



Onondaga County Department
of Children & Family Services



Local Children need you!!!

Become a Foster/Adoptive Family today!!!

We are looking for dedicated families that are willing to share their lives, love and knowledge with children in need of loving home. Becoming a foster/adoptive family in Onondaga County is a one of the most challenging and rewarding ways to give back to our local community. We ask our families to work in partnership with the county toward the goal of one day reuniting children with their families.

Children of all ages come into care, but often our greatest need is finding families who are willing to accept sibling groups, teenagers, and children with special needs into their homes. Children enter into our care for a variety of reasons-primarily due to a history of abuse and neglect. These children could greatly benefit from a supportive & caring home environment.

The Certification Process:

There are two main steps to becoming a certified foster/adoptive parent. To start, each family must be approved to attend the training. Once approved, both parents must then attend the training workshops, and complete a home study.

Training Workshops

There are a total of eleven foster parent training workshops that applicants must attend to be certified. The workshops are designed to educate potential foster/adoptive families on meeting the needs of children in care, whilst still meeting the needs of your own household. Many of the trainings are accompanied by guest speakers. The speakers offer the opportunity to learn more about foster parenting from many local experts in the field of child welfare, including current foster families and even some children in care!

Our hope is to give our foster/adoptive families the knowledge and skills required to parent children in care. We do this through covering a variety of topics including child development & attachment, issues of abuse & neglect, separation & loss, and more. We also go over our agency policies and expectations for foster homes in depth. The trainings will also cover the availability of community supports for foster parents to assist them in meeting the needs of children in care.

Home Study

After attending the training workshops your assigned Home Finder will visit you in your home. During these visits, we will discuss the goals of the agency as well as get to know you and your family. We will also discuss the level of commitment expected from our foster parents. Our families find that they develop a strong connection with their Home Finder, who acts as their advocate.



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As the certification progresses, we will begin contacting the personal references which you provide. You will also be asked a series of questions regarding your own personal health and emotional well-being. This information will be kept confidential.

Home Expectations:

- Each bedroom will have a door and a window.
- Children in care require their own bed.
- There can be up to three children per bedroom.
- Children in care cannot sleep in attics or unfinished basements.
- A fire and lead inspection must be completed.
- Non-familial boarders/renters are not permitted in foster/adoptive homes
- Foster homes will follow the policies, regulations, and guidelines set forth by Onondaga County.

Certification:

After you are certified, your decision to take a child into your home is based on shared information between you and your Home Finder. The length of a child's placement depends on a number of varying circumstances.

Supports to Available to Foster/Adoptive Parents:

Let's face it, caring for children is no easy task. We recognize this and offer a variety of assistance to our homes. To start, each foster home is assigned its own home finder to guide them through the home study and certification process. After certification, the home finder continues to provide ongoing support to the foster family by answering any questions that may arise, and ensuring that the foster home is ready and willing to accept placements.

The county assists with transportation for foster children and by reimbursing foster homes for the care they provide to our children.

Reimbursement:

The cost of caring for a child is often a factor in a family's decision to welcome a child into their home. Onondaga County provides reimbursement for a variety of expenses associated with raising a child, including the following:

- Daycare can be reimbursed for working parents.
- Children in Care receive medical benefits, as well a small amount for clothing reimbursement.
- Living expenses are reimbursed based on the age and need of the child(ren).



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Onondaga County Foster Care
www.onfostercare.org (315) 435-3827

Additional Supports

Onondaga County is home to many child welfare resources outside of the Department of Children and Family Services:

The ENHANCE Clinic is a specialized health center for foster children. Onondaga County partners with the doctors and staff at ENHANCE to ensure that that all children are provided a continuity of care for the health services they receive while they are in the care of the county.

Family Place offers a simulated home environment for families to visit their children while they are in foster care. The staff at the Family Place often supervises visits to ensure they are conducted in a safe and productive manner.

The SUNY Upstate Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Clinic provides both diagnostic and treatment services to all children in care.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to consider this life changing commitment to the local children in need of a loving home.

Call Today 435-3827!!



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Becoming a Foster Parent

INTERESTED IN FOSTERING/ADOPTING?
CALL OR VISIT US TODAY! (315) 435-3827

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT ARE OUR NEEDS?

We are looking for dedicated families that are willing to share their lives, love and knowledge with children in need of a loving home. Becoming a foster/adoptive family in Onondaga County is one of the most challenging and rewarding ways to give back to our local community. We ask our families to work in partnership with the county and birth parents toward the goal of one day reuniting children with their families.

HOW DO WE GET STARTED?

Call 435-3827 for initial information and register for an additional informational meeting.

WHO ARE OUR CHILDREN?

Children of all ages come into care, but often our greatest need is finding families who are willing to accept sibling groups, teenagers, and children with special needs into their homes. Children enter into our care for a variety of reasons-primarily due to a history of abuse and neglect. These children could greatly benefit from a supportive & caring home environment.

WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS TO BECOME A FOSTER PARENT?

You must be 21 years of age, be financially stable with a steady means of income, have at least two bedrooms in your home or rented apartment, complete extensive Criminal history and Child Abuse clearances, and have a way for the agency to contact you.

WHAT KIND OF HELP DO FOSTER PARENTS RECEIVE?

Foster parent receive a monthly stipend and children in care have medical coverage through Medicaid. We have a specialized medical clinic for children in care for all their medical needs. The children are eligible for child care if their foster parents are employed. Foster parents are reimbursed for mileage when they are transporting children for medical appointments and family visits. Foster Parents receive supports from the child's caseworker and the family's home finder. Ongoing training for foster parents is also available.

DO FOSTER PARENTS ADOPT?

Yes, many of our Foster/Adopt families do adopt. Most Foster/Adopt families continue to provide foster care for children in our community even after adopting.



Foster/Adoptive Family Pre-Application

Date Sent _____

Please print clearly and use legal names.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ County: _____

Home Phone No. _____ Work/Cell No. _____

Email: _____

Please list ALL members of your household, their relationship to you, dates of birth, and social security number:

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Relationship</u> | <u>Date of Birth</u> | <u>Social Security</u> |
|-------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| _____ | Self | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Are you receiving rental income from any household members? Y___ N___

If unmarried, but involved in a relationship please list name, date of birth, and length of relationship:

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Date of Birth</u> | <u>Length of Relationship</u> |
|-------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

Please list any children/step-children NOT in the home, dates of birth, and present location.

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Date of Birth</u> | <u>Present Location</u> |
|-------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |



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Please list maiden name, aliases, former married names, former spouses, and their date of births:

Please list whether you rent or own, the number of bedrooms, and the length of time you've been at your current address:

Rent ____ Own ____ Number of Bedrooms ____ Length of Time ____

Do you baby-sit and/or provide day care in your home? Y ____ N ____

Have you ever been a foster parent? Y ____ N ____

If yes, are you currently certified? Y ____ N ____

Please circle one: Are you looking to
(Foster Only/ Foster to Adopt/ Adopt only).

Please list any family pets in the home, dog breed, and their disposition:

Please list the place of employment and occupation for the adults in your home, including the length of time there:

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Employer</u> | <u>Job Title</u> | <u>Length of Employment</u> |
|-------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |



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Have you had liens/bankruptcy judgments in the past 2 years?

Y _____ N _____

Please list anyone in your household, ex-spouse, biological, adopted and/or step children that have been arrested, involved in Family Court Matters and/or Child Protective Services, either as an adult or child.

Please state when incident occurred and the specifics of the situation.

To the best of my/our knowledge, the above information is true. Your signature gives us permission to do local agency, State Central Registry, and criminal clearances.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you have any further questions and/or need assistance, please do not hesitate to call our Home Finding Department at (315)-435-3827. Otherwise, please return this application to:

Onondaga County
Department of Children and Family Services
ATTN: Home Finding
8th Floor, Civic Center
421 Montgomery Street
Syracuse, NY 13202
Or
Fax to: 435-3778



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Looking to Adopt?

Our Foster/Adoptive program dually certifies you to be both a foster and adoptive parent.

Children who enter care range from Birth to 21 years of age that have been living in an unsafe environment. Our greatest need is for homes that are willing to foster and adopt, as it is rare that children come into care already freed for adoption.

Who are our Children?

Like the population at large, our children may be typical, or they may have physical, mental, or emotional difficulties.

We are in great need of homes for sibling groups or adoptive homes for older children. Furthermore, we ask for families to provide a nurturing, safe, stable environment while helping to transition the child back to their family. If reunification is not possible, we ask that these homes become a permanent resource for the child or children in their home.

However, if you do not think it would be possible for you to provide a foster home for a child in care you can always look at the state's registry of children freed for adoption.

<https://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/adopt/>

This site provides both a video gallery of adoptive children and adoption photo listings including the Silverlight adoption album of children in need of a permanent home. There are also many private adoption agencies that handle adoptions.