

Who can apply to be a Foster Parent?

- ❖ **People over the age of 21.**
- ❖ **Single persons or married persons.**
- ❖ **Those who meet Chapter 56 regulations.**

Do Children in Foster Care have frequent contact with their Birth Parents?

Children in foster care will often have frequent contacts with their birth parents. When possible, the social worker attempts to arrange visits that are mutually convenient. Some of the visits may occur in the foster home.

Do I have to be a parent or a certain age?

We have found that many people who are not currently “parents” often have natural abilities and adapt to being foster parents quickly. As long as you are 21 years old or older, age is not a factor in becoming a foster parent. We are specifically seeking persons who represent a range of diversities including age and racial heritage.

<http://www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/humanservices/FC/docs/FosterCare/index.htm>

<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/children/foster/>

The Licensing Process

Initial Contact / Orientation

Contact Rhonda Rude for information on the foster care orientation sessions and to obtain further information regarding the licensing process.

Attend and Complete 36 hour Pre-Service Training

Our comprehensive 36 hour pre-service training is co-facilitated by a Human Service professional and a Foster Parent professional. The Pre-service training covers multiple aspects of foster care and child welfare.

Complete the Foster Care Home Study

A social worker from the Foster Care Unit will be assigned to conduct a series of interviews to gather information and complete the Foster Parent Assessment. The assessment process will help us get to know you and your family. It will assist in identifying your strengths and matching children to your home. Through home and office visits you will also learn more about our agency and children in need of placement.

For more **information** or to start the **application process**, contact:

Rhonda Rude,
La Crosse County
Human Services Department
300 4th Street North
La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601
(608) 789-4834

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Children's Foster Care

La Crosse County
Human Services Department
Children's Foster Care Program
(608) 789-4834

What is Foster Care?

Family foster care provides skilled and caring substitute families for children to live with until their own family problems are resolved. Foster parents provide youngsters with the guidance, discipline and safety they would give their own children. Foster families work with human service agencies to address the unique needs of the children in their care until they can return to their own families, move on to a permanent adoptive home or live independently.

How does La Crosse County **decide** if my home is suitable to provide Foster Care?

Potential foster parents are involved in a process of pre-service training and interviews to:

- help them and the agency know each other,
- help them learn more about foster care,
- see if their home satisfies the State licensing requirements and will meet the needs of the children available for placement (HFS 56),
- identify the strengths of the foster home and their preference for placement and
- give them information and a realistic perspective of the commitment required to become a foster parent for La Crosse County.

Are there different levels of Foster Care?

Yes, within the Foster Care Unit of La Crosse County Human Services we have four distinct levels of care.

- **Emergency** foster homes rotate being on-call or on back-up status for 24 hour availability. Emergency foster homes take children of all ages and receive payment for being on call. The goal is for children to only remain in emergency care for a period of sixty days or less.
- **Ongoing** foster homes provide care for children who cannot be placed with relatives or return immediately to the parental home. As members of the treatment team, foster parents are expected to support the case plan and visitation schedule. Some children are in need of foster homes that can provide long term care.
- **Concurrent** foster homes provide ongoing foster care but may also be identified as an adoptive resource for the children placed in their home if the reunification plan does not succeed.
- **Specialized** foster homes receive placement of children that have special needs. These children have behavioral, emotional or personal/physical care needs that are moderate to intensive and require additional skills of the foster parent.

Most children are involved in therapy on a weekly basis and require intensive supervision and implementation of behavioral programs. In addition to the social workers, a foster care consultant may work with these children and foster parents to ensure the stability of the placement.

Who **pays** for the care of children in foster homes?

Foster parents are paid the Uniform Foster Care Rate (UFCR) for each child in their care by the La Crosse County Human Services Department on a monthly basis. The basic UFCR is set by the State of Wisconsin and is intended to cover food, clothing, housing, personal care and other expenses. All children in Foster Care receive state funded Medical Assistance. Additional payments may be considered according to the child's emotional, behavioral, or personal/physical care needs.

