

What should I do next?

- Share this leaflet with people important to you (family/friends/professionals) and talk it through together.
- Work openly and honestly with the Local Authority and be honest with yourself about any worries or doubts you may have.
- Never be worried to say if you change your mind - this is a big decision.
- Do not feel pressured into changing your mind – only you can make this decision.
- Tell the Local Authority immediately if there is anyone in your family or friends network who you want to care for the child so that they can be assessed as carers.

For further information / support:

- The child's social worker
- Your GP and / or midwife
- A solicitor or legal representative
- After Adoption
(Independent support for families when adoption is being discussed, or in the event that an adoption takes place)
- Sharing Stories

After Adoption:

 0800 0568 578

 actionline@afteradoption.org.uk

 www.afteradoption.org.uk

Sharing Stories:

 0117 955 8826

 07840 154191
(text or call)



Early Permanence Project

Early Permanence: Information for people considering relinquishing a child

Please note: CCS Adoption have received Government funding to help families, professionals and potential adopters understand more about Early Permanence. Therefore this leaflet has been produced by CCS Adoption. This does not mean that if your child is adopted, that the adopters will be CCS adopters. The adopters could be from any Local Authority or Voluntary Adoption Agency.

Why have you been given this leaflet?

You have been given this leaflet because you have informed your Local Authority that you are considering, or have decided to, 'relinquish' a child. 'Relinquish' is an official term for the process of asking for a child to be cared for by the Local Authority, with the intention of wanting the child to be adopted once legally possible.

This leaflet is to help you understand about Early Permanence, not to help you make a decision about whether or not to relinquish the child. Sources of further information / support are listed at the end of this leaflet.

Because you are thinking about relinquishment, you may have decided not to think of the child as 'your' child, or you may be very clear that the child is 'your' child but would be best cared for by someone else. Both of these options are completely fine and not unusual. For this leaflet 'a' and 'the' are used in reference to children. You are able to decide how you want the child to be referred to in your presence, but legally you will be the child's parent.

What is Early Permanence?

Early Permanence is a way of providing children who need it with the security of a safe permanent home from the earliest point. Having a permanent home offers children security and stability that can benefit their physical, social and emotional development.

Staying in foster care, even for a short time, is not always good for young children. This is especially true if they have to move to more than one foster carer whilst the official relinquishment process is underway. The child may begin to develop a strong attachment to their foster carer(s), but then have to move again to an adoptive family once the child is legally able to be placed for adoption.

How does it work?

Early Permanence Carers are carers who have been approved to adopt, but who have also been approved as foster carers. Early Permanence placements mean that a child will receive foster care as a looked after child, until the child is legally able to be adopted. Early Permanence placements are designed to stop the child having to move from foster carers to adopters, avoiding disruption and giving the child stability as quickly as possible.

If you decide not to go ahead with relinquishment, the child will remain in / return to your care if safe and appropriate. The carers will support the child's return to you and they will only ever have been foster carers. However, if you go ahead with the relinquishment process, once legally possible these carers will then formally apply to adopt the child.

If the Local Authority have concerns about whether or not you can provide 'good enough' care (this is a term used in Court) to the child, they will seek legal advice and you will be entitled to free legal advice. This is exactly the same as if the child were with traditional foster carers or a family member.

Can I meet the Early Permanence carers?

You are usually able to meet the Early Permanence carer(s) if you want to, and you may see them at contact sessions if you decide to have contact with the child. However any safety concerns for you, the child and the carers will come first.

You may find the idea of meeting the person(s) who may go on to adopt the child extremely hard. However, such meetings mean that children who go on to be adopted will have first-hand stories about their birth parents from their adopted parents. If the child has an Early Permanence placement you will also have the opportunity to be referred to the 'Sharing Stories' mediation project (separate leaflet available).