



There are many ways to help children and families, but none are more direct than opening your heart and your home to a child who has experienced challenges. Every member of a foster family learns and grows through the experience of caring for a foster child. Mentoring a child through healing, growing and learning can be one of life's most rewarding experiences.

### What is foster care?

Foster care provides a child or siblings with a nurturing and supportive alternative home when they are not able to live with their birth family. Some children may require foster care for just a few days or a few weeks. Others may need to live with a foster family for several months or, in some circumstances, several years. Every effort is made to reunite a foster child with his or her family or find a permanent home for the child.

In New Brunswick it is the responsibility of the Department of Social Development to provide protective services to children who cannot safely live with their families as a result of abuse or neglect. Some children and their families receive services in their own homes while other children must be placed in foster care.

### Foster children...

- Range in age from infants up to 19 years old.
- Come from a variety of cultural, racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds.
- Are brothers and sisters.

- Have emotional, developmental or physical challenges.
- Are in foster care with the consent of their family or by court order.
- Are in care because there is conflict within their family; their parents may be chronically ill; or they have been neglected or abused.
- Have families that cannot provide adequate care or the necessities of life.

Each foster child is experiencing a difficult time in his or her life; however, despite this, many foster children remain very close to their biological families and maintain a relationship via frequent visits and telephone calls. Eventually, most children return home.

### What is a foster family?

- A volunteer family that has the ability to provide, within their home, a safe, loving and nurturing environment.
- A family who helps a child heal, grow and develop.
- A member of a team working for the best interest of the child.

Foster families work together with the Department of Social Development's staff to develop a plan for each child in care. The ideal plan is to reunite the child or the young person with his or her family. When a reunion is not possible, the plan focuses on a permanent placement. While the legal responsibility for the child remains with the minister, foster families play an essential role in the child's daily life. The stable and caring home environment that foster families provide helps encourage healthy growth and development.

### Who can become a foster family?

We are looking for couples or single adults who:

- Can form healthy relationships with others.
- Are able to meet the care and supervision needs of the child and/or youth.
- Have good parenting skills and insight into child behaviours.
- Are financially self-sufficient.
- Have sufficient physical space in their home to accommodate the child's needs.

A criminal record check and a prior contact check with the Department of Social Development will be completed for anyone 18 years of age and over living in the home.

### What kind of support does a foster family receive?

- Foster families receive monthly funding and benefits for each child to cover the cost of items such as food, clothing, lodging and other expenses the child may have.
- Medical and dental costs for the child are covered.
- Families receive training and ongoing support from the department.
- Families receive support from both the local and provincial Foster Family Association.

### What is the need?

There is an ongoing need for foster families for children of all ages, but over the past few years the need for homes for youth has increased. Children coming into care are more likely to be nine years of age or older.

### How do I apply to become a foster family?

For more information about fostering, call **1-800-990-0119**

or visit [www.gnb.ca/SocialDevelopment](http://www.gnb.ca/SocialDevelopment)

If you think your family has the special qualities and time to become a foster family, or if you want more information on fostering, please contact the Department of Social Development through one of the above options. The foster family program will be explained to you in detail and any specific questions that you may have will be answered.

*Being a foster parent can be such a rewarding experience.*

**Share life.  
Become a foster family.**

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