

Frequently Asked Questions About Foster Parenting

What is the goal of foster care?

Foster care provides a safe and caring environment for a child on a temporary basis. The goal is ultimately to reunite the child with his or her family whenever possible.

Who can be a foster parent?

Foster parents can be couples or singles from diverse backgrounds, with or without children of their own. They must be able to provide a safe, stable and nurturing environment for a child temporarily in need of care.

I am a day care provider, can I still foster?

You may still be able to foster. This may depend on the number of children in your day care. Being a day care provider must not hinder your ability to meet the needs of children placed in your care.

How long do children usually stay in care?

Foster children may be in care for a few days to many years. The average length of stay is six months.

How old are the children that require foster care?

Halton CAS provides care for children from infancy to the age of 18.

Can foster parents specify ages, etc of the children that they willing to foster?

Foster parents may choose to take only male or female children, may specify the age range, and may list the types of behaviours they feel they can manage.

Are foster parents paid?

Foster parents receive tax-free "room and board" rate. The rate may be higher for children with more demanding needs. The Agency also covers the cost of clothes, medication and similar expenses.

What are the benefits of foster parenting?

Foster parenting can be rewarding. It makes a real difference in the life of a child. It is a challenging job, but most foster families find it satisfying.

How does fostering affect the other children in the family?

Fostering is truly a family affair. Your children must be involved in making the decision to foster. Some children can readily share their parents, and some will only tolerate the addition of another child in their home. As parents, you are best able to determine how fostering will affect your own children.

Many foster parents report that fostering has helped their children become more compassionate towards others. A foster child may also bring behaviours such as swearing, that may be new and confusing to your child.

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What is the most difficult part of foster parenting?

Foster parents generally agree that the hardest part is saying goodbye to a child, who is returning to his or her family, or moving onto adoption. Some foster parents express concerns about decisions made by the court. They worry that the child is being returned too soon.

What supports are available to foster parents?

New applicants are required to complete a Pre-Serving Training Programme prior to approval. Foster parents are expected to continue to develop their knowledge and skills through training offered by the Agency and the Community.

All foster parents are assigned a Resource Worker to assist with any difficulties. Foster parents are expected to attend support groups held at the Agency.

Halton foster parents have a formal Foster Parent Association. The FPA has many functions, but one is to assist new foster families.

What if foster families are having difficulties managing the care of a child?

Discussing the problems with the child's Social Worker is the first step. He or she can offer advice and sometimes services to assist with the problems. Sometimes a move to a more appropriate placement is required. This is an option that can be explored when necessary.