

Companion Activity Sheet

Family Involved: Why Families Matter in Foster Care (Even When It's Hard)

Purpose:

This activity sheet is designed to help deepen understanding and reflection on the *Family Involved* principle of the CARE model. It offers space to connect the blog content to your everyday practice and explore how we can strengthen family connections in safe, respectful, and trauma-informed ways.

What the Research Says

Children with strong, supported family connections are more likely to:

- **Feel safe and grounded in their care placement**
- **Build a positive sense of identity and belonging**
- **Experience better emotional wellbeing**
- **Maintain stable relationships and reunification opportunities where safe**

Brain development research shows children are *wired for connection*. Healthy, familiar relationships (even when limited) help reduce the impact of trauma and support developmental progress.

Common Myths and Truths

MYTH	TRUTH
"If their family was harmful, they shouldn't be part of the child's life."	Safe, supported connections can still exist and help a child process their experiences.
"Talking about family will upset the child."	Ignoring family can deepen confusion and grief. Respectful conversations help children feel seen and understood.
"It's either the carers or the family—not both."	It's not a competition. Multiple loving adults can support a child, and that includes their family of origin.

Reflective Questions:

Take time to consider the following questions either individually, in supervision, or as part of a team discussion.

1. What is one thing from the blog that challenged or shifted your thinking?

2. How do I currently support family involvement in my role?

3. What language do I use when talking about a child's family? Is it respectful and child-centred?

4. What are some barriers I face when trying to include families? How might I work through these?

5. What does meaningful, safe family involvement look like for the child or young person I support right now?

Practice Prompt:

Choose one of the following small actions to try this week:

- ☐ Include a photo, drawing, or letter from family in a child's space
- ☐ Reach out to your caseworker or carer for an update to pass along to family
- ☐ Review a care plan and reflect: is family identity truly represented here?
- ☐ Use strengths-based language when talking about family with a child
- ☐ Offer space for the child to express feelings about their family without judgement

One Small Step

What is one action I will take to support family involvement in a safe and meaningful way?
