

# The National Standards for Residential Care – for Children



DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH & CHILDREN  
AN ROINN SLÁINTE  
AGUS LEANAÍ

# The National Standards for Residential Care – for Children

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*We have tried to make this book  
really easy to read,  
but we had to use a few special words.*

*The special words are explained  
in the middle of the book, on pages 25-32.*

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Thanks to the children of  
Creag Aran Centre for illustrations

## My information page

*You can write down the names, addresses and phone numbers of people you need to remember in case you need to contact them. You could ask your key worker to help you to fill in this page.*

*My name is .....*

*I live in.....*

*.....*

*The phone number is .....*

*The manager is called.....*

*My key worker is called.....*

*My family lives at.....*

*Their phone number is.....*

*My social worker is called .....*

*His/her phone number is .....*

*The monitor for this area is called.....*

*His/her phone number is .....*

*The inspector is called .....*

*His/her phone number is .....*

***The Social Services Inspectorate is at  
94 St. Stephen's Green, Third Floor, Dublin 2.***

*Their phone number is **(01) 418 0588***

*Their website is **[www.issi.ie](http://www.issi.ie)***

***The Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at  
94 St. Stephen's Green, Third Floor, Dublin 2.***

*The phone number is **(01) 475 7333***

*Their website is **[www.oco.ie](http://www.oco.ie)***



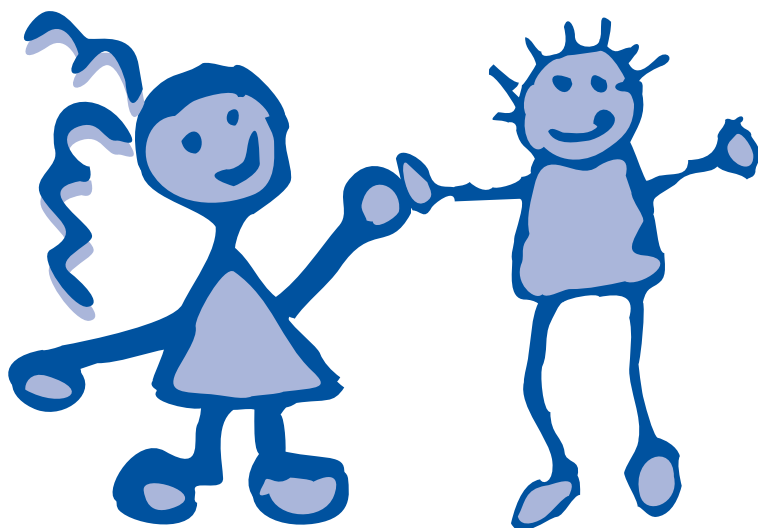
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# The National Standards for Residential Care – for Children





## Living in Care

*If you are not able to stay at home with your own family,  
then you may have to go into care.  
This means that the health board  
must find a safe place for you  
and people to look after you.*

*Some children stay just a little while in care,  
while things get sorted out in their own family,  
and others stay longer.*

*You might be in care with a foster family  
(maybe with someone from your own family),  
or you might live in a house called  
a 'children's residential centre'.*

*The people who  
mind you  
when you live  
in a children's  
residential  
centre  
are called the  
care staff.*

*They look after you,  
instead of your mam and dad,  
while you are in care.*

Even though you cannot  
live with your mam and dad while  
you are in care, the care staff and  
social workers should talk to  
your family and ask them what  
they think



*Your social worker  
is a person outside the residential centre  
who also helps to look after you.  
Part of your social worker's job  
is to talk to you about  
how your life in care is going.*

## Standards for Children's Residential Centres

*You might feel sad about leaving your own family and going into care, but the government wants you to be as happy as you can be while you are in care.*

The government has inspectors who make sure all the children's residential centres are keeping these rules

*And so they have made some rules for the people who look after children in care, to make sure they do a good job of minding you.*

*These rules are called 'standards for children's residential centres'.*

*These standards are not rules for you to keep.*

*They are rules for the staff.*

*But the government thought that you should know about these rules too, so that you understand how things are supposed to be for you.*

*That's why you have this book, written specially for kids in care, to explain the rules to you.*



## Residential centres should have leaflets about themselves

Don't forget that 'children's residential centre' is explained on page 26

The first rule is that the people who are in charge of children's

residential centres must have a leaflet or a sheet of paper that explains all about the kind of place their centre is.

This might say that it is a small centre or a bigger one.

It might say that this is a centre for younger children or for teenagers. Or it might explain that they have places for brothers and sisters to live together.

Then, when the social workers need to find a place for you, they can read all the things the different centres have written about themselves, and find out which would be the best place for you.

Look on page 31 if you need to know what a social worker is



*You and your family should get the leaflet  
about your centre  
so you can read all about it.*





## Every children's residential centre should look after the children really well

*The people who run children's residential centres and the care staff of the centres need to be well trained and good with children.*

*There should always be enough care staff to look after all the kids properly and keep them safe.*

*The manager and staff need to write down all the important things that happen to the children in the centre, and tell the social workers about it, so everyone is able to look after the children properly.*

Can I read all this stuff they write down?

*The staff have to write down when children come*



*to live at the centre and when they leave for a different placement or to go home,*

*so everyone looking after the children knows where they are.*

Yes, you can ask to see what the staff have written about you if you want to



## There should be a person who checks to make sure children's residential centres are properly run

*There has to be a person who keeps a check on all the children's residential centres in an area.*

*Is a monitor the same as an inspector?*

*This person is called 'monitor'.*



*Well, they do the same kind of job, but a monitor comes to the centre more often.*

*The inspector only comes now and again*

*The monitor must visit the centres to make sure they are well run,*

*and talk to the kids to see if you are safe and being well looked after.*



## People should listen to the children

*All children need someone to talk to  
and who will listen to them.*

*You can talk to your family  
or your friends,  
but you should be able  
to talk to the care staff  
at your centre as well.  
You can tell them how  
you are feeling about  
things,  
and they should listen to you.*



*Every child in care  
has one particular member of staff  
whose job is to talk to them*

*and find out how they  
are doing.*

*It's a good idea to  
write your key worker's name  
in at the front of this book*

*This person is  
called your key  
worker.*

*Your key worker is*

*a good person to talk to  
if anything is bothering you.*

*If you have a question,  
the staff or your key worker should  
answer it for you.*

*If you are not happy about something,*



It tells you all about  
'complaints' on page 26



they should try and see  
if they can make  
things better for you.

If something is going

to happen

(like, if you were going to move to a  
new place,

or get a new social worker,

or have a visit from someone),

the staff should tell you all about it  
before it happens,

so that you are not scared or worried.

If you are very unhappy

about something that has happened

and you want to make a complaint,

the care staff should help you to do that.

Sometimes the staff  
might think there is something you shouldn't  
see until you are a bit older, but you can usually  
read most of your file if you just ask

If you want to read  
what the staff have written in  
your file about you,  
you can ask to see it.

Your key worker should show it to you  
and talk to you about it  
and explain it all to you.



## Every child in care should have a care plan

*Your social worker should talk*

*to you and your family about the kind of care you need,*

*and find out what everyone thinks.*

Remember to write your social worker's name in at the front of the book



*Then the social worker writes down what is agreed between you and your family and your carers about what is going to happen about your care.*

*This agreement is called your care plan, and it has everything in it about your care. It goes with you wherever you go to live while you are in care, so that everyone who is minding you knows what is happening and understands what you need.*

*The care plan should say who your social worker is.*

*It should say if you have brothers and sisters that you would like to live with (though you might not be able to).*



If you would like to see your mam or dad  
or anyone in your family,  
the social workers and staff should arrange for  
this,  
as long as it is safe for you,  
and this should be in your  
care plan too.



If you are sick or have a  
disability  
or if you need special medicines or  
special food,  
that should all be in your care plan.  
That way, everyone who is minding you knows  
about it  
and the care staff can make sure  
you get what you need.

If you need any special help at school,  
that should be in your care plan as well.

Your care plan should also say  
what things you are good at  
and what you like doing  
so everyone minding you remembers  
things like your football practice or  
your swimming lessons  
or whatever is  
important for  
you.



*Every now and then,  
you and your family  
and your social worker and the care staff  
should get together  
for a chat about your care plan,  
to see how things are going.*

*These chats are called 'review meetings'.*

Usually your social worker decides  
when it is time for a review meeting, but you or  
your family can ask for a special review meeting  
if you want to talk about something



## Children in care should be able to live like other children

*When you are living in care,  
you should be able to have a life like other kids  
of your age.*



*Your centre should be a happy place to live  
and you should be able to have birthday parties,  
like other kids.*

*You should be able to play sport  
or do whatever your hobby is,  
and have your friends over to play sometimes.*



*The kids and staff  
should have their meals  
together,  
so everyone can join  
in.*

*You should get nice,  
healthy food  
that you like and that  
is good for you.*



*The care staff should not be too hard on you  
if you don't do as you are told.  
They should explain to you  
why you are not allowed to do certain things,  
and try to help you to be good,  
instead of being cross with you.  
If you do get into trouble,  
you should still be treated fairly.*

*Nobody should ever slap you  
or hurt you  
or make you feel very bad about yourself.*

*If anything like that  
happens,  
you should make  
a complaint about  
it.*

You can read about  
complaints on page 26

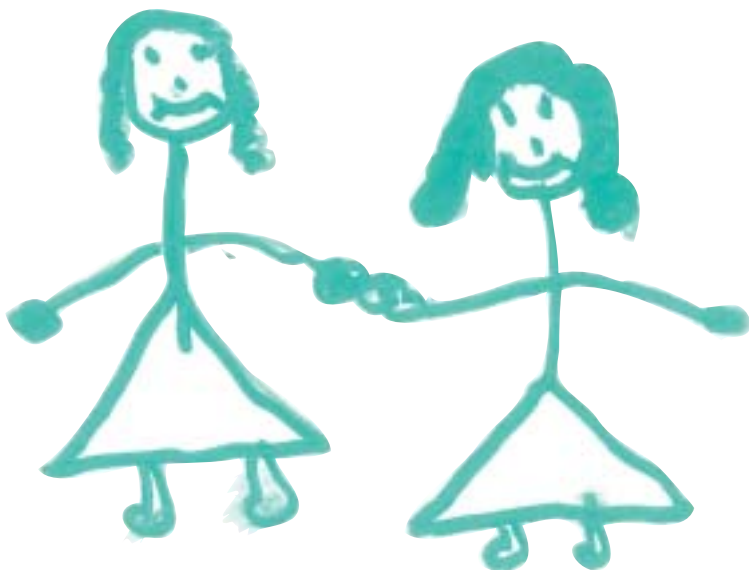


## Children's residential centres should be safe places

*Children's residential centres must be places where children are completely safe and where there is no danger to them.*

*The staff who work in residential centres have to be checked out, to make sure they are OK to work with kids.*

*If any of the care staff ever does anything that worries you or makes you feel bad, you should tell another grown-up about it, and they should make sure that you are kept safe.*



*Your key worker or the manager of the centre  
are good people to talk to  
if anything is worrying you,  
but if you would like to talk to somebody outside  
the centre,  
you should ask to see your social worker  
or another grown-up that you trust.*

*Your social worker should arrange  
to meet you by yourself,  
so you can talk in private.*

Remember, you will not  
get into trouble for telling if  
something is bothering you



## Children in care should go to school

*While you are in care,  
you should go to school,  
the same as you would if you were at home.  
It's a good idea  
if you can stay on at your old school,  
instead of having to change schools  
when you go into care.*



*Your care staff should have a good attitude to  
school,  
and encourage you to do your best  
and enjoy school.*

*They should help you with your homework,  
and they should go to school meetings  
and talk to your teachers,  
especially if you are having problems at school.*

*They should talk to your parents too,  
and they  
should ask  
them  
if they would  
like to come  
to school  
meetings as well.*

*They should only ask  
your mam or dad to come to school  
meetings if you would like that*

*If you need any special help at school,  
the care staff should talk to the teachers  
about it,  
and make sure you get whatever help  
you need.*



## Children in care should get the kind of health care they need

*Children's residential centres should be healthy places.*

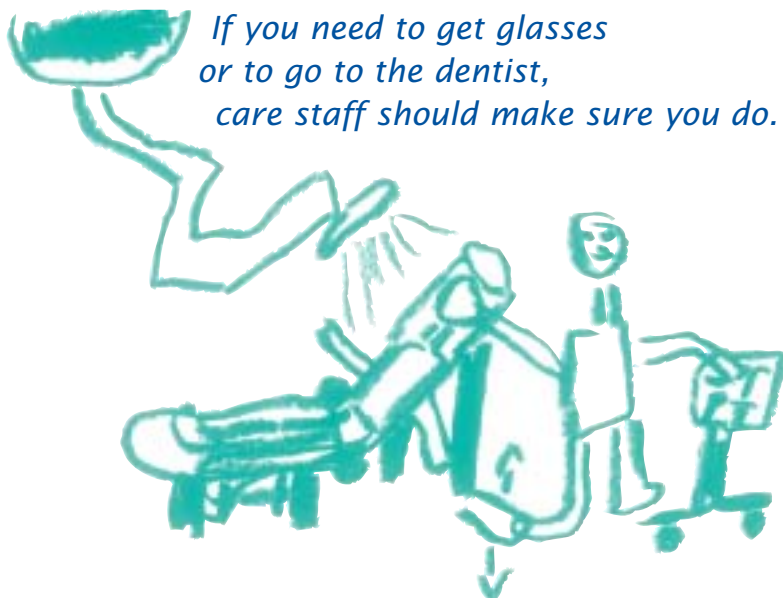
*There should be good food and no smoking.*

*If you have anything the matter with you, you should get everything you need to make you better and keep you well.*



*Staff should take you to the doctor if you are not well, and they should try to make sure you go to the same doctor you are used to going to.*

*If you need to get glasses or to go to the dentist, care staff should make sure you do.*



If you have medicine to take,  
they should make sure you get it  
at the right time every day.

They should write  
down

all the medicines  
you have to take,  
so that other  
people who are  
minding you  
will know what  
you need  
and what you  
have taken.

If you have to go  
to hospital,  
the care staff  
should tell your  
mam and dad  
what has  
happened,  
and where you are  
and how you are doing.

Your mam or dad might have to sign a form  
if you need an operation,  
and they need to know if you are sick  
or having treatment.



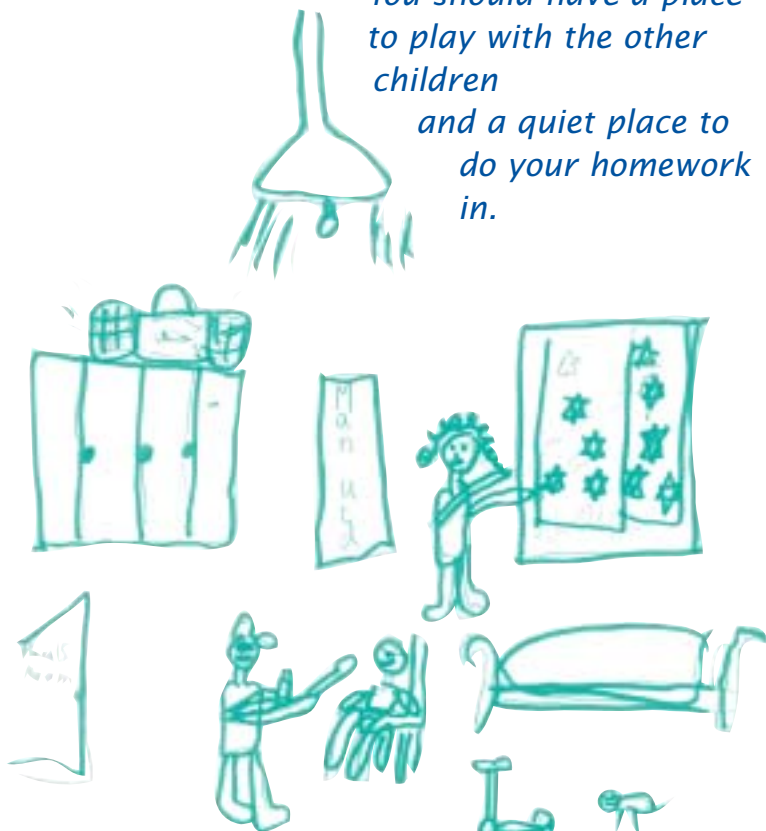
## Residential centres should be nice places

*A children's residential centre should be like an ordinary house. It should be a nice, safe, warm, comfortable, clean place, with enough space for everyone who lives there.*

*You should have your own bedroom.*

*You should have a place to play with the other children*

*and a quiet place to do your homework in.*





*There should be somewhere  
where you can have visits  
from your family or your social worker  
in private.*

*The staff in the centre  
should know all about fire safety  
and some of them should be able to do first aid,  
in case any of the kids has an accident or gets  
sick.*



## Explanations

*The hard words in this book,  
or words that have a special meaning,  
are explained here.*

### **care plan**

*Your care plan is like a storybook  
that is all about you  
and about what is going to happen  
while you are in care.*

*Your social worker first talks to you  
and your family  
about what is the best way to look after you,  
and then writes the care plan down.*

*The care plan says things like  
what sort of care you need  
and what kind of school is best for you  
and when you get to see your family.*

*It gets changed as you go along  
and things change in your life.*

*You can read it if you like,  
or ask your key worker or your social worker  
to read it to you.*

### **care staff**

*The people who look after the children  
in a children's residential centre*

are called the care staff.  
Their job is to look after you,  
and to make sure you get your meals  
and go to school and have clean clothes  
and see the doctor when you need to.  
They do the things  
your mam or dad would be doing for you  
if you were at home.

### **children's residential centre**

The house where you live while you are in care  
and where you are looked after by care staff  
is called a 'children's residential centre'.  
Some people might call it a children's home.  
It's usually very much like  
an ordinary family house.  
The word  
'residential' just  
means that  
people live  
there.

You might have a complaint  
about a small thing, like the rules  
of your centre, or it might be something  
very serious. Whatever it is, it's best  
to talk to a grown-up that you  
trust about it

### **complaint**

You can make a complaint  
if you are unhappy or annoyed about  
anything  
that happens while you are in care  
of if something bad happens to you  
or if a grown-up hurts or upsets you  
while you are in care.



*The first thing to do is tell  
the care staff or your key worker  
or the manager of your centre  
or your social worker  
about the problem.*

*They might be able to help to fix it,  
but if they can't do that,  
they should help you  
to make your complaint.*

*That means, they will write down  
what you tell them,  
and show it to people who can help  
to make things better for you.*

*If one of the care staff has been nasty to you,  
you should tell the manager  
of the centre about it,  
or you could tell your key worker  
or your social worker.  
If the problem is with your social worker,  
then you should tell one of the care staff  
that you trust about it.*

*It is part of their job to help you with your  
complaint.*

### **file**

*A file is another word for a folder,  
where grown-ups keep pieces of paper  
that they want to be careful not to lose.*

*All the pieces of paper that have to do with you  
and your time in care  
are kept in your file.*

*This file has information in it such as  
your name and age,  
your parents' names and address,  
when you came into care and why,  
where you have been in care before,  
who your social worker is, and so on.*

*This information is private,  
and nobody is allowed to read it unless it is part  
of their job and they need to know this stuff  
so they can help you.*

*You can read it if you like.  
You can ask your social worker  
and he or she will show you your file  
and explain what is in it and help you to read it.*

*But sometimes your social worker  
might not let you read  
part of your file until you are older,  
because it might be upsetting for you.*

### **health board**

*Health boards are the people whose  
job it is to make sure that  
people are healthy and safe  
in the area in which they live.*

*A health board has to give every child in care a social worker.*

### **inspector**

*An inspector is a person who works for the government  
or the health board  
and whose job is to make sure  
all the centres are keeping the rules  
and that the children are safe and happy.*

*After the inspector visits a centre  
they write a report about it,  
which says all the good things about the centre.  
The report also says if there are things  
that need to be made better  
for the children who live there.*

### **key worker**

*There are usually different people  
working in a children's residential centre,  
and they come and go at different times.  
There is always someone there to mind you,  
and that is the main thing.  
But it is also important to have one person  
who is specially in charge of you  
and knows you very well,  
and that you feel you can talk to about things.  
This person is called your key worker.  
Your key worker takes special care of you,  
and makes sure you get everything you need.*

*Your key worker talks to your social worker about how you are getting on.*

### **monitor**

*Every children's residential centre needs to be checked out every so often by a person who works for the health board. This person is called a 'monitor', and their job is to make sure the centre is up to standard and that the children are being properly looked after.*

*You can talk to the monitor when he or she visits, and tell them what you think about the centre.*

### **ombudsman for children**

*This is a person who works for the government. His or her job is to help children who have problems that they can't get solved in any other way.*

### **review meeting**

*Every now and then, your social worker and your key worker will meet you and your parents to talk about how your care is going and how you feel about things. These meetings are called review meetings.*

*Changes can be made to your care plan at these meetings.*

*If you would like to talk about something to do with your care, you can ask for a special review meeting to be held.*

### **social services inspectorate**

*The people who work for the Social Services Inspectorate are in charge of making sure that the social workers and the residential centres that are run by the health boards are doing a good job looking after the children.*

### **social worker**

*Your social worker is the person that the health board has asked to make sure you are properly looked after while you are in care.*

*The social worker does not live in the residential centre, like the care staff, but comes to visit.*

*You can talk to your social worker about anything that is worrying you and he or she will try to help you to understand.*



## ***standards for residential care***

*The national standards for residential care  
are rules that the government has made  
for the right way  
to look after children who are in care.*

*These standards or rules  
are explained in this book,  
in a children's version  
and in a version for teenagers.  
There is also a grown-ups' version  
of the standards,  
which you can ask to see if you like.*

Notes:

Notes: