

Foster Parenting



7,000 kids in Kentucky
are waiting for
someone like **you.**

Learn more about becoming a
foster parent, call 1-877-994-9970
or visit www.project-match.org

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Making Appropriate & Timely Connections for Children

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240 Wells Hall
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Tiffany and Don's Story

Don and I were introduced to each other by a mutual friend after he moved from Texas to Kentucky. We later married and soon we realized that we wanted more children and our son Devin, my biological son from a past relationship, wanted brothers and sisters. Since I was adopted as an infant, adoption became a part of our conversation as we began to look into our options. In our search, we learned that some agencies offered foster care services. We weren't quite sure if we were cut out for foster care; however, our social worker was nice and we felt supported so we decided to give it a try.

That was over four years ago. We have since become a family of eight by adopting a sibling group of four: Carshay, Krystal, Cardre and Tay'vion. We will soon be adding Alexis to our growing family in the near future. She is the younger half sister of our adopted siblings and came to live with us shortly after the first adoption was finalized. We stay busy keeping up with six kids, spending our free time as a family boating and swimming.

We also speak with other families who are interested in foster care at the pre-service classes offered by our agency. We encourage new foster parents to be flexible and willing to change. Our foster care and adoption journey has definitely been a learning experience but the good outweighs the bad. Ultimately, we know that being foster parents has made such a wonderful difference in our lives and the lives of our children. What can becoming a foster parent mean for someone like you?



Funded through a Cooperative Agreement
with the Department of Health and Human
Services, Administration for Children and
Families, Children's Bureau.
Grant # 90C01040

What is foster care?

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Foster parents and foster families take children into their homes, and hearts and provide them with a safe and secure place to grow.

What should you know about foster care?

Foster parents are volunteers who receive a monthly reimbursement to help offset the cost of caring for children.

- Child care is paid for foster parents who work outside of the home.
- Medical and dental costs are covered for children in foster care.
- Teens in foster care are eligible for programs that help them learn life skills and may be eligible for college tuition waivers.
- Children with special medical needs are only placed with foster parents who have been specifically trained to care for them.
- The length of time a child will stay with you depends on the particular child and their parent's situation. It could be for a few days, a few months or much longer.
- The goal for the child is to reunite him or her with their parents. If that does not work out, many foster parents adopt children who have come into their homes.
- There are several agencies in Kentucky that work with foster parents. Be sure to find the agency that is right for you.

Who are foster parents?

Foster parents are people who:

- Are 21 or older
- Are single, married, divorced or widowed
- Are male or female
- Are straight, gay, or lesbian
- Are a homeowner or a renter
- Are financially stable
- Can pass a background clearance check

What is the process?

- You will need to fill out some paperwork.
- You will meet with a social worker who will talk to you about your family to determine if fostering is appropriate for you and your family.
- You will attend training to prepare you to care for the children who come into your home.
- You may need to take CPR/First aid training.
- Everyone in your home over the age of sixteen will pass a background check.
- You will have an inspection of your home or apartment to make sure it is safe for children and that there is enough room for a foster child to have his or her own space.
- It typically takes several months to go through the licensing process.



Who are the children needing foster care?

At any given moment in Kentucky, about **7,000** children are in need of foster care. They are:

- Children or youth who have been abused or neglected
- Infants with special feeding and medical needs
- Children with physical or developmental disabilities
- Children with emotional challenges
- Children of color
- Brothers and sisters who should stay together
- Youth who have left home or been kicked out of their homes because of sexual orientation or gender identity differences
- Teenagers who need families to guide them into and support them throughout adulthood
- Bright, kind, resilient, funny, creative children and youth who have had negative life experiences through no fault of their own



Sonny and Carol's Story

My wife Carol and I went to grade school together and were married once I moved back home from college. With dreams of having a big family, we settled down and raised our two boys, Brent and Dustin. As Brent and Dustin grew older, we realized we were getting closer and closer to having an empty nest. I was adopted from foster care when I was nine and knew there were other children in need of loving families right here in our own community.

Carol and I signed up for foster parent classes despite some initial concerns. We were especially worried about how we would handle it when the children were reunited with their birth parents. We learned that a child is only returned home when the children are safe and it is in the best interest of the child. We felt confident we would be supported by our worker through the challenging times.

We've been foster parents for over three years now and have been blessed to adopt a sibling group of three, Lyndsey, Elijah, and Madison. Having been in foster care myself, I knew how important it was for me to be with my siblings and we wanted to be able to give that back to the kids in our home. We are also in the process of adopting another sibling group of two and we recently welcomed the arrival of our first grandchild.

Now our dreams of having a big family are finally coming true. We stay busy keeping up with seven kids, but nothing beats the time we spend together as a family around a camp fire, or piled up on the couch on movie nights. For Carol and I the saying "the more the merrier" really has been true. We know that being foster parents has made such a wonderful difference in our lives and the lives of our children. What can becoming a foster parent mean for someone like you?

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Pat's Story

Once my oldest daughter was grown and my ex and I had gone our separate ways, I found myself with a lot of time on my hands. Instead of taking on a second job to fill the time, I decided to give my time, love and attention to those who really needed it... children in foster care.

That was over 15 years ago. Since becoming a foster parent, I've had the opportunity to care for children and work with families from lots of different backgrounds. Being a foster parent hasn't always been easy, especially when it comes to building relationships with the child's birth family; but knowing I've made a difference for a child and their family is very rewarding. I have been fortunate enough to maintain contact with many of the children who have been in my home even after they have reunited with their birth parents.

I didn't get into foster parenting to adopt, but along the way my three girls, LeaKeshia, Keera and Brianna came into my life and never left. Foster parenting has taught me that I can handle a lot more, even as a single parent, than I ever thought I could. Now my free time is filled with soccer games and shopping trips. I know that being a foster parent has made such a wonderful difference in my life and the lives of my children. What can becoming a foster parent mean for someone like you?



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Rebecca and Casey's Story

My husband Casey and I went to high school together but our relationship really didn't begin until after Casey returned home from serving in the Marine Corps. Once we were married, we wanted to start our family, but were never able to conceive on our own. We heard about foster care and adoption from a friend who was a foster parent and we decided to look into it as a way to start our family.

When we attended our pre-service classes, we learned there are many teenagers in Kentucky in need of permanent loving homes. At first, we weren't sure if we could handle a child older than 10 because we were so young ourselves and had never been parents before. But when our social worker called to ask if we would care for Jesse, who was 10 at the time, and his twin brothers, Daniel and Josh, who were 12, we decided to go for it. That was over six years ago we were blessed to adopt the three boys who are now 17, 17, and 16.

Going from not having kids to having three teenage boys took some adjustment but knowing that we were able to keep them together and seeing how far they've come definitely made it worth it. We may have missed out on some life stages, like potty training, but we've been able to experience many more fun times together for the first time. When we see them in their football jerseys with our last name on the back, we could not be more proud.

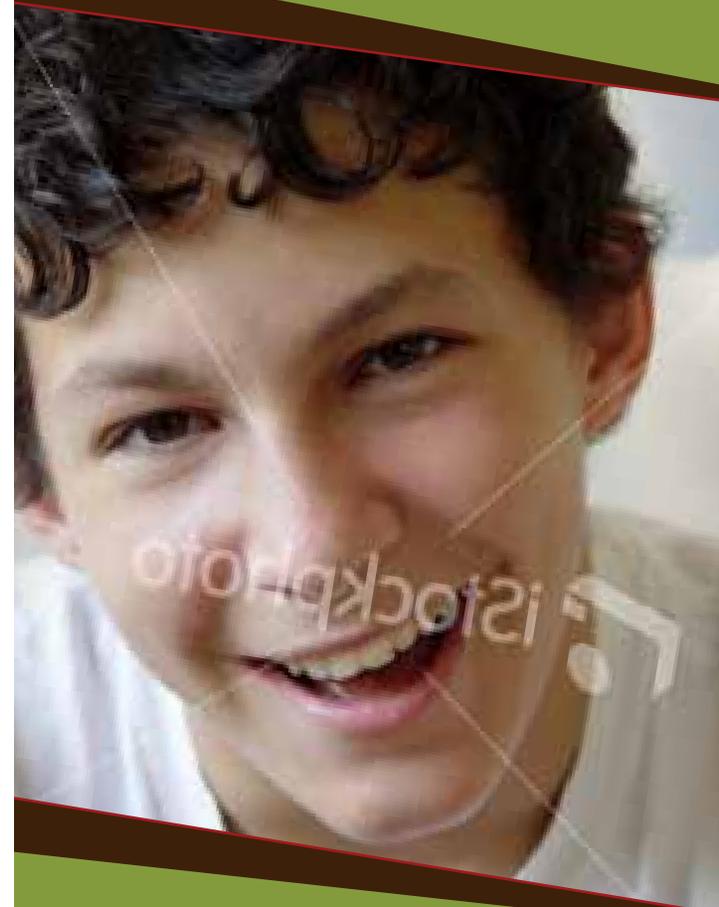
Recently we began the process of adopting two girls, Brittany, age 8, and Destini, age 5. Our faith and our family has grown as a result of our decision to be foster and adoptive parents. We know that being foster parents has made such a wonderful difference in our lives and the lives of our children. What can becoming a foster parent mean for someone like you?

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