

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)930-9824 ext 824
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