

The government has a set of 'standards' about living in foster care. This means that the care you get has to reach a certain 'level'. The 'standards' are to make sure that you are kept safe and cared for properly when you are in foster care. They are also to make sure that your foster family listens to what you have to say.

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR FOSTER CARE

There are 'National Standards for Foster Care'. Young people in care have written a youth-friendly version of the 'standards' for you.

1. Your foster family should help you to feel good about yourself;
2. Children in foster care should be able to keep in touch with their family and friends. If it is possible, your Social Worker will organise visits with your family and any other people that are important to you. You should also be able to be in touch with your family by phone, text or email;
3. Children in care have a right to:
 - * Privacy;
 - * Have their views and opinions listened to;
 - * Make a complaint and have something done about it;
 - * Be given information so that they can make decisions about themselves;
4. Foster families should respect children's cultural identity, race, religion & beliefs, sexuality and needs;
5. Children in foster care should have their own social worker;
6. Children's needs should be assessed before they go into foster care;
7. Your Social Worker will work on YOUR care plan with you and make sure it is up to date;
8. Every child who goes into foster care should live with the kind of family that is best able to look after them;
9. Every foster home should be a safe and positive place. You should:
 - * Get good food and exercise so you feel physically well;
 - * Your foster family should make you feel good about yourself;
 - * You should be able to have friends around;
 - * You should get new clothes when you need them;
10. Children in foster care should be protected from abuse, neglect and any sort of harm. You cannot be slapped or pushed by your foster parent at any time. You should not be bullied;
11. The health of children in foster care should be looked after. You should:
 - * Be looked after if you are sick;
 - * Be brought to the dentist, optician or doctor if you need to;
 - * Have a medical card;
 - * Get any medicines that you need;
 - * Be given healthy food to eat;
12. Children in foster care should get a good education and be encouraged to do well. Your foster parents should:
 - * Make sure you go to school;
 - * Help you to do your homework;
 - * Help you choose your subjects;
 - * Talk to you about what kind of job you would like when you leave school;
 - * Make sure you become the best person you can be!
 - * Help you to get involved in activities inside and outside school;
13. Young people in foster care should be helped to make plans for leaving care and moving on. When you turn 16, your Social Worker should make sure you have a 'Leaving Care' (Aftercare) plan.