



# Frequently Asked Questions

## *About Foster Care*

### What is foster care?

State and federal laws mandate that the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Family Services, protect children from abuse and neglect. Foster care offers temporary placement for children who have been removed from a home due to neglect or abuse. All foster-care providers are licensed by the state of Idaho.

### Who are the children that come into the foster care program?

Children in the foster care program:

- May be victims of neglect or abuse;
- Range in age from newborns to 18-year-olds;
- May have special physical, emotional, or medical needs;
- May be members of a large sibling group; and/or
- Reflect all cultural and economic groups in Idaho.

### Who can become a foster parent?

Foster parents are individuals or families who enjoy children and are willing to provide a safe, loving environment for a child or children who have suffered neglect or abuse. You may qualify to serve as a foster-care provider if you:

- Are 21 years of age or older;
- Have adequate space in your home for the placement of a child or children;
- Have a home environment that will pass a health, fire, and safety inspection;
- Have sufficient income to meet care requirements; and
- Participate in required orientation, pre-service, and in-service training.

### We don't have any experience with parenting. Is that a problem?

While experience working with children may be an asset, it is not required. Parenting experience is important, but the willingness to develop the skills necessary to meet the needs of children who have been through abuse or neglect in their young lives is also important.

## **Do you have to be married to serve as a foster parent?**

No. The foster care program is open to individuals and families who can provide children with a safe and loving environment.

## **How long will a child remain with a particular foster parent?**

The foster care program is set up to provide temporary placement. However, the length of that placement can vary from as short as overnight to as long as several months. In a small number of cases, placement of children may result in the child being adopted by the foster parent.

## **Our family lives on a modest income. Would that interfere with our opportunity to be foster parents?**

No. Financial wealth is not a requirement to become a foster parent. You do need to have enough income to ensure the expenses of fostering are not a financial hardship for the child or your family.

## **Do foster parents receive financial assistance from the State?**

Yes, foster parents receive a set monthly reimbursement for each foster child. The exact dollar amount is based on the child's age and needs. Reimbursement rates are generally higher for children who have special medical or behavioral needs. Reimbursements cover child-care-related costs, such as food and clothing. The State also provides medical and dental coverage while the children are in the foster-care program.

## **What other support may a family expect from the agency?**

Every foster child is assigned a social worker who teams up with foster parents in meeting the needs of the children placed in foster care. Foster parents may also take advantage of support groups, social activities, and training opportunities.