



# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

## JOTIT Notebook

### Partners

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# INTRODUCTION

This *JOTIT Notebook* has been designed to help you to capture thoughts and experiences about food and the way food and food routines ‘work’ with the child or young person you are looking after.

A key finding was that food and the practices around it have significant symbolic value. That is, food can come to represent or stand for thoughts, feelings and beliefs. You can read more about this on the *Food for Thought* website: [www.foodforthoughtproject.info](http://www.foodforthoughtproject.info)

During the *Food for Thought* Project, foster carers and residential staff talked about the challenges of reflecting on, or analysing their own and their child’s behaviour around food. They described day-to-day life as very busy, often with little time to stop and think. As a result, they have helped design this *JOTIT Notebook*.

## Don’t lose it, JOTIT!

The *JOTIT Notebook* is designed to be easy to use. It is intended to help you, as a foster or residential worker, to capture some of the thoughts, observations and experiences that happen day-day-day, especially around food.

The idea for the *JOTIT Notebook* is that you jot down the date and a brief note about anything that you want to remember for later. People have used it to note down their own feelings or thoughts; recorded food that their child has liked or disliked; written about successful baking experiences or challenging mealtimes. Some foster carers and staff have drawn in it or used it to stick pictures or recipes in. It is intended for you to scribble down anything that you see as important.

Although it was originally designed to be used by one person, we’ve found that it works well as a way for whole families, teams or residential units to record their experiences of food in their household. It has also been used by children and young people to share and record their views of food.

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Food for Thought resources include an online *Interactive Introduction*, a *Reflective Tool* to be completed individually, a *Reflective Workshop* for a group of foster carers and/or residential workers where they learn more about how food can be used in care, and *Peer Support Guidance* to help facilitators guide group discussions such as team meetings, support groups or specially arranged meetings to discuss food related issues following the *Reflective Workshop* and/or use of the *Reflective Tool*. Check out the *Food for Thought* website for details: [www.foodforthoughtproject.info](http://www.foodforthoughtproject.info)



# THINGS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN USING THE JOTIT NOTEBOOK

The *JOTIT Notebook* is intended to be used as an informal, easy way of recording. It works best if it is kept close to hand. On each page, there are a number of questions or prompts. These are there just to jog thinking and do not have to be answered.

Foster carers and residential staff said that they found it useful to read over all the questions every now and then. For example, when the house was quieter or when they were feeling a bit 'stuck' or 'confused' by their child's behaviour or responses. For that reason, we've listed the various questions at the start of the *JOTIT Notebook* but remember they are just a guide. The *JOTIT* is for you to record YOUR thoughts, observations, worries, successes and questions as things occur to you.

When you have time to look through your notes, you may see patterns in behaviours or be able to reflect on progress that you could have missed when 'in the moment'. This can be useful for your own development or it can help you to clarify issues that you might like to discuss with your child or young person when the time is right. Your *JOTIT Notebook* may also help you remember important things that you want to discuss with others – team members, other carers, managers or supervisors.

If you like the idea of being even more structured in your reflections, you could use the *Food for Thought Reflective Tool*. You can get that from your organisation or download it from the *Food for Thought* website at [www.foodforthoughtproject.info](http://www.foodforthoughtproject.info). You can also use this website to try the *Food for Thought Interactive Introduction*, to find out more about *Food for Thought* and other resources, to add your own ideas and comments and to see what others have said.

## Ways to use the JOTIT Notebook

- You might prefer to keep it in a safe place as a 'note to self' - a record of your own thoughts.
- You could use it with your child to write down things about food that are important to one or both of you. Sometimes children like to draw or stick on pictures to express themselves.
- You could use it as a team to keep track of your observations about how a child is using food and how you are responding to him/her.
- It could be a family notepad relating to food and the activities around food.
- If you are a supervisor or support worker, you might use it to help with your discussion of a child or as a way of looking at how a placement is going for the adults and the children. You might want to use the questions listed at the start of the *JOTIT Notebook* in supervision as a way of exploring care.
- You might give it to a child or young person to record their thoughts and feelings about food and care.

## HOW COULD YOU MAKE THE BEST USE OF YOUR JOTIT NOTEBOOK?



# QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

These questions and prompts appear throughout the *JOTIT Notebook*. They have been listed at the start to help you think about the types of questions you might want to ask yourself or for you to talk over with your child or supervisor. However, **these are only suggestions**. The *JOTIT Notebook* is designed for you to record **anything** you want about yourself, your child, your home or residential unit and food.

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- What happened? How do I feel? How does my child feel?
- What's my child's favourite food?
- What do I communicate when I make/buy their favourite snack or meal?
- What just happened? What was my child telling me?
- Do I mind when children eat with their fingers? If I discourage it, why is that?
- What do I know about my child's early experiences of food and eating?
- Do our rules and routines around food work with this young person? How do they help us to provide the best care?
- When is it appropriate for our child to influence the rules and routines? How would they do that?
- What happened? How is my child feeling?
- Could I have handled that better?
- When was the last time I tried a food that was unfamiliar to me?
- What food did I like as a child? Why?
- How do I use food to show that I care?
- How does my child use food to show he/she cares?
- Are there foods that my child often asks for? What is that about?
- How well has our child adapted to our foods and routines? Is there anything we should think about doing differently?
- Does my child know when he /she is hungry/full?
- Does my child hide or steal food?
- Is pudding important?
- Could I try a different approach today?
- How does my child feel about mealtimes?
- If a stranger came for tea, what would they notice about how my child is around food?
- Does my child use food to show that they are angry or scared? What does he/she do?
- How is my child feeling about food today? How does that make me feel?
- Is there anything my child does around food that makes me angry or uncomfortable?
- Do we all share the same expectations about how we should behave at breakfast, lunch, dinner, supper?
- When do I get to eat MY favourite food? What ways do others use food to tell me they care about me?
- When would I make food together with my child? Why?
- What has surprised me most about how my child is about food?
- Since my child has lived here, what has given me most satisfaction in relation to how they are about food?
- What worries do I have about my child and food?
- What's going well for me and my child in relation to food?

















# MY NOTES

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**WHEN IS IT APPROPRIATE FOR OUR CHILD TO INFLUENCE THE RULES AND ROUTINES? HOW WOULD THEY DO THAT?**



# MY NOTES

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**COULD I HAVE HANDLED THAT BETTER?**



**WHAT HAPPENED? HOW IS MY CHILD FEELING?**



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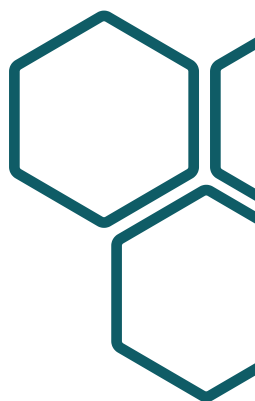
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**HOW DOES MY CHILD USE FOOD TO SHOW THAT HE/SHE CARES?**



**HOW DO I USE FOOD TO SHOW THAT I CARE?**









# MY NOTES

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**IS PUDDING IMPORTANT?**



**COULD I TRY A DIFFERENT APPROACH TODAY?**



# MY NOTES

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**DOES MY CHILD USE FOOD TO SHOW THAT THEY ARE ANGRY OR SCARED? WHAT DOES HE/SHE DO?**



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**IS THERE ANYTHING THAT MY CHILD DOES AROUND FOOD THAT MAKES ME ANGRY OR UNCOMFORTABLE?**



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**HOW IS MY CHILD FEELING ABOUT FOOD TODAY?  
HOW DOES THAT MAKE ME FEEL?**



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**DO WE ALL SHARE THE SAME EXPECTATIONS ABOUT HOW WE SHOULD BEHAVE AT BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER, SUPPER?**





# MY NOTES

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**WHEN WOULD I MAKE FOOD TOGETHER WITH MY CHILD? WHY?**











# ISSUES TO TAKE TO SUPERVISION OR A PEER SUPPORT MEETING

It can be useful to read through your *JOTIT* notes to look for patterns of thoughts, feelings or behaviours or things that have gone well. It can also help to highlight challenging events or experiences that you may feel concerned about.

Use the space below to note the issues you would like to discuss with others. During the discussion, or afterwards, you can also jot down any suggestions you've been given about things you could try. It can be useful to keep a note of these suggestions or your own ideas about what you might do differently. Don't forget to *JOTIT!* If you run out of space and you need another *JOTIT Notebook*, just download one from the *Food for Thought* website [www.foodforthoughtproject.info](http://www.foodforthoughtproject.info).

Supervision	Peer Support
<p><b>Issue</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Suggestions</b></p>	<p><b>Issue</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Suggestions</b></p>
<p><b>Issue</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Suggestions</b></p>	<p><b>Issue</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Suggestions</b></p>



# ABOUT FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This resource was written by Ruth Emond, Carol George, Ian McIntosh and Samantha Punch (School of Applied Social Science, University of Stirling) and was devised in collaboration with our partners: FCA Scotland, Aberlour Child Care Trust, Perth and Kinross Council, the Centre for Excellence in Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS) and the Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS). The *Food For Thought* project was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## STAYING INVOLVED

The *Food for Thought* team are committed to monitoring the impact of this resource on practice. Over the next five years, the team will be seeking views on how useful this resource is to foster carers, residential staff and managers as well as how they think it has impacted on children's everyday lives. We would be delighted to hear about your experiences of using this resource.

You can do this by sending a comment through the *Food for Thought* website [www.foodforthoughtproject.info](http://www.foodforthoughtproject.info) or by contacting one of the team (Ruth Emond) on [h.r.emond@stir.ac.uk](mailto:h.r.emond@stir.ac.uk). You can ring Ruth on 01786 467710.

