



# Helping a Child to Settle into your Home

**OWNER**

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Brighter Futures for Children: Fostering  
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## STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

Fostering Services National Minimum Standards (England) 2011:

- [Standard 1 - The child's wishes and feelings and those significant them.](#)
- [Standard 5 - Matching the child with a placement that meets their assessed need.](#)
- [Standard 11 - Preparation for a placement.](#)

Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care:

- [Standard 1 - Understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people.](#)
- [Standard 2 - Understand your role as a foster carer.](#)
- [Standard 4 - Know how to communicate effectively.](#)

### RELATED GUIDANCE

- [Understanding Placement Plans and Looked After Reviews](#)

All children will have been given information about you, your family and your home before they are placed with you, unless they are arriving in an emergency. They may have visited you before the decision to place them with you was taken and may have had an introduction period where they were able to express their views about living with you. Sometimes children will move some of their belongings throughout the introduction period or start decorating their new bedroom with you.

This will hopefully help in settling a child, but all children will cope differently with either coming into care or moving from one home to another as it is a very sensitive time for them and yet another new situation to adjust to.

Carefully read the information given to you from the child's social worker and ask them if there is anything you are not clear about before the child arrives.

It is important that you are warm and welcoming, calm and reassuring whilst also introducing some ground rules before discussing clear boundaries and expectations. If the child is withdrawn give them space but also offer times when they can talk to you or spend time with you. Perhaps offer to go for a walk or do an activity with them, depending on their age.

Some children may be on their best behaviour (which is often referred to as the "honeymoon" period) and be scared to show how they feel in case you send them away.

Your supervising social worker is there to help you understand and interpret different behaviours - remember, never take it personally, it is rarely about you! Discuss the difficulties as they happen and keep a record!

Your own family may also take time to adjust. Your children may feel a little left out because some of your time and focus is given to another child. Talk to all children in the household about the child in care to help them adjust to the change.

It will be useful to look at all this during the Placement Planning Meeting and when you are developing your generic and Individual Safer Care Plans.

The following information will be useful and should be gathered from the child's social worker and parents where possible

- What the child prefers to be called.
- What do they like to do?
- If there is a very young child, do they have a dummy or a comforter - like a teddy or a blanket? What is it called? Older children may have a comforter but may be embarrassed about anyone knowing.
- Clothes are important, if they bring any with them don't throw them away, use them at first and then make sure you keep them as they are part of the child's memories.
- If the child is old enough, let them choose what to wear as long as it remains appropriate
- A child may be uncomfortable bathing or undressing in front of a stranger – be sensitive to their privacy and find out what their self-care needs are.
- People who are important to the child and their relations to them, including friends.
- Food - likes, dislikes, routine, special religious or cultural preferences
- Bedtime routines.
- Skincare.
- Pets, likes and dislikes and fears.
- Hobbies and interests, clubs and activities.
- Fears.
- Medical information and allergies.
- Any communication difficulties.
- Any specific equipment e.g. if the child has a disability.