



**Children of
Foster Carers
Survival Guide**



Why do children go into foster care?

There are many factors that may lead to children being fostered.

Children may come into care due to illness, relationship problems, family breakdown, or perhaps a situation where the child's welfare is threatened.

Many children who require foster care have experienced some degree of neglect, and/or physical, emotional or sexual abuse. All of them will have experienced loss and separation from their birth family.

Even if the child presents a happy and smiling front, their past experiences will almost certainly have an effect on their behaviour and development.

Who are Eastern Fostering Services?

Eastern Fostering Services (EFS) work with children and young people who can't live with their own families for lots of different reasons.

We approve people to be Fostering Families

These are people like your parents, who want to help children and young people.

EFS is there to support you and your parents while fostering.

They are here to help, if you need!

Meet the EFS Team....



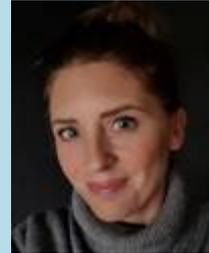
**El – Registered
Manager**



**Sandra – Senior
Supervising Social
Worker/16+
coordinator**



Jo – Practice Manager



**Emma – Senior
Supervising
Social Worker**



**Sam – Supervising
Social Worker**



**Sian – Supervising
Social Worker**



**Lizzy – Supervising
Social Worker**



**Alex –
Supervising
Social Worker**



**Emily – Placements
Officer**



**Sarah –
Operations and
Administrative
Manager**



**Rachel – Fostering
Administrator**



**Yvette –
Fostering
Administrator**



**Angela –
Fostering
Administrator**



**Paul – Participation
Worker**



Lucy – Marketing



**Chris Dingley, Agency
Decision Maker**



Have Your Say

As part of the foster carer assessment process, the social worker will have a session with you and any other children in the family on their own which gives them the best opportunity to say what they think about the idea of your parents fostering.

Once they have been approved as foster carers you can still voice your opinions and any concerns to your parents or to the EFS team.

Your opinions are very important.



Your Role

Fostering involves everyone in the household and relies on working together as a team, both within the family and the wider fostering agency to make it a success.

As with all families, there will be arguments and disagreements; however fostering families also have lots of fun; make positive friendship and fond memories.

You can be a great role model for any foster child that comes into your family whether they are older or younger than you.

How will I know what to do?

It is pretty likely the child or young person you are fostering won't have exactly the interests as you and your own family, so why not sit down and ask them what they are interested in.

Make them feel welcome as they will be just as nervous if not more nervous about meeting you than you are of meeting them.

Issues you might face

Your privacy may be invaded, belongings may be borrowed without your permission, and you may even feel that they have had less of your attention from your parents because they are foster carers.

You will also have to cope with the uncertainty of fostering; the child that comes to live with you that has become their friend may suddenly be able to return home. You will almost certainly miss them....even if the foster child had caused them some troubles!

It is normal to feel upset, confused, and alone or even angry, change is a big thing and its best to talk about what is going on with you.

Just remember **you are not alone** your parents are going through the same thing and there are other children like you who are also children of foster carers.



Frequently asked questions

How do I cope with sharing my parents?

- Tell your parents how you feel.
- Try and remember that you are with your parents - they are not.
- Ask your parents to give you a set time when they talk just to you.
- It is important to both include the foster child and take time on your own with your parents.
- Try and understand why a foster child may need extra attention.

How do I cope with difficult behaviour?

- Stay calm. Don't get annoyed or shout.
- Don't try to deal with it on your own.
- Go and talk it through with an adult.
- Try to ignore what is happening.
- Try to include them in things you do.
- Ask advice about dealing with behaviour that occurs a lot

What should I do if a foster child bullies me?

- Don't try and deal with this yourself - share this problem with somebody you trust such as your mother/father.
- Sometimes it's OK for you to ask for a child to be moved on.
- It's important to show them it's not getting to you - even if it is.

How do I cope when a foster child moves on?

- Remember at the start of the process, that the foster child will probably move on at some stage.
- Make sure you are given information about the plan before and during placements.
- Make sure that you're able to say 'goodbye' properly.
- Sometimes you may feel happy that a child has moved on, this is natural if the child has caused problems for you.

What can I do if my things get broken or stolen by a foster child?

- Talk to the child about house rules such as access to bedrooms.
- If it only happens once it might just be that they are going through a bad patch and it would be good to just accept their apologies and leave it there.
- Try and confront them nicely.

What should I do if a child tells me about something bad that happened to them?

- Ask your parents for clear instructions about information sharing.
- Don't keep it secret with the child – tell your parents.
- Try to get the foster child to understand that it's best to tell an adult they can trust.
- Offer support to the foster child - listen and remember that it might be very hard for them to say what they are telling you and they may never have told anyone else.

- Don't tell any of your friends.
- Try not to look shocked or ask questions - just listen.



What does the Law have to do with it?

Every child that comes in to foster care is covered under some part of the Children Act 1989. This means that the Local Authority has certain duties and responsibilities to each child. This will affect contact and the length of time the child can be in care and who has responsibility over them.

Section 20 Accommodated

An Accommodated Child is looked after under Section 20 of the Children Act. This is a voluntary arrangement between the local authority and the parents (or the young person if they are aged over 16). The parents retain full parental responsibility.

Section 31 Full Care Order

Under section 31 of the Children Act 1989, children's services acquire parental responsibility and become a legal parent alongside the parent/guardian but can override parent's wishes if necessary.

Section 38 Interim Care Order

An interim care order places the child in care on a temporary basis whilst the family is assessed and until the court can make a final

decision about what is best for the child. The interim care order has the same effect as a final care order in giving the local authority parental responsibility to make decisions on your behalf.



You have Rights too...

- To express my opinions and be listened to.
- To tell my parents if I feel a particular child is too difficult (it's my home as well, after all).
- To share my feelings with my family or with a local support group.
- To have advice about sorting out problems regarding fostering.



What Other Children of Foster Carers have Said

“Fostering has both been rewarding and difficult at times.”

“I think sometimes having someone younger to speak to for her is good as we can help her with some things mum cannot.”

“Initially it took time to adjust.”

“ I do worry sometimes about my mum, but when things are discussed there is often a reason for behaviour even if there is not always a remedy as sadly some things are way out of our hands as foster carers.”

“He would test the boundaries as much as he could.”

“My foster brother is now truly a part of our family.”

“The hardest part of fostering so far has been the few times I had to watch our foster child hit, punch and kick my mum.”

“ We have your banter, and he annoys the hell out of me sometimes, but it wouldn't be natural if he didn't.”

“I had various discussions with the EFS social worker to see if I was really ok with fostering”

“Us, as a family unit, gave him structure, routine, stability and opportunities.”

Useful Information

Childline:

This is a helpline and a website that gives you advice on all sorts of things that might be troubling you. Contact them on:

Tel: 0800 1111

Eastern Fostering Services:

Unit 1E, The Gattinettes

Hadleigh Road

East Bergholt

Suffolk

CO7 6QT.

Tel: 01206 299775

Email: team@easternfosteringsservices.com

Ofsted:

Ofsted checks all of the work that EFS and its' fostering families does. Contact them on:

Tel: 0300 123 1231 or text to 60085

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Post: Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate

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