



# Is Fostering Right for Me?

## Myth or Truth?



Becoming licensed as a foster home is a fast and simple process and requires no special preparation or training.

Licensing is a process that takes an average of six months and requires specific actions and preparation on the part of the foster parent. Social Services (DSS) staff provides the necessary guidance and support to move the parent through the process.

As a foster parent, you are on your own and no one really helps you. You never get a break.

Every foster parent has DSS and other professionals available to assist them with any aspect of fostering. Respite care is even available to give foster parents a break when they need one.

You have to be married and own your own home to be a foster parent.

You do not have to be married to be a foster parent. You don't have to own your home, and you can live in an apartment.

You have to have previous parenting experience to be a foster parent.

You don't have to have parenting experience to be a foster parent. You do need to have some level of experience in working with/caring for children. You must be age 21 or older and be healthy enough to parent.

You can't work and be a foster parent because you have to stay home to take care of the child.

You can work and be a foster parent. Daycare assistance is available for children under 12.

To be a foster parent, you have to be interested in adopting a child.

Fostering is not the same as adopting. The first goal of DSS is to reunify the foster child with their birth parents.

You will have to provide insurance for the foster child and pay out-of-pocket for their medical and other needs.

You will not need to provide insurance. The child's medical costs will be met by DSS. You will receive monthly financial assistance to help offset the expenses of caring for the child.

People only become foster parents for the money. Some foster parents require foster children to share clothing and other personal items.

Foster parents receive monthly room, board, and clothing assistance to help care for the child. However, it is not always sufficient to meet all the child's needs. Foster parents are expected to provide children with their own personal items.

You can foster as many children as you want at any given time. You just take the child next in line for placement.

A foster family can have a total of five children in their home at any given time. This includes the foster parent's birth/adoptive children and foster children. Every effort is made to assure the child and foster family are a good match before placing a child in the home.

You and your home will always be under the DSS microscope.

DSS and the foster family partner closely for navigation through the fostering experience for the benefit of the child.

*This document was produced by the Catawba County Subcommittee on Recruitment of Resource Families as part of the work of NC's Reaching for Excellence & Accountability in Practice (REAP).*



# What is Fostering Like?

## Myth or Truth?



Our family life won't change by adding a foster child. "It's just one more person!"

Becoming a foster parent/family requires adjustments and may come with some challenges. Most parents/families adjust well over time and experience much satisfaction through the fostering experience.

You can't take a foster child with you to your church or place of worship.

A foster child can attend the foster parent's church or place of worship if so desired.

Children in foster care are safer not being around their familiar settings, such as their usual school or church.

Being in a familiar setting can bring comfort to a child. Every change can be interpreted by the child as a loss. DSS works to keep most children in or close to their home community.

All children in foster care have behavior problems. You can discipline or punish a foster child any way you see fit.

Often the way children behave is their way of coping with the loss of their family. Challenging behaviors are often the result of unmet physical or emotional needs rather than willful bad behavior. Physical discipline is not allowed. Foster parents receive training on alternative disciplinary methods.

Children (especially teens) in foster care do not go on to be successful in life.

Many children who have been in foster care graduate high school, continue with higher education, and become successful in life and contribute to society.

Most children in foster care are teenagers and are African American or other non-white ethnicity. You have to foster a child from your own race.

There are children of all ages in foster care and ethnicity is representative of our county demographics. You can foster a child whose race/ethnicity is different from yours.

All children in foster care have the same needs and require the same level of care.

All children are individuals who have their own needs and require unique care and parenting.

The foster parent will be seen as the child's hero and they will not have to interact with the child's birth parents.

Children in foster care and their birth parents may have negative feelings toward the foster parent, especially when children first enter foster care. The foster parent and birth parent are supported in developing a positive working relationship for the benefit of the child.

Parents of children in foster care don't want their children back. Likewise, children in foster care don't want to be reunited with their parents.

Most parents and foster children want to be reunited with one another.

As a foster parent, you will have lots of children come into your home and move through quickly.

The length of time a child spends in foster care varies depending on individual circumstances.