

IS PRIVATE FOSTER CARE FOR YOU?

Thank you for your interest in becoming a foster parent! There are several types of foster parenting options available to you. This document will provide you with some basic information on the various types/levels of foster care to assist you in choosing the level that will best suit your family.

DCF Foster Care

The Department of Children & Families (DCF) licenses foster families to care for children who are temporarily and/or permanently unable to live with their birth families. These licensed families are trained and supported by DCF Foster & Adoptive Services Units. While all children in foster care have experienced trauma, they all experience the trauma in different ways. In general, children in DCF foster homes exhibit mild to moderate behavioral issues.

Private Foster Care

Some children in DCF's care require a foster home that has more experience or training in working with kids who have experienced significant trauma. These youth often require additional services and support to overcome behavioral issues. In these cases, children may be referred to the private foster care system. DCF contracts with a number of agencies to train, approve, and support families for youth who require a higher level of foster care. Typically, these agencies work with older children who require enhanced care to meet their mental health, behavioral health, and/or medical needs. Because children placed through private agencies require a higher level of care, there are greater expectations regarding training, number of visits to your home every month, and cooperating with in-home or out-of-home services a child may need. Due to these increased expectations, foster parents approved through private agencies receive increased resources and supports which correspond to the needs of a child.

Choosing Your Partner: How to interview an Agency

Foster care is intimate work. **You should be able to feel that there is a good chemistry between you and the agency.** You should feel comfortable asking questions, satisfied by answers, and valued as part of the team.

Ask about what type of **training** you will receive, including opportunities for growth.

Ask about what type of **support** the agency will provide. Who will help you in times of crisis?

Ask about **your role** as a parent and how your skills will be evaluated.

Ask the agency **about the decision-making process to place a child in your home.** How much say do you have about the children placed in your home?

What happens if you or the child needs a break? Are there **respite** services provided?

If you are wondering, ask!

If you are interested in becoming a foster parent through a private foster care agency or would like more information, please refer to the attached contact listing of DCF-contracted agencies.

THANK YOU FOR WANTING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN A CHILD'S LIFE!