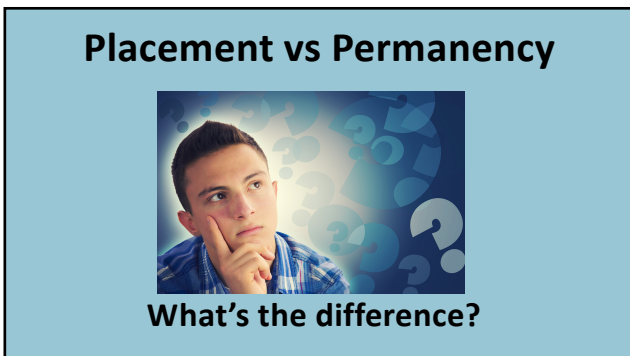
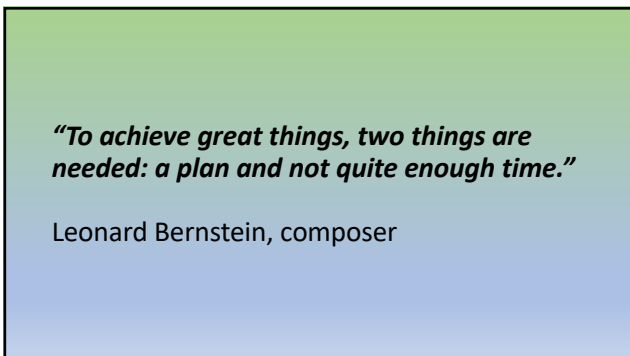
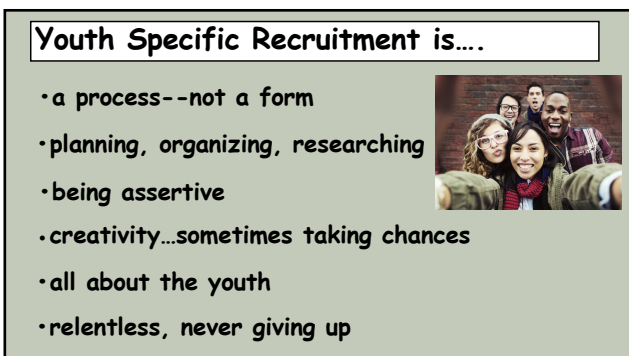








[illegible][illegible]

Components of Youth Specific Recruitment

Youth Engagement

- Build your relationship with the youth
- Interview the youth for their input—use tools!
- Ask what's going well for the youth
- Have a realistic view of the youth—the “why” behind the “what, why or no”.
- Gain buy-in, collaboration & partnership
- Patience & Perseverance



Gaining Buy-in: Tough Questions

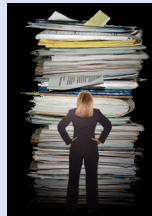
- “I don’t want to leave the Group Home!”
- “Why do I have to visit my parents?”
- “I’ll tell you where I want to live!”
- “If you put me in that home, I’ll run away!”
- “I don’t want to change schools again!”
- “I’m almost 18 so I’m just want to stay here till I age out.”
- “Why do you want me to go to strangers again?”
- “Hell NO!”



Components of Youth Specific Recruitment

File Mining...aka “Archeological Dig of the Record”

- Touch every doc, read every screen
- Consider other sources of info
- Use Tools to organize info
- See who attended court, mtgs
- Be a detective!



Step 1: Getting Ready to Find Families

• Pull together the Youth Centered Recruitment Team

• Who should be involved?

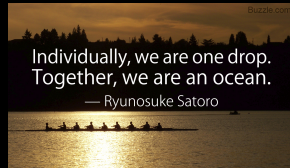
- Youth
- Youth's social worker
- PO
- CASA
- Placement Partners
- Community Partners
- Family Members
- Others?
- MH/Health
- Education

• Take advantage of opportunities presented



Take Advantage of Existing Opportunities

- Using the CFT
- Court Hearings
- IEP meetings
- Permanency Roundtables
- Using other meetings
- Creating an Ad Hoc Team
- Starts at FRONT DOOR!



Step 2: Identification of Possible Families

- Talk with youth
- Contact/Return to Birth Family
- Contact/Reconnect to Kin
- Interview past caregivers
- Dig deeper into the file
- Reverse Matching
- Overlook NO ONE!
- Use search engines
- Make personal contact
- Follow up!!!!!!!
- Keep talking with the youth!



Step 3: ENGAGEMENT of Possible Families

- Starting the conversation
- Sharing need for a family
- Make no demands
- Listen to their story
- Solicit their help in family finding
- Keep talking with the youth



Step 4: Exploring the Family Options

- Ranking potential family possibilities
- Engaging potential family as helpers
- Selection of potential family to pursue
- Begin to develop PLAN A, B...and Z
- Identify needed supports for youth and family
- Keep talking with the youth
- Gaining their commitment to move forward



Components of Youth Specific Recruitment

Specialized Media Approaches

- Developing youth focused, developed materials
- Print, electronic and social media
- Respect youth's wishes



CONSIDER ADOPTION



KWAMANE

KWAMANE
Birthdate: July 1989

Kwamane likes to play sports, fish, hunt, and help repair and fix things around the house. Kwamane loves animals and very much desires to have pets of his own when he is adopted. Kwamane is deaf, but he is able to use American Sign Language and read lips. Kwamane attends a public middle school where he attends classes with other deaf children. Kwamane has stated that he wants to be adopted by a family with either a deaf child or a deaf parent. He is adamant about continuing his involvement in the deaf community now and in the future. Kwamane was not identified as deaf until he was two years old. In addition his early childhood environment was respectful. No one in his biological family or past foster families learned sign language. Due to this Kwamane was a very angry and frustrated young man as well as socially immature for his age. Kwamane's current foster family has learned sign language and Kwamane has thrived in their home since November of 2011. Kwamane is still not a typical teenager as he continues to be socially behind his peers. Kwamane wanted to play football this year at his school but wasn't allowed to take swimming classes at the YMCA. Kwamane loves to attend church and identifies with the Christian faith. Kwamane has a younger brother and sister who he will need to stay in contact with after adoption as well as be able to maintain his relationship with his current foster family who he loves very much. If interested in finding out how you and your family can become part of Kwamane's life, please contact his social worker.

For more information, please contact:
Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services

Contact:
Sally Dennis at (216) 881-4441, 1-800-321-0322 ext447
E-mail: sdenis@genes.cuyahoga.org

Alternate contact:
Wika DePue at (216) 881-4447, 1-800-321-0322 ext4637
E-mail: wdepue@genes.cuyahoga.org

One Stop Service 771

 Cleveland, Ohio 44133

Parental guidance requested

With her photo album in hand, 16-year-old Rose hopes to find a family to adopt her.



ROSE BROWNSTEIN

With her photo album in hand, 16-year-old Rose hopes to find a family to adopt her. Rose is a 16-year-old girl with dark hair and a friendly smile. She is wearing a red and black plaid shirt. The background is a simple, light-colored wall.

Time running out for teen who seeks a family to call his own

With the clock ticking, Rose Brownstein is looking for a family to adopt her.



ROSE BROWNSTEIN

With the clock ticking, Rose Brownstein is looking for a family to adopt her. Rose is a 16-year-old girl with dark hair and a friendly smile. She is wearing a red and black plaid shirt. The background is a simple, light-colored wall.



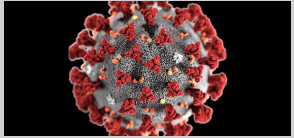
Components of Youth Specific Recruitment

Growing Relationships

- Outreach to specialized groups
- Affinity groups
- Mentors
- Teen focused groups



A Word about Covid...



- Take advantage of virtual connections
- Think about what you CAN do, not what you CAN'T do
- Make the most of every connection
- Build a virtual recruitment team for the youth
- Get help to master apps and platforms
- Regularly stay in touch with the youth virtually

- **YOU** shouldn't do this work alone!
- **PARTNERS** can support the family identification process and provide support before, during and after placement
- With support, a **FAMILY** can work with the youth's behaviors/needs
- **ALL** families need trauma-informed knowledge and skills
- A youth's behaviors **CAN** and **DO** change over time
- Engage the youth at **EVERY** Step!

Final Thoughts...

Your Questions???

All About ME

My name is _____ and here is some information that might be helpful to my new caregivers.

My birth date is _____ which means I am _____ years old.

I have _____ brothers and sisters. Their names and ages are: _____

The last school I attended was _____ and I am in the _____ grade.

Describing myself:

I would describe myself as:

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ friendly | ☐ quiet | ☐ artistic | ☐ talented |
| ☐ funny | ☐ loud | ☐ musical | ☐ shy |
| ☐ smart | ☐ athletic | ☐ outgoing | ☐ good looking |
| ☐ stylish/trendy | ☐ pretty | ☐ other _____ | |

When I have a problem, here is how I try to handle it:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ writing in a journal | ☐ talking to my friends |
| ☐ thinking by myself | ☐ talking to a caring adult |
| ☐ getting angry and being mean | ☐ talking to my counselor |
| ☐ going on a run or exercising | ☐ _____ |

I get angry when _____

It makes me scared when _____

I feel good about myself when _____

Favorites:

Favorite subject at school _____

Least favorite subject at school _____

Favorite kind of music _____ Band: _____

Favorite movie: _____ Book: _____

Things I like to do:

	Love to do	Like to do	Want to learn how
_____	☐	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐	☐

I have these hobbies: _____

☐ I need some help finding some hobbies.

Living with me:

If it were up to me you would find my room:

☐ Messy ☐ Clean ☐ Somewhere in between

Chores and help around the house that I am pretty good at:

My sleeping habits are:

☐ I usually stay up late and sleep in ☐ I get up early in the morning

☐ I have a hard time sleeping

☐ It helps me get to sleep when _____

My favorite foods are _____

My least favorite foods are _____

Other information I would like you to know about me:

All About MY CHILD

Date: _____

Parent(s): _____

Child's Full Name: _____

Nickname: _____

Age: _____

Date of Birth: _____

SSN: _____

Other family or extended family members that your child might miss or talk or be concerned about:

Medical Information

Pediatrician: _____

Last visit/Next Visit: _____

Phone Number: _____

Dentist: _____

Last visit/Next Visit: _____

Phone Number: _____

Does your child have any special medical conditions you would like us to know about? Y / N

Have there been any significant medical events in your child's history? Y / N

Are there any mental health or emotional health concerns? Y / N

Does your child have any allergies to medications? Y / N

(Please specify) _____

School Information

My child attends _____ and is in _____ grade.

My child's teacher is: _____

Does your child have special services in school? (an IEP?)

Is there anything you want to share about your child's school experience or situation?

Food and Meals / Daily Routine / Activities

What are your child's favorite foods or meals?

What foods does your child dislike?

Is your child allergic to any foods or have dietary restrictions? (Please be specific and list reactions)

What are your child's routines related to breakfast / lunch / dinner?

What does your child do after school?

Please list any extracurricular activities or sports:

What is your child's bedtime and bedtime routine? (stories, song, prayer, comfort item, etc.)

Does your child have special friends at school or in the neighborhood?

Do you have a religious tradition or affiliation?

Other Information

Are there any behaviors that your child may exhibit: (unsafe play, bed wetting, tantrums etc.)

Does your child have any special fears or anxieties?

How do you comfort your child?

Is there any other information that you can share that might help make your child more comfortable while he/she is in care?

Hair Care

THANK YOU

Icebreaker Meeting Report

Case Name: _____

Case Number: _____

Date of Meeting: _____

Parent(s): _____

Child's Full Name: _____

Social Worker: _____

Foster Parent(s) or Caregiver(s) _____

Status of Icebreaker:

____ Held

____ Declined by parents

____ Declined by caregivers

____ Not held due to parent's lack of availability

____ Not held as child is returning to prior placement within one year

____ Not held because _____

Attendees (inc. Title or Role):

Attach the "All About..." questionnaire(s) to this report.

Attach any other notes from the meeting to this report.

Visitation or Communications Plan:

—

—

Summary and Comments about the meeting:

All About MY TEEN

Date: _____ Parent(s): _____

Youth's Full Name: _____ Nickname: _____

Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____ SSN: _____

Other family or extended family members that your child might miss or talk or be concerned about:

Medical Information

Pediatrician: _____ Last visit/Next Visit: _____

Phone Number: _____

Dentist: _____ Last visit/Next Visit: _____

Phone Number: _____

Does your child have any special medical conditions you would like us to know about? Y / N

Have there been any significant medical events in your child's history? Y / N

Are there any mental health or emotional health concerns? Y / N

Does your child have any allergies to medications? Y / N
(Please specify) _____

School Information

My child attends: _____ and is in _____
grade.

My child's teacher is: _____

Does your child have special services in school? (an IEP?)

Is there anything you want to share about your child's school experience or situation?

Food and Meals / Daily Routine / Activities

What are your child's favorite foods or meals?

What foods does your child dislike?

Is your child allergic to any foods or have dietary restrictions? (Please be specific and list reactions)

What are your child's routines related to breakfast / lunch / dinner?

What does your child do after school?

Please list any extracurricular activities or sports:

What is your child's bedtime and bedtime routine? (stories, song, prayer, comfort item, etc.)

Does your child have special friends at school or in the neighborhood?

Do you have a religious tradition or affiliation?

Other Information

Are there any behaviors that your child may exhibit: (unsafe play, run away, truancy, etc?)

Does your child have any special fears or anxieties?

How do you comfort your child?

Is there any other information that you can share that might help make your child more comfortable while he/she is in care?

Sexual Development

Hair Care

THANK YOU

All About MY BABY

Date: _____

Parent(s): _____

Child's Full Name: _____

Nickname: _____

Age: _____

Date of Birth: _____

SSN: _____

Other family or extended family members that your child might miss or talk or be concerned about:

Medical Information

Pediatrician: _____

Last visit/Next Visit: _____

Phone Number: _____

Dentist: _____

Last visit/Next Visit: _____

Phone Number: _____

Does your child have any special medical conditions you would like us to know about? Y / N

Have there been any significant medical events in your child's history? Y / N

Are there any mental health or emotional health concerns? Y / N

Does your child have any allergies to medications? Y / N

(Please specify) _____

Developmental Milestones (rolling over, sitting up, walking, crawling, language, potty training, solid foods, etc.)

Comfort Items (clothes, blankets, toys, use of pacifier, etc)

Pregnancy/Birth Complications, Premature

Food and Meals / Daily Routine / Activities

What are your child's favorite foods or meals?

What foods does your child dislike?

Is your child allergic to any foods or have dietary restrictions? (Please be specific and list reactions)

What are your child's routines related to breakfast / lunch / dinner?

What is your child's bedtime and bedtime routine? (stories, song, prayer, comfort item, etc.)

Do you have a religious tradition or affiliation?

Other Information

Are there any behaviors that your child may exhibit: (tantrums etc.)

Does your child have any special fears or anxieties?

How do you comfort your child?

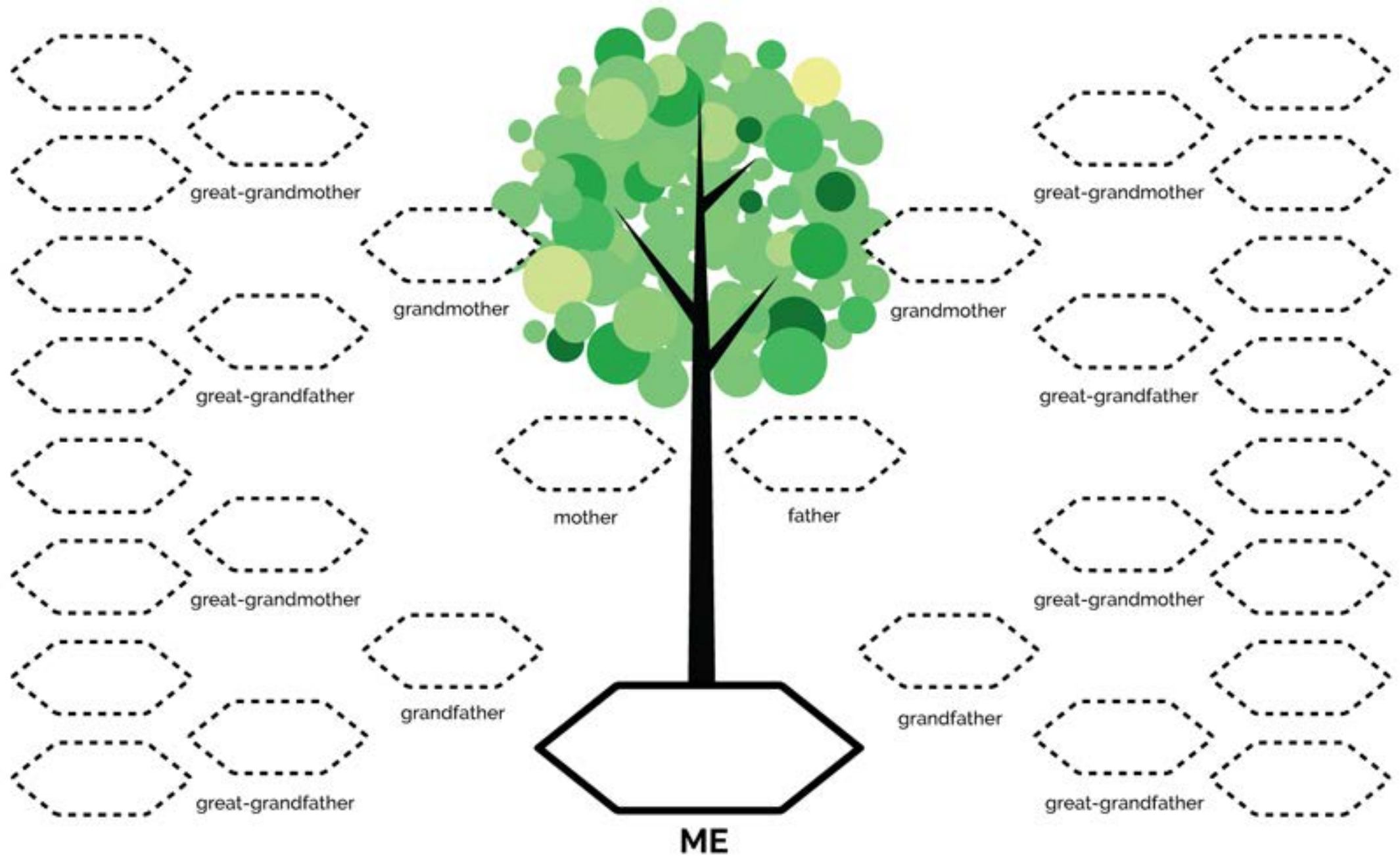
Is there any other information that you can share that might help make your child more comfortable while he/she is in care?

Hair Care

What (developmental) goals do you have for your child that you would want the foster parent to work on?

THANK YOU!

Family Tree



These are the safe and supportive family members and caring adults that need to be on my team:

Things I want you to know about my family and team:

When it comes to family and caring adults, these are the things that:

- Are going well
- I’m worried about
- I hope will happen

I need my team to help me plan how to get to a safe, supportive and lasting family relationship. My team should:

*Adapted from North Carolina Family-Centered Meetings Project 3/2007 *Nothing About Them Without Them: Children’s Participation in FGDM December 3, 200 Teleconference Handout #29*, Revised for NH DCYF by 3P Consulting LLC 2016

DO YOU WANT TO BE ADOPTED?



WHY KIDS SAY "NO" TO ADOPTION:

Social workers often give up searching for an adoptive home for a child because the child has said, "I don't want to be adopted!" When you ask a youth, "Do you want to be adopted?" They don't necessarily hear that s/he will be with a permanent, committed family where s/he can grow up. The youth is likely to "hear" other questions that may make him/her resistant to the concept of adoption. Here are a few of those questions with possible responses:

Do you want to change your name?

No, you don't have to change your name. Some kids prefer to change their last name so they will blend into the family, however, they keep their first and middle names to stay connected to their past and their identity. But there are kids who also want to change their first name or middle name, too. It's best if you discuss this with your social worker and your adopted parents so you can make a decision that best for you.

Do you want to move to another home?

It's hard to move and you've probably already moved enough times in your life and you don't want to move again! It's not always necessary to move to be adopted. Some kids are adopted by their foster parents or relatives who they are living with. But there times when kids do move to be adopted. Those kids feel it is worth one more move so they will get a permanent family and they won't have to move again until they are ready to be on their own. Even when they are in their own apartment or in the military they will still have a family to depend on and be there for them.

Do you want to lose all of your friends?

You don't lose friends when you are adopted! You gain a family, relatives and even more friends. There are lots of ways to stay in touch with your friends even if you don't live near them anymore. By using the phone, mail, email and through visits, you can still stay in touch.

Do you want to have to start over?

It is hard starting over. But each of us starts over or begins new experiences many times during our lives--new job, new boy/girlfriend, new car, new house, new marriage. Have confidence in yourself! You have the skills to make new friends and your new family can help you become acquainted with their extended family, neighbors and friends.

©March 15, 2006 Created by Denise A. Goodman, PhD and Scott Lee, State of Tennessee with inspiration by Gina

Do you want to betray your birth family?

It's hard to believe that you could join another family without being disloyal to your birth family. Think of adoption like a marriage. When two people get married, neither one gives up their birth family, they have created new relationships to take the next step in their lives. You need a family to take the next steps in your life. However, your birth family will always be a part of you!

Do you want to lose contact with your siblings?

Unfortunately, there are times when brothers and sisters are not adopted by the same family. When this happens, social workers make every effort to continue the relationship through visits, phone calls and emails. Some families work hard to maintain the relationship while others don't. One way you can help is to create a positive relationship with your siblings' adoptive parents and try to stay in touch through letters and calls. You can call your social worker and s/he can help you as well.

Do you want to take a chance of being rejected?

You probably feel that where you are living now is a "sure thing". Most kids feel that way. While there are no guarantees, your social worker can help you meet your new family and assist you in building a relationship with them. There will be visits and phone calls over a period of time to help you feel secure before you move in with your new family.

Teens may also say "NO" to adoption because they lack knowledge and understanding about adoption. To them, it may not seem much more different from foster care. They don't understand the steps of the process, what the prospective family has had to complete to become approved and the prospective family's desire to adopt a teen. Suggesting to the teen that s/he could be with a permanent family and be able to stay to adulthood may be more appealing to the youth.

Teens may decline adoption or permanency because they want to be free from the system and desire to have regain control over their lives. Social workers who effectively engage and empower youth to participate in permanency planning have been successful in identifying permanent homes even for youth deemed to be "hopeless"!



30 Ways to CARE...when you can't be the CAREGIVER

1. Call the caregiver and see how they are doing.
2. Send encouraging/supportive letters to the caregiver in the mail.
3. E-mail or text to see if your help is needed.
4. Take child/youth to spiritual/worship services.
5. Offer to provide weekend or evening respite/babysitting for caregiver.
6. Attend school open house with child/youth/.
7. Attend music performances, sporting events to support child/caregiver.
8. Go with the child on a school field trip.
9. Attend parent-teacher conferences to help out the caregiver.
10. Send a birthday treat for the class for the child's birthday.
11. Be available for "homework help" calls or tutor the child/youth.
12. Assist with transportation to extra curricular activities.
13. Build a family photo scrap book for the child/youth to have.
14. Take photos of the child/youth's activities while in care for scrap/memory books.
15. Invite child/youth and caregiver to important family events and celebrations like birthdays, weddings or other family traditional celebrations.
16. If financially able, take child/youth shopping for new clothes, school supplies, athletic equipment or materials needed for special events.
17. If able, pay for fees necessary for participation in extra curricular events like sports fees or music instrument rentals etc.
18. Transport child/youth to appointments, visitation and activities for the caregiver.
19. Invite child/youth and caregiver over for a meal once a week.
20. Give the caregiver a hand with housekeeping and yard work when possible.
21. Help keep separated siblings connected by hosting visits with the whole group or taking all children/teens on an outing together.
22. Host visitation between the child/youth and their birth parents, or other important family members such as cousins, aunts, uncles or Grandparents.
23. Take the child/youth on vacation with your family to give the caregiver a break.
24. Host a birthday party for the child/youth.
25. Help the caregiver and child/youth to mediate/negotiate disagreements.
26. Attend Child -Family Team Meetings and court hearings.
27. Support the caregiver in solving discipline/behavioral issues. Don't undermine their authority.
28. Be part of the child/youth's support team that meets regularly and help find a permanent family resource., if needed.
29. Offer to care for child/youth when sick so the caregiver does not always have to miss work.
30. Transport the child/youth to and from school when needed.

****Remember to thank the caregiver for stepping up to care for your family's child****

Child Specific Recruitment Case File Review Tool

CHILD'S NAME _____

DATE _____

COMPLETED BY _____



INTRODUCTION

Purpose: This tool is designed to assist the social worker when reviewing the child's and family's case record for potential placement resources or individuals who would assist in identifying placement resources.

In addition, the tool collects information helpful in the development of the child's lifebook, background information for formal presentations, full disclosure forms and/or subsidy documents.

Therefore, a single **thorough** review of the child's and family's case records can serve to satisfy several case management responsibilities. More importantly, after a meticulous review of the case record, the social worker knows the child better and is able to identify a family to meet the child's lifelong needs.

Directions:

1. Obtain the child's and family's case record.
2. In an organized fashion, review (touch) each piece of paper in the case record. Pay particular attention to meeting documents, case histories, forms that list family and friends of the child and their parents.
3. As critical information is uncovered, record it on the appropriate page in this tool.
4. Once the case record review is completed, analyze the tool and identify potential placement resources or individuals who could be utilized as members of the recruitment team.

Child's Placement History

[illegible]

Child's Placement History-continued

Caregiver's Name and Type	Address	Phone Email	Dates Resided in Placement

*For placements that the child recognizes as significant, complete the *"Placement Ecomap"* with the child.

Birth Mother's Background Information

Name _____ aka _____ DOB _____

Birth Mother's Known Addresses:

[illegible]

Birth Mother's Relatives:

[illegible]

Other Individuals Connected to Birth Mother:			
Name	Relationship	Address	Phone/Email

NOTES:

Birth Father's Background Information

Name _____ aka _____ DOB _____

Birth Mother's Known Addresses:

Street Address	City, State, Zip	Phone/Email

Birth Mother's Relatives:

[illegible]

Other Individuals Connected to Birth Mother:			
Name	Relationship	Address	Phone/Email

NOTES:

SIBLING INFORMATION

Name	DOB	Relationship (full, half, step, fictive)	Address	Phone/Email
<i>Joe Brother Sample</i>	<i>4/1/09</i>	<i>half brother</i>	<i>1212 Main St, Centertown, St 98765</i>	<i>999-321-4567 BroJoe@email.com</i>

Notes:

SCHOOL/EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

(include preschool, Headstart, elementary, middle, high, vocational, etc.)

Name	Dates Attended	Address	Phone/Email	*Any Important People
John Hancock Elementary	10/18/11-3/12/12	776 Franklin Parkway Washington, ST 01324	999-345-9876 HancockEl@edu.com	Miss Teacher, classroom aide

NOTES

*Important people to consider: teachers, coaches, program aides, lunchroom staff, bus drivers, clerical, principal, tutors, maintenance staff, guidance counselors, music/art teachers, etc.

MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION

	CURRENT THERAPIST	RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT
Name Address City, State Zip Phone number Date of service		
	PAST THERAPIST	RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT
Name Address City, State Zip Phone number Date of service		
	PAST THERAPIST	HOSPITALIZATION
Name Address City, State Zip Phone number Date of service		
	PAST THERAPIST	HOSPITALIZATION
Name Address City, State Zip Phone number Date of service		

SOCIAL & COMMUNITY CONTACTS

SOCIAL & COMMUNITY CONTACTS		
	RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS	BIG BROTHER/BIG SISTER/MENTOR
Name Address City, State Zip Phone number		
	VISITING FAMILY/RESPITE CARE	GODPARENTS
Name Address City, State Zip Phone number		
	SPORTS/RECREATION/CAMPS/SCOUTS	FRIENDS (peers)
Name Address City, State Zip Phone number		
	FRIENDS OF THE FAMILY	EMPLOYER
Name Address City, State Zip Phone number		
NOTES:		

SOCIAL SERVICES CONTACTS

	SOCIAL WORKER	PAST SOCIAL WORKER
Name Address City, State Zip Phone number		
	GUARDIAN AD LITEM	CASA
Name Address City, State Zip Phone number		
	RECRUITER	CONTRACT AGENCY SOCIAL WKR
Name Address City, State Zip Phone number		
	INDEPENDENT LIVING SPECIALIST	OTHER STAFF*
Name Address City, State Zip Phone number		
NOTES:		

*Other staff may include clerical, transportation, training, etc. who may have had contact with the child

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, CONTACTS OR POTENTIAL LEADS FOR THE CHILD:

CHILD SPECIFIC RECRUITMENT PLAN FOR

Child's Name

D.O.B.

Case #

SOCIAL WORKER

DATE ASSIGNED _____

DATES REVISED _____

Current Placement _____

GETTING READY TO RECRUIT CHECKLIST

DATE

- _____ Interviewed child
- _____ Reviewed child's case record for information
- _____ Reviewed Genogram
- _____ Picture of child taken
- _____ Complete write up for child
- _____ Produced flyer of child
- _____ Wall photo of child produced
- _____ Talked with former social worker
- _____ Talked with RFA social worker

RECRUITMENT TEAM

People who have agreed to help find a permanent home for the child

NAME/ RELATIONSHIP	ADDRESS	CITY	ZIP	PHONE#	COMMENTS

CHILD'S SUPPORT RESOURCES

	DEADLINE	DATE COMPLETED	NAME OF CONTACT	ADDRESS	PHONE	RESULTS/NOTES
Paternal Relatives						
Maternal Relatives						
Neighbors						
Friends						
Social Contacts						
Interested Individuals						
Teachers/School Personnel						
Past CPS Social Workers						
Past Foster Families						
Therapists						
Doctors/Nurses						
Probation Officer						
Past CPS RFA Social Workers						

AGENCY BASED RESOURCES

	DEADLINE	DATE COMPLETED	NAME OF CONTACT	ADDRESS	PHONE	RESULTS/NOTES
WWK Recruiter						
Personal Video						
External Displays Specify:						
Pre-Approval Presentation						
Resource Parent Association						
Resource Parent Support Groups Specify:						
Youth Panel at Pre-Approval						

COMMUNITY/LOCAL RESOURCES

	DEADLINE	DATE COMPLETED	NAME OF CONTACT	ADDRESS	PHONE	RESULTS/NOTES
Community Liaisons						
Churches:						
Youth Organizations						
Neighborhood Centers						
Library						
School						
Other Specify:						
Other Specify:						
Other Specify:						
Other Specify:						
Other Specify:						
Other Specify:						

COMMUNITY/LOCAL RESOURCES

NEWSLETTER STORIES	DEADLINE	DATE COMPLETED	CONTACT PERSONS/PHONE NUMBER	RESULTS/NOTES

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES	DEADLINE	DATE COMPLETED	CONTACT PERSONS/PHONE NUMBER	RESULTS/NOTES

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RADIO BROADCAST	DEADLINE	DATE COMPLETED	CONTACT PERSONS/PHONE NUMBER	RESULTS/NOTES

TELEVISION APPEARANCE	DEADLINE	DATE COMPLETED	CONTACT PERSONS/PHONE NUMBER	RESULTS/NOTES

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS SPECIFY	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	CONTACT PERSON/PHONE NUMBER	DEADLINE	DATE OF PRESENTATION	RESULTS/NOTES
Special Issue Support Group:					
Special Issue Support Group:					
Community Organization Presentation Specify:					
Other Specify:					

STATEWIDE RESOURCES

MAILINGS/CONTACT	CONTACT PERSON/PHONE NUMBER	DEADLINE	WHAT WAS SENT	DATE COMPLETED	RESULTS/NOTES
CDSS Website					
OTHER COUNTY AGENCIES SPECIFY:					
OTHER PRIVATE ADOPTION AGENCIES SPECIFY:					
FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATIONS (OTHER AGENCIES) SPECIFY:					
ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS SPECIFY:					
STATEWIDE PRIVATE PROVIDER ORGANIZATION					
STATE WEBSITE					
OTHER SPECIFY:					

OTHER STATE RESOURCES	CONTACT PERSON/PHONE NUMBER	DEADLINE	DATE COMPLETED	RESULTS/NOTES
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STATE PHOTOLISTING				
STATEWIDE MEETINGS				
STATEWIDE CONFERENCES				
OTHER SPECIFY:				
SOCIAL MEDIA:				
FACEBOOK PAGES				
TWITTER				
YOUTUBE				

NATIONAL RESOURCES

CONTACTS	CONTACT PERSON/PHONE NUMBER	DEADLINE	DATE COMPLETED	RESULTS/NOTES
ADOPTUSKIDS.ORG				
OTHER EXCHANGES SPECIFY:				
OTHER EXCHANGES SPECIFY:				
NACAC				
CWLA				
OTHER CONTACTS SPECIFY:				

PUBLICATION RESOURCES

CONTACTS	CONTACT PERSON/PHONE NUMBER	DEADLINE	DATE COMPLETED	RESULTS/NOTES
ADOPTALK (NACAC)				
ROUNDTABLE (NRCSNA)				
ADOPTNET				
ADOPTIVE FAMILIES				

INTERRACE MAGAZINE				
OTHER SPECIFY:				
OTHER SPECIFY:				
OTHER SPECIFY:				

Placement EcoMap

(Name of Placement)

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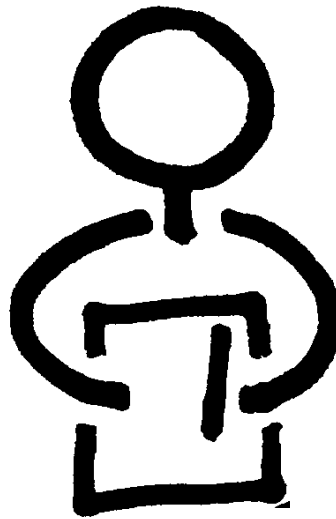
FRIENDS



SCHOOL



CHURCH



NEIGHBORS



RESOURCE PARENTS' EXTENDED FAMILY



EMPLOYMENT



ACTIVITIES



SPECIAL PEOPLE



getting started in

SOCIAL MEDIA

a guide to setting up social media tools for use in
foster carer recruitment

Dominic Stevenson

**The
Fostering
Network**

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Foreword

Across the UK, fostering services continue to successfully recruit the 14 per cent of foster carers that leave the profession on an annual basis. But with ever increasing numbers of children coming into care, the pressure remains to find new ways and techniques to recruit and retain the foster carers of the future.

In recent years social media has gained greater awareness and prevalence in application across a number of different sectors.

But what is social media? To put it simply, it is a platform to engage. This might be with like-minded people who share common interests or viewpoints who come together in a virtual community. It can also involve an audience who will share your message in their own communities, who in turn may do likewise – the ultimate form of word of mouth. And as such it does provide another channel for reaching prospective foster carers.

But a warning – it is only a tool, and by no means a gateway to a fostering recruitment panacea. Careful consideration needs to be made as to whether use of any social media tool fits with your recruitment strategy, and if so, to the messages you will broadcast and the audiences you will target.

I am a passionate advocate for social media and have incorporated it as a tool into my own fostering recruitment

campaigns to raise awareness of foster care and encourage the right people to come forward.

The Fostering Network shares this passion and is here to support you. This guide provides an introduction to each of the main social media platforms, with step-by-step guides as to how to establish your presence. We will be following this guide with a more detailed phase two on recruitment techniques, looking at how to develop your social media platforms and engagement, as well as providing training and workshops to support you.

If you would like further information and advice around the use of social media, please contact me at
e james.foyle@fostering.net
or **t** 020 7620 6443.

James Foyle
Recruitment and
Retention Consultant
The Fostering Network



Social media - an introduction

Why social media?

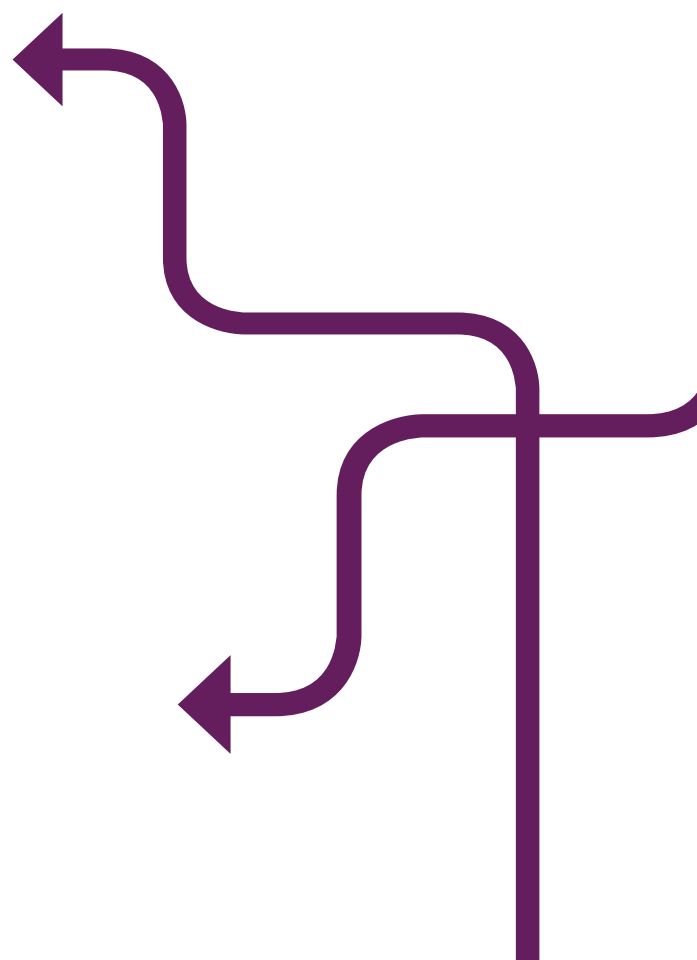
Very simply, social media is all about being social. It is a way of making and developing connections with people within your community and sector – it provides highly accessible routes for socially interacting with others who share a common interest.

Using social media tools can be a great way for your fostering service to get messages out to a really wide audience. The only costs involved at an introductory level are the staff time to run it but depending how you use it, this can be minimal.

Social media is relatively new but is here to stay. It is so prevalent that it enables you to communicate with people when they are on the go, via their mobile devices, as well as on their computers. This compares with more traditional and static methods of reaching people, through print publications, posters and direct mailing. Failing to explore how your fostering service could utilise social media within your wider recruitment strategy could lead to you missing a real opportunity.

Just social media?

Social media can be a very useful addition to your ongoing foster carer recruitment activities. It cannot, and should not, replace practised and traditional methods of recruitment. It should complement them. Any social media you use has to be carefully considered and appraised and should be fully integrated with your ongoing media and recruitment strategies.



Remember your audiences

It is vital that with an ageing foster care population fostering services all try to engage with different demographics, and that is why social media can form an integral part of your wider media and recruitment strategies. Different age groups and demographics will use different social media channels. You will know your local audiences best, so use that knowledge and choose social media to communicate with them. As technology changes and more people go online, diversifying your recruitment channels has never been more vital.

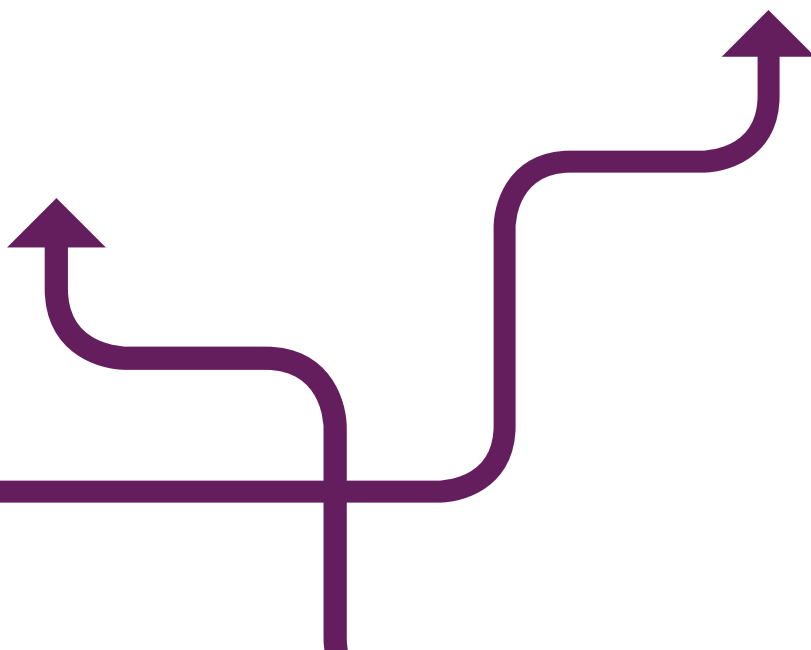
Integration and pushing people in the right direction

Whichever social media you choose to use, make sure that you integrate it with your other advertising and promotional work. For example, if you have a Twitter account, make sure your username is on your website, posters and so on.

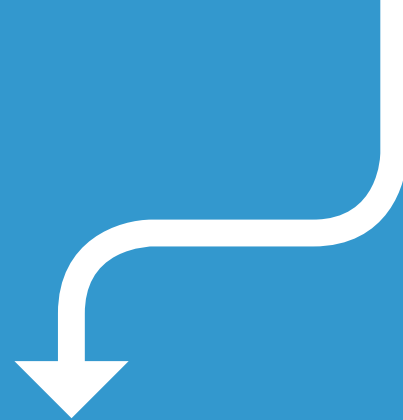
Before you start

As a new recruitment tool, it is far too easy to let social media become the be all and end all which could lead to your traditional recruitment work being neglected. If you are in a team that does not have a lot of resources, do not obsess over your social media, let it be a slow burning activity that over time can potentially reach a large and engaged local audience.

Social media tools offer another way of reaching potential foster carers, and as such are worth exploring to see how they can add to your recruitment strategy. But the most important thing to remember is that whatever techniques you use to reach prospective foster carers, what matters is that your information and messaging about fostering must be right.



Facebook



What is it all about?

Facebook is probably the best known social media tool. It is a free, web-based social network where you can create your own page to share your news and interact with other Facebook users.

Although Facebook has been popular for several years, it is still getting more and more users and so can provide a very good, and free, place for your foster carers to interact and be updated about your fostering service. It can also be a good way to encourage your foster carers to share your need for more people to come forward and foster.

With so many foster carers on Facebook already, it is worth considering starting up your own page so that you can have control over what is shared and how it is discussed before your foster carers collectively do it themselves.

Getting your account set up

Go to **facebook.com** and log in with a generic email address, such as **fostering@yourfostering-service.gov.uk** and follow the simple on-screen instructions on how to set up an organisation page.

You will have to provide lots of information that will be useful to your users, such as contact details for the fostering service and a brief background of the fostering service. This will help visitors decide if you are the right group for them to join and how to contact you for further advice.

Posting and comments

Once you have set up your page, you can post text, photos, videos, news stories and your latest information on there.

Ideally, a fostering service would aim for two to three posts a week to keep their audience engaged and growing but at the same time not overwhelming people with information.

These messages have comment boxes where visitors to the page can comment. These comments can be constructive, critical or irrelevant to the initial message. Ideally your foster carers will support your recruitment effort by discussing how rewarding fostering is.

It is important that unless an individual makes a comment to which someone could take offence, or the service is potentially libelled, you do not delete comments without good reason. This can put off users from visiting your Facebook page again, and instead they can just start their own. If people use bad language then it is advisable to delete the comment.





Being 'liked'

People 'like' Facebook pages and then they have that page's messages posted automatically to their own Facebook timeline. This means that they will see whatever you post, so don't post too frequently during the day otherwise they may 'unlike' you.

Being liked by lots of people does not mean that your Facebook page is being effective. Where recruitment is concerned, 10 local likes is better than lots from different places as it means your messages are being targeted appropriately.

Direct messages

Most of your interactions with Facebook users can take place in the public forum of your page. However, occasionally people may send you a private message. It is a courtesy to respond to these as they may be from someone who wants more information or is in distress.

'Share' button

A good way of reaching new users through your current users is by getting them to share your messages via the 'share' button. This means that information shared reaches your users' friends, some of whom are likely to live locally. The fact that they have shared the information will be seen as an endorsement by their friends, strengthening the impact of the message.

Some local authorities have policies that prevent fostering services from setting up their own Facebook pages, instead requiring them to use the corporate page. This may be better than not using Facebook at all, but it will be very difficult to engage the users about fostering – users will not 'like' the corporate page because they are specifically interested in fostering.

For this reason we recommend that local authority fostering services make a strong case for a bespoke Facebook page for fostering, separate from the corporate page. The Fostering Network has identified over 20 local authorities which have their own fostering Facebook page – check out facebook.com/surreyfostering, facebook.com/eastsussexcountycouncilfostering service and facebook.com/sheffieldfostering

Facebook checklist

Wall – where you post your content

Like – when people 'like' your page, posts from your wall appear on their timeline

Timeline – where your content appears to the people who 'like' your page



Facebook case studies

Telford and Wrekin fostering service uses bright and vibrant colours with a range of photographs as the cover photo on their Facebook page. This, plus their straightforward description of what they do, gives any visitor an immediate positive impression of the service.



10+ fostering in Wales posts short and concise messages that engage visitors to their Facebook page. They use their posts to convey clear messages that demonstrate the variety of work that they do. They also engage well with their site visitors by asking questions in order to generate discussion.

East Sussex fostering service encourages interaction with, and from, their users by sharing relevant posts from others and commenting on them. This gives a platform for their Facebook followers to comment on wider sector issues. Make sure to have a good balance of your own content, such as dates for information evenings, as well as that from others.



Twitter

What is it all about?

Twitter is a free website where you can publish short messages (tweets) to an audience of people who have chosen to follow you.

Tweets consist of 140 characters or fewer. Within this limit you can post anything from a simple message to web links of your own or other people's news, to pictures, sound recordings and videos.

Now is a great time to establish a presence on Twitter so that in the future you can make this free service an integral part of your recruitment activities.

What Twitter really can offer is a way to reach out to and engage with local audiences who your traditional recruitment work may not be reaching.

Getting your account set up

Go to twitter.com and follow the simple on-screen instructions. The three most important things to get right when creating your account are your username, your biography and your picture.

Your account username should be reflective of the service you're providing and the area that you are in.

For example, Sussex Fostering and Children's Services has the username: **@SussexFostering**

Phoenix Fostering has the username: **@PhoenixTFC**

Having a simple username that reflects what you do and where you are will help people find you and make you recognisable to a local audience.

Your biography should be concise and describe what you do and where you are.

For example, Sefton Council fostering service has written: 'We are a friendly fostering organisation, based in Sefton, Merseyside.'

Phoenix Fostering has written: 'Phoenix is an independent fostering agency providing therapeutic family placements for children and young people with complex needs and challenging behaviours.'

Your picture, in most instances, should be your organisation's logo, unless you have a specific one for your fostering service.





Tweeting

It is always good to have lots of followers but what is even more important is that you attract the right followers. By tweeting things of interest about your fostering service you will increase engagement levels and gain more relevant followers.

To send a tweet, simply write your message in the box provided and press send. You have up to 140 characters in each tweet. Do not use text speak (such as 'Gr8 2 cu') as it can sometimes be unintelligible to others.

'Have you ever wanted to know what skills it takes to be a foster carer?'

To reply to a tweet, click on the tweet, press reply and type in your message. Twitter automatically puts in the name of the person that you wish to reply to.

'@fictionaluser have you visited our new website for more information?'

If you want to tweet about someone or ensure that they see a tweet, type your message and at a relevant point type in their username.

'We have launched a new website. @fosteringnet have you visited yet?'

When you tweet it will appear on the timeline of all of your followers, as well as the person with the username.

Being followed

People will mainly follow you because they have an interest in your work and potentially live or work in the area in which you provide your services.

It is fantastic to have lots of followers but it is better to have 10 followers in your area than 1,000 followers in Australia, as it will be very difficult to recruit foster carers from Australia!

Following

Following people can, in some instances, bring your organisation to another's attention and as such following people like local journalists can make them aware of your activities.

Follow those who are of genuine interest to you and your fostering service otherwise your timeline will be full of tweets that have no relevance to your social media aims.

It is by no means obligatory to follow people back who follow you. If you build up a reasonable number of followers then following them all back becomes impractical and can mean that you miss tweets from followers whose messages you want to see on your timeline.





Retweeting

Retweeting is reissuing a tweet previously sent by someone else. This is a great way of sharing tweets that you believe may be of interest to your followers.

Some Twitter users believe a retweet to be an endorsement of what is said in whatever you have retweeted. If you are retweeting a news story by someone else make sure you have read it first so that the material is suitable for your followers.

Many Twitter users ask celebrities and people with lots of followers to retweet what they say. This will not be effective. Unless the person you are asking to share it has a specific involvement with your fostering service, this will lead to unnecessary clogging of people's timelines and could potentially lose you followers.

Hashtags

A hashtag # is used to assign a particular topic to a tweet. For example you can write in your tweet #fostering.

By putting # and then a relevant word after it, you are making your tweet available to be searched by everyone who wants to search for that word, for example 'fostering'. This means that people who want to find out more about a topic can do so easily using the twitter search functions.

You don't have to put a # in every tweet but it can be a useful tool. Don't use more than two # per tweet.

'We are looking for foster carers for disabled children in [NAME YOUR AREA] #fostering. Visit our website for more info'

'Foster carers needed to look after teenagers in #[NAME YOUR AREA]. Visit our website www.yourservice.gov.uk for more info'

Mentions

If people mention you in a tweet then it will appear in the '@connect' window of your Twitter homepage.

Like your phone, sometimes you are away from Twitter and so there is no need to worry about not immediately replying to people. If they have an urgent enquiry then they will find another way to contact you, such as the phone or your website.

It is a courtesy to reply to people, if you judge a reply to be needed, when they mention you in a tweet. Do not, however, feel that you have to reply to everything.

Direct messages

You can only send direct messages to people who follow you and you can only receive direct messages from people you follow.

Most of your interactions with followers can take place in the public forum of your timeline, but if a follower raises an issue that you wish to address in private, follow them and send them a direct message with a phone number or email address where you can talk in more detail.



Twitter case studies



Phoenix Fostering has a very clear biography of what they do and where they do it. When people search Twitter, they will see these biographies, and so being as clear as this example will help direct people to your Twitter feed.



Spaces for Faces has very clear branding on their Twitter page. Their page background is a repetition of their avatar (logo or other user image) and this can help to reinforce brand recognition. This is very important if you are competing against other local fostering services.

Twitter checklist

Tweet – up to 140 character messages that will be seen by your followers

Timeline – where you see the tweets of people you follow, and where your followers see your tweets

Hashtags # - a way of imposing a topic on a tweet, to enable anyone to search and read more tweets about that topic

Blogging

What is it all about?

A blog is a website where an individual or organisation can post opinions and information about their area of interest.

Blog entries are, like newspaper stories, usually manageable chunks of content that make them perfect for visitors to your blog to share with others via email, Twitter, Facebook and so on. This kind of word of mouth publicity can prove very useful locally.

A blog may be used for the purposes of foster carer recruitment.

Case studies of people who have become approved foster carers, for example, can be very popular as they let people know what to expect when they apply.

Posts by social workers and others from the fostering service that help people understand the recruitment process could also prove to be really valuable in informing potential foster carers.

Unlike a lot of websites, blogs tend to be current as they are frequently added to. This makes them an excellent source of information. It is usual for blogs to have a comments section underneath so that readers can get involved in the discussion.

Your audience

Your audience will be potential foster carers from your local area. This is why it is a good idea to start with blogs about what your fostering service offers, how you can get involved and lived experiences of foster carers and care leavers.

Why blog?

A blog is a great way to demonstrate your expertise. Let your audience know that you know what you are talking about by creating and sharing great content that is highly relevant to them.

You can promote the latest news and achievements from within your fostering service. This can include posting links to any media coverage you receive. A blog can also be used by journalists when they are looking for news stories on a slow news day, and this can get you valuable publicity.





Getting a blog set up

There are several blog sites that are free, popular and easy to use. These provide simple instructions on how to set up your blog using their website.

The two most commonly used blog sites are Wordpress (**wordpress.com**) and Blogger (**blogger.com**).

Depending on what you want from it, a blog site can require a bit of expertise to get it set up, so you may need to ask your webmaster to get involved. If you just want something simple then it is worth looking for yourself and seeing what you can achieve.

You may also be able to set up a blog on your organisation's website – speak to your webmaster.

Writing your blogs

Blogs can be the responsibility of those in your fostering service who already work in the promotion of foster carer recruitment. It is worth taking some time to read blogs by other similar organisations and services as this can give you an idea of the type of content and posts that are working for others.

A blog site should provide a more personal perspective of the activities of your service and more importantly, it can be a place where people share experiences.

Requesting blogs from your current foster carers to show how people got in to fostering is a great place to start. If you have these emailed to you then you can edit them to make sure that you are happy that no confidentiality has been broken. If you do choose to edit blogs that have been submitted to you, make

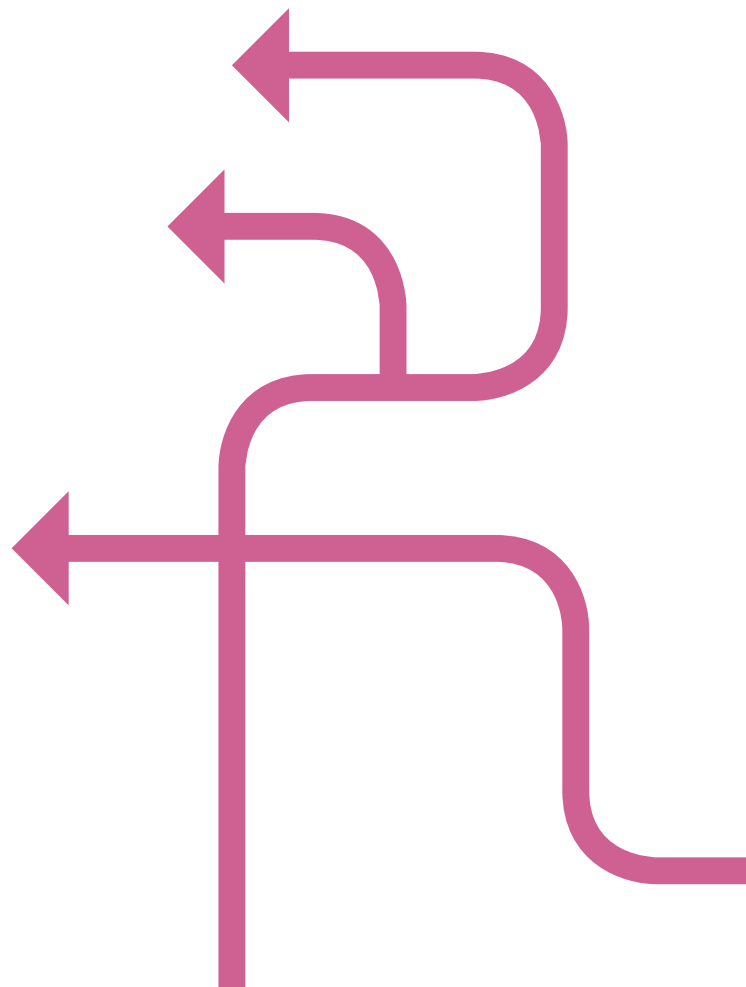
sure that you don't edit the personality out of them otherwise they just become another corporate message.

Consider how often you will be posting. Decide whether you will produce a blog post once a week or once a month for example and stick with this so your blog readers begin to know when to expect a new post.

Sharing your blogs

When you have posted a blog, you can share the link on your website as well as your Twitter and Facebook pages. This will help to drive interested people to your blog pages.

On most blogging sites you have to approve comments that are made on posts and this means that if there is anything that you are uncomfortable with, it can be blocked before it is seen by the public.





Blog case study



This blog is clearly branded, very attractive and it also has a link on the front page to the organisation's website. This is a good example of integration of social media and your own website. Good content will make people click to find out more.

Audio & film

Audio clips and films can make great content for use on your Facebook, Twitter and blog accounts. They can be powerful ways of explaining what fostering is and sharing the experiences of your existing foster carers and young people.

The basics

Ensure that all participants sign a release form saying that they are happy for their recording/image to be used. Also ensure that you comply with your own organisation's policy on showing images of children, young people and adults involved in the care system.

Audio

Creating short pieces of audio to tweet or share on Facebook can offer a creative insight into what it is like to be a foster carer. One of the most positive aspects of using audio is that there is a lower risk of identifying anyone involved. This anonymity means that for example, children could talk about how being in foster care has benefited them.

Audioboo, audioboo.fm, is a website where, for free, you can register and then download an app to a smartphone which lets you upload up to three minutes of audio to your own personalised webpage. You can then share the link via your other social media avenues to give it maximum exposure.

Good audio content is also very tempting to journalists when they are looking to cover fostering.

Film

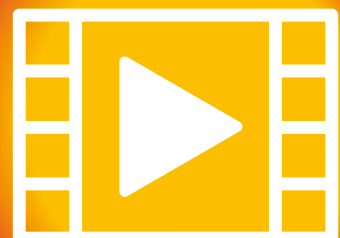
There are many limitations with regards to privacy and confidentiality that may hinder a fostering service when they produce video footage.

If you do choose to make films to show the work of your fostering service, then use your current rules around confidentiality when deciding who and what to film.

YouTube is the most common home for videos online and they can be easily uploaded by registering with **youtube.com** and following their instructions.

Once you have uploaded them, you can share them via your other social media avenues.

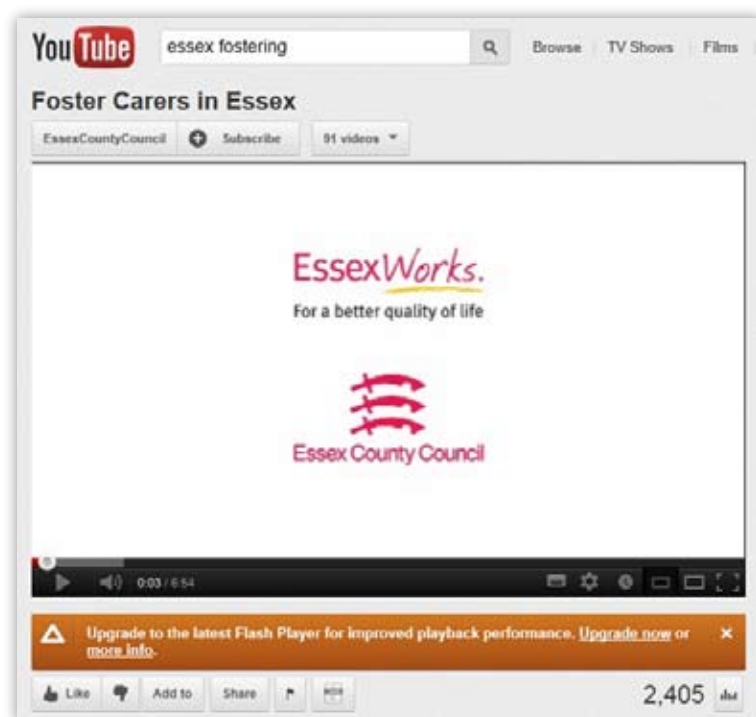
Be aware that films can be expensive to make and have a short shelf life, quickly looking dated. Audio can be a cheaper, easier and longer-lasting alternative.





YouTube case studies

These films hosted on YouTube are good examples of the type of content you may wish to create. Focusing on experiences from your own foster carers provides prospective foster carers with a real insight on what it's like, as well as seeing the qualities and skills required. Make sure your films are long enough to provide the information, but not too long to lose the viewer's interest.



Other social media

Pinterest

Pinterest, [pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com), is an online pin board – or bookmarking site – where you can pin relevant and of interest web pages to your own organisation's board. It is a good place to collect useful web articles that your service or your users may be interested in.

To create an account, visit the Pinterest website and follow their simple instructions.

Your account username should be reflective of the service you're providing and the area that you are in.

For example, the Fostering Network's Pinterest username is '[fosteringnet](https://www.pinterest.com/fosteringnet)'. This username is identical to the charity's Twitter account, [@fosteringnet](https://twitter.com/fosteringnet). This means that people will associate one with another.

Having a simple username that reflects what you do and where you are will help people find you and make you recognisable to a local audience.

Your picture, in most instances, should be your organisation's logo unless you have a specific one for your fostering service.

Pinning items on Pinterest is a good way of reflecting the issues that really matter to you. It is also a great way of making people aware of what you as an organisation believe or would like to endorse.

Don't forget, if you are pinning images from your own picture library, ensure that you have permission from the participants first.

Surely that's not all?

This guide has been designed to help you take your first steps into using social media and to encourage you to think about how to use it for foster carer recruitment. It is not an exhaustive list of media you can use, so here are the best of the rest.

Digg

Digg, digg.com, delivers interesting and talked-about stories on the internet and sends them to you in a 'Daily Digg'.

Reddit

Reddit, [reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com), is a website where people vote for popular items on the internet.

Delicious

Delicious, delicious.com, is a bookmarking site, similar to Pinterest.



Your own website

Your website is one of the main sources of information for both existing and prospective foster carers and provides a platform to link to your social media activity. These seven steps can help make sure your site is up to date and contains all the information your visitor will need.



Check all the latest versions of your promotional leaflets and information packs are available to download.



Review your Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and if you don't have any on your site consider uploading some.



Check that details of the practical and financial support you offer are readily available and up to date.



Make sure there is a clear call to action directing people to what you want them to do and how they can contact you.



For people who want to apply to foster, make sure they can easily find an online enquiry form.



If you are a local authority or health and social care trust, ask for fostering to feature on the homepage throughout recruitment campaigns.



Include links through to your social media accounts eg Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and so on.



Troubleshooting

The basics

Whether you like it or not, your foster carers are active users of social networks. Unless you make some moves towards engaging with them on social media and providing a forum where they can talk openly but that you can influence, then you leave the fostering service open to unmonitored criticism. You also need to ensure that your foster carers have other ways of communicating and airing their views with the fostering service.

If you receive a media enquiry via social media, do as you would do with a phone call or email. Refer them to your press office, or suitable point of contact for the media, as set out in your own organisation's protocols.

If people contact you asking to promote their service on your wall, it is advisable to decline, as you could alienate your own followers by letting other people flood their Facebook wall with advertising.

You may wish to post a message similar to that below in the 'About' section on your Facebook page:

'Please note that any posts on the [YOUR USERNAME] Facebook page that are deemed to be offensive or abusive will be removed, and the user blocked. Any posts seen as advertising will also be removed.'

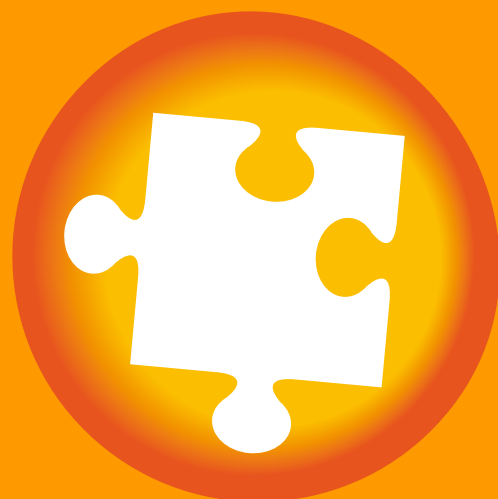
Confidentiality

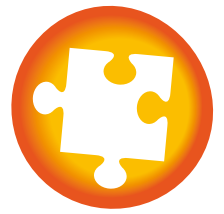
Should foster carers join a Facebook group or follow a fostering service on Twitter, they are self-identifying as a foster carer or having an interest in foster care. You should ensure that your foster carers are aware of how to work their privacy settings.

When it comes to posting fostering service photographs or film, ensure that the individuals involved are made aware before you do it and that they have signed a consent form.

If you see one of your users, particularly on Facebook, revealing confidential information on your Facebook wall, delete the information and contact the foster carer as soon as possible.

The fostering service should always work closely with foster carers so that they know what is and isn't suitable information for the public domain.





Risk

If someone posts accusations, threatening comments or derogatory messages about an individual or organisation on any of your social media forums, then you should delete the message and leave another message explaining that the original did not adhere to your standards for use and was therefore deleted.

After this, if possible, send a direct message to the individual who posted the original message asking them to contact you directly to discuss their concerns.

Despite the risks of criticism, it is always crucial that commenting on all forms of social media is enabled. This means that users can engage with you and that you can join in with as well as monitor the conversation. If you do not allow commenting, users will go elsewhere and exclude you totally.

Trolling

Trolling is where people purposefully and viciously abuse others on the internet. If someone unknown trolls on your social media feed, report them using the social media tool's report functions and block them.

How not to do it

Being 'liked' on Facebook by a big, unrelated organisation does nothing to promote your cause. Additionally, being 'liked' by an organisation that is unlikely to engage with your social media work is equally pointless. If you ask a larger organisation to support you, bear in mind that they will have many similar requests and as such may not be able to offer you anything other than a 'like'. Many organisations have a disclaimer saying that a 'like' on Facebook, or a retweet on Twitter, is not an endorsement.

Don't spend your time on Twitter asking celebrities for retweets or follow backs. This will annoy those people who do follow you and means that you waste valuable time and resources chasing a goal that has no strategic value.

If instead you put your efforts into getting your foster carers to go on Facebook and 'like' you, or retweet you on Twitter, this means they can share your information locally to the audience you need to reach.

Social Distancing Recruitment Strategies

The world of social distancing has eliminated the typical face to face strategies used to recruit new foster families. However, ***YOU CAN STILL RECRUIT!*** Here are a few ideas and helpful messages to use.

- ✓ **Up your usage of social media**—Now is the time to maximize your use of social media.
 - Daily** posts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok
 - Ask others to like your page, post messages on friends/family pages
 - Send suggested posts to staff and foster parents for them to post on their sites
- ✓ **Use others' social media**
 - ask churches, schools, businesses, community service organizations to post your information on their Facebook pages, add links to your website to their website.
- ✓ **Letters to the Editor**
 - write a letter to the editor or an Op Ed for your local newspaper or local online news outlets and share the good works that foster parents do and the need for more in your community.
 - Share that your agency is still in need of foster parents as children and teens are still being removed from their homes.
- ✓ **Human Interest Stories**
 - work with your local newspaper or local online news outlets to feature stories of foster families and relatives that have stepped up to care for kids during Covid 19 and share the need for more families
- ✓ **Post on others websites**
 - work with schools, faith organizations, businesses, community service providers to post stories, recruitment materials and your website's links on other's pages.
 - ask to have a pop up or link on their website
 - if religious services, classes or meeting are livestreaming, ask if they can give a shout out for recruitment of foster homes
- ✓ **Newsletter Stories**
 - write a short article about what foster parents do and what they have done during the Covid 19 pandemic to be there for youth and their families
 - the story can be put in church, school, business, governmental agency and community organization's online newsletters.
- ✓ **TV Stories**
 - contact your local television station and offer to do a short story that can run on the morning or 5 o'clock news. You can record it right from your home and send it to the TV station!
- ✓ **Radio Spots**
 - recording a message that could be played on the radio is easy! Contact the station and ask for their help.
 - call-in shows are another option. You and a foster parent can talk and field questions from the radio audience.
- ✓ **Re-Recruit Past Families**
 - reconnect with families that have shown interest in the past, such as:
 - have finalized adoptions in the past 3-5 years
 - began the process in the past 1-2 years but did not complete
 - were past foster parents and closed on good terms with the agency
 - were kinship or child-specific from the past 3-5 years.
 - Current Kinship or child-specific families can be asked to consider expanding their license to care for non-related children
 - came to orientation and requested follow up later

A simple letter, phone call or email inviting them to reconsider becoming a foster or adoptive parent (again) and inviting them to a special online orientation might be just the encouragement they needed to sign up -

again! Be sure to have outlined, in advance, if and what can be waived (like training and certain paperwork) when speaking with past families.

WHY BECOME A FOSTER PARENT NOW??

- ***You may have time now due to Shelter in Place/Stay At Home Orders.*** You may be laid off (we're sorry) or working from home. This allows you the time to complete the application process, training and interviews.
- ***"Orientation can be done online or over the phone."*** We can make it very convenient for you to complete this step in the process. May I share the options with you?"
- ***"Training is now VIRTUAL!"*** Virtual trainings took a huge leap forward due to Covid-19. You can most, if not all, of your trainings online or through Zoom or other applications."
- ***"There's flexibility in process!"*** Most interviews can be done virtually, you can scan or photograph your documents and email them to us. And some requirements are being deferred until social distancing is over. (You'll have to complete them at later.)"

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