



Frequently Asked Questions

What is foster care?

Foster care is "out of home" care for children and youth who must be separated from their parents or guardians. Foster care is a temporary living arrangement.

How do children enter the foster care system?

The majority of children in foster care are victims of abuse and/or neglect. They are placed in the custody of the local Public Child Serving Agency by law enforcement or through court. The Public Child Serving Agency then places the child/ren in a licensed foster home.

How long will a child be placed in foster care?

Children may be in care as brief as overnight or until age 21. In Ohio, the average length of stay for children in foster care is 25 months. Each child's length of stay in foster care is dependant upon that child's specific circumstances.

Can I be single, employed, and a foster parent?

Yes. Your home situation will be evaluated and considered individually. Your circumstances will influence the ages and needs of the children considered for placement in your home. You must have the flexibility to meet the day to day needs of the youth in your care including transportation needs.

What is a homestudy?

A homestudy is an assessment of your family and home that is required by the state. Focus on Youth, Inc. will meet with you in your home to talk about your personal history, family relationships, reasons for wanting to foster, and the support you have available to you. Focus on Youth will determine whether or not your home is safe and has sufficient space for foster children. The homestudy is to help you and Focus on Youth, Inc. identify the best possible decision about whether placement of a child in your home will or will not work out and to determine the characteristics of the children whom you are best able to parent.

Will we have a choice to accept or decline a placement?

Yes. The final decision on whether or not to accept a foster child placement lies with the foster parent(s). A part of the homestudy process is to help evaluate your family's preferences, strengths and needs. You will receive training that will help determine your skills and abilities. You are encouraged to ask questions about the child's history and background to help you decide if your home and family can commit to meet the child's needs. We will help you make an informed choice based on your ability to commit to meeting the needs of the child.

What happens if my family becomes attached to the foster child and the child is reunited with the birth family?

Since foster care is temporary, most children will be leaving your home to be reunified with birth parent(s) or to live with a relative. Training will help prepare you for that day but will not take away your sadness of saying goodbye! We will be here to support you through the transitioning home for the child.

Will the foster child visit with their birth family?

Family visits are essential for the child and the family to maintain a sense of belonging and identity. The length of time and frequency of visits depends on the birth family's situation. Visits might be once to twice a week, once a month, twice a month, or never. The visits may be held at the agency or in the child's birth home. Some visits will be supervised by staff, especially at the beginning of the child's placement in foster care. A successful reunification can be encouraged through visitation.

What ages are the children who need foster care?

Children from newborn to 21 are in need of foster homes. Focus on Youth accepts children of all ages in family foster care and treatment foster care. There is a special need for families who will foster sibling groups and school aged children, especially teens.

Do children in foster care have behavioral, emotional, medical needs or learning difficulties?

Yes. In addition to being abused and/or neglected, children entering foster care may have experienced conditions that have affected their development. Some children may have more severe challenges than others.

Are foster parents permitted to adopt a child who has been placed in their care?

Sometimes. A large percentage of children in foster care are adopted by their foster parents. The process to become an adoptive family is similar to becoming a foster family; however a court must terminate the parental rights of the birth parents before a child may be adopted and before the adoptive process can begin.

What does the process to become a foster parent involve?

A Family Assessor will visit your home to meet your family and share information. To complete the homestudy process, you should allow 3 – 6 months. A homestudy includes but is not limited to:

- ♥ Completed and approved application
- ♥ Completed financial statement and supporting financial documents
- ♥ An assessment of your home completed by a certified Family Assessor
- ♥ 3 favorable references from non-relatives (4 for adoption)
- ♥ A favorable medical statement from a doctor for each family member
- ♥ An approved fire inspection completed by your local fire department
- ♥ An approved safety audit of the home completed by a certified Family Assessor
- ♥ Completed criminal background checks with no disqualifying offenses
- ♥ A completed Ohio Central Registry Check on child abuse and neglect
- ♥ 36 hours of Pre-placement training
- ♥ Any additional paperwork required

What kinds of services will be available to me at Focus on Youth?

Focus on Youth is unsurpassed in our quality of services. Our staff prides itself in being connected to our families to assure they receive the support they need. The following is just a portion of what we offer:

- ♥ Over 100 years of combined staff experience in foster care and adoption
- ♥ A nationally recognized therapy program
- ♥ 24/7 crisis intervention
- ♥ Foster Parent Advisory Board
- ♥ Experienced foster and adoptive parents and family members on staff including the executive director
- ♥ A superior training program

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