



## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

 News Releases  Podcasts



- *First Lady Anne Holton on the importance of foster care and what foster children need most*

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# Foster parents needed around the state

*First Lady works for strong foster care programs; May is National Foster Care Month*

**Richmond, Va.** – Nearly 8,000 children are in foster care throughout the Commonwealth. Approximately 50 percent are 13 and older. These children are in urgent need of foster parents and, for many of them, a “forever family.” The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) is asking families, couples and individuals to open up their hearts and homes to a foster child.

First Lady Anne Holton created the [For Keeps](#) foster care initiative in 2007. It was founded on the belief that every child deserves and needs a “forever family.” Under her leadership, a number of foster care reform efforts were successfully passed this year.

“As a juvenile court judge, I met so many older teens in foster care trying to navigate the adult world without the stable family foundations that so many of us rely on,” First Lady Holton said. “For Keeps focuses on ensuring older children in foster care have permanent family connections and community support to help them develop into successful, independent adults.” *(Hear more from the First Lady by selecting the “pod” icon in the top left corner.)*

The goal of Virginia’s foster care program is to maintain family unity and ensure that all children grow up in safe, stable homes. “There is no ‘typical’ foster child, but they all desire a permanent, loving home. This is especially true for older children, teens and siblings,” said VDSS Commissioner Anthony Conyers Jr.

The need for loving foster parents is ongoing for both short and long-term placements. Local departments of social services offer training for families and individuals interested in becoming foster parents. To learn more about making a positive difference in a child’s life, visit <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/fc/index.html> or contact your local department of social services.

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*Interviews are available upon request. For additional story ideas and for information on how your media outlet can help raise awareness of the need for loving homes for foster children, contact Carla Harris, VDSS, (804) 726-7107 or [carla.harris@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:carla.harris@dss.virginia.gov).*