



Frequently asked questions about Foster Care

What is Foster Care?

The State mostly works with special needs children. Foster care includes a number of temporary out-of-home placements such as:

- Placement with relatives
- Foster family care
- Specialized or therapeutic foster family care
- Emergency shelters
- Group or residential treatment facilities
- Psychiatric hospitalization
- Transitional living arrangements
- Detention

If a child is unable to return home, a plan is developed to provide other means of permanency for him or her.

Children can be removed from their home by a court action or are voluntarily placed in foster care by their parents.

What types of children come into foster care?

- Many of the children are between ages 8-18.
- Many of the children have been neglected and some have been physically, emotionally and/or sexually abused.
- Most children have emotional or behavioral problems that will require extra patience and added attention.
- Some children are developmentally disabled.
- Many children are behind in their school work.
- A number of children are entering foster care through the juvenile offense proceedings.
- Some children may be in their first placement, while others may have been in a succession of foster placements that did not work out.

How do foster children behave?

Many children in foster care are frightened and confused at the separation from their parents. These children may display inappropriate behaviors, have poor self-esteem and/or have inadequate social or personal skills. Often these children are frightened and worried, and may not be in control of their feelings or behaviors.

What are the general guidelines for an adoptive parent?

- Be at least 21 years of age. Older persons are also considered, however adoptive parents generally should be of an age to have naturally parented the child they seek to adopt.
- Married couples and single people may be reviewed as potential parents.
- Must be in good physical and mental health as demonstrated by a current medical statement about their physical and emotional capacity to care for children.
- Have sufficient income to meet the immediate and future needs of the child.
- Working parents will be considered although appropriate child care arrangements must be provided.
- Must pass a health/fire/safety inspection of their home (for both renters and those who own their own home).
- No active child protective services case at any time.
- No criminal involvement. Everyone in the home over age 18 will be finger printed for a criminal investigation background check.
- Must complete and pass a home study.
- Must demonstrate the ability to commit to a child, provide the child with maximum opportunities for personal development, and respond honestly to the child.



Do I need any special training to become a foster parent?

All foster parents attend a pre-service orientation training and discuss the responsibilities and details of becoming a foster parent. The Bureau for Children and Families also provides training to foster parents on areas affecting children in out-of-home care.

What do foster parents do?

- Provide for basic daily needs such as food, clothing, shelter and supervision
- Provide transportation to appointments, court hearings, and visits with family
- Arrange for medical and dental care
- Provide positive parenting skills when redirecting behavior
- Provide consistency such as clear expectations, regular bedtimes and reasonable limits for the child's age
- Provide emotional support, love and understanding

What forms of discipline am I allowed to use?

Families who have, or can learn, positive parenting skills are needed to care for children who need homes. Families must use appropriate, positive discipline and make a strong commitment to the children placed with them.

How long will a child stay in my home?

There is no set time frame for how long a child may remain in a home. Reunification with the family is the most common goal of permanency, however this option may not be appropriate for every child. When a child cannot return home, other permanency options considered include adoption, placement with a relative, permanent foster care or legal guardianship.

Does a foster child need his or her own bedroom?

No. Each child must have his or her own bed and individual space in which to keep personal items. A child can share a room with another child of the same sex. A child cannot share a bedroom with an adult, except for an infant under two years of age.



Is financial help available for adoptive parents to care for children?

Yes. Adoption subsidies are available for eligible children who have special needs including children over 8 years of age.

