

October 2022 Fostering Newsletter

Hello,

FOSTERING NEWSLETTER



I'm Denise, the fostering team manager and I make sure that whether you're at the beginning of your journey or fostering regularly, you are supported and listened to. I work with foster carers, birth children of families who foster and also care leavers.

I hope you are doing well. We have created our newsletter for the many people who are 'thinking about fostering'. It's a massive decision to make. There are lots of different things to consider including your family, space at home and what time you have available, just as a start!

At Leicestershire County Council, my team are here to help, advise and support you with information that will help you to decide if and when fostering may work for you. We are not here to encourage you to foster, more to support you to decide if now is the right time for you to progress.

So, we'll be sending out case studies, stories of people's experiences of the application process and subsequently becoming carers along with many other interesting facts straight to your inbox.

I can't wait to see what path your fostering journey may take and wish you the very best of luck wherever it takes you.



case study

October is Sons and Daughters Month!

Our lovely fostering team and foster families have celebrated Sons and Daughters month this October!

Sons and Daughters month recognises and appreciates the journey that birth children go on when their family decides to foster. Whilst many people say that the potential impact on their children is a major barrier to becoming a foster carer, it can be an enriching experience to see life from another child's perspective.

Throughout October, our fostering recruitment team have been sharing quotes and stories from the birth children of our fostering families, to show appreciation of their contribution and dedication to fostering. You can take a look on our [Facebook Page](#).

One story that we have proudly shared this month, is that of birth son, Evan Trigg. Evan is so enthusiastic about fostering, that he did a presentation about it to his Primary School last year. When the pupils at his school were asked to dress as a 'Key Worker', Evan chose his mum, a Leicestershire County Council Foster Carer – he even made his own name badge!

Evan said: "I love fostering because I love to see all the different people we get to meet and help. Especially when we get told the morning of school that a little one will be coming that night – it's exciting!"

I also love to see foster children when they're in their forever home – my family are lucky we stay in touch with all the babies that leave us. It's great to hear how they're doing and see photos!"

This Sons and Daughters month, we'd like to shine a light on how fostering can benefit birth children's learning and development as individuals. The children of foster carers play an essential role in welcoming children and young people in care into their families.

We'd like to thank them for the love and support they provide the children and young people that join their family.





How to approach a conversation about fostering:

If you've been considering fostering, but are unsure how it would make your birth children feel, here are a few ways you can approach a conversation:

Satisfy their Curiosity

Regardless of your child's age, be prepared for lots of questions at the beginning.

Children's relationships will build over time. First, it's important for your child to overcome their uncertainty of the unknown.

The more you can inform your child and satisfy their curiosity, the less strange the concept of welcoming a child into your home will be.

To make sure you have the answers, you could always come to one of our find out more about fostering events, which are run virtually, every three weeks.

Who, when, where?

It's never too early to talk to your children about fostering. Speaking to your birth children early will help them feel involved in the decision. Talking to them before you start the application process is perfect, let them start the journey with you.

Talking openly and honestly about fostering will prepare your whole family for the journey ahead. A fostering assessment takes around 4-6 months to complete, it's important the whole family feels committed.

It's better if all members of the household are present when you first explore fostering with your children. Your children should feel that you're a family unit and recognise that you're making decisions together.

The stronger the family unit, the more ready you'll be to embrace a new child into your home.

We're in this together

The message that you want to get through to your children is; when you foster, no-one is left behind. We are all part of a wider fostering community, and we support each other.

Your birth children will not only build a relationship with a foster child, but with our social workers too. We also hold regular Sons and Daughters events, so your children can meet others in the same situation. It's important that your child feels supported, not just by you as parents, but by the wider team.

Educate them

Your child may have no understanding about fostering at all, especially if they're younger. Explaining why foster carers are needed is a good start to helping your child understand fostering. It won't be easy, but this conversation must happen before you formally apply.

Make sure that you talk about why you want another child to be part of your family. This will be personal to you. Be open and honest with your children. Think about your answers before you speak to your child. It could be something as simple as wanting to extend your family.

Prepare them

Life will change. Discuss this with your children; how must routines adapt to include another child? The bedtime routine is a good example of where you might need to re-think your current routine.

It doesn't take long for changes to become recognised routines within your family. It's best that changes like this happen before you introduce another child. This will give your own children a chance to adapt to your new normal.

Be age appropriate

Take your child's age into consideration when you first speak with them. Their age will determine what is appropriate to discuss about fostering, and what is likely to worry them.

A teenager for example, is likely to be more protective of their space and their things. They may wonder how you'll manage behaviour, and if they'll identify with the other child. A younger child could struggle

with the 'waiting' before becoming a fostering family.

Reassure them

Your children will seek reassurance from the very first conversation, and all the way through your fostering journey.

Assure them you'll still have alone time with them, to focus on the things they like and enjoy.

Respect their decision

If you find that your child isn't ready to share their parents and their home, respect their decision.

Use the time to build up your knowledge of fostering as a family. As your child becomes more aware, they may change their view of fostering.

Giving your child that little extra time may be all they need to reflect, process and adapt to the notion of fostering.



Sons and Daughters Events

When you decide to foster with us, we want to make sure that the whole family feel supported and cared for – that includes birth children!

We often hold events and socials for the sons and daughters of our foster carers to get together and have some fun. This provides them the opportunity to speak to and socialise with children in the same situation.

It's lovely for them to get together and see that they're not alone. Especially when they're doing a fun activity, like bowling or abseiling!



Independent Visitors

If you're not sure about becoming a foster carer just yet, why not try your hand at Independent Visiting?

Independent Visitors give a few hours each month to visit a young person and take them out to do something fun. You can find out more about Independent Visiting [here](#).

If you are aged 18+, drive and have access to a car, and think you could make a big difference to our children in care, give us a call on 0116 305 0505.

Particularly, we are seeking more male Independent Visitors to be mentors and role models to our young boys in care in Leicestershire. Though we welcome all volunteers so please get in touch!



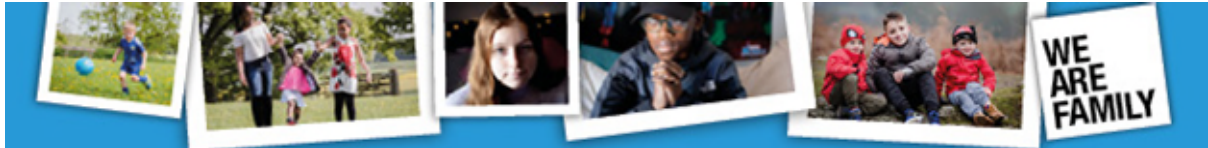
Signing Off for October

If you're finding yourself ready to start your fostering journey and need help with anything from talking to your children, friends, and family about it, please don't hesitate to contact us. Our lovely fostering team are available to support you throughout the whole process.

We also hold 'Find out about Fostering' events, every three weeks, online. The next one is Tuesday 1 November. [Find out more and register for our events.](#)

There are lots of helpful resources available on our website and we have also produced a helpful guide for potential foster carers to share with their children. If you'd like us to send these helpful resources to you, please email [Fostering Leicestershire](#).

For more information, please visit our [website](#) or call our team on 0116 305 05 05. If you'd like to find out a bit more about fostering but can't call the team during the day, you can also give us a call or message on 07923 230 856, on Whatsapp, every Tuesday between 5pm and 8pm.



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