

Foster Care Frequently Asked Questions

What are the first steps to becoming a foster parent?

Call and talk to a member of the Child Welfare Services Placement Support Team (PST) at (530)527-1911. Ask questions, request a packet of information and come to an inquiry meeting.

Is the foster care licensing process difficult?

No. Foster parents are carefully screened through a process of interviews and home visits. Each adult 18 years old & older residing or working in the home must pass a criminal record check, including fingerprints, and foster parents are asked to get a physical & TB test. We require 27 hours of Foster Pride core training along with CPR & first aid.

Why must a foster home be licensed?

For the child's protection, state law requires a full-time caregiver of a child to have a license, unless that person is a guardian or close relative. The license is issued by the Tehama County Department of Social Services, and regulations are established and monitored by the California State Department of Social Services.

Is there a charge for the license?

There are expenses involved in the process; the physical exam, CPR and first aid training and possible safety requirements, such as a smoke detector or fence around a pool or body of water.

How many children can a foster parent be licensed for?

It depends on the size of your home and your own family's size. Usually the limit is four foster children, or a maximum of six total children in the home.

Who makes a good foster parent?

Adults who care deeply about children. Someone who is consistent and who understands that routines help children feel secure. A caregiver that is flexible and can adjust to unexpected events, such as nightmares or tantrums. A person willing to learn new parenting techniques and someone who will take advantage of training opportunities to gain new skills. An understanding person who can acknowledge the child's bond with their biological parent, and who has a willingness to work with birth parents to reunite families.

Do foster parents receive information on the child's history?

Yes. We give foster parents as much information as possible so they may better understand the child's needs. It is important that a child is accepted in the foster home, and this can only happen if foster parents are aware and understand his/her problems. Of course, foster parents must keep this information confidential.

Must the foster parent accept any child referred to their home?

No. Foster parents discuss with the social worker what age and sex they can work with best, and placements are made within this age range. When a child is available, the foster parents decide whether they can work with the child; they have the right not to take any foster child whose placement they think would not work. We appreciate a thoughtful decision, even if it is negative. Our goal is to keep children in as few placements as possible.

May the foster parent see the child before placement?

Because of time and emergencies, this is not always possible. However, the social worker and/or PST Team may be able to help with a transition and pre-placement visits depending on the situation.

Can the foster parents receive help if problems develop with the foster child?

Yes. Each child in the foster care system has a social worker, who helps with supervision of a child, and Tehama County has a dedicated Placement Support Team (PST) for support and guidance to foster parents. Foster care works best when foster parents and social services work as a team to meet the children's needs. Many community resources are also available if problems arise.

How long does a foster child remain in the home?

There is no definite length of time. The goal of foster care is to reunite children with their parents when a suitable home environment can be reestablished. In most cases, this is the decision of the Juvenile Court, and reunification can take 6 to 18 months.

How long must foster parents wait for placement?

This is determined by the needs of the child, the abilities of the foster family and the suitability of the child to the foster family. Many factors are considered in placement, including religion, age and sex, schools, relationships with others, etc. It is desirable to have many homes with varying compositions, attitudes and locations to select the most suitable one for each child. Placements are generally faster in homes that can accept a family of children or older children with problems. Homes for children aged 12 and over are especially needed.

Do foster children visit with their parents or relatives?

Visitation is arranged by the supervising social worker in consideration of the needs of the foster child, the birth parents and the foster family (in that order). Visits take place in safe places like the Department of Social Services Office or the Family Contact Center at Northern Valley Catholic Social Services. Willingness to work with birth parents is essential. The frequency of visits is ordered by the court.

Can a foster child go on vacation or trips with the foster family?

Yes. Foster families are encouraged to accept a child as one of the family, and trips are excellent experiences for foster children. Plans must be worked out in advance with the social worker or probation officer, and out-of-state travel requires a court order.

Does a foster family receive money for the care of foster children?

Yes. This rate is set by the state. The amount depends on the age of the foster child. The money received is for food, clothing and maintenance of the foster child, not income for the foster family. There are also special care rates for children with more severe medical and emotional needs.

Is there a provision for medical care for foster children?

Yes. Almost every foster child receives a Medi-Cal card that covers most medical and dental expenses. This card is accepted by clinics, some local doctors and hospitals.

What about a child's clothing?

If the child does not have adequate clothes at the time of placement, an arrangement usually can be made for an initial clothing allowance. After this, clothing should be purchased from the monthly payment for the child's care. There is also an annual clothing allowance for each foster child.

What other resources are available?

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