

Children & Family Services / FOSTER CARE & LICENSING

Foster parents provide a special service to children and to the community by providing love and ongoing care to children who cannot live with their birth families.

Children come into foster care because their biological families are unable to take care of them. Foster families provide temporary homes until these children can be reunited with their own parents or move on to a permanent home. Foster care may last for a few weeks or a few months, but it is almost always temporary.

Foster parents do much more than provide shelter and supervision. They accept the challenge of nurturing the children in their care by providing stability, acceptance, guidance and love.

Some parents are foster parents and prospective adoptive parents at the same time. These parents are known as Concurrent Caregivers. Concurrent caregivers provide love, and ongoing care to children who are not able to live with their birth families. These are children who the Court may legally free for adoption.

Requirements for Foster Parents

It all starts with the willingness to open your heart and home to a child who needs you.

There are, however, some very basic requirements that need to be met by all families interested in foster care, concurrent care giving or adoption. This list is brief and encompasses the most common conditions that must be met in order for a license to be issued.

- Your residence must be located in Contra Costa County and must meet basic health and safety standards established by the State of California
- The home must have sufficient bedrooms so that adults and children have separate bedrooms. Children may share a bedroom depending on their sex and age
- Rooms commonly used for other purposes (e.g., dining room, hallway or garage) cannot be used as a bedroom by any member of the household
- Each applicant must have sufficient income to meet his or her own family's financial needs
- A criminal record check will be conducted on each applicant and adult in the foster or adoptive home
- Adult caretakers must be in reasonably good health and free of communicable diseases, especially TB. TB tests are required
- Each licensed home must have a working telephone
- The main caretaker of the children or another member of the household over the age of 18 must be certified in CPR and First Aid. We can assist you in locating an appropriate class

Who Can Become a Foster Parent

You are over 18, in good physical and emotional health
You may be married or single

You can be same sex couple

You can be working parents

You can live in an apartment or a house

You need to have the necessary skills, stamina and patience to deal effectively with children who may have emotional or physical problems

You must have sufficient income to support your own family without relying on foster care payments

You'll need to obtain a state foster care license. That process includes providing references, health clearances, and fingerprints, plus an in-home visit from an agency worker

You'll need to work as a cooperative team member with other children's services specialists including agency workers, court representatives, health care professionals and community agencies

You must be accepting of the temporary nature of foster care. This means supporting efforts to reunite foster children with their families, or when that is not possible, preparing them to move on to a permanent home

Concurrent Caregivers

Concurrent caregivers are foster parents and prospective adoptive parents at the same time. Concurrent caregivers provide love, and ongoing care to children who are not able to live with their birth families. These are children whom the court may legally free for adoption.

Children in this program are foster children at the time of placement. Concurrent caregivers will be asked to cooperate with the reunification plan which may include visits between the birth parents and the child. These may take place either in or out of the home. If reunification with the birth family does not occur, concurrent caregivers may then pursue adoption.

Support and Training

When someone chooses to be a foster parent they become a very important member of a team of professionals who are dedicated to the welfare of children.

Support

Each child placed with you will have a social worker. Social workers, for example, play a key role in the foster child's life and are readily available to assist foster parents in their efforts. In addition to coordinating birth parent visits, court appearances, and therapeutic services, social workers are oftentimes a foster family's link to a variety of resources.

Additionally, there are groups such as the Foster Family Network (FFN). The FFN is a subordinate chapter of the California State Foster Parent Association, Inc. Generally speaking, the main goals of FFN are to inform, educate and support the foster family community in Contra Costa County.

Go back to previous page (Children and Family Services Bureau) and click on Foster Care Benefits to learn about the financial assistance that is also available for individuals who become foster parents.

Training

Before a child can be placed in a home, potential foster parents must obtain a license to provide care to foster children. The first step in obtaining a

license is to attend a brief orientation held by Contra Costa County Children and Family Services. At the orientation individuals can obtain an application to become licensed along with other information regarding the process of becoming a foster parent. This orientation provides a chance for individuals to meet and interact with others who may be interested in becoming a foster or an adoptive parent.

The next step will be to attend 21 hours of training. This training is designed to enhance the ability of the foster family to meet the complex needs of a foster child.

Foster Family Network

The Foster Family Network is Contra Costa County's local chapter #82 of the California State Foster Parent Association. We are a nonprofit organization serving the foster children of our county and their foster families, relative care families and adoptive families. Our membership is open to anyone who is involved in the welfare of dependent children including county licensed foster parents, FFA certified families, relatives raising their kin, county EHSD staff and allied professionals.

We currently have over 110 member families that participate in the many activities we have provided for them over the last 12 years. These include dinners, picnics, game nights, baby showers, interactive theater events, backpack give-aways, educational conferences and holiday parties.

We have received many generous donations from the community to help with these events. The FFN works with CCC EHSD Children and Family Services. Our FFN board members currently serve on many County committees including the Policy Steering, Recruitment Development and Support, Mentoring, Baby Moms and Visitation committees. They also serve as instructors for the Heritage Project (Options for Recovery) and the Contra Costa College System's Foster Care Education.

Visit Foster Family web site at: <http://www.ccfosterfamilynetwork.org>

[2012 Foster and Adoptive Family Orientation and Informational Meeting Schedule](#)

[2011 Spring Continuing Education Program Foster/Adoptive Parents and Relative Care Givers](#)