

Programme “The visits: a space of family development”

Based on the importance of the contacts maintained in foster care, the present work is the consolidation of different research projects and publications carried out by the Foster Care and Adoption Research Group of the University of Malaga (Fuentes et al., 2019; García-Martín et al., 2019; Salas et al., 2016; Salas et al., 2021). As part of the latest national excellence project (EDU2016 77094-P), the programme Las visitas: un espacio de desarrollo familiar [The visits: a space of family development] (Bernedo et al., 2021) was designed and implemented. This psychoeducational intervention programme is aimed to improve the quality of the visits of foster children through the promotion of parental, educational and emotional competences of biological and foster families. The programme consists of two training modules. Each module consists of 7 sessions, the first six individual sessions and the last one in a group with an approximate duration of 1 hour, birth families and foster families separately. Some of the aspects worked on with the biological families specify have been learning to transmit appropriate messages to the children, guidance on the types of gifts, snacks and age-appropriate topics of conversation, etc. In foster families have been worked child emotional before and after the visits. Both families (birth and foster care families) have been training in specific communication skills, and in educational strategies and guidelines, among other relevant aspects for the development of the visits. Finally, it is important to highlight the need to promote the parental and emotional competences of the biological families due to the role they play during the visits.

Keywords: Contact visits, foster care, program intervention, birth parents, foster carers