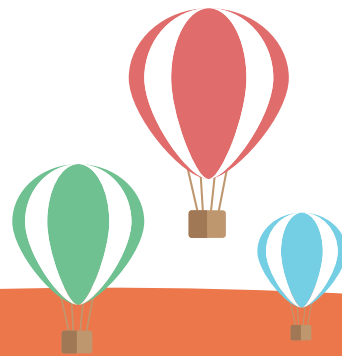


A GUIDE TO FOSTER CARE FOR CHILDREN

SUNBEAM FOSTERING AGENCY

Ages 5 – 10 years (Midlands)



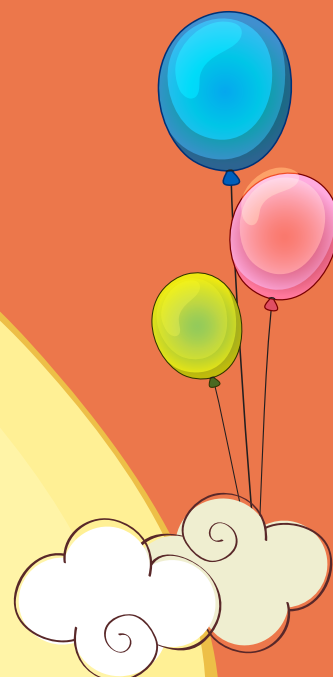


Dear

This handbook is to provide you important information about being in foster care with Sunbeam.



It is also a place where you can write down and draw things about being in foster care and how you feel about that.





SUNBEAM

FOSTERING AGENCY

DRIVEN BY CHILDREN'S NEEDS

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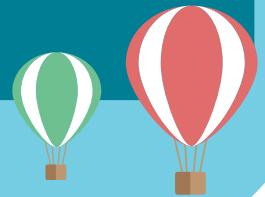
**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**





WHAT IS FOSTERING?

Fostering is a special service set up for looking after children and young people who are unable to live with their parents.



THERE ARE 3 MAIN TYPES OF FOSTERING

1 EMERGENCY/RESPIRE

This is for a very short time maybe a few days or weeks, this is usually for children who need to take some time out from their home. Social services will find them a family who they can stay with for a short time.

2 LONG - TERM OR PERMANENCY

This is when a child or young person is placed with a foster family for a long time, usually for a number of years or until they have grown up.

3 SHORT - TERM FOSTERING

This is when a child or young person is placed into care, short term can be for a few weeks or sometimes longer.





YOUR SOCIAL WORKER

Your own social worker works for the Local Authority – that's the area you live in. They are in charge of making sure you are looked after very well. Your social worker will visit you at your foster home to make sure that you are happy.

Your social worker can help and you should feel happy talking to them about things that are worrying you.



CAN YOU DRAW A PICTURE OF YOUR SOCIAL WORKER?



Who is an IRO?

An Independent Reviewing Officer's (also known as IRO) main job is to make sure that your care plan (which is all about you and where you will be living) meets your needs.

- ✱ they will chair your looked after care review
- ✱ to support and encourage you to express your views, wishes and feelings
- ✱ ensure people do what they agreed to do at your review

At your Review, it is very important that you make sure that your IRO knows how you feel and what you would want to happen.

Your IRO's job is also to make sure that the Local Authority (who your social worker works for) knows when everything is going well but also to find out if there is anything they can help you with.

TEN important things to know about your IRO

1. If you are in care (or "looked after") the local authority must appoint an IRO for you
2. Your IRO chairs your case reviews.
3. If you have brothers and/or sisters in care they too will have the same IRO as you do.
4. You should know who your IRO is and how to make contact with him/her.
5. You should keep the same IRO for the whole time that you are in care.
6. If you are a parent yourself of a child who is also in care, you both will have the same IRO but in some situations will have a different IRO.
7. You should be given written information explaining the role of the IRO, and telling you what you can do if things decided at your review are not carried out.
8. If your IRO leaves (perhaps to go to another job or retire) they must introduce you to your new IRO.
9. Apart from your first week in care, you should never be without an IRO.
10. Your IRO should meet with you in person before your first review.

How to contact an IRO?

Your social worker or the Agency's supervising social worker can provide this information for you. You can also take your IRO's contact details when you meet him/her at your first review.

Do you know who is your IRO ? Write his/her name here :

Do you know how to contact your IRO ? Please write down here:

.....



YOUR FAMILY

Your family will be told by your social worker about your foster carers. How you are doing in their care and how you are feeling.

You can talk to your foster carer about your family.

You can talk to your family about your foster carer.

Is there anything you are missing most?

Write down names of people who are important to you.



WHY NOT DRAW A PICTURE OF THEM TOO?





- Your Foster Carers have their own social worker who works for Sunbeam.
- They are there to make sure your foster carers are getting the help they need and that they are looking after you well.

Do you know the Sunbeam's Social workers name?

- Sunbeam is an Independent Fostering Agency and have two offices, one in West London and the other in Coventry. Sunbeam opened in 2000 and we have many years experience of providing foster care for children and young people.
- The Children and Young People in our care are very important to us and we work hard to make sure that you are happy with your foster carers.





Foster carers are people who have been approved especially to care for children and keep them safe.

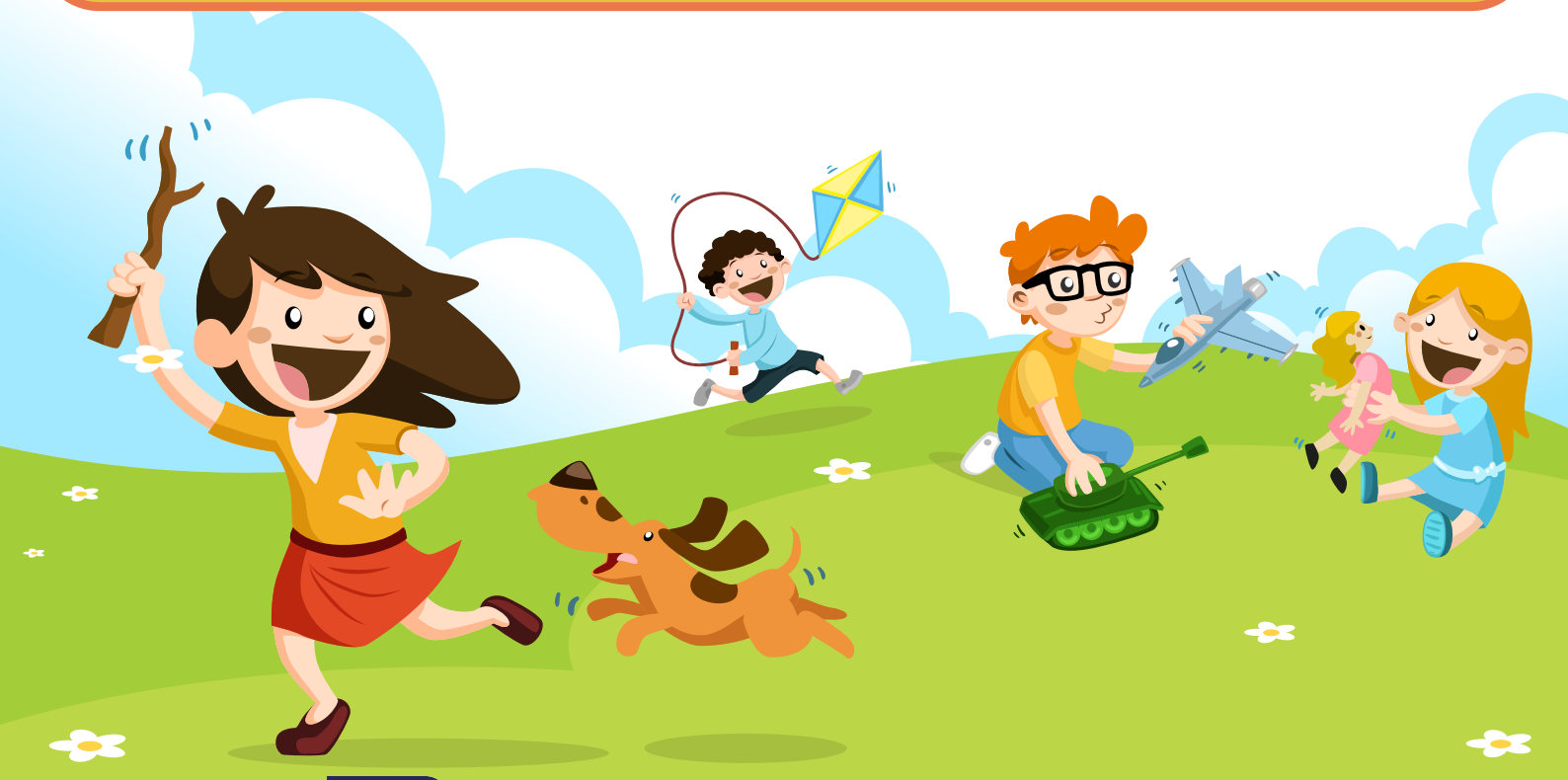
We understand that it can be very difficult moving into a new home and meeting your foster carers for the first time. Your foster carers will make you feel welcome and safe in your new home. You will have lots of questions like:

- **What do I call my Foster Carers?**

You should ask them, they won't expect you to call them 'Mum' or 'Dad'. If you talk about it then you can find out what everyone is happy with.

- **My Bedroom?**

You will have your own bedroom or you may share with your brother or sister. Your bedroom is your own space. You should try to keep it tidy. Your bedroom is your place to keep your personal belongings and anything that is important to you.





YOUR FOSTER CARERS

- Your foster carers should do their best to protect you and help you feel safe and happy in their home.



CAN YOU DRAW A PICTURE OF YOUR FOSTER HOME?



YOUR FOSTER CARERS

To make life easy for everyone, your foster carers will have house rules which they would like you to follow. These will be things like : Saying please and thank you, to knock on a bedroom door before going into the room and what time you should go to bed.



**Do you have some house rules?
Write them down to help you remember :**


1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____





YOUR FOSTER CARERS

Can you draw a picture of your foster family - don't forget to put yourself in the picture too...





YOUR RIGHTS

All adults should listen to you and treat you fairly all the time, even when you have done something they are not happy with.

When you want to find out about something or want some advice then your foster carers will help you. You can also speak to your social worker or the Sunbeam social worker.

You should tell your foster carer about yourself, what your favourite foods are and what you like doing.

CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER



www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk



You have the right to be kept safe at all times.

You should receive a healthy and balanced diet and plenty of exercise.

When you are 18 you will have the right to read your file.

Every child has the right to an education.

You will receive pocket money, and your carers will save money for you in your bank account.

You have the right to know why you are in care.



WHEN YOU ARE WORRIED

Sometimes you may feel worried but you should always talk to your social worker and foster carers. No one should ever hurt you and if you feel sad we need to know why. There are many people you can talk to for help. Please see below and contacts numbers on the last page:

- ✿ Shams Zaidi – Complaints Officer/ Designated Safeguarding Officer
- ✿ Your Social Worker (Local Authority)
- ✿ Your Foster Carer
- ✿ Ofsted
- ✿ Your Teacher
- ✿ The Sunbeam Social Worker

You may have many different feelings about being in foster care.

The word search has lots of hidden feelings. Can you find them all? Are there any feelings you are hiding?

s	a	d	s	i	m	v	b
c	g	y	h	w	t	q	g
a	e	a	n	g	r	y	i
r	o	t	e	p	c	u	l
e	r	l	o	n	e	l	y
d	v	k	f	x	a	o	b
z	w	o	r	r	i	e	d
c	o	n	f	u	s	e	d

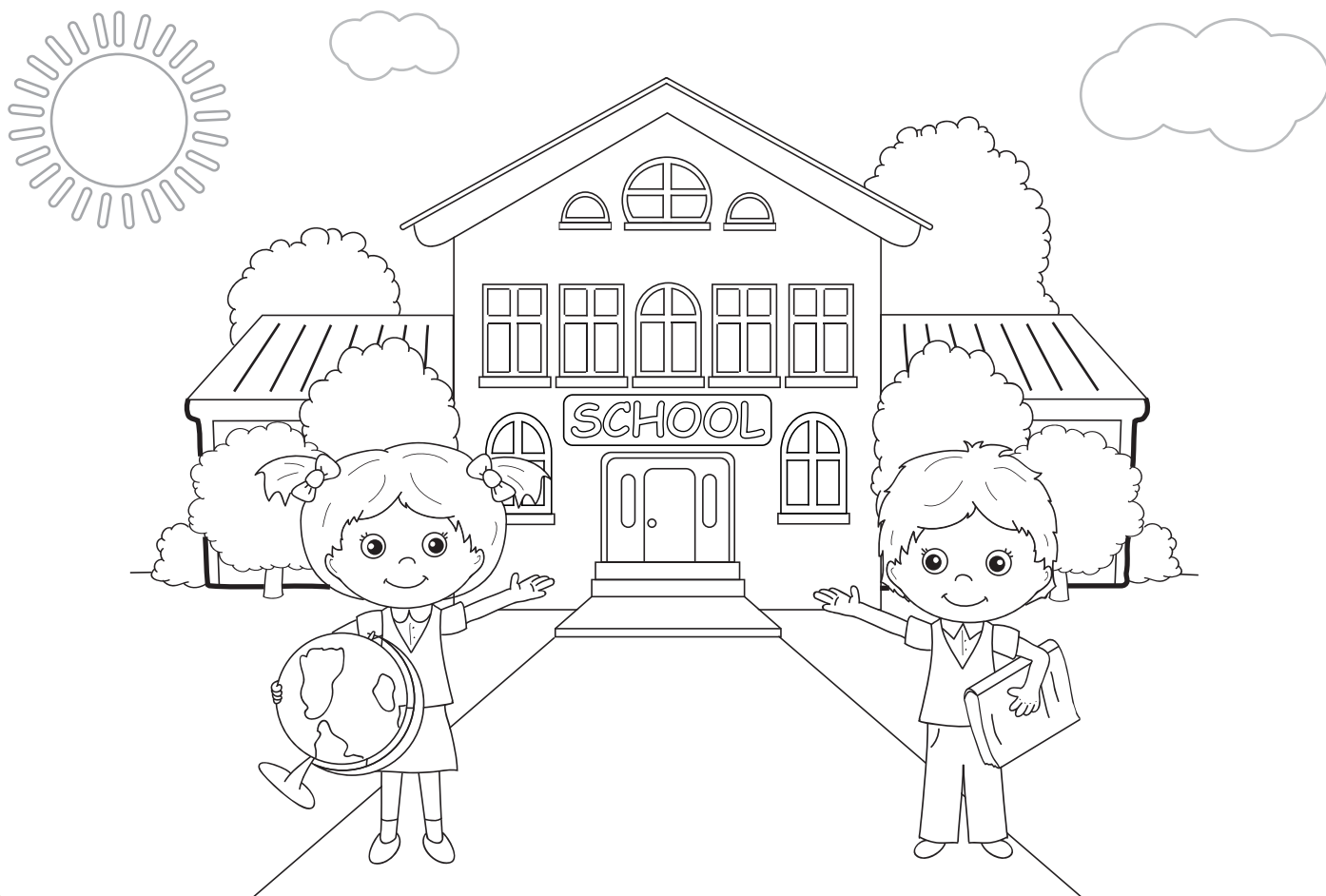
sad
scared
angry
worried
confused
lonely
safe



YOUR SCHOOL

- ✿ If you are already in school then everything will be done to make sure you can stay there.
- ✿ Sometimes it is better for you to change school because of the travelling distance.
- ✿ Only your teacher will know that you are in foster care but no one else will.
- ✿ Your teacher is also there to help and if you have any problems in school then you can talk to them.

CAN YOU COLOUR IN THE PICTURE BELOW ?





We hope you have a good experience with your foster family. If you are unhappy or wish to make a complaint then it is important to get in contact.

You can contact the agency **Complaints Officer** her name is **Shams Zaidi**. If you need help to get in touch then you could ask an adult who you trust to assist you.

You can contact **Shams Zaidi** on **02476 420 390** or write to her at

 Sunbeam Fostering Agency
383 Broad Lane, Coventry
West Midlands, CV5 7AX
 duty@sunbeamfostering.com

Your feedback is valued and we are keen to ensure that all children feel happy and supported in their foster home.

You can also discuss your concerns with your social worker or your teacher.






Please see the next page for contact details



YOUR CONTACTS TO HELP YOU ANYTIME






Sunbeam Fostering Agency Complaints Officer

 Shams Zaidi
 02476 420390
 duty@sunbeamfostering.com

OFSTED

 Piccadilly Gate, Store Street
 Manchester, M1 2WD
 0300 123 1231
 enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

The Office of the Children's Commissioner

 Sanctuary Buildings
 20 Great Smith Street
 London, SW1P 3BT
 0800 528 0731
 advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

✿ NSPCC HELPLINE : 0808 800 5000

✿ CHILDLINE : 0800 1111

✿ VOICE FOR THE CHILD IN CARE : 0808 800 5792

✿ Advice & Advocacy Service For Children (NYAS) : 0808 808 1001

Children's Handbook

Reply slip

• Your Name : _____

• I have read my handbook

☐ YES ☐ NO

• Was the handbook helpful?

☐ YES ☐ NO

• Do you understand your rights and allowances?

☐ YES ☐ NO

• Do you know how to make a complaint if you need to?

☐ YES ☐ NO

• Do you have any questions?

Please return to the Sunbeam Supervising Social Worker