



Action for Children Learning Library:

Resources for Foster Carers

In order to encourage learning and development, we have compiled a range of free resources that foster carers can access from home. This document contains links to learning resources for a range of topics that may be helpful to you. These resources include digital training modules, written guides, official reports and more.

The topics covered include autism, mental health, neglect, safeguarding and more. These resources are developed by external organisations and are not owned by Action for Children. If you require any assistance accessing these resources, please contact a member of the fostering team.

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Free Online Courses

Some training providers now offer a range of free courses that can be accessed from home. These short courses cover a variety of topics, and you can choose any that are relevant to you. To find out what's on offer, take a look at the information below.

Open University

The Open University offers thousands of free short courses on a wide range of topics, all of which can be accessed directly through their website. These courses are open to everyone and can be completed at a time that suits you. Courses include:

- Attachment in the early years.
- Childhood in the digital age
- Introduction to child psychology
- Exploring children's learning
- Infants' understanding of their social world
- Listening to young children
- Making sense of mental health problems
- The role of play in children's learning
- Understanding dyslexia
- Supporting children's development

To search or browse for courses, go to <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/>.



Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

This section has a range of resources aimed towards those wishing to learn more about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Asperger's Syndrome.

Autism Awareness Course

This step-by-step guide explains what autism is and how it may affect people. Created by Dudley Council and designed for professionals who work with people with autism, it offers suggestions on how to best support a person with autism. There are two modules to the courses, and each takes approximately 30 minutes to complete.

<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/autism/>

Research Autism: Completed Research Projects

This page contains information about some of the research projects funded and completed by Research Autism. Their programme of research is intended to make a significant and positive difference to the lives of people on the autism spectrum and their families.

<http://researchautism.net/research-autism-our-research/research-autism-projects-completed>

Autism West Midlands

Autism West Midlands offers a range of free online resources for professionals and parents. These can be accessed on their website from any device.

<https://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk/online-resources/>



Mental Health Resources

Record levels of children and young people are struggling with their mental health. Academic pressure, social media, bullying, poverty, and lack of availability of professional mental health support have all been named as contributing to poor mental health in children.

Action for Children have made Mental Health a strategic priority, and an area in which we wish to up skill our staff and carers. Below are links to a variety of learning resources which will support you in learning more about this key area.

MindEd Hub

MindEd is a free educational resource on children and young people's mental health. MindEd is suitable for all adults working with, or caring for, infants, children or teenagers; all the information provided is quality assured by experts, useful, and easy to understand. Their aim to give adults who care for, or work with, young people:

- the knowledge to support their wellbeing,
- the understanding to identify a child at risk of a mental health condition,
- the confidence to act on their concern and, if needed, signpost to services that can help.

<http://www.minded.org.uk/>

Parental Mental Health & Families e-Learning

This resource from the Social Care Institute for Excellence provides multimedia e-learning resources to assist in exploring the nature of parental mental health and its impact on families. Topics include: an introduction to the family model, working together with parents/professionals, care planning and review, interventions etc.

<http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/elearning/parentalmentalhealthandfamilies/>



Department of Health - Future in Mind

The Department of Health provides statistics on children's mental health, and well as reports on promoting, protecting and improving children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england-2017-pas>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-mental-health-of-children-and-young-people>

NHS Online Resources

The NHS website contains a huge amount of knowledge and resources concerning mental health and wellbeing. Here are some articles to get you started:

- Talking to children about feelings:
<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/mentalhealth/Pages/talkingtochildren.aspx>
- Stress Busting Tips:
<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/reduce-stress.aspx>
- Coping with Panic Attacks:
<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/coping-with-panic-attacks.aspx>
- Overcoming Fears:
<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/overcoming-fears.aspx>
- How to Control Anger:
<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/controlling-anger.aspx>
- Raising Self Esteem:
<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/mentalhealth/Pages/Dealingwithlowself-esteem.aspx>
- Is your Child Depressed?:
<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/children-depressed-signs.aspx>



Neglect Resources

Neglect is extremely damaging to children in the short and long term. The experience of neglect affects physical, cognitive and emotional development, friendships, behaviour and opportunities. The links below offer a range of informative training and other resources.

Digital Learning & Videos

Local Safeguarding Children Board - Michelle's Story:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0X8gsyk0Dv8>

Harvard University - Building Adult Capabilities to Improve Child Outcomes:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urU-a_FsS5Y

GOV.UK - Childhood Neglect Training Resources:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/childhood-neglect-training-resources>

International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

<https://www.ispcan.org/>

The only multidisciplinary international organization that brings together a worldwide cross-section of committed professionals to work toward the prevention and treatment of child abuse, neglect and exploitation globally.



Online Safety

The resources below relate to children's safety online, including while using social media. This is an ever-changing issue that carers are advised to update their knowledge of regularly, in order to stay up to date with the latest advice.

Thinkuknow

Thinkuknow is an education programme from the National Crime Agency's Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) branch. The Thinkuknow website includes educational activities for children of all ages, as well as resources for parents and professionals.

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

UK Safer Internet Centre

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>

The UK Safer Internet Centre is coordinated by a partnership of three leading organisations: South West Grid for Learning, Childnet International and the Internet Watch Foundation. It is co-funded by the European Commission and has three main functions: an Awareness Centre, a Helpline and a Hotline. On their website you can find e-safety tips, advice and resources to help children and young people stay safe online.



Safeguarding Resources

Safeguarding children and young people is everybody's business. Action for Children has a duty to promote the welfare of children and young people, to safeguard the children and young people we are working with, and to have policies and procedures in place so that all staff, volunteers and carers know how to respond if they have a concern about a child or a young person.

NSPCC: An introduction to child protection legislation in the UK

This resource provides a brief introduction to some of the key legislation that protects children and young people in the UK. It is not comprehensive and does not constitute legal advice. It has been compiled by the NSPCC Information Service.

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Sindhu_Dr_Thulaseedharan/publication/255738892_An_introduction_to_child_protection_legislation_in_the_UK/links/00b7d5209f8d58971e000000/An-introduction-to-child-protection-legislation-in-the-UK.pdf?origin=publication_detail

NSPCC: Helping Parents Cope with Crying

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/evaluation-of-services/helping-parents-cope-crying-report.pdf>

Crying is an issue that affects all families with a young baby, but for some it can be very serious. Research shows that in the worst cases, babies' crying is associated with parental stress, depression and relationship problems.

Crying can disrupt parents' developing bonds with their babies, and in extreme cases, can cause parents to get angry and harm their babies. This harm can result in non-accidental head injuries, which are the leading cause of death and long-term disability in babies who are maltreated. In the UK, nearly 200 babies suffer from these injuries each year. The NSPCC looked at best practice from around the world in how to help parents to keep calm and keep their babies safe.