

Information leaflet

Relationship management

Becoming a special guardian can have a huge impact on your personal relationships and family dynamics. It is important that you are aware of these changes and understand that it is normal for issues to arise and realise that it will take time for things to settle and for a new routine to be found.

A child under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) can have challenges forming relationships with adults and other children within their new special guardianship family and you will have to learn how your role has changed within your family.

Family relationships

Often in cases of special guardianship a child can gravitate towards and show more affection and attention to one adult which can be a source of jealousy and friction in your relationship. In some cases the child may even try to play adults off against one another in the hopes of securing an advantage.

Although this can be difficult, special guardians should bear in mind that this is perfectly natural. It is important that all adults with active roles in the child's life have an agreed and consistent approach towards the child. If you have a partner then it is important that you work as a couple and can be seen as a unit and show the same responses in terms of rewards and discipline.

Contact with the birth parents and siblings might also be taking place and it is important that you have considered how this might affect your relationship with your child.

Problems can also arise when a child is coming to live in a home where other children are already present. It is important that the new child coming in has the same rules and affection given to the other children. In turn it is important that your other children do not feel forgotten or that your special guardianship child is being favoured.

It is important that you spend time together and grow and develop your relationship with your child. Over time trust will build and relationships will evolve. Once the child is comfortable they should spend quality time alone with each adult in the family and you should ensure time is spent together as a family.

It might be worth looking for family events where you can meet others in similar situations. Your local authority might offer family days in the summer for special guardian families or you can see our list of useful links below for charities that offer events.

Key points



- Your family relationships and dynamics are going to change and it will take time for things to settle and for a new routine to be established.
- Special guardian children have a lot of changes to deal with but it is important not to forget how the changes are affecting your other children.
- It's important to spend quality one-to-one time with your child as well time together as a family.

Useful organisations

Family Mediation Council

www.familymediationcouncil.org.uk

The Family Mediation Council promotes best practice in family mediation to ensure families can confidently access high quality mediation services. Their website provides detailed information about the practicalities of mediation and also offers a local service finder.

National Family Mediation (NFM)

www.nfm.org.uk

Tel: 0300 4000 636

NFM delivers family mediation through affiliated members in over 500 locations across England and Wales. Their website explains how mediation works and provides a local service finder.

Siblings Together

siblingstogether.co.uk

Siblings Together is a UK charity that promotes positive contact between brothers and sisters separated in special guardianship, foster care, kinship care, residential care, or adoption. They run monthly activity days, residential camps, creative workshops and trips to give separated siblings a chance to spend time together engaged in enjoyable activities.

Grandparents Plus

www.grandparentsplus.org.uk

Kinship care advice line: 0300 123 7015

Grandparents Plus hold an annual celebration day to offer kinship carers and their children the chance to meet others in a similar situation, share their experiences and have fun together.

Family Action Head Office 24 Angel Gate, City Road, London, EC1V 2PT

T: 020 7254 6251 F: 020 7249 5443 info@family-action.org.uk www.family-action.org.uk

Registered as a Charity in England & Wales no: 264713. Registered as a Charity in the Isle of Man no: 1206.

Registered Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales: 01068186.

Patron: Her Majesty the Queen. Chair: Bryan Portman MBA FCCA FCIS. Chief Executive: David Holmes CBE.

Vice Patrons: Christine Davies CBE. Dr Andrew McCulloch. Dame Denise Platt DBE. Katie Vanneck-Smith. Professor Harriet Ward CBE.