



Tips for Parents: Becoming a Foster Parent

Foster parents provide a temporary, safe home for children in crisis and become part of the child's support, treatment, and care program. If you are interested in being a foster parent, this Tips for Parents will help you know what is involved and how to begin the process.

Why become a foster parent?

For each person the answer is different. A few reasons people become foster parents:

- They are unable to have biological children but still want to parent.
- Their own children are grown but they still have room in their home and hearts for children.
- They have training to deal with troubled youth and want to be able to help the youth in their own home, not just in a professional setting.
- They recognize the tremendous need for foster parents and want to help.

Being a foster parent is not a passive act of opening one's home and providing food, clothing, and shelter. It is a proactive statement of nurturing, advocacy, and love.

Is Foster Care Right for You?

Here are some things to consider when thinking of being a foster parent:

- Can you love a child despite their background?
- Can you make a place in your home for the child, and make them feel part of the family?
- Can you love a child who rejects your love?
- Can you set firm rules and be strong in enforcing them?
- Can you commit time to appointments with social workers, doctors, and the school?
- Can you prepare yourself for the time when the child will leave your home?

Requirements to be a Foster Parent

Each state has their own requirements to become foster parents, but the general requirements are as follows:

- Be at least 21 years old.

- Have enough room (and beds) in your home for a foster child to sleep and keep his or her belongings.
- Live in a home that meets basic fire, safety and sanitary standards.
- Be physically and emotionally capable of caring for children and have no alcohol or drug abuse problems.
- Be able to pass a criminal background check and have no substantiated record of abusing or neglecting children.
- Make enough money to provide for your own family, so you do not need to depend on the foster care reimbursement you receive from the state as income.

There are several ways to become a licensed Foster Parent. You can go through the state run fostering programs or many Residential Treatment centers license and place foster children. Whatever program you choose to go through they will have their own pre-placement training that must be completed before a child is placed in your home.

Our country has thousands of children in need of a home. If you think that you may be able to provide a safe and loving place for a child in transition, consider becoming a foster parent.

For more information:

<http://www.adopting.org/adoptions/becoming-a-foster-parent-2.html>

<http://www.nfpainc.org/>