



Families Who Bring Hope and Healing

Characteristics of Great Foster Families

We surveyed child placing representatives, long-term foster families, and therapists asking them what makes a great foster family. This is what they said:

The motivations of a great foster family:

- To love because there is an understanding of self-sacrificing love
- To serve a child and the biological family
- To hope for restoration and healing of the child and their bio family
- To be a part of changing a life or supporting a community

The expectations of a great foster family:

- Challenging parenting but with understanding of the child's difficult past
- Fully committed to foster the child until permanency is attained
- An inner peace and satisfaction that they are making a difference even if for a brief time
- That a traumatized child needs compassion, patience and consistency.

A great foster family needs these resources:

- A support network of friends/family who physically support them with meals, clothing for children, transportation for kids, lots of grace and listening
- Trauma-informed care training and an agency that continually provides refresher courses
- Support group and mentors who understand trauma-informed care and can advise them in difficult situations
- Respite care providers who are also friends of the family
- An agency who respects the sacrifice that foster families make daily and advocates for the child

A great foster family has these characteristics:

- A self-awareness of limitations and the ability to ask for help
- Teachable and flexible
- Compassionate for the child, biological parents and agency/CPS caseworkers
- A strong and unified marriage/community/friends
- Grit

A great foster family has these outcomes:

- Provides a longer placement for children
- The family continues to foster for an extended amount of time
- A new level of healing in the child
- A compassion and connection with biological family
- A community built around caring for the child/family
- Life-changing love to a child

