

**If foster parenting is not the ministry that God desires for my household, in what other ways could I consider serving ECFA?**

Serving opportunities vary depending on the program.

**Foster Care:**

- Foster families
- Volunteer case aides
- Volunteer drivers
- Mentors (for both children and parents)
- Volunteer office help
- College interns (both undergraduate and graduate level)

**Intact Family Services:**

- Volunteer office help
- College interns (graduate level only)
- Mentors (for both children and their parents)

**Pregnancy Support Services (PSS):**

- Shepherding homes (to take in pregnant clients)
- Building Blocks homes (to assist clients who have given birth)
- Baby Boarding homes (to care for an infant waiting to be placed in an adoptive home)
- Female mentors for clients of PSS
- College interns (graduate level only)

**Adoption:**

- Adoptive families for in-state, across state lines, and overseas adoptions
- College interns (graduate level only)

ECFA's Volunteer and Development Coordinator also has many ways in which to serve the agency as a whole, at various fund raising events, as a telephone volunteer, etc. Please feel free to contact the agency to inquire about these opportunities.

Evangelical Child & Family Agency

# What is Foster Care?

*Foster care is the temporary placement of a child in another's home. It is sought when a family's situation cannot provide safety for the child. The primary goal of foster care is to heal families and reunite children with their parents.*

For more information,  
please visit our website

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

## LOCATIONS

### Corporate

1530 N. Main Street  
Wheaton, IL 60187  
630/653-6400  
630/653-6490 (fax)

### Chicago

2520 S. Western Avenue Suite 202  
Chicago IL 60608  
773/523-6200  
773/523-6330 (fax)

### Rockford

5301 E. State Street Suite 124  
Rockford IL 61108  
815/229-3255  
815/229-3256 (fax)

### Intact Family Services

1607 E. Taft Avenue, Suite A  
Wheaton IL 60189  
630/653-4340  
630/653-4830 (fax)



### **Who can be a foster parent for ECFA?**

- Mature, stable followers of Jesus, who share our Christian beliefs
- An Illinois resident, at least 25-years-old, with a verifiable income
- Able to pass a background clearance
- In good physical and emotional health
- Able to work as a team with ECFA, DCFS, and the biological family
- Accepting of the temporary nature of foster care and the goal to heal and reunite families whenever possible.

### **Can single adults become foster parents?**

Yes. Any adult (single or married) who can meet both state and agency standards may be a foster parent.

### **What if I work full-time? Or go to college?**

DCFS provides assistance for work-related and/or school-related daycare expenses.

### **What supports does ECFA offer to a family?**

**FINANCIAL:** ECFA sends out monthly stipends to foster families. The exact amount is dependent on each foster child's age.

**MEDICAL:** The State of Illinois provides a medical card to meet each child's medical, dental, eye, and prescription costs.

**EDUCATIONAL:** Foster children generally attend the local public school. Foster parents need to take an Educational Advocacy class to advocate for a child's needs.

DCFS does not fund attendance at private schools. However, children may attend a private school if funding is obtained from a different source. Additionally, foster children cannot be home-schooled, as foster children must attend an accredited schooling facility.

### **Other Supports**

ECFA offers support of our foster families through the availability of staff, quarterly support group meetings in 4 geographical areas, an after-hours phone system, foster parent buddy systems, and community resources.

### **What is recommended for someone who is considering becoming a foster parent?**

Foster parenting is a big commitment for the entire household. Families who are considering foster care need to pray together as a household about this decision. Three basic questions should be addressed:

- Is foster care the correct ministry/mission for my family?
- Is this the right timing to commit to the healing of another family?
- If the other 2 questions are "yes," which agency would God like me to serve with as co-missionaries?

Once an agency is chosen, the family is usually invited to a foster parent orientation meeting to learn about state and agency requirements. After the initial contact, ECFA will send out informational materials to assist the family and ECFA in making sure there is a good spiritual fit.

### **If I choose ECFA, what are the expectations?**

ECFA expects each foster family to meet the "Foster Family Home Licensing Standards" as set forth by the State of Illinois. In addition, foster parents are required to take a 9 week (27 hour) pre-service training class that is offered statewide. Flexibility is a necessary quality for foster families in order to participate in concurrent planning. This type of planning requires working as a team to heal and reunite a family, while also maintaining a back-up plan in case reunification cannot occur.

As ministers to the entire family, foster families at ECFA are expected to pray for the parents involved, as well as the children, to see the image of God in the faces of those ECFA is serving, and to be teammates and co-missionaries in their own backyard with ECFA's staff.

### **Who are the children in need of foster care?**

The children needing care may be anywhere from 0-18 years old, any race (or mix), either gender, or sibling groups.

Each child needs stability and care. Most children have been traumatized by some situation in their home of origin. They require safe, stable housing while their parents work with staff to make the home appropriate for their return. Many of the children, and their parents, may be frightened and confused as to why they have been separated.

### **How are children assigned to foster homes?**

DCFS has a database of all available foster homes in the State of Illinois. When a child needs placement, a team called the Case Assignment Unit will pull up the names of foster homes from that child's "community" (school catchment in Chicago, school district catchment in the rest of Illinois). The appropriate agency will be called to present the child to the most appropriate family.

For database purposes, families are requested to inform their agencies of the widest age range they can handle, and identify a gender preference, etc., that would best fit into the family.

### **What might I expect from a foster child?**

A foster child may present with a wide range of emotions, including, but not limited to grief, anger, and sadness. Many children may ask questions about why they are in care, display concern for their parents, and be scared to trust the foster family. They may have learned inappropriate habits or language and may need to be re-taught. The children may need counseling to grieve the loss of their parents.

### **How many children can a home have?**

Illinois licensing standards allow a maximum of 6 children under the age of 18 years. Other considerations include bedroom space per child.