

Who are foster parents?

Foster parents are special people who recognize the special needs of children living in a troubled family. With an investment of time, energy, love, and guidance, foster parents can make a difference in the lives of the children and families in need.

Individuals or couples can be licensed as foster parents. Foster parents receive financial reimbursement to meet the basic needs of the children. Children in the legal custody of DSS may also be placed with relatives that can provide full-time care (kinship foster care), protection, and nurturing. Relatives who become foster parents may access the same services for children as non-relative foster parents.

What are the steps to becoming a foster parent?

Visit our website or call one of our area offices to learn more! We look forward to speaking with you!

www.epworthchildrenshome.org

Epworth Midlands Foster Care Program 803-828-7724

Epworth Lowcountry Foster Care Program 843-670-4733

What are the different types of foster homes?

A potential foster parent can become licensed to foster children at a regular or therapeutic level of care.

What is the licensing process like?

The process can be relatively easy, especially when potential foster parents are devoted to cooperating with the agency to complete all of the necessary licensing requirements in a timely manner.

Licensing requirements include:

- Completed application
- Completed 20 hours of training
- Criminal background check, finger printing & check of the Central Registry of Abuse & Neglect for all household members 18 years & older
- Completed sex offender registry check for household members 12 years & older
- Enough bedrooms in the home to accommodate children in foster care
- Completed home study

- Personal references, financial information & medical reports for family members
- Successful fire, health & sanitation inspections of the home

Can I foster only a specific age or need child?

Yes, foster parents can express their preferences in regards to the children they feel more comfortable in fostering; however, the agency encourages foster parents to keep an open mind as all of our foster children deserve a safe and loving home.

Will I be able to keep my job if I am a foster parent?

Yes. It is very common for foster parents to balance work and parenting children who are in their care.

Does the child go to school in the area in which I am zoned or the school they are currently attending?

Typically, a foster child will attend the school in the area where the foster home is zoned. In some circumstances, the foster parent may be asked to help maintain the child in the school they already attend. For instance, if a child enters foster care during the last week of school or during the week of mid-term exams, it would be advantageous if the child could remain in their home school. These circumstances are discussed with foster parents during the selection process so that the foster parent can make an informed decision regarding their commitment.

What am I supposed to do when my child has court hearings?

Foster parents are invited to attend court hearings involving each foster child placed in their home. Attendance is encouraged but not mandatory, and allows foster parents to share information about progress with the court.

Is a child's background available to foster parents?

Yes; this information should be shared during the placement selection process. At any point a foster parent has a question, they should contact the foster care case manager that serves the child. Foster parents may learn a lot about the children in their care by participating in court hearings and attending Family Group Conferences. These are both great opportunities to learn more about the foster children and where they came from, to gain insight into the child's behavior and abilities.

What is respite care?

If you need a break, ask for it! Respite care is a support offered to foster parents as a temporary "break" in caring for a foster child. Depending on the situation, short-term placement with another licensed foster parent can be arranged for the child.

May I take a foster child in my home and then adopt him or her?

Foster care is temporary care. The goal is to reunite the child with birth parents or relatives whenever possible and child welfare professionals depend on foster parents to assist with this process. If the child becomes available for adoption, foster parents may apply to adopt. The child's best interest is the primary consideration when selecting a forever family.

What is the difference between becoming licensed by a Private Child Placing Agency vs through the Department of Social Services?

While the process is the same, the Epworth Foster Care Case Manager adds an extra level of support to the Foster Parent from the beginning of the licensing process all the way until the permanent plan of the child is reached. Monthly home visits provided by the Epworth Case Manager that assist the foster parent in accessing services, preparing for family visits, parent coaching and provides as the liaison between DSS and the Foster Parent. Epworth also provides evidence based training with provided child care, foster parent support groups and 24 hour accessibility to Epworth staff.

Is there financial support for the child I am fostering?

Foster parents receive a monthly board rate stipend for each foster child placed in their home. The board rate stipends vary depending on the age of the child and the special needs of the child. Foster children should receive medical insurance through Medicaid and a clothing allowance. In addition, Epworth Children's Home will give foster and kinship families full access to the Resource Closet. It is stocked with all kinds of items a family would need to support a child or children placed in their home.