



Mahoning County  
**Children Services**  
330-941-8888 [www.mahoningkids.com](http://www.mahoningkids.com)



# FOSTER/ADOPTION INQUIRY INFORMATION

*Our goal is to provide safe, stable, and caring foster homes for children in need.*



The best gift you can give a child is a home.

## What's Inside...

- Foster Care Program
- Characteristics of Successful Foster/Adoptive Families
- Am I Ready to Become a Foster/Adoptive Caregiver Quiz

If you have an interest or any questions regarding foster caregiving or adoption please contact:

**Mahoning County  
Children Services**

**Resource  
Department**

**330.941.8888**

# Foster Care Program

Mahoning County Children Services Foster Care Program is seeking individuals to provide a temporary substitute home for children.

Children placed in foster care are:

- Abused, neglected, or dependent
- Birth to 18 years old.
- From a variety of ethnic, religious and economic backgrounds.

The Agency is in need of homes that reflect the diversity of the families served. There is also a significant need for families accepting placement of teens and sibling groups.

Minimum requirements for the Foster Care Program include, but are not limited to:

- Must be at least 18 years old.
- Can be married or unmarried, if married or divorced, marital status should be consistent for one year.
- May own or rent, as long as there is enough space to accommodate another child.
- Should be in good physical and mental health.
- Must have proof of a steady income.
- Must attend training and participate in the home study process



**If you meet the Minimum Requirements and wish to participate in the Foster Care Program, the steps below are required for licensure**

**1** You will be invited to participate in the Pre-Service Training Program. Preservice is a 24-hour training curriculum that is mandated for prospective foster care and adoptive families. The Preservice training curriculum consists of three self-directed courses and 12 instructor-led courses that can be taken virtually or in-person. Topics addressed include: the impact of trauma on children in care, partnering with primary families, caregiver roles and responsibilities, permanency and maintaining the child's connections. You must also complete CPR and First Aid Training as a requirement. Additional training is required for treatment foster parents.

**2** Upon completion of the Pre-Service training, a Casework Specialist from the agency's Placement Services Department will be assigned to assist you in the licensing process. Some of the State of Ohio license regulations require:

- A physical examination of all family members by your own physician will be completed
- A fire inspection of your home will be conducted
- A credit check will be done to determine financial stability
- Five references, one from a family member, will be requested
- Authorization for Information Releases will be obtained for a police record check

**3** Upon successful completion of the Home study process, you will be recommended to The State of Ohio for foster parent licensure.

**4** Ongoing training and evaluation is required to maintain your foster home license. This training is offered to foster families through our Continuing Education Program.



# Characteristics of Successful Foster/Adoptive Families

Check the boxes of the Characteristics that best describe you

- Patience, flexibility and creativity
- Can give a child a sense of belonging and enhance self-esteem
- Have experience in handling crises
- Can locate and utilize community resources and supports
- Are team players and willing to participate in meetings
- Enjoy challenges and can work towards a goal
- Appreciate differences in individuals and are non-judgmental
- Can give to others without expecting something in return
- Able to accept delayed gratification
- Utilize creative discipline instead of physical punishment to manage a child's behavior
- Recognize and support the importance of birth families to foster children
- Recognize and support the role the foster parents have in adoptive child(ren) lives
- Eager to learn new knowledge and skills through training and support groups
- Willing to join with other Foster/Adoptive parents to enhance Mahoning County's Foster/Adoptive Program.



Every day there are children who must leave their homes due to abuse, neglect, and dependency. To reduce the trauma children feel from being separated from their families, it is best for children to be placed in the least restrictive environment. This is in a home like setting with others who will become the child's extended family.

**The goal of Foster caregiving is to make a temporary care commitment to the child(ren) while working toward reuniting with his/her birth family.**

Foster families help children feel secure and assist the child(ren) with the tasks of normal development. Foster families also assist the birth family towards reunification by providing information on the progress of the child(ren), participating in visitation and offering support, encouragement, and role modeling to parent(s).

The goal of adoption is to make a permanent care commitment to a child(ren) with a forever family. Once the courts determine reunifying with the birth family or other family members is not possible then an adoptive plan is made. The adoptive parents must help the child(ren) feel secure, be aware of the child's needs, promote normal growth and healthy development.

# Am I Ready To Become A Foster/Adoptive Caregiver?

**This Questionnaire will help determine if you are ready to become a Foster/Adoptive Caregiver.**

- 1. Are you able to work as a team with public and private agencies who provide services to children?**
- 2. I have enough room in my home for a foster/adoptive child.**  
You must have enough bedroom space for a foster/adoptive child. A foster/adoptive child may share a bedroom with another child, but the child cannot share a bedroom with anyone over the age of 18 years. You cannot move out of your bedroom and sleep on the couch to make room for a foster/adoptive child.
- 3. I am ready to have a safety inspection of my home done now.**  
It is important to live in a safe environment. During the home study process, your case worker will conduct a safety inspection of your house or apartment. Your home must be free of danger and garbage. You must have working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and a fire extinguisher. Medicines, cleaning supplies, poisons and dangerous tools must be inaccessible to children.
- 4. I am in good physical, emotional and mental health.**  
Being a parent can be demanding. You must be healthy and emotionally stable to care for foster/adopted children. You will be asked to complete a physical exam and you will be interviewed by a case worker.
- 5. I have never had a case with the agency due to abuse or neglect.**  
If you have had an open case with this agency in the past, you may not be able to become a foster/adoptive caregiver. This includes substantiated or indicated cases of abuse and neglect, or if your child was placed in foster care. When we receive your inquiry, we will review our records.
- 6. I have adequate income to meet my current family's needs.**  
You don't have to be wealthy to become a foster/adoptive caregiver; however, you must have enough income to meet your own family's needs. During the home study process, you will be asked to provide proof of income.
- 7. I have been in my current relationship for more than 12 months.**  
Foster/Adoptive caregivers can be single, married, or divorced. However, you must have been in your current marital status for at least 12 months to ensure stability in your relationship.
- 8. No adult in my home has ever been convicted of a crime.**  
If you or any adult residing in your home has been convicted of certain criminal offenses, you cannot become a foster/adoptive caregiver. Each adult member in your household over the age of 18 will be fingerprinted. If you have specific questions regarding which crimes are prohibited, please do not hesitate to contact us.
- 9. I am ready to being the home study process.**  
You are ready to begin if you have given serious thought to the decision about becoming a foster/adoptive caregiver and your life and home are stable. "Stable" means you are not about to move, are not experiencing financial, marital or emotional difficulties, or making any major life changes in the new future. Also, if you rent you will need your landlord's approval and your home must be in good repair.

**Circle One**  
for each statement

**Yes No**

**Yes No**

**Yes No**

**Yes No**

**Yes No**

**Yes No**

**Yes No**

**Yes No**

**Yes No**

If you answered **"YES"** to all of the statements, you are ready to begin the process of becoming a foster/adoptive parent!

If you answered **"NO"** to any statement, contact us so that we can alleviate any concerns or answer any questions.

**Contact:** Mahoning County Children Services' Resource Department:

**330.941.8888**

