

Thousands of people in Illinois are giving foster care to children. Maybe you can too.

Who are foster parents?

Foster parents care about children and they are willing and able to love, respect, and nurture them. They are:

- at least 21 years old.
- stable, law-abiding, responsible and mature.
- free of communicable diseases.
- able to work closely with the agency which supervises their home.
- living in quarters which are large enough, safe enough, and furnished in a way that is appropriate for a family with children.
- trained to foster children.
- licensed as foster parents.

What will prevent me from becoming a foster parent?

If you, your husband/wife, or anyone else who lives in your home has been convicted of certain crimes, DCFS cannot license you as a foster parent. It doesn't matter how long ago this may have occurred. If you or residents of your home were convicted of other crimes, you may still qualify to be licensed. Both are explained below.

If you apply for a license, every person 13 years of age and older who lives in your home must sign a release which allows DCFS to check their background. The following checks will be made to tell DCFS whether you or anyone living in your home has ever been convicted of a crime.

- getting fingerprinted (adults in the home, only)
- a check of criminal records by the Illinois State Police
- a check of the DCFS Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System
- a check of the Statewide Child Sex Offender Registry, and
- a check of criminal records by the FBI (if you or your spouse have not lived in Illinois for all of the past three years)

If you or anyone that lives in your home has ever been convicted of any crime listed below, you should not apply for a foster care license.

Homicide Offenses

- Murder
- Solicitation of murder for hire
- Voluntary manslaughter of an unborn child
- Reckless homicide
- Involuntary manslaughter of an unborn child
- Drug related homicide
- Solicitation of murder
- Intentional homicide of an unborn child
- Involuntary manslaughter
- Concealment of a homicidal death
- Reckless homicide of an unborn child

Kidnapping and Related Offenses

- Kidnapping
- Aggravated kidnapping
- Unlawful restraint
- Aggravated unlawful restraint
- Forcible detention
- Child abduction
- Aiding and abetting child abduction
- Harboring a runaway

Sex Offenses

- Indecent solicitation of a child
- Public indecency
- Indecent solicitation of an adult
- Sexual exploitation of a child
- Sexual relations within families
- Prostitution
- Soliciting for a prostitute
- Soliciting for a juvenile prostitute
- Solicitation of a sexual act
- Keeping a place of juvenile prostitution
- Keeping a place of prostitution
- Patronizing a juvenile prostitute
- Patronizing a prostitute
- Juvenile pimping
- Pimping
- Exploitation of a child
- Pandering
- Child pornography
- Obscenity
- Harmful material
- Ties in sales of obscene publications to distributors

Bodily Harm Offenses

- Felony aggravated assault
- Felony domestic battery
- Vehicular endangerment
- Aggravated battery
- Heinous battery
- Aggravated battery with a firearm
- Aggravated battery of a child
- Aggravated battery of a unborn child
- Tampering with food, drugs or cosmetics
- Aggravated battery of a senior citizen
- Drug induced infliction of great bodily harm
- Intimidation
- Hate crime
- Stalking
- Aggravated stalking
- Threatening public officials
- Home invasion
- Vehicular invasion
- Criminal sexual assault
- Aggravated criminal sexual assault
- Predatory criminal sexual abuse of a child
- Criminal sexual abuse
- Aggravated sexual abuse
- Criminal transmission of HIV
- Child abandonment
- Endangering life or health of a child
- Felony violation of an order of protection
- Ritual mutilation
- Criminal neglect of an elderly/disabled person
- Abuse and gross neglect of a long term care facility resident
- Compelling organization membership of persons
- Ritualized abuse of a child

Offenses Directed Against Property

- Felony theft
- Robbery
- Armed robbery
- Aggravated robbery
- Vehicular hijacking
- Aggravated vehicular hijacking
- Burglary
- Possession of burglary tools
- Residential burglary
- Arson
- Aggravated arson
- Possession of explosive or explosive incendiary devices
- Criminal fortification of a residence or building

Offenses Affecting Public Health, Safety and Decency

- Felony unlawful use of weapons
- Aggravated discharge of a firearm
- Reckless discharge of a firearm
- Unlawful use of metal piercing bullets
- Disarming a police officer
- Obstructing justice
- Concealing or aiding a fugitive
- Armed violence
- Unlawful sale or delivery of firearms on the premises of any school
- Felony contributing to the criminal delinquency of a juvenile

Drug Offenses

- Possession of more than 30 grams of cannabis
- Manufacture of more than 10 grams of cannabis
- Cannabis trafficking
- Delivery of cannabis on school grounds
- Unauthorized production of more than 5 cannabis sativae plants
- Calculated criminal cannabis conspiracy
- Controlled substance trafficking
- Manufacture, distribution, advertisement of look-alike substances
- Unauthorized manufacture or delivery of controlled substances
- Permitting unlawful use of a building
- Calculated criminal drug conspiracy
- Delivery of controlled, counterfeit or look-alike substances to persons under age 18, or at truck stops, rest stops, safety rest areas, or on school property
- Using, engaging, or employing persons under 18 to deliver controlled, counterfeit or look-alike substances
- Delivery of controlled substances
- Sale or delivery of drug paraphernalia
- Felony possession, sale or exchange of instruments adapted for use of controlled substance or cannabis by subcutaneous injection

If you or anyone who lives in your home has been convicted of crimes which are not listed, DCFS may still be able to give you a foster care license. First, though, the licensing worker will consider the following before deciding whether you can be licensed:

- the type of crime for which the individual was convicted
- the number of crimes for which the individual was convicted
- the nature of the offense(s)
- the age of the individual at the time of the conviction
- the length of time that has elapsed since the last conviction
- the relationship of the crime to the person's capability to care for/have access to children
- evidence of rehabilitation
- opinions of community members concerning the individual

You may not be able to be licensed if you or anyone who lives in your home has ever been indicated by DCFS for abusing or neglecting a child, if it involved any of the following allegations:

- Death
- Brain damage or skull fracture
- Subdural hematoma
- Internal injuries
- Torture
- Wounds (gunshot, knife or puncture)
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Sexual penetration
- Sexual molestation
- Sexual exploitation
- Failure to thrive
- Malnutrition
- Medical neglect of a disabled infant
- Any incident resulting in serious injury to a child

You may not be able to be licensed if you or anyone who lives in your home has been indicated by DCFS as a perpetrator of child abuse or neglect more than once, especially if the injuries involved any of the following:

- Burns or scalding
- Poison or noxious substances
- Bone fractures

- Cuts, bruises or welts
- Human bites
- Sprains or dislocations
- Tying or close confinement
- Substance misuse
- Mental injury
- Substantial risk of physical injury
- Inadequate supervision
- Abandonment or desertion
- Medical neglect
- Lock-out
- Inadequate food
- Inadequate shelter
- Inadequate clothing
- Environmental neglect

How do I apply for a foster care license?

If you wish to become a foster parent, call 1-800-624-KIDS to request information.

After you receive the application packet from DCFS or an agency, you must complete the documents and follow all instructions. Your licensing worker will help you and answer any questions you may have.

Specifically, you must:

1. Complete the "Application for Family Home License"
2. Make sure that you and every one, 13 years and older, who lives in your home signs an "Authorization for Background Check"
3. Have your doctor complete the child and adult forms for all children and adults who live in your home
4. List three personal references on the "Foster Family Home Information Sheet"
5. Call 1-800-377-2080 to schedule a time for everyone 18 and older who lives in your home to be fingerprinted

All of the forms will be in the licensing packet.

What happens after I apply for a license?

A licensing worker will visit your home and talk with you and your family to begin the home study. The worker will ask for a tour of your home, and to see the places where foster children will sleep. The worker must make sure your home is safe for children.

An important part of the home study is foster parent training, which helps you and your worker discuss issues and concerns related to fostering.

Working as a team, the home study process can be done smoothly and quickly.

What happens after I have become a licensed foster parent?

When you are licensed you will receive a foster home license which must be displayed in your home.

Together, you and the caseworker should determine when an available child is right for your home. A caseworker may call any time after you are licensed and ask to place children in your home. This decision is always yours to make.

When you agree to care for a child, certain supports become available. They include:

- A monthly check from DCFS or your agency to cover the child's board, clothing and allowance
- A medical card to pay for the child's medical expenses and prescriptions
- The assistance of staff who specialize in supporting foster parents
- Regular visits from the child's caseworker to provide you with assistance
- Special programs and other supports which may be different depending on the agency which supervises your home

How long does this take?

The length of time it takes to become a licensed foster parent depends on many factors. With your cooperation, and working as a partner with your licensing worker, the process should take about 90 days.

If foster parenting seems to be right for you, call 1-800-624-KIDS and ask for an application packet. Or, you may call your local DCFS office.

DCFS is an equal opportunity employer, and prohibits unlawful discrimination in all of its programs and/or services.

CFS 1050-24-1 IL 418- 0651
10M 10/97



Can I Become A Licensed Foster Parent?



**Illinois Department of
Children and Family Services**

Call 1-800-624-KIDS