

Foster Care

Foster care is a temporary alternative to a child's natural home when that home becomes socially, emotionally or physically inadequate for the child's needs. Foster children range in age from infant to 18. All foster children have unique backgrounds, experiences, personalities, strengths and weaknesses. Some may require extensive care for physical or emotional handicaps or disabilities. Many foster children have been victims of physical or sexual abuse, some have suffered neglect and some children and infants require medical care.

Questions about foster care:

Q: What are the basic requirements to be a foster parent?

A: You must be 21 years of age or older and a responsible, mature individual to become a licensed foster parent. You will be asked to provide truthful information regarding alcohol and drug abuse and law violations that may hinder your ability to provide a stable, nurturing environment. Giving false information or withholding information can be grounds for denial of a license.

Q: What is the process to become a licensed foster parent?

A: After completing a Foster Care Application, you and your family will meet with the Foster Care Coordinator several times to complete a home study and ensure your home meets licensing requirements. A criminal background check and fire inspection will be completed. You will also need a physical examination and provide proof of vehicle and homeowners or renters insurance. You will also need to complete foster parent preservice training provided by the agency free of charge.

Q: Who pays for the care of the children in foster care?

A: Foster parents receive money for the room, board and other living expenses from the placement agency. There are also supplemental payments for the care of children with special needs.

Q: How are the child's medical needs paid for?

A: Foster children are covered by Title XIX (medical assistance) or the insurance of their parents.

- Q:** How long do children stay in foster care?
- A:** This can vary from a few days to many years, however the average length of stay is nine months.
- Q:** Must a foster parent accept any child the agency offers?
- A:** No. Available information about a child is shared with you before placement so that you and the child's social worker can decide together whether the child should be placed in your home. On occasional emergency situations, very little may be known about the child.
- Q:** Can foster parents adopt a foster child?
- A:** Most foster children are not available for adoption. If a child does become adoptable, the foster family may apply.
- Q:** What sleeping arrangements should I have for a child?
- A:** Children over one year old may not share a bedroom with an adult. Children over six years old may not share a bedroom with a child of the opposite sex and each foster child must have his or her own bed.
- Q:** Can I have a job and care for a foster child?
- A:** A foster parent may work outside of the home if appropriate arrangements can be made for child care during the absence of the foster parent(s).
- Q:** Will I be involved with the child's natural parents?
- A:** Yes. You, along with the social worker and the child's parents, will work together as a team in an attempt to reunify the child with his/her family. You will communicate with the child's parents on how the child is doing and involve parents in medical and school appointments. The child will also have visits with his/her family and you may have some responsibility with this – for example transportation.
- Q:** Can I take a foster child on vacation?
- A:** Yes. If you are planning on taking a child out of state, prior approval is needed from the supervising agency.
- Q:** What kind of support services are available?
- A:** You will have regular contact with a social worker who will assist you with any questions or problems you may have with the foster child. Regular training and

foster parent meetings are available. Each foster family is provided with respite two days each month. A crisis number is available to you for emergencies when the agency is closed.

Q: Is Manitowoc County in need of foster parents?

A: Yes! We are especially in need of families with a stay-at-home parent as well as Treatment Foster Parents to care for youth with behavioral and/or emotional issues.

Q: When is preservice training offered?

A: Foster Parent Preservice Training is offered two times per year. It includes 12 – three hour sessions. The next training is beginning in February 23, 2007.

Q: Who do I contact for more information?

A: Patty Timm
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