

# Decide If Foster Care is Right for You

Being a foster parent can be an incredibly rewarding, life-altering challenge, if you are ready to take it. You can decide when it is the right time. Children in the foster care system need a special kind of person. A successful foster parent is patient, an advocate, likes kids, a team player and able to love and let go when the job is done.

## Look at your life:

- You are at least 21 years old.
- You are at least one year from a major life event, such as a divorce, birth of a child, or a significant loss, and two years from chemical dependency treatment.
- You are open to a review of your criminal background, your human service and social service history.
- You have enough income to meet your own family's needs.
- You have a flexible work schedule.

## Points to Ponder:

- Are both parents in agreement about being a foster family?
- Do you enjoy being parents?
- Can you work cooperatively with a Social Service Agency and accept its decisions regarding a foster child, even if you may not agree with the plan? Can you accept suggestions and feedback from this team? Are you able to recognize when you need help and ask for it?
- Can you keep information about a foster child confidential from friends and relatives?
- Can you be courteous and friendly toward a foster child's birth parent(s)?
- Does your schedule allow for the necessary training for foster parents?
- Is your marriage strong and stable to allow you to handle the additional stress of foster parenting?
- Are you assertive enough to turn down foster care placement that you are not comfortable taking in?
- Do you love children and truly want to help them?
- Are you flexible and able to adapt to changing situations?
- Are you emotionally secure and confident you can be a good parent?
- Are you mature enough to realize that some children may have difficulty in adjusting to your way of life – until you have gained their affection and

confidence? (Ability to accept the child where he/she is mentally, physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually?)

- Are you able to give affection and care to a child without expecting them to be loving and grateful in return?
- Can you love children despite their behavioral problems?
- Can you set firm limits and standards of behavior? Can you discipline consistently and with patience without using any type of physical punishment?
- Can you view small improvements as victories and accept setbacks as normal?
- Can you accept and nurture children with the ultimate goal of returning the children to their birth or extended families? If the children cannot return to their birth or extended families, would you consider adoption? Can you help a child move on to whatever the Agency has planned?
- Do you have a healthy sense of humor?
- Does your entire family understand and support your commitment to foster parenting?
- Is your family ready to share your home, time and attention with foster children and accept them as a member of the family?
- Does your family have support from extended family, friends, neighbors, other community members?
- Is your household employment situation stable?
- Does your income meet the basic needs of your own family?
- Is your lifestyle a good role model for foster children?
- Can you devote significant time and energy to foster children?
- Is your home large enough to comfortably accommodate another person?
- Can you transport foster children to meetings and appointments?
- Are the members of your family in good health and free from communicable diseases?
- Are you considering fostering to fulfill the needs of a child rather than to fulfill a personal need?

## **Rules & Regulations**

- [MN Statute, Chapter 245A, Human Services Licensing Act](#)
- [MN Rule, parts 2960.0010 to 2980.3340, Licensure and Certification of Certain Programs for Children](#)