

## Helping Young Children Feel Safe in a New Foster Home

### A Trauma-Informed Resource Guide for Foster Care Parents

#### Understanding the Child's Experience

Children entering foster care may feel:

- Confused or scared
- Distrustful of adults
- Overwhelmed by new sights, sounds, and routines
- Grieving the loss of familiar people or places

Your role is to create a safe, predictable, and nurturing environment that helps them feel secure.

#### Comfort Strategies for the First Days

##### 1. Create a Cozy Welcome Space

- Prepare a small area with soft blankets, stuffed animals, and calming colors.
- Include a few age-appropriate toys and books.

##### 2. Use Gentle Introductions

- Avoid overwhelming the child with too many people or activities.
- Introduce household routines slowly and with visual cues.

##### 3. Offer Choices

- Let the child choose between two snacks, outfits, or bedtime stories.
- This builds trust and gives them a sense of control.

##### 4. Validate Feelings

- Use phrases like:
  - ?It's okay to feel sad or scared. I'm here with you.?
  - ?You don't have to talk right now. I'll be here when you're ready.?

##### 5. Stick to Predictable Routines

- Consistent meal times, bedtime rituals, and morning routines help reduce anxiety.

#### Trauma-Informed Parenting Tips

- Stay calm during meltdowns; your regulation helps theirs.
- Avoid punishment for behaviors that may be trauma responses.
- Use sensory tools like fidget toys, weighted blankets, or calming music.
- Model emotional language: ?I feel frustrated, so I'm going to take a deep breath.?

#### Helpful Resources

- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network ? [www.nctsn.org](http://www.nctsn.org)
- Foster Parent College ? [www.fosterparentcollege.com](http://www.fosterparentcollege.com)
- Attachment & Trauma Network ? [www.attachmenttraumanetwork.org](http://www.attachmenttraumanetwork.org)
- Zero to Three ? [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

#### Final Encouragement

You don't have to be perfect?just present.

Every moment of safety and kindness helps a child begin to heal.

## Room & Safe Space Preparation Checklist

### Essential Items to Purchase:

- Soft bedding and pillows
- Stuffed animals or comfort toys
- Age-appropriate books and quiet toys
- Night light
- Storage bins or shelves for personal items
- Hygiene supplies (toothbrush, soap, hairbrush)
- Clothing in various sizes
- Snacks and water bottle

### Ways to Prepare Their Room and Safe Space:

- Create a quiet corner with soft lighting
- Use calming colors and minimal clutter
- Include a small table or desk for drawing or reading
- Add a sensory bin or basket with fidget toys
- Display a visual schedule or routine chart
- Ensure the child has a space to store personal belongings
- Avoid overstimulation with loud sounds or bright lights