



Foster Carers: Why They Stay and Why They Leave (Supporting Parents)

Ian Gibbs, Ian Sinclair, Kate Wilson

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Foster carers look after two-thirds of the children cared for by English local authorities at any one time. The recruitment and retention of these carers is one of these authorities' central concerns. Against this background, *Foster Carers* examines the joys, sadnesses and strains of fostering, the support carers want and need, and the reasons why they continue or cease fostering.

Drawing on questionnaire responses from a thousand foster carers across seven different local authorities, the authors highlight the importance of providing support that:

- * is adapted to the carers' families
- * contains the basic elements of reasonable payment, relevant training and reliable social work support
- * responds sensitively to serious crises and treats carers as part of a team
- * meets the specific needs of carers such as carers' groups and relief breaks.

Foster Carers forms one part of the largest recent study into foster care in the UK. It is an invaluable resource for policy makers and practitioners, as well as local authorities formulating policies for the support and training needed by foster carers, and is essential reading for social work professionals, academics and foster carers themselves.

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