Between Families Newsletter January 2022

**Connecting With Your Foster Child**

**By: excelfostering.com**

As a new foster parent, you may be having trouble connecting with your foster child. Don’t worry - it is very common for parents to have trouble forming a bond with their new family member, no matter what type of foster placement you have. A connection with a child in your care may be something you have to work on, so that’s why [Excel are here to support you](https://www.excelfostering.com/transfer-to-us/foster-care-training-and-support) throughout. If you feel that you are struggling to connect with your foster child, we have compiled a list of helpful advice so you can form the desired bond

1. Redecorate the house- A common reason for young people not being able to initially form a bond with their foster care givers is due to feeling like they don’t belong, or that the [placement is only temporary](https://www.excelfostering.com/about-fostering/types-of-fostering/short-term-fostering). However, this can be easily curbed through redecoration. When your foster child first arrives, your home is just another house that they are staying in - so by redecorating in terms of either moving around possessions, or redecorating their bedroom to their favorite color, is likely to make them feel much more at home.

2. Sit down family dinners- There really is no better place to bond than over the dinner table. Having your dinner at the same time each day, with every member of the family, will form a routine which can help your foster child to settle down and make them more comfortable. If you can’t sit down every evening together as family, try and book in one or two days a week where this happens. Many in foster care have lacked a routine - so something as small as a family dinner every Sunday will create a sense of stability that they yearn for. We encourage family dinners at least once a week to give you a chance, as a family, to catch up and bond.

3. Take an interest in their interests- It is likely that your foster child will have an interest in something you have never heard about before. However, by taking an interest in this, this is the perfect way to start developing a strong relationship between foster parent and child. When your foster child mentions something that interests them, keep them talking - ask them to go into a bit more depth, or to maybe give you a demonstration if applicable. This light chat will help to build up trust and develop your relationship.

4. Get out and do something- Sometimes the best way to bond is to not talk, but to do - and the best way ‘to do’ is by organizing a daytrip. Plan a fun activity or day out with your foster child, making sure you ask them beforehand what they want to do. Why not ask them if there’s a film they want to see? Or you can go out to their favorite restaurant. Perhaps your foster child enjoys animals? With zoos and farms all over the country, take your foster child to a day trip that you can both enjoy together. While you’re out, make sure you give them your full, undivided attention to make them feel cared for and important.

5. Activities at home- Although taking your child out can help to form a bond, there is a lot you can do from the comfort of your own home. Activities such as baking, movie nights and board games make for great bonding sessions. During these activities, it is important to listen to your foster child and allow them to take the lead – if they want to play Monopoly instead of the planned Cluedo, let them! If you’re struggling for ideas, our [Kid Zone](https://www.excelfostering.com/kids-zone) has a number of suggestions and print outs so you will always have something to do.

6. Give your child a say- Making sure your foster child knows they have autonomy and freedom under your care is one of the most important things you can teach them. The best way to do this is by letting them have their say on day-to-day decisions. This could be for the smallest of things like which toothpaste to buy, or something bigger like giving them the freedom to decorate their room how they like.  Either way, that autonomy will help your foster child to trust you and help build the bond between you.

7. Ensure your child knows you will support them-Ensure that your child knows you will always support them - as a parent, this is the most important part of establishing a strong bond. The best way to do this is to reaffirm your love for them. Even after they have done something wrong, reiterate that you are still here for them. For children in foster care, there is always the fear that they will be cast out – your reaffirmation of wanting them there will help develop your connection and bring you closer together.

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**PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ½ HOUR CREDIT**

1. Which of these are not tips for building a connection with your foster child.

A) ensuring your child knows you support them

B) give your child a say

C) buy them a new toy

D) all of the above

2. (True/False) There is not much you can do to bond with a child inside your own home.

3. What are two things you can give a new foster child a say about in your home?

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4. take your foster child to a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that you can both enjoy together

5. What are three ways you can connect with a child in your home?

1.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6. (True/False) It is not likely that your foster child will have an interest in something you have never heard about before.

7. There is always the fear that they will be cast out – your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_of wanting them there will help develop your connection and bring you closer together.

8. There really is no better place to bond than over the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

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**ANSWERS**

1. C
2. False
3. Any answer
4. Day Trip
5. 3 of Any of the following:

-Redecorate your house

-Sit down family dinner

-Take an interest in their interests

-Get out and do something

-Give Your child a say

-Activities at home

-Ensure you know your child will support them

1. False
2. Reaffirmation
3. Dinner Table

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