- Each child in your care has a social worker who visits the child and maintains a link with the child's birth family;
- You will be able to apply for child benefit for each child in your care;
- Support from your public health nurse if you are caring for a pre-school child;
- A comprehensive training programme pre and post approval;
- A year's free membership to the Irish Foster Care Association; and
- Each child in foster care will have their own medical card.

Training and Development

We recognise that the needs of children in care will change over time. With this in mind, we actively support and promote the continuous professional development of our staff and foster carers.

Training and development is compulsory for all foster carers and all applicants will be asked to complete a fostering induction course prior to approval as a foster carer. Throughout your time as a foster carer various workshops and education opportunities will be offered to you and we hope you will find these courses both interesting and enjoyable.
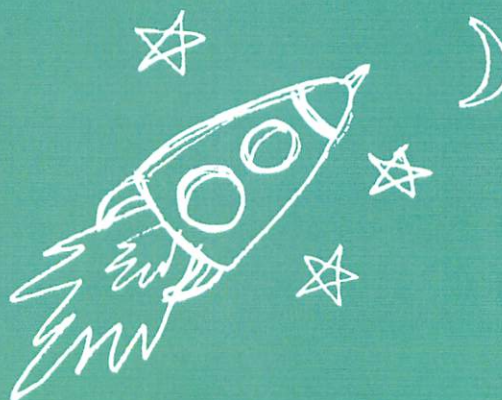
I Am Interested in Becoming A Foster Carer: What Happens Now?

The first step is to contact the Child and Family Agency at:

Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan
071 91 49681

Or you can use our online enquiry form at **fostering.ie**.

A member of our foster team will then follow up with you by telephone at a time that is convenient for you.

Could Someone Like You, Help Someone Like Me?

BECOME A FOSTER CARER.

TÚSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

What is fostering?

Fostering means so many things. It means someone who cares, nurtures and supports.

Our foster carers provide a safe, stable home for children and young people who are unable to live with their own families, and give them the support they need to thrive.

Who can foster?

Foster carers are a diverse group of people who come from all walks of life. Foster carers may be single, married, co-habiting, in a same sex relationship, employed, unemployed or retired. Having foster carers from different cultures allows us to match children and young people with suitable foster carers.

Tusla – Child and Family Agency will provide you with the training and support which will enable you to undertake this challenging task and give a child a second chance at getting the best start in life.

What you need:

- Time, energy and enthusiasm for children and their interests;
- An understanding that it can take a long time for a child in care to respond to you and your family;
- A flexible approach, adaptable attitude and the ability to work as part of a team;
- A positive outlook and ability to be pleased with small steps forward;
- Strong and available family or support networks;
- At least one adult is available to care for the child on a full-time basis.;
- Respect for individuality and diversity and a willingness to speak up for young people's rights;
- Willingness to learn from your own and other people's experiences and to attend regular training sessions, group meetings and workshops;
- No record of violence or serious offences.

During our fostering process, we will assess you and your family's skills, attitude, personality and ability to understand what children and young people are going through and how you could, and would meet their varying needs.

What Support Do Foster Carers Receive?

We understand that good support is absolutely vital to ensure that you feel confidant and capable in your role. It is our job to do everything we can to help you. We value the work foster carers do and the contributions they make to children and young people's lives. We provide foster carers with a solid support system to enable them to provide a good standard of care for the children they look after.

Foster carers receive a foster care allowance in respect of and for the benefit of the foster child and is used to meet the day to day costs associated with looking after a foster child. It is not a payment or salary to foster carers.

This allowance does not affect tax or state benefits. The Child and Family Agency has a guidance document on the appropriate use of the fostering allowance.

Other supports include:

- Regular home visits and telephone contact from your assigned fostering link worker;