



# BECOME A FOSTER PARENT

**Make a difference in the lives  
of children in foster care.**

In Virginia, there are currently more than 5,000 children in foster care. These children are in need of a nurturing and supportive home when their parents or other relatives are unable to care for them. Foster parents provide a safe and nurturing home until a child or sibling group can be reunified with their prior custodian, placed with a relative or placed for adoption.

## How You Can Help

Every situation is unique and a child's time in foster care depends on several factors. Approximately one-third of children exiting foster care each year return to their parents' custody. Other outcomes include adoption, the transfer of custody to a relative, and emancipation. Foster parents are a part of a team effort to support the child, which may involve working with biological parents, courts, local departments of social services (LDSS) and community partners. Options to support Virginia's foster care needs include:

**Foster Care** – Provide temporary, 24-hour care for children and youth placed in foster care

**Respite Care** – Offer part-time, short-term relief to foster parents as an approved respite provider

**Foster-to-Adopt** – Foster a child or youth in foster care with the goal of adoption

# Requirements to Foster

The most important factor in choosing to become a foster parent is your willingness and ability to open your heart and home to children. As a foster parent, you provide the critical support these children need as they experience disruption from their home environment.

You must be at least 18 years of age or older to be approved as a foster parent. Foster parents can be single, married, divorced or widowed. Individuals and/or couples must have the time and energy to give to a child and must meet all the approval requirements, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ▶ Complete an application, pre-service training and Mutual Family Assessment
- ▶ Submit to a national Fingerprint Criminal Record check, Central Registry Check, and a Department of Motor Vehicles check
- ▶ Provide three character references

## How We Partner With You

As you care for Virginia's children in foster care, we offer the necessary support to enable you to provide for their daily care and supervision. Working with your LDSS, a monthly stipend, annual training and access to community services are just a few of the resources available to you as a foster parent.

**To begin the EXCITING JOURNEY toward becoming a foster parent, contact your LDSS. For your LDSS' contact information and more information, visit [FosterVA.com](http://FosterVA.com)**



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF  
SOCIAL SERVICES



Division of  
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