

Messages from research -

How evidence based research
supports good practice

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Improving the lives of
looked after children

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Fostering success:
An exploration of the research
literature

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Evidence suggests that foster children should do well if:

- they have at least one close tie with a committed adult
- they are happy and involved at school
- they have an opportunity to break away from their background in certain respects

Difficulties of foster care

- The difficult temperaments and histories of the children which may make it difficult for them to trust foster carers or settle with them
- Their lack of educational achievement which commonly antedates foster care
- The lack of evidence that specific forms of training can, on their own, improve outcomes

Difficulties of foster care

- The potentially difficult relationship between foster family and birth family. In certain circumstances contact with certain family members may threaten a placement
- What happens after foster care – foster care rarely lasts into adult life. Returns to birth family and movements to independent living are often very problematic for the former foster children



Innovative, tried and tested: A review of good practice in fostering

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- Recruiting and training foster carers
- Retaining carers and creating job satisfaction by career choice
- Creating placement choice by using partnership working and commissioning
- Fostering children with complex and special needs
- Providing additional services to the children and young people placed
- Evaluating fostering services through user participation



The adoption of looked-after children

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- A scoping review – a summary of the main trends in research
- Identified areas requiring more research – especially the adoption of teenagers
- Collated evidence from a range of research on disruption rates according to age at placement



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Practice guide to fostering

Introduction

SCIE Practice Guide to Fostering (October 2004) is designed for foster care practitioners and anyone with an interest in good practice in fostering. The easy-to-use guide is packed with case studies, good practice tips and research summaries and designed to answer any questions foster carers may have on fostering, as well as provide food for thought.

The guide is based on evidence from a number of reports including [SCIE Knowledge Review 4: Innovative, Tried and Tested – A Review of Good Practice in Fostering](#), [SCIE Knowledge Review 5: Fostering Success – An Exploration of the Research Literature in Foster Care \(1\)](#), [\(2\)](#) and two other recent studies [\(3\)](#). It shows how this evidence can be used in every day practice.

Link: [About this guide](#)

Link: [SCIE Knowledge Review 4: Innovative, Tried and Tested](#)

Link: [SCIE Knowledge Review 5: Fostering Success](#)

About SCIE



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- identifying major areas of importance in current fostering practice
- summarising key research findings
- providing references for the original research
- suggesting practice points

- giving examples and illustrations from practice
- giving definitions and details of relevant legislation, guidance and standards
- providing further information and useful web links
- providing information about current English law and standards.

Guide topics (1)

- Children's views
- Meeting foster children's emotional and behavioural needs
- The needs of foster children from a black and minority ethnic background
- Looked after children's physical health
- Counselling and therapeutic help
- School and education

Guide topics (2)

- Contact
- Temporary foster care
- Placement stability
- Placing siblings
- Using partnerships and commissioning to create placement choice
- The profile of foster carers

Guide topics (3)

- Recruiting foster carers
- Training foster carers
- Retaining foster carers
- Creating foster carer job satisfaction
- User evaluation of fostering services

Structure of the guide (1)

Each topic is divided into the following sections:

- **Key research findings**

An accessible summary of the important research.

- **Practice points**

Where appropriate, an analysis of how these findings have been translated into everyday practice.

- **Research**

An overview of current research with references and some links to the original research.

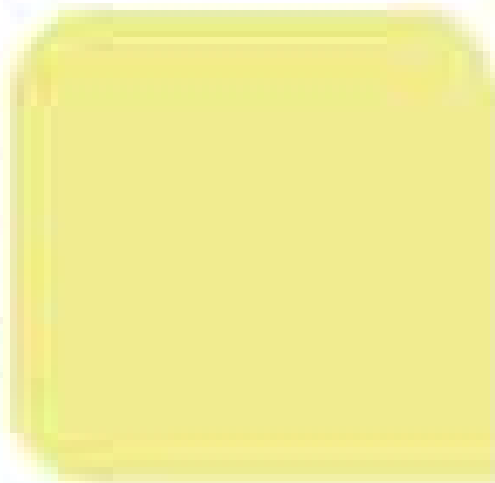
Structure of the guide (2)

- **Ideas from practice**

Where available, there are practice ideas and examples showing how agencies have tried to improve practice and solve problems. Law and standards

- **Relevant legislation, guidance and standards, where it exists.**

Adult placements and person centred approaches



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Sources of knowledge

- A practice survey that identified emerging and developing practice
- A literature review that pulled together the key literature on adult placements
- An analytical report that identified the key messages from these two surveys

Contents of the guide (1)

- Being person centred
- The current situation
- Assessment and referral
- Matching and introductions
- In the placement

Contents of the guide (2)

- Monitoring and review
- Moving on
- Adult placement carers
- Advocacy
- Person centred planning
- References

Assessment and referral

- What national minimum standards say
- Findings from the practice survey
- Practice points

Forthcoming research work (1)

- **Communication skills with children and young people:** a Knowledge Review to assist social work programme providers in teaching qualifying social workers – this will be converted into a resource guide
- **Provision of services to children and young people with complex health needs:** a Knowledge Review that addresses what children, young people and families want for themselves and that emphasises the difficulty of breaking down their needs into those met by health and those met by social services

Forthcoming research work (2)

- **A review of what older people value as outcomes of receiving social care services:** highly relevant to what we mean by 'personalised' services
- **Day care activities for people with learning disabilities:** a Knowledge Review that emphasises the need to think in terms of the ordinary activities we all do rather than 'attending a day centre'