

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can be an Epworth Foster Parent?

We license both single individuals and married couples who are at least 21 years of age. You may rent or own your home.

Is there financial assistance?

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. There is also a quarterly 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 children placed in their home. Foster children receive medical insurance through Medicaid First Choice Plan.

What is the foster home licensing process like?

The process can be relatively easy, especially when potential foster parents are devoted to completing all of the necessary licensing requirements in a timely manner. Licensing requirements include:

- Completed application
- 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
- Documentation- Marriage License, Divorce Documents, Military Discharge Verification, etc.
- Personal references, financial information & medical reports for family members
- Preservice Training
- Successful fire & health inspection of the home
- Completed home study

Do I have a say in which children I foster?

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.

Is a child's background available to foster parents?

Yes, information that is known will be shared during the placement selection process, although sometimes there may be limited information initially. 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.

Frequently Asked Questions

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 the foster home is zoned for. 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.

Foster parents who work will receive ABC vouchers to cover the cost of daycare.

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.

May I take a foster child into 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 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.

What is the benefit of working with a private agency?

You have Epworth's support from the beginning of the licensing process all the way until the permanent plan of the child is reached. Licensing workers walk applicants through the foster home licensing process and intake workers support families through the placement process. Once a child is placed in the home, an Epworth Case Manager will serve as a liaison between the foster parent and DSS. They will make monthly visits to the foster home (more frequently if the child's needs require), assist the foster parent in accessing services, and provide coaching. Epworth has an evidence-based training model with childcare provided, foster parent support groups and 24-hour on-call line.