



Foster Care

A foster child is a child who has no parents, or who has been abandoned by his/her parents. A foster child may also be a child who has been abused, neglected, or exposed to harmful activities and circumstances.

A foster care placement is valid for a period of two years, every two years the placement is re-evaluated.

SCREENING AND TRAINING

Not just anyone can become a temporary safe care parent or a foster care parent. You first have to be screened and trained by a social worker.

The social worker will ask you to sign a form 30 and also to complete an affidavit swearing that you do not have a criminal record.

If you are found on the child protection register to be a person who is unsuitable to work with children, children will not be placed in your care.

BIOLOGICAL PARENTS

If the biological parents are still alive, arrangements for contact between the biological parents and the child/children concerned are arranged by the social worker.

Reunification services are rendered to the biological parents of children who are found to be in need of care and protection.

TEMPORARY SAFE CARE

Temporary safe care refers to a period usually of 90 days (3 months). Children in need of care and protection are placed in temporary safe care pending further investigation of the Children's Court Proceedings.

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY

If you are interested in becoming a foster care parent or a temporary safe care parent, please contact our office and ask to speak to a social worker who will provide you with more information regarding this process.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FOSTER PARENTS

The foster parent may not:

- Deal with property that belongs to the child.
- Consent to the marriage of the child.
- Consent to an operation or medical treatment of the child that involves serious danger to life (report to the social worker).
- Take the child outside the borders of South Africa without the written consent of the Director General (ask the social worker).

The foster parent **MUST** inform the social worker/social auxiliary worker on:

- Any changes with regard to the circumstances of the foster child and foster family.
- Challenging behaviour of the child (e.g. school dropout, staying out late at night, using drugs or alcohol, high risk sexual behaviour).
- Work with the social worker to address these or any other problems/challenges that may exist in the household.
- Attend any program or group recommended by the social worker – e.g. programs for children with challenging behaviour, treatment at an alcohol/drug centre, individual counselling sessions at a social worker or psychiatrist. Attendance of the foster parent groups is also compulsory.
- At least twice a year consult with the social work professional and inform her on the progress and wellbeing of the child.