

Self-Care and Respite/Breaks from Placements

Description

Self-Care and Respite Breaks in fostering homes

<https://sparksfostering.org/wp-content/uploads/speaker/post-756.mp3?cb=1668276881.mp3>

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Every parenting role is challenging; more so when children have additional needs. Some children in care are very settled, have few additional needs and have strong attachments with their foster carers; however, in general children who are in foster care have a higher level of need than their peer group. This is to be expected given the circumstances under which children usually enter the care system.

Foster carers (as with all parents) should be attentive to their own needs so that they are better able to meet the needs of the children in their care. Self-care can mean chatting to a friend, going out for dinner with friends, going to the gym, reading a book, or carrying out any other activity which is calming and enjoyable.

When care for a child is particularly challenging, the foster carer may need a few days break from the child – perhaps to go abroad, or perhaps to deal with personal matters. For this to be possible, foster carers need a 'backup' carer or respite carer who is available to care for the child when the foster carer needs a break. The backup carer can be a friend of the foster carer; someone that the child/ren come to know and trust, so that when the child spends a few days in their home, the child feels comfortable and happy with the situation. Foster carers are expected to support the child to settle into their home before they consider making use of backup care – this means that foster carers should not agree to welcoming new children to the home if they plan to be absent from their home within the next few months.

When a child is settled into the home and has built a reasonable attachment (relationship) with the foster carers, it is expected that the foster carers would consider taking the child/ren looked after on holiday with them. The children being looked after should never feel that they're not welcome and/or excluded from the family; that said, it is understandable if the foster carers (as with all parents) may need some time to rest and recover if they've had some challenging times.

All backup carers are subject to a police check and they undergo a short assessment to ensure that they are suitable for the role and that they're clear about the expectations.

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