Thank you for your interest in fostering through Adult and Child Center!

You have taken the first step toward helping a child in need. Our foster families provide loving, supportive homes to children who have been removed from their birth homes due to abuse and neglect. The children we serve need people like you to care for them, give them a place to heal, and help them develop the healthy behaviors needed to be successful in life.

We are looking forward to meeting with you, and guiding you through the licensing process to become a foster parent.

The information enclosed details the licensing process, and gives you guidance on what you can expect in the coming weeks. If you have any questions, please give us a call at 317-445-3628 or email us at FosterCare@AdultandChild.org.

Sincerely,

Licensing Team
Therapeutic Foster Care Program
Could I be a foster mom?

This was the question Cookie Purvis asked, over 20 years ago. As a single parent and mother of 3 college-bound biological children, Cookie found herself in discussions with friends around becoming a foster parent. She hadn’t really considered the idea because she assumed her divorced marital status, “already raised” bio children, and recent relocation to Indianapolis excluded her from being eligible to foster; all of which are myths.

Cookie’s remarkable devotion to providing disadvantaged children with the feeling of family quickly drew her through foster parent training and she began providing short-term “emergency” foster care in 1990.

As Cookie’s confidence grew, she began fostering children for longer periods of time and her journey eventually connected her with Adult and Child Center. Adult and Child’s program focuses on supporting children with emotional challenges and while Cookie admits this presents a unique set of parenting challenges, she is also very proud of the success her foster children have found.

“I encourage my children to figure out what they like to do most in life and go do it. So many times, these kids come to our family having never been encouraged or experienced love or affection. Before any child comes into our home, we discuss it as a family, but once they are here, we treat them like family regardless of color, gender, or disability. We are just a family that has no love boundaries.”

Today, Cookie is married to Warren, and the couple continues caring for foster children. When asked about the challenges around caring for children who have emotional challenges, Warren referenced a t-shirt he owns which says “set no limits”. This phrase is much more than a t-shirt for Warren, it is his philosophy (Warren is the proud father of 7 adopted teenage girls). He proactively includes each of their (foster) children in family games, activities, and home projects regardless of gender, ability, or project type.

Cookie and Warren have lost track of how many children they have fostered, but they estimate it to be well over 40 children; 7 of whom they have adopted (and they aren’t finished). The Purvis family is truly a remarkable Hoosier family. Their ability to embrace and accept traumatized children into their family, without judgment, is encouraging.

“Whether they have a mental disorder, or physical disorder, or they are just traumatized, all these kids want to feel is safe and loved.” — Cookie Purvis
When children are removed from their homes for any reason, they experience challenges most people never dream of facing.

The trauma associated with abuse and neglect can affect kids for a lifetime, but we believe in the resilience of children, and we believe in the power of family.

We are asking families who will provide a nurturing and loving home for children to foster with us!

Are you ready to meet Foster?

317.445.3628

FosterCare@AdultandChild.org

In June 2012, there were 9,184 Hoosier children living in out-of-home placements due to child abuse and neglect.

When you foster a child, you provide so much more than a place to live. You provide care and support so Foster can heal and grow.

Tiffany took the time to meet Foster, and is glad she did. Read her story at: www.IndyFosterCare.org/success-stories/
Our Foster Families Provide “Therapeutic Foster Care”

As a mental health center, Adult and Child Center has expertise in serving children with a history of trauma and emotional difficulties. Children who are placed with us often require a little extra love and support. They look to people like you for healthy role modeling, a safe and happy home, and unconditional love.

Adult and Child Center provides extensive training and support to our foster families to ensure a smooth transition and a longstanding placement for every child.

What is Required to Foster a Child?

- Must be at least 25 years of age
- Must be able to financially support yourself without public assistance
- Parents may be single, divorced, married/non-married couple, or partnered couple
- Family Members must pass background checks, including criminal histories and Child Protective Services history
- Parents must have reliable and insured transportation, as well as a valid driver’s license
- Your home must have sufficient bedroom space
- You must successfully complete Foster Parent Training (weekend session)

Why Foster with Adult and Child Center?

Adult and Child Center will support you and the children in your care.

- Great agency reputation among foster parents.
- 24/7 access to emergency behavioral health services
- On-going licensure and clinical supports
- Competitive daily allowances
- Paid respite days
- Holiday and summer activities

Have Questions about Fostering?

Contact a Licensing Specialist at 317.893.0207 or email FosterCare@AdultandChild.org

Visit us online at www.IndyFosterCare.org to:

- Get answers to Frequently Asked Questions
- Watch a video about Foster
- Read stories from foster parents

“We other things may change us, but we start and end with family.”
Adult and Child Center provides training for new foster parents at no cost. This training prepares you to care for foster children, while meeting the state’s requirements.

Adult and Child staff provides all the training you need to become licensed, including: Resource and Adoptive Parent Training, Therapeutic Orientation, CPR and First Aid.

Snacks and drinks are provided during the full-day trainings; please make plans for your noon meals.

Training FAQs

Does my spouse/partner need to attend the pre-service training?

**YES.** The State of Indiana regulations require both spouses/partners attend.

Do I need to attend all 20 hours of training to become licensed?

**YES.** The State of Indiana stipulates that all newly licensed foster parents with a “therapeutic certificate” complete 20 hours of training. Missed classes may be made up during the next scheduled course. There are no “special” make-up classes offered.

I’m already certified in First Aid, CPR, and Universal Precautions. Do I need to attend that training?

**NO.** Please provide documentation showing your certification is current.

Please contact us for our next pre-service training dates!
Many of the most commonly asked questions are answered below. We know that you will have many questions about becoming a foster parent, beyond what is shared here. We will address many of your questions during pre-service training. If you would like to talk with us before you attend training, please call us at 317-445-3628.

**What is Therapeutic Foster Care?**
Therapeutic Foster Care, also known as “Treatment” foster care, is a level of foster care that provides care, nurturing, and services to children believed to have significant emotional and behavioral needs.

**Why do you need more foster families?**
There are many reasons more families are needed. It is common for our current families to reach the state’s allowable “maximum” capacity, and not be able to take additional children. In addition, the more families available, the greater the likelihood we can place siblings together. And, the more diverse our foster family base is, the better we can match a child’s needs to a family. The more families we have dispersed throughout our services areas, the more likely we can place children in or near their own communities and avoid disrupting positive familiar connections for the child, like schools, peers, and positive role models.

**What is my role as a foster parent?**
Foster parents provide a safe, nurturing, and usually temporary home for children who have been removed from their home due to abuse or neglect. Foster parents care for children, with a goal to help them safely reunify with their families.

**Who can become a licensed foster parent?**
Following are the minimum standards that a home must meet in order to become a licensed therapeutic foster home with Adult & Child: parents must be at least 25 years of age; parents must be able to financially support themselves without public assistance; parents may be single, divorced, married/non-married couple, or partnered couple; all residents of the household, age 18 and older, must pass local, state, national criminal background checks, and all household members must have clear Child Protective Services checks; parents must have reliable and insured transportation, as well as, a valid driver’s license; your home must have sufficient bedroom space.

**How much does it cost to become a licensed foster parent?**
Adult and Child Center covers the majority of the costs associated with licensing (approximately $1,000 for training, background checks, and the home study, and other investments for a typical two-parent family). Potential foster parents are responsible for the cost of the health screening for all household members. There may also be a minimal charge for local background checks.
How long does it take to become a licensed foster parent?
The licensing process can be completed in 3 months or less.

What should I expect after my license is approved?
Our goal is to match your home to the child whose needs and profile are the best fit. We use a specialized matching process when placing foster children. Recognizing that every child is unique, and has unique needs, we work to match the child with staff and families who are best prepared to meet those needs.

Could you describe the “typical” foster child?
Children in foster care are as diverse and unique as the children living in your community. They are individuals of varying likes, dislikes, ethnic backgrounds, talents, interests, intellect, and needs. The common thread that links children in foster care is their exposure to trauma which usually leads to psychological, emotional, and/or behavioral challenges. Their response to abuse and/or neglect is a shift in their brain’s perception to survive in a hazardous world. Children who have shifted into this “survival” mode will take a great deal of effort and nurturing to help them feel safe and secure.

I already have kids. How will fostering impact them?
Children are impacted in very different ways, depending on the age of your child, sensitivity to change, resilience, capacity to share, gender, and even their own special needs. Some children are very receptive to new children coming into your home and others may need time to adjust to the impact that adding another child creates. This sometimes disrupts the birth-order (age sequence or rank) of your own children, when a foster child enters the family. Children who are excited to be a foster family during the application process may not be fully prepared for the reality of sharing their space, belongings, and family (parents, siblings, and extended family). They may need time to adapt to their new foster sibling, just as an “only child” would need to learn their role as “the oldest” when a newborn sibling arrives. With time, they will develop bonded relationships that are similar to that of step-siblings (including normal feelings of care, concern, jealousy, anger, joy, and sibling defense). It is imperative that your children have a voice in the decision to be a foster family. They should also be included in selecting the matching criteria of children you would like to provide care for (such as age range, gender, etc.).

What supports does Adult and Child Center provide?
Adult and Child Center provides both financial and sustaining supports. Foster families receive a competitive daily allowance; paid respite days; mileage reimbursement; 24/7 access to emergency behavioral health services; support to maintain their license; and more.

Learn more about how we support foster families online at www.IndyFosterCare.org.