



Ethelbert Fostering Services

# CHILDREN'S GUIDE

## under 8



Where Every Child Has Mattered For More Than 35 Years



Hi!

My name is Debi Atkin and I want to welcome you to Ethelbert Fostering Services. We have been asked to provide a foster family for you. I am the Manager and my job is to make sure that you are looked after well. I am helped by people called "Supervising Social Workers". Supervising Social Workers will help your Foster Carers look after you but I will tell you more about this later.

We all know how hard it might be for you to come to a strange place and to meet new people for the first time. So, we have made this short book to help you settle in and tell you about things.

It is about:

- ❖ Foster Carers
  - the people you live with
  - what to expect
  - what should and should not happen to you
- ❖ Social Workers
  - the people who help you
- ❖ Supervising Social Workers
  - the people who help your Foster Carers
- ❖ Contact
  - this means keeping in touch
- ❖ Your Care Plan
- ❖ Your Review
- ❖ How Long Will You Have To Stay?
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Health
- ❖ What To Do If You Have A Problem

If this is the first time you have lived with Foster Carers, you may have lots of questions. Even if you have lived in a foster home before, you may still have some questions. We hope that this book will answer some, if not all of your questions.

You might want to read this book on your own or ask a grown-up like your Foster Carer to go through it with you. If you do not understand anything, talk to your Foster Carer. They will help you and explain things to you.

## Foster Carers

Fostering is a way of looking after children who, like you, cannot live at home or with another member of the family. It is important to know that children live with Foster Carers for all different reasons. It is **not** because you have done anything wrong.

Foster Carers are special people who have been carefully chosen to look after children. All our Foster Carers have had training and been 'checked out' to make sure they can offer you a safe place to live.

All foster families are different but they all understand how upsetting it can be for you to be living away from your own family.



You may be looked after by one or two Foster Carers. They may have their own children. They may already be looking after another foster child. The most important thing to remember is that they will treat you as one of the family.



## ***What Should and Should Not Happen To You?***

When you arrive, your Foster Carers will want to get to know you as soon as possible and make you feel at home. They will want to know about what food you like to eat, your favourite games, hobbies – even what your favourite television programme is.

Your Foster Carer will explain how their family like to do things. Sometimes this may be a little different from your own family.

To help you with this there are some pages at the back of this book for you to fill in with your Foster Carers. They are:

- 1 All About Me (That's You!)
- 2 Things You Might Need To Know
- 3 Important Things To Know

## **Your Rights**

There are certain ways you should be treated. These are called your "Rights".

- ❖ You have the Right to be safe, secure and protected from harm
- ❖ You have the Right for grown-ups to listen to you and treat you equally and fairly
- ❖ You have the Right to be helped to express how you feel and what you want
- ❖ You have the Right to be offered education, health care, play and leisure activities
- ❖ You have the Right to know why you live in a foster home and when you will next see your family
- ❖ If you have a disability you have the Right to any help you need with it

## **Rules**

### *Rules for You*

Foster Carers have rules for everyone who lives in their home. The rules should be fair. They are about keeping everyone safe.

So that your Foster Carers can keep you safe, please remember to:

- ❖ Talk with your Foster Carers if you are not happy about something
- ❖ Always ask your Foster Carers if you are allowed to go somewhere before you go
- ❖ Do not talk to or go off with strangers (these are people you don't know)
- ❖ Be kind to your Foster Carers and others living in your foster home (this includes any pets)
- ❖ Ask if you want to borrow something
- ❖ Take care of your belongings – clothes, toys, books, games
- ❖ Always wear your seat belt in the car

Your Foster Carer will tell you what will happen if you break a rule. For example, not being allowed to watch TV.

## **Rules for Your Foster Carers**

It is important for you to know that there are also rules for your Foster Carers.

They are not allowed to:

- ❖ Hit you (this is called physical punishment) or harm you in any way
- ❖ Call you names
- ❖ Make you feel bad about yourself
- ❖ Stop you from having Contact with your family or other people
- ❖ Stop you seeing your Social Worker
- ❖ Stop you having meals
- ❖ Lock you in your bedroom or any other room
- ❖ Stop you from having any medical or dental treatment
- ❖ Keep your belongings or presents that may have been bought for you
- ❖ Stop you taking your belongings with you to a new placement or if you go home
- ❖ Bully you by calling you names or making fun of you
- ❖ Search your clothes – (you should not be asked to take your clothes off for them to be searched)



Your Foster Carers want you to be happy. For example:

- ❖ Help you go to school and help you with any homework
- ❖ Help you to be healthy and fit
- ❖ They will have somewhere to keep your things
- ❖ They will help you to see your family and friends
- ❖ Help you to follow your religion – if you have one. For example, they will find the nearest church or Mosque so that you will be able to attend. If your religion says that you have to eat certain foods your Foster Carer will arrange this
- ❖ They will give you Pocket Money
- ❖ They will provide you with clothes
- ❖ They will take you on outings and encourage you to carry on with your hobbies and activities, for example comics and sticker books, swimming

# Social Worker



A Social Worker is someone who likes children. It is their job to make sure you are OK so you should think of them as someone who is here to help.



All towns have a Social Worker who works for the Local Authority. They help you if you go into Foster Care. The Local Authority has the job to make sure that you are being looked after well in your town or city.

Your Social Worker will visit you in your Foster Home and get to know you. Sometimes they may take you out.



Your Social Worker cares about you so you can talk to them about how you feel. If you have any worries or problems they will help to sort them out.

Your Social Worker will need to tell your Foster Carers the important things about you and your family. Your Foster Carers must keep this information safe.

If you want to see your Social Worker, speak to your Foster Carers. Your Foster Carer will phone your Social Worker for you. We will write your Social Worker's name and telephone number down for you at the end of this book.

## Supervising Social Worker

All Foster Carers have a worker from this Agency who visits them. This person is called a Supervising Social Worker. They help your Foster Carer and make sure that you are being looked after well.

The name of your Foster Carers' Supervising Social Worker is:

.....

The Supervising Social Worker will come and see your Foster Carers often. They will also talk to your Social Worker and tell them how you are doing. They will see you from time to time as well. This is another person you can talk to if you have any worries or problems. Their telephone number is at the back of this book.

Your Social Worker and your Foster Carers' Supervising Social Worker may sometimes visit you together to make sure everything is all right. If anything is not right they will sort it out.

They want you to be happy.

## Care Plan

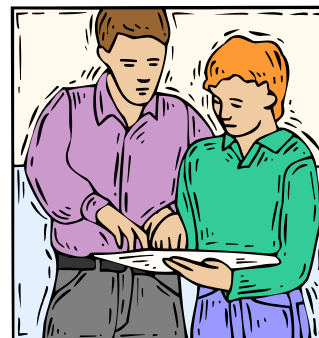
All children who are in care have their own special plan. This is called a "Care Plan". Your Social Worker will explain your Care Plan to you.

It is about everything that is important to you such as when you see your family, your school, your health.

It is also about things you want to do – such as how to make sure you can carry on doing the sports or hobbies that you like.

If there is something that you want, but it can't be arranged you will be told why not.

If there is anything in your Care Plan that you do not like, tell your Social Worker – they may be able to change it.



# Reviews

There will be regular meetings to check your Care Plan.

These are called Review Meetings.

Review Meetings are to find out:



- ❖ How you are doing
- ❖ How things are going on in your life
- ❖ What needs to be changed in your Care Plan
- ❖ If there needs to be changes in the way you are looked after

People such as your parents, Foster Carers or Teacher will be invited to go to this meeting.

You will also be invited to go to this meeting and have your say.

The person in charge of these meetings is called a "Reviewing Officer". They will want to hear from you. You will be able to talk to them or write things down before or at the Review Meeting.



If you don't want to go to this meeting this is OK. You can either ask to speak with the Reviewing Officer on your own **or** you can tell your Social Worker or Foster Carer what you would like to say.



# Contact

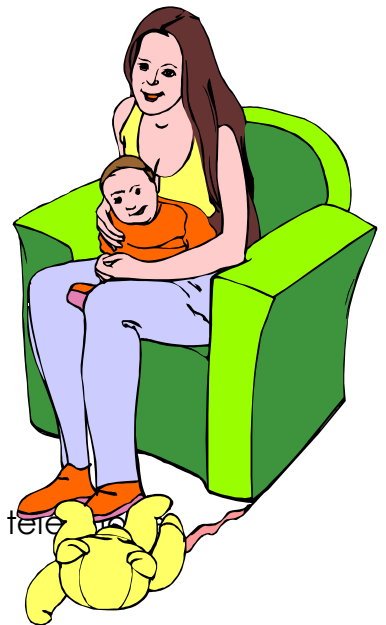
Just because you live in a foster home, it doesn't mean that you have to lose touch with your family and friends. Everyone knows how important your family is to you.

How often you see them and where you see them will depend on the reason you are being looked after. As soon as you come into care your Social Worker will talk with you about this.

Everyone knows that it is important for you to keep in touch with your family and friends. The grown-ups call this keeping in touch - "Contact".



Sometimes a Contact Meeting will be arranged when you can see your family.



Sometimes it is possible for you to speak with your family on the telephone.

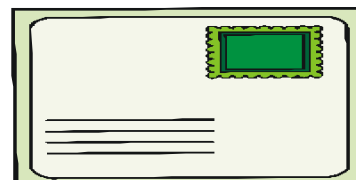
This is called "Telephone Contact"



and .....

Sometimes you may get and send letters.

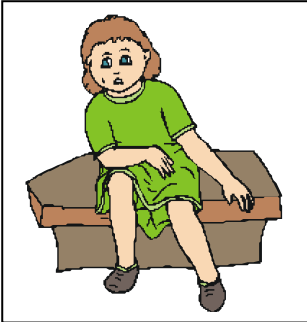
This is called "Letter Box Contact".



## What To Do If You Have a Problem

Everyone will try and make sure that you are treated well and fairly. We will listen to you about what you need and what you want.

You may be unhappy about something that is happening when:



- ❖ You Visit Your Own Family
- ❖ You Are At School
- ❖ You Are Somewhere Else

If there is something that you are not happy about it is very important to tell someone. It is important that you speak to someone you can trust such as your Foster Carer or Social Worker.

*Don't keep what is worrying you to yourself – it is not good for you.*

## What If You Are Unhappy With Something at Your Foster Home?

Sometimes you may be unhappy about something your Foster Carer or someone else in the home has done. If this is the case there are other people you can speak with about what is worrying you.

You can:

- ❖ Speak with your Social Worker
- ❖ Speak with your Foster Carers Supervising Social Worker.  
Can you remember.... this is the person who helps your Foster Carer and speaks with your Social Worker
- ❖ Speak with your teacher or ....
- ❖ You can also speak with me (Debi Atkin). My job is to make sure you are looked after well



## And .....

- ❖ If you don't want to speak with me you can speak with Leslie Davenport. He helps me to make sure you are looked after well

## How Long Will You have to stay?

Some families have problems which stop them from looking after their children. This can be very upsetting and hard to understand.

Some children stay with Foster Carers for a short time. Sometimes this is longer.

You will be welcomed into a foster home for as long as you need.

Everyone will want you to go home to your family as soon as possible, but only if it is safe. Talk with your Social Worker and Foster Carers about this.

If you ever feel scared about what will happen to you in the future, tell your Social Worker and Foster Carer. They will do everything they can to help.



## What about School?



Your education is important. Therefore you will be expected to go to school. Your Foster Carer will take you to school and help you with any homework that you are given.



## Health

Whilst you are being looked after it is important to make sure that you are fit and healthy.

It may be that you have missed out seeing the doctor, dentist or a school nurse.

You may need to have your eyes checked, be measured to see how tall you are, or be weighed to check your weight. This won't take long.

Everyone just wants to make sure you are well.



As we have kept telling you throughout this book, it is important for you to speak with someone you can trust if there is something worrying you or if there is something you are not happy about.

We are all here to help you and we will do our very best to do that.

To help you settle in there are some pages next for you to fill in with your Foster Carers.

There is also a page with the names of all the different people we have told you about and their telephone number.

***Thank you for reading this book.***

# All About Me

My Name is .....

I like to be called .....

I was born on .....

My family are .....

.....

.....

.....

Things I like to eat are .....

.....

.....

Things I don't like to eat are .....

.....

.....

Things I like to drink are .....

If I have a packed lunch for school I like .....

.....

My favourite TV programme is .....

Things I like to do .....

.....

.....

Sometimes these things worry me .....

.....

This is what I usually do at home .....

.....

## Some Things I Might Need To Know

What time do I have to go to bed at night? .....

Can I keep a light on at night .....

What happens if I don't feel well at night? .....

.....

What time do I have to get up in the morning? .....

Do I need to ask if I want a drink or can I help myself? .....

Do I have to ask for snacks and treats such as?

Yes ✓

No X

- ❖ Fruit
- ❖ Biscuits
- ❖ Crisps
- ❖ Sweets

What other things can I have? .....

How much pocket money do I get? .....

Who buys me clothes? .....

Can I watch TV when I want to? .....

Can I use the phone when I want to? .....

Can people phone me? .....

Can you think of anything else you want to know?

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Important Things for Me to Know

The name of my Foster Carers .....

Other people in my foster home .....

.....

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The name of my Social Worker .....

The address of my Social Worker .....

.....

The name of my Foster Carer's Supervising Social Worker

.....

The date I came to Ethelbert Fostering Service .....

The reason I am living here now .....

.....

.....

Who was looking after me before I moved here? .....

.....

The name of my new school is .....

The name of my Doctor is .....

The name of my Dentist is .....

Contact with my family is .....

.....

## Names and Telephone Numbers That I May Need

Person	Name	Telephone Number
Foster Carers		
Foster Carers Supervising Social Worker the person who helps my Foster Carer		01843 229522
Social Worker		
Ethelbert Children's Services Manager The person whose job it is to make sure I am looked after well while I am with my Foster Carers	Debi Atkin	01843 229522
The person I can call if I don't want to speak with my Foster Carer or their Supervising Social Worker	Leslie Davenport	01843 823762
People I can call if I feel I have no one else to talk to	Child Line	0800 1111
The people who make sure everyone is doing their job right and looking after me	Ofsted	08456 404040

### Other People I might like to Get In Touch With

Person	Name	Telephone Number