

Read the text about men working as temporary parents to children in the care of the state. Then answer the questions (1-5) using a maximum of 4 words. Write your answers in the spaces provided on the answer sheet. The first one (0) has been done for you.



Male child carers

When Joe started fostering eight years ago, his social worker would regularly ring up and ask to speak to his wife, despite the fact he could have dealt with the call himself. He was left with a sense that he was less important as a foster carer than his wife, despite the fact that they fostered as a couple. Joe was not alone in feeling that way. Male foster carers frequently report being overlooked in discussions and decision-making about a child in favour of their female partners.

And if being made to feel second best when fostering discourages existing foster carers, there are even more difficulties in persuading men to consider fostering in the first place. Research by NCH shows that men are failing to come forward to work with children because they are frightened of being labelled paedophiles. This, along with the lack of male teachers in nurseries and primary schools, means that many children may never have a positive male role model during their childhood.

Andrew is 15 and has been in foster care for 12 years. During that time he has lived with 10 different families. When he moved in with Carl - a single male foster carer - two years ago, it was the first time a man had ever been involved in his direct care. Foster care is still viewed by many as a woman's domain. In a society where men are often perceived as more likely to do harm than good to children, their ability to nurture is still called into question. Yet male foster carers can be excellent role models for fostered children, some of whom have had negative experiences of men before coming into care. They can act as role models, giving foster children their first positive close daily contact with men.

Attitudes towards men and childcare are changing in the home, as more and more fathers vote with their feet and decide to stay at home to play a part in the daily care of their own children. But there is an urgent need for fostering services and the wider public to recognise and respect the role men can also play in transforming the lives of other people's children. For Joe, things have improved since 2000, as attitudes at his fostering service have changed and he feels more valued. He also feels more supported since the creation of a local networking group for men in fostering. The challenge is now for all fostering services to empower their existing and potential male foster carers, and to reassure them that they have a crucial role to play, either as sole carers or as half of a fostering couple.

0	Who did Joe share his fostering responsibilities with?
1	What do male foster parents say about their situation? (Give <u>one</u> answer.)
2	What scares men about taking jobs involving kids?
3	What do people think men are incapable of?
4	What development can be observed in families? (Give <u>one</u> answer.)
5	Where does Joe now get encouragement and positive feedback?

Male child carers

0	<i>his wife</i>
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Von der
Lehrperson
auszufüllen

richtig falsch

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___ P.