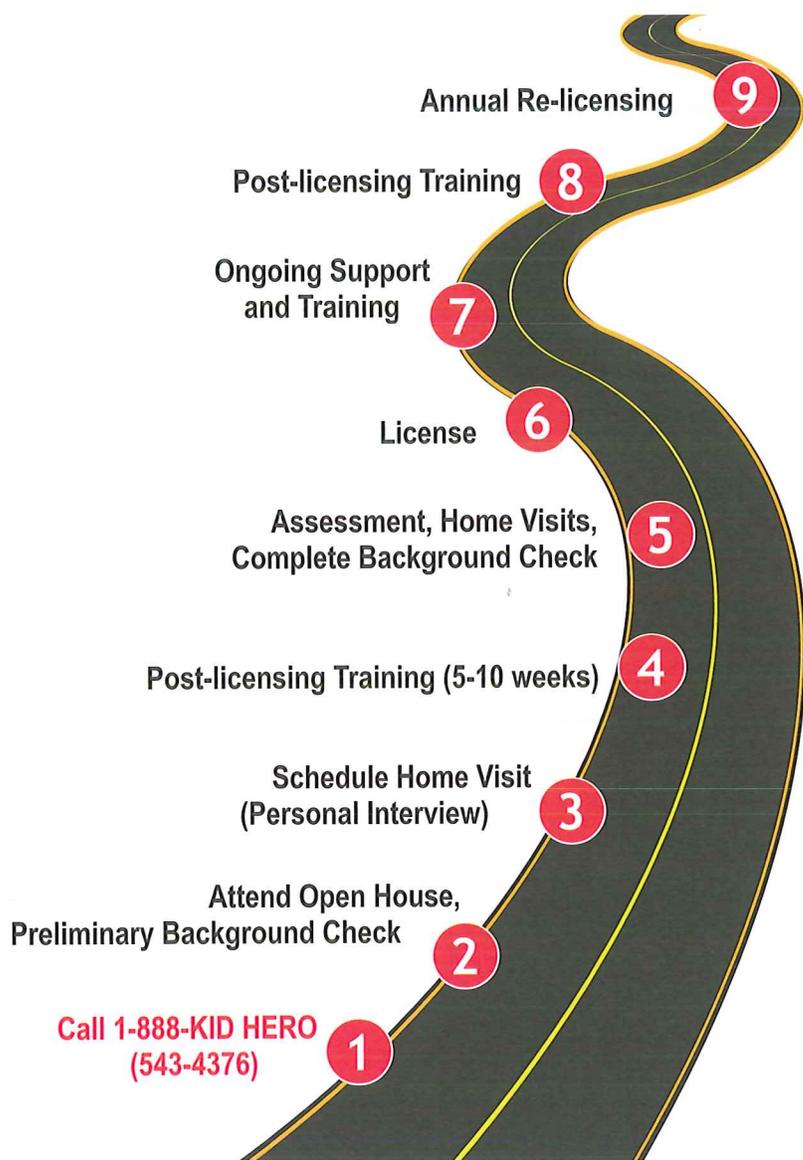
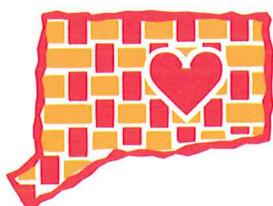


The Road to Fostering/Adoption

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- 1 Inquiry:** You express interest in foster care or adoption licensing. **Call 1-888-KID HERO (543-4376)**
- 2 Open House:** You attend an open house to receive information necessary to consider becoming a licensed resource. (Preliminary Background Check)
- 3 Home Visit Personal Interview (PI):** A home visit assesses the physical/safety aspects of your home environment and your motivation to become licensed. You have the opportunity to ask additional questions about the process.
- 4 Pre-licensing Training:** You are invited to pre-licensing training as part of your assessment for licensure.
- 5 Background Checks:** There are follow-up home visits and interviews, completing required licensing documents and mutual assessment.
- 6 License:** You are licensed to provide care to children entering the Department's care.
- 7 Ongoing Support & Training:** You're assigned a support worker. You attend support groups and post-license trainings. You access support services.
- 8 Post-licensing Training:** There are required post-licensing training on various topics.
- 9 Biannual Re-licensing:** Your home is reassessed.



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What is Fostering and Adoption?

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There are thousands of children who need adults to be positive role models. To teach them to ride a bike or bake a cake. To bring them to soccer practice. To help them pick out a prom dress. To talk about what happened in school today. And to simply be there and show that you care. Fostering and adopting are the processes by which the State of Connecticut connects these children in need with caring parents and families throughout the state. Parents who adopt and provide foster care say it's the most fulfilling and important thing they've ever done.

Fostering and Adopting in CT

As a foster parent, you provide a safe, supportive environment in your home for children who cannot live with their own families. Foster care is different from adoption in that it is temporary. Foster parents serve as caregivers and mentors as they help bridge the gap until children can return to their families, are adopted or move on to live independently. Foster parents are closely guided and supported by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and always receive financial support for the foster child's needs, as well as ongoing training and days of respite as needed.

Adoption is the process by which you become the legal parent of a child and assume all of the rights and responsibilities of a birth parent. Unlike fostering, adoption is permanent and requires that the birth parents legally give up their rights as parents of that child. DCF provides special training and guidance to adoptive parents as well as financial assistance for medical and educational expenses.



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Foster/Adoption FAQ's

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How can I become a foster or pre-adoptive parent?

To get started, call **1-888-KID HERO (543-4376)**. All families providing foster care and pre-adoptive care for children in Connecticut are licensed or approved according to the regulations of the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF). The first step is to attend an open house offered by one of our 14 area offices. At the open house, staff provide an overview of the DCF's mission, what we do and who we serve, our philosophy of foster care, and the licensing process and requirements.

How old do I have to be?

You must be at least 21 years old.

Does a recent marriage, divorce or birth of a child affect the application process?

Any major life change will be assessed on an individual basis. Sometimes a brief wait is encouraged. Families need stability before considering the addition of a child.

Is there an income requirement for fostering and adopting?

Your family must have sufficient income to cover expenses without the monthly reimbursement for the care of the foster child.

Do I have to own a home?

No. You can rent or own an apartment, single-family house or condominium. You need to have a separate bed for each foster child and separate bedrooms for children of the opposite sex.

Can I work outside of my home as a foster or pre-adoptive parent?

Yes, provided the daycare plan is approved by the child's social worker and is guided by the needs of the child.

Do foster or adoptive children have medical insurance?

Yes. Each child has coverage through a managed care company.

Is there a limit to the number of foster and adoptive children in my home?

Yes. The maximum number of foster and/or pre-adoptive children in the home is three. The maximum number of all children under 18 years of age in your home, including foster children and birth children, is five.

Can single parents foster or adopt? Can same sex couples foster or adopt?

Yes. Foster care and adoption by single parents, as well as same sex couples is permissible and supported.

How long does it take to adopt a waiting child?

The time frame varies, based on the needs of the waiting child and the type of child you are willing to consider. After placement, the average length of time from placement to finalization is six months to a year for those children who are legally free. The supportive services from the Department are available during the pre-adoptive time period to ensure that the best plan is in place for the child and the adoptive family.

Can I foster or adopt if I already have a child or children?

Yes, you can.

Are there certain health requirements for foster and pre-adoptive parents?

DCF will require physical examination reports from a doctor for the primary caretakers and all members of the household. Foster and pre-adoptive families must be physically and mentally capable of providing care to a child.



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Who are the Children?

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Children in need of foster or adoptive parents are diverse in age, race, background, religion and gender. While we need homes for children of all ages, there is a special need for:

Children Under Five

From newborns to toddlers, very young children require a greater level of attention, vigilance for their safety and developmental guidance.

Adolescents

For older children and teens, you come into their life at an important period in their educational and personal development. By caring for them, you help guide them toward adulthood and increased personal responsibility.

Siblings

Preserving the emotional and historical connection between siblings is a special gift you can give to children in need. Allowing them to grow up together rather than separated can make an important difference in their happiness and development.

Children with Special Medical Needs

Children with complex health needs typically are the most challenging to place. Stability, attention and love are critical to their coping and their development. There are assistance programs to help you and the child succeed in this important alliance. Additional medical training and support will be provided by DCF.



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Working Together

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It can be expensive to raise a child. But if you are a licensed foster parent or if you adopt a child from foster care, the State of Connecticut will help you every step of the way.

Adoption Costs

There are NO legal costs or fees associated with adopting a child from foster care. In addition there are no requirements that you travel abroad or any great distances.

Monthly Cash Subsidy

Based on a 30-day month and depending on the age of the child, adoptive and pre-adoptive parents receive cash payments to offset the costs of care. These payments are not taxable.

Health Insurance

The child receives free (at no cost to the family) HUSKY health insurance. The foster and pre-adoptive parents are eligible to purchase medical and/or dental group coverage through the State of Connecticut plan.

College Program

Children in foster and adoptive care may receive tuition benefits for attending post-secondary educational/training institutions up to the age of 23. (Tuition benefits are capped at the cost of attending a Connecticut State University.)

School Lunch Program

The foster child is eligible to receive free school lunches through the child's school system.

Respite Services

Foster and pre-adoptive parents can receive up to 14 days a year of respite.

Child Care Reimbursements

For foster and pre-adoptive parents, the costs of necessary child care are paid for by the State.

Federal Tax Credit

Families adopting a child from foster care may receive a federal tax credit of up to \$12,000 per child without having to document expenses.

Adoption Assistance Program

The Adoption Assistance Program provides post-adoption services to families who have adopted children from foster care. Services include case management, assessment, and in-home and community-based services.

Training and Support

Foster and pre-adoptive parents receive free post-licensing training as well as reimbursements for transportation and day care associated with training. There are also ongoing parent mentoring programs and monthly support groups and networking events so that foster and pre-adoptive parents feel a community of support.

In addition to services and support from DCF, there are a number of additional resources and organizations that can help you.

Connecticut Behavioral Health Partnership (CT BHP)

A program of The Department of Children and Families and the Department of Social Services, CT BHP is focused on addressing and improving the behavioral health of children in the state. Specifically, CT BHP seeks to eliminate the major gaps and barriers that can hinder a family's access to quality behavioral health services. www.ctbhp.com

Foster and Adopt Support Team (FAST)

FAST service provides assessment, behavior management, respite, support and other therapeutic services to foster and adoptive children and their parents. The goal of the FAST is to support foster and adoptive families through a range of services, allowing children to live in safe and stable home settings, and averting disruptions, if possible. The services broadly include: preliminary in-home child and family assessment, service plan development, behavior support; crisis intervention; respite; and additional service identification and referral/transition planning.

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