

# Frequently Asked Questions

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 317-893-0207.

## 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; 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.

We license a wide variety of foster parents because we believe this diversity will provide the best placements for kids. We encourage and support foster parents regardless of race, religion, socioeconomic status, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender.



Want to know more?  
**ask Foster**  
staff and parents to tell  
you about fostering.  
Call us today, or find  
their stories at  
[www.IndyFosterCare.org/  
foster-stories](http://www.IndyFosterCare.org/foster-stories)

### **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 typically take 2-3 months. It is driven by your engagement in the process.

### **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](http://www.IndyFosterCare.org).