

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.
- Tell the Local Authority immediately if there is anyone in your family or friends network who may be able to care for your child/ren so that they can be assessed as carers.
- Get advice about how to talk to your child/ren about the Early Permanence Carers – however painful the situation is for you, your child/ren needs your permission to feel safe, secure and happy with the carer(s) whilst the Court are deciding what is best for the future.

For further information / support:

- Your child's social worker
- Your child's court appointed Guardian (If court proceedings have begun)
- Your 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
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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

Information for parents: Early Permanence

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 your Local Authority are currently considering whether you are able to provide 'good enough' care to your child or children. 'Good enough' is a term used in Court.

The Local Authority are worried that you may not be able to make the changes your child/ren needs fast enough for your child/ren not to suffer 'significant harm'. Because of these concerns, the Local Authority are currently considering whether it would be best for your child/ren to be adopted. This may be very difficult for you to think about, therefore sources of further information and support are listed at the end of this leaflet.

What is Early Permanence?

Early Permanence is a way of providing children with the security of a safe permanent home, as soon as possible, should they need it. Having a permanent home offers children security and stability that can benefit their physical, social and emotional development.

Staying in foster care is not always good for young children, especially if they have to move to more than one foster carer whilst the Court are making decisions about your child/ren's future. Your child/ren may develop a strong attachment to their foster carer(s), but then have to move again to an adoptive family if the Court decides that your child/ren cannot return to your care.

How does it work?

Early Permanence Carers are carers who have been approved to adopt, but who have also been approved as foster carers. Your child/ren would be placed with these carers in either a 'Concurrency' or a 'Foster to Adopt' placement. Both these types of Early Permanence placements mean that your child/ren will receive foster care as a looked after child/ren, until the Court decides whether your child/ren should return to your care or to a family member.

If the Court orders that the children return to your care or to a family member, these carers will support the child/ren's return and they will only ever have been foster carers. However, if the Court grant a 'placement order' (for your child/ren to be adopted), these carers will then be able to go on to adopt your child/ren. This means that your child/ren will not have to go through a further change in carers, avoiding disruption and giving them stability as quickly as possible.

Does Early Permanence affect the chances of my child/ren remaining in or returning to my care?

No. If the Court finds you are able to provide 'good enough' care to your child or children, in the timescales that the child/ren needs, they will return to you. If the Court decide you cannot safely care for your child/ren, they would then consider if any family members can provide 'good enough' care. If they can, your child/ren will return to their wider family. This is exactly the same as if the children were with traditional foster carers or a family member.

Can I meet the Early Permanence carers?

You are often able to meet the Early Permanence carer(s) if you want to, and you may see them at contact sessions. However safety concerns for you, your child/ren and the carers will come first so this will be decided on a case by case basis. It is important for you to remember that the carers are not part of the Court proceedings or decision making and will only be told what they need to know in order to look after the child/ren. Your child/ren is likely to benefit from you giving him/her/them positive messages about the carer(s), even though it may be very emotionally hard for you to do so.

You may find the idea of meeting the person(s) who may go on to adopt your child/ren 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 your child/ren has an Early Permanence placement you will also have the opportunity to be referred to the 'Sharing Stories' mediation project (separate leaflet available).