

Unless you are providing emergency foster care, you should be provided with information about the child who the agency wishes to place with you and with time to make the decision to accept or not accept the child. Your refusal to accept a child should not have any impact on future placements.

Information to Ask

Before deciding to accept a child into your home, be sure to have sufficient information about the child so that you can make a good decision for your family and for the foster child. Some of the questions to ask are:

- What is the child's name, age, legal status?
- What is his/her caseworker's name and telephone number?
- Why is this child being moved or taken into care?
- What are the previous placement experiences of the child? Can I contact previous foster parents or caregivers?
- What is the care plan for the child and the expected length of placement?
- Where are the parents?
- Are there brothers and sisters and where are they? Ages? Birthdates?
- Are there other extended family members involved with the child?
- Will there be visits with parents, siblings, and/or extended family members? Frequency? Where? Who arranges? Are they to be supervised visits (and if so, who is to supervise)? Who transports?
- Does the child have any medical problems? On medication? Reasons for each medication?
- What grade is the child in? Are there school problems? What school is the child to attend?
- Has he/she been abused? By whom? In what circumstances? Is he/she a risk to other children? Has this child ever made allegations of abuse against anyone? If so, against whom? What was the outcome of investigation?
- Does the child have any special behaviour problems?
- Is the child in therapy or receiving counselling? Frequency? Who drives? Am I expected to participate?
- Is the child involved in any organized leisure time activities? Which ones?
- How does the child relate to other children? To adults?
- Why have I been considered as a placement for the child?

Pre-Placement Visits

The child's caseworker, whenever possible, will facilitate pre-placement visits. This process may involve a number of visits, including an overnight, or may be restricted to just one visit. The length of time and number of visits will be dependent upon a number of factors. In all cases the child's caseworker or an involved collateral worker will escort the child for all pre-placement visits and for the admission. Where it is possible, the child's parents/guardian or previous caregiver should accompany the child on these visits.

Care Plan

The child's caseworker, in collaboration with appropriate others, will develop a plan for the child following the completion of an assessment. This plan must be completed within 30 days of the beginning of a long-term placement. This plan should be provided to you.

Caseworker Responsibility at Admission

The child's caseworker will arrange for the child's personal belongings to be brought to your home at the time of placement. The caseworker will advise you at the time of the placement of any known risk factors that the child may present to you or others in the home including, but not limited to offending behaviour, fire setting and aggressive behaviour.

Caseworker Responsibility During Placement

The caseworker is to have face-to-face contact at least once a month with the foster parent(s) and the child.

First Contact in Home

Set the child at ease by exploring the names that are comfortable for all concerned. Calling foster parents "Mom" and "Dad" may be uncomfortable to foster children who have a close bond with their biological parents. If the use of your first name is uncomfortable, other alternatives should be considered (i.e., auntie, grandma, Mr. and Mrs. may all be appropriate suggestions if everyone is in agreement).

Give the child a tour of the house. Show him/her where to hang up clothes and where the bedroom and bathroom are located. Explain the bottom line rules by saying "in this house," as a means of making the child comfortable.

