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Thank you for your  
interest in fostering for  
North Ayrshire Council.

This pack will provide you with some of the information you require to help you make an informed decision about whether fostering is right for you and your family at this time.



The pack gives a brief description of the different ways you can foster, why children need to be fostered, who these children are and what support you will receive once approved.

It also includes information on how you can apply to us to become a foster carer and what the process involves.

We hope you find the information helpful and that it encourages you to progress with your fostering application.

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

## Could you Foster?

The children we place come from a wide range of backgrounds, cultures and faiths. We are keen to have foster carers from all walks of life to reflect this diversity. All kinds of different people make good foster carers but here are a few essentials that we require of all our carers;

- You must be at least 21 years old.
- You need to have a secure home base (rented or owner occupied).
- We expect you to have a spare bedroom.
- You must be willing to take part in regular training along with other carers to develop your understanding of the fostering task.
- Carers should keep fairly good health and be active, as children can be physically and emotionally demanding.
- You must be a non-smoker if you want to care for children under the age of two.



You should ask yourself the following questions?



# Why do Children need a Foster Placement?

Children require foster placements for all sorts of reasons. Many fostered children have experienced some degree of neglect, and/or physical, emotional or sexual abuse.



North Ayrshire Council has a statutory responsibility to ensure that children in these and other situations are looked after safely.

Some of the possible reasons for a child coming into foster care to be looked after are:

- Physical or mental ill health of the parent(s)
- Death of parent(s)
- Parental drug or alcohol misuse
- Marital violence or violence towards the child
- Sexual abuse
- Imprisonment of parent(s)
- Physical or emotional neglect or abuse
- Children who have been in trouble with the police and have appeared at a children's hearing
- Children or babies who have been given up for adoption

Can you imagine what it is like for a child being looked after in a foster home? Being removed from their own family in difficult or distressing circumstances and placed in a strange house with people they don't even know, or separated from familiar surroundings and friends? Some will see removal from their family as a punishment for something they have done wrong, even if they cannot think what it could be.

Sadly, all children will be affected in some way by leaving their families.

Sometimes children only need to be looked after for a short period until their parents sort out their problems, at which time the children may return home. In other cases children may never be able to return home and may need long-term foster carers or even adoptive parents.