



Caring for Muslim Children

**Fasting (Sawm in
Arabic)**

With you every step of the way

Fosterline
0800 040 7675
your fostering advice service

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Sawm literally means abstinence. During certain times of the year Muslims will observe a period of fasting.

Most people will not realise that it is not only the abstinence of food and drink but also the use of certain products and medications. Fasting is also applied to spiritual as well as physical abstinence. Muslims must refrain from vices such as anger, argument and immoral behaviour in general.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, which follows the lunar cycle. The lunar year is shorter than the solar year. This means that the month of Ramadan changes each year in relation to the Gregorian calendar, moving “back” approximately eleven days each year.

Fasting will take place from first light (dawn) and ends at sunset. During this time, Muslims abstain from all food and drink, sexual relations, ingesting medication through the oral cavity and smoking. Gargling is acceptable as long as no fluid enters the throat.

Following sunset Muslims can return to usual activities until dawn the next day.

Fasting does not apply to women who are menstruating or the sick however, they are required to make up the missed fast(s) later in that year. The sick person should consult a physician before fasting. Please note that injections are not permitted for the fasting person and if taken the fast is invalid and must be made up later without any additional penalty being imposed on them. Children are encouraged to fast but there is no obligation upon them.

During Ramadan your Muslim foster child may wish to pray more than usual or attend a mosque for night prayers.

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How to aid a child to fast

To assist your foster child with fasting it may be helpful:

- To ensure the young person wakes up for the pre-dawn breakfast meal (suhur)
- Remind them to set an alarm
- Share breakfast with them pre-dawn
- Ensure breakfast consists of slow release energy to help sustain them throughout the day such as wholemeal grains
- Be ready with a meal at dusk so the fast is not prolonged
- Facilitate the young person's attendance at mosque

The information on what nullifies fasts was taken from Information provided by UAE official Fatwa Centre General Authority of Islamic Affairs & Endowments.

What nullifies the fast

Permissible

Using suppositories

Applying eye liner

Showering

Using asthma inhalers (unless it goes down the throat)

Using eye drops (unless it goes down the throat)

Using eardrops (unless it goes down the throat)

Using oxygen (unless mixed with water or medicine that goes down the throat)

Using intramuscular, intravenous or intradermal medical injections

Wearing make up

Applying nicotine patches

Giving blood for analysis

Tasting food without swallowing (but only done when necessary)

Unintentional vomiting

Nasal bleeding and bloody tooth extraction

Swimming and diving (but better to be practiced later)

Using toothpaste (unless swallowed even partially)

Using penicillin injections

Using insulin injections

Swallowing saliva

Using and smelling perfume

Using lip balm (providing none is swallowed)

Using miswak (inadvisable if wet)

Not Permissible

Using nutrient injections

Intentional vomiting

Using antiseptic gargle

Using nose drops if it goes down the throat

Intentionally inhaling aloeswood incense

Taking anti-stroke sublingual tablets

Eid

Eid is a special time of the year for Muslims and Eid is celebrated twice annually. The first Eid celebration is called Eid al-Fitr which indicates at the end of Ramadan and occurs on the first day of the Islamic month Shawwaal (the tenth month in the Islamic calendar).

Eid al-Fitr celebrates the end of the holy month and gives thanks for the deeds performed during this period.

The second Eid celebration is called Eid al-Adha which commemorates the end of Hajj pilgrimage to Makkah made by the Prophet Abraham. This occurs approximately ten weeks after Eid al-Fitr. Like Eid al-Fitr this Eid too is celebrated with friends and family. Many people sacrifice animals (such as a lamb or sheep) for this Eid to commemorate Abraham's sacrifice of the Ram in God's pleasure. This meat is distributed for cooking amongst friends, families and the needy. The Hajj occurs annually which is attended by approximately 3-4 million Muslims perform hajj in Mecca every year.

Supporting your foster child on Eid:

- Ensure that they wake up early
- Ensure that they take a bath before going out to the Eid prayer
- Sometimes a miswak can be used to brush one's teeth. This is a natural tooth brush that can be purchased from any Islamic book store.
- Ensure that they have either new clothes or wears their favourite clothes on this special day.
- Ensure they have breakfast or eat something sweet (such as dates or sweetened porridge) before leaving for the Eid prayer.
- Help your foster child to get to the place of the Eid prayer place early if possible, so that they can offer the prayer in congregation.



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**Department
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Fosterline is funded by the
Department for
Education and delivered
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