

Other supports include:

- Regular home visits and telephone contact from your assigned fostering link worker;
- 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;
- 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 would like to find out more about becoming a foster carer - what should I do?

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

**086 183 3760**

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. They will also offer to put you in contact with an existing foster parent so you can ask them questions if you wish.



Could Someone Like You, Help Someone Like Me?

Tusla supports foster parents to improve the lives of children in their local communities, and these children need more people in this rewarding role. Find out more in this leaflet and give us a call on 086 183 3760

**TUSLA**

An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

## What is fostering?

Our foster parents provide a home for children who are unable to live with their own families, and give them the support they need to thrive. Fostering may be for a few days or weeks, or for many years, and the children range from babies to teenagers.

Tusla is the only State fostering service in Ireland. We don't make money from fostering, our only aim is to support people like you to help children thrive. Fostering can be a challenging but highly rewarding journey, and one that we and other carers will go on with you.

## Who can foster?

Foster carers are a diverse group of people who come from all walks of life. Many foster parents have their own children. 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:

You can foster if you have the time and energy to make a positive difference to a child's life. We will help equip you with the skills you will need and provide support when you require it.

- **Do I need a spare room?**

While it is ideal that a child will have their own bedroom, it is not always essential. A check will be completed on your home (which you can either own or rent) as part of the assessment process and this will consider the suitability of your accommodation.

- **Can I work and foster at the same time?**

We will consider working foster parents. The main thing is your availability to meet a child's needs. For some children it will be necessary for one carer to be at home full-time.

- **What will I know about the child before they are placed in my care?**

We will provide you with as much information as is possible before any child is placed in your care, so you can make an informed decision on whether or not you are likely to be able to meet the child's needs. In some emergency situations we may only have limited information in the initial stages and as information is gathered it will be shared with you.

- **What if I can't manage a child's behaviour?**

Not all children in foster care will display behavioural problems, but if you do have

difficulty coping your social worker will discuss this with you so that supports can be put in place early. In rare cases another home may be found for the child.

- **Can I choose the type of fostering I want to do, such as age group, gender, short stay or long term?**

Yes, you can. This may depend on varying factors which will be discussed during your assessment such as your accommodation, the age of your own children, your availability, and your experience.

## What Support Do Foster Carers Receive?

We understand that good support is absolutely vital to ensure that you feel confident 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.