Foster Care

If you’d like to become a foster parent, you must meet some basic requirements.

The checklist:

- I’m at least 21.
- I have sufficient income to financially support children and pay for shelter.
- I do not have physical, emotional, or mental conditions that could impair my ability to care for a child.
- No one residing in my home has a physical, emotional, or mental condition that would endanger a child.
- At least one person in my home can read, write, and speak English or communicate effectively with a foster child and the child welfare agency staff.
- No adult (person 18 years or older) living in my home has been convicted of, or pleaded guilty to, any of the offenses listed in Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-7-02(J), with some exceptions.
- In the case that there is a child (person between the ages of 12 and 17 and 364 days) living in my home that has been convicted of, or pleaded guilty to, any of the offenses listed in Ohio Revised Code 5103.0319, I have notified the child welfare agency.
- I have not had my foster care license revoked in Ohio or another state within the past five years.

If you meet these requirements, you can choose to be a foster parent for either a county public children services agency or a private foster care agency.

Prospective foster parents should research and reach out to several agencies to learn more about their programs and services and how they support youths and families.

To become a foster parent, complete the following steps:

- Contact the agency for which you would like to serve as a foster parent.

- Complete the agency’s application process. Most agencies will conduct a home study, which could include:
  
  - Personal interviews; home visits; a request for health records, financial statements, a personal statement, and character references; educational training; a search of the statewide automated child welfare information system; a safety audit; and a water test.

- Complete a background check. Prospective foster caregivers can request expedited processing of their background check from the Ohio Attorney General’s Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) by sending an email to FosterCheck@OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov.

- Have a licensed medical professional fill out a medical statement for each member of your household. To print the statement, visit www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/file.asp?id=495&type=application/pdf.

- Arrange for a home safety inspection by a certified state fire safety inspector or the Ohio Fire Marshal’s office. To reach the fire marshal, visit www.com.ohio.gov/fire.

- Take part in a home study, which can be performed by your licensing agency.

- Complete preplacement training (a minimum of 36 hours), which is offered by your licensing agency or through a regional training center. To find the closest training center, visit http://ocwtp.net/RTCs.htm. To find out more about training, visit http://ocwtp.net/Trainee%20Resources.htm#Preservice.