

Parallel Parents

Beginners Guide to Fostering



Parallel Parents
Fostering

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Who are Parallel Parents?

We are an independent fostering agency that has been established for over 25 years. We are a family run agency, and believe that our child-focussed approach makes us really stand out from other agencies.

We are proud to have been rated "Outstanding" by Ofsted in our last two inspections. Our first priority is always the child or young person in our care. We believe that children have the right to a safe, stable and nurturing home, and our overarching aim is to recruit skilled and resilient foster carers who are able to offer children a positive substitute family experience where it is not possible for them to live with their own family.

What is Fostering?

The purpose of foster care is to provide a safe and stable environment for children who cannot be looked after by their own families. Fostered children stay with their foster carers until their own families are able to look after them, which may be for a few days or it could be until they are 18.

There are lots of reasons why children go into foster care. Sometimes they have been abused or neglected by their parents, and other times their parents have an illness which means they need to be looked after on a short-term basis.

Types of Foster Care

There are different types of fostering to suit all different types of children and families.

Short Term Fostering

provides a home for children on a short-term basis, such as a few days or weeks, until their long-term home is ready.

Long Term Fostering

provides a home for children with the intention of them being there for a number of years, or until the child is able to live independently.

Emergency Fostering

provides a home for children who need a stable environment urgently, any time of the day or night.

Respite Fostering

provides a home for children whilst their long-term foster carers have a short break. This could last anything from a few hours to a few weeks.

Parent & Baby Fostering

provides a nurturing home in which young parents can be taught skills to aid them to care for their baby.

Specialist Disability Fostering

provides a home specifically tailored for children with physical, developmental, sensory or intellectual disabilities.

Remand Fostering

although there is minimal requirement for this, remand carers provide a short-term home in which young offenders, or children awaiting criminal conviction, can live.



Can I foster?

We need people from all walks of life to be foster carers. It doesn't matter if...

You're retired or age 65+

You can foster whether you're 25 or 78, as long as you have a zest for life and are committed to make a difference to children and young people.

You have a criminal record

Having a criminal record does not necessarily prevent you from becoming a foster carer – it depends what your convictions relate to and how recently they have taken place. Each case is individually looked at when you apply.

You're single or in a couple

You can be a foster carer regardless of whether you live on your own, are part of a couple, or have a family. It's not your status that matters, it's the qualities and support you can give to a child.



You've not got much experience

It doesn't matter whether you've had experience with children or young people before. We offer all the training and support you need regardless of any prior experience you have.

You're LGBTQ+

You can be a foster carer whether you're gay or straight - it's your personality and character that makes you a good foster carer not your sexual orientation.

You have a job or are unemployed

When you become a foster carer the children you look after will be your first priority but, as long as your job is flexible, working alongside fostering is fine.

You're religious

There are thousands of children needing foster families and they come from a variety of religious and racial backgrounds, so we recruit a rich variety of carers to care for them.

You've got kids at home

You can foster whether you have children or not as long as you have a spare bedroom. If your children still live with you at home then we will make sure any children you foster fit well with your family and your circumstances.

Why foster?

Fostering is a brilliant thing to do. There are lots of different types of people who foster and they have different reasons for doing it.

Want to make a difference?

Fostering gives you the chance to help change a child's life for the better. It gives a second chance to children who would otherwise be forgotten, and gives you a sense of purpose and fulfilment.

Had you own children?

Put your experiences into practice and use the hurdles you've overcome to care for children and young people without a family.

Can you deal with difficult children?

Many of the children who come into foster care have challenging behaviours as a result of the abusive and neglectful situations they've come from. So if you're tough but have a heart of gold, you'll make a great carer.

Do you work with children?

Use your professional knowledge and skills to be a great foster carer. You don't need to give up your day job - we will support you to make sure you're fully committed to everything you do.

Benefits to you...

- Earn from £350 to £500 per week, per child you look after, tax free* (Standard allowances)
- Benefits not normally affected*
- Paid holidays and breaks
- Career development opportunities and full training provided
- Receive 24/7 support from professional social workers and become part of our 'fostering family.'
- Feel good about what you're doing with your life and see the impact you're having.
- Receive special foster carer discount cards.

*conditions apply

maxcard

How to foster?

The process of becoming an everyday heroes can be broken down into the following simple steps...

1. You get in touch

When you get in touch with us we'll chat about your interest in becoming a foster carer, complete a short enquiry form on our website (www.ParallelParents.com), call us on 0800 023 4450 or email: Hello@parallelparents.com and we will answer any questions you have.

2. Home visit

One of our fostering advisors will visit you in your home to explain what fostering involves and to find out more about you and your circumstances. They'll then help you complete an application pack so your enquiry can be taken to the next stage.

3. References & Training

In order to get to know more about you and your family we request references from your friends, family and employers. We also request criminal record checks, Local Authority checks and ask you to have a medical assessment.

You'll be invited to our Skills to Foster training which help you to prepare practically for being a foster carer.

4. Assessment

One of our social workers will contact you when you're ready to start your assessment and arrange dates when you're available for them to visit you. The assessment is a report written about you and your family, your life experiences, and your skills which will help you as a foster carer.

5. Fostering Panel

When your assessment is completed it will be presented to the fostering panel by your social worker. The panel will make a recommendation to the manager of Parallel Parents so that a final decision can be made about you being a foster carer.

6. You are an approved foster carer

When you have been approved your fostering journey begins! Your social worker will link with you to find the right child for you to foster. They will carry on training and supporting you and will be with you every step of the way.



Why choose Parallel Parents?

We are proud of Parallel Parents and our hero foster carers are too!

There are lots of reasons why we believe we're the best agency to foster with, but here are a few.

Our Support Team

Our support teams are on hand 24 / 7 to offer practical help and support to foster carers.

We put the needs of our foster carers at the same level as the young people they care for because we know they come across challenging situations and can have difficult decisions to make. Having this level of support provides the much needed security and stability required by young people, as well as their foster carers.

Professional Training

We train our foster carers before they are approved to help prepare them practically for becoming foster carers. This is usually carried out in small groups so it is also a good opportunity to get to know other people who are becoming foster carers.

Training is also provided by our own City & Guilds accredited training centre on subjects such as behaviour management, attachment training, internet safety, and much more.

Training can also be tailored to suit particular the interests and requirements of our foster carers depending on the type of children they look after and their individual needs.

Career Development

We invest in our foster carers and give opportunities for them to develop their careers. Some of our foster carers have specialised in areas such as therapy, social work, and support work.

Parallel Parents has been awarded Investors in People Gold in recognition of the career development opportunities they give to all their staff and carers.

Fostering Resource Centres

Parallel Parents are linked to fostering resources centres run by their partner organisation, Care Today. These centres are designed to be a transitional link between residential and family-based settings so offer support to more challenging and complex fostering placements experiencing difficulties adjusting to family living.

Fostering resource centres offer a variety of support strategies such as outreach work to meet the specific needs of the young person, residential respite and bridging placements to support placement stability, and family intervention work.

CARE • TODAY
Childrens Services

What Ofsted say about us

We have been rated an "outstanding" fostering agency by Ofsted!

They rated us outstanding in every area of our fostering service.

Overall effectiveness: "outstanding"

Experiences and progress of, and outcomes for, children and young people: "outstanding"

Quality of service: "outstanding"

Safeguarding children and young people: "outstanding"

Leadership and management: "outstanding"



**Ofsted**
Outstanding

What our carers say about us



Training is very helpful and informative and questions are always answered and explained.



I could not do the job without my Supporting Social Worker. She is like part of our extended family. She is very supportive and always there to help



Parallel Parents is a very caring agency. It is not like being part of a corporate organisation; instead it is more like being part of a family



Our Supporting Social Worker is always available to offer help and support when needed. Our foster child always looks forward to seeing her and even tidies his room when she visits.



When I had a very difficult placement, my Supporting Social Worker came 7 nights a week – brilliant!



I have to say that the level of support I have received has been second to none... It didn't matter what time of night I contacted my Support Team, they were always very supportive and helpful and nothing was ever or is ever too much trouble for them. There has never been a time when I have not received support when needed.

FAQs

Foster carer allowances

Foster care allowances are given to foster carers in order to practically help them care for the children they look after – and reward them for their hard work.

Parallel Parents allowances depend on the carers experience and we have a clear structure to move further up the levels.

Ability to drive

Being able to drive makes travelling to school and meetings this a lot easier, but if you cannot drive you can still foster as long as you have good access to public transport.

Criminal record

Having a criminal record does not necessarily prevent you from becoming a foster carer – it depends what your convictions relate to and how recently they have taken place.

Already have children

Yes, you can foster whether you have children or not as long as you have a spare bedroom. If your children still live at home then we will make sure any young people fit well with your family's circumstances.

Birth parents

Children go into foster carer for all sort of reasons - sometimes because they have been abused or neglected and other times because thier parents have a short-term illness. Therefore wherever it is appropriate fostered children meet with their birth family during scheduled visits.

Can I still work?

When you become a foster carer the children will be your first priority but, as long as your job is flexible, working alongside fostering is fine.

Age and gender

We want the children you foster to fit in with your family situation so the child's age, gender and character are all taken into consideration.

Prior information

We like to be open with our carers so we will give you as much information as possible about a young person you may look after, including any behavioural and emotional difficulties which they may have.

We always do as much as we can to ensure that the child will fit in well with your circumstances.

Parallel Parents Fostering

Contact Us

www.ParallelParents.com

0800 023 4450

hello@ParallelParents.com