

Becoming A Foster Parent in Minnesota

Thinking of providing foster care for a child in Minnesota? There are many good reasons to become a foster parent, and just as many benefits to the child you foster. If you're looking for information on how you become a foster parent, here's an overview of the process.



Is this your next foster child?

First of all, what exactly does being a foster parent encompass? As a foster parent, you will be providing care for a child on a temporary basis. Children who are in foster care are in the temporary custody of the state; their birth parents (or whoever had custody of the children before they entered foster care) still have parental rights, and the children will be returned to their parents at a later date if this is possible and in the children's best interests. Fostering is not like **adoption** in that adoption is a permanent transfer of parental rights to you. You should go into foster care with the firm understanding that the child may return to his or her birth family at a later date, even if there is a possibility that this won't be possible and that you will be given the opportunity to adopt the child.

You start the foster parent application process by contacting a county foster care agency. In Minnesota, the **Minnesota Adoption Resource Network** can help you get started (don't be confused by the word "adoption" in their name!). The general process involves attending an orientation meeting where you'll get detailed information about fostering, submitting an application, going through a home study and licensing process, and undergoing a criminal background check. After all of this, you'll receive training on how to be a foster parent—whew!

There aren't any fees to become a foster parent, but the foster care agency will verify that you have enough income to meet your own needs. There aren't any requirements about having parenting or child care experience, or owning your own home. You'll receive a payment of about \$20 a day to cover the child's expenses, but obviously earning money is not a good reason to decide to foster!

Those were some of the legal issues that will be relevant to you if you decide to foster. You might also want to consider some more practical questions before you make your decision: how will your foster child get along with any other children in your house? Is your family supportive and understanding of your decision to foster? Many counties have foster parent networks; consider starting by attending one of these and asking experienced foster parents lots and lots of questions.

While we can't give legal advice over email, we'd love to hear your comments either directly or below. If you are considering becoming a foster parent and feel you need an attorney call us to talk about your options.

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Remember I am not giving anyone legal advice, this is just an informational blog that hopefully will answer some basic questions and lead you to call an experienced Minnesota Divorce Lawyer.

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