



FOSTER CARE FACT SHEET . . .
DANE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN SERVICES
242-6303

The purpose of foster care is to provide temporary family care when a child is unable to stay at home with his or her parents. The ultimate goal is to reunify a child with their birth parents or relatives.

Children go into foster care for many reasons:

- Abuse (physical or sexual), neglect, abandonment
- Illness, incapacity, alcohol or drug abuse by parents
- Inability of parent to provide care due to emotional problems
- Special needs of the child (behavioral, physical or emotional) that cannot be met by the birth parent
- Involved in crisis needing emergency, short-term placement

Length of placement varies, depending on the individual case plan. The tendency is for placements to be for one year, especially for younger children.

Currently there are over 200 children in care. About 50% of foster care placements in Dane County are of minority children – predominantly African-American. 50% of the children placed in foster care are age 12 and older.

Current Foster Care Needs:

- Emergency foster care placements for all ages
- Homes who can care for minority children
- Homes for children with emotional or behavioral challenges
- Homes to give foster or birth parents a break for 1-2 weekends per month
- Homes for teenagers, moving toward independence
- Homes for sibling groups
- Homes for children with developmental disabilities
- Homes for babies and toddlers
- Home for boys between the ages of 10 and 13 years old
- Concurrent foster care ***

*** Concurrent foster families actively work toward the reunification of children with their families, but are available to adopt the child if a return home does not occur.

Characteristics of Foster Parents:

- Excellent child caring skills or individuals willing to learn these techniques through training
- Nurturing, committed and excited about providing a healthy, positive environment for children
- At least 21 years of age, single or married, with or without children, employed or unemployed, any income level, renters or homeowners

Requirements of a Foster Home:

- Each child must have a separate bed, adequate dresser and closet space and at least 40 square feet of bedroom floor space
- Basement or attic bedrooms are usually not licensable
- Children over six years of age cannot share a bedroom with a child of the opposite sex
- Must have adequate living space, housekeeping and safety standards

People wanting to provide care for children must be licensed as a foster parent, as do all adults living in the home. If you are interested in providing foster care:

- Attend and informational meeting to receive licensing information and an application
- Submit a completed application form
- Attend training classes consisting of an overview of the foster care system in Dane County
- Meet with licensing worker in your home to see if your home meets licensing requirements

Foster parents receive a monthly grant for providing care for the child. The basic maintenance rate is dependent on the age of the child. It is intended to cover food, clothing, housing, personal care and other expenses. In addition, a foster child with emotional, behavioral or medical concerns may receive additional payment.

Medical and Dental expenses are covered for all foster children, as is daycare funding with a licensed or certified provider.

The foster parent, social worker, birth parents/family and other professionals work together to provide a positive experience for the child.

