

FOSTERING A BETTER EDUCATION

How foster carers can improve the education of looked after children



Devon County Council Fostering Service



SUMMARY

Getting to know your new arrival

Every child has potential, and it's your job to help them achieve it.
Learn about their background and any problems they may have, so you can be more effective.
Introduce yourself to the school as soon as you can.
Check that the child or young person has a Personal Education Plan – they should have one within 4 weeks of coming into foster care.

Support the child in the home

Realise they may need a lot more help than your own children did at that stage.
Make a point of spending time playing games and reading stories.
Get your own children involved – they'll gain a lot from the experience.
Try to maintain clear boundaries, rather than impose a strict disciplinary code.
Make sure they've got their looked-after children's library pack – help them to enrol and use the library regularly.

Keep talking to people

Get involved with the school – and make sure they know you give education the highest priority.
Don't just accept something you're not happy with – talk it through.
If you've got a problem, remember you're part of a team – talk to other carers, your Peer Guide, your Social Worker, your Support Worker, a teacher, an Educational Psychologist.
Work with teachers to improve attendance, behaviour, homework and achievement.
Get involved with Support Groups.

Be an advocate for the child

Make sure you go to every Parents' Evening – don't be put off!
Get involved with the child or young person's Personal Education Plan sooner rather than later.
Go to school productions and events – it's very important that the child or young person knows you're there.
Remember you're often the most effective voice for that child or young person – you're on the spot, you know the situation.

Think about exams and beyond

Don't let the young person be discouraged from attending SAT's exams.
Work closely with them when they're making subject choices.
Make sure the young person is sitting the appropriate level of GCSE exam.
Talk about the future – encourage the young person to have ambitions, and find out how you and the school can help achieve them.
Get them to think about higher education and university, if it's appropriate – or training and employment opportunities.

Make a difference

Don't be afraid to challenge if there's something you don't believe in.
Encourage young people's aspirations – have high expectations.
Give lots of praise – reinforce what they do well. It all has a cumulative effect.
Believe in the power of people to change – the young person with you can succeed.
And don't forget that, even in difficult times, you're probably making more of a difference than you could imagine.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Admissions

For help with finding a school place, contact the Devon Schools Admissions Team. Tel: 01392 383459 Email: admissions@devon.gov.uk Web: www.devon.gov.uk/admissionsonline

If the child or young person has a Statement of Special Educational Needs, contact the Devon County Special Education Team. Tel: 01392 383913 Email: csetmail@devon.gov.uk Web: www.devon.gov.uk/cset

Get the leaflet 'Admitting Looked After Children to Devon Schools' from 01392 384722.

DfES Education Protects

The government's key documents on education for looked after children and young people are under Corporate Parenting at: www.dfes.gov.uk/educationprotects/

Educational Maintenance Allowance

Help with day-to-day costs when young people stay on at school or college after 16, details at: www.dfes.gov.uk/financialhelp/ema

Educational Psychology Service

Find out what it has to offer at: www.devon.gov.uk/educational_psychology

Education Welfare Service

For guidance on attendance and child employment, go to: www.devon.gov.uk/index/learning/supporting-children/health_welfare/education_welfare.htm

English as an Additional Language

Help for pupils for whom English is not the first language at: www.devon.gov.uk/english_as_additional_language

Exclusion and Re-integration

If a child or young person in care is at risk of exclusion, call 01392 383940

Extra Tuition in Year 11

A special scheme is being piloted to provide full- or part-funding of additional academic tuition for looked after young people in Year 11. For full details, email: year11pilot@devon.gov.uk

Financial Support for Education

For post-16 students in sixth forms, colleges and universities: www.devon.gov.uk/index/learning/leaving_school/studentfinance.htm
For school pupils: www.devon.gov.uk/index/learning/supporting-children/financial_support.htm

Libraries

Find your nearest at: www.devon.gov.uk/yourlocallibrary.htm
Children's library website: www.devon.gov.uk/thezone

Office for Standards in Education – Ofsted

The inspectorate for children and learners in England, at: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Parents' Evenings

Get the leaflet 'Making the most of Parent Consultation Evenings' from 01392 384722

PEP's and Early Years PEP's

For guidance on both Personal Education Plans, go to: www.devon.gov.uk/eall/dgfl/forms/education.html

PEP Dowry

Financial help with out-of-school activities identified in the Personal Education Plan. For the details call 01392 384722, or email: pepdowry@devon.gov.uk

Special Educational Needs

A comprehensive guide to services is at: www.devon.gov.uk/index/cyps/children-with-special-needs/sen.htm

Term Dates

Go to: www.devon.gov.uk/index/learning/shools/termdates.htm

Transport from Home to School or College

For advice on eligibility, and for arrangements, call 01392 383359 – or go to: www.devon.gov.uk/index/learning/getting_to_school/school_transport.htm

If you need any other information – call the Looked After Children Co-ordinator on 01392 384722, or email kim.piper@devon.gov.uk

This Information Sheet has been produced to complement the DVD 'Fostering a Better Education'. Download and print additional copies from www.devon.gov.uk/fostering in Information for Foster Carers. For enquiries about the DVD – call Fostering Promotion on 01392 386045.

