



Adopt North East

Information for Parents about Early Permanence

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Information for Parents about Early Permanence

If you are reading this, it will probably mean that there are plans for court proceedings where decisions will be made about your child's future. We hope that this information will be helpful during what is usually a very difficult time for parents and the wider family.

The purpose of this leaflet is to provide you with information about the care of your child and about early permanence.

What is Early Permanence?

Early Permanence means that your child can have one consistent carer for the duration of their childhood should the Court decide that they cannot return to you or your wider family. Early Permanence carers have been trained and approved to look after children both as foster carers and adopters. These carers are committed to helping us to reunite parents with their children if this is possible. However, if the Court decides that your child cannot return home to you or to another member of your family, these carers are ready to offer the security of adoption so that your child does not face another change of carer.

As part of this process, it may be possible to meet the person who is caring for your child to discuss what is happening in their life and how they are developing.

What are the aims of an Early Permanence Placement:

- To provide the best possible care to children whilst they are not able to live with their parents.
- To reduce the number of carers a child may live with until decisions by the court are made.
- To provide love and security to children when it is not possible for them to return to their parents, or to live with other family members.

What happens during an Early Permanence placement?

The Court will be responsible for making the decision about where your child should live in the future. It is the local authority's job to work with you to assess whether or not your child can return to your care and to support you if this happens, but it is still the Court's decision.

During this time, we will provide a foster placement for your child, where they will be looked after by people who are called 'Early Permanence Carers'. Like any other foster placement, you will have good quality family time with your child, and the frequency and length of this will be decided by the Court. The Local Authority will have an agreement with you setting out the family time arrangements, what you are expected to do and what help is available for you.

The family time will take place in an agreed venue with a family time supervisor who will support you and your child, help you to get the most out of your family time and develop your parenting skills as part of ongoing assessment work.

What could happen to my child in the longer term?

The Court will decide whether your child can return to you or another member of your family. The decision will be based on the evidence from you, as well as evidence from social workers, the Children's Guardian and any other professionals who have been asked to do an assessment or give an opinion. If the Court's decision is that your child can return to you a plan will be agreed to make this happen.

If the Court decides that your child cannot return to you or a member of your extended family, your child will continue to be cared for by the Early Permanence carers who would then go on to formally adopt them. They would then apply to the court to become the adoptive parents, and you would be notified at this time. For your child/children they will not have to have another move and they can continue to grow in a place which is familiar to them.

You may also already know the carers and we hope you would feel confident that they would give your child the love and security he or she needs.

Who can I discuss these arrangements with?

Your child's social worker will be able to explain the information in this letter in more detail. You may also find it helpful to discuss this leaflet with your solicitor.

For further information / support:

This will understandably be a difficult and stressful time for you so please do ask for support. You can get help or advice from:

- Your child's social worker
- Your child's court appointed Guardian (if court proceedings have begun)
- Your solicitor or legal representative
- Family Rights Group **0808 801 0366**
- The Local Authority in which you live will be able to direct you to local independent support for families where adoption is being discussed, or in the event that adoption takes place.
- Samaritans **116 123**

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