



Friends, talking about things that matter & liking how they look

Sheffield
'Fostering Five'
conversations
March 2022

Bright Spots findings highlighted areas for improvement; some children in Sheffield did not like how they looked, felt they didn't always get to see their friends or have a chance to talk to carers about things that mattered. The fostering service has developed a service-wide response to these areas called the 'Fostering Five'.

Why?

The Bright Spots findings highlighted areas where, on average, children in care in Sheffield were feeling less positive than children in other local authorities. These areas for improvement formed the basis for a fostering service-wide response focused on carers supporting their children.

What difference is it making?

The film, prompt sheets and action plan has been rolled out across the fostering service. Train the trainer sessions have been held. Fostering Five is discussed in supervision, support groups and other fostering work. Feedback is that carers are asking their workers to ask them about the Fostering Five!

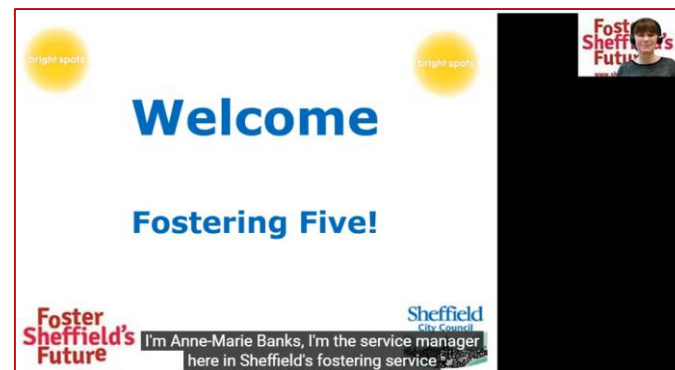
What did they do?

Across the fostering service Bright Spots sessions with staff and carers have been held focused on the concept of '5 conversations' that carers can focus on. The themes will be woven throughout the service: recruitment, training, supervision and annual reviews. The 5 areas are:

1. Liking how you look
2. Having good friends and friendship groups
3. Doing the same things as other children
4. Talking to us (carers) about things that matter
5. Liking school/education / encouraging education

A 'Fostering Five' prompt sheet has been produced with ideas of things carers could try. An action plan can be used (in partnership with the supervising social worker) to reflect on, and record, what the carer feels is going well and areas they want to work on or things they want to try to do differently. There has also been work to link the fostering national minimum standards with the 'Fostering Five'.

The fostering service manager has produced a short film for carers to watch with their worker or in their support groups to explain the origins of the work and encourage everyone to work on these 5 conversations.



My Bright Spots action plan

Fostering Five: what am I going to do?

Training/discussion date:

| | What is working well now? | What can I do differently? |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Liking how you look | | |
| Having good friends and friendship groups | | |
| Doing the same things as other children | | |
| Talking about things that matter | | |
| Encouraging education | | |

Fostering Five: Bright spots conversations prompt sheet

Fostering Five: Brightspots Conversations

Liking how I look

Feeling good about how you look is closely linked with how you feel about yourself and sense of security. Self-esteem grows when children and young people are given opportunities to feel a part of the family, and when they are praised for trying out new things or doing well. Praise them when you notice good behaviour, giving genuine praise can build self-esteem and security. And try:

- Taking moments to notice things about the children in your care
- Complimenting them on their appearance/features
- Celebrating the positives
- Saying, 'I really love it when you.....'
- Celebrating and acknowledging kindness
- Taking photos
- Catching the good moments

What is already working well, what can I do differently

Liking school/education and helping me learn

Children will feel more confident in their learning when they know that you are behind them, taking an interest in their school and schoolwork. Try to give encouragement and show appreciation of your child's achievements, whether great or small, as this can help boost their confidence.

- Connect with school and be interested by reading letters sent home
- Check the school website, and look out for posters about events that might be happening in school
- Try to attend fun events, like school fairs and parents' evenings
- Get to know the teacher, and talk with the teacher about things you or your child may be worried about
- If your child is having a difficult time, pop a message in a lunchbox or pocket and they will know that you are thinking about them
- Help with homework – help and praise and look at schoolwork and reading school diary
- Remember a child may be tired or hungry and not feel like talking. Be available to listen later if they want to talk later

What is already working well, what can I do differently

Talking about things that matter

Children thrive on active listening, they also need special time to talk about worries and fears, hopes and dreams. This can lead to open conversations about other problems and the things that matter most.

Active listening is a good way to improve your communication with your child. It lets your child know you are interested in what they have to say.

- Caring and curious conversations

