



## Foster Care at Family Services of NW PA

Family Services of NW PA is a licensed adoption and foster care agency with a strong commitment to Strengthening Families and Transforming Lives. We know that foster families come in all shapes and sizes and believe children of all ages need a stable, loving family.

If you're ready to open your heart and home to a child, we want to work with you. Learn how you can make a difference today by becoming a foster parent.

### Foster Care Requirements

- Must be at least 21 years old.
- Must be physically and mentally able to care for children and be free from communicable diseases.
- Must be able to obtain Child Abuse, Criminal and FBI clearances.
- Must be able to complete required trainings.
- Must be able to prove that you are financially stable.

### Foster Family Home Requirements

- An operable toilet. A sink and bathtub with hot and cold running water.
- An operable heating system.
- An operable telephone.
- A suitable sleeping area for foster children with a clean, comfortable mattress, and clean linens, blankets & pillows.
- The ability to lock medications and keep other toxic materials inaccessible to children.
- Emergency telephone numbers posted.
- Fireplaces in good working order.
- Smoke alarms on each level of the home.
- Carbon Monoxide detectors.
- Fire extinguisher kept in the kitchen.
- Protective safety caps on outlets.
- No exposed electrical wires.
- If your home uses well water, the ability for the well to be tested as potable.
- The ability to lock firearms and ammo separately where they are inaccessible to children.



## Family Services of NW PA

### Reputation

For more than 130 years, Family Services of NW PA has been helping children find safety, security, and permanency in the home. Our Permanency Specialists are dedicated to the children and families who invite us into their homes.

### Training

Family Services of NW PA provides quality training to foster parents. We will work with you to be sure you have all the knowledge and insight to parent the specific foster children in your care.

### Support

Raising a child can be a daunting task, but you're not doing it alone! Our Permanency Specialists will be there every step of the way to offer individualized support to ensure success in whatever you choose. Post-permanency services are also available to ensure long-term success.

## OUR MISSION

We strengthen families  
and transform lives.

## Office Locations

### Erie County Office

5100 Peach Street  
Erie, Pennsylvania 16509  
Phone: 814.866.4500  
Fax: 814.864.2677

### Downtown Erie Office

240 West 11th Street, Suite 402  
Erie, Pennsylvania 16501  
Phone: 814.871.0903

### Crawford County Office

18360 Technology Drive, Suite 200  
Meadville, Pennsylvania 16335  
Phone: 814.724.4800  
Fax: 814.724.5181

### Mercer County Office

7 West State Street, Suite 208  
Sharon, Pennsylvania 16146  
Phone: 724.704.7227  
Fax: 724.704.7224

Learn more about Family Services of NW PA at

[www.FSNWPA.org](http://www.FSNWPA.org)



 **Family**  
*of NWPA*  
**Services**  
Foster Care Services

## Foster Care in Pennsylvania



**15,000** children are in foster care in Pennsylvania



**22%** of children in foster care will be adopted



**20%** of teens who age out of foster care find themselves instantly homeless



**1 in 3** children entering foster care for the first time are under the age of 2

## What Makes a Foster Parent?

**MYTH: "I'm too old to be a foster parent."**

**TRUTH:** You're never too old to make a difference in a child's life. We welcome all people 21 years of age and older to apply.

**MYTH: "I can't be a foster parent because I don't have a giant house."**

**TRUTH:** You don't need a Pinterest-perfect mansion to be a good foster parent. You do need a safe, stable home with room for a child.

**MYTH: "We can't be foster parents, we already have children of our own."**

**TRUTH:** Foster families can have children of different ages living in their home. Family Services of NW PA will help to determine your needs and match you appropriately.

**MYTH: "I can't be a foster parent, it would break my heart to give a child back."**

**TRUTH:** That very worry probably means you'd be a great foster parent! Fostering has been described as loving the ones entrusted to you for however long they are entrusted to you.

**MYTH: "If I am a foster parent, I won't be able to work or have a social life."**

**TRUTH:** Foster children need care and supervision, but many attend school and child care. We will get to know your family and match you with a child that is right for you. Approved foster parents are also eligible to receive paid respite days.

**MYTH: "I'm a single gay male, there's no way I can become a foster parent."**

**TRUTH:** Not all families look the same—which is great! Foster children don't all look the same, either. Foster parents can be single, partnered, or married. They may have children in the home, have an empty nest, or this might be their first experience parenting.

Family Service of NW PA does not discriminate based on race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, or age. We welcome people 21 years of age and older from all walks of life.

**MYTH: I can't afford to be a foster parent.**

**TRUTH:** Adopting from the child welfare system is virtually free. Approved families can also receive subsidies to help offset the cost of caring for the child.

## Path To Foster Care

### Step 1: Learn More

Call us at 814-866-4581. We are happy to answer your questions and help you start the process.



### Step 2: Complete Application

Complete an application and begin submitting background checks and clearances.



### Step 3: Training

Attend a free training to learn more about children in care.



### Step 4: Home Visit

Together, we will schedule a time to meet with you and your family in your home.

### Step 5: Gather Remaining Information

Provide any additional information necessary to complete the process.



### Step 6: Approval

Congratulations! You are now a foster parent! We have gotten to know you very well and will provide you with a great match for your child placement.



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## How To Get Involved

### Foster Care

Foster families share their homes with children who need temporary care. These children may be of any age and have been removed from their homes by the Office of Children and Youth due to abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

The goal is to reunify these children with their birth families as soon possible. Although some children take longer to reunify than others, these are generally considered to be short-term placements.

### Foster-To-Adopt

Foster-to-adopt families provide long-term placements to children who are not yet ready to be adopted. These families are ultimately looking to adopt a child, but are also willing to provide a home for children who may or may not become free for adoption.

This option is available to families who are interested in adopting a child. Families may care for several children long-term before finding the perfect match.

### Awaiting Families

Awaiting families are interested in providing a child with a forever home. Unlike foster-to-adopt families, awaiting families are interested in long-term placements with children who are ready and legally able to be adopted.

Family Services is a Statewide Adoption Network (SWAN) affiliate. We provide training and support throughout the entire process to ensure you are matched with the right child. Post-permanency services are also available to ensure long-term success.

## How To Get Started

The decision to become a foster family is a big one, but it is also very rewarding. If you're ready to learn more about becoming a foster parent, contact Family Services of NW PA today!

#### **Melissa Scobey, Permanency Supervisor**

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#### **Martine Barclay, Recruiter/Trainer**

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