

WHAT QUALIFICATIONS DO I NEED TO MEET?

Applicants must be at least 21 years of age, have sufficient income to meet their own basic needs, and be in good physical, emotional and mental health. A Foster/Adoptive parent can be single, married, divorced, or widowed.

CAN I CHOOSE WHAT AGE(S), GENDER(S), RACE(S), AND NUMBER OF KIDS I FEEL COMFORTABLE CARING FOR?

Yes. All placements must be approved by the foster family. Additionally, foster parents have the opportunity to voice their preferences during the home study process, though we encourage families not to set unnecessarily narrow parameters.

WHAT IF I WANT TO ADOPT?

All families certified by the LA Department of Children and Family Services have dual certification that allows them to foster and/or adopt. Foster parents must understand that the first goal of foster care is typically to reunite children with their biological family members. Foster parents should support efforts for reunification. For about 20% of children in foster care in Louisiana, reunification is impossible and they become eligible for adoption.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS TO BECOMING A FOSTER/ADOPTIVE PARENT?

- Info Meeting - Attend an informational meeting for an overview of the agencies involved and the foster/adoption programs.
- Pre-Service Training - Taught by DCFS, A Journey Home, the pre-service training, consists of eight three-hour sessions. If married, both spouses must complete pre-service training to be certified. Children are not allowed at training.
- Application – Paperwork that marks the beginning of the certification process - a requirement to proceed.
- Fingerprinting - Every applicant and adult (over the age of 18) in the home will be fingerprinted.
- Home Study - During training, caseworkers will conduct a series of interviews, home visits, a safety and fire inspection and additional paperwork.
- Placement - After you are certified, a child or children will be placed in your home. This may happen immediately or may take longer, depending on what age/gender of child you are able to care for. The agency will try to place children with you that match your strengths and preferences. You are not obligated to accept any placement. During the certification process you will explore what age(s), gender(s), race(s), number and type(s) of child(ren) you are able to care for and you will be certified accordingly.
- Additional Training – Crossroads NOLA requires additional training that should be completed before certification.

WHAT DOES IT COST?

Foster care is designed to come at no financial expense to foster families. Every month, families receive a stipend to help offset expenses incurred in caring for a child (food, clothing, toiletries, etc). In addition, all children in foster care are on Medicaid. Foster families are not responsible for medical, dental, or vision expenses.

HOW LONG DOES THE PROCESS TAKE?

Once pre-service training is complete and the application has been submitted, the home study and certification process must be completed within three months.

WHAT IF WE NEED CHILDCARE?

The State of Louisiana will pay for daycare, if both parents work. The center must be a state-registered, "Type III" daycare. Depending on the daycare, foster parents may need to pay an additional amount to cover tuition costs above the state-approved rate. You can locate the Type III childcare facilities in your area by going to this website: carefacility.doe.louisiana.gov