



## ***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.

