

WATERFORD COUNTRY SCHOOL FOSTER CARE



Is Foster Parenting right for you?

Becoming a foster parent is a rewarding and challenging process. Great families come in all shapes and sizes. Foster parents can be single adults, married couples, couples with kids or no kids. You are encouraged to be informed and gather as much information as you can. Ask yourself these questions as you think about becoming a foster parent.

■ Do you have enough room in your home to temporarily house a child?

You must have enough bedroom space to foster a child. A child in care may share a bedroom with your child, but they must have their own beds. A foster child may not share a bedroom with any individual over the age of 18.

■ Can your home pass a safety inspection?

It is important that children live in a safe and clean environment. You must have working smoke detectors and a fire extinguisher. Your home must be free of danger and obvious safety hazards.

■ Are you physically and emotionally capable of caring for children?

Being a foster parent can be demanding. You must be physically healthy and emotionally stable to care for foster children. If you have recently been through any significant life changes, you need to consider whether it is the best time for you and your family to be pursuing foster care.

■ Do you have a history or record of abuse or neglect?

If you've had a substantiated case of abuse and/or neglect, you might not be eligible to become a foster parent.

■ Do you have adequate income to meet your own family's needs?

While you don't have to be wealthy to be a foster parent, you must have enough income to meet your own family's needs without the Foster Care stipend.

■ Do you have the ability to work with a team for the benefit of the child in your care?

Helping a foster child is a group effort. A great foster parent has the ability to work cooperatively with the case worker and social workers caring for the child.

Take the first step!

We'll help you determine whether therapeutic foster care is right for you. Call the WCS Foster Care Recruiting office to see how you can help a child today!

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Steps to Becoming a Therapeutic Foster Parent

■ APPLY

The first step in becoming a foster parent is to fill out and return the Interest Sheet. When your Interest Sheet is received, our recruiter will call you and schedule a time to meet with you and your family and tell you about the program. Our program serves children, ages 8-18, with specialized emotional and behavioral needs, you will need to determine if this is the right fit for you. If so, the recruiter will enroll you in an upcoming foster parent training class (PRIDE).

■ TRAIN

To train our foster parents for the challenges ahead we use the PRIDE training model. PRIDE is nationally acclaimed and used in more than 30 states. The classes consist of 37 hours of curriculum led by WCS trainers. During training, prospective foster parents will undergo the necessary background checks and complete a home study. You will be required to complete post-approval training also.

■ MATCH

Once you are approved, WCS staff will start looking for a child/children that will be a good match for you and your family. You will be provided access to the child's referral information which will give you an insight into the child and their history. Visits begin if you and the child elect to proceed. The WCS Coordinator and DCF worker will collaborate with you to determine the timing of the child's transition into your home.

■ PLACE

When your foster child moves in we'll be there to help you. A WCS Foster Care Coordinator is assigned to your family and will be in weekly contact to ensure that all is going well. You will be encouraged in your parental role to attend school meetings, treatment plan reviews and DCF reviews that relate to your foster child/children.

■ SUPPORT

Support services for foster parents begin immediately. In addition to weekly visits from your Foster Care Coordinator and ongoing training and support groups, we also provide around-the-clock crisis intervention. A substantial payment is sent to you monthly from Waterford Country School based on a per diem rate for each day of care given to the child during the previous month. The stipend is intended to cover all ordinary expenses involved in caring for your foster child. Medical expenses are covered in full and your foster child is eligible for free lunch in public schools. Extraordinary expenses incurred will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

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Frequently Asked Questions

■ What's the difference between therapeutic foster care and foster care?

There are thousands of children living in foster homes throughout Connecticut. A small percentage of them require additional supports and services in order to be successful. Therapeutic Foster Care is a higher level of care provided by private, non-profit agencies in Connecticut such as Waterford Country School. Therapeutic foster parents become part of the child's treatment team and receive additional training before and after becoming foster parents, intensive case management and an increased daily stipend. Children who are eligible for Therapeutic Foster Care also have access to additional funding to meet their treatment needs.

■ Can I choose the age of the foster child?

Yes, you can request a specific age group. You might find through experience and training that you are most effective with a certain age range. The children we serve are usually between the ages of 8 and 18.

■ How long will the foster child remain in my home?

Every child has a unique permanency plan. Some children only need a caring foster home for a few weeks or months and others may be adopted by you and stay a lifetime. You will be told about a child's permanency plan before you meet them. That information will help inform your decision about whether or not a particular child is right for you and your family. It is important is that, as a foster parent, you help each child achieve the best possible permanent living arrangement they can.

■ As a foster parent, can I work outside the home?

You can work outside the home and be a foster parent. You need to be aware of your work schedule and how it will affect the child (i.e. working 3rd shift, who will be home with the child?). If the foster child requires child care, the foster parent may be responsible for that expense.

■ Can I adopt a foster child living in my home?

Yes, it is possible. While foster care is defined as a temporary living situation, many children who enter Therapeutic Foster Care are adopted by their foster parents. Adoption is a desirable outcome for many of the children who are referred to our program. You will know before you meet a prospective child if their permanency plan includes adoption. If you are unwilling or unsure if you want to adopt a child then foster care is right for you. You are not required to be open to adoption to become a foster parent; a foster parent can be someone who helps transition a child into a permanent adoptive home.

■ I don't think I could care for a child that will eventually leave. Am I cut out to be a foster parent?

We understand that this is a hard task, emotionally and physically. Many foster parents feel this way initially but then realize the importance of making a positive impact on a child for however long they can.

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Interest Sheet

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Waterford Country School Foster Parent. Please fill out the following information so that a staff member can contact you to discuss foster parenting and the approval process. We look forward to working with you!

Date: _____

Name(s):

_____	_____	_____
First	Middle Initial	Last
_____	_____	_____
First	Middle Initial	Last

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

How did you hear about us?

- Newspaper (specify):
- A WCS Foster Parent (specify):
- Booth (specify):
- Poster
- Phone Book
- Church/School
- Internet
- Other (specify):

What foster care class time slots work for you?

- Weekday Evenings
- Weekdays Daytime
- Saturdays

Please mail completed form to:

**Waterford Country School
Foster Care Program
2 Clinic Drive
Norwich, CT 06360
Attn: Recruiting**