

# Dungarvin

## Treatment Foster Care Program



Prospective Foster Parent Information Packet



Thank you for making the decision to learn more about becoming a foster family! The process of fostering can be an emotional and complex one, but it is also very rewarding. This packet has been specifically designed to provide you with information about foster care. As you read through the steps involved, keep in mind that the staff at Dungarvin Ohio is here to support, encourage and assist you throughout your journey. You are welcome to call us at (614) 547-8410, visit our website at [www.dungarvin.com](http://www.dungarvin.com) or email our foster parent recruiter, Adrienne Kennedy at [akennedy@dungarvin.com](mailto:akennedy@dungarvin.com) at any time.



He can't wait  
till some day.

## So What is Foster Care?

The primary goal of foster care is to provide a stable living arrangement for the child, at the present time and then permanently. Ideally, the child's family is strengthened and the child returns home. When this goal is not attainable, the goal is to create another permanent plan for the child through adoption, long-term foster care or independent living.

At Dungarvin, we license and support families who provide Treatment Foster Care (TFC). TFC is a specialized form of foster care that was designed especially for children and adolescents who have an identified cognitive, emotional, or behavioral condition which requires specialized care and treatment. Services for these children are coordinated by an alliance between professional treatment staff and foster families who have received specialized training in caring for children with special needs. Through Dungarvin's TFC program children and adolescents receive:

- ✿ Assessment Services
- ✿ Referral based Individual and Family Therapy
- ✿ Skill Development
- ✿ 24/7 Crisis Support
- ✿ Referral based Psychiatric Services

Some of the basic responsibilities of a foster parent are:

- ✿ Provide a nurturing environment.
- ✿ Include children in the daily activities of the family.
- ✿ Arrange and take children to medical and dental appointments.
- ✿ Support contact between child(ren) and their birth families.
- ✿ Communicate with the school and keep up on child's progress.
- ✿ Communicate and cooperate with your Program Director and the child's treatment team about progress and concerns.
- ✿ Maintain training requirements.



# Requirements

In order to become a foster parent:

- ✿ You must be 21 years of age or older.
- ✿ You may be single, married, widowed or be in a significant long-term partnership.
- ✿ You must be in good health and be willing to provide documentation from a medical professional.
- ✿ You and your family must participate in the home study process, which will be completed by a licensing worker from the agency you are seeking a foster care license from.
- ✿ You must be able to provide proof of homeowner's or renter's insurance.
- ✿ You must be able to provide proof of automobile insurance.
- ✿ You will undergo criminal background checks.
- ✿ You will be required to provide fingerprint-based criminal background checks.
- ✿ Your home must be in compliance with the requirements established by the State of Ohio.



## Time Frame

The process of becoming a licensed foster parent varies, but usually takes at least two to three months to complete. You can begin to take children into your home when your license and pre-placement training are completed. Licenses are issued for a period of two years and then must be renewed.

## Training Requirements

Training requirements are divided into two phases:

- ✿ **Pre-Service:** To be completed prior to the placement of the first child in a family's home. Completion of pre-service training is required to obtain licensure.
- ✿ **On-going:** 30 hours of training must be completed every year of a foster parent license.



# How Do Children Enter Our Services?



The children in Ohio's foster care system are between the ages of 0 and 21. The amount of time a child will spend in foster care depends on the circumstances of the child and their biological family. Some children are in care for one day, others for many years; each child's case is different. Children are placed in foster care for different reasons. Some examples include: a child who has been abandoned, a child who is not safe, a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect, a child whose parent is incarcerated or hospitalized, a child who has significant medical or mental health needs or a child who has committed a delinquent act.

The basic goals of foster care are:

- ✿ To protect the child from further abuse or neglect.
- ✿ To provide a safe and nurturing home.
- ✿ To provide consistent care and supervision that meets the child's needs.
- ✿ To help the family make positive changes in order to work toward reunification.

Overall, foster care aims to keep children in a safe and positive environment.



The numbers below represent the various categories of placements used by Franklin County Children Services in 2013:

- ✿ 4,146 children in agency custody
- ✿ 2,278 children served in purchased foster care
- ✿ 1,199 children served in group or institutional care
- ✿ 1,450 children placed with relatives

# The Need Is Most Critical For...

## Sibling Groups

- ✿ Preserving the bond between brothers and sisters is an essential part of their long-term emotional well-being.
- ✿ Placing siblings together, or enabling them to maintain contact when they are separated, preserves their connections with one another and to their family, improving long-term well-being and permanency, whether the ultimate plan is reunification, adoption, or permanent placement with kin.
- ✿ Placing siblings with kin increases their chance for retaining family connections not only with one another but with other family members. At Dungarvin, such placements are pursued whenever possible.



## Teenagers and Teen Moms

- ✿ Contrary to the common belief that most foster children are younger, most children in foster care are between the ages of 11-17; most teenagers are male.
- ✿ Teens in foster care face additional challenges in making important decisions because of temporary living situations, lack of a permanent adult mentors, lack of continuous and easy access to health services, and history of trauma or abuse. Caring foster parents are needed to help these children break a continuing cycle of abuse, trauma, and early parenting.
- ✿ Teens in foster care are at a higher risk of becoming parents early.
- ✿ Often if the baby is not a foster child, Children Services will often allow mother and baby to live together.



## Children with Special Needs

Youth with disabilities who are also in the foster care system are one of the most vulnerable populations in the United States. Foster children with developmental disabilities need a special home in which to live and thrive. Dungarvin Ohio specializes in working with foster children and youth that have the following developmental disabilities:

- ✿ Autism Spectrum Disorder
- ✿ Down Syndrome
- ✿ Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- ✿ Intellectual Disability
- ✿ Physical Disability



## We Belong Together

We are sisters and live together, but we don't live with our brothers. We live in Columbus, and our brothers live in Dayton. A year ago, we were sent to foster care and separated from our older brothers. Our brothers couldn't live at the same foster home as us because our foster mom didn't have enough room for all four of us.

Sometimes kids are placed in foster care when they (or their parents) need time to figure things out. We were sent because our mom needed to get some help for herself. We like our foster mom, she's nice and she treats us very well, but we miss our brothers.

We don't see each other very often and this makes it hard for us to keep the close relationship we're used to. Now we have to rely on letters and phone calls to keep in touch. We know we are luckier than some separated foster kids who rarely get to see their siblings at all. When we are with our brothers, it's always a special time. They make us feel safe and loved. We can always count on our brothers whenever we need help or feel lonely.

It makes us sad to think that we may never live with our brothers again. But if we do, we know that we will love and appreciate each other so much more. Being away from each other has made us value each other and the time we spend together.



*A Family Story*

# Interested in Becoming a Foster Parent?



## Things to consider

We know this is a lot of information to digest. You may be wondering if this is the right thing for you and your family. We recommend taking some time to assess your feelings and think about what responsibilities you would take on as a foster parent and also the goals of foster care. You may also want to ask yourself the following questions:

- \* Do I meet all the qualifications to become a foster parent?
- \* Am I willing to work with birth families, including extended relatives, when appropriate?
- \* Can I handle having my family's way of life examined?
- \* Am I patient, flexible and do I have a sense of humor?
- \* Would I be willing to keep up with the latest training and look for resources when I'm stuck?
- \* Will I be able to cope with the grief and loss when a child leaves my home?
- \* Do I have a support network?
- \* If a child in my care needs an adoptive home, would I be willing to consider adopting or helping him



**Q:** How much experience does a Foster parent need to have?

**A:** Since Dungarvin provides initial and ongoing training, it is not a requirement that foster parents have prior foster care, or developmental disability experience. **HOWEVER**, this is extremely helpful! Foster parents are assessed individually based on their ability to provide a safe and stable environment. It is, however, required that foster parents are willing to receive as much training as is deemed necessary and that there is a compatible behavior support philosophy. Many of our foster parents decide to do respite care before taking in a full time placement to begin getting accustomed to working with the children in our care, and learning the ropes a bit.



**Q:** Does Dungarvin provide all of the initial training?

**A:** Dungarvin will provide all of the initial training. You will be given dates and times for training when the certification process begins. You may choose to get First Aid/CPR on your own. If you have a conflict with the dates or times, we can give you additional dates. See certification checklist for a list of all required training. A child will not be placed in your home until all initial training is complete.



**Q:** When will a placement be made?

**A:** Placements are made based on a match between the foster parent(s) and the child. Safety issues, location, service availability, schedules, experience, and other factors are considered when making a match. We are never without referrals, but no guarantees can be made for placement timelines, especially when there are young children in your home currently. Most of our current foster parents have received a placement within a few weeks of certification.

**Q:** How many children can be placed in a foster care home?

**A:** There can be no more than five children placed in a foster care home at one time. For more guidelines, please refer to the health and safety checklist located on our website.

**Q:** Do you have to own your own home to be a foster parent?

**A:** No, you can be a renter, as long as you notify your landlord that you are providing foster care services, have renter's insurance, and the property you are renting meets the standards for the Health and Safety Assessment.

**Q:** Can I work a job and still be a foster parent?



**A:** Yes, many of our foster parents do work. A flexible work schedule is needed as many of our children have doctor's appointments, therapy, and other appointments scheduled. We try our best to help accommodate schedules and help when we can but as a foster parent, you should be available should situations arise that require you to be present

**Q: Who pays for the costs involved in getting certified?**

**A:** Costs of getting certified, and re-certified, are the responsibility of the foster parents. Initial costs usually include fingerprinting (\$46 per person). First Aid/CPR (\$60 per person if not taken through Dungarvin) a fire inspection for your home is also required (\$75). These requirements are in accordance with the Ohio Administrative Code. Emergency preparedness supplies are typical expenditures for parents seeking certification as well. Foster parents are also required to take and pass a medication administration class prior to certification (\$125 per person). Any costs related to modifications of the home that are required as per the children's foster care rule are also the responsibility of the Foster parents.

**Q: How is compensation determined?**

**A:** Foster parents receive a daily rate based on the needs of the child. Per Diem rates vary depending on the personal care needs of the child, and how intensive their supports need to be. Foster parents are not required to keep a ledger on this compensation, but are encouraged to see an accountant for tax advice. Typical service payments range between \$1,100 and \$2,500 a month.

**Q: Is parenting a foster child just like parenting my own children.**

**A:** There are many differences in parenting a foster child than parenting your own children. We are bound by the standards of the Ohio Administrative Code, which stipulate that no forms of punishment can be implemented. Our behavior support policy clearly outlines strategies for positive behavior supports that must be followed. Each child also has a team of people who work together to make decisions in the best interest of the child, and permission has to be received from the team for things such as large purchases, trips out of town, school placement, etc. Also, depending on the circumstances of how the child entered into our program, they may still have their birth family involved in their care.



**Q: Do all these children really need is love?**

**A:** Many new foster parents enter our program with the ideal that they are going to be able to make huge changes in a child's life by offering a loving, safe home for the child. We welcome the good intentions and uplifting spirit this brings, however, many of our children need a great deal more than love and safety. As a team we work together to provide you with as much information and history of the child up front, and formulate the best plan of care we can for that child, and how to effectively support them in their challenging times as well as good times. Change does not come overnight, but with consistency and dedication, we are able to help these kids achieve a great quality of life and become active members of the community!

## My Experience in Foster Care



My life was tough growing up. My father was addicted to drugs and was physically abusive towards my mother. I didn't feel like anyone cared about me so I fell into the wrong crowd and starting making a lot of bad choices.

After a time, the problems at home got so bad that I had to be put into foster care. At first I was relieved, but when the day came I didn't want to go. Even though things were rough at home, I just didn't want to leave home and be away from my parents. That is the day my whole life changed.

What helped most was having someone who encouraged me believe in myself, and helped me to believe that I could do anything I put my mind to. Today, I am grateful that there are families who open their hearts and homes to children in need. I'm happy that there are people who are willing to offer a place for children to feel safe and cared for. I want to say thank you to all foster parents for making the choice to make a difference in the life of a child.

### More Questions?

If you have more questions, please call us at Dungarvin Ohio. We are here to help! Please remember that the staff at Dungarvin Ohio is here for you during every step of your journey.

### Resource Appendix

For more information regarding the requirements for becoming a Foster Parent please visit our website, [www.dungarvin.com](http://www.dungarvin.com) for additional resources that may be helpful to you through your foster care journey. By exploring the website you can find:

- ✿ Licensure Requirements
- ✿ Health and Safety Requirements

If you need any assistance in navigating our website, or any other information or resources, please give us a call.

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