



BECOMING A FOSTER FAMILY

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT YOUR FAMILY'S NEW JOURNEY!



WHAT IS FOSTER CARE?

Fostering is when a family looks after a child or young person while they are unable to live with their own family. This can be for a few days or months, or sometimes a few years until they can live on their own as adults.

Fostering involves the whole family; children living at home, adult children who have left home, extended family, aunts, uncles, family friends and even neighbours!

WHERE DO I FIT IN?

Even though it is the adults who are responsible for caring for the children that are in foster care, you can make a big difference by:

- Listening when they need someone to talk to, and give them motivation and encouragement.
- Helping them to feel that they are part of the family.
- Being a good friend! Having fun together, playing games, and sharing their hobbies and interests.
- Being a positive influence by encouraging healthy habits. You can help each other with homework, cheer each other on in sports and encourage each other to try new things.

The relationship between you and your foster sibling is really important and can make a big difference in both of your lives!

WHY DO CHILDREN NEED FOSTER CARE?

There are a lot of different reasons why children are in foster care. It might be because their parents are ill. It might be because they have not been looked after properly or they may have been hurt in the past.

Being fostered can be worrying for children as it means moving away from their family and living with people who they have never met before.



Don't Lose Them

9 CHARACTERISTICS

OF A GOOD FOSTER SIBLING



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO BEING A FOSTER SIBLING?

You get to make a positive difference in the lives of children who need it most, and you can learn new things about different cultures and backgrounds.

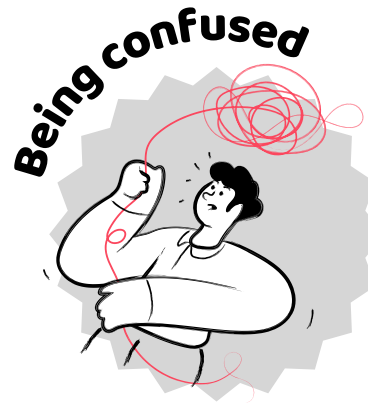
You may also form strong bonds with the children who stay with your family, and you can take pride in the knowledge that you've helped make a difference in someone's life.



IT'S NATURAL TO HAVE SOME CONCERNS

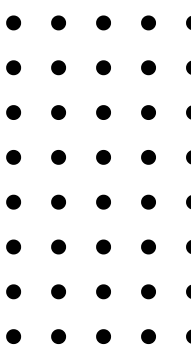
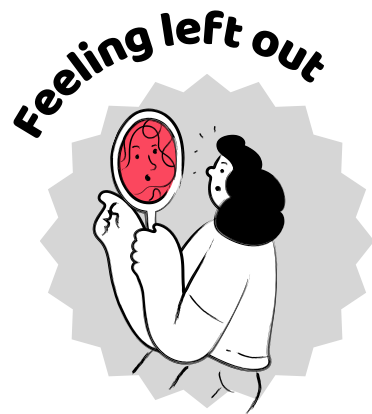
You may be worried about sharing your space with someone new, or about how you'll get along with the new child/ren. You may also feel sad when the child/ren leave, as they may not be with your family forever. It's important to talk to your grown ups and express your feelings, as they can help you work through any challenges that may arise.





THINGS THAT ARE OKAY!

You will feel lots of emotions on your journey in fostering. It is ok to feel things, take the time to talk to an adult you trust about your thoughts around fostering.



HOW DO MY PARENTS BECOME FOSTER CARERS?

At the start of the fostering process your family will be visited by a member of staff from Three Circles, and you will be asked how you feel about your parents fostering. It's important that you feel involved in discussions and decisions about your family starting to foster. If you are worried or don't understand anything, speak to your parents or someone from Three Circles, because fostering has to be the right decision for all the family, including you.

If your parents decide to apply to foster, they will have videos to watch, things to read and other foster carers will tell them about some of the children and young people they have looked after. They will have visits from people asking questions about their lives and a report will be written with all the information they share.

When the report is written this is shown to a group of people called 'panel'. Your parent/s will go to meet the panel where a decision is then made about whether or not they can be foster carers.

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE THEY ARE OFFICIAL FOSTER CARERS?

Once your parent/s are approved to be a foster carer then a Supervising Social Worker will come out to visit and get to know your family. They will be there to support you and your family through your fostering journey. Another person at Three Circles will be busy helping to find safe and happy homes for children who need somewhere to live.

A child will come to live with you when a team of people including the child's social worker has decided that living with your family is the best place for them. Your parent/s will get some information about the child and will make a decision about whether it is right for you all.



SOME QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

Who are the children that will be living with us?

Just like every person is different, every foster child is unique too. There is no one-size-fits-all answer to what type of child/children will be coming to live with you. Your family may have a bit more information that they may be able to share with you!

How long will they stay with us?

Foster care can be temporary or long-term. The goal is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for as long as the child/children need it.

How will they fit into our family?

Sometimes when a child first becomes looked after, it can be an unusual time for them. When they come to live with you the new children will be a part of the family. Everyone should work together to make them feel welcome.

Will they be going to our school?

It depends on the situation. Some children may have to switch schools if they are not from the same area and therefore could go to the same school as you.

How will our lives change?

There may be changes to the family routine and other things that come with a new person living in the family home. The new children will not change the love and care that your family shares.

Can we stay in touch after they leave?

You may form strong bonds with the children who stay with the family, and may want to stay in touch with them after they leave. It's important to understand that it depends on the situation, and that the foster care agency will make arrangements if it's possible.



USEFUL LINKS AND HOW TO COMPLAIN

There are lots of useful links detailed below! If you want to complain you can get in touch with us at Three Circles, or you can contact Ofsted directly:

Ofsted

Ofsted is the government body responsible for upholding standards in foster care. They inspect fostering agencies such as Three Circles Fostering.

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

Phone number: 0300 123 1231

Email address: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office of the Children's Commissioner

Address: The Office of the Children's Commissioner, Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT

Phone number: 020 7783 8330

Website: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Three Circles

- Ring us on **01625 533 531** and tell somebody at Three Circles. They will help you find the best way to share your views.
- Text the KICup call line on **07958 291 784** with your views, or request a call back. You can also ask us to send you a form via text that you can fill out.

BECOME.
THE CHARITY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE
AND YOUNG CARE LEAVERS



Become

Become has lots of information about the care system and can help to answer any questions you have about foster care.

Web: becomecharity.org.uk/
Care advice line: 0200 023 2033

Childline

Free 24 hour helpline for children. They are there to help you find ways to sort things out. It is confidential - which means they won't tell anybody about your call - unless you want them to, or if you are in danger.

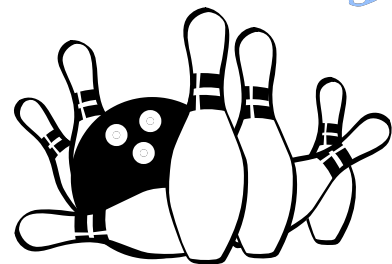
Call: 0800 1111
Web: childline.org.uk

ThinkuKnow

There is so much more to discuss about mobile safety. Need advice about something? (whatever your worry, be it about a picture a mate has shared, or online bullying), you can go to www.thinkuknow.co.uk for loads of useful tips and where to get help.

WHAT CAN I GET INVOLVED IN?

- We have lots of events at Three Circles where we invite the whole family - not just the fostered children! Some of our past events include ice skating, bowling and climbing!
- We have a digital youth group called Catalyst which meets online every half term. At Catalyst we make a difference to the world of fostering by having an active role in the agency. We have given you a leaflet about catalyst in this booklet, ask your parent/s to get in touch with us if you would like to join! It is for fostered and also children who foster!



- We provide you with this magazine all about fostering
- We will send you a birthday card on your birthday
- We send you a Christmas voucher just like we do for the fostered children
- We have an independence scheme called the 'KICup skills programme' which has lots of useful info including money skills and cv writing. Ask your parents for more info!



ACTIVITY CORNER!

ANIMAL CROSSWORD

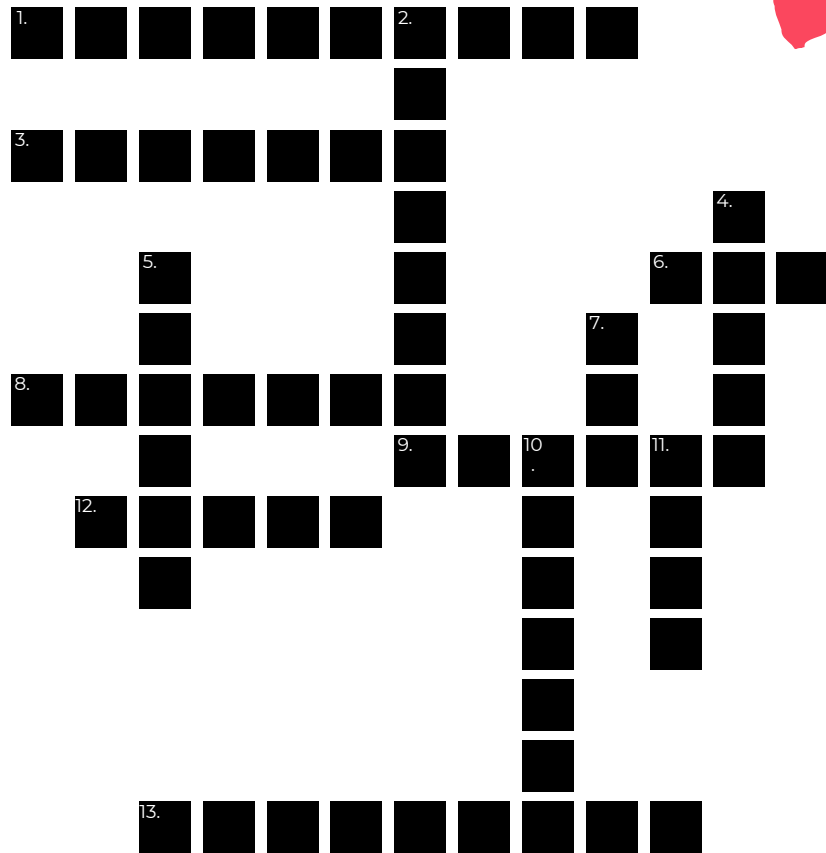
Solve the clues to find the animals.

ACROSS

- 1. Big Animal That has one horn
- 3. This Animal has a very long neck
- 6. Man's best friend
- 8. Lives in the cold and waddles
- 9. Slow moving and has a shell
- 12. Striped animal that looks like a horse
- 13. can swim under water and walk on land and has big bite

DOWN

- 2. This animal has a long trunk
- 4. This animal likes to eat carrots and sugar cubes
- 5. This animal loves bananas
- 7. Some say this animal has nine lives
- 10. Has big ears and likes to hop
- 11. King of the jungle



**DRAW 3 THINGS
YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR TODAY...**



EMOTIONS WORD SEARCH

Can you find the words hidden in the puzzle, how are you feeling about fostering?



- | | | | |
|-------|---------|-----------|-------|
| BORED | JOYFUL | CONFUSED | SAD |
| ANGRY | SCARED | SURPRISED | CALM |
| HAPPY | WORRIED | NERVOUS | TIRED |

GET TO KNOW ME

TIME I WAKE UP

USUAL BREAKFAST

MOST PLAYED SONG

LAST TV SHOW WATCHED

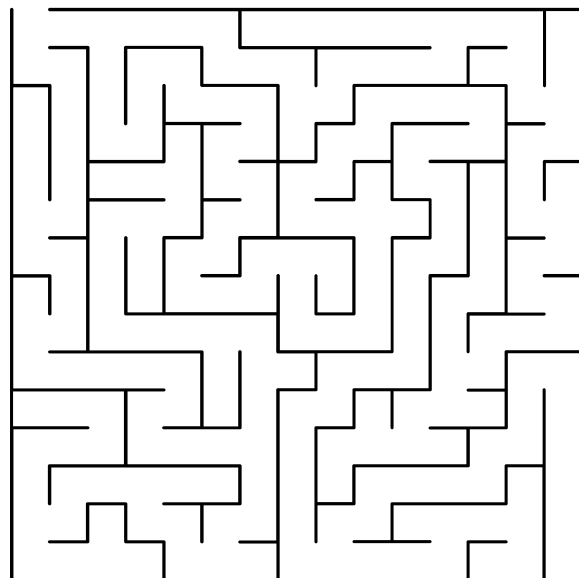
FAVORITE BOOK

CURRENT FOOD CRAVING

MY SAFE SPACE

MAZE TIME!

Help the child to find their way through the maze to the house!

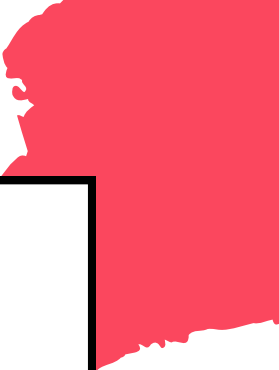


HOW CAN I SHARE HOW I FEEL?

We have a dedicated wishes and feelings form where you can share your views. We will share this feedback form with you every year in October. If you would like to share your views at another time we have a digital version of this form. Head to threecirclesfostering.com/childrenwhofoster to fill out a feedback form (ask a grownup to help you if you need).


Things you like about your family fostering:

Things you would like to change about your family fostering:



Do you get on with the child/ren that you live with? Please explain:



































How could fostering be made better for you?



Anything else you would like to say?

HOW HAPPY I AM

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is being as happy as you can be..., where are you now? Circle the emoji that matches how you feel!

Question	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy having foster children live with us					
I feel like my family treat me the same as our foster children					
I feel like my family take good care of me					
I feel like my family involve me in activities with our foster children and help me to take part in my hobbies					
I feel proud of our family being foster carers					
I feel comfortable talking to my family about how I feel about fostering					
I get on with foster children who live with me now					
I am enjoying school					



GLOSSARY

Social worker

They make decisions about the children's care and manage their care plan. They should be in regular contact with the children you foster at home and visit them at least every 6 weeks.

Care Plan

A care plan is a document created by the Local Authority, such as by a social worker, that should consider the needs of a child in care. This includes things like where they live, their family relationships, their physical and mental health, their education, and much more. The care plan is about making sure the children who are in foster care are safe, happy and well.

Review meetings

For any child who is in care, there will be regular meetings arranged. These are to ensure they are safe and well, and that everyone involved in supporting them is doing their job to help. These are often referred to as 'Review Meetings', this might be a term you hear at home from time to time.

Personal Education Plans

Every young person in care will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP). The PEP forms part of the care plan and is reviewed twice a year. The PEP sets out what needs to happen in the child's education to make sure they have the right support to achieve at school. This is another meeting you might hear about at home.

Supervising social worker

They visit your parent/s and make sure that they are looking after the fostered children properly. They are your parent/s social worker.

Three Circles Fostering

When a child cannot live with their family at home, social workers find safe places for young people to stay. Sometimes they ask fostering agencies (like us!) to care for children. We are a group of foster carers, social workers, teachers and lots more - all working to make life better for children.

