



Figuring out your next step starts here. There's no rush. There's no pressure. There's your curiosity, our resources, and a whole lot of room for discussion.

Thank you for taking this step.

Whether you decide to become a foster parent or become more informed and decide not to, it means a ton that you're willing to take it into consideration.

It may sound silly but so many people say "I could never do that" but instead, you're asking "could I do that?" and this question creates an opportunity.

Thank you for being here. Thanks for being open minded. And thanks for taking the time to get to know more.

We're here to support you,
The Friends of Foster Care Team



# The Path to Foster Parenting

#### Interest -

#### Learnin

You heard about foster care and are wondering if this is something you could do and if now is the right time.

ou decide to learn more. You check out the Friends of Foster Care Training, reflect on your goals and expectations, and decide if exploring options is the best next step.

### O Support in Other

Ways You decide to support kids in care without becoming a foster parent. You donate, volunteer, become an advocate, or find a different cause that's close to your heart to support.

# Reaching Out — Agency Selection —

#### Logistics -

You decide to learn more and reach out to a couple of local licensing agencies to learn more about their training approach, timeline, and resources for foster parents. The Friends of Foster Care can help connect you with agencies that will be a good fit for your family. You select an agency to work with and go through their Foster Parent Training program to become licensed to foster.

You go through a home study and background to make sure your space is suitable to meet the needs of a foster child. You also share your preferences and parameters with the agency so they're clear on the age, gender, and needs of the child(ren) you're open to fostering.

## **Approval & House**

**Opening**Once your training, home study, and background check are complete, you officially become approved!

#### The

**Ask** When a child comes into care, the licensing agency will find the home best suited for the child(ren). If your home is identified as a good match, they may call and ask you if you're open to taking the placement.

## The

Answer You decide if the placement details align with your capacity and availability. Most often the placement will happen right away, other times you'll have a few days or weeks before arrival.

## **Ongoing**

**Support**While you have a child in your care, you'll work closely with the agency to meet the needs of the child. You'll be responsible for taking them to visits and appointments as well as communicating with their resource team and continuing your education and training to best support the child(ren).

# Frequently asked questions about foster parenting

#### How long does it take to become a foster parent?

The exact timeline depends on how quickly you'd like to move through the process and how quickly the training program proceeds with the agency you decide to work with.

This is a great question to ask agencies when you attend information

Typically it takes about 4-10 months from selecting an agency to receiving a placement.

### Can I adopt?

Sometimes. The goal of foster care is always reunification with the biological family first. In some instances the child cannot go back to their biological

and in that case they may become available for adoption. When you are talking

to agencies about fostering with them, make sure to share with them if you're

interested in adoption and ask them about the typical adoption rate and process for their agency. Note: You will be required to foster the child for 6 months prior to being able to adopt them.

#### Do I get to pick the age of the child I foster?

As part of your licensing process, you will share with your agency the age ranges of children you are open to fostering. You can always say no to a placement opportunity.

#### Do I have to interact with the biological parents/family?

Sometimes, yes. Many times biological parents will get to have visitation with their children and you will interact with them. It is important to remember that the child loves their parents no matter what and honoring that relationship (with healthy boundaries) is important to the child's growth and development. Your agency will provide more training on how to interact in the most positive way for the child.

### **Eager to learn more about the process of becoming a foster parent?** Click here to get access to our private training portal. The Friends of Foster

Care

Training walks you through how to think through making this commitment and talking with your family and friends about your choice.

You'll also be invited to our community of Prospective Parents who are also considering fostering so you can ask questions and connect with others on similar journey!

Get instant access by clicking here.



# Before you begin:



The TFFC Prospective Parent Program (PPP) is designed to support individuals considering becoming foster parents. The PPP offers emotional support, accountability, and guidance throughout the decision-making and licensing process. And it's FREE!

#### WHAT'S PROVIDED:

<u>Personal Coaching:</u> Participants are paired with a dedicated coach to navigate the challenges and questions that arise during the fostering journey.

<u>Step-by-Step Guidance:</u> The program assists with initial training, application processes, and scheduling consultations with the TFFC team.

This program is ideal for those who are interested in fostering, but are seeking more information and support before making a commitment.

## Learn more about TFFC's PPP program here.



#### **MISSION**

Virginia's Kids Belong mobilizes government, faith-based, business and creative leaders around the goal of permanency and belonging for every child. Combining grassroots and "grasstops" methods.

Virginia's Kids Belong runs innovative initiatives to help ensure that every child is in a loving home by: recruiting more foster and adoptive families, engaging wrap-around support for at-risk, foster & adoptive families along the way, and helping youth who have aged out without a family reach their full potential.

#### **MODEL**

**Solve** the Foster Care Crisis?

You're probably wondering if a problem so large is really SOLVABLE. We've been there, too.

But we're happy to tell you that with two proven models and a first-of-its-kind solution, the answer is YES. Regardless of your occupation, skill-set, and life stage, you have the unique ability & opportunity to impact the lives of children in foster care.

Learn more about Virginia Kids Belong here.



# Our Preferred Partners:



Families First of Virginia (FFVA) provides therapeutic foster care services to children under the age of 21 years old. FFVA programs are open to all children without regard to race, national origin, or sex. Children with handicapping conditions either physical or mental are accepted when there is an appropriate foster home match that can adequately accommodate and provide for their needs.

FFVA's philosophy is that children heal wounds from trauma when they are placed in a safe, stable, committed home where the parent (biological, foster, or adoptive) is the catalyst for change and growth. Therefore, although FFVA provides services directly to the youth, Families First of Virginia also focuses on direct service to foster families, empowering parents and families by using a Family Focused Treatment approach. Families First of Virginia provides intensive case management services to youth and families, reducing the number of service providers needed to stabilize and maintain a foster home and a child's placement.

Families First of Virginia has been established in order to decrease the length of time a child languishes in foster care and to promote permanency.



For over 25 years, The James Barry-Robinson Institute's Foster Care Program has delivered quality foster care and foster parent training. When a child or teen must be separated from their biological family, JBRI places them with a stable, nurturing foster parent until they can return home. If reunification isn't possible, JBRI can guide the foster family through the adoption process. Each child and situation is unique, so JBRI takes time to understand every child's background and family circumstances. JBRI works closely with foster parents to ensure a good match between child and family.

### Highlights of JBRI's Foster Care Program:

- Foster parents receive thorough training to support children and meet developmental needs.
- A stable, supportive home environment helps children grow and thrive.
- JBRI offers 24/7 support, backed by a team of counselors, physicians, dietitians, and therapists.
- When reunification is the goal, JBRI supports the process. Some youth remain with foster families and are adopted. Many children return home; others find permanent families through adoption.

If you're interested in opening your heart & home to a foster child, JBRI would love to hear from you. They need dedicated foster parents to provide loving, stable homes while families heal.

# Learn more about JBRI here.





# Public Agencies:

#### NORFOLK DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

The Norfolk Department of Human Services is committed to improving the lives of children, families, and communities through comprehensive services that support the well-being of Norfolk citizens.

Things to note about Norfolk's Department of Human Services:

- They believe children do best when raised with families.
- They need foster parents who will assist with reunification and who will be willing to work with teenagers.
- They believe that every child deserves at least one positive adult who will protect, guide and advocate for them.

Learn more about Norfolk Department of Human Services

#### HAMPTON DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

The department works to ensure that all Hampton families are able to become healthy and self-sufficient.

Goals include:

- o Empowering families and children to escape the long-term effects of poverty
- Protecting abused or neglected children and adults
- Supporting families for healthy development

<u>Learn more about Hampton Dept. of Human Services</u>

#### FRANKLIN DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Franklin's social services mission is to be a city with people helping people triumph over poverty, abuse and neglect to shape strong futures for themselves, their families and our city.

Learn more about Franklin Dept. of Social Services

#### CHESAPEAKE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Foster/Resource parents provide a safe, caring, and family home for a child ranging in age from birth to 18 who has been temporarily separated from their own family for various reasons. The child is in the custody of the Chesapeake Department of Human Services. Resource parents are Foster parents who meet the criteria to adopt if the foster child in their home was freed for adoption. Chesapeake's Foster/Resource parents are dually certified so that if they wanted to adopt a child they were fostering, the process is easier.

<u>Learn more about Chesapeake Dept. of Human Services</u>

#### RICHMOND DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Foster Care manages the provision of services and treatment to a child who is in the legal custody of the Department due to abuse/neglect or the need for services. To be placed in foster care, the child must have been placed in the Department's custody by a Virginia court. Services are provided to the child and to the family to prevent further need for foster placement, and to achieve permanency.

The Resource Family Unit is responsible for the recruitment, training, support, and placement coordination for the Department's foster and adoptive families. Members of this team recruit qualified families from the Richmond community and surrounding areas (within an hour radius) to serve as foster and/or adoptive parents to the children in care.

The Department provides the following services to individuals interested in becoming a foster parent:

- Free Training
- One-on-one assistance from a family services worker to complete the process
- A series of home visits and interviews to help each family determine the type of child they feel they
  can best parent
- Monthly ongoing training and other special events throughout the year

The Resource Family unit is also responsible for locating placements for children who enter foster care, or when a change in placement is required.

<u>Learn more about Richmond Dept. of Social Services</u>

#### **GLOUCESTER DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Foster Care Provider Certification - Foster parenting is caring for a child who has been abused or neglected until his or her parents can resume their caretaker responsibility or until a permanent plan such as placement with relatives or adoption is achieved. The Gloucester Department of Social Services is looking for foster parents who are committed to working with the child through this difficult period in his/her life and who are able to work well with the department in achieving the foster care goal set for the child. Basic Qualifications Required for Certification

The foster parent must be:

- 21 years of age or older
- Have enough income to meet their own expenses without having to rely on foster care payments
- Able to provide a safe and healthy home with enough space for a child, willing to work with the agency, children's families, schools, and others
- Able to help a child cope with separation from his family and with the effects of abuse and neglect and able to "let go" when the time comes
- Able to attend pre-service training and upon certification attend required in-service training Qualities Foster Parents Need to Possess:

We are looking for people who are good listeners, flexible, realistic, able to laugh, and team players. All these qualities are necessary in order to provide the best possible care for the children who have been put in our care.

Learn more about Gloucester Dept. of Social Services

#### **NEWPORT NEWS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

Foster parenting is accepting a child into your care who might have been abused or neglected or who might need a temporary home. The foster parent is a tem- porary caregiver for a child whose goal is to return home or to be placed with a relative. A foster parent works with a team of people (the social worker, therapist, teachers, and the child's family, to name a few) to assist this child. Being a foster parent is both rewarding and challenging and the city of Newport News is here to support both you and the children in care on your foster care journey.

<u>Learn more about Newport News Dept. of Human Services</u>

#### VIRGINIA BEACH DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

The foster care program is a state mandated service that provides a full range of casework, treatment and community services to a child who is abused or neglected. Foster care placement is intended to be a temporary, rather than a long-term, solution to family problems. The Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court hears petitions for custody. Specific foster care requirements are set forth in federal law and state laws. Placements may be with a foster family, in a group living arrangement, in a residential treatment facility, or in an independent living situation.

Virginia Beach hosts information sessions for people interested in fostering on the third Tuesday of each month from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. Anyone may attend, however registration is required.

Contact the VBDHS Team at (757) 385-3529 or (757) 385-3287 to register.

<u>Learn more about Virginia Beach Dept. of Human Services</u>

#### PORTSMOUTH DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

The Portsmouth Department of Social Services touches the lives of our citizens by providing quality services that address the health and welfare needs of the community; while promoting self-sufficiency and encouraging all people to be the best they can be.

Things to note about Portsmouth's Department of Human Services:

- They are committed to supporting children and families.
- They are champions for kinship and prioritize maintaining familial bonds.
- Their foster care program is unique in the sense that we have so many young adults participating in our Fostering Futures program.

Learn more about Portsmouth Dept. of Social Services

#### SUFFOLK DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

The Foster Care Program provides placement for children who have been removed from their birth parents due to some type of abuse and/or neglect, or other family circumstances that prevent children from remaining in their homes. The Department of Social Services endeavors to work in partnership with the child(ren) and the birth parents to help resolve the family issues and reunite the family whenever possible.

If you are interested in becoming a Foster Parent and/or an Adoptive Parent, or simply would like to know more about the Foster Care and Adoption Program, you may visit the Suffolk Department of Social Services. You can contact Our Team at 757-514-7338, or call 1-888-VDSS-2DA (1-888-837-7232). You may also contact us via email at suffolkfosterparent@suffolkva.us.

Learn more about Suffolk Dept. of Social Services

#### ISLE OF WHITE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

The Isle of Wight County Department of Social Services (IOWC-DSS) in Virginia provides a comprehensive foster care program aimed at ensuring the safety and well-being of children who cannot remain in their birth homes due to circumstances such as abuse or neglect. The program prioritizes placing children with relatives or familiar caregivers to maintain family and community connections, and offers training and support to foster parents to prepare them for providing nurturing and stable environments. The ultimate goal is to achieve permanency for each child, whether through reunification with their biological family, placement with relatives, or adoption when necessary.

<u>Learn more about Isle of Wight County Dept. of Social Services</u>

#### SOUTHAMPTON DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

The Southampton County Department of Social Services, located in Courtland, Virginia, is dedicated to safeguarding the well-being of children and families through a range of supportive services. Their foster care program focuses on providing safe, nurturing, and temporary homes for children who cannot remain with their birth families due to abuse, neglect, or other challenges. The department works to ensure that children maintain connections to their families and communities, with the ultimate goal of achieving permanency through reunification, kinship care, or adoption. Prospective foster parents receive training and ongoing support to prepare them for the responsibilities of fostering. For more information or to inquire about becoming a foster parent, contact the Southampton County Department of Social Services at (757) 653-3080

Learn more about Southampton County Dept. of Social Services

#### YORK/POQUOSON DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

The York-Poquoson Department of Social Services, based in Yorktown, Virginia, provides a variety of programs aimed at promoting the well-being of children and families throughout York County and the City of Poquoson. Its foster care program offers safe, supportive, and temporary homes for children who are unable to live with their birth families due to abuse, neglect, or other serious concerns. The department actively recruits individuals and families to serve as foster parents, offering extensive training—including the PRIDE curriculum—and ongoing support to prepare them for this important role. Foster parents must be at least 18 years old and comply with all state requirements. The agency prioritizes reunifying children with their biological families whenever possible and also supports kinship care and adoption when appropriate. To learn more or begin the journey to becoming a foster parent, visit the York-Poquoson Foster Care website or call (757) 890-3787.

<u>Learn more about York-Poquoson Dept. of Social Services</u>

#### **MATHEWS COUNTY**

The Mathews County Department of Social Services, located in Mathews, Virginia, is committed to promoting self-reliance, stability, and safety for children and families through collaborative efforts and quality services. Their foster care program provides temporary, nurturing homes for children who cannot remain with their birth families due to various challenges. The department supports foster parents with necessary training and resources to ensure the well-being of the children in their care. For more information or to inquire about becoming a foster parent, contact the Mathews County Department of Social Services at (804) 725-7192.

Learn more about Mathews County Dept. of Social Services

## USEFUL RESOURCES FOR AFTER YOU ARE LICENSED



The Friends of Foster Care (TFFC) is s nonprofit founded in 2016 with a mission to help ensure that every foster youth has an opportunity to thrive. TFFC works with community partners to support foster youth across Virginia by filling gaps in the foster care system.

Key Services Include:

- Academic Tutoring: One-on-one, in-home support—even after reunification.
- Extracurricular Activities: Access to sports, arts, and community programs.
- Camperships: Summer camp opportunities to keep siblings connected.
- Emergency Needs Funding: Help with urgent costs like clothes and supplies.
- Prospective Parent Program: Resources for those exploring foster parenting.
- YMCA Membership: Providing a space to be healthy as a family.

TFFC's programming is completely free and aimed at helping every foster child succeed by supporting their education, well-being, and family connections.

# <u>Learn more about The Friends of Foster Care here.</u>



Connect With a Wish works to connect the wishes and needs of local youth in Hampton Roads foster care with the generosity of our community. They provide the resources and support needed to give children in foster care the opportunity to grow into positive and productive members of our community. Connect With a Wish also strives to move forward and support the young adult community as they age out of foster care with temporary, affordable housing to include wrap around support services proved by the Connect to Careers program.

Connect to Careers is equipped with a program manager to work with aged-out youth and those in the city's Fostering Futures program. CWW work on five goals with them to pursue independent living: getting a transportation plan, building interview skills, polishing resumes, securing a housing plan, and additional education and job training. CWW helps out in lots of ways, from resume writing workshops and financial literacy courses to driver's license help and exclusive job fairs; and it's all focused especially to those in foster care. Connect to Careers will also soon service our affordable bridge housing, providing these services and more to residents.

### <u>Learn more about Connect With a Wish here.</u>



There are ample opportunities and resources available to members of First Star Old Dominion University Academy. First Star's Foster Youth Academies are the country's first long-term college-prep programs for high school foster youth that include four immersive residential summers on a university campus and monthly sessions during each school year.

First Star keep foster youth on track for high school graduation and prepare them for higher education and adulthood by providing specialized programming that addresses the academics, life skills, and adult supports unique to students in foster care.

Learn more about First Star here.



Freekind exists to prevent human trafficking and support survivors on their journey to freedom. Formed in 2021 through a merger of two Virginia-based nonprofits—Richmond Justice Initiative (RJI) and Virginia Beach Justice Initiative (VBJI)—Freekind combines years of local impact. Since most U.S. trafficking survivors were under 23 when their exploitation began, we developed The Prevention Project—a nationally recognized, survivor-informed curriculum for middle and high school students and youth service providers—designed to stop trafficking before it starts. For adult victims incarcerated for crimes linked to their abuse, we offer off-ramps, which includes jail-based classes to identify victims, court advocacy for alternative sentencing, re-entry planning, and transitional support as survivors rebuild their lives. Freekind addresses both ends of the trafficking spectrum: helping survivors reclaim freedom and equipping youth to protect themselves from exploitation.

Learn more about Freekind here.



Family in Focus was created to support parents who are worried about weight in their family. The way out is to shift focus off the scale and instead focus upon what's really important: Creating better relationships with food, body, and most importantly our family.

Discover the habits that have created your current health, and take the opportunity to choose new habits that the whole family can share for life. Meanwhile, they focus on creating better relationships with our own bodies, our families, and our food.

<u>Learn more about Family in Focus here.</u>



Children and teens who have experienced trauma or deep wounds can have special challenges that often leave both child and caregivers confused and frustrated — without hope. Made 4 Connection (M4C) aims to help and support those families. M4C teaches a trauma care model called Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI®), a parenting intervention created and developed by Dr. David Cross and Dr. Karyn Purvis at Texas Christian University's Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development. TBRI® helps caregivers understand the impact of trauma on the brain and body. It also teaches them strategies to connect with the child emotionally and to disarm fear-based behaviors.

Learn more about Made 4 Connection here.



#### **HEALING THROUGH HORSES AND NATURE**

Mill Swamp Indian Horses is a nonprofit educational program, just outside of Smithfield, Virginia. We offer unique opportunities for trauma recovery, youth support, and community healing through our work with Corolla wild horses and other rare strains of Colonial Spanish Horses. Our Programs Include:

- Equine-assisted learning
- Historical horse conservation and care
- Homeschool and youth programs
- Regenerative agriculture and land healing
- Music, art, and storytelling as tools for recovery
- Training for Foster Parents and Social workers

<u>Learn more about Mill Swamp Indian Horses here.</u>



Kempsville Center for Behavioral Health is a leading community partner providing acute, residential and Partial Hospitalization treatment for children and teens exhibiting behavioral and/or mental health concerns. Their programs are designed to treat your child or teen in a secure, therapeutic environment.

<u>Learn more about Kempsville Center for Behavioral Health here.</u>



Delpierre & DiCorrado, PLC represents clients throughout Hampton Roads including Norfolk, Portsmouth, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Newport News, Suffolk, and Hampton. Our attorneys are also proud to serve the Northampton and Accomack counties on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Our attorneys provide experienced counsel in the areas of criminal, traffic, domestic and civil law.

At Delpierre & DiCorrado, PLC, we strive to provide quality, individualized legal representation for our clients. Every case is different and our attorneys work diligently to ensure that your voice is heard and interests protected. Our firm strives daily to make a meaningful difference in our client's lives

Learn more about Delpierre & Dicorrado, PLC here.



Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters

# **Expert Medical Care - Just for Kids**

Whether your child needs a family pediatrician, a specialist or a surgeon, CHKD is here to provide quality medical treatment in a child-friendly atmosphere. CHKD provides a variety of medical services for foster children, including specialized support for children in the foster care system. CHKD also offers a range of medical services, including primary care, urgent care, and specialty care, accessible through their health centers and main hospital.

Learn more about CHKD here.



Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield understands our health connects us to each other. What we all do impacts those around us. So, Anthem is dedicated to delivering better care to their members, providing greater value to their customers, and helping improve the health of communities.

Learn more about Anthem here.



Remember, becoming a foster parent is not a decision you need to make today. We are here to talk with you about the process and provide you with as much insight as possible.

If you'd like to learn more or speak with one of our team members, please email info@friendsoffostercare.org or visit friendsoffostercare.org



# Thank You to Our Sponsors:

















Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters























