

You can make a difference
in the life of a child
in your community...



Illinois Department of
DCFS
Children & Family Services



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Printed by Authority of the State of Illinois • DCFS #442 • Mar 2024 • 2,000 copies
CFS 1050-25 • rev 5.22.24 at 15:00

Become a foster parent!

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How can a foster parent help?

All children need the love and support of a family to grow into healthy, productive adults. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) works to strengthen families, helping them provide that love and support to their sons and daughters. But when children are abused or neglected and cannot safely stay in their home, foster parents in the community can step up to help both the children placed in foster care and their families. Each of us has unique strengths and skills, and every foster parent can make a contribution to a child's life. Our teams work hard to match the needs of each child with the special strengths of each foster family. Some foster parents have a gift for working with adolescents or make themselves available for large groups of siblings, while others are inspired to help children with medical challenges. All foster parents provide a stable, caring and safe family home, and work with DCFS as part of a team to ensure that a child's developmental, educational and medical needs are met.

When a foster parent helps a child and their family, they also help their own community. Children in foster care do better when they stay in their home communities— and when they can continue attending the same school. When foster parents help a child maintain ties to community and strengthen bonds with family members, they are creating better outcomes for a child, and also creating a stronger, more supportive community.

Being a foster parent can be very hard work, but it can also be the most rewarding experience of your life. Many foster parents later adopt children they fostered, or keep in touch for many years with those who have returned home. You and your family can make a difference in the life of a child in your community!



How do I become a foster parent?

Foster parents must be at least 21 years old and can be married, in a civil union, single, divorced or separated. They can work full- or part-time, go to school or be a stay-at-home parent; and rent or own their own home.

To become a foster parent fill out our online interest form at <https://dcfs.illinois.gov/get-involved/become-a-foster-or-adoptive-parent.html> and a member of our foster parent recruitment team will contact you to discuss next steps. Please understand that becoming a foster parent is a serious commitment that may take up to six months. Background checks, home visits, licensing and trainings are required before a child can be placed in your home.

Foster parents receive a monthly stipend to cover the child's food, shelter, clothing and personal allowance, with the amount based on the child's age and any special needs. Each foster child receives a medical card that pays for most necessary medical care and prescriptions. Other support services may include counseling, physical therapy and medical equipment. DCFS also provides additional payments for daycare services, after-school care and extracurricular activities for foster children. Becoming a foster parent is an important decision and DCFS is here to support you in this critical work.

