1 Community-based care

All children and young people deserve to live in settings that reflect their needs for age-appropriate freedom and autonomy while ensuring their safety and the safety of the community. They also deserve to live and grow up in a community that is familiar to them and close to their birth family members, if appropriate.

2 Unconditional care

All children and young people deserve a safe, warm, nurturing environment where they can thrive. This approach is focused on social learning and the concept of developing the whole child with a lifelong perspective.

3 Normalisation of care

Children and young people in foster care need to receive the same opportunities and support as well as facing the same challenges as their peers so that they can learn and develop and make full use of opportunities available to them.

4 Continuity of care

All children and young people benefit from continuity in their lives; same community, same school, same friendship groups, same access to sports, arts and leisure opportunities.

5 Cultural relevancy

Children do best when connected with the culture they identify with. Children and young people say that they feel more comfortable, and research suggests that they do best, when they feel connected to their cultures and live in families that reflect their ethnicity and values.

6 Birth family viewed as partners and future support

The Mockingbird Family Model supports practice that enables children and young people to receive age-appropriate, accurate information about their past care and to learn the skills and boundaries necessary to establish and maintain safe relationships with their birth families into the future.

7 Foster carer support

Take good care of the adults who take good care of the children. It is essential to take good care – with training, practical and emotional support and supervision – of the foster carers who take good care of children and young people.