

Fostering Families

a publication of the Chaddock Center for Family Development



The Real Meaning of Family

"Family." Today, more than ever, people are realizing that word is about a lot more than a certain number of parents or siblings or grandparents. It is about adults being there for children . . . giving a young person a solid foundation of support and acceptance, boundaries and consequences, unconditional care and concern.

There are so many children, right here in our own community, who **desperately need that kind of family** . . . and who will only find it in the loving home of a foster parent.

There are many stereotypes about foster parents (and foster children for that matter). In reality, foster parents are married, single, divorced, male, female, young, old, with no children, grown children, children at home, living in town, on the farm, in big houses and rented apartments . . . Foster parents are people, just like you and me, who have found it in their heart to reach out to a child in need and welcome them into their lives and their homes.

Lots of people comment that they have thought about foster parenting for a long time, but just haven't gotten to the point of taking that step yet. That's okay. Most people think about foster parenting a long time before they make the commitment — because it is a big commitment.

Foster parents shape lives . . . and in the process experience both the challenges and rewards that come with that challenging task. They give a solid foundation and a brighter future to a child who otherwise may have little to look forward to . . . they reach out to one small life to keep it from becoming yet another sad statistic in the news. **They are heroes** who personify the word family. And there are not nearly enough of them.

If you, too, have considered foster parenting but have just never taken that step, please read on. **Chaddock can help** you take that next step to becoming just the family a child needs — a foster family.

Just the Facts . . .

- ◆ Foster Parents always have the final decision as to whether a child is placed in their home.
- ◆ Foster children can accompany you on family trips or special occasions as long as the necessary steps are completed.
- ◆ All basic costs such as food, clothing and medical expenses are covered for foster children.
- ◆ Chaddock provides 24-hr. a day on-call support for foster parents — you never have to feel you are totally "on your own" with a child.
- ◆ Foster parents receive a monthly reimbursement, based on the level of need of the child placed in their care. Payments received for foster parenting are tax exempt.
- ◆ Foster parenting may also provide opportunities for adoption if that is a goal for the Foster Parents.

“ The payoff for all this effort is simply incredible. The feeling of pride and accomplishment about the changes you see in a child is hard to describe.”

Chaddock Foster Parent

Laying the Groundwork for Success

Considerable training is provided to prospective foster parents before licensing. This not only gives them the tools to be effective foster parents, it also provides the opportunity to network and learn with others interested in foster parenting. After completing the training, some individuals may choose not to become foster parents, but for most the training gives them the confidence to take the next step in the process. Topics covered in the 27-hour Foster Pride training include:

- ◆ Building relationships
- ◆ Importance of biological families
- ◆ Child abuse/neglect reporting act
- ◆ Grief, loss and separation
- ◆ Documentation and procedures
- ◆ Surrogate parenting
- ◆ Confidentiality
- ◆ Teaching discipline
- ◆ Cultural competency
- ◆ Self-esteem building

Specialized and Treatment Foster Care training includes all of the above topics as well as an additional 13 hours of intensive behavior management training which includes:

- ◆ Behavioral Documentation
- ◆ Reality Therapy/Choice Theory Concepts
- ◆ Discipline
- ◆ Relationships
- ◆ CPR and First Aid

In addition to this initial training, regular foster parents are required to complete four hours of on-going training each year to enhance their skills, specialized foster parents are required to complete 24 hours of annual training, and treatment parents need 30 hours.

In addition to the formal training, Chaddock also has monthly support meetings for all foster parents to discuss issues of common concern, and interventions other foster parents have found effective. All Chaddock foster parents also have 24-hour a day on-call professional support to assist when necessary.

Levels of Foster Care

Relative Foster Care: Children in this program live with relatives and have previously been determined to have been either abused and/or neglected or a minor requiring authoritative intervention by the court. Children placed within this program may or may not show minor behavior problems, and there may or may not be a goal of the child returning home.

Regular Foster Care: Children placed within the program – usually infant through grade school age – have previously been determined to be either abused and/or neglected or a minor requiring authoritative intervention by the court, and do not have appropriate relatives with whom the placement could be made. Children in this program may or may not show minor behavior problems, and there may or may not be a goal of returning home.

Specialized Foster Care: Children in this program show troubling behaviors that prevent placement in regular foster care. The youth may have experienced multiple prior placements, which may or may not have been completed successfully, and the child's family or guardian is not capable of dealing with the troubling behaviors. There may or may not be a goal of returning home.

Treatment Foster Care: Youth placed in this program have at least four of the following behaviors: chronic adjustment problems at school, delinquent behavior, assaultive behavior, drug/alcohol use, inability to develop attachments, pregnant mother or teen parent, problematic sexual behavior, returning from residential/institutional care, running away, suicide attempts, withdrawn behavior.

So Many Questions . . .

What happens if you run into the foster child's biological family when you are out with your foster child?

Are foster children allowed to be made to do chores? (yes)

How long will the child be with us?

Can foster children be spanked? (no)

Who sets the rules and limits for the foster child? (DCFS)

Do foster children spend holidays with their biological family?

The fact of the matter is, there will be clear answers to some of your questions, and others may vary on a case by case basis . . . just as with a parent's natural children, each foster child and their circumstances is unique so there isn't always one simple or right answer.

Rest assured, however, if the answer to a question isn't readily apparent, Chaddock will work with you to find the best answer given the individual situation.

The Licensing Process

Every Chaddock Regular, Specialized, and Treatment Foster Home is licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). (Relative homes may also choose to be licensed.) The licensing process is a necessary part of ensuring the safety and security of the foster children in our care.

Individuals must first complete the Foster Pride foster parent training before they are eligible to apply for licensure. There is no cost to apply for licensure, which is renewable every four years.

There are a number of aspects of the licensing process, including background checks and fingerprinting of the prospective foster parents along with reference checks, verification of physicals for all individuals living in the household, current vaccinations for any animals in the home, and a home study covering areas such as: checking for smoke alarms and fire extinguishers, exit windows in sleeping areas, square footage of the home, etc.

Prospective foster parents receive all the information about what is required for the home study and licensing ahead of time, and Chaddock's licensing specialist works with them throughout the process to answer questions or address concerns.

Monthly Foster Parent Meetings Give a Network of Support

Just as it's comforting to parents of newborns to know that it's normal for babies to have their days and nights mixed up at first; it's also a great relief to many foster parents to know that others have gone through — and survived — the same types of things they may be experiencing with a foster child.

Monthly foster parent support meetings provide a great opportunity for this type of informal interaction with others who "have been there." While Chaddock foster parents are more than willing to lend support any time, the opportunity to talk about the little things on a regular basis has proven to be a great support.

“ I found I had a lot of time on my hands now that my child is an adult and no longer lives near me. So I decided to become a foster parent. Now my hands, time and heart are all filled.”

Chaddock Foster Parent

Adoption Opportunities Increasing in Foster Care

For individuals and families interested in adopting foster children – including newborn foster children – the opportunities have never been greater.

Previously, adoption of a foster child could take years because of the reluctance to terminate the parental rights of birth parents. Today, however, DCFS is undertaking a “Permanency Initiative” with a goal of finding a permanent placement or adoption for children as soon as possible. As a result, a process that used to take years may now be completed in a matter of months.

If you would like additional information on becoming a foster parent with a goal of adoption, please contact the Chaddock Center for Family Development at 222-0034.

Incredible Unseen Need

Last year alone, Chaddock served more than 100 children in foster care. And yet, the need continues to grow.

Few people recognize the incredible need for foster parents – right here, in our own community. There are so many young children enduring the trauma of being removed from their home and parents, often not understanding what is happening or why?

As one of our foster parents pointed out, “Can you imagine what it’s like not to know where you will sleep each night, or whether you will have a permanent home during your childhood?” Each and every year, hundreds of children in our community face that uncertainty. Chaddock is doing all that it can to brighten the future of abused and neglected children, but we can’t do it without the help of people like you. If you have ever considered becoming a foster parent, please give us a call to learn more about opening your home, and your heart to a child in need.



Chaddock

center for family development

**636 Hampshire
Quincy, IL 62301
(217) 222-0034**

Think You Might Want to Learn More?

Chaddock offers numerous opportunities for individuals who want to learn more about how foster parenting might fit into their lives. If you would like additional information, we would be happy to:

- Set up an individual appointment with Chaddock staff who work with the foster care program
- Give you the opportunity to speak with a Chaddock foster parent
- Let you know of our next informational meeting regarding foster parenting.

To take advantage of any of these opportunities, please call or write the:

**Chaddock Center for
Family Development**
636 Hampshire
Quincy, Illinois 62301
(217) 222-0034

“ Our secret to foster parenting is to just love them, love them some more and then love them again. ”

Chaddock Foster Parent