

Want to find out more?

We know you may have lots of questions about coming to a parent and child fostering placement. In the planning that takes place before any particular placement is confirmed, you will have lots of opportunities to find out more and answer any questions you may have.



Comments, compliments and complaints:

Please let us know if you have found our services to be useful, or if we could improve them. If you are unhappy with something we have done, you can ask to speak with the team manager or service manager for your social work team.

If this does not sort out the problem, then you may want to use the Children's Act complaints procedure. Ask your social worker for a leaflet, or ring your Children's Service and tell them you want to make a complaint.

For general information about the Parent and Child Fostering Scheme, please contact:
Peter Stevens, Consortium Co-ordinator
tel: 07596 442 526 or email: peterghstevens@btinternet.com



North London Fostering Consortium
**Parent and Child
Fostering Scheme**
Information for parents



The North London Fostering Consortium provides specialist foster placements for parents and their child/children.

Parent and Child Scheme foster carers are specialist carers working for the boroughs of Camden, Islington, Haringey, Enfield and Barnet.

When a safe and supportive place is needed to help with decisions about a child's future, Parent and Child Scheme foster carers share their homes and offer support to the parent to develop their parenting.

Parent and Child Scheme foster carers:

- Have a parent and child/children to live with them in their home, generally for 12 weeks, as part of an assessment of the parent's abilities and needs in relation to taking good care of their child.
- They get to know the parents and children well. They understand parents' difficulties and can support you to gain knowledge and skills in looking after your child.
- They work closely with the Children's Service and other agencies, contributing their views and evidence to the overall assessment.

If your assessment recommends you have the ability to look after your child safely but will need support in a fostering setting for a longer period, arrangements can be made for this.

Keeley's story

"After Leo was born I found it really hard to cope and change my life so I could look after him. I didn't get much support and things were not going well for Leo or me.

My social worker suggested Leo and I go to a parent and child foster placement. When I first moved in with the foster carers (Brenda and Tony) I found it very difficult living in a house with people I didn't know and not being able to do exactly what I wanted. There seemed to be lots of rules but I soon began to realise these were there to help me.

Brenda and Tony talked to me about what a baby needs and showed me how I could look after Leo. I got lots of support and felt better about myself.

Leo and I live in our own place now. It's still hard for me at times but I am determined that Leo and I will stay together and have a good life."



When you are living in the foster placement...

You will have a furnished bedroom big enough for you and your child; additionally, you will share space with the fostering household. You should bring your own baby equipment or your child's toys, if you have them.

You will be responsible for providing food and other day to day items for looking after your child and yourself, including your travel, toiletries and mobile phone costs. If you need help in ensuring you have the correct benefits to cover your costs, your social worker can help. The foster carer will meet all household bills during the placement.

If this is relevant, your social worker can help make sure you can continue to claim housing benefit whilst you are away from your normal accommodation.

It is usual that you will be required to do things together with your foster carer at least at the start of your placement. This is to help you settle in and to ensure that you understand what is expected of you in caring for your child. As the placement continues time spent outside the placement with your child will be discussed.

The foster carers have an important role to play in supporting you and making a record of your progress in placement. You also will have a number of appointments and meetings to attend concerning the assessment of your ability to care for your child now and your capacity to be able to meet their needs as they grow up.

Many parents go on to safely care for their children at home after a parent and child foster placement and we wish you every success in your placement.



Who makes plans?

For all the families who are referred to the Parent and Child Fostering Scheme there are important questions about risks to a child or children, that could lead to the children needing to live somewhere else. This means that plans are made not just by the parent(s), but also by Children's Social Care and, if care proceedings have been applied for, by the Family Proceedings Court.

If your child's social worker or the court thinks a Parent and Child fostering placement makes sense, the first step is a referral. Then a **viability assessment** looks at whether the scheme can provide what is needed. We like to offer parents the chance to meet with the proposed foster carer(s) as part of this.

Assuming the placement is to go ahead, there will be a **pre-placement planning meeting**. This usually takes place in the foster carer's home, and we talk about what will happen during your placement.

From this meeting it should be clear to you what you are responsible for. You will be asked to agree to what is expected of you and we will make clear what support will be available. Contact with your friends and family will be planned for.

During your placement there will be several **review meetings**. These will help you to know what you are doing well and where you might need to put in some extra work.

A social worker will have responsibility for doing an assessment whilst you are in your placement. This assessment will be reported to the Children's Service and if relevant the Court, where longer-term plans will be made.

"I was worried about the idea of living in someone else's home, but after meeting the foster carer I felt much better about it."

