



Foster Care Myths vs. Facts

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These services are provided by Northern Rivers Family of Services 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 or apartment. The only financial requirement is that you have enough income to support yourself and your family aside from the stipend you are reimbursed 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 or 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 at least age 21. We have many "empty nesters" who 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 help. 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. 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.

continued

NORTHERNRIVERS

NORTHEAST PARENT & CHILD SOCIETY
PARSONS CHILD & FAMILY CENTER

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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 his or her medical, dental, and mental health care needs.

MYTH: All foster children are emotionally disturbed, and I am not qualified 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.

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, and 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 a lot of pain and trauma that no child should have to face. They need the love, care and safety that foster parents provide. In some cases, some of our 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 problem solve, learn the joys of sharing, and 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.

