

Department for Community Based Services
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about being a foster parent...

1. How do I become a foster parent?

For information describing the steps to becoming a foster parent, please view [Fall in Love with Foster Care and Adoption](#), contact your local Department for Community Based Services office or call (800) 232-KIDS (5437). You will be sent a packet of information that describes the requirements for being approved as a foster parent.

2. Do you have to be married?

No, you can be married, single, divorced, widowed or be a co-parent. However, if you are presenting as a couple, both must go through the approval process.

3. Do you have to own your own home?

No, you can rent. But you must have adequate space available and your landlord's approval to care for foster children.

4. Can you be a foster parent if you work?

Yes. Extra help for the cost of day care may be available.

5. What happens after I have received my packet of information?

You should read through the information in the packet, then attend an information meeting designed to answer any questions you may have about foster care or adoption. Please call your local Department for Community Based Services office at the number provided in your packet or (800) 232-KIDS (5437) for times and dates of information meeting.

6. What are the qualifications for becoming a foster parent?

- Applicants must be at least 21 years old.
- Foster/Adoptive parents can be married or single.
- Foster/Adoptive families should be financially stable and have an income sufficient to meet the family's needs.
- Applicants must be able to provide a safe, secure and healthy home for a child.
- Foster/Adoptive parents must be in good physical and mental health.
- All adults in the home must complete criminal background checks including FBI, sex offender registry and a check of the child abuse registry.
- All applicants must complete training to help them understand the needs of children in foster care.

7. Can I get financial help from the state to care for a foster child?

To meet the needs of children placed in their home, foster parents receive:

- Financial assistance in the form of a daily rate
- Medical coverage for the children

- Daycare assistance for working parents
- Other assistance provided to meet the specialized needs of children on a case by case basis.

8. What are the different types of foster homes?

- Basic foster homes
- Medically Complex Homes – for children with medical challenges
- Specialized Medically Complex Homes – for children with medical and emotional challenges
- Degreed Medically Complex Homes – for children with medical challenges in which the primary caretaker is a health care professional.
- Care Plus Foster Home – for children who have emotional or behavioral challenges.

9. What is respite care?

The law defines respite care as “temporary care provided by another family or individual to provide relief to a foster or adoptive parent with the expectation of the child’s return to the current foster or adoptive home”.

10. What kind of training do I need to become a foster parent?

The Department for Community Based Services provides training that meets the needs of foster parents. Foster parents are required to receive a minimum of fifteen hours approved curriculum training and fifteen hours of pre-service web-based training to becoming a foster parent. Approved foster and adoptive families must complete a minimum of ten hours of ongoing training each year.

11. Do I have a choice regarding the children placed in my home?

Yes. We want to ensure that the needs of the children placed in the home are compatible with the strengths of the foster parents.

12. Can people on public assistance become foster parents?

Applicants will be expected to have an income sufficient to meet their present family needs and to insure the stability of the family unit.

13. Can I be approved to foster or adopt a relative, for example, a grandchild?

A child may be placed with a relative when it is in the best interest of the child. To be eligible for the assistance provided to foster parents, a relative foster home must meet the same requirements for training and ongoing approval as nonrelative homes. The majority of children who are placed with relatives do so outside of the foster care system, and the family does not need to become approved to foster or adopt.

14. Once I become a foster parent, are there other foster parents I can contact for advice and support?

Kentucky offers foster parent peer support through programs such as:

- The Kentucky Foster and Adoptive Training Support Network
- The Foster Parent Mentor Program
- Adoption Support for Kentucky

15. May I take a foster child into my home and then adopt him or her?

Maybe. Foster care is temporary care with the goal of reuniting the child with his or her birth family. Three out of four foster children do go home and it is important for foster parents to help the child successfully reunite with his or her birth parents while helping the child during such a tumultuous time. In the event that the child's goal changes to adoption, the foster family may apply to adopt. Many adoptions in Kentucky are foster parent adoptions. In selecting adoptive families, the best interest of the child is always of the utmost importance. Therefore, many factors have to be considered. For example, does the child need to be adopted with his or her siblings who may be in other foster homes? Your R&C worker can help you in deciding whether to explore this option.

16. Is a child's background available to adoptive parents?

All known relevant information about the child's educational, medical or developmental history is provided to the foster parent.

17. We have pets, is that a problem?

This is not a problem unless the child is allergic or scared.

18. I don't think I fit the typical foster or adoptive family model.

Actually, there's no typical model. Some of our foster families are single-parent families. Some have kids in their home while others don't. Some older foster parents have already raised their own family, but want to open their hearts and homes to more kids. Some are homeowners, and some are renters. Our parents come from all racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds and sexual orientations.

19. How long is a foster care placement?

A child's placement may be for as short as an overnight stay or longer than a year.

20. What happens when the child returns home?

A foster child's return home is usually the ultimate goal. The foster parent will have the opportunity to participate in the planning and to say goodbye to the foster child. This can be a difficult time, but the child's return home represents a success. Returning home is the goal for most children in foster care. You will play an integral role in helping the child and family successfully transition.