

Foster Parenting

Myths and Facts about Becoming a Foster Family

MYTH: Foster parents must be married and/or have children of their own.
FACT: Foster parents do not need to be married or have children.

MYTH: Older people cannot be foster parents.
FACT: Foster parents must be at least 21 years old. There are no other age requirements.

MYTH: People with police records are automatically ineligible to become foster parents.
FACT: To ensure the safety of children in foster care, potential foster families are screened for past criminal activity. Convictions are reviewed by the Office of Licensing and Accreditation on a case-by-case basis.

MYTH: To become foster parents, a family must make a certain amount of money.
FACT: A family must be able to support itself financially outside of foster care payments.

MYTH: People become foster parents just for the money.
FACT: Foster parents are reimbursed monthly to help meet the essential needs of children placed in their care. Foster care payments are intended to cover the needs of the child placed in care.

MYTH: Foster parents must own a large, expensive home in order to meet licensing standards.
FACT: There are no licensing standards regarding the size of a potential foster parent's home. Licensing standards that do exist are in place to help ensure the home provides a safe environment for children in foster care.

MYTH: Each child in foster care must have their own bedroom.
FACT: Children in foster care can share bedrooms. However, children over the age of six can only share a room with a child of the same gender.

MYTH: Foster parents must pay for medical expenses if they are caring for a child in foster care.
FACT: Children who are placed in foster care by the South Dakota Department of Social Services receive medical coverage through the Department. Foster parents are not responsible for the medical expenses of children in foster care.

MYTH: Birth parents can "drop in" and visit their children in foster care at any time.
FACT: The child's Family Services Specialist approves all parental visitation plans and coordinates those plans, in advance, with the parents and foster family. Foster parents have the opportunity to mentor a child's family.

MYTH: Foster parents who work outside of the home must pay for the child's child care expenses.
FACT: If the child care is provided by a registered family daycare or a licensed child care center, child care costs can be reimbursed. The child care plan must meet reimbursement criteria as established by the Department of Social Services.

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