and you should tell them how you feel about staying in touch with your family.



Your Foster carers will support you to stay in touch with your family and you can discuss your feelings with them. This will help them to support you and make sure that your Social Worker is aware of how you are feeling.

Depending on your age and situation you may be able to choose how and when you would like to stay in touch with your family. Discuss this with your Foster Carers and Social Worker so everyone is aware of what is happening, where you are and who you are with.

EDUCATION

We must make sure that all children and young people have a school or college place. If you do not have one, then your Social Worker and Foster Carers will be working hard to find a place in a school for you.

Education is important and moving into foster care can be disruptive for you but you must try to maintain a strong attitude towards your education. Your teacher will know that you are looked after and you can also speak to them about any issues or things which are upsetting you.

A teacher or a member of staff from your school may also attend your review. You should get as much help as possible to help you achieve your long-term plans, this may be to study at college or university or an apprenticeship, whatever your plans are if you do not feel supported then make sure you raise your concerns.

Aim high and stay motivated!

HEALTH

You may be asked to see a doctor or nurse when you go to live with your foster family, this is to make sure you are healthy. This is called a Health Assessment and you will be asked to have this once a year. Your Foster Carers have to register you with a GP, Optician and Dentist, you may have lots of appointments to attend when you move to your new foster home, it will benefit you to ensure that you are healthy and being well cared for.

Eat Well:

Your Foster Carers will provide you with a healthy and balanced diet. There may be some foods you have not eaten before – TRY THEM, you may like them. There are lots of benefits of eating healthy, you stay in shape, sleep better and have more energy.

Exercise:

Exercise is very important, and your Foster Carers will encourage you to exercise. This could be by joining a club, gym or group (like football, swimming or karate), or by walking to school, having a kick around in the park or riding your bike. Try to find an activity you can do after school – playing computer games does not count!

TALKING ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL

It's not good to hold in your feelings. Try to speak to someone you trust (your Foster Parents, Social Worker, a teacher or Supervising Social Worker) about how you are feeling whether you are sad, angry, confused or happy!

They will always try to listen to you and mostly act upon your views, wishes and feelings. If you can't have what you have asked for, we promise to always explain why.

Everything that has happened to you and all the changes in your life might be a bit confusing to understand but no one will mind if you ask them to explain exactly what is happening and why.

It is important that we know how you are feeling so that we can work together to make the right plans for you.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE FEELING SAD

We understand that leaving your own family and moving in with a new one is very upsetting, and everything is different and strange. But remember that everyone is here to listen and help you to settle in as quickly as possible.

Your Foster Parents want you to feel happy in their home and will help with any problems you may have even if the problem is about living with them.

If you have been living with your new foster family for a while and you are still not happy you should have a chat with your SSW or Social Worker. They will visit your foster family's home regularly to check how things are going and they will ask you how you are feeling. It is important to be honest about this.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED

Bullying includes such things as receiving threats, name calling, pinching, hitting, pulling hair or other types of physical intimidation or action which deliberately upsets you.

There are many types of bullies and many types of bullying. At the back of this booklet there are some contact details in case you are being bullied or know someone who is being bullied. Children can also feel scared of cyber bullying. Cyber bullying is any form of bullying which takes place online or through smartphones and tablets. – We have contact details for cyber bullying too, at the back of this booklet.

If you feel that you are being bullied at school, please talk to a teacher you like. If you feel that you are being bullied, you can also tell your Foster Parents, Supervising Social Worker or your Local Authority Social Worker. They can really help you.

There are other agencies that can help you such as Childline on: 0800 11 11. There are more names and contact numbers of people who can help you with any worries or problems that you may have at the end of this booklet.

Sometimes it is good to be able to talk to someone who is not in your foster family or who works for Caldecott Fostering. One of the people you can speak to is called an advocate.

WHAT IS AN ADVOCATE?

Sometimes it is good to be able to talk to someone who is not in your foster family or who works for Caldecott Fostering. One of the people you can speak to is called an advocate. They can help you to say the things that you want to say or when you want to do something that you think might upset somebody.

An advocate can help you to make a complaint or any other representation about your care, for example issues around contact with birth families or placement moves. They can accompany you to reviews or other meetings and ensure that your voice is heard in a way that the Foster Carer is unable to do.

An advocate can:

- *Come to meetings with you and help you in saying the things you would like to say*
- *Help if you are unhappy about the way you are being treated or you are worried about plans being made for you*
- *Help you to understand what people are talking about in meetings*
- *Make sure people listen to what you have to say*
- *Give you advice and information about your rights*

We have included some advocate contact details at the end of this booklet.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FEEL LIKE NO ONE IS LISTENING

Your Independent Reviewing Officer (you will hear people call them 'IRO') runs your review meeting and is responsible for making sure that your Local Authority Social Worker and Caldecott are all doing what the law says they should and are listening to your wishes, opinions and feelings.

You can ask to see your IRO at any time. You do not have to wait for a review meeting.

Your Foster Parents and Social Worker can all help you to get in contact with your IRO if you wish to speak to them.

If you still feel that you are not being listened to you can make a complaint. The next page in this guide will tell you how to do this.



HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

If you are unhappy with something and you don't feel like you are being listened to, you can make a complaint by contacting us by letter, phone or on the website. On the website you can tell us about your complaint by filling in the 'Get in touch' section and clicking on 'send.' Please remember that you will not get in trouble for telling us if you are feeling unhappy. We will look into your complaint and let you know what we have done.

Our office address is:

Caldecott Fostering
Caldecott House
Hythe Road
Smeeth
Ashford
TN25 6SP

Or you can call us on: 01303 760430

www.caldecottfostering.co.uk

HELPFUL CONTACTS

NSPCC HELPLINE: 0808 800 5000

CHILDLINE: 0800 1111

VOICE FOR THE CHILD IN CARE: 0808 800 5792

ADVICE & ADVOCACY SERVICE FOR CHILDREN (NYAS): 0808 808 1001

OFSTED: 0300 123 1231

Ofsted office address
Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street
Manchester,
M1 2WD
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

THE OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER: 0800 528 0731

Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT
advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk



HOW CAN WE MAKE CALDECOTT FOSTERING BETTER

Share your ideas for activities with
your supervising social worker!

Join our young people's panel - they help us make
important decisions about Caldecott and they
interview people who want to become foster carers

CALDECOTT FOSTERING

01303760430

www.caldecottfostering.co.uk