

Developing a Safer Caring Plan

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

Fostering Services National Minimum Standards (England) 2011:

- [Standard 3 - Promoting Positive Behaviour and Relationships.](#)
- [Standard 4 - Safeguarding Children.](#)
- [Standard 6 - Promoting Good Health and Wellbeing.](#)

Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care:

- [Standard 2 - Understand your role as a foster carer.](#)
- [Standard 6 - Keep children and young people safe from harm.](#)
- [Standard 7 - Develop yourself.](#)

Introduction: Creating a Safer Caring Plan for your family, including your foster child, involves identifying and addressing potential risks in your family's behaviour. The plan should ensure that safer care becomes a natural part of everyday life. It is important to involve the entire family in developing and reviewing the plan, and to communicate it to regular visitors and the child's social worker.

The **family safer care plan** will be general and can form part of the early fostering training and thinking through the implications for the whole family on caring for someone else's child.

When children come to live with you, you and the child/ren will consider your general safer care plan and, where appropriate, together build an **individual safer care plan for the child** as they will also have their view of what makes them feel safe and secure. Your Supervising Social Worker and the child's social worker will support you with the development of the plan to make sure that all affected will feel comfortable and safe.

A Safer Caring Plan will consider the following:

- ✓ **The names you use:** Encourage children to call you by your first name to avoid confusion and respect their own family background.
- ✓ **Physical Contact and Showing Affection:** Demonstrate care and affection through safe physical contact, respecting boundaries and avoiding reinforcing sexual stereotypes. Always ask children for consent before engaging in physical affection.
- ✓ **Playing:** Encourage children to play in public areas of the home and be attentive when they become quiet. Consult your Supervising Social Worker regarding play arrangements with friends.
- ✓ **Stopping Bullying:** Establish clear rules against bullying, provide education on the issue, and create opportunities for children to express their thoughts through creative activities.
- ✓ **Intimate Care:** Encourage children to undertake personal care independently, but assist them if needed, documenting the details. Follow specific arrangements for intimate care in the Placement Plan.
- ✓ **When you go out:** Make appropriate and early arrangements for childcare when you are not present. Consult with your Supervising Social Worker for guidance

- ✓ **Travelling by Car:** Ensure the children's safety by having car seats that are meeting the government guidance. We recommend that in line with this, younger children sit in the back seat for as long as possible beyond the suggested age range. Document important details of car journeys. There might be times where it is safer to travel with two adults in the car, please discuss this with your Supervising Social Worker.
- ✓ **Photos, Videos and the Internet:** Obtain consent before taking photos or videos of the child, be sensitive to their reactions, and discuss internet usage with them. Safeguard against inappropriate material by using filtering software.
- ✓ **Children with Disabilities:** Consult with the child's social worker and parents or health team to address the specific needs of a child with disabilities.
- ✓ **The way you dress:** Dress appropriately when in the house and ensure that all family members, including foster children, have appropriate nightwear.
- ✓ **The foster carers' and other family member's bedrooms:** Do not share your bed with foster children and maintain appropriate boundaries. Provide alternative means of affection outside the bedroom.
- ✓ **Children's bedrooms:** Establish clear rules for bedrooms, including individual rooms for children over three years old, and respect their need for privacy and personal space.
- ✓ **Bedtime:** Show care and warmth during bedtime routines, considering the child's preferences and previous experiences. Leave the door open when putting children to bed.
- ✓ **Education about relationships, sex and sexuality:** Provide age-appropriate education on relationships, sex, and sexuality, respecting cultural and religious backgrounds. Foster a safe environment where children feel confident to ask any questions they may have about sex education and set clear boundaries around sexual activity.
- ✓ **Fire Plan:** Discuss and practice evacuation plans in case of a fire, ensuring that everyone knows the location of keys for doors and windows.

Supporting your own children: Foster carers' own children are crucial to the success of fostering, as they often welcome a new foster child into the home and help them settle in. However, sharing their home and parents with another child can be challenging, and foster carers' own children need support to navigate the daily challenges of growing up in a fostering family. It is important to have discussions about acceptable behaviour and boundaries for everyone involved.

Your own children, depending on their age, should be actively involved in developing the Safer Caring Plan. This ensures that everyone is clear about the boundaries and safety measures in everyday life, fostering a sense of security for all. Lack of support for your own children can lead to placement breakdowns, which can cause further instability for fostered children.

It is essential to consider how a new foster child will fit into your family dynamics before making a decision. You can discuss any concerns or questions with your supervising social worker, who will also see your children regularly to ensure that they feel their opinions are valued when it comes to the whole family's fostering experience. It's important to dedicate quality time to your own children. It might be helpful to routinely agree on times, dates, and activities for both your own children and the fostered child. These activities can be separate or done together.

Pay attention to early signs of problems and communicate openly with your child and the fostered child. Discuss any concerns during your supervision meetings with your Supervising Social Worker or seek advice from other foster carers. If you feel an issue needs immediate attention, don't hesitate to reach out for support. Creating a nurturing environment for both your own children and the fostered child can create meaningful connections and lasting memories for the entire family.

Updating the individual safer care plan

You and your Supervising Social Worker will review the Individual Safer Care Plan during every supervision to make sure the risks assessed are still current and applicable. Should there be an incident between your supervisions, your Supervising Social Worker will discuss this with you and update the Individual Safer Care Plan accordingly.

Conclusion: Being a foster carer is a rewarding and challenging role that requires dedication, patience, and a genuine commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of vulnerable children. By understanding the complexities of foster care and being equipped with essential knowledge and skills, you can provide a nurturing and supportive environment for the children in your care.

Remember to maintain effective communication with the relevant professionals, such as your supervising social worker and the child's social worker, to ensure that everyone is working together in the best interests of the child. Actively participate in meetings to contribute your insights and experiences while also learning from others.

Take advantage of the training, support, and development opportunities available to foster carers. By continually improving your skills and knowledge, you can enhance your ability to meet the diverse needs of the children and young people in your care.

Ultimately, your role as a foster carer is to provide a safe home that offers stability, love, and guidance to children who may have experienced trauma or upheaval in their lives. By offering them a nurturing home, you can make a profound impact on their well-being and help them thrive.