

What is foster care?

Foster care is a service provided to families who, for a variety of reasons, cannot assure the safety of their children or parent them in a way that will promote health physical, social, and emotional development. Children live with Agency approved families until they can return to their own families, or until some other permanent arrangement can be made.



What kind of people are foster parents?

All kinds of people are foster parents. They may be younger or older; have young children, adult children, or no biological children at all. They may own their own home or rent; be a one or two-income family, or even retired. Foster parents are regular people. They are not "perfect" parents and they don't have all the answers. They just care about kids, are committed to "family," and want to help others through a rough time.

For more information, contact:

**Snyder County
Children & Youth Services
(570) 374-4570**

<http://www.snydercounty.org/sccy>



"The Greatest Honor"

*It takes a special person,
To be a mom or dad;
The joy when a child is born,
Is enough to drive you mad!*

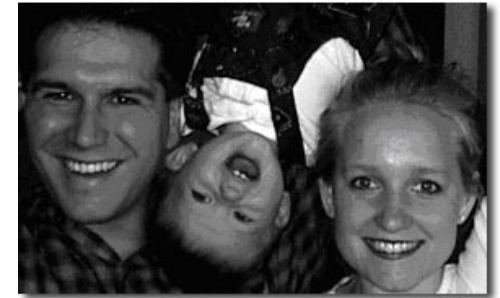
*Now when a child's adopted,
His family gets to choose;
The babe brought home to open arms,
A situation he can't lose.*

*Moving on to foster parents,
Whether young or old;
They take children into their homes,
And love them like their own.*

*They teach the children new things,
And how to trust again;
They show children the world out there,
Beyond the sorrow and pain.*

*Foster parents have hearts of gold,
And they often take the fall;
For this they have the greatest honor:
Appreciation from us all!*

- Wendi Sturgeon



Snyder County Children & Youth Services



FOSTER PARENTING



WHY ARE CHILDREN PLACED IN FOSTER CARE?

Children may be placed in foster care because they have been physically abused, sexually abused, or neglected. They may also be in foster care because their parents lack the parenting skills necessary to nurture and discipline them properly.



WHAT IS A TYPICAL FOSTER CHILD LIKE?

There are no "typical" foster children. They can be any age, from birth to 17. Foster children may be individuals or part of a sibling group to be placed together. They all have unique personalities and come from a variety of home situations.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO BE A FOSTER PARENT?

You must be:

- At least 21 years old
- Free from communicable disease or health problems that impair your ability to care for children
- Mentally and emotionally stable
- Able to meet your financial obligations and have a consistent source of income (not public assistance)
- Complete pre-service training
- Complete a home study with the Agency and receive a favorable recommendation

WHAT DO FOSTER PARENTS DO?

Foster parents play a vital role in the lives of foster children and their families. They do a lot, including:

- Providing for the basic daily needs of foster children, such as food, clothing, shelter, and supervision
- Transporting foster children to appointments, court hearings, and visits with family
- Arranging medical and dental care for foster children
- Role modeling positive parenting to the foster child's birth family



COULD YOU BE A FOSTER PARENT?

Maybe! Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- **Do you have a strong support system of friends and/or family?**
- **Are you a patient person?** Are you willing to continually give and very rarely get anything in return, except for the knowledge that you are helping a family?
- **Many people enter into foster care thinking that they are rescuing a poor child from an abusive parent.** These foster parents believe that the child will be grateful and relieved to be out of their home situation. This is rarely the case. The child's bad situation is his/her "normal." Be prepared

for the child to be anything but happy about being in your home. In other words, examine your expectations.

- **Kids in care have sometimes been neglected or physically, sexually, or mentally abused.** These children can be angry, resentful, and sad. They may take it out on their foster parents. Are you willing and able to deal with what the children may put on you and not take it personally?
- **Are you willing to have social workers in your home?** Can you work in a partnership with a team of professionals to help the child either get back home or to another permanent placement, such as adoption? This requires excellent communication skills on your part and a commitment to follow the plan set forth by the social workers.
- **Can you say goodbye?** Foster care is not a permanent arrangement. However, you and your family will attach to this child, so don't be fooled into thinking otherwise.
- **If you have children of your own, how do they feel about doing foster care?** Your children will have to share their home, room, toys, and parents. They sacrifice a lot in becoming part of a foster family.
- **What type of children can you parent at this time?** Consider the ages and gender of a child. You will also be given choices on what behaviors and special needs you feel that you can and cannot parent at this time. Be aware, however, that the Agency is not always aware of a child's behavior or special needs at the time of placement.
- **Do you have a lot to give?** Are you ready to throw a child his/her first birthday party? Can you help him/her decorate a first Christmas tree or carve a first pumpkin? Help the child to see that families are a great place to grow up and show him/her an excellent role model of health family relationships? Give him/her an opportunity to heal and grow?