

# Foster Care Q&A



## Q. How can I become a Foster Parent?

**A.** Foster parents 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 agency's mission, what we do and who we serve, our philosophy of foster care, and the licensing process and requirements. CT FOSTERS staff will conduct an assessment of you, your family and your home and write a home study. The home study process includes attendance at classes and home visits by a social worker.

To begin this process, please call: **1-888-KID-HERO**. You can also check our open house schedule for the location most convenient for you.

## Q. Are there age requirements for applicants?

**A.** Yes, you must be at least 21 years old.

## Q. Who can foster?

**A.** Any adult, single or married, who is able to provide a safe, loving home to a child is eligible to foster. There is no discrimination on the basis of race, age, gender identity or expression, marital status, or actual or perceived inherent sexuality. Foster parents can be as young as 21 or they can be seniors. Parents may be renting a residence or may own their home. **NOTE:** All prospective parents must attend a series of classes which meet at a variety of locations and times around the state. The course covers a wide range of subjects that may be helpful in parenting a child with special needs, and includes a home study. In addition, prospective parents must pass federal, state and local criminal history and DMV background checks. In total, the licensing process may take 4 months or more to complete.

**Q. Does a recent marriage, divorce, birth of a child, death of a loved one or other major change/event in the family affect the application process?**

**A.** Yes. 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.

**Q. Is there a minimum income requirement?**

**A.** The family must have sufficient income to cover their own living expenses (rent, heat, electric, food, insurance, medical, etc.) without the monthly reimbursement fee for the care of the foster child.

**Q. Is home ownership a requirement?**

**A.** 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 rooms for children of the opposite sex ages three and older.

**Q. Can I work outside of my home?**

**A.** Yes, provided the plan is approved by the child's social worker and is guided by the age and the needs of each child.

**Q. Does the child have medical insurance?**

**A.** Yes, Each child has coverage paid for by the State through a managed care company.

**Q. Is there a limit to the number of children allowed in my home?**

**A.** Yes. The maximum number of children allowed, including your own, is six. The maximum number of foster children placed in the home is three at the same time.

**Q. Can single individuals or parents foster?**

**A.** Yes. Foster care by single parents is permissible and supported. LGBTQIA+ individuals are also encouraged to foster in Connecticut.

**Q. Can same gender couples foster?**

**A.** Yes. Foster care by same gender couples (both married and those couples living in the same household) is encouraged and supported.

**Q. Can I foster if I already have a child or children?**

**A.** Yes, you can. Families who have parenting experience are a great resource for waiting children. Some families foster children while their biological children are still in the home. Many families who have grown children may experience “empty nest” feelings and will foster, most often fostering an older child or sibling group.

**Q. Are there subsidies available for families?**

**A.** Yes, any family fostering a special needs child in Connecticut may be eligible to receive a medical and/or financial subsidy for their child. Children who have special needs include children with physical, intellectual or emotional disabilities, sibling groups, older children and children with complex medical needs. CT FOSTERS also has a College Assistance Program that contributes to the cost of college tuition for foster children who attend an accredited college, university, or post-secondary program.

**Q. Are there health requirements for foster parents?**

**A.** Agencies will require physical examination reports from a doctor for the primary caretakers and all members of the household. This does not mean that you must be in perfect physical condition. Families must be physically and mentally capable of providing care to a child.