



**IT  TAKES**  
**100% Heart™**

# Your Roadmap to Foster Care

*an initiative of:*



Department of  
Job and Family Services

*locally supported by:*

**Action for Children**





## About Us

Action for Children is the local child care resource and referral agency for Central Ohio; serving Franklin County, as well as Delaware, Fairfield, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, and Union Counties.

# Our Mission & Vision

## Action for Children

Action for Children transforms the lives of children by supporting, empowering, and advocating for the adults who make the biggest impact on children's lives—their parents, caregivers and teachers.

### What We Do

All children, nurtured by strong families and vibrant communities, have opportunities for quality early learning experiences that prepare them for success in school and life.

Action for Children



@ItTakesHeartOH



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Anyone who does anything  
to help a child in his life is a hero.

**Fred Rogers**



# Introduction to Foster Care

Foster care is the temporary placement of children with families outside of their own home, often due to child abuse or neglect. The goal of foster care is to reunite children with their parents or extended family.

# Types of Foster Care

## **Family Foster Care**

Traditional foster care is for those who care for a child, or sibling group, in county custody.

## **Treatment Foster Care**

Treatment foster care is for those who care for children with higher levels of behavioral and emotional needs.

## **Medically Fragile Foster Care**

Medically fragile foster care is for those who care for children who have intensive health care needs.

## **Kinship**

Kinship care is for family or close friends who care for children in need of temporary or long term placement.

## **Respite**

Respite foster care is for those who provide care to children for a short period of time (for as little as 24 hours up to a few days).

# Facts About

## Foster Care



**You can be licensed as a foster parent** by either a private agency or a public agency.

**Youth often enter the foster care system due to abuse and neglect.** This causes a unique set of emotional, social, and academic challenges for them.



**Youth often experience mental and physical health issues.** This includes grief, guilt, anger, sadness, loneliness, anxiety, and low self-esteem.

**Whenever you're ready a child is waiting.**  
Visit [FosterandAdopt.ohio.gov](https://FosterandAdopt.ohio.gov)



# Roadmap

1

## **Select an Agency:**

The journey to becoming a foster parent starts with selecting an agency. Once you've decided, complete the inquiry form.

2

## **Attend required preplacement/preservice training:**

Preplacement training is required for anyone who wishes to become a foster parent. *Step 2 & 3 order may vary by agency.*

3

## **Fill out the application:**

The application starts the official process to become a foster parent and requests basic demographic information, as well as historical data. *Step 2 & 3 order may vary by agency.*

4

## **Complete a homestudy:**

A homestudy is required as part of the licensing process. The basic elements include home visits, medical statements, financial statements, background checks, references, safety audits, and fire inspections.

5

## **Wait for a child to be placed:**

During this process, the agency will provide you with detailed information about the child including their characteristics, any specific medical, educational, or treatment needs, and the child's history of abuse or neglect.

6

## **Welcome your first child:**

Once all details have been discussed and your family is able to care for a child, a child will be placed with your family.

While each agency's licensing process can vary, these are the major steps you can expect. Each agency will also navigate you through any agency-specific processes.



Children in Your Community  
Need Stable, Consistent,  
and Loving Homes.



# Becoming A Foster Parent

Becoming a foster parent is a rewarding and serious commitment. Discover answers to many of your questions about the licensing process and preparing for your first placement.

# General Requirements



- Must be 18 years of age
- Must have functional literacy to be able to read and write at the level necessary to participate effectively in the community in which they live.
- Must be able to communicate with a child placed in the home, the foster care agency, health care providers and others working with the child and family.
- You may be single or married
- The household must have stable income to meet basic needs
- You can rent or own your home
- Background checks must be completed
- Your home must pass a safety check and fire inspection
- All religious affiliations are welcome
- Must be willing to cooperate with social workers, caseworkers, and the child's primary family members
- Must complete all required training



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Every kid is one caring adult away from being a success story.

**Josh Shipp**

# How We Can Help

1

Action for Children works to provide information and resources to those who are interested in becoming a foster or adoptive parent.

2

Action for Children will assist each prospective foster or adoptive parent in identifying an agency.

3

Action for Children works to educate each person on every eligibility requirement.

4

Action for Children will help with all unique situations and troubleshooting. We are always here for assistance and continuous support.



# FAQ

## **What is the difference between foster care and adoption?**

Foster care is temporary. Foster parents care for children while their primary family work to create a safe and stable family environment for them to return home to. Adoption is permanent. Children become eligible for adoption if their parents' rights are terminated.

## **How long does it take to be licensed to foster?**

It varies. The goal is to have a homestudy completed within six months of the date the family completes the application. During that time, the family has to complete several training sessions and documents in order to meet the agency's requirements.

## **Do I have to work with families?**

Every child and teen deserves to have everyone they love in their life. Foster parents have the right and responsibility to help support the child's relationships with their family during placement and even after reunification.

## **Do I have to be married to become a foster parent?**

No, you don't. Many amazing foster and adoptive parents are single.



## Next Steps



### Contact Us Today!

Visit [FosterAndAdopt.ohio.gov](https://FosterAndAdopt.ohio.gov) to learn more  
OR Contact Action for Children to speak to a specialist:

Keith Wollenberg

614-562-4714 | [kwollenberg@actionforchildren.org](mailto:kwollenberg@actionforchildren.org)

[Fostercareinfo@actionforchildren.org](mailto:Fostercareinfo@actionforchildren.org)

78 Jefferson Avenue

Columbus, OH | 43215

Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:00pm

Visit [odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/num/JFS01675/pdf/](https://odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/num/JFS01675/pdf/) for  
additional information about adoption.



# Thank You

Hope, faith, and positive energy can make all the difference in the life of a child or youth. Action for Children would like to thank:

The amazing foster families who help children in foster care heal and thrive,

The adoptive families who make an unconditional, lifetime commitment to a child who needs permanency, and

The countless social workers and staff who do the work of licensing and supporting our community's most vulnerable families and children.

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