

Testimonial from a SWAN Fostering Foster Carer

Our son was getting ready to leave home, and I casually mentioned to my husband that I would like to foster a child. He was a bit unsure, and came up with a list of pre-conceived ideas about why we wouldn't be able to foster - like his age, my high blood pressure etc.

However, I decided to contact **SWAN Fostering** anyway to make an enquiry.

From the very start of the process, I had a good feeling about **SWAN Fostering**.

After my initial contact, a home visit was arranged at a date and time convenient for us all. My husband and I decided to decorate the house and tidy the garden up before the visit. As we got closer to the date of the home visit, we realised that decorating would not be finished! I was worried about this, and tried to put off the home visit until we had finished. However, a lovely woman from **SWAN Fostering** said they would come on the date as arranged, and she would put the decorating down as work in progress.

On the morning of the home visit, I cleaned the house from top to bottom! I thought, "If we are going to be turned down at least it would not be because the house was dirty!"

Two assessors from **SWAN Fostering** came round, and asked us questions, made notes, and had a look around the house and garden. They were friendly, professional and completely unthreatening. A few days after this visit, we received a letter inviting us to attend the 'Skills to Foster Initial Training'.

I was elated! Although I knew that we had a long way to go, we had in-effect got over the first hurdle.

The 'Skills to Foster Initial Training' was interesting, and it gave us both a broad in-sight into both the positives and negatives of what we were likely to encounter whilst a child was in placement with us.

The training did not put me off; however, I was not sure about my husband's feelings towards it, because it was all very new to him.

The training opened up our ideas on the problems we were likely to encounter, not only from the foster children but also from their parents. Funnily enough, my husband enjoyed the initial training course and he was not put-off by the challenges we were likely to face.

We therefore decided to go ahead with the assessment.

We had a lovely assessor from the Agency. The assessment processes I feel prompted us look deeply at our own self. It forced us to look and analyse significant events in our life. It make us look at our life from a totally different prospective and question events that have happened. It makes us realize that some of the circumstances that children finds themselves in, through no fault of their own, we have been through.

The roller coaster emotions that these children have experienced and are going although, they are not indifferent to the emotions that we have gone through at some point in our lives. We had only forgotten as we have grown older what it was like to feel rejected, unloved, unwanted, and insecure.

The process made us look back on our lives when we were children and made us realise that our experiences as children are not to different from the children we will hopefully be looking after. However, as children we must have had the built in strength and resilience to have overcome what life had thrown at us to have made us the adults that we are today.

We have learned that with the right help, intervention and input, at the right time in children's lives, they can grow up to be settled, well balanced, resilient, successful adults.



SWAN FOSTERING