


The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) had meetings with young people living in care. 211 young people came to the meetings and said what they thought was:

- * GOOD about care;
- * NOT GOOD about living in care and;
- * What should be done to make it better.

Afterwards, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs invited the young people who came to those meetings to join a group made up of young people who live in care now or who used to live in care.

The group was set up to help make sure the things that young people said to do to make their lives in care better actually happened. This group is called Teenagers and Children Talking in Care (TACTIC). The TACTIC group decided that it would be a good idea to have a book on 'going into care' for every child and young person when they are first going into care.



GOING INTO FOSTER CARE

INFORMATION
FOR WHEN YOU FIRST
GO INTO FOSTER CARE

ALL ABOUT ME

NOTES:

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

SOCIAL WORKER'S NAME:

SOCIAL WORKER'S NUMBER:

TEAM LEADER'S NAME:

TEAM LEADER'S NUMBER:

FOSTER PARENT'S NAME:

FOSTER PARENT'S NUMBER:

SCHOOL'S NAME:

SCHOOL'S NUMBER:

PEOPLE WHO ARE IMPORTANT TO ME:

WHAT IS THIS BOOK FOR?

This is a book for when you first come into 'care'. It was written by other young people who live in care now.

The book has lots of advice from young people who are living in care. It also has information on things that young people living in care think you might need e.g. information on social workers, care plans and what you can expect when you are living in foster care.



**There are over
6000 children in
care in Ireland.**

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE 'IN CARE'?

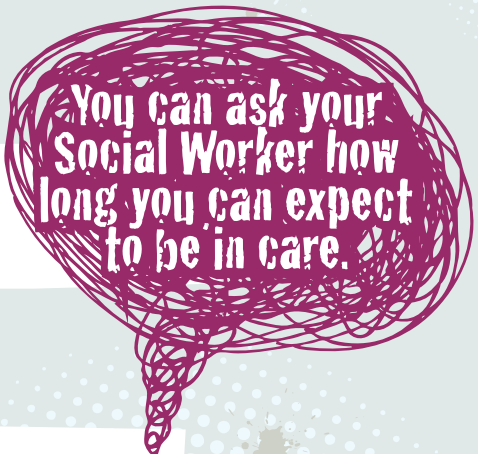
You are placed 'in care' by the Child and Family Agency when your parents are not able to care for you. This means that you leave your home and go and live in a new home with people who can care for you.

WHY AM I IN CARE?

Whatever the reason you are in care, it is always to make sure that you are cared for properly. It is not your fault. The reason that YOU are 'in care' should be explained to you by your Social Worker.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN CARE?

Some people are in care for a very short time. Some young people are in care for many years. Sometimes it is hard to say exactly how long you will be in care.



You can ask your
Social Worker how
long you can expect
to be in care.

WHERE WILL I LIVE?

- * When you go into foster care, you live with a 'foster family' that care for you as they would care for their own family;
- * You might have your own room or you might have to share with other children in the house;
- * The house may be close to where you lived before or it might be in a new area;
- * If you live with and are cared for by an aunt, uncle, grandparent or another member of your family, this is called 'relative' foster care.

WHERE WILL I GO TO SCHOOL?

The **CHILD AND FAMILY AGENCY** will try and place you in a home close to your school. Sometimes, your new home is too far from your old school and you might have to change school. Your foster parent will make sure that you can travel to school safely. Your Social Worker will talk to you about what school you will be going to.

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WHEN YOU ARE IN CARE

There are some really important things the young people in care from TACTIC wanted you to have information on:

Social Workers

Every young person in care has a Social Worker. A Social Worker is somebody who is **TRAINED TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES** when they are going through difficult times.

When you are first in care or in a new placement, your Social Worker visits as often as needed to make sure you are doing ok. The first visit is during the first month. Once you have settled in, you should see your Social Worker at least **ONCE EVERY THREE MONTHS** for the first two years. After that, your Social Worker should visit at least **EVERY SIX MONTHS**. You can arrange to talk to or ask for a meeting with your Social Worker **ANYTIME**.

You should know
your Social Worker's
full name and have
their number

*(you can put their details
at the front of this book).*

THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN TACTIC ALSO ADVISED THAT SOME OF THE OTHER THINGS YOU CAN EXPECT YOUR SOCIAL WORKER TO DO ARE:

- * See how you are getting on in your foster home and make sure that you are being treated well;
- * Talk to your foster parent about how they feel you are getting on;
- * Arrange for you to visit your parents, brothers and sisters (if possible);
- * Explain things to you so that you know what is going on;

- * Answer any questions that you might have;
- * Give you advice, information or support if you need it e.g. if you need help at school or with your health;
- * Help you change things you are not happy about;
- * Write down things that you say (because they visit lots of different young people) because what you say is important. The things that you say are kept in a file with other information about you. You can ask your Social Worker to see this file.

IT IS ALSO PART OF THE SOCIAL WORKER'S JOB TO:

- * Go to any meetings about your care and your new home (these are called Child in Care Review meetings);
- * Help you have your say about how you are being cared for and what you want to happen in your life;
- * Work with you, sometimes your parents and your foster parents to make a 'Care Plan' for your future.

Care Plans

A Care Plan is put together for every young person when they come into care. This is a plan of your life in care and all the things to help and support you while you are in care. It is also **A PLAN FOR YOUR FUTURE**. Your Care Plan has information on:

- * Where you will live and who you will live with;
 - * Where you will go to school;
 - * Where and when you will meet your parents, brothers and sisters (if it is safe to do so). This is called 'access';
 - * How your Social Worker will help you and;
 - * Other important parts of your life e.g. your health care.
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- * Your Social Worker will talk with you about plans for your care every time they visit;
 - * You can arrange to talk to your Social Worker about your life in care and the things in your Care Plan **ANYTIME YOU LIKE**;
 - * Your Care Plan is also talked about at special meeting. These are called Child in Care Review meetings.



The Care Plan
says **WHAT** will be
done and **WHEN** it
will be done.

Child in Care Review meeting

WHAT DO YOU TALK ABOUT AT A CHILD IN CARE REVIEW MEETING?

- * Anything **YOU** want to talk about;
- * What has happened or changed since the last meeting;
- * Your home...and how that is working out;
- * Your school...and how that is working out;
- * Your health... and how you are feeling;
- * Where and when you will meet your parents, brothers, sisters and other people you want to see (if possible);
- * How you feel about living in care;
- * Where you will live in the future.

WHO IS AT THE CHILD IN CARE REVIEW MEETING?

- * Your Social Worker, foster parents, parents and other people who care for you can go to the meeting;
- * **YOU ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON AT THE CHILD IN CARE REVIEW MEETING.**
You do not have to go but it is a good idea for you to go so you can:
 - Say how YOU think everything is going and;
 - Make sure you have YOUR say in how your life is supported while you are in care.

WHEN ARE THE CHILD IN CARE REVIEW MEETINGS?

- * There is a Care Plan meeting before or when you first go into care;
- * After that, there is a Child in Care Review meeting every six months for the first two years;
- * After that, there is one every year;
- * In between these meetings, **YOU CAN ASK FOR A SPECIAL REVIEW MEETING ANYTIME.**
Your Social Worker will talk to you about this.

The Child in Care Review meetings last for about one hour.

ADVICE FROM YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE ABOUT CHILD IN CARE REVIEW MEETINGS

- * It is ok to be honest about how you are feeling. You do not need to worry about upsetting anyone else;
- * Your Foster Parent or Social Worker can help you say what you want to say;
- * The most important thing to remember is that this meeting is about YOU.

BEFORE THE CHILD IN CARE REVIEW MEETING

- * **YOU** can say:
 - **WHERE** you would like the meetings to be e.g. your sitting room or somewhere you like. If you are not able to have your meeting exactly where you decide, your Social Worker will talk to you about why;
 - **WHO** you would like to be at the meeting;
- * Your Foster Parent and Social Worker will help you get ready for your Child in Care Review meeting. They will talk to you about what will be talked about at the meeting.

REMEMBER!
YOU DO NOT HAVE TO
WAIT UNTIL ONE OF
YOUR CHILD IN CARE
REVIEW MEETING TO
TALK ABOUT
SOMETHING THAT IS
IMPORTANT TO YOU
OR TO CHANGE
SOMETHING THAT YOU
WANT TO CHANGE.



THINGS I WOULD LIKE PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT ME

It is important that the people in your new home know what you like and do not like! Write down some of your favourite – and not so favourite! – things and then give this page to your foster parent!

Name I like to be called:

Food I like:

Food I don't like:

TV programmes I like to watch:

Things I like to do:

Things I really do not like doing:

Things I am good at:

Things I am not so good at:

Things I need now:

Write down any things that you need right now e.g. toothpaste, to call a friend, anything that you need now...

Things I would like over time:

Write down any things that you would like over time e.g. new shoes for school...