



TIME OUT
fostering

valuing individual needs

SECTION SEVEN

RECORD KEEPING

2008

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1. CHILD OR YOUNG PERSONS FILE

When a child or young person is placed with foster carers they are given a file which contains: Recording sheets, Health sheets, Pocket money and Clothing allowance sheets, education section, accidents form and a space of receipts and confidential documents. These files must be kept in a locked drawer or cupboard where they cannot be accessed by anyone other than the foster carer. Ideally this should be a fire proof and waterproof container.

For each child placed with you separate notes must be kept. This file aims to simplify your recording. At the end of a placement it will be returned to Time Out Fostering for archiving in case of any allegation etc in the future. It is therefore imperative that you maintain this file. During the child/young person's placement your SSW will take copies of the records and sign them.

Recording sheets: to be filled in either electronically or hand written daily by a carer bearing in mind the section in your TIME OUT FOSTERING HANDBOOK on record keeping.

Clothing Allowance and Pocket Money: To be filled in and maintained to account for all allocated monies that are agreed by the social worker at the start of a placement. Receipts should be kept wherever possible for your own protection. Evidence will need to be provided of savings accounts. Please keep a sheet total of money saved and spent and carry over any money owed.

Health Sheets: These are a legislative requirement. Records for all health related events should be recording here and not in the recording sheets. Examples of what should be recorded and kept in this section are

- Details of accidents,
- injuries or illnesses
- bruises, scratches, wounds, sores, lumps,
- infections,
- headaches etc.
- diet issues,
- visits for eye checks ,
- dental visits
- Medication given
- Any treatment or prescribed medication including any mistakes in dosage.
- Health assessment paperwork
- Sexual health discussions
- Emotional health discussions
- Any other paperwork relating to health
- Give any reasons, whether accidental or self injury.
- Any witness to what happened;

If there is not enough room to go into the required detail refer to recording sheets for further information. These sheets will be taken and photocopied by your SSW.

Accident forms: All accidents must be recorded in the accident forms and not in the recording sheets and the SSW should be informed as soon as possible.

Education section

All reports and information about any type of training or educational activity should be kept in this section of the file.

Please delete all electronic records on children after the placement ends and ensure that any records are password protected.

2. Why keep Records?

- ◆ The foster carer must keep an ongoing record on each child placed with them. This information can help to protect the foster carer and the child.
- ◆ The foster carer may see patterns emerging from their records, which help to understand the child.
- ◆ The foster carer is in a unique position to observe the child. This can be invaluable information for the Local Authority.
- ◆ Foster carers may need to attend a court hearing or Case Conference and the records will be useful to remember things that may be relevant.
- ◆ Accurate up to date records may help to keep foster carers safe against allegations.

- ◆ Foster carers can help children to record their life and create a life storybook.
- ◆ Children and young people are entitled to access the records of their time in foster care.

3. Writing Records

- ◆ All records must distinguish between fact, opinion and third party information. So when keeping records if you write something which is your opinion say that it is *your* opinion.
- ◆ If you want to record something that someone else said then write *who* said it.
- ◆ Foster carers should record everyday.
- ◆ All entries should be initialled and dated.
- ◆ If foster carers fall behind on their records they should summarise events since their last entry and make sure that they are up to date before their next visit from their statutory social worker.
- ◆ Foster carers should ensure that the records are written as clearly as possible.
- ◆ Foster carers should use easy to understand language
- ◆ Foster carers should make a note of how reliable the information is and identify things which you feel are unreliable.
- ◆ Foster carers should make a note of people who witnessed events, or any other information that backs up their records.
- ◆ As it is not always possible to be objective it is useful to indicate what foster carers emotions are at the time of writing the entry.

4. What should be Included in the Records

When writing records and diaries it is good practice to finish the entry with a positive comment, where possible.

- ◆ Contact with child's family or relatives.
- ◆ Contact with the school and educational information, this could include home school agreements.
- ◆ School behaviour and contacts/comments from school.
- ◆ Is he/she sleeping well? Sleep patterns or disturbances.
- ◆ Is he/she eating well? Patterns etc.
- ◆ Home behaviour including relationships within the foster home.
- ◆ Record any attachments that have been made.
- ◆ Record any achievements that have been made.

- ◆ Comments made by the child.
- ◆ Any inappropriate touching etc.
- ◆ Behaviour that gives cause for concern.
- ◆ Any allegations must always be recorded and the social worker informed ASAP.
- ◆ Review dates and decisions made.
- ◆ Visits and meetings with social workers.
- ◆ Any absences from the placement or times the child is away or being looked after by someone else, this will include respite, babysitters etc. Do not include school.
- ◆ Details and dates of any theft or damage by the foster child.
- ◆ Any contact with the police.
- ◆ Details of any specific events.
- ◆ Change in the circumstances of any member of the foster home.
- ◆ Record any sanctions or punishments as soon as possible.
- ◆ Contact meetings with family or friends.
- ◆ Record fights, disputes or disagreements.
- ◆ Any meetings with social workers.
- ◆ Outside agencies contacted for advice, time of contact, the person's name and advice given.
- ◆ Actions taken to deal with a possible emergency or safety hazard.
- ◆ Any information or complaint that has a serious potential impact on the foster child, the foster carers, their family or the agency.

5. Other Information

- ◆ All foster carers will be given a file to record information in and a diary for appointments etc.
- ◆ Each child placed must have separate records.
- ◆ The record is a legal document.
- ◆ The records will be checked photocopied and signed by the supervising social worker every four weeks (Pro-rata to the placement).
- ◆ Foster carers must encourage the child to reflect on their history. It is good practice to help the child to keep appropriate records of this e.g. photographs. The foster carer will be given access to information about the child's history so that they can adhere to this.
- ◆ All carers and children should be encouraged to access their files and contribute to them.

Confidential information should not be shared with anyone other than your supervising social worker or the child's social worker. If there is information foster carers feel may be in the best interest of another person to know, they should check with a supervising

social worker. Any other children living with the foster carer should also be aware of confidentiality.