

Guidance for Social Workers on profiling children through video

Creating a video profile for a child is a great way of showing prospective adopters who they really are on a day-to-day basis and can give a much more varied and fuller picture than a written profile alone.

If done correctly, video content can complement a written profile, but it is important to stress some points for consideration even before you start.

Before you begin filming

Depending on your availability, you may choose to film the child/ren or, you may ask the foster carers to do so. Either way, before filming, make sure you or the foster carer is shooting in **landscape** and not portrait mode. This is as simple as turning your mobile phone on its side as seen in the link here: <http://digitalcommunications.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/files/2016/02/giphy1.gif>

This means that the video will fill the whole screen and there won't be black bars at the sides which can be off-putting. Nowadays, it has become second nature to film videos in portrait mode, but you can capture much better footage by always filming in landscape.

Do's and Don'ts

Do's

1. Do try to film a selection of footage of the child/ren playing outside and inside and doing different things. Focus on what the child likes to do-if they want to dress up and dance, let them do so. If they want to sit quietly and draw, let them do this too. The important thing to remember is not to become stressed about recording perfect footage and that behaviours are natural and relaxed.
2. Get down on the child's level and engage with them in play. Filming from above or filming from far away makes it difficult to see the child.
3. If you are filming siblings, try to have a selection of footage of them playing together as well as some individual footage of each of them.

Don'ts

1. Don't film in portrait!
2. Don't film too little. As we can edit the footage, it is much better to film too much than not enough. Aim to have around 4-5 minutes of footage for a video profile to be edited down to 3 minutes.
3. Try not to move the camera too much as this causes shaky footage. A good tip is to bring your arms towards your sides to 'anchor' yourself while holding the camera.
4. Don't add music to the video. This can be overly emotive and distracting to viewers and doesn't create a realistic representation of the child. The video shouldn't appear to be an advert of the child- adding music instantly creates this impression. A better idea is to get the foster carers to contribute audio content.

Providing audio content

For the purposes of webinars, we ask foster carers to provide us with audio content which seeks to replicate the question and answer exchange between prospective adopters and yourselves when you meet at Exchange /Activity Days. We would like you to talk about the child's progress in your care and what they are like on a day to day basis.

We are keen to hear from them about the fun and joyful aspects of caring for the child/children whilst not shying away from the difficulties. Promoting what the child is good at and is currently managing. Providing a holistic view of the child which cannot be achieved through a written profile.

You worker could support you with a practice question and answer session or when possible to visit – could sit and record together.

Suggested questions are highlighted below but don't need to be strictly followed.

- What is it currently like to care for the child on a normal day to day basis? Show their progress and development.
- What is it about the child that brings a smile to the carer's face?
- What do they like to play with? Do they have a favourite toy? A comfort item?

Even if the video isn't being created for a webinar, we would still recommend that you try to engage with foster carers to provide audio content as this really adds to the video and understanding of who the child is.

Scotland's Adoption Register is also able to provide an editing service for your videos so please let us know if you would like this by emailing us at sar@adoptionregister.scot