

Specialized Foster Care

A foster parent must be accepting and understanding of individuals who have made mistakes and are from disadvantaged environments.

A foster parent must make a commitment to be persistent and giving, as the task of fostering is temporary, making it neither easy nor simple.

Foster parents are supported by a network of professional and clinical staff. Together, as a team, they provide the nurturing, structured home life and the individualized attention these children need..



Westside Family Resource Network

**For more information call:
West Side Community House**

9300 Lorain Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44102

Phone: (216) 771-7297, ext. 323
Fax: (216) 619-0710
E-mail: WSCHouse@yahoo.com



Serving Families
through Foster Care
and Supportive Services

Westside Family Resource Network

Making a difference in the
lives of children.
Becoming a Foster Parent



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What we learned from our foster children.



The Sorenson's *

What we have learned from being foster parents is that you can love all children, even when they are of no relation to you.

Children are great and have great character. There is value added in our lives when we give them hugs and kisses and as they grow we can see the light in their eyes because they didn't know love could be expressed like that.

We took for granted that everyone was raised the same way that we were and this has helped us to see that love equals caring and serving – not just words but by doing.

One child was placed with us and we couldn't figure out why he would scream and cry when we went to the drive through at the bank. He was expecting take-out from fast food restaurants and because that was all he knew he reacted in a negative way. He had to learn that in our house, we often sit at the table and have dinner together.

Once he accepted this he would look for the table to be set everyday when he came from daycare and we absolutely had to eat dinner together – right away!

The more love these children get, the more they are capable of. This experience enriches us because we feel like we contributed in a positive way to their continued success beyond their time with us.

Overall love has a boomerang effect. The love given comes back to you – it always has a return.

* Stories are factual. Names and faces have been changed to protect privacy.

Do you have what it takes to become a foster parent?

Foster care is a protective service for children and families. The children are provided a substitute family life experience in an agency certified home for a temporary period of time. The primary goal of foster care is family reunification. Foster parenting is not a lifetime commitment to a child/adolescent, but a commitment to be meaningful to a child's lifetime.

Consider becoming a foster parent

You can make a difference in a child's life by becoming a foster parent. The need is great in our community for safe, loving homes where children can grow and develop. Our goal is to place kids in a stable setting as soon as possible. Every child deserves a family.

Are you ready to do the following?

- Undergo an investigation of your personal background that includes being fingerprinted.
- Show that you are in acceptable physical and emotional health.
- Allow your home to be inspected for fire safety and compliance with minimum state standards of care, cleanliness and safety.
- Undergo personal interviews that examine your family history; how you were raised; who you are today; your values, beliefs, opinions about others and their interests; your goals and motivations for wanting to foster.
- Be willing to learn new or additional parenting and disciplinary skills.
- Actively participate in the process to reunite children with their families.

If you answered "yes" to all of the above, then you are ready to call (216) 771-7297, ext. 323.



Make a difference in their lives and in yours.*

What I learned from my foster parents.



Erica Johnson *

When I was 14, I was placed in my first foster home. I was pregnant and scared.

There was one foster child already in the home and the family had a daughter of their own. I thought they would be mean to me and didn't really care.

It turned out that I was wrong about my foster mother. She was a caring person and really looked out for me. She taught me how to take care of myself while I was pregnant and took me to her job to talk with a lady who just had a baby. We talked about how to take care of my baby, what will happen with my body and what to expect during labor.

My foster mother took me shopping to buy items for the baby and really gave me the support that I needed. Even when the other girl who was in the home before me began to act aggressively because of what was going on in her family my foster mother was fair in looking at the situation. She never treated one of the children in her home better than the other. She loved us all the same.

I am 18 years old now, and while I was only in her home for 10 months, we still talk regularly. Because of the love she showed me, I want to be a foster parent someday.

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