



TIME OUT
fostering

valuing individual needs

SECTION FIVE

FOSTER CARER TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

2007

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TRAINING OF FOSTER CARERS

A profession in foster care is a job that requires specialist skills, knowledge and professional responsibilities. It is a role that is becoming more demanding and complex with each addition to the legislation and regulations that underpin it.

Time Out Fostering sees training as a vital part of a carer's support and education and we are committed to providing quality training for all carers. This is designed to enhance carers' knowledge, make their role more professional and bring about the best possible outcomes for the children in their care. Time Out Fostering recognizes that carers may not have had the opportunity and benefits of an extended formal education and so an effective training programme has to be relevant to carers' needs and expectations, built upon existing skills and awareness. Training needs and methods are therefore negotiated with the carers through feedback of the training attended. Carers are encouraged to be involved in the development and delivery of training. Time Out Fostering believes that there is always something new to learn and that it is important to share experiences with each other.

Time Out Fostering will provide training to:

- Ensure that disadvantage and discrimination are recognised by Time Out Fostering carer(s). Consequently, carers will be given skills to challenge and address disadvantage and discrimination.
- Promote the professional qualities of the carer(s), enabling them to feel able and supported in their demanding role.
- Expand carer(s) knowledge, to keep up with any developments and to put this into practice.
- Implant an overall philosophy and standard of values throughout all Time Out Fostering placements, running through this will be the promotion of equality of opportunity and valuing of diversity.
- Ensure that Time Out Fostering carers are competent to provide safe and nurturing environments.
- Equip Time Out Fostering carer(s) to give the children placed with them a professional, positive, caring experience.
- Improve the crucial work the carer(s) undertake.

Training is an important element of Time Out Fostering's wider service delivery. It is also a way of valuing and nurturing foster carers. A range of training will be regularly offered to expand the skills of carers and their families to promote their ability to form positive relationships that in turn enhance the parenting capacity of the families with whom they are involved.

It is a requirement that all carers attend some training. Each carer will have an individual learning profile and training programme. This will be monitored and recorded. This will be subject to yearly review. It will be expected that the carer(s) take responsibility within this process, for example, by requesting areas of training that they feel could enhance their care giving.

All new foster carers will be expected to attend and participate in the 'Skills to Foster' training alongside the form 'F' assessment process which will be an integral part of this initial assessment.

This course aims to provide the new foster carer with information about the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to begin a career in fostering. To assist applicants to reflect on their values and attitudes in relation to the task of caring for children and young people who are separated from their families. To provide opportunities for applicants to think about how fostering will impact on their families and way of life and to assist them to decide whether or not fostering is right for them.

Time Out Fostering expect their foster carers to complete all the mandatory courses within the first two years after a child has been placed with them and to continue to undertake training throughout their fostering career. These are listed on the following page. This would enable them to share knowledge, gain more insight, improve skills and update them on changes in regulations etc.

Carer Training

Training will operate on an informal and formal level. General support and information can be given by the supervising social worker or another experienced foster carer. Support groups and other events will offer an informal information session. Group training will give the foster carers a more formal experience.

Some training will be run by Time Out Fostering staff and some by external trainers. Some of our training will be on a 1:1 basis. This will allow for intensive individualized work, where specific difficulties can be addressed by the carer.

In order to remove barriers from training, in certain circumstances Time Out Fostering may assist within reason the costs of attendance of compulsory training.

Foster carers are encouraged to request any training they feel would be beneficial to them. There will also be training available to the daughters and sons of foster carers.

MANDATORY COURSES FIRST YEAR

- **Challenging Behaviour**
- **Attachment**
- **Child Protection**
- **Safer Caring**

These courses must be completed during your first year

MANDATORY COURSES SECOND YEAR

- **Equality & Diversity**
- **Basic First Aid**
- **Education of Looked after Children**
- **Managing difficult behaviour and absences from placement**
- **Record Keeping**

These courses must be completed within the first two years.

It is Time Out Fostering's minimum expectation that the content of courses must be provided and discussed with all carers within the first two years following the placement of a child or young person with them. Where a couple are both approved as foster carers, it is expected that both will attend mandatory training as soon as possible, however it will be main carer who should prioritize the training if attendance for both is difficult.

Extra Training for Support Carers

- What is Support Care
- Conflict Resolution
- Observation and analysis
- Target setting
- Relationships with birth families

These courses must be completed within the first two years.

The following issues will be incorporated into carer(s) training:

- Health and Safety
- Recording Information and contributing to meetings
- Direct work with children and young people
- Working with children and young people who have suffered abuse
- Promoting and handling contact
- Identity and esteem
- Health care of fostered children and young people
- Empowering children and young people
- Positive working relationships with permanent families

NVQ 3

The NVQ 3 training will be offered to carers with at least six months experience of foster or support caring at the discretion of Time out Fostering. This allows for professional recognition of the carers work and may lead to an increase in payments for fostering. Discuss this option with your supervising social worker.

SUPERVISION FOR CARERS

Time Out Fostering believes that support is an essential element of successful fostering placements. Support will be offered in a variety of ways. A supervising Social Worker will be allocated to each family. Their role will be to supervise the carer(s). They will offer a visit regularly whilst a child is staying with you, at least four weekly. This is open to negotiation depending on the experience and needs of the carers and the placement. Additionally they will offer support via telephone calls, referral allocation, and liaison with the Local Authority and training/development work.

A supervision agreement will be drawn up early in the supervisory relationship to clarify expectations of both parties.

The main aims of supervision are to :

- support carers in the job they are doing for Time Out Fostering
- provide consultation and advice
- allocate tasks
- provide space to discuss any concerns in relation to the child or young person staying in the home or your role as a foster carer
- discuss training and development needs
- allow carers to discuss Time Out Fostering's expectations of them and vice versa
- ensure that policies and procedures are understood and worked within
- check records are being maintained and offer support with this

- reflect on issues of anti-discriminatory practice

Supervision is a two way process. It is useful for carers to prepare anything they wish to discuss before supervision, so they do not forget during supervision. The power inherent in the social worker role should be verbally addressed early in the supervisory relationship so that all parties feel freer to mention it when necessary. Unfortunately confidentiality cannot be guaranteed because of the nature of the work. All Child Protection issues have to be reported to the appropriate authorities.

A formal record will be kept on supervision, it will be agreed and signed by all parties and all parties will hold a copy.

Supervising social workers will aim to make the experience a positive one for carers. Both carers should be present if appropriate. Sometimes daughters or/and sons may wish to attend a supervision session.

There will be occasional unannounced visits by supervising social workers. This will be at least yearly when a child is in placement.

Time Out Fostering will promote more creative forms of appropriate support, such as an optional network of confidential support among carer(s) or group meetings. Time Out Fostering respects the knowledge and direct experience carer(s) have of the difficulties that may arise during a placement, and therefore they may at times be the best source of support for another carer(s). The ultimate responsibility however, lies with Time Out Fostering staff.

The Social Worker or another member of their team will be contactable by the foster carer during office hours. Out of office hours there will be a support telephone number and an additional back up telephone number. There will be access to a member of Time Out Fostering staff 365 days a year 24 hours a day.

These numbers are in the first section of this handbook.

Carers will also have financial support, which respects and values the work provided.

REVIEW OF CARERS

Reviews of the carer(s) will take place annually, unless circumstances dictate otherwise. The review will be organized by a Social Worker who is not associated with the allocated Time Out Fostering Social Worker. The review will focus on the experiences of the carer(s) and their future development or training needs. If any issues arise which affect their approval then this may be reassessed. The review report will be presented to the panel for their comments.

See Section Three for more details on this.