
FRAMEWORK FOR EXCELLENCE IN FOSTER CARE



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INTRODUCTION



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KEY ASSETS CEO



KEY ASSETS IS AN INTERNATIONAL PROVIDER OF SOCIAL CARE SOLUTIONS INCLUDING FAMILY BASED FOSTER CARE. SINCE ITS FOUNDATION IN 1994, OVER 20,000 CHILDREN HAVE BEEN PLACED WITH FOSTER CARERS.

Key Assets provides a sound infrastructure of support, expertise and governance across its fostering services, and enables the sharing of evidence based best practice.

In our engagement and conversations with partners around the globe we have encountered a variety of perspectives on what is understood by the term foster care. In some countries the term foster care doesn't exist and, where it does exist, can carry different meanings or different expectations.

We are also aware that whilst service standards for foster care in some countries and jurisdictions are very comprehensive, in others they are at earlier stages of development. Some have standards for the welfare and protection of children in out of home care, which combine a range of care services and placing authority

responsibilities. These can however be less explicit about what it is that a child¹ should expect when placed with foster carers, and how in practice, we can ensure that foster carers and the fostering agency work together to ensure that safe, high quality, family based care is provided.

In drawing up our Framework for Excellence in Foster Care we have read and considered available standards for foster care and out of home care from a range of sources including from the UK^{2,3,4}, Ireland⁵, Europe⁶, the United Nations⁷, and Australia⁸. We are grateful for the opportunity to learn from and reflect on both the literature available, as well as the learning shared with us by children, foster carers, employees and partners in all of our jurisdictions.

This framework outlines what we understand by quality family based foster care and recognises our collective responsibility to promote the rights of children worldwide (UNCRC⁹). It is underpinned by our commitment to making a positive and lasting difference to the lives of children who, for many and varied reasons and for differing lengths of time, are unable to live with their parents.

1. Where the term child is used throughout this document this is in accordance with the UNCRC definition, i.e. "For the purposes of the present convention child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier" (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 Part 1 Article 1)

2. Fostering Services National Minimum Standards 2011 Department of Education (England)

3. National Care Standards Foster Care and Family Placement Services. 2001 Scottish Executive

4. National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2003 Welsh Assembly Government

5. National Standards for Foster Care 2003 Department of Health and Children (Ireland)

6. Quality4 Children Standards for Out of Home Care in Europe. FICE, IFCO, SOS Children's Villages

7. United Nations Guidelines for the Appropriate Use and Conditions of the Alternative Care for Children (adopted 2009)

8. National Standards for Out of Home Care 2010. Dept of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. (Australia) KPMG

9. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989



WE BELIEVE:

- Every child deserves a childhood
 - Every child deserves family life
 - Every child deserves to belong
 - Foster carers are our 'key assets'
 - Working together best serves children and families
 - Strengthening families strengthens communities
 - Evidencing is our responsibility
 - People are more than labels
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Children everywhere deserve excellent care and this framework outlines the overarching aims and outcomes which we hope will be achieved for all children placed in our care. Foster carers should expect clarity around their roles and responsibilities, support with the development of their own skills and abilities, in addition to continuous quality support for themselves and their families.

We are committed to working together with our children, our fostering families, placing authorities and other significant partners to strive for excellence, to build resilience and a sense of belonging for all children growing up in foster care.



Standard One

PROMOTING CHILDREN'S SAFETY

EVERY CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON WILL BE PLACED IN A FOSTER HOME THAT IS SAFE AND SECURE, WHERE THEY WILL BE PROTECTED FROM ABUSE OR EXPLOITATION OF ANY KIND.

OUTCOME

The child will know that adults caring for them will keep them safe, provide support and protection from harm, and enable them to share fears or feelings, past and present. The child will develop an awareness of, and skills in, self-protection.

THE CHILD WILL:

- Know their foster carers have been carefully assessed and checked to ensure that they are safe and caring people.
- Be provided with some information about the family they are going to live with (Carer Welcome Booklet), and have the opportunity to meet them before moving in, whenever possible.
- Be provided with information about the fostering team (Staff Welcome Booklet) so they know the staff and what they do.
- Know they can bring favourite toys, clothes and other things to the foster home.
- Be helped by the foster carers to learn how they keep children safe, for example Safe Caring guidelines, and be able to have a say in these guidelines.
- Know that the carers and staff will listen to any worries about times when they did not feel or were not kept safe in the past, and talk with the child's social worker as to what can be done about this.
- Know the foster carer's home is checked every year for safety from dangers such as electric equipment and that everyone knows what to do in an emergency.
- Be helped by the foster carer to keep themselves safe (e.g. using cooking equipment safely, keeping in touch when out of the house, road safety, using the internet safely, safe relationships).
- Be helped by the foster carer to get to know and spend time with other children and adults who are safe to be with.
- Know that if anyone is bullying or trying to harm them that the foster carer and the staff will listen to their worries and do everything they can, quickly, to stop this happening.
- Know they have a right to complain about anything that they are unhappy with in the foster home or with the staff. They will be listened to and advised what can be done to make things better.
- Know that the foster carers and staff will value them for who they are and respect their individuality, including their age, abilities, background, culture and spirituality.



THE FOSTER CARER WILL:

- Make sure that their home is free from hazards as much as possible and help the child to understand how to deal with potential hazards.
- Not impose any form of corporal punishment on the child, which will include smacking, slapping, shaking, spanking and other humiliating forms of treatment or punishment.
- Ensure that where children are being transported, this is done in a safe manner, in a vehicle which is roadworthy and insured, and using appropriate seat belts/car seats.
- Produce safe caring guidelines for their family, which are updated as required and are contributed to by all family members and fostered children. They will also complete a Child Specific Safe Caring Plan if necessary.
- Ensure the child is provided with information, appropriate to age and stage of development, on general safety and how to keep him or herself safe.
- Provide appropriate supervision for all children in the home.
- Build positive relationships with children and be alert to signs that children may be at risk of harm.
- Provide a 'Welcome Booklet' for the child and support this with planned introductions where possible.
- Listen to any fears or concerns that the child has around safety, past or present, and ensure that this information is shared with agency staff so that it can be acted upon in accordance with placing authority guidelines.
- Respond quickly to any incident of abuse or bullying, racism, discrimination, exclusion or other unfair treatment that has affected the child, and inform agency staff.
- Respond quickly to any accidents and attend training in First Aid.
- Ensure any significant incidents are accurately written down, using critical incident and other reporting procedures.
- Record evidence in the Key Developmental Assets recording tool on how the child is being kept safe, both in and outside the home, and how the child is being supported to develop skills in personal responsibility and self-care.
- Respect the privacy of children and keep confidential information safe.
- Attend training provided by the agency on first aid, child protection, health and safety, safe caring, managing a child who has been sexually abused or abused others, behaviour management, internet safety and other similar topics.
- Know that the agency will make clear to them any policies and procedures relating to child protection and ensure that they understand their role and responsibilities.
- Know that the agency will give guidance on processes regarding allegations against foster carers and that, in the event of such an allegation, they will be supported and treated with dignity and respect.

KEY ASSETS WILL:

- Ensure that criminal records, statutory checks and references are completed on all potential foster carers and staff, and kept up to date in accordance with the local jurisdiction.
- Implement a thorough and comprehensive assessment on every foster carer to ensure that the carers have the ability to provide safe care for the child placed and any birth children.
- Provide an independent fostering panel to make recommendations about the appointment of foster carers to the agency.
- Undertake a health and safety assessment of the foster home on an annual basis, including internal and external avoidable hazards and ensure that any outstanding concerns are put right.
- Ensure that where children are sharing a bedroom, a risk assessment has deemed this appropriate, and this is in accordance with placing authority guidelines.
- Ensure a system is in place for confirming that other support persons or babysitters have been assessed as safe.
- Ensure any group activities arranged by the agency have been assessed in a manner which considers risk and mitigation.
- Provide support to the child and family through a "Team Parenting*" approach, maximising collaboration and communication between all key agencies and family members.
- Obtain as much information as is available about the child, in order to match the child and foster family. Ensuring that the foster family is informed about the child's history, strengths and any concerns.
- Ensure there is a Placement Agreement for every child at the point of placement to confirm communication, clarification of roles and responsibilities, and to enable the plan for the child to be one that is protective.
- Produce a Child Profile for each foster child in providing information about the child to others who may take care of the child temporarily. Ensure that the child has the opportunity to contribute, in an age appropriate manner, to the development of this profile.
- Ensure a comprehensive record is kept of the care and progress of the child including foster carer recordings, staff contacts and, where possible, contributions from the child.
- Support foster carers to develop Safe Caring guidelines that are updated annually. Develop Child Specific Safe Caring Plan where appropriate.
- Ensure monthly supervision of the foster carers covers safety issues, guidance and addresses any concerns regarding the child or foster carer practice.
- Provide a policy and guidance on risk assessment and support to children who self-harm.
- Implement a process for annual reviews of foster carers or post allegation reviews, inviting comments from the carers, children and placing authorities, ensuring foster carers remain suitable for their role.
- Implement systems for monthly supervision of all staff and an annual performance and development review.
- Ensure agency and carer practice provides cultural safety for the child, by providing an environment in which their cultural identity is valued, respected and promoted.
- Act promptly on any reporting or concerns about past or present abuse or bullying of the child, in close liaison with the child's placing authority and local child protection procedures.
- Ensure any critical incidents relating to the child are reported to the placing authority without delay.



- ▶ Support carers to minimise the risks of children going missing. Work with agencies to secure their return and provide appropriate support for the child.
- ▶ Ensure the child is helped to understand reasons for placement moves and to be prepared appropriately.
- ▶ Provide training and/or guidance procedures for foster carers and staff on first aid, safe caring, child protection and safeguarding, complaints and allegations, critical incidents, health and safety, missing children, internet safety, caring for a child who has been abused or may abuse others, managing behaviour safely.
- ▶ Provide regular updates to the authority placing on how the child is being kept safe, using the foster carer's Key Developmental Assets recording as evidence.
- ▶ Put in place a procedure for listening to and acting on complaints and allegations. Ensure complaints and allegations are recorded accurately and monitored centrally including the outcome. Information on how to make a complaint will be made available to children, carers, staff, parents and placing authorities.
- ▶ Provide a framework for risk management, "whistle blowing" and Business Continuity Planning to secure safe agency practice and stability for children.
- ▶ Comply with any country or state specific legislation and policy on safety and child protection procedures, home and public safety, and ensure all staff and foster carers are made aware of their responsibilities.
- ▶ Ensure office premises are safe from potential hazards and that confidential information relating to staff, foster carers or children is securely kept, both in the physical and electronic environments.
- ▶ Provide access for the foster carer to social work support from the agency, around the clock, every day of the year.



Standard Two

PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING

THE PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND ONGOING DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF EVERY CHILD WILL BE PROVIDED FOR IN THE FOSTER PLACEMENT, MAXIMISING THEIR POTENTIAL TO LIVE A HEALTHY AND FULFILLING LIFE.

OUTCOME

The child will be encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle and to know that good care will be taken of them when they are not well. They will be supported to grow and develop and, as far as possible, to live a life free from ill health and to have a positive view of their future.

THE CHILD WILL:

- ▶ Know that the foster carer's home will be clean, comfortable and welcoming to them.
- ▶ Know that the foster carer will provide food that is healthy, nutritious and includes some of their favourite meals.
- ▶ Be encouraged to get involved in exercise, for example, walks, games, sports and other activities, and know that their choices in this will be respected.
- ▶ Know that the foster carer will support them to go to medical appointments as necessary e.g. doctors, dentists, opticians and provide prescribed medicines at the appropriate times.
- ▶ Know that their own views and, where applicable, their parents' views will be taken into account in any medical treatment.
- ▶ Be encouraged to learn how to take care of their own body, for example, washing, bathing, cleaning teeth, using the toilet and know that any help provided will respect their privacy and dignity.
- ▶ Know that foster carers and staff will listen to their worries and fears and try to help to sort out any problems.
- ▶ Know that the agency will advocate for specialist services as needed, for example, a hearing aid, wheelchair, counselling, therapy or advice on sexual health.
- ▶ Be provided with a copy of a Health Passport which the carer will help to complete with the child, recording any health checks and treatment during the foster placement. This record belongs to the child and will go with them when they leave.
- ▶ Know that the carer will try to make sure that any child with a disability is helped to be involved in all aspects of family life and activities, and is able to have the same opportunity to say what they feel and have choices, as any other child.
- ▶ Know that the carer will be sensitive to the child's culture and community norms in promoting his/her health and healing.



THE FOSTER CARER WILL:

- ▶ Provide a clean, comfortable and nurturing home environment for a child and promote a sense of belonging in, and attachment to their family.
- ▶ Encourage the child to express their wishes and feelings and to feel included in family activities.
- ▶ Provide balanced and nutritious meals for the child and encourage involvement in choices and preparing food, appropriate to the child's preferences and cultural norms.
- ▶ Register the child with appropriate medical services, according to needs.
- ▶ Support the child to attend any medical appointments required and encourage them to take responsibility for their own health as they mature.
- ▶ Work closely with medical professionals to support the child's health needs.
- ▶ Support a parent in placement alongside their child to understand and promote good health for themselves and their child.
- ▶ Ensure that children are aware of body and lifestyle changes as they mature and encourage a positive attitude to this e.g. puberty, relationships, sexuality, sexual identity and safe sex.
- ▶ Support children with personal care needs in a manner which is safe and respectful of their age, privacy and dignity e.g. bathing a younger child or a child with a disability.
- ▶ Be creative in involving children in a range of activities and experiences, which will maximise their opportunity to maintain good health and self-esteem.
- ▶ Encourage participation in out of school activities, clubs etc which support healthy exercise and self confidence, and provide positive adult role models.
- ▶ Attend first aid and other health related training e.g. HIV/AIDs, sexual health, disability awareness, and specialist training.
- ▶ Discourage the child from engaging in activities harmful to their health e.g. drug taking, smoking, use of alcohol, unsafe sex.
- ▶ Be sensitive to the child's needs for emotional support and provide opportunities to share their feelings and concerns.
- ▶ Be sensitive to the child's cultural, spiritual and personal beliefs, and connection to people and places.
- ▶ Refrain from smoking in the home and in the presence of foster children.
- ▶ Ensure that medicines are safely locked away and know that they will not be asked to administer invasive medical practices without appropriate training and support.
- ▶ Keep an accurate record of any medical intervention and treatment and report any side effects or reactions to the placing authority.
- ▶ Keep the child's Health Passport up to date with any health issues and enable the child to contribute where possible.
- ▶ Keep a record in the Key Developmental Assets recording of how they are providing physical and emotional support to the child and promoting good health, and a record of any health matters.
- ▶ Keep the agency and the child's placing authority fully informed of any health matters relating to the child.



KEY ASSETS WILL:

- ▶ Ensure that the health of foster carers is assessed and medical reports sourced during the assessment process and for periodic reviews.
- ▶ Ensure all carers are physically and emotionally well when commencing fostering and review regularly.
- ▶ Seek full health information on the child at point of referral and ensure that foster carers have all relevant information and are aware of their responsibilities.
- ▶ Where specialist medical resources and appointments are required take this into consideration in the matching process.
- ▶ Provide a Health Passport for the child and support the carer with maintaining this.
- ▶ Work in collaboration with the placing authority and health professionals in plans to promote the health of the child.
- ▶ Provide training for foster carers on first aid and other specialist health matters as required e.g. HIV/AIDS, autism, ADHD, disability awareness, attachment and trauma.
- ▶ Promote healthy lifestyles in activities and supervision of foster carers.
- ▶ Advocate for the provision of health services for children including specialist services where required e.g. therapeutic support, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and support for children with disabilities.
- ▶ Promote in all training and activities an inclusive approach to children with special health needs or disabilities.
- ▶ Ensure that a child's cultural practices, wishes and spiritual beliefs are taken into account and, where appropriate, incorporated into wellbeing and healing.
- ▶ Ensure that carers for children with exceptional medical needs requiring regular medication or invasive medical practices, e.g. psychotropic medication or tube feeding, are appropriately trained by the Health Service before the child is placed.



Standard Three

PROMOTING GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

EVERY CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON WILL BE FULLY SUPPORTED TO REALISE THEIR POTENTIAL FOR LEARNING AND GROWTH - TAKING ACCOUNT OF AGE, DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE, ABILITY, LEARNING STYLES, CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS.

OUTCOME

The child will be encouraged to gain satisfaction and confidence from learning and achieving, which will include the development of social and life skills as well as formal education. The child will understand the value of learning in his/her own right, and have the skills and resources to further their own personal growth and life choices.

THE CHILD WILL:

- ▶ Be nurtured and supported in their natural curiosity to discover and learn, in all aspects of life.
- ▶ Feel that they have a sense of success in achievements, including learning from mistakes, risk taking, or things that didn't work out as planned.
- ▶ Feel that their achievements are recognised and valued and that their own personal and cultural needs are met.
- ▶ Be offered choices to learn in ways that are helpful to them and build on strengths and natural intelligences, for example, playing, reading and writing, multimedia, talking and listening, music, arts and crafts, physical and outdoor activity, involvement with nature, IT skills, using the internet and storytelling.
- ▶ Be supported to learn in ways that help them to communicate e.g. using their own first language or sign language, and know that their foster carers will support this.
- ▶ Be included in talking about and making decisions about their own learning and development.



THE FOSTER CARER WILL:

- Recognise that children have a natural curiosity to discover and learn, and to promote and encourage this in the child's life space.
- In providing learning opportunities, take account of age, developmental stage, differing abilities, different learning styles, languages, cultures and methods of communication.
- Take a holistic approach to the child's learning, using the carer child relationship to promote a 'head, heart and hands' approach, and encourage a commitment to lifelong learning.
- Provide babies and young children with opportunities to learn through creative and imaginative play, participation in day to day home activities, reading stories, music and movement, interaction with people and exploration of the natural environment.
- Expect children to attend and achieve at school (including distance learning if more appropriate) and support this with praise and recognition, travel arrangements, homework assistance, space to study at home, provision of books, access to a computer, toys, games and other materials.
- Provide positive opportunities for children to develop social and life skills, support them to participate in hobbies and interests, shared family and friends experiences, after school activities and involvement with the local community. For children living in remote communities, ensure appropriate networks and opportunities are established.
- Seek opportunities for the child to learn about their own personal and cultural history, beliefs, crafts and customs, and promote a spiritual awareness in the child.
- Maximise the personal and social learning opportunities for any parent who is placed alongside their child.
- Support the learning and development plan for the child (in partnership with the birth parent(s) or legal guardian) and contribute to educational assessments, school meetings or communication and liaison with teachers.
- Advocate for the child where their educational needs are not being met and support educational activities for a child who is temporarily out of school.
- Support a child with applications for further education, training or employment.
- Give examples of the support provided to the child's development and achievements in their Key Developmental Assets recording.
- Be committed to their own learning and development, thereby enhancing skills and knowledge, at the same time as providing a role model for the child.
- Advocate for the child who is being excluded by systems or people on the basis of their status or identity.



KEY ASSETS WILL:

- Obtain information about the growth and development needs and abilities of all children and young people placed and make sure that staff and foster carers understand what is expected of them.
- Work in partnership with the placing authority, education staff, specialist services and other relevant parties to ensure that the child's educational needs are appropriately met.
- Give a high priority to meeting the learning needs of each child or young person in foster care and ensure that foster carers are equipped with appropriate guidance on matters such as educational processes, language and culture, child development, learning impairment, IT skills and internet safety.
- Have high expectations of children and provide evidence to the child's placing authority of the developmental learning and growth promoted and achieved during the child's placement with the agency.
- Support foster carers to be creative and actively engaged in promoting the child's learning and development, and to be involved in discussions and meetings regarding the child's formal education.
- Provide foster carers with appropriate pre approval and post approval training in relation to meeting the growth and development needs of children and young people.
- Provide a Personal Professional Development Plan (PPDP) for foster carers to support and monitor their ongoing skills and knowledge development.
- Provide skills development programmes for all staff, appropriate to their role and responsibilities.
- Have clear expectations (especially in relation to school day responsibilities) of its foster carers and the arrangements which will be put in place if any child in their care is not in school. Those arrangements include structured occupation during school hours.
- Provide opportunities for children, individually or in groups, to take part in learning and development opportunities – for example, structured or self-directed play, multimedia, sports, arts, crafts, drama, outdoor activities and discussion based activities.
- Seek opportunities for children's attainments to be acknowledged, for example, through achievement awards, art exhibitions, publications, sporting events and newsletters.
- Ensure that staff, carers and relevant others communicate and support each other to maximise the opportunities for the child to learn and develop.
- Ensure that learning and development programmes are informed by current research and evidence based practice and provide a range of reference and learning resources to support staff and carers.



Standard Four

PROMOTING BELONGING AND KINSHIP

EVERY CHILD SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR BIRTH FAMILY, CULTURE AND ORIGINS, AND WHEN CONTACT WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS IS IN THE CHILD'S BEST INTERESTS THIS WILL BE ACTIVELY PROMOTED AND SUPPORTED.

OUTCOME

Children will be helped to benefit from continuity of relationships with family and friends and their personal identity, emotional wellbeing and sense of belonging in their birth and foster family will be developed.

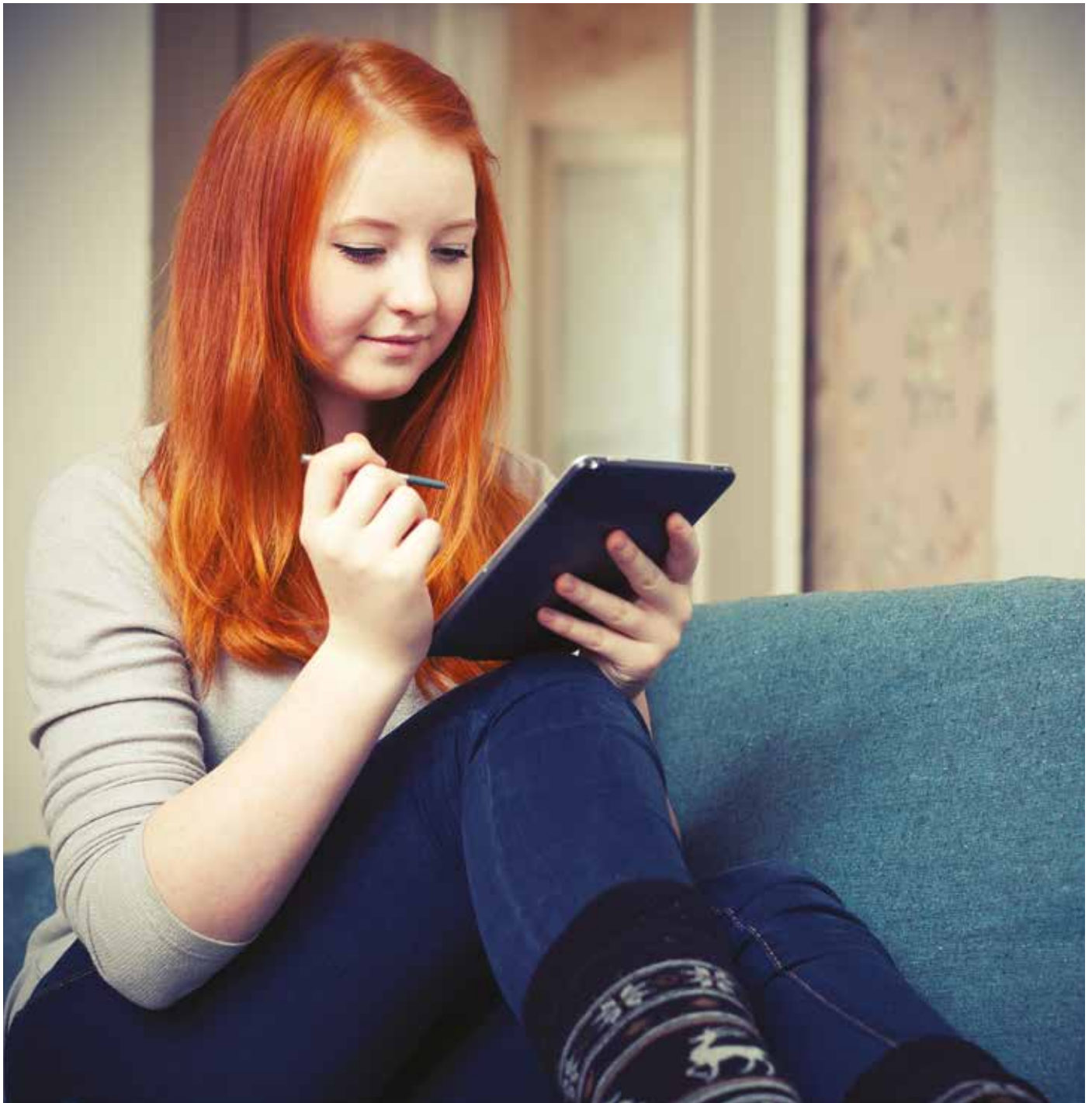
THE CHILD WILL:

- Know that their foster carers will support them with contacting and meeting family and friends so long as it is agreed by the child's social worker. This might include visits at home or somewhere else, talking on the telephone, writing letters or connecting on the internet.
- Know that their family matters, that they will be made welcome during visits and be able to share important information that will help carers and staff to look after them.
- Know that the foster carers and staff will listen to and understand their wishes and feelings about family and friends and will respect their views.
- Know that foster carers will help them to keep family memories safe, for example, photos, letters, and things that come from home.
- Know they can meet with or talk to their family and friends in private unless it has been decided that this is not safe.
- Know that carers and staff will take action to protect the child if it is thought that any family or friends are behaving in a way that could harm them.
- Know the agency will work closely with their birth family, in particular when the plan is for the child to return home.
- Be encouraged to participate in activities organised by the agency, and to meet other fostered children and their families.
- Feel that they are treated fairly and in a similar way to other family members.



THE FOSTER CARER WILL:

- Support the plan agreed by the placing authority for the child's contact.
- Enable contact with family and friends to take place in the foster home where this is agreed to be safe, appropriate and mutually acceptable.
- Treat the child with respect and fairness, as with birth children.
- Support the child to maintain contact in a range of ways e.g. face to face, taking them for contact visits, letters and cards, text messages, the internet and providing a telephone for conversations.
- Strive for a positive, professional and supportive relationship with birth family members.
- Encourage the child to talk about their experiences of family life and their feelings about this. Also help them to know, remember and value the importance of family and their place within it.
- Help the child to keep safe any family mementos, photographs etc, and support this with life story work if requested.



- Inform staff and the child's social worker if they have any concerns around contact for the child and how the child or the foster family are being affected.
- Be expected to attend or take children to agency events and activities, encouraging a sense of belonging.
- Where possible keep in contact with children and young people who have moved on from placement.
- Keep a record in Key Developmental Assets recordings of contact the child has with family and friends.
- Where possible and appropriate remain connected to foster children moving on into independence.
- Help the child to develop a memory book and memory box, to help retain for themselves a coherent history and images of their time in this family and their own activities and development.
- Promote positive relationships for the child with all foster family members and the local community.



KEY ASSETS WILL:

- ▶ Actively promote the need for family contact when recruiting and assessing foster carers and reinforce this through on-going training to staff and foster carers.
- ▶ When placing a child in a foster family, make sure that the child's important contacts are taken into account, especially when they are physically moving away from their own community or land.
- ▶ When placing siblings endeavour to provide a foster family who are able to keep all the children in the family together, or within easy reach of each other.
- ▶ Collaborate with the child's social worker regarding what is planned for contact whilst in foster care, including any contacts which should not take place. This information should be written down in the child's placement agreement and explained to the child.
- ▶ Where possible provide a family friendly environment for family contact and, if requested and agreed, a worker to supervise the contact.
- ▶ Give guidance to carers on photographs and filming of children, ensuring privacy and safety for the child.
- ▶ Support the foster carers with managing any difficult contact issues, for example, helping a child to understand feelings of divided loyalty, and to make sense of their relationships and past experiences.
- ▶ Keep the child's social worker informed of how the contact is going, including benefits and concerns.
- ▶ Agree with the child's social worker what permission is needed for the child to visit friends, including staying overnight, and what decisions it is appropriate for the foster carer to make.
- ▶ Provide written guidance to staff and foster carers on promoting contact.
- ▶ Enable the child to meet other children in the agency and encourage them to participate in agency activities, building a sense of relationship with and belonging to the agency.
- ▶ Work closely with the birth family in particular when the plan is for the child to return home.
- ▶ Provide guidance for foster carers on memory work for the child.



Standard Five PROMOTING CULTURE

THE DIVERSITY OF EVERY CHILD IN RELATION TO THEIR ETHNICITY, CULTURE, COMMUNITY, LANGUAGE, FAITH, SPIRITUALITY AND PERSONAL VALUES WILL BE SUPPORTED AND PROMOTED.

OUTCOME

The child will know that their unique identity will be valued and will take pride in maintaining or developing a connection with their own culture and family history, customs and beliefs.

THE CHILD WILL:

- ▶ Know that the agency will try to find a foster family who are from a similar background to them and, wherever possible, close to their own community or land.
- ▶ Be involved in choosing and preparing food which is suitable for their preferences and traditions.
- ▶ Be able to choose clothing to suit their taste and cultural needs.
- ▶ Know that they will get help to learn about the history of their family, community, tribe, band or nation and the origin of their beliefs or spirituality.
- ▶ Know that they will be supported to practise their religion or spiritual beliefs, which may include prayer or study at home, going to faith centres (e.g. mosque, church, temple, synagogue) or going to community events, celebrations, festivals and spiritual gatherings.
- ▶ Be able to meet with a cultural advisor if needed and link with community groups and individuals who will promote their culture.
- ▶ Be encouraged to speak in their language where possible and meet other children from the same country or cultural group.
- ▶ For a separated, unaccompanied child, be supported through the process of applying for refugee status, settling in a new country and receive guidance on local culture and customs.
- ▶ Be supported to find books, internet sources and other materials to learn about their culture and history.
- ▶ Have opportunities to join with other fostering families and staff to celebrate a range of cultural events.
- ▶ Be helped to learn about the customs, culture and religious beliefs of other people.
- ▶ Be encouraged to keep or display personal and cultural items at home (e.g. cooking equipment, family photos, traditional dress and ornaments, religious symbols and scriptures, prayer mat and other materials).



THE FOSTER CARER WILL:

- ▶ Respect the cultural and faith traditions of every child in their home, ensuring that the care provided is appropriate.
- ▶ Support the child to stay connected to their culture and belief systems, through sharing information, providing culturally appropriate food, routines, toys, books, images and other materials.
- ▶ Encourage family members to participate in learning about diversity, e.g. preparing a meal from another country, celebrating different festivals at home, attending cultural events and ensuring that the language in the family home is not discriminatory.
- ▶ Support a child from another country to learn the local language and customs, and learn about the country and customs where the child is coming from.
- ▶ Support the child to deal with discrimination and racism if this occurs and encourage a positive sense of self.
- ▶ Provide physical care appropriate to the child's needs, e.g. skin and hair care, respect for customs around washing, personal hygiene and modesty.

KEY ASSETS WILL:

- ▶ When offering a foster placement seek, wherever possible, to match the child's cultural and ethnic background. Where this is not possible ensure that the family placement is culturally competent to meet the child's needs.
- ▶ Ensure that the child's culture and spirituality are discussed and provided for in placement planning and on-going care.
- ▶ Advocate for interpreting services for a child who needs this e.g. refugee child, child with another first language, or a child with communication needs.
- ▶ Promote a culture of inclusiveness and respect for diversity in all of the agency's interactions, office environments, policy and procedures, recruitment campaigns, publicity and media.
- ▶ Seek to recruit staff and foster carers who represent diverse cultural backgrounds and are able to meet the needs of a diverse range of children.
- ▶ Promote cultural competence in staff and foster carers through foster carer assessment, on-going cultural awareness training, supervision and support.
- ▶ Provide resources for staff, foster carers and children to enhance their learning in terms of ethnic, cultural and faith background, including the impact of personal and institutional racism.
- ▶ Promote learning around the historic and generational impact of policies and practices which have impacted negatively on the wellbeing and life chances of individuals and communities.
- ▶ Work closely with ethnic minority, indigenous and other community groups to ensure that local customs and practices, and any relevant statute or guidance, are respected and integrated into the work of the agency.
- ▶ Forge links with cultural advisors who can support foster carers and children in meeting their cultural needs.



Standard Six

PROMOTING SKILLS FOR LIFE

EVERY CHILD WILL BE SUPPORTED TO DEVELOP SKILLS AND PERSONAL STRENGTHS WHICH WILL BUILD RESILIENCE AND ENABLE POSITIVE TRANSITIONS THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES.

OUTCOME

The child will be encouraged to develop confidence in caring for themselves and develop a range of social, home making and relational skills. This will help them build strong and healthy relationships, develop a positive attitude towards their life and future, and feel able to move through developmental and personal stages throughout their lives.

THE CHILD WILL:

- Know the foster carer will help them learn about things they will need when they grow up, for example, cooking, cleaning the house and washing clothes. This will start from an early age e.g. helping with the washing up, helping carers cook, tidying toys, helping in the garden or keeping own room clean.
- Know that the foster carer will include them in shopping for and choosing food and clothes so that they understand how to get good value and learn to budget.
- Be supported to learn money management including age appropriate pocket money, managing living expenses and opening a bank account.
- Learn from the carer how much it costs to run a home, e.g. gas, electric, rent, insurance and other household costs, so they will be prepared for managing their own home.
- Learn from the carer how to speak to people in other agencies to explain what they need, for example, doctors, shopkeepers, travel agencies, parent support groups, housing organisations, social workers, teachers and colleges.
- If coming from another country, learn from the carer and the agency what are the customs and rights that they need to know about living in this country.
- Be supported to learn about traditional skills from their own culture, for example, gathering and growing food, fishing, preparing for festivals and celebrations.
- Learn from the foster carer or staff how to find information that they need on the internet and how to find places in the community where they can follow their interests or hobbies and meet other people.
- Be supported by the foster carer in making choices and understanding how to say 'no' to people who try to influence them in the wrong way.
- Be supported by the foster carer and social workers in managing contact with family members.
- Be supported to develop a memory box and memory book as a record of their time in foster care, which can include photos, stories, written and other information.
- Be advised on their rights to see what is written about them, now and in later years.
- Be involved in contributing to the foster carer Key Developmental Assets recordings and add their own ideas and comments, e.g. 'My view of the week'.



THE FOSTER CARER WILL:

- ▶ Provide opportunities for children to learn domestic skills on an age and developmentally appropriate level.
- ▶ Support the child with learning the value of money and budgeting.
- ▶ Help the child to learn how to develop interests and activities and to form friendships in the community.
- ▶ Support teenagers with the transition to adult life including managing relationships, understanding sexuality and physical and emotional changes so they feel comfortable and supported in their sexual identity.
- ▶ Encourage awareness of safe sex, peer group pressure and issues around experimentation e.g. drugs and alcohol.
- ▶ Encourage choice and decision making starting with small steps and progressing to life choices, involving the child in any planning meetings which relate to them.
- ▶ Provide evidence of the support offered to and progress made by the child using the Key Developmental Assets recording tool, and involve the child or young person in contributing to this.
- ▶ Help the child to remain connected to and pursue learning around their culture and identity.
- ▶ Advocate for interpreters for children who don't share the first language of the locality or country.
- ▶ Talk through with the child how they will manage family and friends relationships once they leave foster care.
- ▶ Help the child to develop skills in peaceful conflict resolution.
- ▶ Help the child to understand their feelings and behaviours and encourage them to manage these in a safe and positive way.
- ▶ Assist the child where possible to develop practical skills e.g. decorating, gardening and using tools.
- ▶ Support the child with planning and carrying out activities or journeys, taking into account any access needs, e.g. wheelchair/buggy.
- ▶ Work with the agency, the child's placing authority and adult services if appropriate, to progress the care plan or plan for independence.
- ▶ Attend training provided by the agency in preparation for adulthood and accept that increasing independence may bring with it calculated risks and benefits.
- ▶ Enable the child to connect with groups and organisations in their community or the community they will be moving to.
- ▶ Enable children with disabilities to take control of their lives in the same way, advocating for resources or providing support as needed.
- ▶ Help parents to learn parenting skills and how to provide safe care for their children.
- ▶ Promote the value of learning and development for the child and provide what support they can in accessing further education, training or employment.
- ▶ Where appropriate, enable the child to remain connected to the foster family once they have moved on.



KEY ASSETS WILL:

- When assessing foster carers ensure that they understand their role in preparing children for independence and have a willingness to adapt family routines to accommodate this.
- Provide training for foster carers in preparing and developing skills for life.
- Support foster carers with managing the developmental changes and challenges for young people.
- Ensure that the child's placing authority is informed of progress and incidents relating to the child's emerging independence.
- Provide opportunities for children and young people to come together to share issues around moving on.
- Provide training for foster carers on promoting positive behaviour.
- Provide opportunities for young people who have left foster care to remain connected to the agency and to each other, if they wish to.
- Provide group activities which will enable children to try out new skills and learn to work in groups.
- Encourage a respect in young people for the living environment, an appreciation of the natural world and enable young people to remain connected to their land, community and traditions.
- Provide opportunities where possible for a record of the child's achievements and activities to be evidenced, e.g. as part of a CV/ resumé.
- Work closely with placing authorities and others to ensure that the young person receives accommodation and support appropriate to their developmental needs and preferences once they move beyond foster care.



Standard Seven

PROMOTING PARTICIPATION

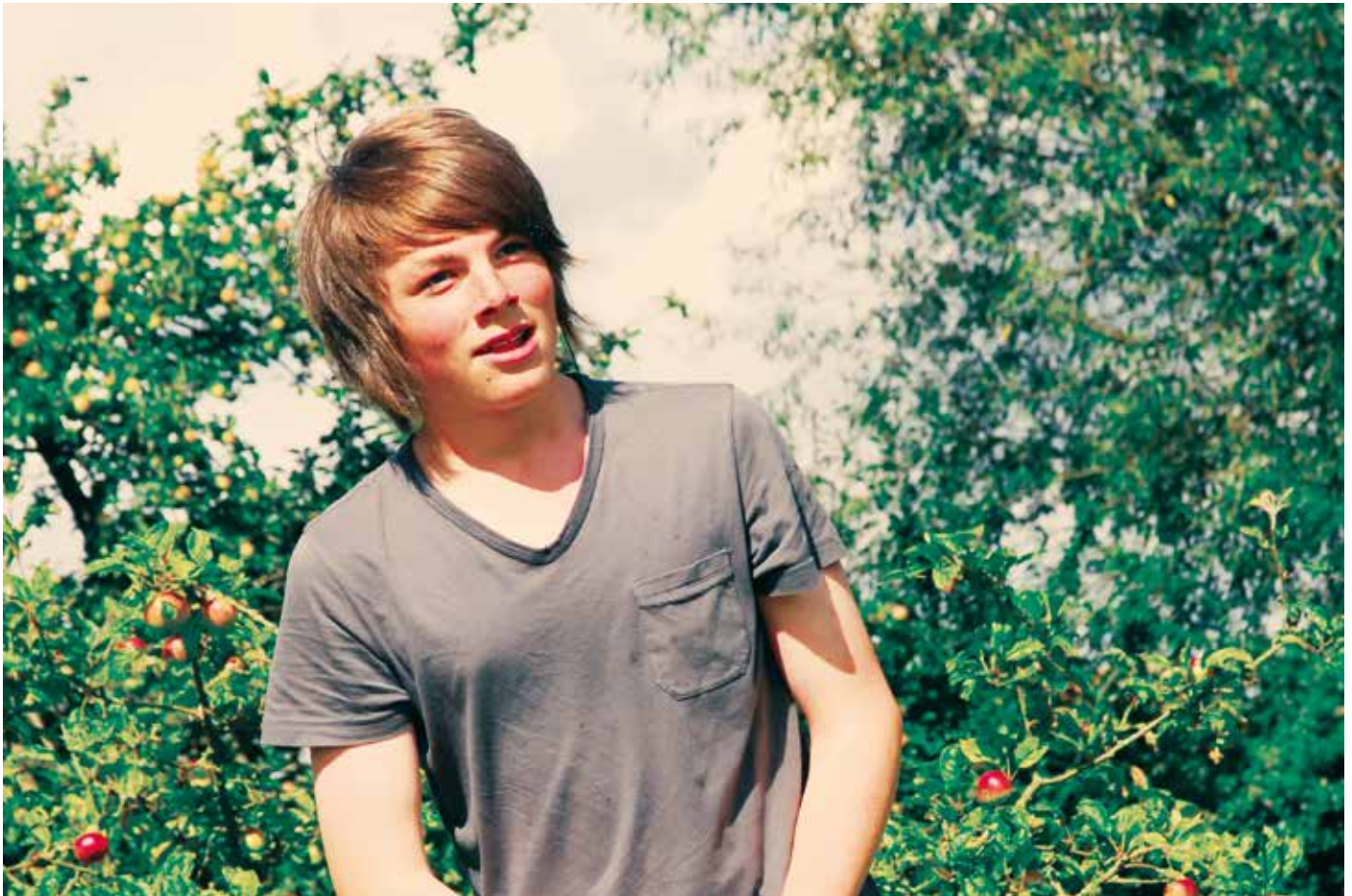
EVERY CHILD WILL BE GIVEN AN ON-GOING OPPORTUNITY TO GENUINELY AND ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN ALL MATTERS AFFECTING THEIR LIFE, CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORK OF KEY ASSETS AND UNDERTAKE THEIR RIGHTFUL POSITION AS ACTIVE MEMBERS OF THEIR COMMUNITY.

OUTCOME

The child will know that their views and contributions are important, that these will be included in matters affecting daily living, relationships, growth and development, health and wellbeing, culture and kinship, and that Key Assets will give them opportunities to have their say about the organisation and its work. The child will be helped to develop confidence in expressing themselves in a range of settings and be enabled to be an active member of society.

THE CHILD WILL:

- Be encouraged from an early age to have choices, beginning with simple things like what to play with, what they would like to eat, and later bigger decisions like going to college or joining a club.
- Learn how to listen to other people in a family making sure that everyone else's views and choices are respected.
- Be given information, wherever possible, about the foster carer they may be moving to (Carer Welcome Booklet) and be invited to share their views and have any questions about their foster home answered.
- Be given information about the agency and who the staff are (Staff Welcome Booklet) and have any questions about the agency answered.
- Have the opportunity to join in with group outings and activities with other foster children and their foster families, and to have a say in what activities they would like to do.
- Be able to have a say in how the agency is working and what we can do better, by talking to foster carers or staff in person or by phone, writing letters or emails, going to children's forums, using the complaints and representations procedure.
- Be supported with extra help e.g. advocating for an interpreter if they need this to say what they think.
- Be supported to say what they think at meetings which are about their care and their future.
- Know that the views of their parents will also be asked for about important things, where this is appropriate.
- Be helped to build up a collection of memories for themselves, e.g. photos, artwork, letters, souvenirs from trips, birthday cards.
- Know that the agency staff and other people important to them will all work together to help them reach their potential.



THE FOSTER CARER WILL:

- Listen to the child and encourage them to express their views on day to day family life and appropriate choices concerning them.
- Involve the child in family discussions to develop their skills in self-expression, negotiation and sensitivity to others.
- Give guidance to the child in making choices that are helpful not harmful.
- Encourage participation for the child in a range of experiences and activities, both in and outside of the home.
- Help the child feel they are valued as part of the family and will be supported to participate as much as possible. This may include advocating for specialised adaptation or accommodation for children with disabilities.
- Promote appropriate and positive relationships with the child's birth family where this is in their best interests so that they can also participate in discussions and decisions about their child.
- Encourage the child and other family members to participate in agency groups and activities, and encourage the child to develop experience in helping other people.
- Attend agency foster carer support groups to develop networks of support and learning and contribute to agency direction and decision making.
- Provide evidence in Key Developmental Assets recordings on how the child is being supported to participate in a range of situations and what progress is being made. Encourage the child where possible to participate in recordings.



KEY ASSETS WILL:

- Encourage all members of the child's network to participate in working together in a Team Parenting® approach around the child, so as to maximise the contributions of all and promote support and consistency for the child.
- Ensure that foster carer assessments are carried out in a way that encourages the full participation of foster carers (discussion/writing own version of events/use of visual aids e.g. genogram).
- Ensure opportunities for foster carers own children to be included in the foster carer assessment process in a child centred manner and have their views represented.
- Provide foster carers with full information on any potential children referred and invite discussion as to the suitability of this family for the child.
- Support foster carers through supervision and training with ways to promote participation for children e.g. through play, storytelling, games, art and other activities.
- Produce a plan (involving children) for children's participation and develop and embed a culture in the organisation which promotes listening to and acting on contributions from children.
- Seek opportunities to involve children in having their voices heard, e.g. in agency publications, external meetings and child care reviews.
- Provide opportunities for foster carers, children and their social workers to contribute to foster carer reviews.
- Provide opportunities for foster carers own children to join in with activities and have opportunities to express how fostering impacts on them.
- Encourage children and foster families to be involved in learning and activities which are inclusive of the child's own culture or community traditions.
- Provide support for children to enable participation, especially those whose communication needs may make participation more difficult, using different methods of communication and advocating for additional resources where needed, e.g. interpreting.
- Manage the complaints procedure in a manner which promotes participation and resolution rather than confrontation.
- Encourage staff, foster carers and children to participate in a range of agency activities and tasks using their skills and abilities to the maximum.
- Provide opportunities for experienced foster carers and young people to be involved in mentoring or delivering training to others.
- Produce a report outlining the remit and purpose of the agency including goals, vision, values, governance and standards and invite regular contribution and comment from all stakeholders.
- Develop professional and local community networks which encourage the involvement of placing authorities and other groups and organisations in the work of the agency.

KEY ASSETS



“We are committed to working together with our children, our fostering families, our placing authorities and other significant partners to strive for excellence, to build resilience and a sense of belonging for all children growing up in foster care.”

Jim Cockburn
Founder and Core Assets Group Chairman

Asia

www.keyassetsnpo.jp

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www.keyassets.com.au

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Quality Care in a Family Setting
