

## Frequently Asked Questions

For your convenience, Child & Family Services has listed the most frequently asked questions and answers regarding foster care and adoption. For more information, please call (716) 882-0555 or [click here](#).

### **How old do you need to be to become a foster/adoptive parent?**

You must be at least 21 years old.

### **Do you have to earn a certain income?**

There is no minimum income requirement, but you are expected to have income to meet your needs as well as the child/children brought into your home. No foster/adoptive family should be dependent upon the board/subsidy payment for their own livelihood.

### **Do you have to be married?**

No, you can be single, married, divorced, widowed, or living with a partner.

### **Do you have to own your own home?**

No, you can also rent, but you must have adequate living space available.

### **What kind of assistance does the agency provide to foster parents in caring for children?**

Foster parents receive a per diem rate depending on the age and needs of the child. This payment is received monthly and includes a daily clothing allowance. Foster parents also receive mileage reimbursement for certain travel expenses. Additionally, all children in foster care are eligible for Medicaid to ensure cover the cost of medical and dental care.

Financial assistance is available for individuals and families adopting through foster care, including subsidies, tax credits, and healthcare assistance. As a result, many families adopt through foster care at little to no cost.

A case planner is assigned to each child placed. This worker provides support and assistance to the foster parent. Additionally, the Agency offers regular trainings and activities for foster and adoptive parents and their families.

### **Can you be a foster parent if you work?**

Yes. Assistance to cover the cost of daycare is available.

### **Can a foster parent request specific ages or gender of foster children?**

You may request specific ages and gender of children you think would fit in best with your family situation and needs. Families are specifically needed for children ages eight (8) and above, sibling groups of three (3) or more, and children with special needs.

### **Can I adopt a foster child placed in my home?**

The primary goal of the foster care system is to reunify a child with his/her family when possible. In the event that the child cannot return home or be placed with a relative, foster parents given first consideration for adoption if the child has been in their care 12 months or longer. The best interest of the child is the primary consideration when determining an adoption plan for the child.

**Can I adopt a child of a different race?**

Yes. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or nationality. Efforts are made to place children with a family in which they will feel most comfortable and which will best meet their needs.

**Are there babies or young children available for adoption?**

While there are some babies and young children freed for adoption through foster care, they are typically adopted by the foster parents who have cared for them. Most children freed for adoption through foster care are school aged, with a current average age of six/seven years old.

**Can I be a foster parent if I have a criminal record?**

Possibly. Each individual situation is reviewed by Child & Family Services. All adult household members over the age of 18 must have a criminal background check.

**What training is required to become a foster/adoptive parent?**

All foster and adoptive parents are required to complete pre-certification training. These trainings are offered throughout the year.

**What happens after training is completed?**

Once you have completed the required pre-certification training AND completed and turned in all required paperwork, a staff member will be assigned to begin the home study process.

**What is a home study?**

The home study involves information sharing and gathering to determine an applicant's suitability to be certified as a foster or adoptive parent, based upon state and agency eligibility requirements.

The home study is a detailed process which involves all household members. During the home study, all family members will be interviewed. The process affords an applicant the opportunity to assess whether or not foster care and/or adoption is the appropriate option for one's family. The home study process also provides the applicant and the agency the opportunity to mutually assess what type of children the applicant is best suited to parent.

**How long does all this take?**

The training and certification process usually takes between three and six months.

**When can I have children placed in my home?**

After your home study has been completed, it is presented for approval. Once you have been approved, the agency can begin placing children with your family.