

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Family Ark Foster Care

### **Q: WHAT IS FOSTER CARE?**

*A: Foster care is a system of temporary care for children and adolescents. The primary goal of foster care is to reunify families once it is safe to do so.*

### **Q: WHAT ARE THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LEAD TO A CHILD BEING PLACED IN FOSTER CARE?**

*A: Children are placed into foster care due to no fault of their own. In most instances, they are removed from their families due to substantiated allegations of abuse and/or neglect by their caregiver(s).*

### **Q: CAN FOSTER PARENTS CHOOSE WHAT AGE, GENDER, AND BEHAVIOR OF A CHILD THEY ARE COMFORTABLE PARENTING?**

*A: There is a lot of flexibility in fostering. We want families to feel comfortable and confident in their ability to parent the children in their home. You are always free to not accept a placement you feel you are not the best fit for.*

### **Q: WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO BECOME A FOSTER PARENT?**

*A: At a minimum, applicants must:*

- Have a nurturing and loving home*
- Be at least 21 years of age*
- Be single, married, or unmarried couple living together for at least 1 year*
- Complete a medical report*
- Complete background checks, including fingerprinting*
- Complete First Aid/CPR/Universal Precautions certification*
- Open your home for at least 3 visits to a home study practitioner*
- Complete 10 hours of Initial Training*
- Provide 4 references*
- Pass a home inspection*

### **Q: HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO BECOME A LICENSED FOSTER PARENT?**

*A: There are NO costs, it's free! Even though we are a private agency, there are no costs associated with fostering through Family Ark. We also cover the fees of CPR/First Aid certifications, as well as fingerprinting for background checks.*

**Q: WHAT COUNTIES DOES FAMILY ARK SERVE?**

*A: Family Ark primarily works with counties in Region 18 of Southern Indiana; Floyd, Clark, Harrison, Washington and Scott counties.*

**Q: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FOSTERING THROUGH FAMILY ARK, A LICENCING CHILD PLACING AGENCY (LCPA), VERSUS THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES (DCS)?**

*A: There are several benefits of being licensed through an LCPA:*

- You receive a Family Ark foster care case manager. Because our case managers have much smaller caseloads, they are able to provide you with personal, one-on-one support for you and your family!*
- We have a 24/7 on-call phone. Our foster parents can reach a Family Ark foster care team member at anytime if they are feeling overwhelmed, their child is exhibiting behaviors they aren't sure how to manage, if there is an emergency, and everything in between!*
- Family Ark hosts several fun events throughout the year for our foster families! We have an Annual Foster Parent Appreciation Event in May, a summer/fall event, as well as a huge Holiday Celebration in December. We also often receive discounted or free tickets to events in the community.*
- We offer monthly in-service trainings on our campus and childcare is provided for any children in your home. We also provide dinner and allow parents to receive and give peer support.*

**Q: WHAT TYPE OF TRAINING WILL I RECIEVE TO BECOME A FOSTER PARENT?**

*A: There are three initial training classes Family Ark provides in order to become a licensed foster parent. (1) Introduction to DCS, (2) Child Abuse & Neglect, and (3) Attachment, Discipline & The Effects of Caregiving on the Family.*

**Q: HOW LONG ARE THE PRE-SERVICE TRAININGS AND WHEN ARE THEY HELD?**

*A: Pre-service training courses are 10 hours total. One of the trainings is completed online and discussed in the classroom setting. Classes are scheduled to meet the needs of our parents, so we take into account our parents' schedules while planning class dates and times.*

**Q: WHAT ARE THE ANNUAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS AFTER LICENSURE?**

*A: Through ongoing training, foster parents will continue to improve their parenting skills and have opportunities to give and receive peer support. Families are required to earn 15 hours of ongoing training annually to keep their license in good standing. Family Ark hosts monthly*

*in-service trainings in order for our families to have ample opportunities to meet this requirement. We provide childcare for all children in your home as well as meals!*

**Q: WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES WILL I HAVE AFTER I AM LICENSED?**

*A: Foster parents are required to complete monthly documentation during placements, meet annual training requirements, and perform regular parental duties (e.g., provide transportation for children to visits with their biological family, take children to doctor's appointments, therapy appointments, and other needs dependent on the specific child).*

**Q: HOW ARE MEDICAL COSTS COVERED FOR FOSTER CHILDREN?**

*A: All medical costs will be covered by Indiana Medicaid, a biological parent's private insurance, or the Department of Child Services.*

**Q: WHAT CAN I EXPECT WHEN A CHILD ENTERS MY HOME?**

*A: Family Ark prides itself on the support it gives to its families. Foster parents will work with a Family Ark case manager to best meet the needs of children placed in their home. Families meet and communicate with their case manager ongoing throughout the month.*

**Q: WHAT ARE RESPITE FAMILIES?**

*A: While the licensing process and requirements are the same, some families choose to be a "respite-only" family. They provide a needed break and support for full-time foster parents. The temporary care that respite providers offer is essential to maintaining healthy relationships in the foster family and leads to greater success for the child. Respite care typically occurs over the course of a weekend or single week.*

**Q: CAN I ADOPT A CHILD FROM FOSTER CARE?**

*A: Yes, there are many families that choose to adopt children through foster care! There are thousands of children who are legally free for adoption who are waiting for their forever families. Other times, foster families who are traditionally fostering adopt their foster child after reunification is no longer an appropriate option for that child.*

**Q: HOW DO I START THE PROCESS OF BEING A LICENSED FOSTER PARENT?**

*A: The first step of starting the process is to contact a member of our foster care licensing department at (812) 282-8479. Applicants will be given a brief overview of Family Ark's Foster Care Program, along with answers to any initial questions you may have. Next, you can schedule an in-person informational meeting, where you will have the opportunity to ask more questions about foster care, tour our facility, and receive the initial licensing paperwork.*