



A Young Parents Guide to Being in Care

with Little Acorns Fostering



LITTLE ACORNS
FOSTERING



Contents

Introduction.....	4
Little Acorns.....	4
Who Works at Little Acorns	5
Little Acorns' Aim.....	6
The Family You Will Be Living With.....	7
Your Responsibilities.....	8
Role of the your Carer:.....	10
Role of the Little Acorns Supervising Social Worker	16
Role of your Social Worker	17
Your rights	19
Making a Complaint	20
Important Contact Numbers You May Need	22

Introduction

Coming into a foster placement is always going to be a scary time without the added worry of the parenting assessment of you and your child. You may feel like you are going to be watched so it's important that you and the carer build a positive and trusting relationship. Don't see them as the enemy! They are there to support you and the baby.

Parent and Child placements are there to support and guide you with the challenging task of parenting. Unfortunately, babies don't come with an instruction book and being in a Parent and Child placement will give you the opportunity to learn the skills and knowledge needed to care for your child in a safe and nurturing environment.

This guide is designed to introduce you to Little Acorns and the family you will be staying with, along with practical help and advice about the roles of the people around you, and your own responsibilities.

Welcome

Firstly, Little Acorns would like to welcome you and your baby to your Parent and Child placement!

Little Acorns is a fostering agency that helps to find families and carers for children, young people and new parents that need to live away from their home or need help and guidance to bring up their little one in the best possible way.



Here are some of the people you might meet when you visit Little Acorns, why not fill in their names?

Responsible Individual

.....

Registered Manager

.....

Business Services Director

.....

Senior Practitioners

.....

Supervising Social Worker

.....

Business Administrator

.....

Little Acorns Aims

- To ensure you and your little one are cared for properly
- To help you feel safe and keep your baby safe
- To keep you and baby healthy
- To encourage you to progress and learn the skills you need
to look after yourself and your baby
- To help maintain contact with those you are close to
- To support you with your cultural needs
- To help with any worries you may have
- To be there if you need to talk



The Family You Will Be Living With

Diagram illustrating the family structure and information to be provided:

- Their Childrens names are:** (Brown circle)
- Your Carers names are:** (Green circle)
- Your new address:** (Orange circle)
- Their pets names are:** (Yellow circle)
- Their phone number is:** (Red circle)

Your Responsibilities

You will be expected to care for your child at all times (getting up, bathing, feeding, changing etc, under supervision from carer until it is agreed it is no longer necessary).

You will need to manage your day and bedtime routine, which should fit in with the carer's household. When you are settling your child for bed it is your responsibility to check on your child throughout the evening and during the night as required.

You will have to be able to demonstrate your ability to attend to all your child's physical needs as well as demonstrating positive interaction.

With some assistance from your carer to begin with, you should be doing your own shopping, budgeting and cooking for yourself and your child and attend to all clothes washing and ironing.

One of the placements aims will be for you to achieve greater independence and skill in these areas.

You should keep your room tidy and leave the kitchen, bathroom and any other communal areas in a tidy, clean condition after use.

Personal clothing and belongings must be kept in your own room. The foster carer won't be responsible for property or articles that are lost or damaged.

You will contribute to the wellbeing of everyone in the foster carers' home and in public by demonstrating positive behaviours.

Your carer may make random room checks to ensure your safety and that of your child and therefore all bedroom doors must be kept unlocked.

Smoking is not permitted inside the foster carer's home. If you smoke, it must be in an agreed, designated outside area. On returning to the home, you must wash your hands before contact with your baby.

You are not allowed alcohol or any other illegal substances in your carers home. However, it is recognised some parents may be supported in a parent and child placement whilst the parent is supervised by a treatment programme for drug or alcohol misuse.

Your circumstances and history are strictly confidential to your carers and not their families or friends. You can feel reassured that no discussions will take place between family members and friends.



The Role of the your Carer

Support

Your foster carers will provide a comfortable, fully furnished bedroom for you and your baby along with age appropriate toys etc. You will also have access to the kitchen and sitting room areas and home entertainment. They are there to provide a safe and friendly environment to supervise and support you and help you improve your parenting skills.

In the early stages of the arrangement, we understand that you will be feeling overwhelmed, tired and may possibly have had a difficult birth. The foster carer will to give you the opportunity to rest and recover, and help you to care for your child while you settle in to all the new and different demands.

Your carers will offer guidance and assistance to you in managing the care tasks for your baby. This may include direct instruction, responding to questions, or it may include practical support such as accompanying you to parent/baby groups, health visiting clinic, shopping etc.

They will show you how any technical appliances work so that you are able to use cooking and cleaning facilities appropriately. If the placement progresses positively it is expected that you demonstrate less reliance on the carers support.

Once you have settled in and got to grips with your baby, the foster carer will help you to establish a good routine and will be available to prompt and guide you in all the different areas (😊 because there are soooo many!) You may not need many prompts as you are already starting to feel confident, but the foster carer is there to talk things through with and help you to learn what to expect as your baby grows. For example; talking, smiling, eye contact with baby.

**The carers
will offer guidance
and assistance**



The Role of the your Carer (continued)

Recording and Assessment

The foster carer will be keeping daily records noting observations of your ability to respond to your baby's needs, manage the routine, and manage the practical tasks of washing, ironing, shopping, budgeting etc.

These observations will be shared with your social worker and the Little Acorns Supervising Social Worker. The foster carer will be open and honest about your strengths and difficulties when recording their observations and you will be given the opportunity to read and comment on these observations.

Access to External Resources

The carers will support you to register with the Midwife, Health Visitor and GP so that you will have regular visits with these professionals. They are there to monitor you and your child in the early stages and will weigh your child to ensure they are healthy and will also provide advice on feeding and bonding with baby.

The carer will be there to support you with this as there is much information to take in and they will carefully listen and take notes on the advice that you have been given to help you put this into practice. They will ensure that you and your child attend GP appointments for the baby's 6-week check and immunisations which happen at 8 and 12 weeks.

The carer will also support you to obtain advice about contraception and any other health worries you may have.



**The carer
will be there to
support you**



Placement Progression

Towards the end of the assessment period, it is hoped that you will need minimal guidance as you have taken on all the support and advice from the foster carer and other professionals involved.

When you move on from the carer, most are happy to remain in contact with you and would love to hear how you and baby are doing. They can still be there for advice and support on the end of a telephone.

To summarise, what can you expect?

- Guidance on parenting skills and knowledge
- Clear agreement between you, the carer and the social worker about what's expected of you as a parent
- Occasional babysitting can be offered by your foster carer if agreed by your social worker
- Opportunity to learn home management skills, such as cooking your own meals, shopping, washing clothes etc.
- For you and your child to be kept safe and cared for in a family environment

- Support to attend local parenting groups to assist with socialising with other parents, such as baby massage etc.
- Regular feedback from the foster carer about what's going well and where changes may need to be made
- Develop your confidence in your own abilities to care for your child and build a strong relationship with them.
- Opportunity to access additional services if you have any specific needs that need to be addressed such as; accessing a Freedom programme if you have experienced any domestic violence, emotional, physical, financial, controlling, sexual control in a relationship, or counselling for any type of addiction etc.
- Help to manage your finances to ensure you are able to meet your own and your child's basic needs
- Take part in family activities and if appropriate and safe, meet up with your own friends and family informally, if it has been agreed that it is safe for this to happen
- If it is not safe for you to meet up informally, contact maybe arranged for your child's other parent and immediate family members through your social worker in a family centre close to where you live.



Role of the Little Acorns Supervising Social Worker

Your carers are fully supported by an experienced Little Acorns Supervising Social Worker who will offer ongoing support and supervision.

They will be responsible for monitoring, supporting, supervising, and inspecting your placement.

They will visit in the first week of placement and at least 4-weekly after, as well as regular phone contact. They will also undertake unannounced visits.

The Supervising Social Worker will read and sign off all daily logs and share with your Social Worker. They will discuss the recorded observation with your carer to ensure you are on the right track.



You and your baby will have your own local authority social worker



Role of your Social Worker

You and your baby will have your own local authority social worker and they are the ones that can make the decisions about things. When you are first placed with the carers, there will be a placement planning meeting that you, your carer, social worker and a worker from Little Acorns will attend. This is to talk through what is expected of everybody, so everything will be clear. There will be a review held within one month of you moving in, then after 3 months, then every 6 months for the duration of your placement.

Review meetings are very important. They are about you and your time in placement. Review meetings are to check that the care plan is still right for you and the baby and to change it, if necessary.

You will have your first meeting when you have been looked after for one month. You can go to these meetings and make comments if you wish. Your social worker will explain to you what the review meeting is going to be about and tell you who else will be there and why. For example, your Health Visitor will attend. You can invite whoever you would like to be there too. Let your social worker know.

Role of your Social Worker (continued)

The person who organises the meeting is called an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and it is their job to make sure they know everything about your situation and what has happened so far. This is to make sure any decisions made are right for you and your baby's needs and the best plans are made for your future. Your social worker and the Foster Carer can explain in more detail if you are worried about what these meetings entail.

Your social worker will visit you every 6 weeks whilst you are staying with the carers. You can call them at anytime if you wish to speak to them.

Your social worker will visit you every 6 weeks whilst you are staying with the carers



Your Rights

Little Acorns believes you should have the same rights as any other young person and:

- Be valued as an individual
- Be treated with dignity and respect
- Be safe
- Be given the opportunity of independence and choice
- Be given the right assistance according to you and your babies needs
- Take responsibility for your own actions
- Be given privacy
- Be treated according to your spiritual, cultural and social needs
- Continue to be able to build friendships and interests
- Be kept informed of decisions being taken by those around you
- Be given the opportunity to complain about anything that concerns you

Making a Complaint

If your carer is the one you are not happy with then you should speak to the Little Acorns Supervising Social Worker. If that isn't possible, then you should contact the Little Acorns Registered Manager.

The Registered Manager will always try to deal with this informally. This does not mean that you are not being taken seriously; it is because the complaint is more likely to be able to be dealt with quickly and to your satisfaction when it is dealt with in this way. This is known as a Stage 1 complaint.

All complaints are recorded by the fostering service and the Registered Manager monitors them.

If you are not satisfied with this, your complaint will be dealt with in line with the Children's Social Care Procedures. This is known as a Stage 2 complaint and an independent investigation will take place.

If the complaint has still not been resolved, then an independent review panel will consider the complaint and the way it has been dealt with. This is Stage 3 of the process and it must be considered by an independent panel.

Feel free to talk to your carer or anyone at Little Acorns if you are unsure what to do or have any further questions.



**Feel free to
talk to your carer or
anyone at Little Acorns
if you are unsure
what to do**

Important Contact Numbers You May Need

Childline - 0800 1111

Childline is a private and confidential service for children and young people up to the age of nineteen. You can contact a Childline Counsellor about anything - no problem is too big or too small.

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) - 0808 808 1001

Offering information, advice, advocacy and legal representation to children, young people and vulnerable adults through a network of dedicated paid workers and volunteers throughout England and Wales. Through these services NYAS provides a safety net for children, young people and vulnerable adults, who have nowhere else to turn.

Your Rights - 0800 528 073

This is a guide for children and young people to explain what the Children's Rights Director and his teams do to advise and assist individual children and young people.

Ofsted - 0300 123 1231

Ofsted Inspectors make sure that Fostering Agencies like Little Acorns are following all the rules set by the Government, to make sure that children and young people are kept safe, and all their needs are met.

Other Useful Numbers That You May Want to Keep

My Social Worker

.....

My Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

.....

My Foster Carers Supervising Social Worker

.....

Little Acorns Registered Manager - 01440 732010

.....





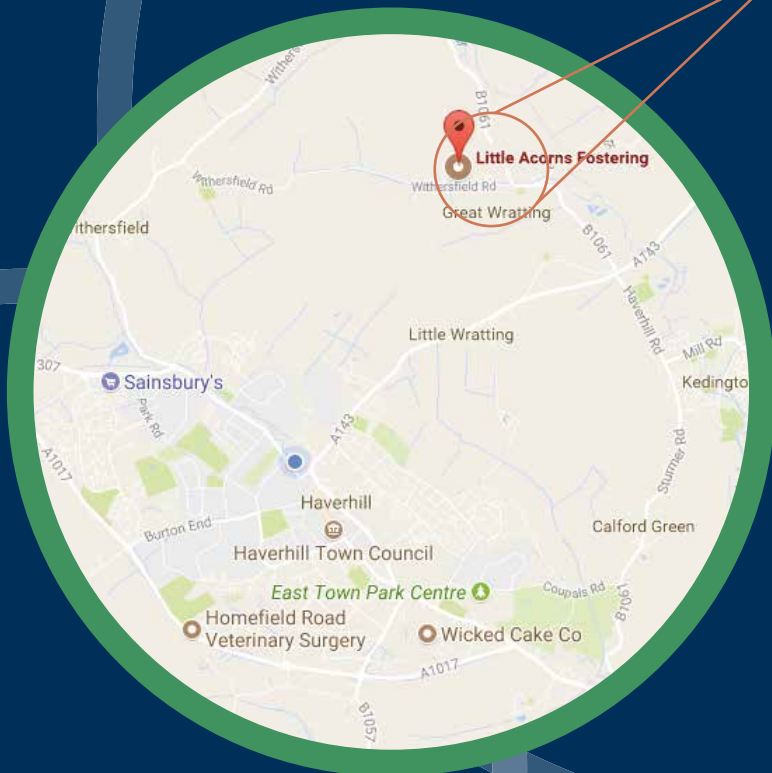
Contact Us

If you would like to find out more about Fostering with Little Acorns you can call us on 01440 732010 for a friendly informal chat.

Alternatively, email us at:
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