



Department
for Education

Training, Support and Development Standards for Family and Friends Foster Carers

Supplementary Guidance

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Contents

- 3 Family and friends foster care**
- 3 - 4 Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards for foster care**
- 4 - 5 Using the Training, Support and Development Standards with Family and Friends Foster Carers**
- 6 The Training, Support and Development Standard for Family and Friends Foster Carers**
- 7 Evidencing the Standards**
- 7 The workbook**
- 8 Annex A: The Training, Support and Development Standards for Family and Friends Foster Carers**

Family and Friends Foster Care

The Children Act 1989 makes it clear that when a child has to be cared for away from home that the local authority should, in determining the most appropriate placement, give preference to a placement with a person who is a relative, friend or other person connected with the child and who is also a local authority foster parent. The Act therefore emphasises the importance of considering family and friends foster care a priority.

Although sometimes known as kinship carers, family and friends foster care is the official term used to denote care of a looked after child within the extended family or social network (Hunt: Research in Practice Briefing no.16 Family and Friends Care, DCSF Making Research Count 2008).

Evidence suggests that children cared for by members of their extended families or social networks appear to do at least as well as those in traditional foster care. However, family and friends foster carers have a range of support needs particular to their circumstances that are not always fully understood or acknowledged by the authorities who engage with them (Relatively Speaking: Developments in Research and Practice in Kinship Care. Nixon: Research in Practice 2007).

More recently, concern to promote and better support family and friends foster care has grown. Statutory guidance on family and friends care was published in March 2011. This set out the responsibilities of local authorities and their partners in providing appropriate levels of support (Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004), emphasising that authorities must engage with foster carers to support them. Fostering services must deliver services in a way which ensures that family and friends foster carers are fully supported to care for children placed with them and are not disadvantaged as a result of their prior relationship with the child. This includes access to training to support them in their role (Statutory Guidance on Family and Friends Care, DfE 2011).

Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards for Foster Care

The TSD Standards for Foster Care were developed by the sector. They provide a national minimum benchmark to set out what all foster carers should know, understand and be able to do within the first 12 months of approval. They form part of a national strategy, supported by the Department for Education, to raise the profile of foster carers as valued professionals and to improve and standardise service provision for looked after children.

Local authorities are expected to engage with foster carers to support them in achieving the TSD Standards. This ensures that the Standards are delivered in a way which allows carers to understand how the standards support them in their caring role, encouraging them to build on any areas for development identified in their assessment.

It is the government's view that all foster carers who are approved under the Fostering Services Regulations should complete the TSD Standards, which are designed to equip all foster carers with the skills and knowledge to provide high quality care to the children they look after. Family and friends foster carers who are approved as foster carers are therefore expected to complete the TSD Standards.

Family and friends foster carers will come into foster care not so much to become professional foster carers, but because they want to make sure that the children in their care remain within the extended family. Their development needs, therefore, are likely to be different to those of other foster carers (Butler: Prepared to Care, 2006).

Thus, completion of the TSD Standards should be seen as an opportunity for family and friends foster carers to gain support for their caring role, access specific training and meet with other foster carers to share experiences.

In recognition of their particular circumstances, family and friends foster carers who are approved as foster carers, have an extended period of 18 months in which to complete the standards. (National Minimum Standards – Fostering Services: April 2011).

Using the Training, Support and Development Standards with family and friends foster carers

There are 7 Training, Support and Development Standards for mainstream foster carers:

Standard 1: understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people

Standard 2: understand your role as a foster carer

Standard 3: understand health and safety, and healthy caring

Standard 4: know how to communicate effectively

Standard 5: understand the development of children and young people

Standard 6: safeguard children and young people (keep them safe from harm)

Standard 7: develop yourself

A number of fostering services have already worked with their family and friends foster carers to complete the TSD Standards. For some carers this will be the right approach, and fostering services will need to work with their carers to establish what is appropriate. However, feedback from family and friends foster carers and fostering services suggests that given the specific circumstances that bring family and friends foster carers to foster care an adaptation of the mainstream TSD Standards would be more useful.

An adapted set of six TSD standards for family and friends foster carers were developed. The aim is to simplify and to reflect the experience of a family and friends foster carer without losing the essence of what is required to meet the standards.

For further information about the TSD Standards for Foster Care and resources to help you with implementation, visit our website at <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/fostercare/fostercarestand/b00203661/nationalstandardsforfostercarers>.

The Training Support and Development Standards for Family and Friends Foster Carers

Standard 1: Understand your role as a family and friends carer

Standard 2: Know how to provide a safe environment and health care

Standard 3: Know how to communicate effectively

Standard 4: Understand the development of children and young people

Standard 5: Keep children and young people safe from harm

Standard 6: Develop yourself

Family and friends foster carers must evidence that they have met **all** these standards, where these apply to the specific child they are caring for. See the section on evidencing the standards below.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Guidance for Supervising Social Workers, Managers and Training Officers (revised February 2011). The guidance forms part of a resource pack for foster care service providers to help them with implementation of the TSD Standards. It comprises the following:

- A guidance document for supervising social workers, managers and training officers which summarises the requirements
- Factsheet: Getting started with the Standards
- Factsheet: Using the workbook
- Factsheet: Evidencing the Standards
- Factsheet: Assessing evidence
- Factsheet: Engaging all carers
- Training toolkit, including trainer's notes, session plans and group exercises

The factsheets may be particularly useful in helping family and friends foster carers understanding how to complete the standards and provide examples of the type and amount of evidence required. Visit our website at

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/fostercare/fostercarestand/b00203661/nationalstandardsforfostercarers> for copies of these resources.

Evidencing the Standards

Although the amount of evidence will vary with each outcome, it should be short and simple. Essays are not required! In some cases this may be reference to another document with a short accompanying paragraph or witness statement. Other outcomes may require a short reflective piece of writing, giving an example of when a particular task was carried out or when an incident occurred.

The areas that family and friends foster carers are required to evidence have been selected taking into account the nature and context of the family and friends caring role. This supplementary guidance and associated workbook aims therefore to simplify the evidencing of the standards for family and friends foster carers.

Family and friends foster carers will be demonstrating that they understand their role as a family and friends foster carer and so the evidence for the standards will be directly related to their parenting of their specific child. Therefore it is likely that some elements of some standards will not apply to their situation. Where this is the case, it is appropriate with the agreement of the supervising social worker, to note this in the workbook.

The workbook

Following advice from key foster care service providers and family and friends foster carers, a separate family and friends foster carers' workbook has been developed.

The workbook sets out the standards for family and friends foster carers, the skills and knowledge expected within each standard and the evidencing requirements.

It is important to acknowledge that family and friends foster carers, as approved foster carers, are expected to provide a professional level of care in the same way that other approved foster cares must. For the purpose of consistent good practice there is a bracketed note underneath each outcome to indicate which of the TSD Standards for Foster Care outcomes it relates to.

To make the workbook as straightforward as possible it is in a downloadable pdf document format. Carers can either print off a copy and complete by hand or type in evidence into the boxes provided.

For foster carers who have literacy problems, evidence can be recorded on an MP3 player or similar. A reference to where the evidence is kept should be logged in the workbook.

You may find the factsheet on Using the workbook useful when supporting carers in completing the workbook.

Annex A

The Training, Support and Development Standards for Family and Friends Foster Carers

Standard 1: Understand your role as a family and friends foster carer

- 1.1 Understand the fostering role as a Family and Friends foster carer (TSD standard 2.1, 2.4)
- 1.2 Equality, inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice (TSD standard 1.2)
- 1.3 Policies, procedures (TSD standard 2.2, 2.6)

Standard 2: Understand health and safety, and health care

- 2.1 Legislation, policies and procedures (TSD Standard 3.1)
- 2.2 Accommodation (TSD Standard 3.2)
- 2.3 Healthy care and medication (TSD Standard 3.3)
- 2.4 Managing risk, personal safety and security (TSD Standard 3.4, 3.5)

Standard 3: Know how to communicate effectively

- 3.1 Encourage communication (TSD Standard 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)
- 3.2 Principles of keeping good records (TSD Standard 4.4, 4.5)

Standard 4: Understand the development of children and young people

- 4.1 Attachment and stages of development (TSD Standard 5.1)
- 4.2 Building resilience and supporting children through change (TSD Standard 5.2, 5.3)
- 4.3 Supporting play, activities and learning (TSD Standard 5.4)
- 4.4 Supporting educational potential (TSD Standard 5.5)
- 4.5 Promote positive sexual health and sexual identity (TSD Standard 5.7)

Standard 5: Keep children and young people safe from harm

- 5.1 Legislation, policies and procedures (TSD Standard 6.1)
- 5.2 Keeping children and young people safe (TSD Standard 6.2)
- 5.3 Recognising and responding to abuse (TSD Standard 6.3, 6.4, 6.5)

Standard 6: Develop yourself

- 6.1 Using support and supervision to support you as a family and friends foster carer (TSD Standard 7.3)
- 6.2 Personal development (TSD Standard 7.4)



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