



# Therapeutic Foster Care

## Frequently Asked Questions

**What is foster care?** Foster care is a system to provide temporary care for children and adolescents. The first goal of foster care is to reunify the family.

**What is therapeutic foster care?** Therapeutic foster care is for children that need extra support, including greater structure and more intensive therapeutic services due to traumatic histories.

**Who does Gateway serve?** Gateway serves children from birth through age 21. This includes teenagers, medically complex children, sibling groups, children with emotional and behavioral disorders, pregnant or parenting teens and children with developmental delays.

**What is the most common age of foster children?** The most typical referral age is 6 years old and up. This corresponds to the time that children usually enter the school system. During this time, they have more contact with other adults (*instead of just their parents*) and therefore, problems in the home are more likely to be noticed and reported. The average age of children that we receive referrals for are ages 12-18.

**Are there a lot of babies available for fostering?** Typically, if you are looking to foster or adopt a baby, we suggest fostering through the State. We do serve children ages 0-21 and receive referrals for infants – however, these infants often have extensive medical needs or come with a sibling group of older children.

**What is the greatest need?** Teenagers and children with special needs are the most underserved children in our foster care system. We urgently need families to foster teenagers who have experienced multiple traumas in their lives and children with medical diagnoses, developmental delays and intellectual delays. Thousands of teens in foster care are looking for the love, support, and encouragement that families provide forever not just until they're 18.

**What is the difference between fostering through a private agency versus the state?** The state serves children who have minimal behaviors and do not need the extensive services that private agencies can provide. Another difference is that the State doesn't provide therapeutic services to families, 24/7 crisis services or ongoing support services. This is outsourced as needed.

**How does fostering-to-adopt work?** When a child first enters the foster care system, the initial goal is reunification—meaning returning back to their family of origin. However, the court may decide it is in the child's best interest to terminate parental rights, also referred to as TPR. Once TPR occurs, the child's goal may be changed from reunification to adoption. The adoption process would then continue from there. Typically, if you are caring for a foster child whose goal is changed to adoption, you will most likely be the first choice for the adoptive family. The length of the fostering-to-adopt process depends on several factors, including but not limited to whether or not this is the child's first time in the foster care system, the length of time the child has been in the foster care system, whether or not the children's parents are following their plan for reunification, etc.



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## What percentage of children in foster care are adopted?

- 9,156 children currently in out of home care
- 3,138 of those children are eligible for adoption
- Approximately 34% of children currently in out of home care are eligible for adoption

*Note: A major reason that children become eligible for adoption stems from the opioid epidemic and increased rates of drug overdoses.*

**Do I receive financial reimbursement when a child is with me?** As a foster parent you are reimbursed each month for having a child in your home. Depending upon the age and needs of the child, reimbursement rates vary.

**Do foster parents receive free childcare?** Our program does not pay for childcare fees. However, our competitive per diem rates may help offset this cost.

**Can I foster if I am single?** Absolutely!

**Can I foster if I rent my home?** Absolutely!

## What are the requirements for becoming a foster parent?

- Be 21 years of age or older
- Live in Kentucky
- Have adequate living space (more than a 1-bedroom home)
- Be financially stable
- Be in reasonably good health
- Have access to reliable transportation
- Pass a criminal background check
- Show proof of home owner's/renter's and car insurance, as well as car registration
- Complete all training requirements (about 30 hours of combined in person and online trainings)
- Pass a home safety inspection
- Have an approved home study

**Why do children need foster care?** Children need foster care for many reasons but to name a few; illness, family breakdown (sickness, death, substance use/abuse and abusive behaviors), school issues, relationship issues, neglect or other abuse that threatens the welfare of children.

**What are the benefits of being a foster parent?** The ultimate benefit of being a foster parent is having the satisfaction of making a difference in the life of a child or teen that would otherwise not have the opportunity to have a new beginning.



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## Why choose Gateway Children's Services Foster Care?

- The quality of our home study evaluations, our family continuing education and our responsive case management services are just a few reasons to choose Gateway Children's Services as your private placement agency.
- 24/7 on-call crisis support. We pride ourselves on our response times; we respond to all questions the same business day and after hours emergencies within 30 minutes.
- In-home case management services. Our talented and compassionate case managers develop supportive relationships with you and your children.
- Competitive financial rates (in terms of per diem and referral incentives)
- Our very own therapist who comes to your home.
- Respite care when you need time away.
- We partner with Sterling Health, which offers the following services: Children's Health, Family Health, Mental Health, Dental Care, Pharmacy, On-site School Health, Psychiatry and Urgent Treatment Center. This is a great way for foster parents to schedule various appointments in a "one stop shop" type fashion. As foster parents through Gateway, it is much easier and quicker to get a foster child scheduled for an appointment at Sterling Health compared to scheduling an appointment with a physician in the community, which can take several months before a child may be seen.

**How do I become a foster parent?** The first step is to contact one of our foster care team members. You can do this by filling out the online form or by calling 859-498-9892. An orientation meeting will be scheduled with you in your home to give you an overview of the program and explain the application packet. From there you will begin the SAFE Home Study evaluation, trainings, background checks and home/vehicle inspections.

**How long is the certification process?** It depends on your schedule. Some families can complete it in 8 weeks while others may take longer.

The flyer features a blue background with white text. At the top, it reads "Gateway Children's Services" and "BECOME A FOSTER PARENT". Below this is the Gateway Children's Services logo (a life preserver) and the tagline "A Lifeline for Change!". The contact information "859.498.9892" and "fostercare@gatewaychildren.org" is provided. On the right side, there is a photograph of three smiling young women. A circular call-to-action bubble says "Call 859.498.9892 Today!". At the bottom of the photo, it says "Open Your Heart & Home to a Teen - Become a Foster Parent". The website "www.GatewayChildrensServices.org" is at the very bottom.