

The Road to Fostering



1 Inquiry

Express interest in foster care or adoption licensing. **Call 1-888-KID HERO (543-4376)**

2 Open House

Attend an open house to receive information necessary to consider becoming a licensed resource. **Preliminary background check.**

3 Home Visit

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. **Personal Interview.**

4 Post-licensing Training

Attend pre-licensing training as part of your assessment or licensure. **5 to 10 weeks.**

5 Assessment, Home Visits

There are follow-up home visits and interviews, completing required licensing documents and mutual assessment. **Full background check.**

6 Licensing

You are licensed to provide care to children entering the Department's care.

7 Ongoing Support & Training

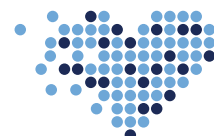
You're assigned a support worker and attend support groups and post-license training. You can access numerous support services.

8 Post-licensing Training

Attend required post-licensing training on various topics.

9 Annual Re-licensing

Your home is reassessed on a regular basis.



What is Fostering?

There are thousands of children who need adults to be positive role models in their lives.

Fostering is the process by which the State of Connecticut connects these children in need with caring individuals and families throughout the state. In addition to providing the basic necessities, foster families contribute to the comfort, happiness and growth of the children. Foster families might teach children to ride a bike or bake a cake, bring them to soccer practice, help them pick out a prom dress, talk about what happened in school today or simply be there and show that you care. Parents who provide foster care say it's the most fulfilling and important thing they've ever done.

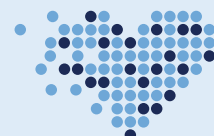


Fostering vs. Adopting

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. **Reunification is always the top priority** for CT FOSTERS and the families involved. When reunification isn't possible, foster families

provide care until the child is adopted or moves on to live independently when old enough.

Foster parents are closely guided and supported by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) through CT FOSTERS and always receive financial support for the foster child's needs, as well as ongoing training and days of respite as needed.



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.

Who are the Children?



Children in need of foster families are diverse in age, race, background, religion and gender. But there are specific groups with a more pronounced need.

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.

Working Together



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, CT FOSTERS will help you every step of the way.

Monthly Cash Subsidy

Based on the individual child and the family's need, foster parents may 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 parents are eligible to purchase medical and/or dental group coverage through the State of Connecticut plan.

College Program

Children in foster 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 school in the Connecticut state university system.)

School Lunch Program

Foster children are eligible to receive free school lunches through their school.

Respite Services

Foster parents can receive up to 14 days a year of free respite care.

Child Care Reimbursements

The costs of necessary day care for pre-school children 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.

Training and Support

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

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.

In addition to services and support from CT FOSTERS, there are a number of additional resources and organizations that provide assistance.

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

www.ctfosteradopt.com

