

Quotes from foster carers

What it means to me:

- It means hard work with huge emotional reward, the joy of caring for children and sometimes the heartache of sharing their sadness too.
- It means watching children grow and embracing their choices and culture with them.
- It means giving someone who really needs it a chance of getting nurture and care in a safe, healthy environment, sometimes for the first time in their life.
- It means understanding and coping with many types of behaviours.
- It means working alongside many disciplines throughout the community.
- It means keeping lots of serious secrets and sharing them with only those who need to know.
- It means exposing your own life to those that need to know and hiding it from those who don't.
- It's a lifestyle difficult to imagine until you are there.

Quotes from foster carers

- "Fostering is a great opportunity to extend parenthood and not make the same mistakes that you made with your own kids; and all teenagers need and deserve a safe and caring home life- even if they don't always admit it, they do appreciate it."
Helen, Permanent Foster Carer

Quotes from foster carers

- "Fostering- What a joy! To get so much fun and reward from something that feels so natural to do and it's just about being me. To have fun and play, and support a child in an environment where they can feel safe. Allowing them to be themselves, gaining trust and watching the simplest of things make a big difference in their lives- and yours."
Sharon, Respite Carer

And what do short breaks carers get from providing this kind of support? Here's a first-hand view:

"I work with young people in my day job so I wanted to be a carer to younger children. A friend of mine was in a similar situation, needing a break to recharge their batteries, and I gave them informal support before I successfully applied to become a short breaks carer in 2010.

By providing short breaks care, I can give the child a chance to enjoy different fun experiences that they might not be able to at home- for example visiting the zoo, going to the cinema, a day at the beach or out for a meal. It also helps give their parents/ carers a break and be able to spend time with other children, so everyone benefits.

Patience, a good sense of humour, flexibility to deal with different situations as they arise and being ready for anything are really important if you'd like to become a short breaks carer. It can be challenging but it's also so rewarding to be able to provide a caring environment that supports a child with a disability and makes a difference to their lives."