



Young People's Guide

12+



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My Details

This guide belongs to:

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

My foster Carers:

My Foster Carers phone numbers:

My Social Worker:

My Social Workers phone number:

My Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO):

My IRO's phone number:

Supervising Social Worker:

Supervising Social Workers phone number:



Fostering

About Fostering and Our Fostering Agency

A foster carer is someone who will look after you when your usual care giver is unable to; they work for an organisation called a fostering agency.

Your foster carers will make sure you are healthy, well cared for and able to attend your school or other place of learning. They will want you to feel part of their family whilst supporting and encouraging you to have time with your family and friends. They want you to be happy and enjoy your time with them so they will encourage you to have hobbies and interests that you can share with them or your friends.

Foster carers are all different. At the Futures Group, we understand that every child is different too and we do our best to find the right family for you. This process is called 'matching'.

We have been working for almost 25 years to provide safe and caring homes for children and young people who are unable to live at home. We find, train, support and supervise foster carers.



Social Workers and Supervising Social Workers

Your social worker is responsible for making sure that you are cared for whilst away from your usual care giver. They will be there to support you, advocate for you and they will ask for your views and preferences.

Supervising social workers work with the foster carers to make sure they have the right information to keep you safe, help you learn and develop and settle in the home.

Meetings

Different types of meetings will take place whilst you are living with your foster carers, this is so that everybody can share information and work together to help you. For example, you may have to attend a placement agreement meeting or a review. Your foster carers will also have an annual review and you will be asked for your views.

Keeping in Touch

Your social worker will help you to keep in touch with your family and people who are important to you. It is important that you tell your social worker about the people you want to see. You may hear the word 'contact' and that means keeping in touch with members of your family and those people important to you, where it is safe and possible to do so. We call it 'family and friends time'.

Your time with your family will be agreed by your social worker with your family and the foster carers. It could include face to face visits, overnights stays, outings or events, telephone and video calls or exchanges of letters or emails.

Your Views

It is important that you tell us what you think and what you want, use the meetings to do this, also talk to your social worker, and your foster carer. Tell people what you like, and what you do not like. You can write your views in the 'Notes' section at the end of this guide.



What should I expect from my Foster Carers?

Your foster carer will do lots of things to make you feel happy and comfortable whilst you are living with them. Wherever you live, you will be treated with respect and you should respect your carers and other young people you may live with. They will make you feel that you are part of their family. On top of this, your foster carers will:

- Make sure that you're well looked after and listen, respect, help and support you
- Attend meetings about you at school and with your social workers
- Help you learn the skills you will need when you grow older and leave their care
- Make sure you have a bedroom of your own (or shared with your siblings)
- Help you stay in touch with your friends and family
- Give you pocket money according to what is agreed in your placement agreement meeting
- Give you a chance to celebrate your birthday and religious festivals
- Be someone who is interested and will encourage and advise you

This is something you'll be able to talk about with your foster carers because they know that it can feel strange living with new people.

They won't expect you to call them 'mum' or 'dad', you'll be able to decide together what works best.

Bedrooms & Personal Belongings

Whilst living in your foster carer's house, you will be given your own bedroom if possible. This is a place where you'll be able to spend some quiet time where you can relax or do some work. It is your own space where you can keep all of your personal belongings.

Your foster carers may need to go into your room from time to time but they will always knock first. Remember that you should never go into someone else's room without permission.

What Do I Call My Foster Carers?



Allowances

Whilst living in foster care you are entitled to weekly pocket money. The amount will be set by your social worker.

Your foster carers get an allowance to make sure that you have nice clothes to wear – you can choose what you wear.

Activities and Holidays

Futures for Children foster carers will fully encourage and support you to take up general leisure activities within and outside of the home. If you have any interests or hobbies e.g. football, swimming, dancing, photography, going out with friends, or going to the cinema; these will all be actively encouraged.

If you want to be given the opportunity to try out new activities, make sure you tell your foster carer and they will do their best to support you.

You may go on holidays, weekends or day trips, maybe with your family, friends or carers. This will be discussed between you, your family, your carers and your social worker.

Dealing with Worries

'Do they know I don't like certain foods?
Can my friends come round? Will I have to move again?'

Your foster carers will not mind you asking them about these sorts of things. They will try and help you with any worry you may have. If you would rather talk to someone else you can contact your social worker or your carers' supervising social worker.



A list of words and what they mean

When you are at your meetings, or talking with adults, you might sometimes hear adults use words that you're not sure about. We've tried to list some of those we think might be of help and given each one an explanation.

Advocate

A person who helps children by putting forward their views, makes sure children's views are heard or makes a case on their behalf.

Care Plan

An agreed plan made at your Review Meeting that should include details of your needs, now and for the future.

Children's Guide

This booklet is a children's guide! There is also a video version, which you can watch online at www.futures-for-children.org

Complaints Officer

Someone who deals with any complaints that are made, in a fair way.

Foster Family

A family, like the one that has been especially chosen for you, to live with when you are not living with your birth family.

Independent Reviewing Officer

They are in charge at your Review meeting and check that everyone is sticking to your care plan to get the best results for you.

Your Review

These are meetings where adults in your life talk with you about your plans for the future.

Local Authority

Every Children's Social Care Department is part of something called a Local Authority.

Placement Plan

When you first arrive at your foster family, decisions will be made about all sorts of things, like when you should go to bed, pocket money and what school you are going to go to. These things are all written down into a Placement Plan.

Policy

Something that is written down to help everyone know what they should do about the subject they're talking about. For example, it is our policy to make sure that every child is kept safe and so we have written down what carers and staff have to do make this happen.

Procedure / Procedures

These are steps people have to follow in order to make sure they're meeting a policy.

Registered Person

Someone in a fostering agency who is either the owner or a manager of the office.

Children's Social Care / Children's Services

The people in the area you used to live in, that your Social Worker works for. Every area has its own department.

Social Worker

The person who has been given the job, by your Local Authority, to act on your behalf.

Staff

All the people who are paid to work for a company like ours.

Statement of Purpose

Something that we have to write to meet the Law. This tells you what we do, for example who does what and how it is done. If you would like a copy of this you can have one sent to you.

Supervising Social Worker

Someone who supports your foster carer, to make sure everything is going OK.

Welfare

People use this word when they're talking about what is best for someone. For example they might say, "we're only thinking of your best welfare". This could mean they are worried about whether you are being kept safe. It can also mean other things to do with your health, your feelings and your general well-being.



Reviews

The point of Review meetings is to check:

- That your Care Plan is working for you
- That you are being well looked after
- If anything needs to be changed (or has been)
- If plans can be made as you grow up
- That you and your family know how you are looked after and that you can say how you feel about it.

If you can't or don't want to go, you can ask your Social Worker or foster carer to talk for you. You should have a Review once every six months. If you want to change how you are looked after, you can ask your Social Worker for a Review meeting.

The Review may be at school, your foster carer's home or somewhere else where you feel comfortable.

The person in charge of the meeting is the Independent Reviewing Officer (also called an IRO). They will usually speak to you before and after the meeting to find out what you want and to check that you understood what was discussed and plans were made.

The people who might be at your review are:

- You
- Your Social Worker
- Your foster carers
- Your carer's Supervising Social Worker
- The Independent Reviewing Officer
- Sometimes your family

There also might be:

Your Key Worker:

If you have one, they will be available to have a chat to you and support you in school.

Your Advocate:

If you have one, they will talk to you and make sure your feelings are heard in the meetings you attend.

A Health Worker:

Someone who makes sure you are well.

An Independent Visitor / Support Worker:

If you do not have contact with your family, this person might take you for days out.

Children's Guardian:

A person from the court who is here to make sure your feelings and needs are understood.

Your Teacher:

Teachers don't always have to physically be there, sometimes they may just send over a report.

If you do or don't want someone to be at your review, just tell your Social Worker or the IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer), they will always help as much as they can, whenever they can.

So how can I say what I think?

The best ways to have your say at meetings are:

Tell adults, like your carers or Social Worker, or the IRO, your wishes and feelings and they can help you to get your views across.

You can write things down. You could read this out at your meeting, or ask someone else to read it for you.

Make sure you go to the meetings and reviews to make sure your views are heard!



Household Rules

Rules

All family homes have their own rules and these might be a bit different to what you are used to. You won't be able to do everything and anything you want because your foster carers have made a promise help you to be settled and stay safe.

Rules are there to make sure the family home runs as smoothly as possible, allowing you to be well by getting enough rest and nutrition you need to develop physically and healthily.

Having rules doesn't mean your foster carers don't want you to have fun, because they do. They want to help you to be happy.

What if I do Something Wrong?

If you break one of the rules, it may be necessary for your foster carers to use some form of consequence. This may take the form of grounding, telling off, the stopping of leisure activities or additional household chores.

All About Us

This is a really handy booklet which your foster carers will go through with you – it will tell you all about the household from where you can put your belongings to whether your friends will be able to come round or sleepover and where you all eat dinner.

To help you remember the household rules so you don't break them, why not write them down in the space provided below?

Education, School and Health Care

Education and School

Your foster carer will help and support you in your education by making sure you have what you need, including a quiet place to study. You need to attend school regularly and if you have any difficulties, talk them through with your foster carer and your social worker.

If you don't go to school at the moment, your foster carers and your social worker will look at why, and work out how to solve any problems so you can return to school. You might be pleased about this or you might not but everyone needs a good education. If you haven't been to school for a while, you may feel nervous about returning but your foster carer will help you overcome any worries.

Remember that school isn't just about the lessons, it's also about making friends and taking part in after school activities too!

Meetings at School

Like with your Reviews, you will have regular meetings at school with your social worker, Foster Carer and your teacher.

These meetings will often be called a PEP meeting, which stands for Personal Education Plan.

At these meetings everyone will discuss how things are going at school and if you are finding any subjects tricky, whether you need some extra help.

Health Care

Good health is cool! Eating healthy food, taking part in physical exercise and things you enjoy.

Your foster carer will make sure you're registered with a new doctor and a new dentist if you live too far away from your family home. They will also ensure that a health record is completed for you.

Our eyesight is one of the most important things for us to look after and we need to have regular checks. Foster carers will make appointments with an optician and they will come with you. If you need to wear glasses then your foster carer will help you pick out a new pair.



Child Protection and Safeguarding

Sometimes adults or other young people may hurt children or harm them in a physical or emotional way and this is not right. In fact, it is against the law.

Child abuse is wrong and child protection is about preventing and stopping child abuse from happening.

What is Child Abuse?

- **Physical Injury.** This is where a child is beaten/punched/kicked hurt in a physical way.
- **Emotional Abuse.** This is when a person behaves in a way that is likely to seriously affect a child's emotional development. It can range from constantly rejecting a child and not being affectionate, through to continual severe criticism. Witnessing domestic violence can be considered a form of emotional abuse.
- **Neglect.** This is the persistent lack of appropriate care of children, including love, stimulation, safety, nourishment (enough or the right food), warmth, education and medical attention.
- **Sexual Abuse.** This is when a child or young person is pressurised, forced or tricked into taking part in any kind of sexual activity with an adult or other young person. This can include kissing, touching private parts or breasts, intercourse or oral sex. Encouraging a child to look at pornographic magazines, videos or sexual acts is also sexual abuse.

What is a Child Protection Enquiry?

Someone may tell someone at school, or a health visitor or Social Services that they are worried about a child. A child may then become the subject of a child protection enquiry this may lead to an investigation. Social Services have a duty to investigate.

Child Protection Conference
It is a social workers job to protect children from harm and if they feel there is concern, a meeting called a child protection conference will be held to help decide what can be done to help a child. This will become known as a child protection plan. Parents, teacher, social worker and all those who play a part in a child's care may contribute to the plan.
If this is about you, you may be able to go to the meeting and should discuss this with your Social Worker.

A key aim of children's services, including local authorities and foster care providers is to keep children and young people safe from harm. The law states that abusing children is wrong.

What we want for you and what you can expect from your foster carers

We want you to be well cared for during the time you are living with your foster family. We know that not all children like or want the same things, so we have listened to what people think you would like and have chosen a family we think you will feel most comfortable with.

All children have rights and during your stay, our foster carers, Social Workers, teachers and others will all work together to make sure we adhere to your rights. We believe that by building on the skills that you already have, we can help you to reach your full potential.

During the time you stay with your foster family you can expect:

- To be able to say what your wishes and feelings are and to know they will be taken into account.
- To be listened to if you are having any problems.
- To be protected from harm and kept safe.
- To be kept healthy and provided with health care to suit your needs.
- To get the most from your education.
- To have your privacy and confidentiality respected.
- To be treated appropriately and with respect for who you are, what you believe in and for any additional needs you may have.
- To be valued and not discriminated against for any reason.
- To be given information about your family and other important people in your life and to have contact with them, or a clear explanation of why this is not possible.
- To be told clearly what you can do and what you are not allowed to do.
- To be given opportunities to develop your skills and interests.
- To be encouraged to participate in making decisions and plans for your future and to be prepared for life as an adult, with the necessary help made available to you while you do this.
- To know how to complain if things go wrong and for that complaint to be dealt with properly.
- To have access to the files about you that we hold.

Bullying and Cyber Bullying

Bullying

Children sometimes bully others because:

- They don't know it's wrong
- They are copying older siblings or other people in the family whom they admire
- They haven't learnt other ways of mixing with their school friends/peers
- Their friends encourage them to bully
- They are going through a difficult time and are acting out aggressive feelings
- They may be jealous

Bullying includes:

- People calling you names
- Making things up to get you into trouble
- Hitting, pinching, biting, pushing and shoving
- Taking your things
- Damaging your property
- Threats and intimidation

You should:

- Tell someone: teacher, foster carer or social worker

Bullying can make you feel lonely, angry, frightened and confused. If you are being bullied, you might be feeling all or some of these feelings.

You can:

- Contact an agency for advice and information (see the 'Useful Contacts' section) – your foster carer or social worker can also help you to do this

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is bullying and harassment through email, instant messaging, text messages, voicenotes, blogs, websites, mobile phones and gaming platforms. It is also called electronic bullying, SMS bullying, mobile bullying, online bullying and internet bullying. Cyber bullying causes distress and is wrong! We have listed some ways to protect yourself.

Do not give out personal information in chatrooms, on gaming platforms or through any app's instant message service. Do not respond to abusive messages – ignore them or log off. Also always think about what you write and how you write it.

Do not reply to any text or video messages that are rude or nasty. The mobile service provider (e.g. EE, O2) will have a number that you can call to report abusive messaging. Take a look on their website. Be careful who you give your number to and don't leave your mobile phone lying around.

If you receive a nasty email it is best not to reply. If they do not stop tell your foster carer, they may be able to contact the service provider. If a situation repeats itself or is serious and is worrying you, save and print off the emails. They will provide evidence in case your foster carer needs to take action.



Using the internet for chatrooms, forums and peer-to-peer networks can be great fun, a place to meet new and interesting people and share ideas and information.

But you need to be very careful about who you chat to and what information you give out.

Remember, if you've never met the person, they are still a stranger, regardless of how often you've 'chatted'.

If a stranger walked up to you on the street and asked you for personal details such as your address and telephone number you wouldn't give it to them.

The same rules apply on the internet.

Sending text messages, emails, pictures or voicenotes either by mobile phone or on your computer or tablet can be a great way to keep in touch with friends. But remember, once that message, picture or email has been sent, you no longer have control over where it goes or who sees it. Images can be copied and edited or even posted on the internet without your permission and that confidential text message you sent could easily be forwarded to the wrong person.

Only give your mobile number to people you know and trust. Never respond to a text message from someone you don't know.

Remember to always ask permission if you want to post a picture of someone else on the internet.

When registering for things on websites you may be asked to give personal information. Always check that the site is reliable and reputable before giving out any information and make sure they will not pass on or sell your information (well-known sites such as the BBC are reliable). Reliable sites will always have a privacy policy which will tell you how your information will be used. This should help you decide if you want to give out your information. Most sites also have a check box at the bottom of the page asking for permission to pass on or use your personal information.

If you have any doubts at all speak to your carer who will be able to help you decide whether the site is a reliable, reputable one.

You can also get help and advice from

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.childline.org.uk

Phone: 0800 1111 (this is free to call)



Our Children and Young People's Charter

Independence

- We want to help you develop practical skills including shopping, budgeting, cooking and laundry.
- We want to help you to develop good personal, self and health care.
- We will support you when you move up to higher education for example, secondary school, college and university.
- When you turn 16 we will support you to think about your future as an adult.

Wellbeing

- We will make sure you will get to all of your health appointments.
- We want to encourage you to have healthy meals.
- We want to support you with your interests and hobbies.
- We want to find ways to support you if you feel unhappy or sad.

Education

- We want to make sure that you can access a good education and feel supported with your work at school and at home.

Family and friends

- We want to help you to keep in contact with your family and friends as we understand this is a big part of your life.

You!

- We want to keep you safe.
- We want to share information with you.
- We want to listen and hear your views.
- We can support you in meetings.
- We want to explain to you who you can contact if your rights have been ignored.
- We want to offer you a nurturing home with firm but fair boundaries and rules.
- We will accept that you don't have to be perfect and recognise your strengths.
- We want to support you regardless of your age, gender, religion, culture and race.
- We will only share your information when necessary.



What do I do if I'm not happy?

Making a Complaint

All looked after children, children in foster care, have a right to make a complaint if they are not happy with something.

How you are feeling matters!

If you are not happy with something you can make a complaint to Futures for Children by phone, in writing or in person.

Most things can be sorted out by talking. If there is anything that you are worried or unhappy about, we have a person who will hear your complaint; they are our Complaints Officer. They will help you and make sure that everything is dealt with fairly. Give them a call or send them a text on 07795 224674.

Or you can speak to your foster carer's supervising social worker for further details.

Your local authority will have a complaints service - ask your social worker about this service and their contact details.

And remember you can speak openly to your Independent Reviewing Officer – they are there to help you voice your wishes, feelings and concerns.

Making a Complaint

Commissioner for England

There is a commissioner for children in England; they work to 'promote awareness of the views and interests of children.'

- The office of the children's commissioner, 20 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT
- Phone: 0207 783 8330
- Web: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk
- Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

Child Line

This is the free 24 hour helpline for children and young people in the UK. Child Line's counsellors are there to help and find ways to sort things out. Child Line is confidential – they won't tell anyone about your call unless you want them to talk to somebody for you, or you are in danger.

- Phone: 0800 1111
- Web: www.childline.org.uk

Ofsted

An organisation called Ofsted checks the work of fostering agencies in England and Wales.

- Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD
- Phone: 0300 123 1231
- Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk
- Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

CoramVoice

Confidential advice and advocacy for children and young people in care or leaving care.

- 49 Mecklenburgh Square, WC1N 2QA
- Phone: 0808 800 5792
- Web: www.voiceyp.org
- Email: info@voiceyp.org

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

If you feel you are not being listened to by your Foster Carer, Social worker, or anyone else involved in your welfare, a NYAS will listen to and support you. They can come and meet with you if needed.

- Phone: 0808 808 1001
- Website: www.nyas.net/contact-us/
- Email: help@nyas.net

Futures Group

If you need to contact us then our details are:

- Futures Group, The Masters House, College Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6YQ
- Phone: 01622 760600

Other Help and Advice

Law Stuff

LawStuff provides free legal information to children and young people, from the Police and the law to what age you are legally permitted to do certain things, like learning to drive.

- Phone: 0300 330 5480
- Web: www.lawstuff.org.uk
- Fill out their online form to gain advice

NSPCC

If you need help or advice, or are concerned that you or another child may be at risk. The helpline is open 24 hours a day.

- Phone: 0800 800 5000
- Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

Become

Become is a national charity, working to improve the care for around 60,000 children and young people, who are separated from their families, living in residential or foster care. They promote the interests of children and young people in public care in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and around the world.

- 15-18 White Lion Street, London, N1 9PG
- Phone: 020 7251 3117
- Website: www.becomecharity.org.uk

FRANK

Provides free and confidential advice and help to anyone affected by drugs. ▪ Phone: 0300 123 6600

- Website: www.talktofrank.com.

Kidscape

Is a children's charity who give practical advice on bullying and keeping safe.

- Website: www.kidscape.org.uk

Young Stonewall

Stonewall is a charity working for equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and others (LGBTQ+) people at home, at work and at school. Young people are entitled to fair treatment in every part of their lives whether at school, college or university no matter what their sexuality is.

- Phone: 08000 502020
- Website: www.youngstonewall.org.uk

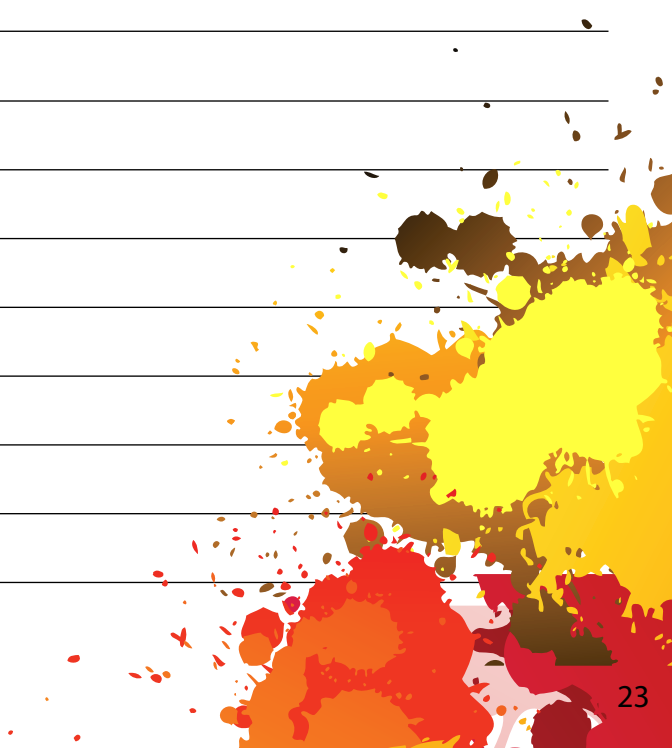
BDD Foundation

BDD (Body Dysmorphic Disorder) is a condition that causes a person to have a distorted view about how they look, and spend a lot of time worrying about their appearance. The BDD Foundation is a charity supporting research and education into the condition. Their website offers lots of helpful information for people with BDD, or who think they might have it.

Website: www.bddfoundation.org

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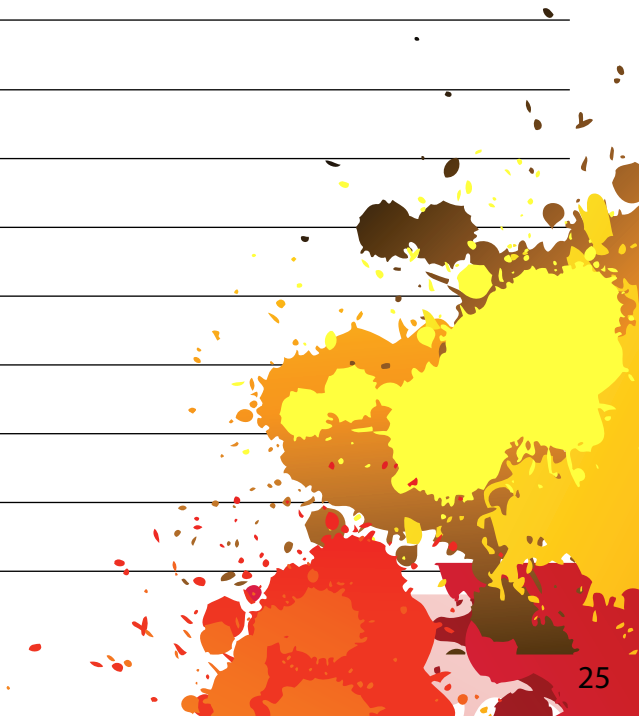
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Your notes

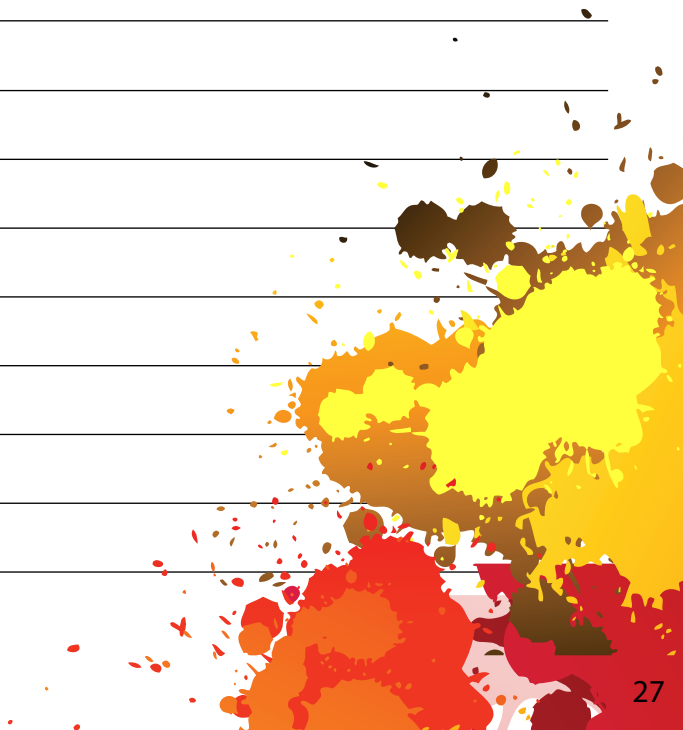
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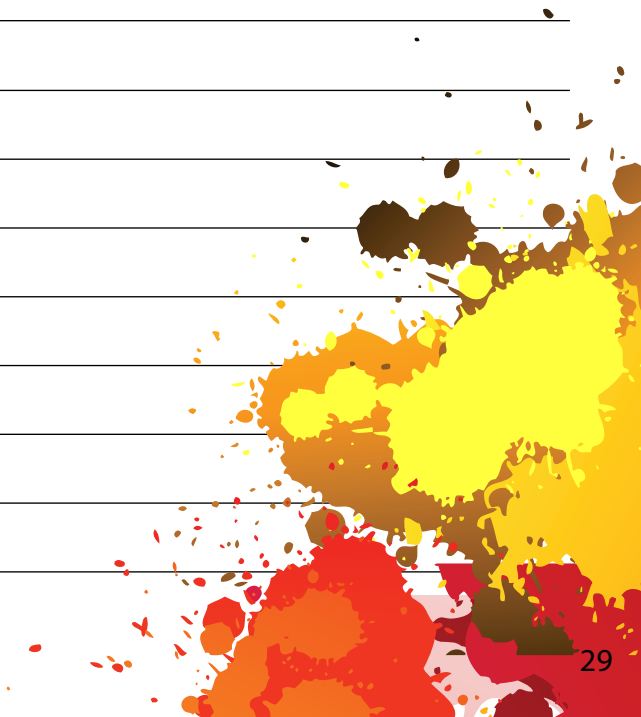
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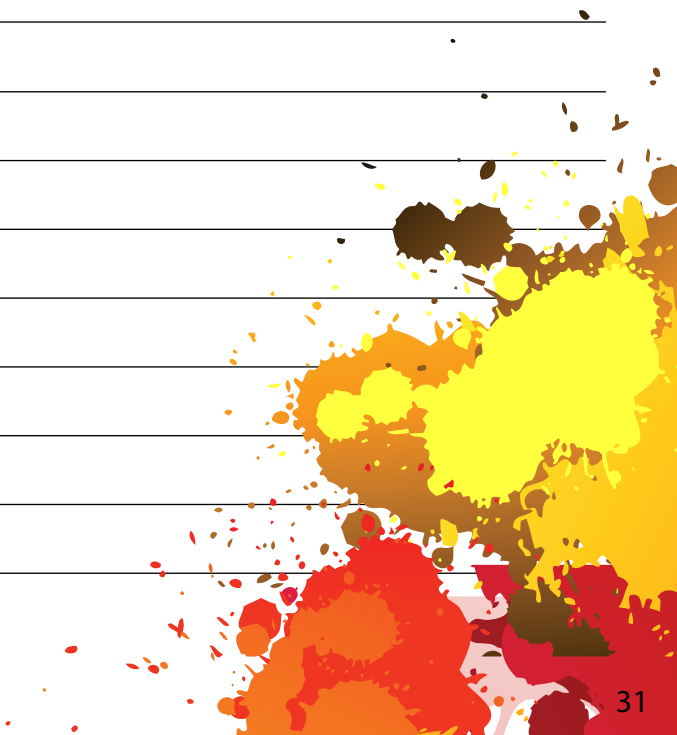
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Your notes

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www.futures-for-children.org



www.fostercaresolutions.co.uk



www.fostering-options.org