



Parent and Child Foster Care

Policy, placement preparation, practice and **protocol**

Scope of this Chapter

This Chapter is to ensure the best help and support is provided from the outset of contact and to establish a clear contract for all parties involved, their roles and responsibilities to the placement.

Relevant Chapters/legislation/guidance

Amendments

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1 Policy Statement

1.1 Aims and Objectives Statement

The Parent and Child Placement Policy has been designed and written to ensure that all foster carers, Family Placement Social Workers, Parents and Child's Social Workers receive the same information about the placement task they are going to undertake.

The policy provides clear guidance and synopsis for each professional / individual involved and enable guidelines for co-ordinating such placements.

The pre-placement meetings and contract are essential tasks to be completed prior to any placement. Failure to do so could result in delaying making a placement or a poor placement outcome.

The Family Placement Service recognises the duty to foster carers and parents to ensure the best help and support is provided from the outset. Establishing a clear contract clarifies for all parties involved their roles and responsibilities to the placement.

This policy should follow pre-birth assessments/child protection conference, which should always be undertaken prior to placements. The content of this policy is based on such assessments being completed, however, in some cases whereby this has not occurred, clear plans/timescales must be provided at the pre-placement meeting.

Parent and Child arrangements should not be treated as the primary means for assessment and training of parenting skills. The foster carer will be informing the assessment, which is the responsibility of the Child's Social Worker.

Parent and Child arrangements are an exceptional arrangement for very young children and their parents. The maximum age for a child within such a placement must not be beyond one year of age.

For a Parent and Child arrangement to successfully meet its objectives there will be a need for multi-agency working and assessment. Child's Social Workers will need to take the lead in negotiating with other agencies to ensure that every placement is fully supported (adult social care, mental health, learning disability, health visiting, family centre and family resource and mid-wife).

Parent and Child foster care will provide a safe and friendly environment, which will enable the parent to be supervised and supported with their baby/infant. The placement will consolidate existing parenting skills as well as improving them through support, encouragement, role modelling and training.

At the pre-placement planning meeting a clear statement as to the objective of the arrangement must be provided. Initial timescales for the assessment period within placement must be provided.

. A placement will only be made following a placement planning meeting and the completion and signing of the placement contract.

All Parent and Child foster carers offering this specialist service must be fully supported by an experienced SSW who will offer a minimum of four weekly support and supervision. The expectation of the Child's Social Worker will be to undertake a minimum of monthly visits to the parent and carer.

Any known or potential risks to foster carer and family from members of the child's family or others must be assessed. No foster carer or member of the fostering household should knowingly be placed in a position of risk as a consequence of providing a parent and child placement. Parents will be DBS enhanced checked and/or Police National Computer checked.

Parents have opportunity within a nurturing environment to achieve greater independence through the foster carer's guidance in housekeeping, cooking and budgeting. The foster carer, along with the Child's Social Worker, will support and provide help/advice in relation to the outcomes and future plans for parent and child.

Daily written evidence based reports will be shared by the foster carer with the parent to highlight and encourage further discussion. These reports will also be signed off by both parties and may be used in court proceedings.

Foster carers offering parent and child placements may do so alongside existing long-term placements. In exception when carers still hold a vacancy a new placement can be considered in consultation with the fostering service management team and all other involved parties; careful matching is paramount.

It would not be appropriate for a foster carer to take fostering leave during a parent and child arrangement and they will not be granted a period of relief care until after the first four month period unless this is a result of an emergency situation or pre-arranged to placement.

2. Placement Request

2,1.1 As with any other request for a foster placement when a child's social worker, becomes aware of the need for a foster placement, agreement for the parent and child arrangement will need to be given by the relevant head of Service.

The referral needs to clarify what arrangement is being requested, i.e.:

2, 1,2 A voluntary arrangement by the local authority where the child is not looked after.

2.2.3 A voluntary placement by the local authority where the child is looked after.

2.2.4 A voluntary placement by the local authority where both the child and the parent are looked after.

2.2.5 An arrangement directed by the courts where the child is looked after.

(Please see Annex B Parent and child arrangements for an expansion on these categories and the regulations and guidance under which they fall in The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regs Volume 4: Fostering Services, DfE 2011).

N,B The referral form to the Family Placement Service , should identify any risks that the parent or child may pose to the foster carer or their household. NB - If the parent is not a looked after child an enhanced DBS check will need to be completed for the parent, because the parent will be classed as a member of the fostering household.

2,2 . The Family Placement Duty service will commence a search of in house foster carers in the first instance.

2,3 If it is not possible to identify an in house carer, then agreement needs to be obtained from the relevant senior manager to search for an IFA placement.

2.4 If agreement is given for this the search will commence for an IFA placement among the preferred providers list kept by the FPS.

3. Pre-placement planning guidance

3.1 Foster Carer

At this meeting clarification needs to be given as to what is expected of the foster carer i.e. observational / non-intervention, teaching / modelling, intervention.

The foster carer will be expected to show the parent how any technical appliances work so that they are able to use cooking and cleaning facilities appropriately. If the placement progresses positively it must be expected that the parent demonstrates less reliance on the carer's support.

The key attachment the child will be enabled to make will be with their parent.

The foster carer will be expected to keep one daily record noting observations of the parent's ability to respond to their child's needs, manage the routine, manage the practical tasks of washing, ironing, shopping, budgeting etc. These observations inform any parenting programme/assessment that has been agreed.

The foster carer will be open and honest about the parent's strengths and difficulties when recording their observations on a daily basis.

Foster carers will agree to provide 24 hour support when required and transport parent and child when appropriate and as agreed.

Foster carers will babysit for one night a week (subject to contract discussion) and the offer stands if 24 hours notice is given.

Foster carers will provide a fully furnished bedroom complete with bed and cot linen and ensure the parent has use of a sitting room with home entertainment. Foster carers will make available and provide full use of baby/child toys and equipment for inside/outside home.

The Supervising social worker and child's social worker together with the foster carer will complete and provide a risk assessment and safer care agreement in relation to the individual parent and child arrangement. Foster carers will inform parent of household rules/routine.

Foster carers will periodically check on care/safety of baby/child in placement and therefore must have access to the child at all times whilst in the home environment.

Foster carers should intervene if the level of risk to baby/child from a parent would be detrimental to the baby/child's welfare.

Foster carers will always seek medical advice/treatment for any fall/injury a baby/child has sustained. A report to the Child's Social Worker and SSW will be made if practicably possible.

Foster carers will respect and give recognition to the importance of a parent and child's ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language, gender, sexuality and disability.

Foster carers will attend pre-placement meetings, reviews, core group meetings, planning meetings, child protection conferences and any other meetings required.

Foster carers will receive full information prior to placement from the Child's Social Worker in relation to parent and baby/child. If the information has not been received the carer must inform the SSW two days before placement commences.

Foster carers will liaise with the Child's Social Worker, health visitor and SSW and any other professionals involved.

Should the arrangement be terminated because of a decision made by the Trust relating to a serious breach of the contract, the wellbeing of the child compromised or because the parent has left the placement without the agreement of the Trust, the expectation will be that the child will remain in the placement, if appropriate, or be moved to a child only placement.

Although the progress of the placement will be reviewed according to the schedule set out in the contract, the baby/child will be subject to the looked after children review mechanism according to the statutory schedule. The foster carer will remain subject to the foster care review mechanism.

3.2 Parent

4.1 Parents will be expected to care for their baby/child at all times (getting baby up, bathing, feeding, changing under supervision from carer until it is agreed it is no longer necessary).

Parents will be expected to manage the day/bedtime routine, which fits in with the foster carer's household. When the parent is settling a child for bedtime routine it is the parent's responsibility to check on the child throughout the evening until they retire to bed.

Parents will be expected to demonstrate their competence in attending to all their child's needs and interact positively with their child.

Parents will be expected to shop/budget/cook for themselves and baby/child and attend to all clothes washing and ironing. Parents will keep his/her room tidy and leave kitchen/bathroom in a tidy/clean condition after use.

Personal clothing and belongings must be kept in the parent's own room. The foster carer cannot be responsible for property or articles that are lost or damaged.

Parents will contribute to the wellbeing of everyone in the foster carer's home and in public by demonstrating non-aggressive/non-threatening behaviours.

If agreed in the contract the foster carer will offer babysitting one evening per week; the parent will provide 24 hours notice for request.

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

The foster carer will write accurate daily record sheets, which will be shared daily with the parent and signed by both the parent and carer. If there are any differences of opinion these should be discussed and recorded.

The foster carer will complete and share the safe caring plan with the parent.

Smoking is not permitted inside the foster carer's home. Any alcohol kept in the carer's home should be kept in a secure place.

No involvement with any illegal substances is permitted in the foster carer's home. However, it is recognised some parents may be supported in a parent and child arrangement when the parent is supervised by a treatment programme.

Parents to inform carer and Child's Social Worker of any appointments / assessments etc and check if childcare cover is approved.

Parent's circumstances/history is strictly confidential to the named foster carers and not their families/friends. Parents can feel reassured that no discussions will take place between family members and friends.

3.3 SSW (Supervising Social Worker)

5.1 SSW's to ensure full parent and child information is passed on by the Child's Social Worker to the foster carer prior to placement commencing. If this is not the case then the SSW should inform Practice Manager, Fostering who will (in discussion with s head of service make a decision if the placement is agreed or delayed.

SSW's will be responsible for monitoring/supporting/supervising/inspecting the management of the placement.

SSW's will visit in the first week of placement and four weekly thereafter to provide supervision and support as well as weekly telephone contacts. FPSW will also undertake unannounced visits.

SSW's will read and sign off all daily record sheets and report any issues that are appropriate. FPSW will photocopy and forward recording sheets to the Child's Social Worker. FPSW will discuss with the carer the recorded observation to ensure objectivity remains.

SSW's will take the lead role in ensuring looked after parents placements do not drift. SSW's will inform foster carers of any annual leave of one week plus.

SSW will check with foster carers they have researched/accessed groups or courses available (if appropriate) for the parent and child in the local area.

3.4 Child's Social Worker (CSW)

6. 1 The Baby/Child's Social Worker must visit the placement every four weeks and make weekly telephone contact in conjunction with the SSW's contact with carer. During these visits social workers should discuss individually and together with the parent and carer how the placement is going in relation to the contact. The child's Social Worker should undertake room checks.

The child's Social Worker should check out any arranged appointments and childcare cover that needs to be approved by carers.

Should a dispute arise within the placement, joint visits will be initially undertaken by the SSW and Child's Social Worker. The Child's Social Worker will then arrange a meeting to include the parent, SSW and carer and hub manager.

The child's Social Workers will inform benefits agencies (child benefit, housing benefits) of the parent's situation and gain written confirmation that benefits agencies have been informed.

To ensure prompt carer's payment, the SSW will inform the FPT Finance Officer of the placement start date.

The child's Social Workers to ensure the carer has all relevant information/paperwork by the latest date of pre-placement planning meeting.

The child's Social Workers to provide the parent with the complaints procedures leaflets.

The child's Social Workers will inform the carers of any arranged annual leave of one week plus.

4... Finance

4. 1 Parent and Child Payment Rates

Dependent on whether child and parent are looked after and if so applicable to current rates for children under 18 in placement.

5 Appendices

5.1 Template for Contract for Parent and Child Placement

5.2 Guidance for Contract

5.3 Parent and Child Daily Report Template

5.4 End of parent and baby placement evaluation form for foster carer

5.5 Clarification of Observational / Non-intervention, Teaching / Modelling, Intervention in Foster Placements5. 1 Agreement between Slough's Family Placement Team and (Parents) in relation to (Child)

Name of parent		DOB
Name of parent		DOB
Name of child		DOB
Child's Social Worker		Team
Contact details	email	
	Mobile	
	Office	
SSW		Team
Contact details	email	
	Mobile	

Office

- a) **Emergency contact office hours**
Emergency contact out of hours
- b) **Objectives of the placement**

- c) **Anticipated length of placement**
- d) **Parent's understanding and consent to placement** **Yes** **No**
- e) **Expectations of parent whilst in placement**

- f) **Financial arrangement between foster carer and parent**

- g) **Parent's expectations from the placement**

- h) **Level of supervision by foster carer**

- i) **Contacts**

- j) **Health issues for parent**

- k) Health issues for baby**

- l) Foster carers will be expected to**

- m) Guardian's views / Court specifications**

- n) Who should the parent contact if there are any concerns**

- o) Are there any cultural, ethnic, religious, language, gender, sexuality or disability needs for either parent or child?**

- p) Any other issues?**

Parent Signature

.....

Date

.....

Foster Carer Signature

.....

Date

.....

Child's Social Worker
Signature

.....

Date

.....

SSW Social Worker
Signature

.....

Date

.....

5.2 Guidance for Contract

(To be completed seven days (minimum) prior to placement)

- a) Carer's first point of call in crisis should be the Child's Social Worker or SSW Social Worker but there will times when neither is available and carers should know whom to contact in this scenario.

This could be the Duty Social Worker in Children's Hub or Family Placement Service.

The Line Manager, in the Children's Hub or Family Placement Social Worker.

Foster carers should also have the Out of Hours support numbers for Emergency Duty Team and the out of hours duty phone line.

- b) It is important that the Child's Social Worker provides clear reasons for the purpose of parent and child arrangement..
- c) It is essential that the parent understands why they are being asked to commit to living in a foster home with their child and that they have been informed of the potential outcomes.
- d) Check parent has read and agreed synopsis of expectations. Following can be commented/included:

Use of TV, computer or telephone?

Retire to bed no later than 11.30pm

Parent to be up by 7.30am to work with carer's current household routine.

Babysitting to be agreed

Time out – daily, weekend

Household tasks? (Hoovering lounge once a week etc)

Cooking?

Changing bedclothes weekly/fortnightly?

To attend family centre days?

Use of mobile "phone (restrictions to evening whilst child sleeps)

- e) Is parent entitled to their own income?
Expectation of contribution from parent to carer (milk tokens, baby/child clothes)
How will expenses be managed (parent and carer buy shopping together)?
Who will monitor what items are needed (nappies, milk, toiletries) so they do not run out?
- f) Is parent clear of their role and responsibility?
Does parent want separate food cupboard in kitchen?
Are there any classes/activities parent regularly attends?
- g) Baby alarm needed?

Babysitting/time out?

How will parent get to and from family centre appointments?

Should child be with parent at all assessments/health appointments?

Agreement needed by foster carer as to caring for child whilst parent attends such appointments.

Unsupervised time?

Guidance if parent leaves with child without notice/agreement?

- h) Contact with identified family and specified friends – frequency with or without child. Another available parent (contact supervised or unsupervised).
Any identified individuals who must not have contact?
- i) Any known on-going medications (storage of)?
Pre-arranged health appointments?
Any health needs to be considered?
Dental/eye appointments or needed?
- j) Medications, appointments
- k) Is there particular need to look at routine/budgeting with parent?
Specific recordings.
Provide clean linen/towels on weekly basis.
Provide cleaning materials and equipment so parent can keep agreed areas clean and tidy.
Will carer be available during labour/childbirth, postnatal appointments?
- l) Views from Guardian
- m) Each parent and child need to have needs recognised and these should be valued and promoted.
- n) Are there any specific services needed to be accessed? Cultural, ethnic, religious, gender, sexuality, language or disability can be recorded in this section.

Date:

Completed by:

RECORD OF DAY

Child's Needs: Please consider routine, play / stimulation (games / reading / singing), physical care (nappy changes, bathing, clean clothes, and encouraging development) emotional care (attachments, eye contact, smiles, reassurance).

Parent's Presentation: Please consider parent's stability / emotional wellbeing (frame of mind), Timekeeping, cleanliness of bedroom, household chores undertaken and personal self care (showers, teeth / hair and clean clothes).

Budgeting: Any money given, how money managed and planned for.

Preparation of Bottles (cleaning / sterilisation), Cooking (who cooked for parent and child, prepared meals, type of food).

Summary of discussion of the day between foster carer and parent (concerns / positives, intervention, skills to work on.

Parent's comments:

Foster Carer Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Family Placement
Social Worker
Signature

Date

5.4 End of parent and baby placement evaluation form for foster carer

(This will be attached to review paperwork)

Name of parent(s):

Name of child:

Name of Child's Social Worker:

Date placement

From:

To:

Working relationship with parent:

Was contract used and reviewed?

Were placement expectations/timescales realistic?

Were there any aspects of this placement that were particularly difficult?

Working relationship with FPSW (did you feel supported?)

Signature _____

Date _____

5.5 End of parent and baby placement Child's Social Worker's report

(This will be attached to carers' review paperwork)

Name of foster carers:

Name of parent(s):

Name of child:

Date placement

From:

To:

Describe working relationship with foster family:

How did foster carer meet placement expectations?

Was the placement suitable for a parent and child?

How did the parent view the carers?

Any concerns about carers/placement?

Signature

Date _____

5.6 Risk Assessment - Parent and Child

Risk Assessment			
Behaviour / Hazards	Details of the last known incident of the behavior and frequency of occurrence	Known triggers	Controls to reduce/eliminate risk
Absconding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - category 1 or 2 absence - from the home - from school - from home - failure to return 			
Self harming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cutting, scratching - using medication - using alcohol/substances - strangulation, head 			

banging			
Impulsive/dangerous behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - self - involves others - involved by others 			
Substance/alcohol misuse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - self - involves others - involved by others 			
Attendance at School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - refusal to attend - no school placement - missing from school 			
Verbal aggression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - abuse - threats - challenging - from others 			
Physical aggression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - threatening - assaults - fighting - from others 			
Bullying <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - of other children - of adults 			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by other young people - by others 			
<p>Sexually abusive/inappropriate behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - towards other children - towards adults - from others 			
<p>Racial violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - towards other children - towards adults - from others 			
<p>Damage to property</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - own property - others property - deliberate - accidental - own property damaged by others 			
<p>Offending</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - self - involves others - involved by others - persistent or ongoing and likely to result in further 			

convictions			
High needs - 'victim' mentality - high levels of reassurance required			
Behavior's which repeatedly put themselves or others at high risk of harm This assessment may be based on any of the above categories			
Ongoing lack of engagement with family, carers or professionals – may be evidenced through any of the above			

5.7 Clarification of Observational / Non-intervention, Teaching / Modelling, Intervention in Foster Placements

Observational/Non-intervention

This approach can be used in cases where the parent(s) deny any previous, current or potential concerns with their parenting or attachment style with their child(ren).

In the observational/non-intervention approach, the foster carer may be asked to observe and take notes on a parent's current parenting strategies, as well as the baby's responses to the parent.

- Maintain a neutral position and relationship with parent(s)
- Notation of both positive and negative observations
- Interactions between parent and child
- Observations of mother and father interactions and parenting relationship
- Routines
 - Bedtime
 - Feeding
 - Bathing
 - Dressing/changing and
 - Playing/Chatting
- Observations of the child's
 - Temperament
 - Reactions to parent and others
 - Eye gazes
- Observations of risks to the child's health or safety
- Reporting risk
- **Intervention** if the child is in *immediate* risk of health or safety
- **Other interventions** should only follow observation of parental actions or discussions of option.

Teaching / Modelling

This approach can be used in cases where the parent(s) acknowledge or share concerns about their previous or current parenting and/or attachment styles.

In the teaching/modelling approach, the Foster Carer may be asked to make initial observations of a parent's current parenting strategies, as well as the baby's responses to the parent. The Carer may then be asked to take a more active role in the care of the baby in order to model useful parenting skills. Such modelling can then be used to observe any changes or potential for change in the parent's approach to parenting.

- Use a supportive interactional position and relationship with parent(s)
- Notation of both positive and negative observations
- Notation of interactions between parent and child
- Proactive modelling of setting routines
 - Bedtime
 - Feeding
 - Bathing
 - Dressing/changing
 - Playing Chatting
- Observations of any changes in the child's:
 - Temperament
 - Reactions to parent and others
 - Eye gazes
- Observations of any potential risk to the child's health or safety
- **Intervention** if the child is in *immediate* risk of health or safety
- Reporting risk

Intervention

This approach can be used in cases where there are known and recognised risks to the baby/child or babies/children.

In the intervention approach, the Foster Carer may be asked to have a "hands-on" relationship while noting the parenting strategies used by the parent, as well as the child's responses to the parent. The Care may also be asked to model useful parenting skills. Such modelling can then be used to observe any changes or potential change in the parent's approach to parenting.

- Use a non-judgemental, active position and relationship with parent(s)
- Notation of both positive and negative observations
- Notation and comment on interactions between parent and child
- Set and provide sole or shared care for the needs and routines for the baby
 - Bedtime
 - Feeding
 - Bathing
 - Dressing/changing
 - Playing Chatting
- Observations of any changes in the child's:
 - Temperament with the parent and with the carer
 - Reactions to parent and others
 - Eye gazes
- Observations of any potential risk to the child's health or safety
- **Intervention** if the child is in *immediate* risk of health or safety
- Reporting risk – especially if the parent(s) is not co-operative with the process for any reason