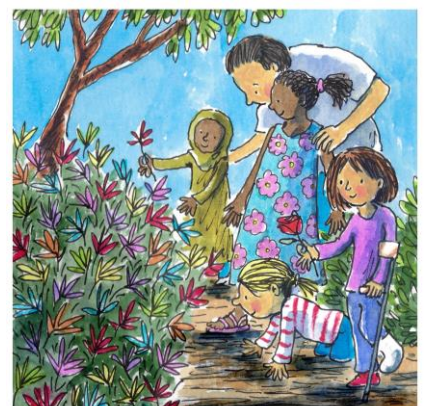


# Children's Guide



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# About You

This page of the booklet is for you to tell us all about you!

Use this space to write down or draw anything you would like us to know.

We have given space for things you like, and things you don't like.

Things I like

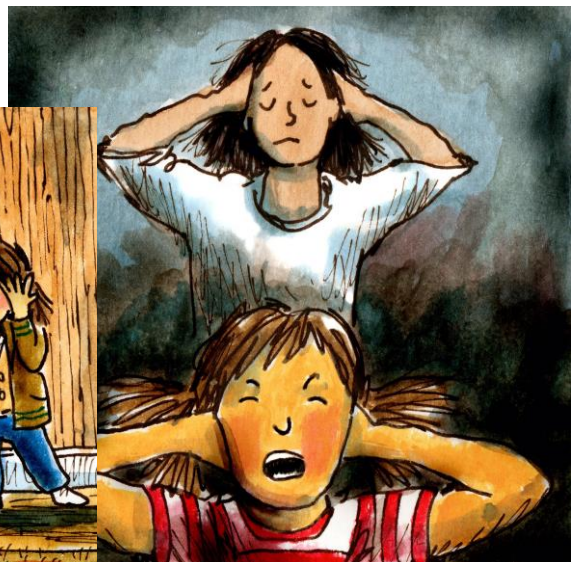


Things I don't like

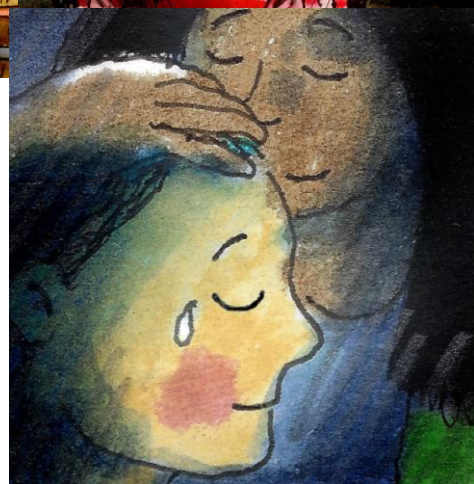




# What is Fostering?



Going into foster care means that you will live with a family for a while because you cannot live with the family you were born into.



There may be many reasons why you are in foster care. All children need lots of different things to make them feel safe and happy. Even though they love them, some families find it hard to give children all the things they need. Sometimes this means that children cannot stay with the family that they were born into.

**Remember, its not your fault, people just want you to be safe and happy.**



# What is Fostering?

Your foster family will look after you as part of their family and give you all the things you need.

People will be helping your family you were born into to try to help things to get better and to think about what should happen in the future.



# Who is everyone and what do they do?



## **Your Social Worker**

A Social Worker is someone who is trained to help children and families through difficult times. They can talk to you and help you understand what is happening.

They are in charge of making sure you are looked after and are safe and happy.

They will come and see you to make sure that you are okay and can help if you feel worried about anything.

*You can draw a picture of your social worker and write their name here*

## **Your Independent Reviewing Officer ("IRO")**

An IRO's main job is to make sure that your needs are met. There will be meetings every few months (normally called reviews) which are all about you.

At your Review, it is important that your IRO knows how you feel and what you want to happen.

*You can draw a picture of your IRO and write their name here*



# Your Foster Parents

A Foster Parent is someone who looks after other people's children when they have to live away from home.

Foster Parents are taught to do this.

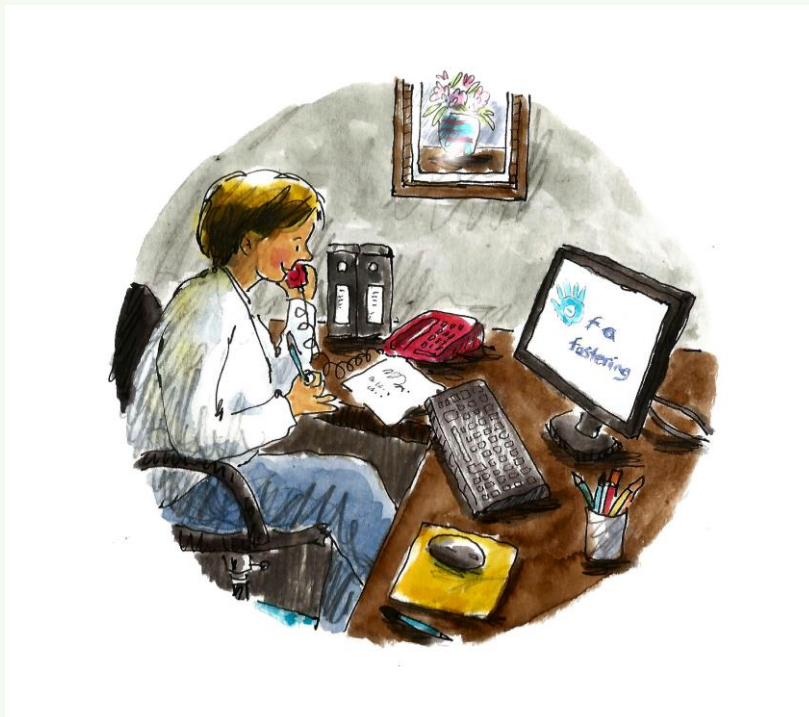
Your Foster Parents will make sure you have food to eat, a warm and comfortable bedroom, and will make sure you are safe and happy. They will help you with school, to do the things you like and be there for you if you are sad or worried. They will also help you to keep in touch with people who are important to you.



# Who are AFA and what do we do?

AFA is a fostering agency. This means we help Foster Parents to look after children like you that cannot live with the family they were born into.

AFA's main job is to make sure you are safe and happy by helping the foster carers look after you.



Your Foster Parents have their own social worker who is called a Fostering Social Worker. Their job is to make sure your Foster Parents are looking after you properly and have all the help they need.

Fostering Social Workers will also talk to you to find out if you are happy and being well cared for. Sometimes you may see them at other times, like meetings at school.





## People I care about

While you are living in foster care, there are going to be people, perhaps family and friends, who you care about who you may not see all of the time.

It's important that you are see or speak to them and to know they are OK. Your Social Worker may call this "Family time" or "Contact".



Your Social Worker, IRO or your Foster Parent can talk to you about who you want to see and when. If there is anyone that you are frightened of or don't want to see, tell your Social Worker, IRO or Foster Parent.

Time with your family will happen if everyone agrees it is best for you. Your Foster Parent will also help you.

# Who can I speak to if I'm unhappy?

When you move into foster care it's okay to feel quite muddled about leaving the family you were born into, moving into a foster family, meeting new people and sometimes even moving to a new school.

If you have lived with your new Foster Parents for a while and you still feel unhappy or upset about how they are looking after you, you should talk to your Social Worker, your IRO or even your Foster Parents' Fostering Social Worker. They will listen and can help you. Your Social Worker will be making plans about you and what will happen next, and it is important they know what you think.



Some children at AFA have made a leaflet about what to do if you are unhappy. It is in your Welcome Box that you were given when you moved in with your Foster Parents.





# What else do I need to know?

Living with your Foster Parents may feel very different to where you have lived before. Every family does things differently and your Foster Parents will explain what is and is not okay in their home. If there is anything you are not sure about, just ask.



AFA and your Foster Parents will always do their best to answer any questions you have. They may also be able to give you information that will help you.

AFA's has Groups for children which meets during the year – ask you Foster Parents' Fostering Social Worker about these.

AFA and your Foster Parents will listen to you and can find people to talk to you to help you feel safe.





# We want to know what you think.

While you are in foster care, lots of different people may want to talk to you. You do not need to talk to everyone, but please find someone to talk to who you feel safe with. This might be your Social Worker, your Foster Parents, their Fostering Social Worker, someone at school or your IRO.

Sometimes children in foster care do not feel that people listen to them. If you feel like this, here are some things you can do:

- Write down or draw what you think so you can give this to someone you trust.
- Ask about having an Advocate. This is someone who can make sure you are listened to. There is a leaflet in your Welcome Box about this.



- You can complain. If this is about AFA, you can complain to us. Information about this is in your Welcome Box. If it is about someone else, you should speak to your foster parent or your advocate who can help you with.

# Information and important contacts

You can contact us if you have worries or are unhappy about how you are looked after on 01603 559255 or email [info@afafostering.com](mailto:info@afafostering.com) or [kids@afafostering.com](mailto:kids@afafostering.com)

Here are some other people you may also contact:

**Childline:** 0800 1111 (someone you can call to talk to if you are worried but you can't tell your carer or AFA)

**NSPCC:** 0800 800 5000 or [help@NSPCC.org.uk](mailto:help@NSPCC.org.uk)

**Coram Voice:** They provide advocacy, and they can be contacted on 0808 800 5792 or you can text them on 07758 670369. Their email is [info@coramvoice.org.uk](mailto:info@coramvoice.org.uk)

**Become - Care Advice Line:** They help children who are in care. Their phone number is 0800 023 2033 or go to <https://becomecharity.org.uk/>

**The Children's Commission for England** is in charge of making sure children are safe. The Children's Commissioner for England You can call them on 0800 528 0731, email [help.team@childrenscommissioners.gov.uk](mailto:help.team@childrenscommissioners.gov.uk) or look at [www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

At the moment this is Rachel Da Souza.

**The Minister for Children** is also part of the Government. David Johnston MP is this person doing this job and can be contacted on 0207 219 6350 or by email at [david.Johnston.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:david.Johnston.mp@parliament.uk)

**Ofsted** are part of the government, and they make sure we are doing everything that we should be to care for you. Ofsted can be contacted on their General Helpline 0300 123 1231.



Here is some pictures that our children have drawn



# CHILDREN'S GUIDE



foster  
carers.







SAddress



**This children's guide was  
produced with the help of the  
AFA Children and Young  
People – a huge thank you for  
all your ideas and artwork.**

**AFA Fostering**

**01603 559255 [www.afakids.co.uk](http://www.afakids.co.uk)**

**Childline**

**0800 1111 [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)**

**NSPCC**

**0800 800 5000 [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)**



*Quality. Integrity. Respect.*