

Short Breaks Fostering: Family Link Scheme

Share a weekend break with a disabled child

About Family Link

Family Link helps children with disabilities and their main carers by offering them short breaks and a chance to take a breather from full-time (24/7) caring responsibilities.

It doesn't matter how much you love your child, there are times when all parents need a break! Its doubly when you have the additional challenges that caring for a disabled child or a child with complex medical needs can bring.

Family Link helps the main carers (be they mums, dads, aunties, grandparents or even full time foster carers!) who look after a disabled child by offering them a much-needed break.

Being a Family Link Carer

As a Family Link carer, you will be linked with a family and will be able to work closely with them to make the necessary arrangements for the child's care.



Often you'll be invited to meet the child a few times before you take on the role, spending time at the child's home building a relationship and learning about care routines. It's also a chance to find out fun things like favourite foods and activities - which will help you plan your break with the child.

You will be allocated your own social worker who will help you understand the role and make sure you are trained and supported to care for the linked child.

Short breaks usually take place over a regular weekend a month. Sometimes families need an odd extra night or two here and there, so may ask if you can help out with those too.

It's amazing what you can do with a weekend! Share a break with a child and make a major difference to their family too.

Shortbreaks

0845 6035620

www.fostering.hampshire.gov.uk

Fostering with Hampshire

Support Care is one of several full and part time fostering options for you to consider.

Fostering full time:

Short term fostering - looking after a child for a few nights to a few years while plans are made for their future or until they are able to return home.

Long term fostering - looking after a child or young person until they are independent.

Short Breaks (part-time):

Support Care - helping children and families stay together through periods of difficulty by offering short breaks, typically 5 nights/4 days spread over a month.

More information on each of these options - and the benefits of being a Hampshire carer - is available online:

www.fostering.hampshire.gov.uk



Hampshire
County Council

www.hants.gov.uk

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Skills and Qualities

We are looking for Family Link carers to join us in caring for disabled children. It's a part time role, so some carers have other jobs, others are full time parents - it's the combination of a carers life experience, professional skills and personal qualities that are important.

We are looking for people who are able to show:

- Experience of caring for children and young people - either through their own parenting or through a professional role.
- A genuine interest in children and young people and helping them make the most of their future.
- The ability to have fun and encourage children and young people to try new activities and broaden their horizons while in the safety of your care.
- The ability to build relationships with people of different ages, backgrounds and whose experiences may be different from your own, including the child's parents and other professionals working to support the child.
- Practically, able to offer a visiting child their own space in your home when they stay.



Training and Support for Carers

Support carers are offered all the benefits of full-time foster carers which includes:

- A nominated social worker who will provide formal support and supervision.
- Practical support and advice via support groups, online portal Foster e-Comms, and a duty system
- Training - training before you start to help you understand more about fostering and support care and training once you are caring in a range of essential subjects.
- Alongside this there are opportunities to attend specialist training and develop particular skills and knowledge, as well as follow formal qualification routes such as NVO
- Social support - from meeting other carers to discounts and offers on local attractions and for special events. This includes a free Culture-all

card!

- Allowances to cover the cost of looking after the child while they are in your care
- Some specified expenses can also be claimed - for example travel- as agreed for each placement.

Apply today!

Taking the first step to sharing a break is simple - just give us a ring or complete the online enquiry form We have need for more Family Link carers across Hampshire.

Our friendly, professional duty team will arrange to chat through a few things on the phone, and then arrange to visit you to make sure Family Link caring is the right thing for you and any family you may have.

The social worker who visits you will also explain about the next steps - for example, the checks and references we need to undertake - and the full process of becoming a Family Link carer.

It will usually take around 4-5 months to get you started - including making sure you've had the initial training and support you need to get started and make a success of your role.