



# Family LIFE

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Family and Foster Care



Lutheran Social Services  
of New York



## Our Long History

Since the 1880s, when our agency began as an orphanage, LSSNY has always advocated for a child's right to loving guardianship and familial ties. As a licensed foster care agency, our experienced, caring staff has successfully placed thousands of children into safe, nurturing foster care or adoptive homes.

People of all faiths, races and nationalities have counted on LSSNY, and through our programs, we have helped more than 450 children and families in the last year alone.



## Join Us—and Help Make a Difference in a Child's Life

**As of April 2013, there were  
12,568 children and teens in foster  
care in New York City.**

To help meet the needs of these children and families, we call on community partners, LSSNY supporters and our dedicated network of foster care parents. We welcome new foster parents to our program to help meet the ongoing need for loving homes.

### **What qualities should I possess to be a foster parent?**

In addition to genuinely caring for children and being at least 21 years of age, we find that successful foster parents are:

- Flexible and open to change
- Dependable
- Patient
- Willing to learn new parenting skills and work with a caseworker to meet the needs of a child or teen
- Positive when addressing challenges







Foster parents are a diverse group of caring people, and we encourage people of all races, religions and nationalities to consider becoming foster parents.

**Children With Special Needs**

We are always looking for foster parents who have experience with, or are interested in, caring for children with special needs. Some children have been diagnosed with ADD, ADHD, Autism or may have health issues related to prenatal drug exposure.

We hope you will consider becoming a foster parent for this very special group of children, and we will provide ongoing training and support to help you care for a child.

## **You can make a difference in a teenager's life**

Remember your teenage years? For many of us, they were filled with some of the most difficult, enjoyable, terrifying, funny and scary learning experiences we ever had. If you were lucky, you were blessed with people in your life who held your hand when you needed it, and knew when to let go. They were the foundation of who you are today. You can be that hand-holding, guiding and caring person in a teenager's life.

## **Today's child is our tomorrow**

Get licensed and become a foster parent for a teenager. Let's build a bright future by taking the time today to help a child in need.

## **Why are children placed in foster care?**

There are a variety of reasons why a child may require our services. A disruption in the home can create a need for a child to be placed outside the home while the parent/caregiver completes a plan for reunification. Sometimes the parent is in need of medical treatment or may be incarcerated. Other children are removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. Some of these children need care until an adoptive family is found.



## **How long will a child remain in my home?**

This depends upon a child's needs. Some need a placement for only a few weeks or months. Others remain in foster care until they turn 21 or until an adoptive family is identified. In an emergency situation, you may be asked to welcome a child into your home for just 24 hours or a few days.



### **What are my responsibilities?**

Foster parents act just like birth parents would, providing all of a child's needs, including health care, meals, clothing, shelter, school and parental guidance.

### **What support can I expect?**

Our services, along with any court costs, home study or legal fees, are provided at no cost to you. In addition to a monthly stipend, your foster child will have their own health insurance through Medicaid. Our staff will provide ongoing support and training.

### **Can I work outside my home and still be a foster parent?**

Yes! Foster parents must have sufficient income to support their families.





## How will you decide which child to place in my home?

Children of all ages, backgrounds and abilities are in need of foster care. Foster parents are also needed for sibling groups, teenagers and teen mothers. You can specify your preferences for age, gender, number of children and ethnicity. You will receive a child's complete history while working with your caseworker, to determine the best fit.



## Eligibility Criteria to Become a Foster Parent:

- You must be at least 21 years of age.
- You can be married, single or partnered.
- You must have your own income.
- You must have a home/apartment large enough to accommodate children.
- The room for the child must be free from health and safety hazards, have a bed for each child, and provide natural light (window).
- All adults in the household, age 18+, must submit to a background check.
- You must successfully complete all training.
- You must submit all required documents.
- A medical must be submitted for all household members, along with a PPD test (medicals and PPDs are required annually).

## What are the steps to becoming a foster parent?

The first step is to attend an orientation meeting during which our staff will provide you with an overview of foster parenting and answer your questions. Once your application is received with all supporting documents (i.e., a medical evaluation, proof of training and a successful background check), you will be assigned a Homefinder to help prepare a home study—an overview of your personal history and living situation.



For more information, please contact:

Lutheran Social Services of New York

**Family LIFE**

*Family and Foster Services*

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## OUR MISSION

“Called by God, we encourage people to reach their full potential.”



Family LIFE is a program of Lutheran Social Services of New York's family of services.