

Support Provided to Foster Parents

Every foster child has a caseworker that works in concert with foster parents to help determine and meet the needs of children in foster care. Additional supports include monthly visits from an agency caseworker, availability of staff around the clock to assist with concerns, training opportunities, Foster Parent Association monthly meetings and social activities.

Foster parents receive a monthly reimbursement based on the child's age and needs. These funds are for child-care related costs such as food, clothing and housing. In addition, each child will have medical and dental coverage while in care.

The Need is Clear

The need for foster care in Chester County is growing. Foster children come from every walk of life and range in age from infants to teenagers. They reflect the growing diversity of Chester County and they all need the support of families that will provide them with guidance and a sense of belonging.

A Personal Decision

Foster parenting is not right for everyone, but is it right for you? While not an easy decision to make, we hope you will explore and evaluate the concept thoroughly.



For More Information

Visit our website at www.chesco.org/cyf, call 610-344-5775 or e-mail us at hfinder@chesco.org. Our Home Finding staff will be happy to provide you with the information and materials you need.



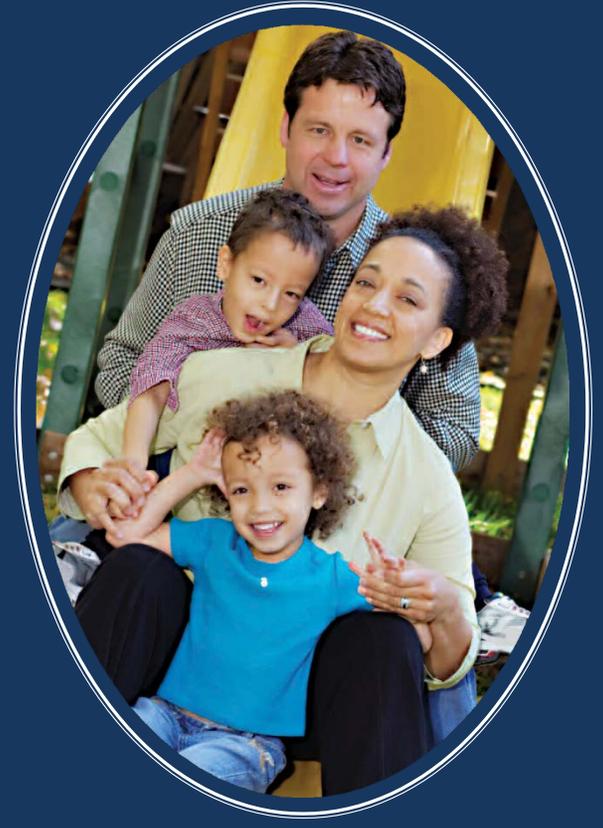
*Working Together for
Chester County's Children*

Chester County Government Services Center
601 Westtown Road, Suite 310
West Chester, PA 19380

Chester County
Commissioners



Introduction to Foster Care



Chester County Department of
Children, Youth and Families



An Introduction to Foster Parenting

Thank you for your interest in becoming a foster parent. This brochure is designed to answer some of your basic questions about foster parenting and provide you with information we hope you will find helpful as you consider this important decision in your life.

Children are generally placed in foster care when their families are unable, for whatever reason, to provide them with the basic level of care, safety and protection they require. The goal of foster care is to provide for the physical, emotional and social needs of children in a “substitute” family setting until the child’s own family can be reunited. Together the foster parents and the agency work to help children in placement achieve permanence, safety and well-being.

Foster families are people who enjoy parenting and are willing to share their home, time, energy and love with children who have special needs because of abuse or neglect.

Whether you are an older adult or a younger adult, single or married, a working or a stay-at-home parent, a homeowner or renter, there may be a place for you on our foster care team.

Children Who Need Foster Parents

Children need foster care for a variety of reasons, including:

- Physical, emotional or sexual abuse
- Neglect or abandonment
- Substance abuse issues of a parent
- Physical or mental illness of a parent
- Death or imprisonment of a parent

Children need foster parents who:

- Provide daily care, nurturing, structure and supervision
- Teach and model life skills and a healthy family lifestyle
- Respect children and their primary attachment to their families
- Assist with educational, medical and therapeutic needs
- Provide transportation when necessary to school, appointments and family visits
- Share information about the child’s progress and needs with caseworkers and other service providers

Why Should You Consider Becoming a Foster Parent

- You like kids
- You want to make a difference in a child’s life
- Patience, flexibility and a sense of humor are three of your greatest strengths
- Reaching out to others seems natural to you
- You have room for a child in your home and heart
- You know how important it is to be part of a family
- Your entire family is ready to accept the challenge of parenting a special child
- You know that families in your community need you

Steps to Becoming a Foster Parent

Becoming a foster parent with Chester County Department of Children, Youth and Families involves several steps requiring varying amounts of time, paperwork, and face-to-face meetings. The process helps you decide whether foster parenting is right for you. It also gives us a chance to get to know you better so that an appropriate match is made between foster family and child. The entire process typically takes about four to six months.

Step 1: Orientation

You will be invited to an orientation, where you will meet with other interested families and learn about Child Welfare and the foster care system.

Step 2: Pre-Service Training

These are classes that help the prospective parents learn how to parent children in foster care, and understand how a neglectful or abusive history may impact a child’s behavior, health, and learning abilities.

Step 3: Home Study

One of our Home Finders will visit your home to interview you and any other family members and residents in your home. Typically two to three interviews are required. The interviews are an opportunity for us to:

- Gather background information
- Ensure that foster parenting is a fit for you
- Ensure that you will be able to provide a safe and nurturing home environment
- Complete criminal background checks on all adults living in your home