Who can be a foster parent?

Foster parents can be married or single, can live in the city, suburbs or country, can be working or retired. If you are an Illinois resident and can answer yes to all of the following questions, you may be eligible to become an LCFS foster parent:

- Are you at least 21 years old?
- Are you willing to submit to a criminal background check?
- Are you financially able to care for yourself and your own family?
- Are you in good health?
- Are you able to meet the demands of children on a 24-hour basis?

How to become a foster parent

Contact LCFS at 800-363-5237 or lcfs_info@lcfs.org to begin the process. A packet of information will be sent to you as well as an invitation to attend an informational meeting. You will need to complete an application, have a medical evaluation completed by your personal physician and participate in a training series. In addition, the law requires that a criminal background check be conducted on all applicants, which means you will be fingerprinted. References will also be checked and an agency employee will be visiting you and your family in your home.
Consider becoming an LCFS foster parent

There is always a great need for loving and stable foster homes in Illinois, especially for older children and sibling groups.

If you have heard too many news stories about abused and neglected children and have wondered, “What can I do to help them?” LCFS can help you become a licensed foster parent. We also provide follow-up training and support as you open your home to one or more children in need of care.

To learn more about becoming a foster parent, visit www.lcfs.org/Foster or contact us 800-363-5237 or lcfs_info@lcfs.org.

What is foster parenting?

There are times when, for various reasons, a child must be separated from his/her birth parents. When this occurs, the child is placed with a foster family. When possible, the child is reunited with his/her birth family. When that is not appropriate, steps are taken to identify a “forever” family for the child.

Being a foster parent requires commitment, patience and hard work. Foster parents are asked to develop trusting relationships with the children and youth in their care and to support and work with birth parents in their effort to reunite with their children. Visits between birth parents and children are an essential part of reuniting families. Foster parents may be involved in visits by transporting children to and from visits, supervising visits and possibly hosting visits in their homes.

There is nothing like giving a child a second chance or working with a birth parent to overcome his/her personal barriers and become a better parent.

What kind of children need foster families?

There are many types of children who need foster families. However, LCFS particularly needs families who are interested in parenting:

- Children with special medical needs
- Adolescents
- Sibling groups
- Adolescents and children with mental-health needs
- Adolescents who are dually involved with the criminal-justice system

“We feel blessed to be foster parents and share our home with children who need love and attention. To watch a youngster blossom and grow in your care is truly a miracle.”

— LCFS FOSTER PARENTS