

The First 72 Hours Checklist

A calm, privacy-conscious organizer for a new foster, kinship, or guardianship placement.

How to use this checklist

Use this as a supplemental organizer. Complete required agency forms and follow the child-specific placement agreement, safety plan, medical instructions, and court orders. Do not include Social Security numbers, detailed allegations, or unnecessary confidential information.

Priority: calm information, immediate needs, and clear follow-up - not extracting the child’s full story.

- ☐ Confirm who has legal and medical decision authority
- ☐ Identify the after-hours contact
- ☐ Record medication information exactly as provided
- ☐ Clarify school and transportation for the next day
- ☐ Confirm family contact or visitation expectations
- ☐ Give the child simple information about what happens next
- ☐ Offer food, water, hygiene, and rest without pressure

Quick contacts

Caseworker	
Supervisor / after-hours	
Agency / resource specialist	
Medical contact	
School contact	
Other approved contact	

1. Placement Call Information

Date and time	
Caller and role	
Child initials / identifier	
Age / grade	
Current location	
Expected arrival	
Reason for placement or move	

Known information to confirm

- ☐ School and transportation
- ☐ Sibling and family relationships
- ☐ Upcoming visits and appointments
- ☐ Allergies and dietary needs
- ☐ Medication and pharmacy
- ☐ Communication or accessibility needs
- ☐ Sleep and supervision needs
- ☐ Pets and household safety
- ☐ Technology and contact permissions
- ☐ Belongings arriving with the child

Questions still unanswered

2. Arrival and First-Night Priorities

- ☐ Introduce household members calmly
- ☐ Show bathroom, bedroom, food, and exits
- ☐ Explain how to ask for help
- ☐ Offer food and hydration choices
- ☐ Provide clean towels and unopened hygiene basics
- ☐ Ask before washing or unpacking belongings
- ☐ Offer a charger and a safe place for the phone if applicable
- ☐ Explain only the essential household rules
- ☐ Avoid forced hugs, photos, family titles, or public announcements
- ☐ Plan a low-demand evening and predictable bedtime

What the child wants to know

Questions, worries, or immediate requests

Tonight’s plan

Dinner / snack	
Medication time	
Contact with approved people	
Bedtime plan	
Morning plan	

3. Belongings and Immediate Needs

Record only enough detail to protect the child’s belongings and identify urgent needs. Do not discard bags or wash items without asking unless required for immediate health or safety.

Item / category	Quantity / condition	Needed soon

- ☐ Weather-appropriate clothing
- ☐ Shoes
- ☐ Sleepwear
- ☐ Underwear / socks
- ☐ Hair and skin-care products
- ☐ Period products
- ☐ School supplies
- ☐ Comfort item
- ☐ Phone / charger
- ☐ Luggage or secure storage

4. Health, Medication, and Safety Questions

Use the official medication record and medical instructions supplied by the agency or provider. This page is only a question tracker.

Medication received	
Instructions received from	
Next dose due	
Pharmacy	
Allergies	
Medical consent contact	
Upcoming appointment	

- ☐ Verify medication name, dose, route, and schedule
- ☐ Count medication when required
- ☐ Clarify missed-dose instructions
- ☐ Ask about refrigeration or locked storage
- ☐ Ask about equipment or accessibility needs
- ☐ Document visible concerns according to policy
- ☐ Notify the appropriate person about missing information

Safety-plan questions and required follow-up

5. School, Childcare, and Transportation

Current school / childcare	
Grade / program	
Educational decision-maker	
School contact	
Transportation plan	
Start / return date	
Upcoming activity	

- ☐ Do not withdraw from the current school without direction
- ☐ Ask whether school-of-origin transportation is being arranged
- ☐ Request records and special-education information
- ☐ Confirm medication forms and emergency contacts
- ☐ Identify basic supplies needed immediately
- ☐ Protect foster-care status and case privacy
- ☐ Identify one trusted adult at school

School questions and next actions

6. Preferences, Routines, and Important People

Ask gently over time. The child may not know what is safe to share yet.

Preferred name / pronunciation	
Food and drink preferences	
Foods to avoid	
Bedtime routine	
Morning routine	
Comfort items / activities	
Hair and skin routine	
Religious / cultural practices	
Important people	
Preferred way to calm or take space	

What helps this child feel respected and included?

7. Follow-Up Within 72 Hours

- ☐ Confirm placement documents were received
- ☐ Send unanswered questions to the caseworker
- ☐ Confirm visitation and transportation
- ☐ Schedule or confirm medical follow-up
- ☐ Confirm school or childcare plan
- ☐ Request needed services and referrals
- ☐ Record purchases and reimbursement questions
- ☐ Review the household safety plan
- ☐ Ask the child what is still confusing
- ☐ Schedule a calm caregiver check-in

Person contacted	
Date / method	
Question or request	
Response / next step	

Top three unresolved items

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