

The story of Whiskers and Oakwood





Once upon a time, there was a little squirrel named Whiskers who had been feeling a bit sad. Things at home weren't going so well and Whiskers needed somewhere safe to stay. That's when a kind person called a social worker came to help.

The social worker told Whiskers that he would be going to a new home with people called foster parents. These are kind, smiley grown-ups who would take care of him and help him feel better.

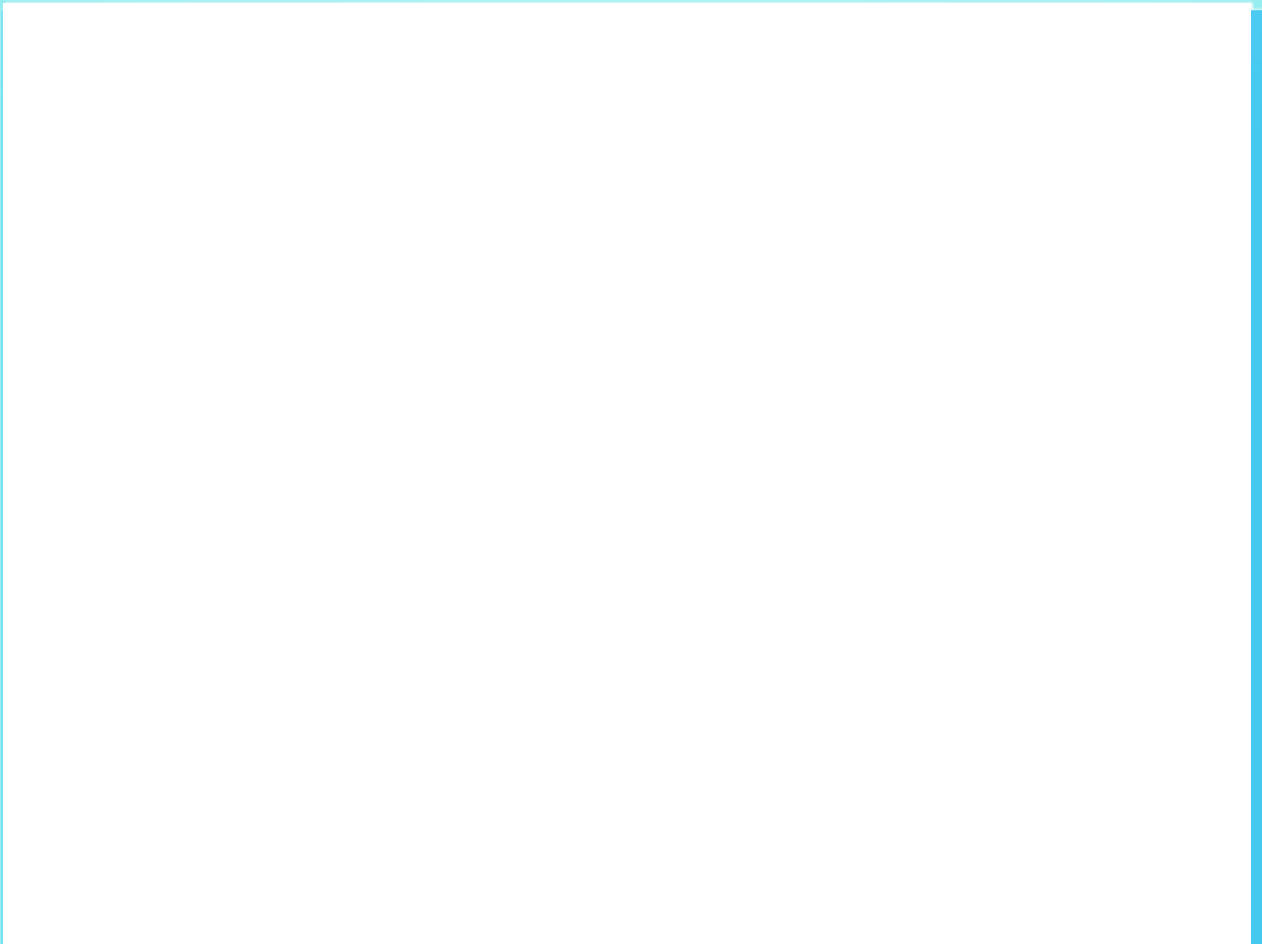
Whiskers was a bit nervous. He didn't know what a foster parent was or what this new home would be like. But his social worker gently explained that foster parents are special people who want to help children (and squirrels!) feel safe, warm and cared for.

Some foster parents are married and some aren't. Some have children and some don't. But the most important thing is they all want to look after children (and squirrels) who need a helping hand.



MY NEW FOSTER HOME LOOKS LIKE THIS:

(Draw your new home below)



This is Me and My Best Friend Together

(Draw your best friend or someone special)





Whiskers' social worker told him to imagine a big circle of people all holding hands, making sure he was always safe. In that circle were his foster parent, his social worker, teachers, doctors, and even the social worker's boss. They all work together to help Whiskers feel happy and safe.

Sometimes Whiskers would have visits from his social worker to check how he was getting on. Other times, all the people in the circle would have a meeting to talk about how he was feeling and what he wanted to do next.

When Whiskers arrived at his foster home, he felt a little nervous. But guess what? His new home was warm, clean and cosy. His foster parent smiled and said, "Welcome, Whiskers! We're so happy you're here." They showed him his very own bedroom with a soft bed, space for his things, and even a place for his favourite drawings.

Whiskers felt safe. His foster parents promised to care for him, listen to him, and help him settle in.



When Whiskers got to Oakwood, he learned about something really special called GROW. It's how Oakwood helps children like him feel safe, happy and strong again.

G Grounded in Safety

Whiskers' home felt calm and safe. Grown-ups helped by following gentle routines and using kind words when things got tricky.

- ✔ Homes are chosen carefully
- ✔ Everyone helps children feel calm and safe
- ✔ Being safe comes first at Oakwood

R Relationships that Repair

Whiskers' foster parents spent time playing, talking and listening to him. Slowly he learned to trust them.

- ✔ Foster parents are there to connect and support you
- ✔ It's okay to need time to get to know each other
- ✔ Being cared for helps your heart feel happy again

O Opportunities to Thrive

At Oakwood, Whiskers got to do the things he enjoyed like reading, climbing, art and making friends.

- ✔ Children are helped to succeed at school and in fun activities
- ✔ Your ideas and feelings matter
- ✔ Every achievement is celebrated at Oakwood

W Withstanding Life's Challenges

Some days, Whiskers still felt worried. But his foster parents understood and helped him feel better.

- ✔ Feelings are okay
- ✔ Your foster parents, social workers and others will support you
- ✔ You'll never be alone with your big feelings

Just like Whiskers, you'll be part of the Oakwood family and get the help you need to grow strong and happy again.

The next day, Whiskers went to school. He met new friends and did fun lessons. After school, he watched his favourite programme and had his favourite dinner. Yum!

My School's Name Is: _____

My Favourite Lesson Is: _____

My Best Friend Is: _____

My Favourite TV Programme Is: _____

My Favourite Food Is: _____

My Favourite Things To Do Are: _____

That night, as Whiskers snuggled into bed, he thought about all the people in his safety circle. He wasn't alone. He was safe, loved, and part of a family that cared for him.

He smiled, closed his eyes, and dreamed of adventures in the trees and lots of happy times ahead.



you Are Never Alone

We hope this little story has helped you understand foster care a bit better. Now it's time for your adventure at Oakwood to begin! Remember, there are lots of people who care about you and are here to help.

If you are ever unhappy or worried, you should tell someone like your foster parent, your social worker, your teacher, or someone else you trust. At Oakwood we have a special procedure to help you with any complaints you may have.





WELCOME TO OAKWOOD

We are so happy to welcome you to Oakwood. This is a place where you can feel safe, cared for and listened to. Everyone here wants to help you feel at home and support you as you settle in. Just like Whiskers, you will have kind people around you who believe in you and want you to be happy. We are very glad you're here and we're excited to be part of your journey.

PEOPLE YOU CAN TALK TO

My Social Worker's Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

My Foster Parent's Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Oakwood Fostering Office

Phone: [Insert number]

Email: info@oakwoodfostering.com

Website: oakwoodfostering.com

You will never get into trouble for speaking up. We are here to help you feel happy and safe.

Words you might hear

Care plan

A plan made just for you, to make sure you're safe and listened to.

Family time

Time you might spend with your family or someone special to you.

Foster Home

The home where your foster parent(s) live.

Review Meeting

A meeting with the grown-ups who help make plans for you.

Social Worker

Someone who helps children who need support.



HELPFUL CONTACTS

Childline – 0800 1111 – A free helpline for children. You can call any time.

www.childline.org.uk

Become Charity – 0800 023 2033 – Help and advice for children in care.

www.becomecharity.org.uk

Children's Commissioner for England – 0800 528 0731

www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Email: help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Rights4Me – Information about your rights in care.

www.rights4me.org

If you'd like this booklet in a language other than English please let us know.

