

Being an Effective Foster Carer:

Helping to Understand Education and Training from 0 to 25, an Aide Memoire

Foster Carers have a key role in supporting the children they look after. A major part of that will be supporting the child with their education. A good education is vital for looked after children – it is a stabilising factor in lives that are too often characterised by instability. A good education will give them more opportunities to do well in their lives. We know that looked after children do not do as well as their peers. It is vital that foster carers understand why this happens and what they can do to improve the chances of the children they are caring for doing well. We have set out below the areas we believe will help foster carers to develop a greater understanding of why education is important and the important role they play. Our expectation is that those providing training for foster carers will use this aide memoire to ensure that the training they deliver allows foster carers to be truly effective in the support they give looked after children.

| Understanding the CHILD/YOUNG PERSON | Understanding the SYSTEM |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child development - how a child's brain develops and how they learn • Barriers to learning – what are they? How are they overcome? • The importance of listening to the child or young person when they talk about their education • Being involved in the care planning process • How to contribute to the child's Personal Education Plan • Encouraging positive behaviours that will help a child access learning • Bullying: what to look out for • Tips to support reading/writing/math • The importance of placement stability, particularly for young people on courses • The impact of transitions in the life of a child in care including the transition between school phases • The continuing importance of resilience and motivation • The importance of pathway planning • Supporting aspirations post-16 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of legislation on education, the education system and the importance of education in how it affects looked after children • How does the law define "Parental Responsibility"? • How to access education: Admissions in early years; the compulsory phase; post-16 • School exclusion what the law says and what you need to do • Why education and learning is integral to the care planning cycle through which Personal Education Plans and Pathway Plans are developed • What are the choices post-16: education and employment and how to help young people make Key Stage 4 choices which ensure appropriate future progression • How the welfare reforms relate to education for care leavers aged 18+ • Sources of funding post-16: The 16-19 Bursary and the HE Bursary • What are the other choices post 16 – non-educational apprenticeships • What is a multi-agency intervention? • Staying Put and Personal Advisers to 25 |
| Understanding the SETTING | Understanding YOURSELF |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The phases of education: pre-school; primary; secondary; post-16 – what the "key stages" mean • What the education system does: the National Curriculum • What types of school are there? Academies, community schools and special schools • Choosing a school: understanding school performance • Working effectively with schools/education professionals, including designated teachers and understanding their roles and responsibilities • How the role of Virtual School Head/CAMHS/adult mental health services can support the child/care leaver • When more support is needed: knowing the SEN framework and the Learning Disability Assessment process • Engaging with education settings to support positive behaviour strategies including good attendance • Alternatives to mainstream settings • Designated support staff in FE settings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of carer involvement in the educational experience of looked after children • Knowing your delegated responsibilities • Building carer confidence in engaging with schools/education settings • Creating a positive home environment that is conducive to learning • Understanding the technology – the importance of ICT • How to be a reflective listener/learner/practitioner as a foster carer • Tips and techniques to support homework and course work • How your own learning style affects how you interact with the children you care for • How to be a good advocate |

Further information can be found at:

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Working together - Learning pack for parents of children aged 5 to 10: https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00141-2010 | How local authorities support the education of looked after children – check the DfE website at: http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/childrenincare/education | Coaching Your Teenager (14-19): https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00143-2010 |
| Foster Care on the DfE Website at: http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/fostercare | Definition of "Parental Responsibility" – (http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/3) and (http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/576) | Getting into Homework (8-13): https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00142-2010 |