



CONNECT
FOSTERING SERVICES

Children's Guide to Fostering

Bright Start, Bright Futures



Ages 0 - 11

This book belongs to:

Keep it Safe!

You may need to look at it from time to time

Name:

Age: **My Birthday is on:**

My foster carers are:

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Welcome!

This booklet is designed to help you understand what fostering is about and answer some of the questions you might have. It will tell you all about living with a foster family and help you understand what fostering aims to do for you. You will be staying with foster carers, who are registered with Connect Fostering Services

Your social worker will talk to you about why you are living here and help make plans for your future. We want you to be safe, happy and be able to try new things.

This booklet is yours to keep and to use, whenever you want to find something out.

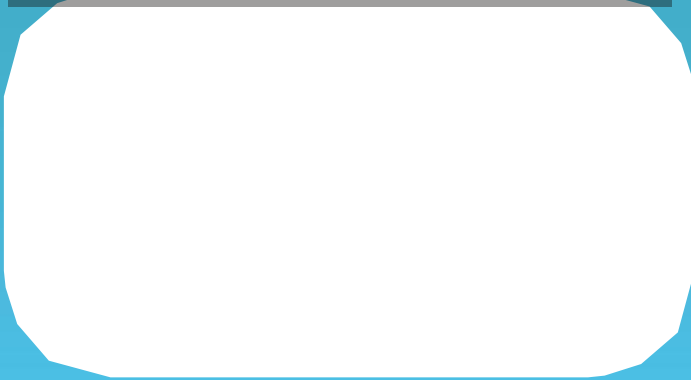
Hi..

My name is **Janey**. I'm here to help you settle in with your new foster family and help answer any questions that you might have. Some of the words in this booklet may be new to you or hard for you to understand, you can ask your foster carer, social worker or teacher to help you.

Hello there... My name is **Joey**. I can't live with my family, so I live with Pat and Penny. They keep me safe, happy and healthy.



All About Me!



Why don't you draw a picture of yourself in the box?

My name is:

I live at:

My foster carers are called:

Telephone:

My social worker is called:

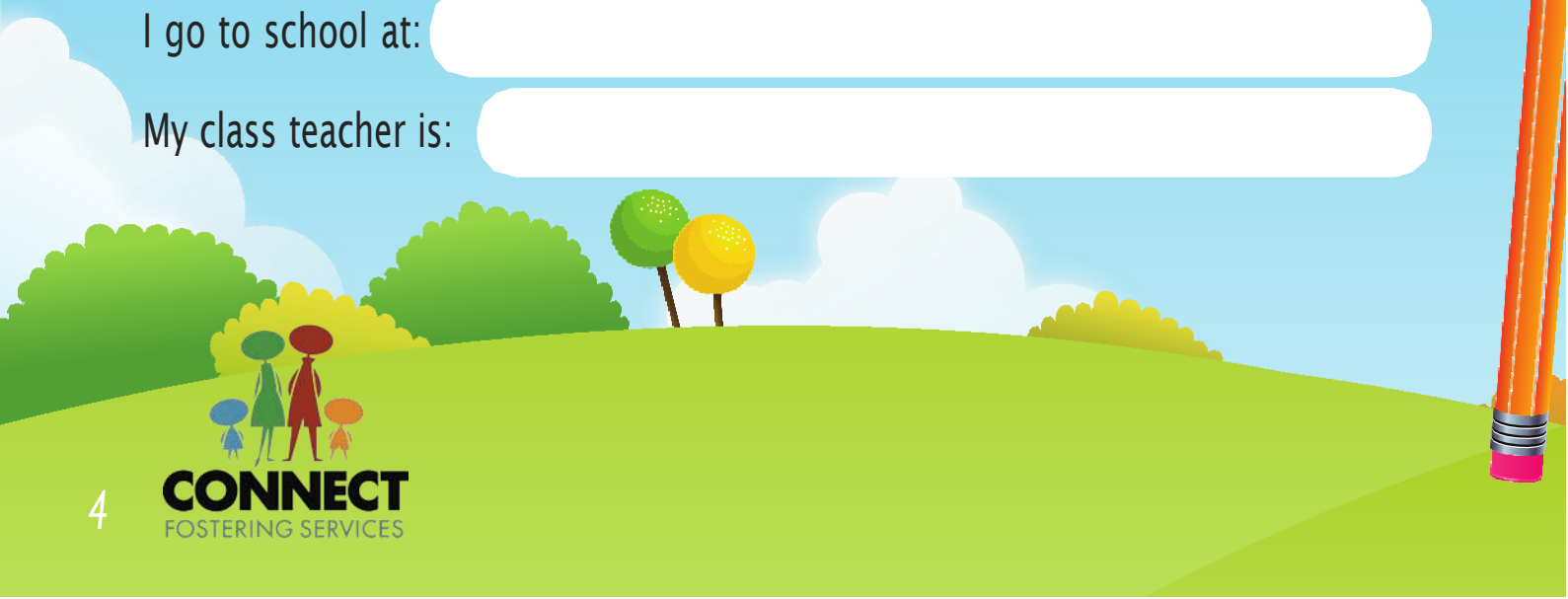
Telephone:

My foster carers supervising social worker from Connect Fostering Services is called:

Telephone:

I go to school at:

My class teacher is:



Your foster carer/s are:

Why don't you draw them here

A large white rounded rectangle intended for drawing. To the left of the rectangle is a vertical orange pencil with a black eraser tip. At the bottom right corner of the rectangle is a grey eraser. The background of the page is blue with white clouds and green grass at the bottom.

Other people living in or regularly visiting the house:



Are there any pets?

Yes

No

If yes, can you draw them?



Who are Connect Fostering Services?

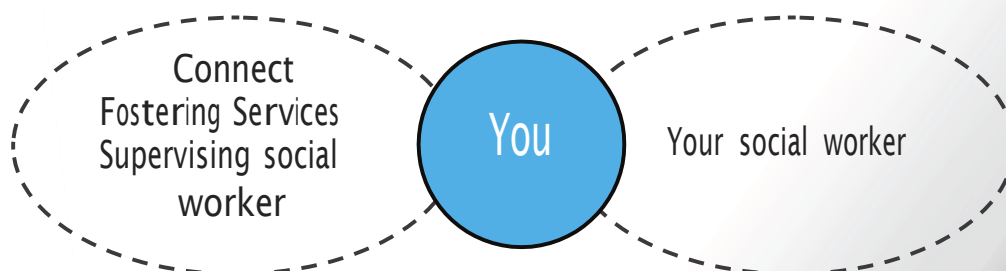
Connect Fostering Services provides foster carers, who help look after children who cannot live with their families.

Why are there two social workers?

There are two social workers:

You will have your own social worker, who will visit you and your foster carers. A social worker is someone who is trained to help children and their families through difficult times. They will explain things to you about what is happening in your life.

Your foster carers will have their own Supervising Social Worker from Connect Fostering Services. Their job is to make sure your carers are looking after you properly and have all the help they need. They will also talk to you to make sure you're happy and well cared for. Connect Fostering Services train and support foster carers and visit them regularly. We want our foster carers to be kind, helpful and treat you fairly. Your social worker and the supervising social worker will work together to make sure that your needs are being met.



Who are Foster Carers?

Foster carers are special people who have been carefully chosen to look after children. Foster carers do all the things parents do, such as setting rules and helping you with things like going to school and making sure you eat the right food. For example:

- Children will be looked after in the Foster Carers' own home.
- They provide children with a safe and comfortable home. You will have your own bedroom.
- Foster carers provide food, clothing and pocket money.
- If you are not feeling well, your foster carer will take care of you, they may call a doctor or get you emergency medical help.
- Foster carers help children with their homework, go to school meetings and school events. They work closely with the school to make sure that you are getting on well.
- Foster carers will arrange activities for you e.g. swimming, football, cinema, visiting the library, shopping, going to the park, photography etc. depending on your interest.
- Foster carers are willing to talk to you about any worries you may have.
- Foster carers may take you on holiday with them.



Your Foster Carer will also:

- Make sure you are well looked after
- Try and make you feel part of the family
- Listen to you and try to help you when you feel sad or unhappy.
- Help you to learn new things.

Why am I being fostered?

Children live with foster carers for all sorts of reasons, but it's not because of anything you have done. Children may have had upsetting times in their lives and lived with grown-ups who may not have looked after them properly or kept them safe. Some children in foster care come from abroad, because it's not safe for them to live in their country.

Remember not everyone can be a foster carer, they are chosen carefully by Connect Fostering Services to make sure that you are kept safe.



They will also make sure you have:

- A bedroom of your own.
- Somewhere to put your clothes and belongings.
- A place where you can meet your social worker when they visit.
- A choice to celebrate your chosen religious festival.



Care Plan

Your social worker will make a plan for you, which is called a 'Care Plan'. This will include things that are important to you, such as details about your health, school, cultural and religious needs, your wishes and feelings, family contact and future plans for you. If you have a disability, then you have the right to extra support and help. Your social worker should take them into consideration, depending on your age and understanding.

School

Your foster carer and social worker know how important it is for you to go to school. They will do their best to make sure you remain in your current school'. If this is not possible they will help find a new school for you. Remember if you are bullied at school, you must tell your teacher, social worker or foster carer.

How long will I be in foster care?

The length of time you are in foster care will depend on your situation. You may stay for a short period like a few months or it may be much longer. Your social worker will advise you about how long you are likely to be in foster care.

Contact with my family & friends?

Your foster carer and social worker will help you to remain in contact with your family. If this is not possible you will be told why you cannot see them. Your wishes and feelings will be listened to about remaining in contact with your family.

Rules of the house

Each foster home is different. Foster carers will tell children what the rules of the house are so that you are aware of what you can and cannot do in the home. These rules will help you to make sure you are kept healthy and safe. Foster carers want you to:

- Show respect to people
- Join in the family meals and activities
- Attend school regularly
- Stick to family rules
- Share your views

No smacking policy

Your foster carer is not allowed to hurt you in any way and nor is anyone else. If you are worried about anything at all, please don't be afraid to speak up as there are lots of people who care about you and want to help.

Bullying

Bullying is when one person does something to another person that makes them feel pain, upset, worried, sad and may make them feel too scared to go to school.

What should I do if I am being bullied?

- You must tell someone immediately like your foster carer, social worker or a teacher, who will help make things better.
- Remember if you ignore it, it's like telling the bullies it's okay for them to be nasty.


Review Meetings

While you live with your foster carers, there will be meetings called 'reviews', where all the important grown-ups in your life will get together and make a care plan for you.

Before the review, you will be asked what you think and what your views are. You may be asked to write this down or to tell your social worker. If you are old enough, you may also take part in the meeting. If you have any worries in between these meetings, you can talk to your social worker or the person who is in charge of the reviews, who is called the 'Independent Reviewing Officer' (IRO).

How can I contact my IRO?

Your social worker, foster carer or connect Fostering Services social worker can provide this information to you and put you in contact with the IRO. You can also take your IRO's contact details when you meet him/her at your first review.



My foster carers or anyone else are not allowed to hit or smack me. If anyone does I must tell someone like my social worker, teacher or Connect Fostering Services social worker immediately.

My likes & dislikes questionnaire

My favourite foods are:

My favourite film is:

The foods I dislike are:

My favourite game is:

My favourite colour is:

My favourite subject at school is:

My favourite book is:

I'm allergic to:

You may want to share this with your foster carer(s).

Colour me in...



Fostering Wordsearch

Can you find these words:

CONNECT



HOME



CARE



SAFE



FOSTER CARER



SCHOOL



FUN



SHARE



HELP



SOCIAL WORKER



T E H Y I L N J L D J Z K J L
T W S C O N N E C T V H J F U
B P V A D E N A H Q A N M Z Y
Q B R I G H T S T A R T M R U
V D X F C U E R H R E K C E H
Q L J U Z S H A R E L M D K L
O Y N F J L Q Z N J B Y X R G
W S R E R A C R E T S O F O F
F N F L J H I H O F E O H W B
L G C T G U M X B M A T A L Z
D N U F B U K L O V W F Y A M
E R I U H J L H H B Z D X I F
F F G Q G A O D A N A J J C J
A F U E M Q S C H O O L J O V
S H D V U Q H E L P N G A S R



Who can I speak to if I am unhappy?

How you are feeling matters to us at Connect Fostering Services. Most things can be sorted out by talking. If there is anything that you are not happy about, such as the time you have to go to bed, or how much pocket money you get, then these are everyday grumbles and you should try talking to your foster carer and social worker about any concerns that you have. Sometimes you may feel that things are more serious, and talking hasn't helped – Then you may want to make a complaint.

There are lots of different people, who you can share your concerns and complaints with. No one will be cross with you, as they are there to help you!



Remember there are lots of people who you can speak to if you are unhappy. Here are just a few people...

Your Foster Carer

Connect Fostering's
Supervising Social Worker
or Support Worker

Your IRO

Your social worker

OFSTED

An Advocate

How will my complaint be dealt with?

Connect Fostering Services has a person who deals with complaints known as a "Complaints Officer" who will help you with your complaint and make sure that everything is dealt with fairly. They will arrange for someone to look at your complaint and may arrange a visit with you and may also discuss the complaint with your social worker.

Connect Fostering Services will keep you informed about the progress of the complaint and on how they have dealt with it. You can contact Connect Fostering Services directly on (0203 780 3333)

You also have the right to talk directly to other organisations like Ofsted (Tel: 0300 1231231).

I talk to my connect fostering services social worker regularly. I tell them if I am unhappy with something for example if I'm being bullied. They take me seriously and try help make things better.



If you want to complain...

Did you know there are lots of other people who you can contact if you are not happy. These include:

An Advocate

If you feel unhappy about something and feel that you are not being listened to. Your social worker will be able to arrange what we call an 'advocate'. An Advocate is someone with a lot of experience of working with children and young people and listening to their views.

They will listen to your concerns and will work with you to find ways to put things right. They will make sure that you are listened to in meetings, and can pass on your views and wishes to other people involved in making decisions.

Independent Visitors

Your social worker may ask you or you may request an Independent Visitor. Their role is to visit you, befriend you, support you and help exercise your rights.

Here are some numbers that may be helpful for you to have:

Ofsted

Ofsted make sure that Fostering agencies like Connect Fostering Services are doing their job properly. They inspect us regularly.

Address: Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

Phone number: 0300 123 1231

Email address: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Children's Commissioner for England

Address: Sanctuary Buildings,
20 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT

Phone number: 0800 528 0731

Email address: help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Childline

Phone number: 0800 1111

Website: www.childline.org.uk

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

Phone number: 0800 800 5000

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

Phone number: 0808 808 1001

Email address: help@nyas.net

Coram Voice

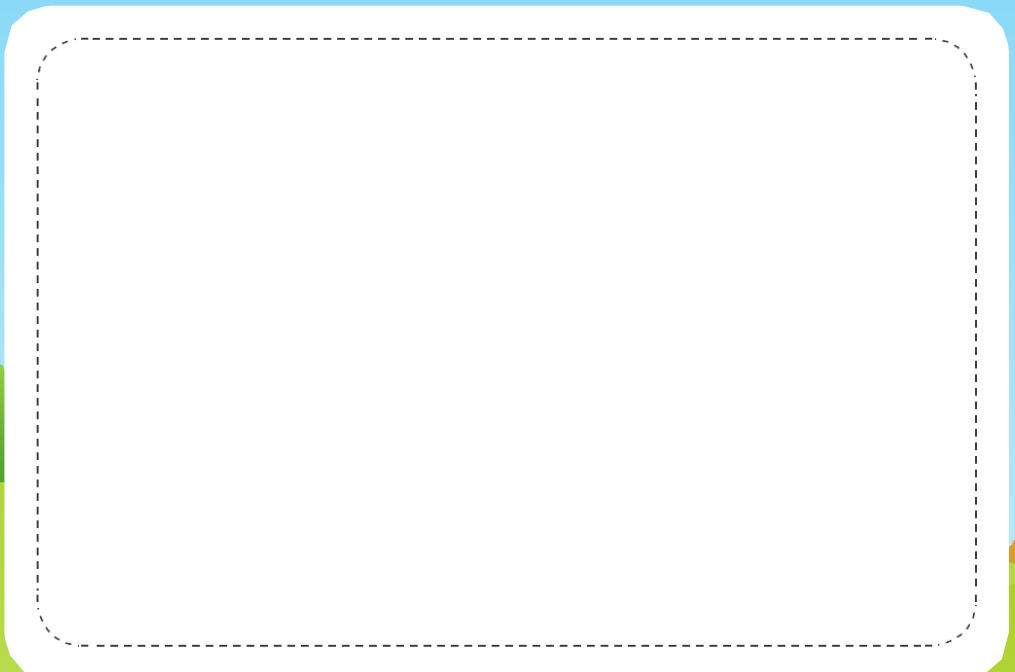
Phone number: 0808 800 5792 (calls are free)

Email address: info@coramvoice.org.uk

For the latest COVID-19 guidelines, visit www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Remove Me

Remove this card →
and keep this safe. This has all the important contact numbers that you may need if you are unhappy.





You can ask your social worker, teacher and foster carers to help you fill out this form. Please give your completed form to your Connect Fostering Services Social Worker. Your comments will be dealt with immediately and you will receive feedback on what actions we take.

If you have a Comment, Compliment or Complaint we would like to hear from you. Please ask your foster carers to cut these out.

My Name is: _____ Age: _____

My Address is: _____
.....

My Phone Number is: _____

My comment is: _____
.....



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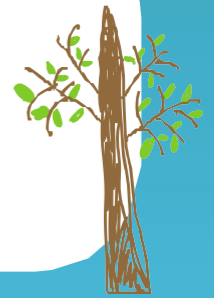
My Name is: _____ Age: _____

My Address is: _____
.....

My Phone Number is: _____

My comment is: _____
.....

This space is for you to write anything you want



Information from this document can be made available in alternative formats and in different Languages. If you require any further assistance, please contact us on the details below.



Connect Fostering Services Ltd
Connect House, The Stables, Parsonage
Farm, Hollow Hill LN, SLO OJW
Tel: 0203 780 3333 / 0203 371 2290 / 0203 371 9192

Tell us what you think



We would love to have your feedback

1. I have read this guide? (please tick) Yes No
2. Did you find this guide useful? Yes No
3. Do you know who you can contact if you are unhappy and want to complain?
Yes No
4. Is there anything we have missed? That you think we could add to improve and make this guide better?

5. Do you have any questions?

Thank you for your feedback!