# Guidance

All newly approved carers should complete a minimum of 6 training/learning activities in their first 12 months of approval or within 18 months for short break or ‘narrow’ approved carers.

All newly approved Supported Lodgings carers should complete a minimum of 3 training/learning activities including mandatory WRAP training.

After the first 12 months all carers, including Supported Lodgings carers, should complete a minimum of 3 training /learning activities a year for the duration of their continued registration.

Learning includes workshops, reading/research, face to face courses, virtual courses, e-learning courses or support groups where there are speakers.

## Foster carer ‘core’ training programme

The training programme includes courses that are either **essential** or **recommended** learning for foster carers. This ‘core training offer’ is provided each year. We expect carers to undertake some courses within the first 12 months of registration; these are clearly marked as ‘PRIORITY within the first 12 months. We expect carers to undertake all other ‘essential’ courses within a maximum of 6 years.

## Supported Lodgings training programme

Supported Lodging carers **can access all courses**. There are some courses that are **essential** for Supported Lodgings carers these are highlighted in the programme.

## Wider, relevant training that foster carers can also access

In addition to this core training programme foster carers can access a wide range of other relevant courses or events that are arranged by Essex Social Care Academy (ESCA). Please read the monthly Foster Carer’s Newsletter to ensure you are alerted to this additional learning that is available to foster carers.

## e-Learning courses

We have a vast range of e-learning courses on all aspects relating to fostering. e-Learning can be a highly effective way of learning for all carers but is especially useful for carers who are working full-time in other jobs. Details of all the e-learning courses are on My Learning. If you cannot find an e-Learning course on a specific subject of interest, please contact ESCA who will explore possible options for you.

## Video resources

We have also created a series of videos, uploaded on our ‘psychologists’ corner’, which can be accessed through our [foster carers' resource hub](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.essexadoptionandfostering.co.uk%2Ffostering%2Fare-you-a-foster-carer%2F&data=02%7C01%7C%7Cead31ddca00c4ab3896f08d869dde2d5%7Ca8b4324f155c4215a0f17ed8cc9a992f%7C0%7C0%7C637375749031866085&sdata=J2SBZIrnTXGTvPahpAbeX8B6wBsHokHnzBx87G36eWY%3D&reserved=0)These videos were originally designed for learning and support during the coronavirus pandemic, but they are highly relevant to all fostering scenarios and focus on therapeutically parenting traumatised children.

## How to book onto training courses and e-learning:

All bookings are via a self-service system called ‘My Learning’ and Foster carers are required to self-register onto My Learning and, once registered, will be able to enrol themselves onto courses of interest. SWs will be able to give more information regarding My Learning system. If you have any difficulties, please contact your SSW in the first instance. Should more assistance be required, contact the Essex Social Care Academy on 03330 138906 or email**:**  [esca@essex.gov.uk](mailto:esca@essex.gov.uk)

See diagram below: -



**Pre-approval training - to be completed before the first child is placed with a foster carer**

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| **ESSENTIAL training for foster carers, short break carers and family, friends or connected persons** | | | |
|  | **Carer 1** | **Carer 2** | **Notes** |
| **Skills to Foster**  Delivery - face to face or virtually | Essential – including Supported Lodging Providers | Essential | This training introduces prospective carers to fostering and what the role entails. This is a 4-day course Day 1 being an e-learning course & 3 days classroom training, the whole 4-day course is a priority, not just the 1-day eLearning. |
| **Fostering in the Modern World**  Delivery - face to face or virtually | Essential – including Supported Lodging Providers | Essential | This training introduces ‘trauma informed’ parenting, and other key concepts. It must be completed prior to registration including for Supported Lodgings Carers.  (r*ecommended but not mandatory for transferring carers or family and friends’ carers who are seeking ‘narrow’ approval)* |
| **First Aid**  eLearning | Essential – including Supported Lodging Providers | Essential | Must be completed by all foster carers, and supported lodgings carers AND updated every 3 years |
| **Medication Workbook**  Self-directed learning | Essential  The medication workbook is given during assessment | Essential  The medication workbook is given during assessment | This training must be completed by all foster carers AND will be reviewed every year |
| **The role of the foster carer**  eLearning | Essential – including Supported Lodging Providers (to be completed prior to panel date) | Essential | This training must be completed by all foster carers. |

# Post Approval - Foster Carer specialist training programme pathways

Core learning for foster carers is divided into pathways:

* Trauma-informed therapeutic parenting
* The fostering role
* Safeguarding

The pathways are equally important and to ensure a broad range of learning foster carers must choose courses from each pathway within each year. This will ensure effective development of your knowledge and skills.

There are ‘essential’ courses listed in each pathway that form the core learning needed for foster carers to safely and effectively care for vulnerable Children in Care. We advise that foster carers complete all essential courses as soon as possible but recognise that this may take several years to achieve.

There is some learning that is PRIORITY within the first year of registration. Priority courses have been clearly marked on the training programme. When this priority learning can be undertaken by e-learning instead of a face-to-face course, this is also clearly marked.

It is important that foster carer’s learning needs are discussed with their allocated supervising social worker. The Personal Development Plan (PDP) document, which is updated annually, should enable effective discussions to take place in order to prioritise learning needs each year and identify the most relevant learning from each pathway.

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| **The trauma-informed therapeutic parenting pathway Courses within this pathway will be available from January 2021, due to Coronavirus, they will be delivered virtually until further notice** | | | |
|  | **Carer 1** | **Carer 2** | **Notes** |
| **Child Development**  **Step 1**: Trauma Informed therapeutic approach  **PRIORITY** - 3-day course, combination of eLearning & classroom | Essential – including Supported Lodging Providers | Recommended | This course is a 3-day course and delivered by our quadrant psychologists and forms the foundation for our trauma-informed and therapeutic approach to parenting.  **PRIORIY COURSE FOSTER CARER -** to be completed within the first year of registration by at least 1 foster carer in the household.  **PRIORITY COURSE SUPPORTED LODGINGS CARERS** - to be completed within 2 years of registration. |
| **Neuroscience**  **Step 2**: Trauma Informed therapeutic parenting  3-day course | Essential | Essential | This course is delivered by psychologist and provides the basic knowledge of the impact on brain development and functioning. |
| **Anxiety & Trauma**  **Step 3**: Trauma Informed therapeutic parenting  2-day course | Recommended | Recommended | Must be completed by all foster carers, and supported lodgings carers AND updated every 3 years |
| **Neuropsychology of parenting traumatised children**  **Step 3**: Trauma Informed therapeutic parenting  4-day course | Essential | Recommended | This course is delivered by quadrant phycologists and mental health coordinators.  **Please note**: - Participants must have attended child development and neuroscience courses and complete an eLearning course prior to attending this course as the course builds on the knowledge gained in the courses. |
| **Teens, Troubles & Trauma: Putting the theory into practice**  **Step 3**: Trauma Informed therapeutic parenting  2-day course | Recommended: For all carers that are caring for children aged 8 + | Recommended | This course is delivered by quadrant psychologists and mental health coordinators.  **Please note**: - Participants must have attended child development and neuroscience courses prior to attending this course as this course builds on the knowledge gained in the two courses. |
| **Therapeutic Play Techniques**  **Step 3**: Trauma Informed therapeutic parenting  2-day course | Recommended | Recommended | This course is delivered by mental health coordinators and the therapeutic team and introduces ‘sensory’ interaction with traumatised children.  **Please note**: - Participants must have attended child development and neuroscience courses prior to attending this course as this course builds on the knowledge gained in the two courses. |
| **Attachment & Loss**  **Step 3**: Trauma Informed therapeutic parenting  3-day course | Essential | Recommended | This course is delivered by our quadrant psychologists and mental health coordinators.  **Please Note** – this course is not currently available and expected to be available from September |
| **Reflective Therapeutic Parenting Programme**  **Step 3**: Trauma Informed therapeutic parenting  3-day course | Recommended | Recommended | This course is delivered by our quadrant psychologists and mental health coordinators  **Please note -** Participants must have attended attachment & loss as a pre-requisite to attending this programme.  **Post course –** you will be required to attend a follow-up meeting along with your SSW to discuss the learning and explore how ongoing supervision will support ongoing learning needs. |

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| **The fostering role pathway**  **Due to coronavirus all courses are currently being delivered virtually or by e-learning until further notice.** | | | |
|  | **Carer 1** | **Carer 2** | **Notes** |
| **Introduction to Fostering in Essex**  ½ day course  **Priority Course** | Essential | Recommended | This training is provided by a senior practitioner within the fostering recruitment team and be completed by all foster carers within the first year of registration (or at least one carer in the household). |
| **Record Keeping**  ½ day course  **Priority Course** | Essential | Recommended | This training is provided by representatives from Essex County Council, Information Governance Team and must be and must be completed by 1 foster carer in the household as a minimum within the first year of registration. |
| **Training Support & Development TSD - Induction Workbook**  3-hour workshop & self-directed Learning  **Priority** | Essential | Essential | **This is required by the Department for Education and is mandatory**. Foster carers must complete a workbook to evidence understanding of the fostering role and supported by workshops in the quadrants.  **Priority -** workboo**k** to be completed within the first year of registration or 18 months for connected carers. |
| **Education Matters - Introduction**  1-day course | Essential | Recommended | This training is delivered by the Essex Virtual School and is vital to understand the foster carer’s role in the education of Children in Care. |
| **New Practice in Transitions** | Recommended | Recommended | **Currently** **unavailable**  Please note that we are working on providing a virtual or e-learning alternative. |
| **Achieving Health and Wellbeing of Children in Care**  1-day course | Essential | Recommended | This is delivered by our Looked After Children nurses. |
| **Equality and Diversity in Foster Care**  1-day course | Essential | Recommended | This course is delivered by Equality and Diversity UK |
| **Non-Violent Resistance**  12-week programme | Recommended | Recommended | **Coming soon**  This training will involve 1 day a week for 12 weeks by quadrant SSW’s and supports effective therapeutic parenting techniques within a supported peer environment. |
| **Makaton – Beginners**  5 short days | Recommended | Recommended | **Currently** **unavailable**  This course covers signing for 200 words. |
| **Makaton Follow-on**  5 short days | Recommended | Recommended | **Currently** **unavailable**  This course covers signing for the next 200 words. |
| **Parent and Child Placements**  eLearning followed up with a 3- hour workshop | Recommended | Recommended | The 3-hour workshop is delivered following the completion of the eLearning course and must have had an assessment to ensure that the home and family are suitable for this type of placement. |
| **Education Matters – Advanced**  1-day | Recommended | Recommended | This is delivered by Essex Virtual School Team |

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| **Safeguarding Children pathway:**  **Due to coronavirus all courses are currently being delivered through live virtual events or by E-learning until further notice.** | | | |
|  | **Carer 1** | **Carer 2** | **Notes** |
| **Protecting Children and Young People**  1 day  **Priority** | Essential **-** including Supported Lodging Providers | Essential | This course is provided by an external company, Reconstruct.  **Course -** to be completed within the first year of registration by all foster carers and supported lodgings carers |
| **Safer Caring – Caring for Self and others**  1 day  **Priority** | Essential **-** Including for Supported Lodgings Carers | Recommended | This training is delivered by the quadrant supervising social workers  **Course -** to be completed within the first year of registration by at least within the first year of registration by at least 1 foster carer or supported lodgings carer in the household. |
| **Health and Safety in the home**  1 day | Essential | Essential | This course is provided by Adult Community Learning and must be completed by 1 carer within the household as a minimum |
| **Child Exploitation**  2 days | Recommended | Recommended | This course is run jointly Essex Social Care staff and Barnardo’s. |
| **Recognising Gang related culture**  2 days | Recommended | Recommended | This is delivered by an external trainer with prior personal experience of gang culture |
| **Radicalisation – can you identify who is at risk?**  **Prevent (WRAP)**  **eLearning** | Essential – Supported Lodgings Providers  Recommended – Foster Carers | Recommended | This learning has been developed by the Dept of Education.  It is essential learning for Supported Lodgings carers within their first year of approval. |