

**Foster Care: Iowa County Department of Social Services**  
**~ Questions & Answers ~**

***What is foster care?***

Foster care is temporary family care when a child is unable to stay at home or with his or her parents. The ultimate goal is to reunify a child with their birth parents or relatives.

***Why do children go into foster care placements?***

Children go into foster care for many reasons:

- Abuse (physical or sexual), neglect, abandonment
- Illness, incapacity, alcohol or drug abuse by parents
- Inability of parent(s) to provide care due to emotional problems
- Special needs of the child (behavioral, physical or emotional) that cannot be met by the birth parent
- Involved in crisis needing emergency, short-term placement

***How long do children stay in foster care?*** It varies, depending on the individual case plan. Placements may be short term (weeks or months) or long term (one year or longer).

***What are the current foster care needs?***

- Emergency foster care placements for all ages
- Homes for children with emotional or behavioral challenges
- Homes that give foster or birth parents a break for 1-2 weekends per month
- Homes for teenagers moving toward independence
- Homes for sibling groups
- Homes for children with developmental disabilities
- Concurrent foster care (Concurrent foster families actively work toward the reunification of children with their families but are available to adopt the child if a return home does not occur.)

***Who can be a foster parent?***

- Foster parents must be at least 21 years of age
- Foster parents can be single or married
- Foster parents can be with or without children
- Foster parents can be employed or unemployed
- Foster parents can be renters or homeowners
- Foster parents should have excellent child caring skills or should be willing to learn these techniques through training
- Foster parents should be nurturing, committed and excited about providing a healthy, positive environment for children

- Foster parents should be willing to work as a team with social workers, birth parents/families, and other professionals to provide the best possible care
- Foster parents should understand the importance of reuniting children with their birth families

***Does my home qualify to be a foster home?***

- Each child must have a separate bed, adequate dresser and closet space, and at least 40 square feet of bedroom floor space
- Usually, basement or attic bedrooms are not licensable
- Children over six years of age cannot share a bedroom with a child of the opposite sex
- Must have adequate living space, housekeeping and safety standards

**Are you interested in learning more about foster care and becoming licensed by Iowa County? What happens next?**

- Contact the Foster Care Coordinator to request licensing information and an application packet:

Beth Enwright

(608)935-9311 ext 739

[beth.enwright@iowacounty.org](mailto:beth.enwright@iowacounty.org)

- Submit a completed application form and necessary background check forms
- Meet with a licensing worker in your home to see if your home meets licensing requirements
- Attend pre-placement training classes that provide an overview of the foster care system in Iowa County