

# **Concurrency: Information for prospective adopters.**

We are looking for people who can care for, and then potentially adopt, some of the very young children in Local Authority care in the Concurrency and Early Permanence Partnership area (Bristol, Bath & NE Somerset, N Somerset and S Gloucestershire).

## **What is concurrent planning?**

Concurrent planning involves placing, usually babies and young children with special foster carers while the courts decide whether or not they can return to their birth parents. These babies may be placed directly from hospital after birth if the court decides that they cannot go home without a full assessment. During this time the children will need to see their parents regularly and the concurrent carers will need to support the birth family's efforts to regain the care for their child.

Concurrent carers are approved as adopters as well as foster carers by one of the local authorities in the partnership area and when children are first placed, they are fostered by concurrent carers.

## **What is the role of the concurrent carers?**

While caring for the child placed with them, the concurrent carers will take the baby/child for regular contact with his or her parents. Often this will be a number of times a week to aid attachment. If the courts decide that the birth parents have shown they can be reliable, able and loving parents, the baby will be returned to their care. If this happens, the concurrent carers will have the satisfaction of knowing that they have given the child the best possible start in life by providing them with care and security from the earliest time, and will help them settle back into their family.

However, if the courts decide that the child's parents cannot provide the security and care they need, and there are no alternative carers the baby will remain with their concurrent carers and be adopted by them.

Concurrent planning is only appropriate in cases where there is a high probability that the child will need an alternative permanent home, but where there is at least a slight possibility that the birth parents might be able to make the significant changes to their lives to enable them to safely care for their child.

## **What are the benefits of this approach?**

The great advantage for the babies and young children is that if they cannot go back to their birth family, it will avoid the stressful upheaval for the child when moving from their foster

home to a new adoptive family. They will have formed an attachment with their new adoptive parents from a very early age.

The advantage for the concurrent carers who go on to adopt is that they will have got to know their children from a very young age. Usually they will also have had the opportunity to get to know the child's parents (through contact) and will be in a good position to understand their background and struggles, which will be helpful for them and their adopted child in the future.

### **Who can be a concurrent carer?**

We are looking for families who are resourceful and emotionally mature, able to put the needs of babies and young children first and who can respect and work with children's families in the early months. We need families from different backgrounds and religions, single parents as well as couples. It is important that families have a strong support network that they can rely on.

### **What support will concurrent carers receive?**

Concurrent carers will be offered additional training to the preparation for adoption course. This will usually consist of sessions on the role and responsibilities of the fostering role and they will also have be-spoke sessions with their assessing social worker to prepare them for the task. Concurrent carers should expect to receive a high level of support from their social worker as well as good communication with the child's social worker. They can also expect on-going post-adoption support should the child end up being placed with them permanently.

Concurrent carers will be offered fostering allowances during the period the children are fostered.

### **What is the next step for potential concurrent carers?**

Please contact your local authority Family Placement Team directly for further discussion and information on becoming a concurrent planning carer.