



Foster Care Myths vs. Facts

COLLEEN VOGEL, MSW
Recruitment Director
Foster Care
518.857.8027
Colleen.Vogel@nrfs.org

HOMEFINDERS

ALBANY OFFICE

Albany and Rensselaer Counties
Jennifer Sherry, BA
518.426.2600
Jennifer.Sherry@nrfs.org

BINGHAMTON OFFICE

Broome, Chenango, Delaware, and
Tioga Counties
Chris Murray, BA
607.441.5055
Chris.Murray@nrfs.org

HUDSON OFFICE

Columbia, Dutchess, and Greene
Counties
Jessica Hatch, MS
518.719.8066
Jessica.Hatch@nrfs.org

JOHNSTOWN OFFICE

Fulton, Hamilton, Montgomery, and
Schoharie Counties
Jolene Olsen, BA
518.390.1117
Jolene.Olsen@nrfs.org

ONEONTA OFFICE

Herkimer, Madison, Oneida, and
Otsego Counties
Kari Judd
607.441.5055
Kari.Judderrell@nrfs.org

QUEENSBURY OFFICE

Essex, Saratoga, Warren, and
Washington Counties
Kari Carroll, MS
518.798.4496
Kari.Carroll@nrfs.org

SCHENECTADY OFFICE

Schenectady County
Jenny McMillen, MS
518.372.6708
Jenny.McMillen@nrfs.org

*These services are provided by
Northern Rivers Family of Services
and member agencies.*

Right now, there are children in your community who need supportive, loving foster homes and foster parents. Being a foster parent isn't easy—it takes a big commitment, a lot of understanding, and plenty of support. It also takes knowledge, and it's vitally important that prospective foster parents know what's true and what's false throughout the process. The best way to counter a myth is with a fact, so we've put together a list of common misconceptions surrounding foster care.

MYTH: I could never be a foster parent because I am not married and I don't make a lot of money. I don't even own my own home.

FACT: There are no such requirements. We have foster parents who are not married, who are single, who own homes, or who rent a home/apartment. The only financial requirement is that foster parents have a sufficient income to support themselves and their family in addition to the stipend they receive for the care of a child in foster care.

MYTH: Foster parents have to stay at home with the children and are unable to have their own jobs/careers.

FACT: We have many foster parents who stay at home and we have just as many who work outside of the home.

MYTH: My children are grown and out of the house; I am too old to be a foster parent.

FACT: The only age requirement is that foster parents be 21 years of age. Many "empty nesters" find foster parenting to be a rewarding experience!

MYTH: You need to have parenting experience to be a foster parent, and I've never raised any children.

FACT: Not true! We have many foster parents who do not have children. These foster parents are responsible people who have made a commitment to children and demonstrate an ability to parent and have a willingness to learn parenting skills.

MYTH: Foster children have been abused so much that they are beyond repair. I wouldn't really be making a difference anyway.

FACT: We have found that children are amazingly resilient! Foster parents who can provide a structured, predictable, and nurturing environment can make a big difference for children. It is important to note that these children will grow up to be adults in our communities. The way we can best respond now to their needs will impact the kind of adults they become in the future.

MYTH: All foster children are emotionally disturbed, and I do not think I am qualified enough to help them.

FACT: Many of our children have stated that they just need someone to listen, understand, and care for them. By building trusting relationships with the children in foster care, we have seen miraculous positive differences in their emotional well-being.

NORTHERNRIVERS

MYTH: Once I accept a child in foster care, I will totally be on my own with no help.

FACT: We pride ourselves on the support we give to our foster parents. Our agency staff is on call 24/7/365 to serve our foster parents and children in care. We have a therapeutic team prepared to assist with any crisis that may occur. We work with our families even before they accept a child to develop a profile of the type of child best suited to the experience and capabilities of that family. Respite care is also provided for those time foster parents need a break.

MYTH: I would have to provide medical insurance for a foster child in my home.

FACT: Foster parents do not pay any of a child's medical expenses. Every child in foster care is covered for their medical, dental, and mental health care needs.

MYTH: You don't have any choice of the types of children who are placed in your home, for example, whether they are healthy or have a disability.

FACT: You do have control over which children are placed in your home. The broader the parameters are, however, the more quickly you will begin fostering a child.

MYTH: I can't become a foster parent because I would get too attached; it would be too hard to see the child leave.

FACT: It is sooo true! You will get attached, and it will be painful when the children you have cared for and loved leave your home. These children have suffered through so much pain and trauma that no child should have to face. They need the love, care, and safety that foster parents provide. In some cases, foster parents continue to stay in contact with the children and families they cared for.

MYTH: Accepting a child into foster care will negatively affect my own children.

FACT: The birth children of foster parents sometimes do have to make sacrifices in sharing their parents, their home, and sometimes their bedroom. However, the gains will greatly outweigh these sacrifices. The children of the foster parents will learn better ways to solve problems and learn the joys of sharing, and they will be an integral part of changing the life of a foster youth.

Ready to become a foster parent? Or do you still have doubts, concerns, or questions? We're always here to talk with you. Our job is to make sure you've got the answers. Our homefinders are ready to listen (their contact info is on the left side of the front page). Reach out and let's talk.

