

Therapeutic Foster Care FAQ's

What is Therapeutic Foster Care?

Therapeutic Foster Care is out-of-home placement for children in the custody of a local Department of Social Services who need more treatment and supervision than can be provided at the county level, but which is less restrictive than residential placement.

Why should I become a foster parent with Kinship Family and Youth?

Our agency provides foster parents:

- 24-hour support/seven days a week
- Respite arrangements to give you a break
- Intensive precertification preparation & training (MAPP/GPS II)
- Monthly post-certification training on topics relevant to foster care population
- Tax-free room and board payments paid monthly
- Reimbursement for travel on behalf of the child(ren) in your home

Can I be a foster parent for a county Department of Social Services and Kinship?

You may only be certified by one agency or department.

What if I am already certified by another agency and want to transfer to Kinship?

You may do so but first you must contact your current agency and request to have your certification transferred, and sign a release of information to do so.

What are the rewards of foster parenting?

Rewards can include a sense of accomplishment, the chance to help children feel good about themselves, the opportunity to meet and work with new people, and the chance to make a lifetime of difference in a relative short period of time in a child's/family's life.

What are the basic requirements to be certified as a foster parent through Kinship Family & Youth?

All kinds of people can be foster parents – single, married, retired, working, those living in the country or a city. Many of our foster families have at least one parent working outside the home. You **must**:

- have extra room for the foster child/ren
- have enough money to cover your own expenses each month
- be able to get a physician's referral
- be at least 21 years of age
- have a NYS driver's license
- have a reliable automobile available at all times
- have NO Child Protective history that would prohibit you from contact with children (and pertains to anyone over age 18 in your household)
- have NO criminal history that would exclude you from eligibility to become certified (also same for anyone over age 18 in your home)
- have homeowner's or renter's insurance coverage
- have adequate liability coverage on your auto insurance
- have pets vaccinated and provide verification
- have your well water tested, where applicable
- be willing to work with birth parents of youth placed in your home
- (* Please be aware that it is more difficult to certify your home if you have unrelated people living with you.)

Does my spouse or significant other have to be certified too?

Yes, we require that your spouse or significant other be certified.

Can I be unmarried or have a non-traditional family and be a foster parent?

Yes, we have many foster parents who are single or have non-traditional families.

How long will the certification process take?

This will depend upon when we will be conducting a precertification program. The sooner you turn in your application, the sooner we can answer this for you.

What would be my level of commitment?

The level of commitment can be as little or as much as you are willing to take on. We have foster parents who prefer to only provide respite – short term care – for children and others who have long-term placements. We need people who will not give up easily on troubled children and are committed to care for children through difficult times.

Will having a criminal record prevent me from becoming a foster parent?

Not necessarily. Eligibility depends on the type of offense and when it occurred. Some offenses, such as crimes against children, sexual offenses or person-to-person offenses automatically disqualify you. Our home-finding staff can give you more information.

Is there financial help for foster parents?

Yes. Foster parents are given tax-free room and board payments every month to cover the cost of caring for the child. The rate may vary depending on the age of the child or the child's home county.

What is the minimum income requirement to be eligible to become a foster parent?

There is no minimum income requirement. However, we do require that you have a means of support other than the monthly stipend you receive for foster care as we cannot guarantee that you will always have a placement.

What kind of accommodations do I need in my home?

You must have a separate bed for each child placed in your home. Some additional requirements regarding ages of children who can share rooms, number of children in a room, etc. will be explained by the home-finder once you are ready to be certified.

What kinds of children would I care for?

Our program provides care for children who:

- range in age from birth to 21 years of age
- may have suffered from physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse, neglect, or abandonment
- may have been involved in the juvenile justice system (PINS/JD)
- may have alcohol or drug issues
- may be freed for adoption at a future date

Will the foster child have medical insurance?

Yes, each child has Medicaid coverage.

What is the next step?

Contact us by phone at 607-324-0909, or email Therapeutic Foster Care Program Coordinator Michele Strazzeri at MStrazzeri@dor.org or Therapeutic Foster Care Home Finder Sue Knight at SKnight@dor.org.

Thank you for your interest in our program ~ we look forward to learning more about you and giving you more information about us.