



Department
for Education

Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care: Evidencing Factsheet

This factsheet provides guidance on evidence, levels, the amount of evidence, what counts as evidence and cross referencing.

Refreshed: November 2012

It is important to remember that the TSD Standards for Foster Care are at a foundation or induction level and set out what foster carers should know and be able to do within 12 months of approval. Assessors should be wary of assessing the outcomes at too high a level or demanding too much in-depth knowledge.

The workbook contains sample questions and activities and examples of evidence. These are for guidance only and assessors may substitute other questions. It is not necessary to answer all questions in order to evidence the standard. The level and sufficiency of evidence is not the same as is required for a Level 3 qualification (e.g. NVQ or Diploma), but will provide foundation evidence towards one.

Amount of evidence

Encourage foster carers to keep it short and simple and use bullet points where appropriate. The evidence box in the workbook is meant to be guidance and is not an indication of amount of evidence expected. Essays are not required. The exemplars given in this factsheet indicate the maximum amount.

The amount of evidence will vary for each outcome. Some will only require a reference to another document, such as a witness statement. Others may require a reflective piece of writing, giving an example of when a particular task was carried out or when an incident occurred, as in the example overleaf.

Exemplar: Standard 5.3c Transitions (also meets 5.1c and 4.1d)

P has been in foster care for over 13 years and been placed with me for the past 4 years. She is now 19 years old and I have been helping her prepare for adulthood and independent living over the past few years. Some of the ways I have helped P include:

- Support with decision making and encouraging P to develop her own opinion.
- Teaching her basic recipes and cooking skills.
- Involving her in household chores and talking to her about safety in the home.
- Supporting and encouraging her to continue with her education.
- Helping her with financial planning and budgeting.

These are just some of the ways that we are helping P get ready for independence. As someone who has been brought up in foster care most of her life, she is uncomfortable and wary of new situations. This means she needs additional encouragement, support, love and patience until she feels able to deal with new situations.

There should be at least one piece of evidence per outcome (see overleaf for 'What counts as evidence').

Please note: one piece of evidence can be used as the basis for a number of different outcomes. For example, in the exemplar below the evidence has been cited for Standard 5.5b. This evidence could also be used as the basis for Standard 2.4a, 4.4a and also for Standard 3.4b.

Exemplar: Standard 5. 5b Supporting Educational Potential

T has been in foster care with me for 3 years. As he is a complex and challenging young person, I get support from a therapeutic worker who offers advice and support around managing his behaviour. I also work closely with the staff at his school who are experienced with looked after children. I have close links with the named person for Looked after Children and we speak on the phone about once a week.

I learnt at T's review that he had not been doing his homework. When I discussed this with the school, they suggested that they take him out of one lesson per week to catch up with homework. This seems to have taken some of the pressure off him and the school has agreed to let him continue with this.

Working together with the therapeutic worker, school staff and social worker has really helped T receive consistent messages and support, which helps him feel secure and safe.

What counts as evidence?

Pre-approval training and assessment can be used as evidence for meeting the TSD Standards. Foster carers completing the Fostering Network's revised (2nd edition) Skills to Foster preparation training will have gained the core skills and knowledge to start their first foster care placement. The skills and knowledge gained through these processes may provide up to 60% of the evidence towards the TSD Standards.

Encourage carers to use a variety of evidence, using a combination of any from the list below. Foster carers can be as creative as they like in collecting evidence – audio, video, photographic records can contribute. Evidence can include a description of their work and how it meets the standard. Evidence can include:

- Cross referencing to other training completed e.g. Skills to Foster, training courses and NVQs. Training certificates should give details of the learning outcomes.
- Witness testimony i.e. by other professionals and service users.
- Professional discussion.
- Reflective accounts.
- Supervision notes.
- Direct observation.
- Fostering records.
- Reviews – minutes of meetings.
- Foster carers' annual reviews.
- Written questioning and oral questioning (must be recorded).
- DVDs – e.g. bullying and education.
- Training undertaken externally.
- Work or leisure activities where foster carer works direct with children and young people.

- E Learning.
- Case studies.
- Photographs of displays, but never of children and young people.
- Support group discussions which also include invited speakers or trainers.
- Research – articles, books, websites etc.
- Foster carers who have undertaken support training roles, or who have done presentations.

Where the evidence is a training certificate or a policy/procedure, the supervising social worker needs to check that it is relevant to the standards and should be satisfied that the carers learning has been assessed, either during the course or after the course through discussion with the carer. If there isn't evidence of the carers learning, the certificate should be accompanied by a few sentences outlining how the training has been put into practice against the standards, as in the exemplar overleaf.

Exemplar: Standard 5.1a Attachment and stages of development

In January 2009 I attended the Fostering Network's course on Attachment (certificate attached). This course helped me understand how secure attachments are made and what the impact of trauma and abuse on children's abilities to develop secure attachments.

As a new foster carer this has really helped me when two sisters (J and K) came to live with us 6 months ago. Even though J is 10 and K is 16, they are inseparable. My husband felt that they should do activities separately as they have different interests. However, through my training I could understand that through their experiences the only constant thing had been each other and it was quite frightening for them to be separated, as they found it hard to trust others. We respect their need for each other, but as they have begun to trust us more, we have started to slowly introduce activities for each of them separately.

Cross referencing evidence from previous relevant training

Foster carers with previous related training, fostering experience or work with children will be able to fast-track through the TSD Standards by providing evidence of competence, based on prior learning and experience. Evidence of their previous relevant experience should be assessed for relevance by the supervising social worker and can be recorded by discussion in supervision and review sessions.

If carers have completed an NVQ3 in Health and Social Care or hold a related professional qualification such as social work, they will already have much of the evidence to meet the TSD Standards. Two documents mapping the NVQ units against the TSD Standards can be accessed [here](#).

The Fostering Network has produced a guide called 'Meeting the Training, Support and Development Standards' which shows how each standard can be evidenced using either

the Skills to Foster training or assessment, the Pathways through Fostering publications or other training and information guides. The guide is available free to members to download from <http://www.fostering.net/all-about-fostering/resources/good-practice-guidance/meeting-training-support-and-development-standards>

Do all carers have to evidence all outcomes?

It is important to note that not all of the standards will be relevant to all foster carers for example standard 5.3 Support Children and Young People to achieve their educational potential, would be marginal to a foster carer who was approved only to look after babies. If this is the case, it is acceptable for the carer to write a comment in the evidence box 'I only foster babies, so this outcome is not relevant to my work'.

It is up to foster service providers to determine agency policy in relation to TSD Standards or outcomes that may not be relevant to particular carers. Some agencies choose to ask all their carers to evidence all the outcomes and where the outcomes aren't relevant, carers are asked what they might do in theory.

Joint carers – Where two adults in a household are approved as foster carers, both carers must evidence that they meet the TSD Standards (as stated in the revised NMS, standard 20.1). Some of this evidence may be joint. Where carers cannot provide joint evidence, each carer must provide their own individual evidence. In some cases, where the majority of the caring is done by one of the carers, some of the outcomes will not be relevant to the secondary carer. If this is the case, it is acceptable for the carer to write a comment in the evidence box which reflects this.

Family and friends (kinship) foster carers are required to complete the TSD Standards for Foster Carer. However, you may need to be flexible in implementing the TSD Standards with these carers, prioritising which standards they need to complete first. CWDC guidance to help providers implement the TSD Standards with family and friends carers will be available in spring 2011.

Foster carers who are approved for a named child are required to complete the TSD Standards for Foster Care. However, not all standards will be relevant to these carers and providers will need to make a judgement about which are relevant on a case by case basis.

Short break carers for children and young people with disabilities. We have developed Training Support and Development Standards for Short Break Carers, that are relevant to the task of carers offering short breaks for children and young people who have a disability or complex health needs. For further information, see <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/send/ahdc/a0070553/short-breaks>

Support carers and foster carers who provide short breaks (formerly known as respite carers). Fostering providers should determine their agency policy in relation to whether to use the TSD Standards for Foster Care or for Short Break Care with support carers and respite carers. We have produced some additional guidance to assist fostering service providers, '[Using the Standards with Support Carers](#)', which provides a framework for making the decision and shows which outcomes must be evidenced.



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