



Serving Palm Beach and Broward Counties



FOSTER A

*Brighter
Future*

Become a Palm Beach County Foster Parent

WWW.CHILDNET.US



*“I Wish...
SOMEBODY
LOVED ME.”*

– SARAH, Haverhill



*“I Wish...
I HAD
A FAMILY.”*

– JOE, Palm Beach Gardens

THE NEED FOR OPEN HEARTS & HOMES

Hundreds of children right here in Palm Beach County have suffered abuse, neglect, and abandonment. They wish for loving foster parents to nurture them and provide a healing refuge.

Foster parents provide a caring, temporary home to children when they need them the most. The children who enter foster care do so through no fault of their own, but because they have suffered abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Foster parents give a loving place to call home until the child is able to return to his or her parents, or transition to a permanent living arrangement such as adoption.

Many local foster parents say they feel called to care for Palm Beach County’s most vulnerable young residents. Those with this sense of purpose find that the rewards of foster parenting far outweigh the challenges. Foster parents can make a lifelong difference in just a short time. And the first life that they change is their own.

Ask yourself if you are called to answer a child’s wish and open your heart and home as a foster parent.

BEGIN YOUR FOSTERING JOURNEY

If you feel called to be a foster parent, the path to becoming a licensed foster parent involves five steps:

- 1. Contact ChildNet Palm Beach County:** We are the local nonprofit lead agency selected by the State of Florida to oversee the child welfare system in our community.
- 2. Be Linked With a Foster Home Management Agency:** ChildNet will refer you to a local agency, who will guide you through the foster parent licensing process.
- 3. Attend the Pre-Service Training Class:** During this class, you will be introduced to the foster care system and learn how to care for a foster child.
- 4. Complete the Other Foster Care Licensing Requirements:** These include a home study and a background check.
- 5. Welcome Your First Foster Child:** You will make a difference for a lifetime in a relatively short time.

Take the first step to becoming a foster parent today, and grant a child’s wish.

Contact ChildNet today:

WWW.CHILDNET.US • 561.352.2501

FOSTER PARENTING MYTHS:

Many myths surround foster parenting. Please keep these facts in mind as you consider if foster parenting is right for you:

- **MYTH:** *You have to be wealthy and a homeowner to foster.*

FACT: You may rent or own your home, and you definitely don't have to be rich. It's the size of your heart – not your paycheck – that matters most.

- **MYTH:** *You have to be married to foster.*

FACT: Single, partnered, and married people alike can all be great foster parents. (*Indeed, an increasing number of local foster parents are single.*)

- **MYTH:** *Foster parents must have had biological children or parenting experience.*

FACT: You don't have to have children of your own or past parenting experience, just lots of love for the children you will foster.

- **MYTH:** *Only people younger (or older) than you can foster.*

FACT: People begin fostering at many different points in life. The only age requirement is that foster parents must be at least 21, and many great foster parents are in their 50s or 60s.

- **MYTH:** *LGBTQ people can't foster.*

FACT: Many excellent foster parents are part of the LGBTQ community.

Don't be deceived by foster parenting myths. If you feel called to foster; ChildNet and our community partners are here to help – and that's a fact.

SHOULD YOU CONSIDER FOSTERING?

Ask yourself the following questions to help decide if foster parenting is right for you. Will you be able to:

- Love and care for a child with a challenging background and sometimes difficult behavior?
- Help the child develop a sense of belonging in your home, even though his or her stay will be temporary?
- Stand by the child through life's ups and downs?
- Be willing to work with the child's birth family?
- Feel that it's your personal mission to help children in crisis?



REQUIREMENTS

The biggest requirement to be a foster parent is love and the desire to make a positive difference in the lives of children.

Foster parent candidates must also:

- Be a Florida resident age 21 or older;
- Be financially stable;
- Be able to care for children;
- Pass an extensive criminal background check; and
- Have adequate room and beds in your home for children.