



Improving education: tools for working with social workers

Introduction

London Fostering Achievement is a programme of activity that aims to improve educational outcomes for fostered children in London. It is delivered by The Fostering Network in partnership with Achievement for All. It is part of the Mayor's London Schools Excellence Fund, funded by the Department for Education and the Greater London Authority.

We bring together leaders, foster carers, teachers, young people and the wider professional network to take part in training workshops, masterclasses and much more. We recognise that all professionals working with a child need to play their part in transforming outcomes. With the right support, children looked after can and do achieve.

At The Fostering Network we champion the important role that foster carers play in encouraging young people to aspire and supporting them to achieve. Foster carers can be powerful advocates around education.

This pack brings together the following useful resources for working with social workers:

- Useful checklists in relation to schools and Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings
- Prompt questions for Personal Education Plans
- A template *Child Looked After Information & Strategy Sheet* which can be used to ensure all staff are consistent in their dealings with traumatised children

This pack is based on materials produced by Bernadette Alexander. For more resources, please visit our website:

www.londonfosteringachievement.org.uk

PERSONAL EDUCATION PLAN

Self-Evaluation: Supervising Social Worker

	Always/ Yes	Sometimes/ Could do more	Don't usually get round to
In each meeting with my foster carers, the child's educational progress forms part of the discussion			
I know and understand what Key Stage and Year Group my carers' Children Looked After are in and the levels/grades they are expected to be getting			
I understand the PEP process			
At each meeting with my foster carers, I read through the PEP and discuss how the Action Plan is being carried out			
I am able to advise my foster carers on ensuring good attendance and punctuality, especially with getting their foster children up and out to school on time every morning			
I am able to advise my foster carers on supporting their Child looked after with homework			
I feel confident in supporting my foster carers with ways of increasing their children's reading, writing and communication skills out of school			
I feel confident in supporting my foster carers with ways of increasing their children's numeracy out of school			
I discuss with my foster carers their liaison with school and how to overcome any concerns they may have about it			
I know where to get advice and support for my foster carers concerning the education of their foster children			
I have high expectations of my foster carers with regards to their promotion and support for the educational attainment of their foster children			

PERSONAL EDUCATION PLAN

Self-Evaluation: Children’s Social Worker

	Always/ Yes	Sometimes/ Could do more	Don't usually get round to
I know what Key Stage and Year Group my Child looked after is in and what levels/grades s/he is expected to be getting			
I know and understand the current attainment and progress being made by my Child looked after			
When I meet with my Child looked after, I talk about school, how s/he is getting on, whether s/he needs any support with any aspect of school life (teachers, friends, clubs) etc.			
I know what extra-curricular activities my Child looked after does and encourage her/him to participate			
I know the names of key school staff and liaise at least once per half term with the Designated Teacher/Head of Year/tutor/class teacher			
I am confident that the school has my contact details and will contact me immediately if there are any concerns			
I ensure the PEP Reviews take place on time, with full attendance of key people and copies are quickly distributed			
At PEPs, I feel confident in speaking out, in advocating for my child, in challenging the school and/or the foster carer if necessary			
I monitor the PEP Action Plan between reviews and ensure that they are carried out			
I find ways in which to praise and boost the confidence of my Child looked after, especially when things are not going well in school			
I encourage my Child looked after to aspire highly and to have high expectations of themselves			
I know where to get support and advice for my Children Looked After concerning all educational matters			

Prompt Questions for PEPs

What might the social worker and foster carer ask of the school?

- What are staff doing to enhance a child's self-belief, motivation and high aspirations?
- What, specifically, is being done to support the development of self-regulation, to improve disorganisation (or other aspects typical of Children Looked After?)
- Are his/her relationships with staff and pupils good and, if not, what is being done to support him/her with this?
- Is s/he engaging appropriately in the work? Is the set work made accessible to him/her (differentiated) when there are difficulties? Is s/he provided with adequate support for work?
- Have her/his needs been taken into account in class seating plans?
- How are social & emotional aspects of learning taught?
- Does the curriculum content and delivery take into account that s/he is looked after?
- Is s/he managing transitions well within the school day? If not, what support is being given?
- Is s/he managing socially and emotionally during lunch and break time? If not, what support is being given?
- Does s/he need extra support with learning? If so, what is or can be done?
- Are there extra-curricular activities s/he could or should be attending?

Prompt Questions for PEPs

What might the school and Designated Teacher ask of the foster carer and the social worker?

- Are you satisfied with the level of communication between school and home?
- What do you do to enhance self-belief, motivation and high aspirations?
- What do you do to support the development of self-regulation?
- Do you have a working knowledge of key stages, national expectations as regards progress, different pathways, how to support transition, etc. or would you like more support?
- What are you doing to promote literacy and numeracy skills at home? Would you like more support with this?
- Are you providing the optimum environment for the completion of home learning?
- What support do you give with home learning?
- Are you taking your child to activities that enhance learning outside of school? (Museums, trips, theatre, cinema, sports etc.)

The Child Looked After Information & Strategy Sheet

The purpose of this is to support staff by making them aware of possible triggers and strategies for avoiding them or for dealing with the upset child. It is particularly useful for staff who do not know the child well, such as cover or supply teachers. Schools can work with foster carers, social workers and other professionals to complete the form.

It is also important in ensuring that all staff are consistent in their dealings with traumatised children.

Name: Class:

Prior Data:

Academic Targets:

Academic strengths: e.g. learns well visually, reading age above chronological age).....

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Academic weaknesses: (e.g. poor short-term memory).....

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Social, emotional and personal strengths: (e.g. works well in groups).....

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Social, emotional and personal weaknesses: (e.g. will constantly seek attention & need affirmation)

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Types of behaviour child may display:.....

Possible triggers for these behaviours:

Strategies to support learning:

Strategies to support self-regulation: