



Placement Tips for Caregivers

1. **Try to get as much information about the child/ren as is available.** You may use the New Placement Guide or the Pre-Placement Questionnaire to help you ask important questions. Please don't be discouraged if you don't know much upfront and need to wait for the SW to call you and explain the placement more. This is normal. When a new child is entering foster care, it can take some time to get all of your questions answered.
2. **Contact your PPE with any questions.** You may not hear from a social worker right away; remember that within the first month of a new placement, the child will have three different social workers. A PPE can help guide you through the process...we might not know the details about a foster child, but we do know how to navigate the system!
3. **Plan to attend Family Team Meetings.** Teaming is an important aspect to child welfare and planning for child and family well-being. As a caregiver, your feedback and insights are important to share with the team. Family team meetings should be taking place regularly to provide a venue to discuss the child, his/her needs and progress, address concerns, and develop plans together.
4. **Review your HEP Notebook.** This folder will come with your foster child. It contains your *Foster Parents Agreement* form - keep this with you at all times. This is proof that you can legally house this child. There should also be a medical card, medical information, etc. in the HEP Notebook. Be sure to also use Foster Health Link to access your child's health information on the go! Please note that it may take up to a week before you will see a new child's information in your Foster Health Link Portal.
5. **Make a Doctor/Dental Appointment.** With each new foster child, regardless of if he/she has come from another home, residential facility or emergency home removal, he/she will need a doctor's visit, and if over 1 year, a dental visit within 30 days of placement. Refer to the **Doctors and Dentists** handout for your area. **NOTE:** You will need a Medical card for your doctor/dental visit. If this card is not in the HEP Notebook, call Eligibility (805-654-3444) for a temporary card to be emailed to you. A card will be sent to your home address. Also, take a copy of the **Medical and Dental Treatment Form** with you. The provider will fax a copy to the county and you can keep a copy in your HEP. Finally, make sure you track all medications on an **Over the Counter Medication Log**.
6. **Look into Childcare/School.** If the child is non-school age and you need childcare, you can enroll him/her in a daycare. But, if the child is school aged, he/she must attend

their School of Origin unless the SW has received written consent from the educational rights holder (often the birth parent(s) that a change of school is permitted. The ed rights holder always has educational rights until the court transfers this right to another person, like a foster parent or relative. Contact the Foster Youth Services Program at Ventura County Office of Education if you are encountering school-related challenges, such as enrolling a child or accessing educational supports.

7. **Setup Free, Valuable Services Right Away!** As a foster parent in Ventura County, your foster child is entitled to the following: Free Respite Care (babysitting)/Child Care/Development; WIC (nutritional support for children 0-5); Free School Lunch (school age); 20% Discount on Electric/Gas; Physical/Mental/Emotional Therapies; Free Clothes and Child Supplies through resource closets; Free Extracurricular activities, etc.! Please refer to the **Resource Guide for Foster VC Kids Resource Families** handout for a more detailed list of resources, activities, and trainings available.
8. **Check into Therapies/Support!** Once a foster child enters your home, two things often happen: the child is super loving, kind and needy...or, the child is grieving, angry and detached. Both are very common and may not last. This is referred to as the 'transitioning phase'. BUT, if you think something more is going on, like a developmental, physical, or emotional, delay, contact your SW and ask for a team meeting and referral to: Tri-County Regional Center (child is 3<), the local school system (child is 3<); Ventura County Behavioral Health, or Kids and Families Together for caregiver support and training .
9. **Unusual Incident/Injury Report.** Accidents happen...especially with young, rambunctious kids But, you need to fill out and fax/email an Report to Licensing/RFA and the SW each time an accident happens...whether you go to the hospital or not. This is to protect you! You are responsible for your state license. Please refer to the **Licensing Notes** handout and a copy of the **Unusual Incident/Injury Report** - Make copies!
10. **Networking and Training!** Connecting with other fostering families is critical to your success as a caregiver. Your PPE can help you build your foster social supports! Attending networking meetings and trainings is a great way to meet other caregivers!

Important Numbers:

Visit <http://fostervckids.org/contact-us/> to access staff directories

Recruitment, Development, & Support

Info Line: 805-654-3220

Placement Hotline: 805-289-1900

Licensing/RFA: 805-654-3405

Eligibility: 805-654-3444

Adoptions: 805-240-2700

Rx for Kids: 805-654-7620

Foster Care Nurse: 805-654-5536

Child Abuse Hotline: 805-654-3200

Case Aids: 805-654-3444