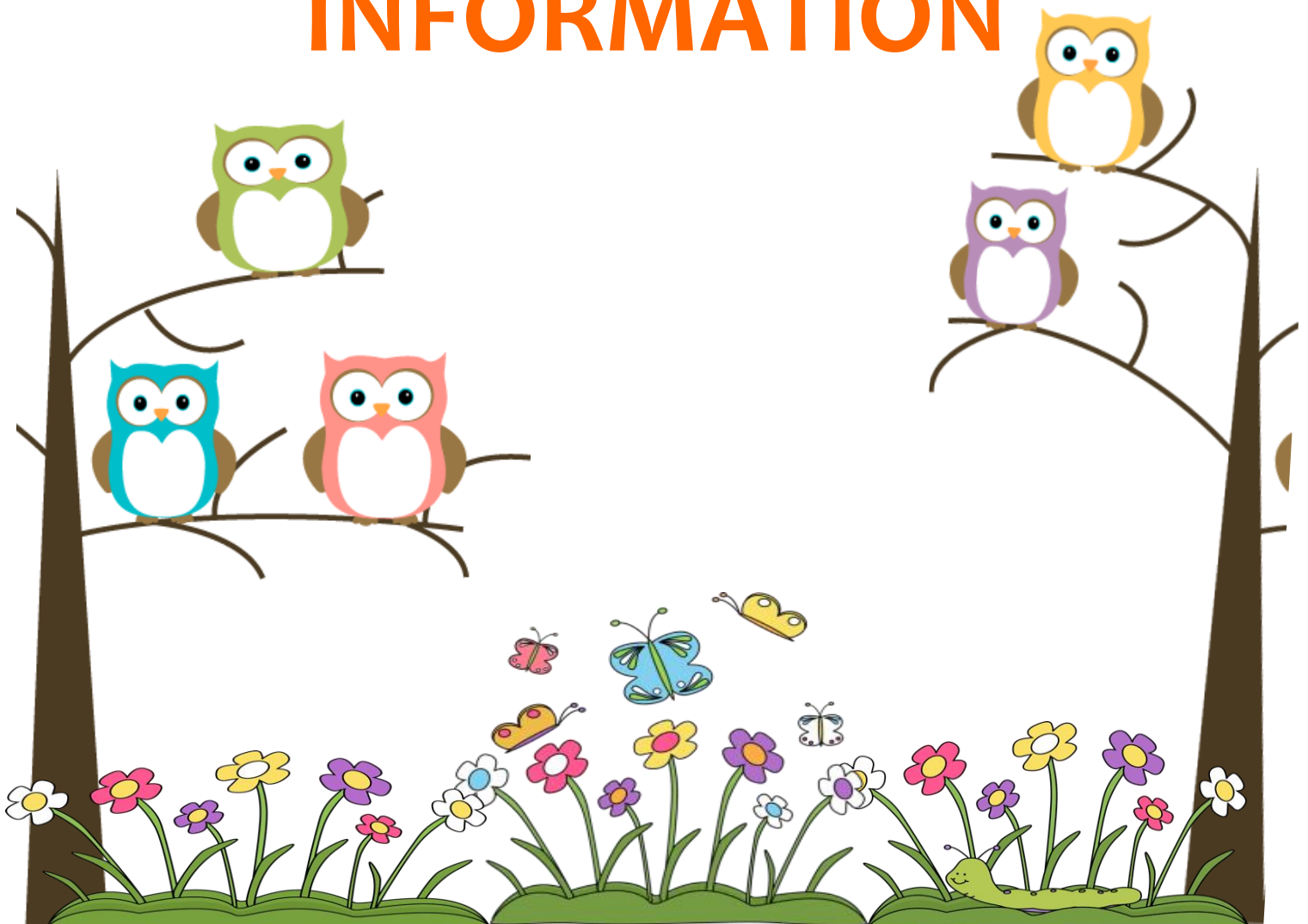




A GUIDE TO TELLING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DIFFICULT INFORMATION







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Who are these people?



Who are **birth** parents?

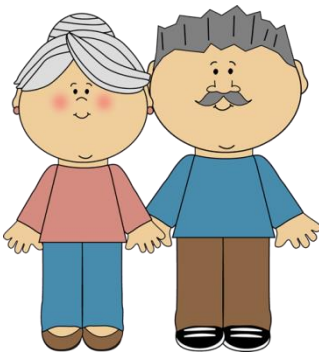
Birth parents are the people who made you. Everyone has a **birth mum** and a **birth dad**.

A **Birth Mum** is the person who carries you in their tummy for 9 months and then brings you into the world.

Who are **Foster** Carers?

Foster Carers look after Children and Young People when they can't live with their birth family.

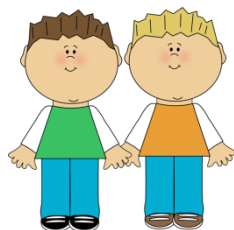
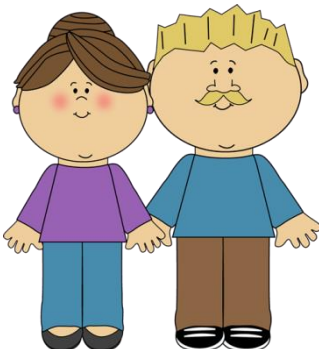
They care for them and keep them safe from harm in their own warm, friendly, family home.



Who are **Adoptive** Parents?

Adoptive parents are people who wanted to have children as part of their family and become the children's new mum and dad.

They look after them, and love them and keep them safe forever.

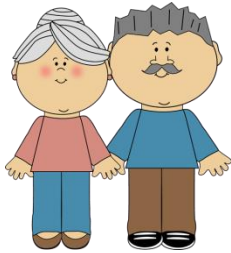




Do you know what these people do?

Social Worker

Social Workers are employed by the Local Authority to help and support families, making sure that children are kept safe. They listen carefully and talk to families, Parents and children.



Foster Carers

Foster Carers look after children who can't live with their birth family. Sometimes this is until the children grows up and can look after themselves. Most of the time children stay with foster carers until the court can decide where they should live.

The Judge and Magistrates

Judges and Magistrates work in Courts, they listen to parents, children, social workers and everyone involved with the family. Then they think about all the things a child needs to be safe and happy and to grow up healthy and strong before they decide where the best place for the children to live would be.



Court

Do you know what a Court is? The Court is a place you can go to see a Judge or Magistrates. Lots of clever and wise people talk and think about families, and then when they've done this the Judge or Magistrates decide what will happen to make things better for the children.



Children's Guardian

The court appoints a Guardian to each child. Their job is to talk to everybody involved and make sure the Judge knows what the child needs and wants. If the child is old enough to talk, the Guardian will ask them where they want to live and why. Sometimes children want something that isn't safe but it's the grown-ups job to decide the best way to keep them safe.





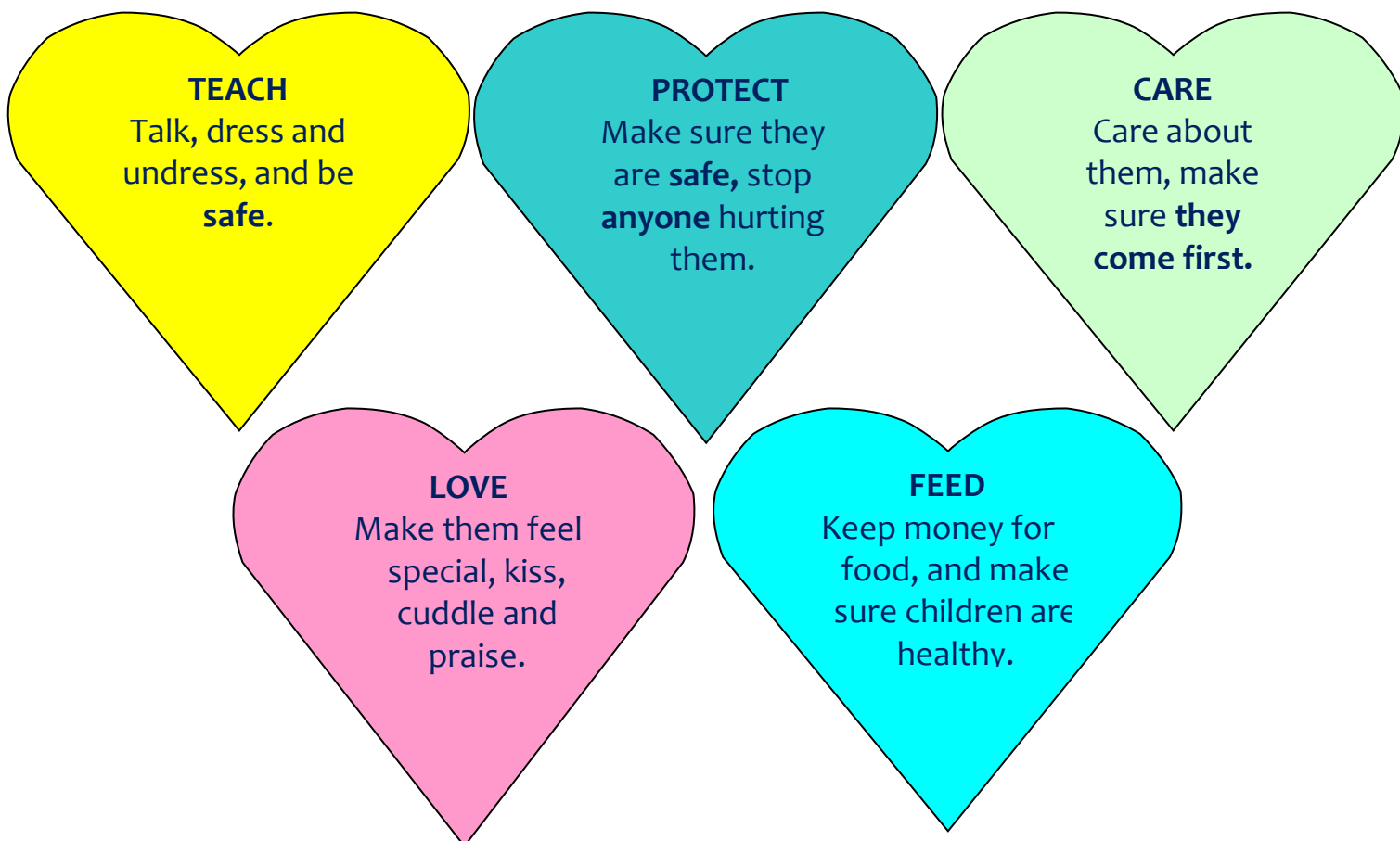
What do parents need to be able to look after their children?

They need five things – we'll call them hearts.

Children need lots of different things from their parents so that they can grow up to be big and strong and happy inside.

Take a look at the hearts below and see what children need from their parents so that they can grow up safe and strong, and learn new things which help them to be a good person and a responsible grown up, and maybe even become a good parent themselves one day.

What parents need to give their children!





What Children Need?

Children need lots of different things from their parents so that they can grow up to be big and strong and happy inside.



I bet you can guess what some of these are.

Good healthy food, a warm clean house, clean clothes, nice bedroom, lots of exercise and toys. They also need to keep them safe from danger or harm, like getting burnt on hot drinks or run across a busy road.

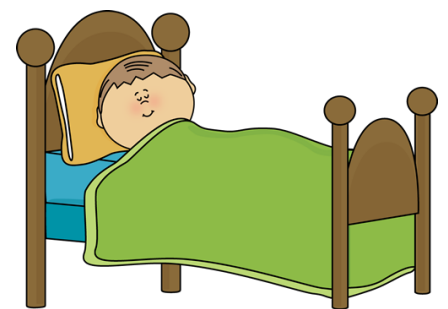
This is called 'physical care'.

The other things are harder to think about. Children need lots of hugs and kisses, to be told they are nice and clever, they need their Mums and Dads to help them learn new things, to learn to do things on their own safely, to be played with and have nice times with their Mums and Dads.



Children need their Mums and Dads to know and understand what they need so they can give it to them all the time, whenever it is needed. This is called 'emotional care'.

ALL babies and toddlers and children need predictable routines this helps them know where they are, and what they are doing and makes them feel safe. This means they need to do everyday things like eating, getting dressed, going to nursery or school and sleeping, the same way at the same time and with the same people. This helps children know where they are and what they are doing.



It means they know that the grown-ups have time to look after them when they are awake and asleep. Remember, if children don't feel safe, or are not sure what will happen when they are awake or asleep, they get worried and scared.

Sometimes parents cannot do all of the things needed to look after and care for their babies and children, even with all the help from lots of other people. One of the hardest jobs in the world is to be a Mummy and Daddy.

It's even harder than being the **Queen**



or **Superman** or **Wonder Woman**.



Some Mums and Dads find this job too hard and all children have to have a parent that can care for them and keep them safe.



Bonding and Attachment



Bonding and attachment is something that all babies and their parents should have with each other. It's something that needs to develop (grow) and should work naturally when mums, dads and babies are getting to know each other. Babies have to rely on their parents to give them what they need and they find ways of letting mum and dad know what they want, at first this is usually by crying.

At first babies cry when they are hungry, or in pain, or need their nappy changing, or when they are tired. When their mums and dads give them the things they need, like changing their nappy, cuddling them, feeding them, playing and soothing their pains, babies learn to trust their parents and know they will come to them when they are needed.



Bonding and attachment means the right kind of closeness that children should have with their parents when they are babies and young children. For example, if the mummy goes out of a room and leaves baby with a stranger, the baby will probably get upset and wonder where mummy has gone – this is natural.

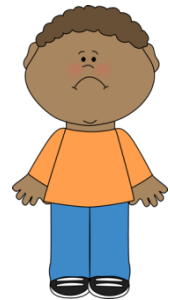
Sometimes when the baby or child isn't bothered about their parent leaving them with a stranger, it may mean that they have not learnt the closeness and trust they need to keep safe.

Sometimes mums and dads didn't have the good bonding and attachment themselves when they were very young children and so they don't know how to give this to their own children.

Sometimes children can have what's called an 'anxious attachment'. This is when the child is worried and scared even when mum is there and clings to her for safety instead of playing nearby and having fun. This can be because something bad or scary has happened when mum has left them before.

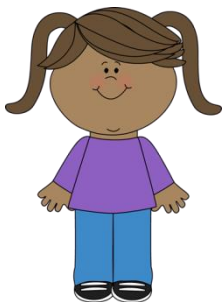
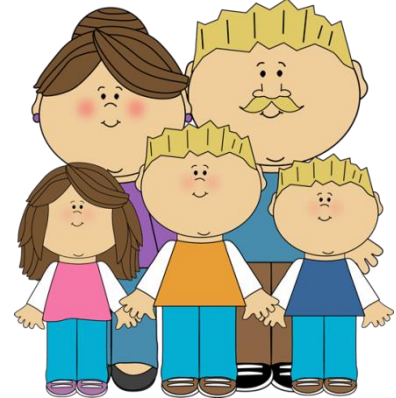
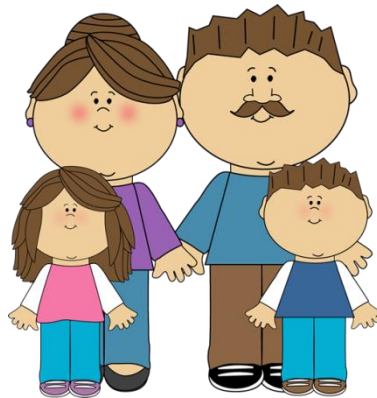


Children and babies rely on the people who look after them to do the things they need and to keep them safe but if this hasn't happened the children have to find their own ways to survive (cope). This sometime means not trusting grown-ups that try to help them. It can also mean they feel sad and don't know how to play or have fun.



There are lots of people who can help parents and their children to form strong attachments, but the parents have to want the help and have to put their children first. Even when they feel tired or want to do something themselves, the children have to be ok first.

If parents can't do this and there are lots of worries about this, sometimes the children might have to live with a foster carer or a new mum and dad who can look after them and keep them safe.



If the people looking after the child work very hard and shows the child they can be trusted, and loved and looked after properly, then the child can start to develop their attachment, meaning they can learn to trust the right adults and know they will be there to help them grow happy and strong and healthy inside and out.





What is right and what is wrong?

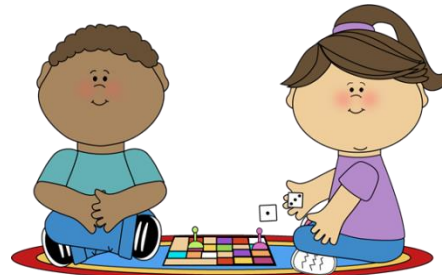


Children learn by watching and interacting (doing things with) grown-ups and other children. It's the grown-ups responsibility (job) to teach children what is right and what is wrong because they know the differences.



Most of the time grown-ups encourage children to do the right things and give them lots of praise for it.

They teach them we should not do the wrong things and sometimes give consequences (punishment) for what has happened, like not being allowed to play out with friends one day, or losing some of your pocket money, or not being allowed to play on a favourite game for a while.



Even though you might not always be happy about the consequences, it's a parent's job to do this.

Sometimes some grown-ups do things that are wrong and they include the children. Because of this the children can begin to think some things are ok when really they are not, for example taking something that doesn't belong to you (stealing), hurting someone to get your own way (domestic violence), or touching someone in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable (not nice).



Abuse and neglect

Sometimes when children get hurt the effects of this can last a long, long time?

It's not the kind of hurt that happens if you have an accident, for example, falling off your bike or scraping your knee or bumping your head.

It's a different kind of hurt that grown-ups call '**Abuse**'.

Abuse is the kind of hurt that should not happen to children, young people or grown-ups and grown-ups know this kind of hurt is wrong.

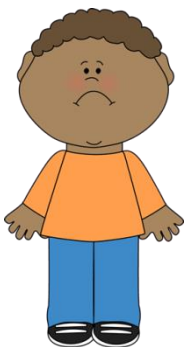
Lets try to explain –

There are different ways that can describe children getting hurt or '**abused**' and these are known as; Physical abuse, Emotional abuse, Sexual abuse and Neglect.

- **Physical abuse** - is when one person hurts another person on purpose by shouting and scaring them, or by hitting, slapping, kicking, punching or other acts of violence (*hurt*) or ways of causing pain to their body. It can also be when a person is pretending the child is ill or doing something to make them ill.



- **Emotional abuse** – is when one or more people are nasty to another person by calling them names (like stupid, idiot, liar), telling them they are bad or no good at anything and telling them they are not loved.

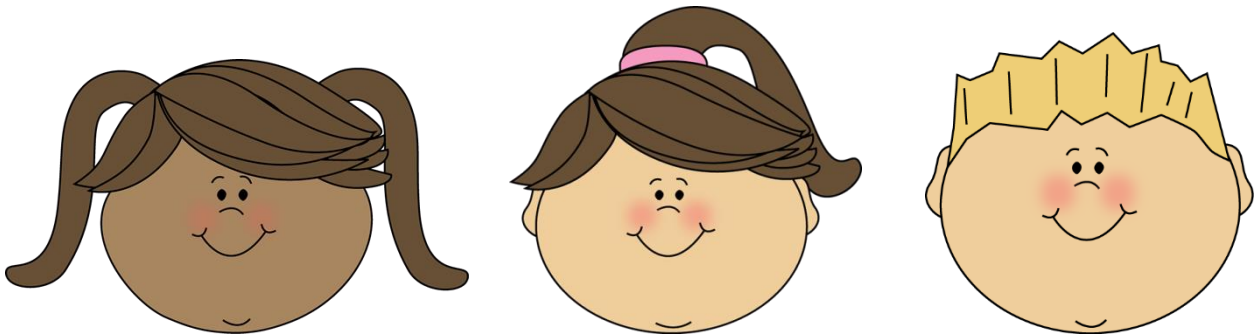


It can also be when someone expects the child to do something that other children their age wouldn't be expected to do **or** doesn't allow the child to do things that other children of their age do, for example, playing out with friends.

It might be the grown ups allowing the child to hear or see others being hurt or the child always feeling frightened or worried about what a person might do next.

- **Sexual abuse** - is where one or more person asks or tells them to look at, touch or does something that they don't feel comfortable with, should not see or know about.

There are good touches that make you feel happy, loved and are fun, like getting a hug and kiss from mum, dad, nana or granddad, or someone you trust. Or like playing a game with your friends, or playing with your pet cat.



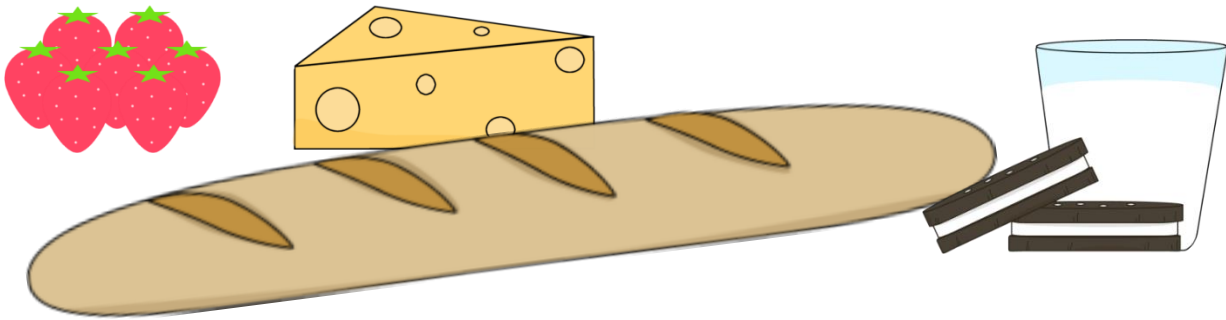
But there are bad touches that make you feel sad, angry, or frightened, like someone pulling your hair, smacking you or touching your body in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable.



Grown-ups know the difference between good touches and bad touches and no one should ever touch a child in a bad way.

This is never ever the child's fault and they should always tell someone they trust so that they can get help to stop the bad things that are happening.

- **Neglect** – neglect is when the grown-ups don't give children the things they need for their body to grow fit and healthy and at the same time don't give them the things they need to grow healthy and happy on the inside.



For example;

- A mother using illegal drugs, smoking or drinking too much alcohol when she is pregnant (growing the baby inside her body).
- Once a child is born, neglect is not giving them enough food, clothes and/or a safe home to live in, leaving them with someone who can't look after them properly, not making sure they are safe when they are playing or around other people, not taking them to the doctor when they are sick and not giving them cuddles and telling they love them or how clever they are. Neglect is not protecting them from all of the other types of abuse we have talked about above.

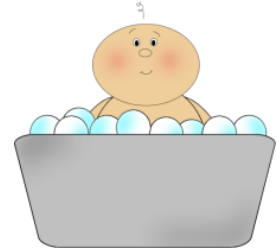
When these things happen it is never the child's fault – remember it's the grown-ups job to keep children safe and grown-ups know what is right and wrong.



What is a Life Story Book?

A Life Story Book is your story about your life.

It's about your birth family, and facts about you and what happened to you. Facts like what time and where you were born, how heavy you were and your name. It is also about what happens to you and why things happened, as you grow older.



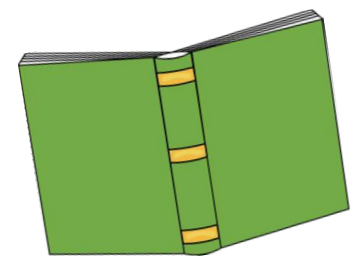
Why do I need a Life Story Book?



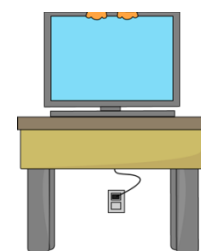
It is very important for all children who do not live with their birth family to know about their history. It is important because you might not be able to ask your birth family questions about yourself or them, as you get older. It will be more helpful to understand why you do not live with them. When you are older, you will often be asked questions or wonder about your history, so it is important that you know about your birth family.

What does a Life Story Book look like?

It can be like a photograph album or a scrapbook with pictures and photographs of your birth family, of you growing up, different places that you have lived and schools that you have been to. It can have stories about people who are important to you or about things that happened to you, or just your own thoughts and memories.



You can even have your life story on a computer CD if you like.



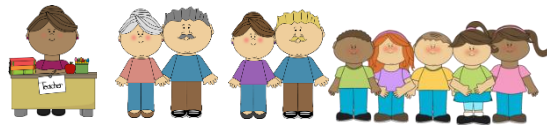


Who will write my Life Story Book?

Adoption Services have specially trained people who prepare Life storybooks for children that can be added to as you grow.

If you require help you can ask for this by speaking to:-

- Your social worker
- Your foster parents or new family
- Or someone else you trust.
- You can even add to it yourself.



Who else might help?

We can talk to lots of people like your birth mum or dad, birth grandparents, aunts and uncles to help find out things about you and what you were like as a baby. We can ask about when you were very young, facts, memories and stories about you from your childhood.

They might also want to write something about themselves – so that you know about them too.



Some of these facts and stories might be difficult to think about at first or make you feel sad, so remember; you don't have to look at everything all at once and you might want to have someone you trust with you when you read it.



As you get older it will become more helpful to have the facts about what happened to you and why. Foster carers, teachers, relatives and other important people who cared for you and looked after you would also be asked about you.



When will my Life Story Book be finished?

It will never be completely finished!

You or your new family can choose to keep adding to it, as you get older the book will grow with you.



Who will look after my Life Story Book?

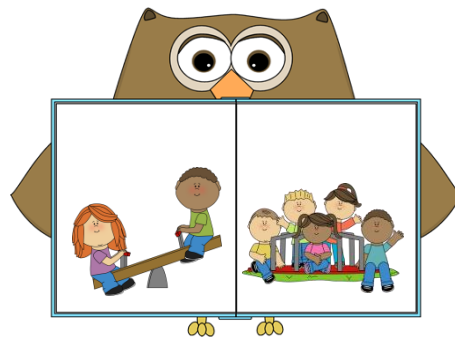
Someone will look after it until you need it, it might be best if your adoptive family keep it safe for you.

But it is **YOUR STORY** and it belongs to **YOU!**

Keep it safe, but use it to remind yourself about **YOUR history, YOUR friends** and **YOUR achievements.**

Some of the pictures and stories will be special and private, so be careful before you decide to show them to other people.

A copy of your life storybook will be kept in the adoption service so that there will always be one available for you, should the original be damaged or lost.

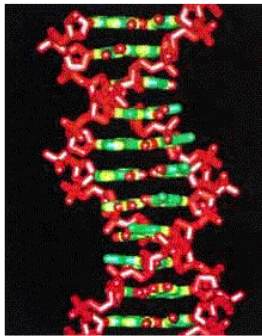




Biological Parents

All children have a family and everyone has a Biological (*birth*) Mother and Father. Let's explain.....

This means you have the same DNA and genes as your Biological parents (*Your Birth Parents*).

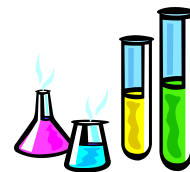


This is a picture of a strand of DNA - every living thing is made of this. We all have different types to our friends but share the same strands as our Biological Parents.

This is why we sometimes look similar to our parents and siblings (*brothers and sisters*).

It can be very confusing but very interesting to find out about your birth family. There are special tests that can be done to prove that one person is related to another person, this is called a 'paternity test'.

A paternity test is a simple test, and it can tell if a particular man is the father of a child by comparing their DNA. If the result is positive then that man will be your biological daddy.



Domestic Violence

There is never a good reason to hurt another person. When couples hurt each other (by hitting, name calling or trying to control and stop the other from doing things) it is called domestic violence. It is rarely a one-off happening. It often gets worse over time.

One person usually tries to control the other and will often use their power, anger and aggression to do this, like shouting, hitting, taking away money, locking them in the house, and not allowing them to have friends or talk to other people or by making them do something they don't want to do.



Children's health and well-being can be seriously affected by living in families where there is any form of domestic abuse. Both the grownups and the children should feel safe and loved.

Local Authorities try to help the grownups to improve things so that they are able to live with their children and be safe together. They can help the women in particular to see how their partner is controlling them and help them to feel strong enough to get away from the dangers.

There are other places and people all over the country, who can help the woman and the children to get away from domestic abuse and to be safe, but they have to want this help.



There is also a place called a ‘Woman’s Aid Refuge’ where women and children can go to live safely until they are helped to find a new home for themselves and their children. They can be helped to start a new life away from the people who are hurting them and are supported to feel strong and in control of their own lives again. But all of this depends on the grownups wanting to separate (leave) from the person who was hurting them.

Women in particular sometimes have to make some very hard choices about what they should do. Some people take the help that’s offered and move on to live a happy and safe life. However, some feel they can’t or don’t want to leave and so they go back to the person who hurts them.

This can be very sad and scary for children and even though the grownups might not mean to hurt the children, sometimes they get caught up in the violence and get hurt or hear the shouting or see their mother frightened and hurt.

When this happens the social worker, and other people whose job it is to make sure that children stay safe (like the Police, Guardians, Teachers, Judges, etc) have to think very hard and decide what to do next.





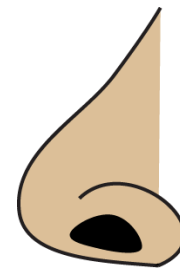
Depression or feeling sad

Some people have an illness called Depression.

Let's try to explain what this is...

People sometimes get ill and you can see their symptoms in their body. Symptoms are the physical signs that our bodies show us when we're not feeling well or good.

Physical symptoms that you can see are things like; a rash, a runny nose, a bad cough or feeling very hot or cold. Usually these things are symptoms of an illness or disease like flu, chicken pox or measles, and a temperature might tell us we have an infection.



When this happens we can take some special medicine to help us get better or go to see the doctor who will sometimes prescribe some particular medicine for that illness. (Prescribe means write a special note).

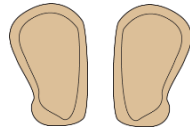
Depression is an illness of the mind and it sometimes shows itself by the person feeling sad and sometimes very tearful.



There are times when we all might feel sad and may sometimes cry but this is usually for a particular reason and we will usually start to feel better quite soon. We might feel sad about missing someone special, hurting ourselves, getting into trouble or being told off, someone saying or doing spiteful or nasty things to us, or even because we are watching a sad movie on the TV.

Depression is when the sadness stays with a person for a long, long time and can affect people in lots of different ways. Some people find it hard to enjoy things, feel worried, feel guilty, don't eat enough so lose weight or eat too much and gain too much weight. Not everyone knows they have depression and it might be someone close to them who notices they are not feeling themselves.

Sometimes some people have what is known as a mental health illness, which means that their mind is unwell and can sometimes play tricks on them. They might hear

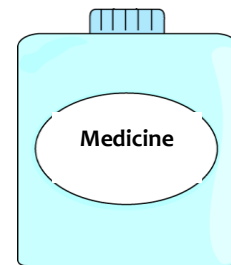


and see



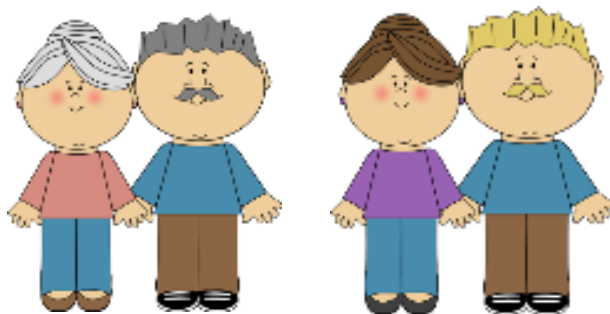
things that aren't really there but they can't tell the difference between what is real and not real. This can be a bit scary to see because they sometimes do things or behave in a way that they wouldn't normally.

The doctors and nurses can help people with depression and mental illnesses and they are sometimes treated with medicine/tablets, which will help the person to feel better, less worried and so they can start to enjoy things that they liked to do before. They need to see the doctor regularly to make sure the medication is working properly for them.



Some people might only need to use medication for a short time and some people might have to use it for the rest of their lives. Most people will get better and are able to look after themselves and get back to their usual life but sometimes the patient struggles to look after themselves and needs others to do this for them.

It's a grown ups responsibility to look after children and keep them safe but if the grown up can't do this, then the children have to be looked after by someone who can.





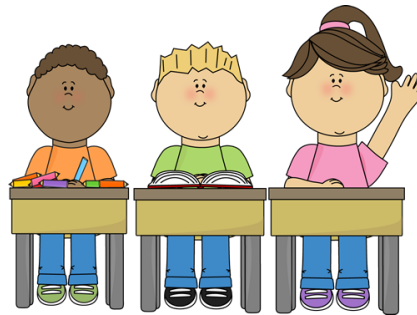
Learning difficulties

Some people have what is known as a ‘learning difficulty’.

This means that they don’t always learn things in the same way as other people or sometimes they take longer to learn new things. Usually they will need extra help and support to learn and understand.

When these people are younger the teachers and other people caring for them usually notice that they struggle to learn and understand as most other children do. Sometimes they can get extra help in their class and sometimes they go to a different school.

This is a special school with smaller class sizes, which means the children can get lots of help and extra support.



There are specialist teachers in the school so that they can give the children the extra help they need to do well at school.

Your social worker had to make sure that your birth parents could look after you and meet your needs, like those in the 5 hearts.



People with learning difficulties often find it hard to learn the same way as other people do and sometimes they might not be able to understand and learn to do things well enough to keep children well cared for and safe. Even with lots of help and support sometimes they just can’t understand or remember what they need to do.



Common child and family illnesses and diseases

Umbilical Hernia

Sometimes when babies are born, the doctors find something called an Umbilical Hernia.

An umbilical hernia happens when fatty tissue or a part of the bowel pokes through into an area near the navel (tummy button). It pushes through a weak spot in the surrounding muscle wall (abdominal wall).

Umbilical hernias are very common in babies, with 1 in 10 young children having one. They are especially common in babies who are premature (born early).

Plagiocephaly

Some babies are diagnosed as having something called Plagiocephaly (plagee-o-se-fa-lee)

WOW! That's a hard word to read!

This is just a fancy word that means the back or one side of an child's head is flattened and sometimes the hair doesn't always grow there.

But don't worry because often when the Doctor see's the child again the head was growing at a much better speed and size so can be discharged, this would mean the child didn't have to go back to see her for this anymore.

Dry Skin

Some babies have very dry skin, so baby's Doctor and Health Visitor would keep an eye on this, just to make sure it did not get any worse.

The Doctor might prescribe Dipobath for your bath and Diprobase cream for your carer to rub into your skin.

The Doctor might also advise to avoid milk products, as this could be a cause of the skin condition.



Gastroenteritis

Since birth some babies suffer at times with colds and something called gastroenteritis.

Phew! That's a BIG word!

Gastroenteritis is an infection that makes you have tummy pains, sickness and diarrhoea. These illnesses sometimes caused you to lose some weight.

Lots of young children can get Gastroenteritis and sometimes have it more than once a year. Sometimes it can be a mild tummy upset lasting for one or two days with some mild diarrhoea or it can be very bad diarrhoea and vomiting for several days or longer.

Many viruses, bacteria and other germs can cause gastroenteritis.

But you would soon recovered from this as the Doctor advised your carer to give you foods with high calorie content to help feed you up again. This soon built you up to be big and strong.

Sometimes the members of a family can be poorly for all kinds of different reasons.

Some illnesses are just short term and the person is better very quickly like having a cold or flu, or chicken Pox or a poorly tummy.

Sometimes the illness is longer lasting and the person might need to take special medicine to help keep the illness away and to make sure the person stays healthy and well.

Sometimes an illness or condition can be hereditary or genetic, which means it can be passed down in the family genes when new babies are born. This kind of illness can usually be expected (people think it will be there) and can usually be treated with medication if it's needed.

Sometimes families have illnesses and conditions, which only come out when the person is much much older.



All members of families can expect to have some kind of illness in their lifetime, which they will probably get better very quickly.

What Is **Epilepsy**?

It's a strange word, isn't it? Epilepsy comes from a Greek word meaning "to hold or seize," and people who have epilepsy have seizures. You might also hear a seizure called a convulsion, fit, or spell. Seizures happen when there is unusual electrical activity in the brain. Your brain cells are constantly sending out electrical signals that travel along nerves to the rest of the body.

These signals tell the muscles to move. During a seizure, a person's muscles tighten and relax rapidly or stop moving completely. Seizures come on suddenly, and people who have them cannot control their muscles while they are having a seizure.

If too many brain cells are sending signals at the same time, it causes an overload and a person may pass out and shake all over. People who have epilepsy may have seizures only once in a while or as frequently as every day.

Asthma

Asthma is a condition that affects a person's airways, which are also called breathing tubes or bronchial tubes. These tubes lead from the windpipe, or trachea, into the lungs.

An asthma flare-up, which some people call an asthma attack or episode, happens when a person's airways get swollen and narrower and it becomes a lot harder for air to get in and out of the lungs.

Doctors will give special medicine to help the person feel better. This medicine can often be given in something called an inhaler. That's a special tool to get the medicine into the lungs by sending a puff of medication that the person breathes in, straight down the throat.

Sometimes the swollen airways produce extra mucus (snotty nose), which makes things pretty sticky, so it's easy to see why it's hard to breathe.



We do know that asthma runs in families?

This means if a kid has asthma, he or she may also have a parent, sibling, uncle, or other relative who has asthma or had it as a child.

Eczema

With Eczema your skin is red and sore. It may even look scaly. You itch like crazy. You know you haven't been near poison ivy and you don't have chickenpox, but you're starting to worry that you're slowly turning into some kind of scaly creature from a monster movie. No need to worry. It's just eczema.

Eczema is also called atopic dermatitis. Atopic means someone who is likely to develop an allergy to something. Dermatitis means that the skin is inflamed, or red and sore. Eczema makes your skin dry, red, and itchy. Sometimes you may even break out in a rash. It's a chronic condition, which means that it comes and goes.

No one is really sure why people get eczema. It's not contagious — which means that no one can catch it from you and you can't catch it from anyone else. Kids who get eczema often have family members with hay fever (it makes them sneeze and have a runny nose), asthma (trouble breathing), or other allergic conditions

Some things that can set off eczema include:

- Soaps, detergents, or perfumes
- hot and sweaty skin or dry winter air with little moisture
- things that can irritate your skin such as contact with scratchy fabrics (like wool) or dust mites in your bed sheets.

Diabetes

Diabetes is a disease that affects how the body uses glucose which is a sugar that is the body's main source of fuel. Just as an iPod needs a battery, your body needs glucose to keep running. Here's how it should work.

When you eat Glucose from the food gets into your bloodstream. Your pancreas (an organ in your body) makes a hormone called insulin. Insulin helps the glucose get into the body's cells. This is how your body gets the energy it needs.



The pancreas is a long, flat gland in your tummy that helps your body digest food. It also makes insulin. Insulin is kind of like a key that opens the doors to the cells of the body. It lets the glucose in. Then the glucose can move out of the blood and into the cells. But if someone has diabetes, the body either can't make insulin or the insulin doesn't work in the body like it should.

The glucose can't get into the cells normally, so the blood sugar level gets too high. Lots of sugar in the blood makes people sick if they don't get special medicine. Another kind of Diabetes is when the sugar levels are too low and someone with this kind might just have to eat a biscuit or Mars Bar to help them feel better.

Senile Dementia

Senile Dementia more often happens when a person gets older; it's to do with your memory, like thinking about something that you did last week or last year.

What Is Memory?

A memory is when something happens, or when you learn something, or when you meet someone, your brain decides whether that information needs to be saved. If your brain judges the information important, it places it in your memory "files."

You probably know your brain has different parts. Some of them are important for memory. The hippocampus (is one of the more important parts of the brain that keeps memories.

What Can Go Wrong With Memory?

As wonderful as memory is, it isn't always perfect.

It's normal to occasionally forget the name of somebody you just met or maybe where you put your shoes. And of course, everyone has forgotten an answer on a test.

Darn!! You knew that one, too!

It's also typical for people to forget more things as they grow older. Your parents or grandparents might joke about having a "senior moment." That's when they forget something.



Alzheimer's disease

But some memory problems are serious, such as when a person has Alzheimer's disease. In this disease, deposits build up and nerve cells stop working leading to memory loss. People sometimes forget lots and lots of things like their name, where they live and who their family are.

Sometimes people with Alzheimer's cannot look after themselves and need someone else to take care of them.

Cancer

There are lots of different types of cancer, which can be found in different parts of the body.

Sometimes people with cancer have to have an operation to get rid of the cancer and sometimes the doctor will give medicine to help get rid of it.

When having all of this treatment the person can feel sick and tired and be quite unwell for a time.

Everyone gets ill or poorly at some time in their life and because we have very good doctors and nurses usually people get better quite quickly. People get different illnesses or diseases which all have their own special names and special medicines to get rid of the illness or disease. Some take longer than others to get better and some are more serious (harmful) than others. Sometimes people will need to go into hospital and some people will just get better at home.

There are lots of special people called scientists and researchers who study and test the diseases so that they can make new and better medicines for all different kinds of illnesses and diseases. This will help people in the future to be safe and healthy.



Alcohol

Sometimes grown-ups like to have what they might call a 'drink'. Usually a 'drink' is when we have some water, or juice, or tea and coffee and it is something that all of us do every day.



We drink lots of different things for different reasons, like when we are thirsty, or to take away a taste in our mouth or even to relax and socialize (have fun) with our friends.

Sometimes grown-ups drink something called alcohol, which is a drink like beer, wine and something called spirits such as vodka, gin and rum, etc.



Alcohol can make people behave in a different way to usual, if they have too much. Sometimes it might make them happy and do funny things that make them and other people laugh. A lot of grown-ups drink alcohol and have a good time.

An alcoholic is someone who drinks lots and lots of alcohol for a long time and can't stop drinking it each day because they drink to make them feel ok.

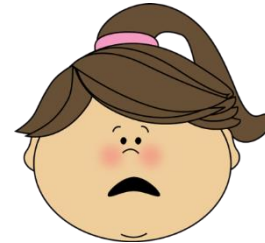
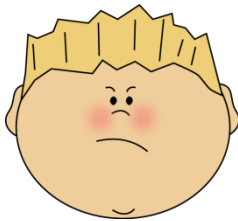
When someone drinks a lot of these things it changes the way they perceive things (the way they think, see and hear things).



They find it very hard to stop drinking so much because alcohol helps them to forget about the worries they have or memories that they don't like. It sometimes makes them feel numb (feel nothing). Sometimes it makes people sad, or angry or paranoid (think everyone is talking about them).

This can sometimes lead to arguments and fights and is not always a safe place to be. It also makes the person respond slower and often makes them fall over or fall into a deep sleep.

People who drink alcohol like this can be unsafe to be around because it sometimes makes them sad or angry or do things that they wouldn't normally do. When they are like this they often struggle to look after themselves so they aren't able to look after children properly or keep them safe.



It's a grown-ups responsibility (job) to look after children and keep them safe but if the grown up has had too much alcohol they can't do this properly. It's sometimes scary to see grown-ups who have drunk too much alcohol and it's the parent's job to make sure the children don't see or hear this kind of behaviour. If the grown up can't look after the child properly, they may not be safe.

Alcoholics find it very hard to stop drinking so much because their body becomes sick if they just stop, so they need special help to do this safely.

When a mother drinks too much alcohol while she is pregnant (carrying the baby in her body), the alcohol can pass through the mother's blood into the placenta and then into the baby.



When the baby is growing inside a mother's body it is in a special place called the womb. The baby is protected by special water and is given everything it needs to grow strong and healthy through something called the 'placenta'.



The placenta is stuck on the wall of the 'womb' and a tube called the 'umbilical cord' leads to the baby – this eventually becomes your tummy button after you are born.

The placenta and cord feeds the baby and sends everything else that they baby needs to grow well.

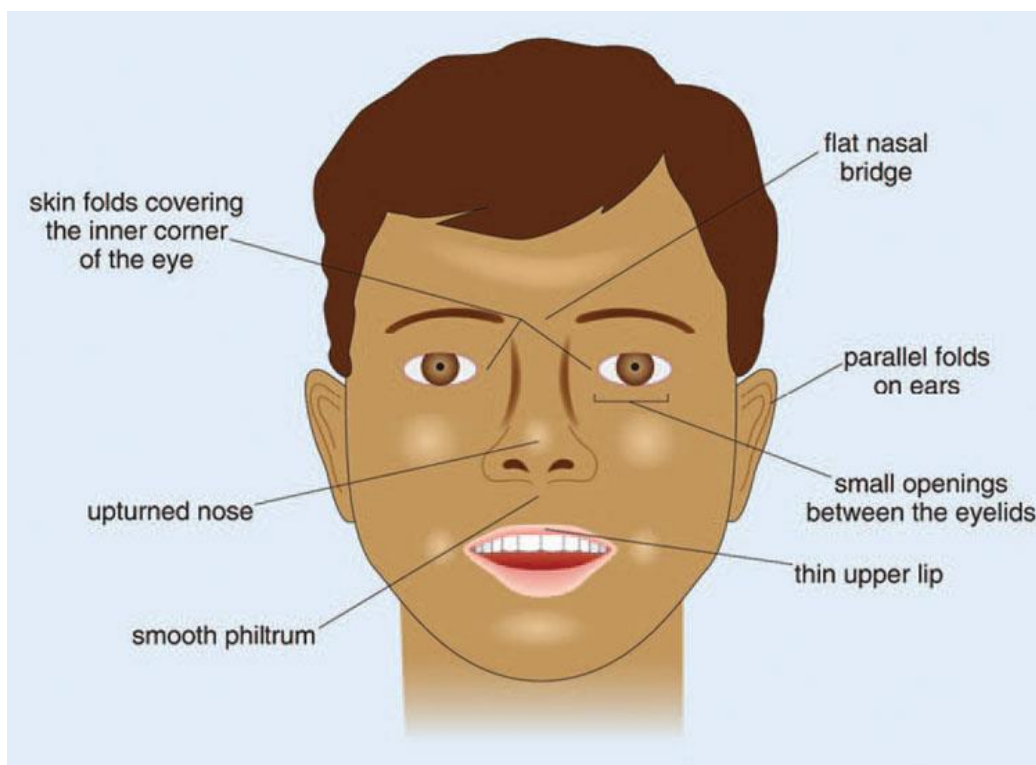
Usually the babies grow without any problems and are born healthy and well. But sometimes there are problems for lots of different reasons. The doctors and nurses try to keep an eye on how the baby is growing and developing whilst inside its mother's body.

If a mother drinks too much alcohol, this will also pass through the placenta to the baby. Alcohol is not good for babies and when they are born they can be very small, poorly or have something called 'Foetal Alcohol Syndrome'.

This is a condition where the baby has been fed too much alcohol when it was growing inside its mother's body.

Sometimes mothers struggle to put their baby's needs before their own.

Foetal Alcohol Syndrome is a lifelong condition, and children can have a range of symptoms, including low birth weight, facial differences and learning and behavioural difficulties.



The severity of the condition depends how much alcohol was drunk during pregnancy.



Because the baby did not have a good start in life, they have a lot of catching up to do. The babies and children need lots of help, support and gentle understanding from their carers so that they can grow strong and happy.

This can be hard for the children to understand but even though they might look a little different, or behave in a different way they are still loved very much. With lots of love and gentle care from their family the children can grow confident and happy, and learn ways to manage their behaviour better.

Sometimes **young people and teenagers drink alcohol**, which is a drink like beer, wine and spirits such as vodka, gin and rum, etc.

Alcohol can make people behave in a different way to usual, if they have too much. Sometimes it might make them happy and do funny things that make them and other people laugh. A lot of grown-ups drink alcohol and have a good time.

But sometimes when someone drinks a lot of these, it changes the way they perceive things (the way they think, see and hear things). They find it very hard to stop drinking so much because alcohol helps them to forget about the worries they have or memories that they don't like. Sometimes it makes people sad, or angry or paranoid (think everyone is talking about them).

This can sometimes lead to arguments and fights and this is not always a safe place to be. It also makes the person respond slower and often makes them fall over or fall into a deep sleep. This can be unsafe for young people or teenagers and sometimes others might take advantage of them (do things that are not good). When they are like this they often struggle to look after themselves so they are at risk of being hurt themselves.

It's an adult's responsibility (job) to look after children and young people and keep them safe but sometimes the teenager won't let the adults help them. There are other people who can help but the young person has to want help for it to work.



Drugs

There are lots of different kinds of drugs and different reasons why a person might take them.

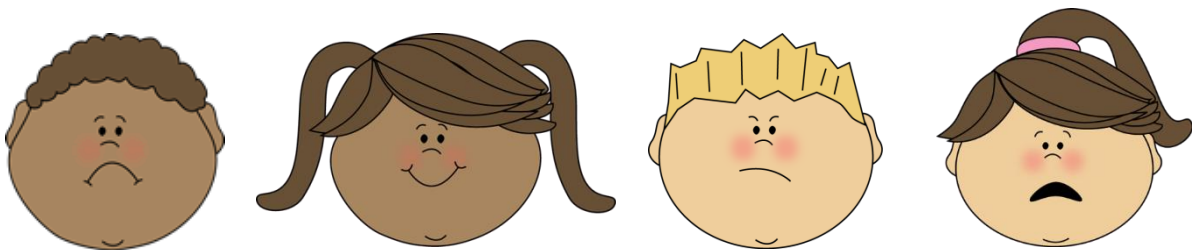
There are some drugs that we can get from the doctor (prescribed) to help us get better when we are poorly, like anti-biotic for a chest infection. These drugs are ok when they are taken as the doctor tells us because the doctors know they are safe.

Some drugs we can buy at the chemist when we have hurt ourselves, like medicine for a cough or cold and cream for sore skin. These drugs are ok when used as the instructions tell us because medical experts pass them.

There are also drugs that are 'illegal' (which means against the law) and these drugs have an effect on how people think, feel and behave. Some of these 'illegal' drugs are stronger than others and most of them are dangerous to use. These are not good to take and that's why they are illegal.

Sometimes people start to take 'illegal' drugs because their friends take them and they want to do the same. Sometimes people take drugs because they help to cover up the pain that they feel inside their body or their mind and some people take them because they like the feeling it gives them. Sometimes people take drugs to make their muscles work harder and help them to be stronger.

Drugs sometimes make people behave in a different way, make them sad, happy, tired, full of energy, angry and aggressive, or see and hear things that aren't real. Sometimes, it makes them feel lots of different feelings very quickly, this is known as mood swings.





Contact

Contact is when babies, children and young people meet their birth mum, dad or family and spend time together when they cannot live at home.

Someone you know very well will bring you to contact and your contact officer will stay with you all of the time. When it's time to go home you and your birth family can say goodbye and then your contact officer will take you safely back home to your foster carer again.



Sometimes it can be very hard for birth parents to see their children and become attached to them when they know deep down that they will not be able to care for them as they grow up into adults. Most birth parents want to be able to look after their children and watch them grow up into adults but sometimes the things they have to change is just too much for them to cope with, and so sometimes they stop trying.

Sometimes birth mums and dads decide that if they continue to see their children they will have even more hurt feelings when they have to say their final goodbye. So, to protect themselves from this hurt they decide to stop seeing the children before they become too attached. This doesn't mean that birth mums and dads don't love their children.

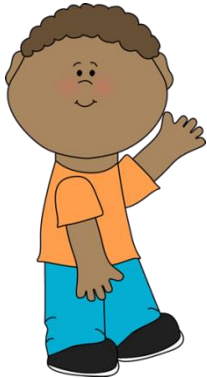


Some birth mums and dads love their children so much that they want them to have a better life than they had or than they can give.



When the Judge or Magistrates decide that the child should live with a new mum and dad (an adoptive family) the children and their birth family will say goodbye to each other for the last time.

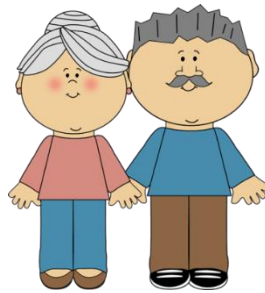




Sometimes your birth family might be able to make this goodbye fun and happy, or sometimes it might be sad but whatever the feelings it's ok.



If the children have questions or anything they want to say they should talk to a grown up that they trust, like their foster carer, their social worker or their contact officer. Talking to someone can help to make you feel better.



Birth mums, dads and other family might also get upset but don't worry, someone will be there to listen to their feelings and try to help them to feel better as well.

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