

Parent and Child Foster Placement Parent Handbook



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Introduction

This is a welcome pack for you as a parent if you are starting in a parent and child foster care placement with Nurture Fostering. Please read this booklet which will provide you with some information about your rights and responsibilities.

Nurture Fostering is a private organisation with skilled and experienced foster parents who have been asked by Social Services to provide you with an opportunity to parent. This booklet gives a brief explanation of what a placement includes, expectations about you as a parent and what Nurture Fostering will do to support you. It also contains simple explanations of the legislation (law) that professionals use in making plans for your child and you.

About Nurture Fostering Limited

Guide for parents and their baby living with foster parents.

Nurture Fostering is an organisation that provides a home for your child and you. This is sometimes referred to by professionals as a placement. Our work is with children and therefore our primary responsibility is for the child that maybe you and your child or just your child.

Your child will have a social worker that helps plan and make decisions with you about their care and future. This work is either through a voluntary arrangement which may include a child protection plan or because your child is subject to a court order. Nurture Fostering will provide a social worker (known as Supervising Social Worker) to help the foster parent give parents the right support for their child's care.

For example they will support you with:

- Establishing routines
- Feeding patterns
- Sleeping
- Bathing and stimulation
- Financial money management
- Budgeting
- Observations and feedback to enable you to support your child

Our foster parents also help parents learn or improve their skills and confidence to parent.

We want you to enjoy being a parent and working with the foster parents. (If you are not a care leaver or over 18 you may not have a social worker, but you might have a link worker from other services such as housing, community services etc), therefore it is important that all the professionals and people that work with you and your child talk to you and to each other so they can work together for the placement to have a positive outcome.

Sometimes you may not agree with what is happening or the decisions that are being made, however the focus of any placement and plan must be what is in the best interests of the child and not the adult. Please talk to us and your child's Social Worker straight away if you are unclear or unsure about the plan for you or for your child.

Your child will have a placement agreement or care plan that lists what the foster parent, professionals and parents expectations and tasks are. This is set within measurable timescales of review dates. These are sometimes known as placement meeting and **Child Looked After Reviews**. These meetings are chaired by someone independent, which means they can look objectively and

without judgement at what is best for your child. You will be expected to attend these meetings and participate.

Nurture Fostering will:

- Provide a safe, stable home where you and your child can live.
- Help and support you to meet your child's Care Plan.
- Encourage you to learn routines that support your child's development.
- Help you make safe, consistent choices and decisions for your child.
- Challenge you and say if something is wrong and offer suggestions.
- Help you make links with the Health Visitor, GP and community groups.
- Listen to what you have to say.
- Help you to feel confident about parenting.
- Make sure our foster parents have the right support to help you.
- Ensure that you and the foster parents know who to contact if something is wrong.
- Signpost you to your rights and responsibilities.

What else do we do

- Contribute to assessments through daily monitoring and record keeping.
- Assist to protect your child if you are unable to manage.
- Talk to you and Social Workers about any worries and concerns.
- Talk to Social Workers about what has been good.
- Attend meetings and reviews.
- Respect your race, religion, sexual identity, culture and belief systems.
- Respect your right to privacy.

What we do not do

- Provide babysitting unless agreed in advance.
- Be a parent to your child.

What we cannot do

- Make legal decisions about your child.
- Remove your child from your care.
- Lie or cover up any mistakes you may have made.
- Stop you from leaving, but we would have to contact the Social Worker and police immediately and share our concerns.

Who's rights?

In a foster placement the rights of the child come first. If it is a baby the same rights apply but an adult will advocate this. The prominent piece of legislation (law) that informs and underpins all work with children is the **Children Act 1989**. This Act sets out how Local Authorities (Department of Children Schools and Families/Social Services) help children and young people and their families.

You may have encountered this Act before through financial assistance with food vouchers, heating or nursery places. These services are known as **Child in Need**.

Sometimes the Local Authority Social Workers are worried a child is at risk or is likely to suffer significant harm. This type of intervention is known as **Child Protection**. A multi-agency decision is made along with a plan to help protect the child and lists what parent/s must do to keep their child safe. It might be that you need extra help with being a parent so part of your child's plan was to come into a parent and child foster placement. If you have agreed to this then your child is placed in

care as part of a voluntary accommodation. Sometimes concerns are so severe that a **Care Order** through the Court is sought for a child. A Care Order means the Local Authority (Social Services) can share Parental Responsibility and make significant decisions about your child which could include long term permanency planning.

You can find out more information about the Children Act at the website address below or Nurture Fostering can provide you with a paper copy:

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts>

You may hear Social Workers or solicitors talk about the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**. This is a universal set of rights for Children and Young People aged 17 and under. It came into force in the UK in 1992. There are over 40 substantive rights. One you might hear is the 'Best Interests of the Child'. This means adults must do what is best for children and think about how decisions made will affect children. Other areas of help are special protection measures and assistance. A child's right is to develop their personalities, abilities and talents to the fullest potential and to grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding.

All of the rights in the Convention apply to all children and young people without discrimination. Further information at the website address below or Nurture Fostering can provide you with a paper copy.

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters>

Parental Rights

You may also hear people make reference to the **Human Rights Act** which came into force for the UK in 2000. This Act recognises that some rights and freedoms are so important and fundamental that they have been written down and that Governments should safeguard and promote them. The Act gives a clear legal statement of a person's basic rights and freedoms, but an individual's rights must be balanced against another's (fairness and protection). However the Act is not straight forward to decipher. Rights are split into categories of absolute, limited and qualified rights such as 'the right and respect for family life'. If you feel your rights have been breached then you can seek legal advice. More information can be accessed at the website address below, or Nurture Fostering can provide you with a paper copy:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/docs>

You can ask the child's Social Worker about areas that might affect you such as:

- Benefits
- Education
- Employment
- Health
- Hobbies
- Holidays
- Independent
- Visitors
- Marriage
- Medical cards
- Name and changes
- Passports

You may also want to get advice about sex and sexuality, contraceptives, HIV, Aids and STD's, smoking, drugs and substance misuse, solicitors etc. Your foster parents or social worker can also support you in these areas.

Have your say compliments and complaints

If the complaint is about decisions or plans made about your child this must be put to the child's Social Worker or their respective department from the Local Authority. Most Local Authorities have a customer relations officer based at a main office like a Town or County Hall. Your Social Worker will be able to advise with this process.

If you want to make a complaint about Nurture Fostering please contact the Registered Manager

Nurture Fostering
The Old Fire Station
340 Lewisham High Street
London
SE13 6LE

020 8690 9012

info@nurture-fostering.co.uk

For details on how the complaint process works, please refer to the TRIX System accessed via our website www.nurture-fostering.co.uk

You can also contact Ofsted. This is a government organisation with which Nurture Fostering is registered with. Their details are as follows:

Ofsted

Ofsted Chief Inspector
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

0300 123 1231

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Children's Commissioner for England

Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

0800 528 0731

Info.request@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

We also want to hear your good comments. These can be made via our website www.nurture-fostering.co.uk

Parent and Child Handbook

Please use these pages to record information about your child and the professionals who are supporting you.

My Name	
Date of Birth	
My Address	

Baby's Name	
Date of Birth	

Any other supportive friend or relative		
Name		
Address		

My Foster Parent's Name	
Address	
Telephone No.	
Email Address	

My Social Workers Name	
Telephone No	
Out of Hours Emergency No.	

My Foster Parent's Social Worker (Supervising Social Worker)	
Name	

Telephone No	020 8690 9012
Email	info@nurture-fostering.co.uk
Website	www.nurture-fostering.co.uk
Health Visitors Name	
Address	
Telephone	
Mobile	
Email	

Midwife Name	
Address	
Telephone	
Mobile	
Email	

Guardian & Litem Name	
Address	
Telephone	
Mobile	
Email	

Other Important Information