

FOSTER CARE FACTS

WHO ARE THE CHILDREN IN CARE?

- In 2009, there were 423,773 children in foster care.
- In 2009, there were about 123,000 children ready for adoptive families in the nations foster care systems.
- African American children represented 41% of children in foster care
- white children represented 40%
- Hispanic children represented 15%

HOW AND WHY ARE CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE?

- Children may enter foster care via voluntary or involuntary means.
- Voluntary placement may occur when a biological parent or lawful guardian is unable or unwilling to care for a child. This could be due to the parent or child's mental health needs. Children may also have developmental delays, or even be involved in the juvenile justice system.
- Involuntary placement occurs when a child is removed from their biological parent or lawful guardian due to the risk or actual occurrence of physical or psychological harm. In the US, most children enter foster care due to neglect. This process will always involve the Department of Social Services.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ISSUES CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE MIGHT HAVE?

- Mental health issues: anxiety, depression, disorganized attachment, insecure attachment, eating disorders, speech problems, academic problems, ADHD, defiance, and PTSD. While there are many more possible issues that children may have the above listed are some of the most common.

HOW WILL I BE ABLE TO HELP CHILDREN WHO HAVE THESE NEEDS?

- You will be provided with specific training that will help you assist each child you accept into your home.
- Children will receive therapy and other services as necessary
- Youth Haven Services will also provide support to you as a Foster CARE parent.
- There is a 24 hr crisis line that is staffed by a trained professional at all times.
- There will also be monthly Child and Family Team Meetings that are dedicated to supporting and helping the children in care.

HOW LONG WILL THE CHILD BE IN MY CARE?

- Foster care is intended to be a short term situation until permanent placement can be made. Options for permanent living include:
- Reunification with the biological parent(s) when it is deemed in the child's best interest. This is generally the first choice.
- Adoption when the child's family is not able to care for them.
- In some situations, kids may stay with foster families long-term

WHAT IS MY ROLE AS A FOSTER PARENT?

- All Foster CARE parents play a key role in providing care and services to children who must live away from their family.
- Foster CARE parents should partner with the child's Social Worker, be members of the child's treatment team, and share with the team ways to better support/help the child.
- Provide corrective life experiences in a safe, nurturing and stable family environment, free from abuse and/or neglect, where the child is respected, valued and accepted
- Provide role modeling which encourages attachment in the family so that the child can learn to form the productive relationships needed to function appropriately in society
- Provide guidance to the child which promotes self-esteem, respect, and growth
- Allow the child to express anxiety, fear, and conflicted loyalty
- Accept the child as a real and equal part of the family
- Make known to the child the house rules, responsibilities, and consequences
- Accept the heritage, culture and language of the child and the birth family
- Acknowledge the importance of the birth family
- Promote and support a positive, non-judgmental relationship between the child and birth family
- Support and facilitate visits for the child with the birth family and siblings
- Understand the child's problems and help him/her with solutions
- Help the child understand the reasons for the placement
- Save mementos and photographs for the child (start a life book)
- Prepare the child for transition to the birth family, another permanent home, another placement or independent living.

HOW WILL THE SOCIAL WORKER AND I FORM A TEAM?

- Maintain licensing/approval standards and requirements
- Comply with Youth Haven and DSS regulations and policies
- Maintain confidentiality in all matters pertaining to the child and the birth family

- Arrange and provide transportation for routine medical and dental care
- Allow visits between the child and the birth family and siblings in the foster home unless it is not in the best interest of the child or foster family
- Seek permission for out-of-state travel and certain medical procedures
- Meet post-licensing training requirements
- Participate in the court process relating to the child, if requested
- Give advance notice when requesting the removal of the child except in situations where the well-being of the child or the foster family is threatened.
- Maintain required documentation

WHAT ABOUT THE BIRTH FAMILIES?

- Accept, cooperate with, and support arrangements made for the birth family and the child to have contact, including visits and correspondence
- Promote and support a positive non-judgmental relationship between the child and the birth family
- Provide appropriate modeling for the birth parents and family (shared parenting)

WHAT ARE THE STEPS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR BECOMING A FOSTER CARE PARENT?

- Contact US!!
- Ask any unanswered questions or attend our open house (held on the first Tuesday of each month)
- Participate in pre-service training (MAPP) - specialized training is provided to ensure that you have the information and skills needed to be a nurturing and effective parent. One class per week for 10 weeks. There is a total of 30 hours required.
- 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 can meet 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.
- Complete a home assessment: this includes home visits made by the agency social worker.

HOW CAN I AFFORD TO CARE FOR A CHILD, AND ARE THEY WITH ME ALL THE TIME?

- Foster parents receive a boarding payment to assist with the cost of the child's housing, food, clothing, transportation, special events, grooming, toiletries, and any extra curricular activities.
- There are funds available to assist with camps or sporting events if they are needed.
- Respite services are available to care for children on special occasion, if the foster parents are not able to do so.
- Children will have Medicaid to assist with their medical and mental health services.