

Companion Resource: 10 Ways to Build a Rhythm of Caring in Foster Care

Creating connection, safety and healing through everyday moments

Children who have experienced trauma often find comfort, trust and healing in the predictable rhythms of daily life. Building a rhythm of caring is not about rigid routines but about creating a sense of safety and belonging through consistent, warm, and responsive caregiving. Here are 10 practical ways to build and maintain a rhythm of caring:

1. Start and end the day with connection

Create predictable morning and bedtime rituals, such as a greeting, cuddle, or reading the same book. These can help anchor a child's day with safety and warmth.

2. Use consistent language and routines

Repeating key phrases or steps for daily activities (e.g., "Brush, book, bed") helps create familiarity and lowers anxiety.

3. Provide visual schedules

Especially helpful for younger children or those with additional needs, visual timetables support predictability and independence.

4. Give advance prompting before transitions

Help children prepare for changes in activity or environment using verbal countdowns or visual cues or prompts (e.g. "Five more minutes, then pack away").

5. Build in regular positive moments

Plan for connection and fun, like a weekly movie night, a favourite snack after

school, or a shared walk, so children know they're part of something reliable and enjoyable.

6. Create predictable transition rituals

Add small routines around daily shift in activity, such as putting away school shoes and sharing a snack after school, to help ease emotional strain.

7. Focus on 'reset moments' after disruptions

When things don't go to plan, calmly acknowledge it and gently guide the child back to the rhythm (e.g. "That was tricky. Let's take a breath and try again.") or utilise [Behaviour Support Techniques](#) from the Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) Training.

8. Personalise routines with the child's input

Invite the child to help design parts of their day. What order they do things in, or which song to use for pack-up time this increases their sense of control and engagement.

9. Keep rhythm through consistent caregivers

As much as possible, ensure key adults are consistent across the week. This helps maintain trust and reduces uncertainty.

10. Celebrate effort and connection

Notice and name when the child engages in the routine or shows flexibility during a transition. Positive feedback builds confidence and strengthens the rhythm.

Remember: The goal isn't perfection. The goal is a consistent, responsive rhythm that says: *You're safe. You're cared for. I'll be here.*