

## **How do I qualify?**

- Must be a healthy, responsible, mature adult
- Must be at least 21 years old
- Must be a legal resident of the US
- Must have a high school diploma or GED
- Must be able to pass criminal background check, FBI fingerprint check, and have no history of abusing or neglecting children or adults
- Must be willing to attend training and accept our policy of no physical discipline
- Must be financially stable and able to support your family without relying on foster care reimbursement
- Must be able to pass home safety and fire inspections
- May be single or married, but if married, must have been married for at least two years
- Must pass a home study

## **What kind of support will I receive?**

- Monthly financial assistance to help pay for the additional living expenses of caring for a child
- Medical expenses covered for the child
- Counseling services available for the child
- Regular contact with a Case Manager for support and assistance
- Monthly foster parent support groups
- Ongoing training opportunities to assist you in dealing with the special needs of foster children
- 24 hour on call assistance
- The satisfaction of making a difference in a child's life

## **How do I become a foster parent?**

You will need to complete an application and submit necessary paperwork. Our agency staff will contact your references and obtain background checks. Then you will have an orientation meeting and start training. You will be screened through a

series of interviews, to create the home study report. The time varies, but is generally somewhere around three months.

### **Where do I start?**

Contact Angela at 806-747-3187 to discuss your interest and request an application.

### **Frequently asked questions:**

- Do I need to own my own home?

No. You may either rent or own your home. You must have an extra bedroom adequate for a child.

- Can I still work?

Yes. You may work as long as you provide adequate child care arrangements that meet state regulations while you are at work.

- What are the training requirements?

There are some initial training classes that are required before children can be placed in your home, such as Trauma Informed Care, Psychotropic Medication, and Managing Aggressive Behavior. You will be required to maintain current CPR and First Aid certifications.

There are training requirements each year for each foster parent, but the amount depends on the level of the needs of the child in the home. Training hours can be obtained through classes offered at Texas Boys Ranch, conferences in the community, foster parent support groups, videos, books, etc.

- How long does a child stay in a foster home?

The time varies depending on the circumstances of the child's placement. Sometimes the child may return home after a few months and others may stay for a year or so. Sometimes children are placed with other relatives. Sometimes children who can't go home become eligible for adoption while others remain in foster care until they graduate.

- Is it possible to adopt our foster child?

The first goal is to reunite children to their biological families if possible. However, if a child in your home becomes available for adoption, you may discuss your interest with the child's case manager. Many foster parents begin fostering with the intent on adopting a child in the future.

## **Adoption**

The primary focus of our adoption program is to find permanent, committed, loving Christian families to special needs children. These are children with physical, mental or emotional disabilities, older children, minority children, and sibling groups. Children of all ages, ethnicities, and backgrounds are in need loving adoptive families.

We also provide services for families that would like to adopt an infant through private adoptions. We work with birth parents who are considering placing their child with a loving, adoptive family.

### **What support services will I receive?**

- You will be provided training prior to having a child placed in your home so that you will have a better understanding about the child's background and experiences that have influenced the child's thoughts and behaviors
- An Adoption Case Manager will visit your home regularly for at least six months after the child is placed in your home to provide assistance and support.
- The child is provided individual counseling.
- Counseling is provided to your family.
- The state offers ongoing financial assistance and other benefits for special needs adoptions.

### **Frequently asked questions for Adoption?**

- What kind of information do I have to provide during the adoption process?

We ask for information such as personal references, copies of marriage licenses and/or divorce decrees (if applicable), proof of income, copy of drivers'

licenses and social security cards, and copies of high school diplomas or GED's. We will ask for medical history for the parents. A criminal background check must be completed as well as a FBI finger print check. A worker will come into your home to meet with all family members to conduct a home study.

➤ What are the financial costs of adoption?

There is no cost for a family wanting to adopt a child that is in the custody of the state of Texas. The only cost will be the legal fees needed to finalize the adoption. The state can reimburse the fees if the child qualifies as special needs.

There is a cost for private adoptions. Those fees can be discussed more thoroughly with an adoption case manager.

➤ How long does it take before a child is placed in our home?

The length of the adoption process varies, but typically lasts between nine and twelve months and includes the following steps:

1. Attend an informational orientation
2. Submit a complete application and other documentation
3. Complete the required training program
4. Participate in a home study
5. Receive approval to be an adoptive family
6. Discuss a potential placement with your case manager
7. Welcome a child into your home