

Foster Parenting

Foster care is about ordinary people doing extraordinary things. It is about opening your home and your heart to a child who is not safe in his or her home due to abuse, neglect or dependency. These children need a temporary, safe and nurturing environment where they can thrive while their parents address the challenges in their lives with the expectation that the child and parents will be reunited. When this outcome is not possible, foster parents help prepare the child for adoption. Foster parenting is rewarding, life-changing, heartbreaking and joyful. Are you ready for this adventure?

Foster Parents are Heros Who:

- Care for children of all ages, races, and religions from all geographic areas.
- Meet the basic day-to-day needs of the children and work with the family's social worker regarding family member visitations, special treatment needs of the child and the hopeful reunification of the child with the family.
- Are open to a child's past, willing to adjust their parenting to fit a child's needs, and are vital members of the treatment team.
- Help the child heal from past experiences and to grow emotionally, psychologically and educationally.
- Enjoy the challenges and rewards that come from helping youth develop self-esteem and a healthy perspective on life.
- Share their hearts, their homes and their family experience.

Children in Need

Children entering foster care are victims of abuse, neglect, and/or dependency. Many of them struggle with emotional and/or behavior challenges that are the direct result of these conditions. These children have led traumatic, chaotic lives and have rarely experienced the stability of daily meals, clean clothes, help with homework or many of the things most of us take for granted. Some children are harder to place in foster care than others and these are the ones who most desperately need a loving home. These are children with disabilities, pre-teens and teenagers, and siblings who need to stay together to retain their sense of family and belonging. All of these children need a responsible foster family that will accept them for who they are, respect their pasts, and encourage their healing and growth. They need guidance, nurturing, and a stable environment where they can feel protected and safe.

Foster Parent Qualifications

Qualifying to be a foster parent is easy and it starts with:

- You must be over 21 years old.
- You can be married, single, or divorced.
- You can have other children.
- You can own or rent your home or apartment.

Next steps include:

- Meeting with an assessor from Guernsey County Children Services to help you decide if foster parenting is a good plan for your family.
- Completing an application and a medical form for each member of the family.

- Getting fingerprinted as part of a legally-required criminal background check that must be run on all applicants.
- Presenting references from people who know and who have an opinion on your ability to be a foster parent.
- Attending training classes to help prepare you to serve as a foster parent.
The initial licensing and training process can take up to six months.

Resources

As a foster parent, you are part of a community that will support you as you accept foster children into your home. GCCS has a variety of resources to help make the experience rewarding for both you and the child. This includes:

- A Foster Parent Manual
- Foster care reimbursement
- Clothing allowance for the child
- Medical, dental, counseling, and therapy services for the child
- On-going visitation
- Summer camp programs
- Respite services

If you are interested in becoming a foster parent, please call **740-439-5555**.