

FACTS & MYTHS ABOUT FOSTER CARE

Facts about Child Focus, Inc. Foster Care

- Child Focus, Inc. provides foster care services to children age birth to young adulthood.
- Children in need of foster care services are referred by the county Department of Job and Family Services in which their birth family resides. Child Focus, Inc. accepts referrals from all counties in Southwest Ohio; however, the majority of children referred to Child Focus, Inc. are referred by Clermont, Hamilton or Warren County.
- Children placed in foster care typically attend the school district where the foster family lives; however, children who have special education needs may need to attend an alternative school setting where their special needs can be met.
- Children in foster care have a Medical card that covers the cost of health care services; foster parents are not responsible for medical care coverage or cost.
- Foster children of the same age, gender and developmental level may share a bedroom; each child needs their own bed and space for personal belongings.
- The goal of foster care is to provide interim care for children until their birth family issues are resolved and the child is able to be reunified; reunification is the goal.
- How long children remain in foster care is dependent on the unique birth family circumstances; children placed with Child Focus, Inc. have an average length of stay of 12 months.
- Older foster children and children with special needs who have not been able to reunify with their birth family often linger in foster care until permanency can be achieved; either the child is legally adopted or emancipates from care.
- Foster children who become legally free for adoption may be adopted by the foster parents; the foster parents are given first priority to adopt a child that has been in their care.
- There is a desperate shortage of foster homes at the local, state and national level; there are two-three times more children needing foster home than available.
- There is no cost involved with licensing as a foster parent and the process generally takes between 3-4 months to complete.
- Adults may be employed outside the home and be licensed foster parents. Employed foster parents are supported by a range of community child care options and an agency reimbursed child care stipend.
- Foster parenting is accessible to individuals and co-parents regardless of marital status; however, both adults in the couple relationship must be licensed and equally committed to being a foster parent.
- Child Focus needs foster parents to work with all ages of children; however, a dire present need is for foster parents who are interested in working with school age children, teens and sibling groups.

Myths about Foster Care

Myth 1: A person must own his or her own home in order to be a foster parent.

A foster home may be a single family home, condominium, apartment, or mobile home. Families who own or rent can foster a child.

Myth 2: A person must be or have been a parent to be a foster parent.

No, having been a parent or having parenting experience is not mandatory. Prior parenting experience is helpful; however, not having parenting experience doesn't prohibit an individual from becoming a licensed foster parent. Child Focus, Inc. provides comprehensive training specific to caring for foster children in the home.

Myth 3: A person must meet stringent income guidelines to be a foster parent.

No, applicants are required to have income from a stable source sufficient to support household expenses independent of the foster care reimbursement. The foster care reimbursement is paid to foster caregivers exclusively to support the cost of caring for the foster child.

Myth 4: A person must be young to be a foster parent.

No, the only age requirement in Ohio is that an applicant must be a minimum of 21 years of age.

Myth 5: A person has no say in the children who are placed in the home.

No, foster parents make informed decisions and give consent as to which children they agree to have placed in their home. Agency staff provide foster caregivers with all available social history information at the time a child is referred for placement.

Myth 6: Foster parents are poorly reimbursed for the relative cost of providing for the care of a child.

No, at Child Focus, Inc. foster caregivers are fully and adequately compensated for the cost of caring for foster children in their home.

Myth 7: It is hard to be approved to be a foster parent.

No, Child Focus, Inc. is in need of quality foster caregivers. Applicants who meet state and agency certification guidelines will be approved. The most important quality beyond meeting state and agency guidelines is "being dedicated to the health and well being of children."

Myth 8: Foster children are "beyond repair" and foster parents are not able to make a difference.

No, Child Focus, Inc. foster parents have the most influence in helping foster children heal. Foster parents can make the difference in a child's life by providing safe and secure alternative families for children until they are able to return to their birth families or achieve permanence.

Myth 9: Sibling relationships do not matter in foster care.

No, Child Focus, Inc. works to maintain sibling relationships and to place siblings together as much as possible. Maintaining sibling groups allows for family continuity and protects the children from experiencing further loss.

Myth 10: When a foster child is placed in a foster home, the foster parents receive no support.

No, Foster parents become part of the Child Focus, Inc. family and team when they are licensed. Child Focus, Inc. provides unlimited support and guidance to foster families and offers wrap-around services for foster children. Foster parents also receive 24 hour on-call support and guidance by qualified professional staff.