

The purpose of foster care is to protect children and strengthen families.

A foster family provides the child with the stability of an alternative family that is seen as complementary to the child's biological parents, rather than as a substitute family. This view of the foster family as an extension to the biological family, rather than a replacement, will reduce conflict between foster parents and biological parents. Your role is to assist the child and his/her family with reunification, if that is the plan. The length of time each child remains in care is determined by the needs of the child and his/her family situation.

You, as a foster parent, will require a great amount of warmth, tolerance and understanding to be a temporary mother or father to someone else's child. The

experience will demand a lot of time and effort on your part as well as on the part of your children.

As a foster parent you are being asked to:

- accept and love a child who may not be able to give much in return;
- guide, protect and help the child develop mentally, emotionally, physically, educationally, spiritually and culturally; and
- provide the child with food, clothing and shelter.

You must do all these things knowing that the majority of foster children are placed for a temporary period.

