

For information regarding foster care, contact your county or tribal social service agency.

# Foster Care

## Minnesota is proud of its foster parents

Every day their care ensures that children have food, clothing, shelter, but much more—love, understanding, and patience while children and their birth parents work through the difficulties in their lives.

Foster parents provide the stability children need. Day after day, their dedication, commitment and efforts make a profound difference in the lives of children and their families.

*Foster Parents make a commitment to children to help them feel secure in the present, understand where they came from, and build hope for the future.*

**Sarah Greenblatt**

*National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency at Hunter College School of Social Work*

## Foster families

Children need foster parents to provide a safe and temporary home for them when they cannot remain with their birth families. Foster children include sibling groups, older children, and children from diverse cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Foster parents are as diverse as the children they care for. Some are married; some are single; some are grandparents; some are parents with young children, adolescents or grown children; some hope to eventually adopt children. The characteristics foster parents have in common are a love for children, an ability to commit to challenges and a desire to make a difference in children's lives.

## What are some of the greatest rewards you have received as a foster parent?

*Getting children who seem to have had everything go wrong for them to smile again and to enjoy life.* **Woody**

*This information is available in other forms to people with disabilities by contacting us at 651-282-5329, or through the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529 (TTY) or 1-877-627-3848 (speech-to-speech relay service).*

*Making a difference in the lives of families and children*



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

[www.dhs.state.mn.us](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us)

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## Where do children in foster care come from?

Most of the children in need of foster care are in the child protection system because they've been abused or neglected. They have been traumatized. Some are coping well, given the circumstances, and others are in great emotional pain and may show that in their behavior.

In some instances, children in foster care have special needs, such as emotional and developmental disabilities; their parents need temporary support and foster families offer families that help by caring for their children.

## What are foster children's needs?

Children, like adults, may be depressed, anxious, fearful and angry. Some have medical or developmental delays. Many have delayed social skills or special school needs. All of them need stability and emotional support to build trust in others.



Children need foster parents to work with county social workers toward reunification with their biological families. These children and families also need the positive role models that foster parents provide.

## What are the first steps in becoming a foster parent?

Prospective families are encouraged to consider their own strengths and supports that will be there for them as a foster family.

County social service agencies will provide prospective parents with information on foster parenting, and training resources. Foster parents are expected to complete initial training classes.

The application process includes an inspection of the foster home, a home study of all household members and background checks for all people, age 13 and older, in the foster home.

When the application is complete and the license approved, foster parents will work with a county social service agency to bring foster children into their homes.

## What do you like most about being a foster parent?

*It has been a life-long challenge, but has been so rewarding, especially with the children in placement now. When you can see their progress, that makes it worthwhile.* **June**

## Where do children go after they leave foster care?

Most children are reunited with their families quickly. Some children need a foster family to care for them for a long time, months or years. Some need an adoptive family; foster families sometimes adopt foster children. Regardless of how long children are in foster care, they need the commitment of foster parents until they can safely return to their birth families or be adopted.

## Foster parents provide care in:

- Emergency shelter homes: Foster families care for children primarily in short-term emergency placements, usually lasting no longer than 30 days.
- Family foster homes: Foster families care for children expected to return home within one year or be placed for adoption.
- Special services homes: Foster families provide extraordinary care or services, by virtue of training, experience, or special skills to children with special needs. Special service foster parents can care for children who are delinquent or who have developmental or emotional disabilities.
- Permanency resource family homes: Foster families provide immediate care for children and actively support reunification with their birth families while committing to the possibility of adoption if reunification can not take place.
- Respite care homes: Foster families commit to caring for children for a short time, such as a weekend, to provide children's parents or caregivers a brief break from their daily parenting responsibilities.

## Foster parents receive support through:

- Training provided by the Minnesota Child Welfare Training System
- Foster parents who are members of a team, working together with county case managers and children's biological families to care for children's needs. Foster parents may also receive support and guidance from professionals in mental health, educational and medical services based on individual children's needs.
- Monthly financial reimbursement for care they provide to foster children.

