

Dungarvin

Treatment Foster Care Program



Prospective Foster Parent Information Packet



Thank you for making the decision to learn more about becoming a foster family! We are excited to share with you some information about Dungarvin's Foster Care Program. The process of fostering can be an emotional and complex one, but it is also very rewarding.

Dungarvin Ohio has been providing a broad range of services to families and children since 1992. Our foster care program started in Central Ohio in 1998. We operate a small foster care network to ensure that we are able to offer quality support and services to both the foster parents and the foster children within our network.

For foster parents who currently hold a license and desire to transfer their license to Dungarvin, the process is similar. Additionally, most of your training and documents follow you from your current agency. In most cases the children who are currently placed in your home will be able to transfer to the Dungarvin network, as well.

Foster families in the Dungarvin Ohio network receive a high level of support from staff supervised by a Licensed Social Worker. We conduct regular visits to our foster homes, have weekly contact with our foster parents and attend all meetings related to the child. We have 24-hour emergency support available and we also provide respite services for our foster parents.

Foster caregivers receive a stipend for providing care to children placed in their homes. This rate can vary depending on the level of care required for a given child; the more intensive the needs of the child, the higher the stipend that is paid to the foster caregiver. Dungarvin pays out foster care stipends on a bi-monthly basis. Dungarvin provides Pre-Service training right in the Dungarvin office, as well as other trainings necessary to maintain licensure. Because our network is small, we pride ourselves on the fact that you receive personal care and attention.

This packet has been specifically designed to provide you with information about foster care. As you read through the steps involved, keep in mind that the staff at Dungarvin Ohio is here to support, encourage and assist you throughout your journey. You are welcome to call us at (614) 639-0734 or email us at OH-Fostercare@dungarvin.com.

Thank you for your interest and we look forward to hearing from you!

What is Foster Care?

Foster parents provide a temporary living arrangement for children who need a safe place to live when their parents or relatives cannot take care of them. Children remain in foster care until the court decides that they can return home safely or that they should be placed with relatives, legal guardians, or adoptive parents. Foster parents provide a safe and encouraging environment for children while remaining very active and involved in the child's case. The end goal for foster care is reunification with the birth family.

At Dungarvin, we license and support families who provide Treatment Foster Care. Treatment Foster Care is a specialized level of foster care for children who have experienced childhood trauma and/ or have an identified cognitive, emotional, or behavioral condition that require specialized care and treatment. Dungarvin offers on-going training, support, and supervision to assist the foster parents in providing a high level of nurturing and support to help children overcome the barriers they face.

Foster Care is meant to be temporary, but its impact can last a lifetime. In some cases, foster parents work with birth family to support them and the case plan to work towards reunification. At times, reunification is not an option and permanent living arrangements must be pursued for the child. In those situations, foster parents can be given the opportunity to adopt the child.

Dungarvin is here to support foster parents through all the stages of foster care.



Foster Parent Role

- Provide a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment.
- Integrate children into your family.
- Schedule and transport children to routine appointments.
- Support contact between the child and their birth families.
- Communicate and cooperate with your Foster Care Social Worker and the child's treatment team.
- Communicate with the school and support the child's educational needs and progress.
- Maintain training requirements.



Requirements

Being a foster parent is a serious but rewarding commitment. To become a foster parent, you must meet all the requirements below.

- You must be at least 18 years old.
- At least one person in your home must be able to read, write and speak English, or be able to communicate effectively with both the child and the agency that placed the child in your home.
- You may be single or married. All orientations are acceptable.
- All religious affiliations are acceptable.
- You must be able to provide contact information for individuals who can provide references for you.
- Your household must have enough income to meet the basic needs of those already living in the home and to make timely payment of shelter costs. *
- You do not have to own a home but must have enough space available for the children and their belongings.
- You must have a separate bed for each child and separate bedrooms for children if there are boys and girls over age 5.
- You must be free of any physical, emotional, or mental conditions that could endanger the child or seriously impair your ability to care for the child.
- A licensed medical professional must complete and sign a medical statement for you and each member of your household stating that you are healthy enough to care for additional children.
- Everyone 18 and over living in the home must have criminal background checks completed, as well as child abuse and neglect checks. If you have concerns about something in your past that you think may disqualify you from being a foster parent, talk to your agency about it.
- Your home must be free of hazardous conditions and pass a fire inspection and safety audit.
- You must complete all preplacement and continuing training required by your agency.

*Foster families receive financial reimbursement to help cover the costs of the children placed in their homes. Contact your agency for more information. Medical care for children in foster care is covered through Medicaid. Foster parents are not expected to pay for children's medical expenses.

Training Requirements

Dungarvin provides the trainings required to become a foster parent. Foster parents must complete pre-service training prior to certification, which consists of 24 hours of training. The projected outcome of the training is to adequately train foster parents to provide appropriate care to youth with special treatment needs. Training for treatment foster parents within the Dungarvin foster care network will focus on the special needs of youth with developmental, physical, and learning disabilities as well as youth with challenging behaviors. The training will cover all required topics as well as help foster parents understand the importance of how trauma affects the youth for whom they are providing care. Dungarvin requires additional trainings to be completed for those who do not have the required experience to be considered a Treatment foster care provider. You can learn more about this upon inquiry. Once certified, there are on-going training requirements. Dungarvin will provide you with training opportunities and guide you through the on-going training expectations.



Time Frame

The process of becoming a licensed foster parent varies, but usually takes an average of four months to complete. You can assist in expediting that process by attending all scheduled trainings, submitting required documentation in a timely manner and ensuring your availability for the home study process. Upon the completion of a successful home study, you will become a licensed foster parent. Once licensed, you will be eligible to take children into your home for placement.

Children in Foster Care

At any given time, up to half a million children in America are in the child welfare system. Ohio has more than 16,000 children being cared for by someone other than their birth parents and roughly half of those children are living with foster parents. Foster parents care for children temporarily until a court decides that they can return home safely or that they should be placed with relatives, legal guardians, or adoptive parents. Typically, agencies try to place the children with family members, family friends or neighbors, which is called kinship care. If kinship is not an option, the agency will then place the child in a licensed foster home. Dungarvin works with the custodial agency to help match a child in need of placement to a Dungarvin Foster Home.

Children ages 0 to 21 years can come into foster care and may enter foster care for many different reasons. Some of the most common reasons include:

Neglect

- Neglect is when a child goes without basic needs. Neglect includes leaving a child alone for extended periods of time, having inadequate food or nutrition, unsafe living environments, lack of medical care, or absence of responsibility for education.

Abuse

- Living in an abusive home puts a child at risk not only physically, but mentally. Abuse comes in many forms: physical, sexual, and emotional. Witnessing abuse of other family members is also considered abusive to a child.

Drug Addiction

- When a family member, especially a parent, struggles with addiction, it causes chaos in a home. In recent years, the United States has experienced an opioid epidemic that has affected every aspect of the child welfare system. Even when children come into the care of a child welfare agency because of abuse or neglect, a parent's drug addiction is often one of the underlying factors in the family's situation.

Incarceration

- If a parent faces incarceration, every attempt will be made to place the child with an appropriate family member or family friend. Until this can be arranged—or if it can't be—the child may be placed in foster care.

Illness

- Illnesses can be incapacitating. Depending on the situation, parents can become physically, and also financially, unable to care for their children. If a family member can't take over the parenting responsibilities, the county agency and court may need to step in so the child may be placed in foster care until the parent or another family member can care for the child.

Death

- When a parent dies, a family member or friend usually steps in to care for the child. When that cannot happen, sometimes the county agency and courts must get involved to find a safe and stable home for the child. In those cases, the child may be placed in foster care until a permanent placement can be found.

Voluntary Placement

- Sometimes a parent voluntarily agrees to work with a county agency to place their child in a foster home while they work to improve the family's situation. In these cases, the parent is usually given a short amount of time, typically 30 to 60 days, to alleviate the risk factors. When successful, the child can return home quickly. If the parent can't reduce the risks, sometimes the agency has to get the court involved to take custody of the child.

Once a child has been placed in a foster home, foster parents provide a safe and encouraging environment for children while remaining very active and involved in the child's case. The end goal for foster care is reunification with birth family. Reunification of children with their families typically happens within a year but sometimes takes longer. Over time, many foster families develop supportive relationship with birth parent and continue to support them after the child has returned home and the agency has closed the child's case.

Most Critical Placement Needs

Sibling Groups

- Preserving the bond between brothers and sisters is an essential part of their long-term emotional well-being.
- Placing siblings together or enabling them to maintain contact when they are separated, preserves their connections with one another and to their family, improving long-term well-being and permanency.

Youth with Disabilities

Youth with disabilities who are also in foster care are one of the most vulnerable populations in the United States. Foster children with developmental disabilities need a special home in which to live and thrive. Dungarvin Ohio specializes in working with individuals with developmental disabilities, such as:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Down Syndrome
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- Intellectual Disability



Teens and Teen Mom's

- Most children in foster care are between the ages of 11-17.
- Teens in foster care face additional challenges in making important decisions because of temporary living situations, lack of a permanent adult mentors, lack of continuous and easy access to health services, and history of trauma or abuse. Caring foster parents are needed to help these children break a continuing cycle of abuse, trauma, and early parenting.
- Teens in foster care are at a higher risk of becoming parents early.
- Teen moms can maintain custody of their baby when appropriate and the baby can live in the foster home with the mom.

Contact Us!

We can't wait to hear from you! We are here to guide you through every step of your journey and answer your questions. If you have any questions or are ready to learn more, please contact us!

614-639-0734

OH-Fostercare@dungarvin.com

Resources

For additional information and to learn more visit the following websites:

<https://fosterandadopt.jfs.ohio.gov/home>

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/>