

Requirements and State Guidelines for becoming a foster and/or adoptive parent in the State of Kentucky:

Requirements:

- Must be 21 years of age or older.
- You may be married, single, widowed or divorced.
- You may rent or own your own home.
- There are no minimum income requirements; however, applicants must have a legal and stable income that meets the needs of their family.

State Guidelines:

- Attend an orientation meeting and complete a basic screening questionnaire.
- Participate in 33 hours of preparation training that is held in the evenings and sometimes on Saturdays. These are referred to as MAPP Classes (Model Approach to Partnership and Parenting).
- Complete a home study with a Recruitment and Certification worker.
- Complete background screenings for criminal history or reports of child abuse and neglect.
- Be in good physical and mental health. A medical exam/doctor's statement is required.
- Provide character and credit references.
- Final approval from the Kentucky Division of Protection and Permanency.

Questions and Answers:

What are the reasons for a child to be placed in foster care?

- Children in foster or pre-adoptive care are often labeled as “bad” or “problem” children. However, this simply isn't true. In most cases, their circumstances make it unsafe for them to be living where they are.
- There could be physical, sexual or emotional abuse.
- There could be neglect which is inappropriate living conditions, educational neglect or medical neglect.
- Birth parents may have serious parenting problems because of drug or alcohol abuse, mental illness or other conditions.
- Some birth families may have a temporary crisis, like health problems or loss of income and housing, causing their children to need foster care.
- Abandonment or death of a parent; no other family to take the child.
- Some birth parents voluntarily place their children for adoption.
- These are circumstances that are out of the child's control and are the responsibility of the adult who is supposed to be caring for them.

Why is there a need?

- There are over 7,000 children in the Kentucky who are in foster care.
- The greatest need is for families that are willing to accept sibling groups and/or older children.
- Over 3,000 children are ages 12 to 21.

- There are only 428 foster/adoptive homes in the State of Kentucky that will accept children ages 12 to 21.
- Over 3,000 children are part of sibling group.
- There are only 1, 789 foster/adoptive homes in the State of Kentucky that will accept sibling groups.

Where do the children go?

- If there are no homes available in the child's home county they are moved to an available home in another county or to a group home. The move to a different county adds to the trauma the child is experiencing; in addition to losing their home and family, they are leaving any sense of familiarity behind.

Who cares for the children?

- Normal, everyday people.
- People who want to help a child in need.
- People who have the capacity to love any child, whether they give birth to them or whether the child is given to them.
- People who feel it is an honor to raise a child.

What's in it for me?

- You provide a child with a safe and loving environment.
- You help a child experience things that they may have never had the chance to experience such as being on a baseball team, dance lessons, or even going on a vacation. By doing this, you can plant a seed that their life can be better than it is now.
- You could be the one who helps stop the cycle of abuse and neglect.
- Benefits are available to families who wish to foster a child. Additional benefits are also available to children adopted from foster care.

To find out more how you can start the process of becoming a foster and/or adoptive parent, please contact the Family Enrichment Center's Adoption Resource Program at (270) 842-9032 or toll free at (866) 842-9032.