

ARE YOU FOSTER PARENT MATERIAL?

Here are some questions for you to consider before you decide whether you want to be a foster parent. Taking a foster child into your home and your family is a very important decision, and the following questions are designed to help you make the right decision for you and your family.

HOW WILL MY LIFESTYLE CHANGE IF I BECOME A FOSTER PARENT?

1. What goals do I have for my life? What is important to me?
2. Do I have the time and energy to care for a foster child?
3. What age child will realistically be best for my family?
4. Am I ready to give up some of my freedom or arrange my lifestyle to include a foster child?
5. Am I willing to spend more time at home and socialize less? Will I miss my free time and privacy?
6. Can I afford my own expenses, knowing that compensation for having a foster child will only be enough for the child's needs?
7. How will a foster child fit into my neighborhood?
8. How will being a foster parent change how I want to grow and develop?
9. How much time am I willing to commit to a foster child?
10. Am I willing and able to take a foster child to counseling sessions, doctor's appointments, court hearings and other regular appointments?
11. Am I willing to attend counseling sessions with a foster child?

HOW CAN I BENEFIT FROM BEING A FOSTER PARENT?

1. Do I like doing things with children? Do I like activities that children could do also?
2. Do I want a foster child to be "like me"? Should he/she call me Mom/Dad?
3. How will I view a foster child's different values and ideas? Will I attempt to get a foster child to accept my values?
4. Do I want a boy or a girl? Do I want one or more? How about brothers or sisters? Teenagers? What ages?
5. Do I want acceptance or gratitude from a foster child?
6. Why do I really want to take a foster child into my home?

WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT RAISING A CHILD?

1. Do I like children? Will I be able to put up with the noise and confusion?
2. How do I deal with my own frustration and anger? How do I handle other people's anger and frustration?
3. How easy is it for me to tell others what I want, need or expect from them?
4. How will I set my rules and enforce them?

5. Am I able to give a child the love he/she needs? Is it easy for me to show love?
6. What is discipline to me? Am I open to new ideas?
7. What will I do if a foster child doesn't cooperate with me or refuses to follow my rules?
8. Can I keep the information that I learn about a foster child confidential?

HOW DOES MY FAMILY FEEL ABOUT BEING A FOSTER FAMILY?

1. Does my partner also want to share his/her life with a foster child? How about my own children? Have we discussed fostering as a family?
2. Are we secure and stable enough to add a foster child to our family? Will this cause undue stress?
3. Are we both ready to give the time and energy to a foster child, or will one of us invest more in a foster child than the other?
4. Can we be a team?
5. Could we share our love with a foster child without other family members becoming jealous?
6. How will a foster child fit into our religious life? Are we willing to allow that child to pursue his/her own beliefs or to choose not to attend church?
7. How will my children accept a foster child into their lives? Do they want to share their rooms, toys, friends and parents with a foster child?

ATTACHMENT

1. How will I feel about a foster child being removed from my home?
2. How do I feel about the child's birth parents and the problems they may have?
3. Am I able to understand that a foster child still loves his/her parents and that I should not interfere with this relationship?
4. What does my family have to offer a foster child who needs a good, stable and loving home?
5. Which of these questions do we need to discuss more thoroughly before deciding?