

Key questions to ask your Social Worker



BEFORE ACCEPTING A PLACEMENT

This list is designed to prompt you with a series of points to consider in a meeting, or during a phone call with your Social Worker, before accepting a child into your care. It is not exhaustive and the relevance of the questions may vary, depending on the nature of your caregiving. You may only require some of this information, or you may not require any of it.

Note: this information sheet is intended for **formal** caregivers, where Oranga Tamariki has custody or guardianship orders.

PERSONAL DETAILS

- Child's name and correct pronunciation.
- Child's age and date of birth.
- Does the child have enough clothes & toiletries for the duration of their stay? If not:
 - » How am I required to address this?
 - » How will I be supported to fulfil this need?
- Is there an All About Me Plan for the child? If not:
 - » What is the name and contact details of the child's social worker and their supervisor?

TIMING OF THE PLACEMENT

- What is the expected length of their stay with me (when/or how will this be reviewed)?
- If the placement is close to a school holiday, is there a plan for a school holiday programme in place?

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CHILD'S HEALTH

- Who is the GP for the child? When was their last check up?
- Does the child have any physical difficulties? (e.g. eyes, ears, breathing, coordination) or disabilities?
- Does the child have mental health difficulties? (are they anxious, do they exhibit challenging behaviour?)
- Is the child neurodiverse? (e.g. ADHD, autism)

If the answer is yes to any of the above;

- Is there a plan to manage these issues?
- How am I required to support this? How will I be supported to fulfil this expectation?

ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

- Is there an access plan in place?
- Who is access with? What is the frequency of this? Is there transport in place?
- How am I required to support this? How will I be supported to fulfil this expectation?

EDUCATION

- Does the child/young person attend an early childhood centre/school?
- Do they have learning support or in-school behavioural support?
- Is there an expectation for them to attend school while they are in my care?
- Do they have the necessary uniform, shoes, stationery and school bag?
- Are they enrolled in activities outside of school that I need to be aware of?
- How will I be supported to fulfil these commitments?

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL NEEDS

- What is the child's cultural identity?
- Do they practice a religion or attend church?
- How am I required to support their cultural identity and spiritual education?

SPECIALIST SUPPORT

- Does the child receive support from a therapist or other professional or service?
- If so, who? When? Where?
- How am I required to support the child with these appointments?
- How will I be supported to fulfil this expectation?

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FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Can you tell me about the Board payment? (or, if this is not the first child in your care - Has the Board payment been adjusted?)
- If there is no board payment, can you advise how I will be supported to meet the financial needs of this child?
- Are there any other payments attached to the placement of this child?

COMMUNICATION

- Who can I expect to contact me to check on this placement?
- How often will [that person] check in with me?

EMERGENCY PLACEMENTS

If this is an emergency placement and the child/young person is unknown to the social worker or agency, there could be little information available to share with you.

The social worker requesting the placement may be the 'duty' social worker and not the social worker for the child after the child is placed. In these cases, it is probably more important to establish a line of communication with the social worker for the child.

Ask: "Who will be my point of contact after today?" or "Which team will the child be allocated to?"

Keep notes of what was requested, ask for the name of the social worker that is calling you, and write down as much information as you can, clarifying any details that you are unsure of.

NATIONAL CARE STANDARDS CHECKLIST

Oranga Tamariki is required to provide you with certain information before you accept a child into your care, so that you understand what will be expected of you.

This information is outlined in the National Care Standards. You may find it a useful reference during discussions with your Social Worker. Click the link below.

[National Care Standards, Section 44: Information to be provided to prospective caregivers](#)

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Caring Families Aotearoa (formerly Fostering Kids New Zealand) supports the thousands of children in care in Aotearoa, by supporting their caregivers.

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