



## Frequently Asked Questions For Potential Foster Parents

### **Q: What documents do I need to turn in to become a foster parent?**

**A:** You need to fill out the application, which includes a questionnaire, various agreements, personal references, and criminal background check forms. The certifier also needs to have copies of current driver's license(s), proof of automobile insurance, Certificate(s) of Indian Blood/Tribal Enrollment card (if applicable) and social security card(s).

### **Q: What happens after I turn in all the required documents?**

**A:** The certifier will first review the application then conduct a criminal background check and child welfare background check on all adults in the home. The next step is a "home study" meeting to determine if you have a safe and stable home and to get to know the applicants more fully. It is important that all members of the family be present at the time of the home study.

### **Q: What are examples of disqualifying crimes?**

**A:** The Tribe must abide by the list of crimes set forth in the ASFA (adoption and safe family act) guidelines. Some felony crimes are permanent disqualifiers, such as violent crimes against other persons, especially against children or where a child witnessed the violence. Other crimes are 5-10 year disqualifiers, such as some thefts, drug charges, or harassments/mischief charges. The arrest pattern and convictions are looked at as a whole to make the assessment on each individual. If a denial is made, the applicant has the right to ask for an exception and/or appeal the decision.

### **Q: Do I have to have raised kids of my own?**

**A:** No, but you should have knowledge of and/or some experience with children. You should be responsible and have "child-rearing practices and attitudes that will serve the best interest of foster children."

### **Q: Do I have to own a home?**

**A:** No, you must only have stable, harmonious living environment conducive to raising children. You can live in an apartment, condo, or house. You must

have enough space in the home for a child to have their own bed and space for their personal belongings.

**Q: Do I have to be married? Is there an age requirement?**

**A:** Foster parents can be single, divorced, separated, cohabitating, or married. The age requirement is 21 and over. There is no upper maximum age limit for foster parents, rather, an assessment will be made according to the child's needs and the foster parent's capabilities.

**Q: Can I be a foster parent if I work full time and my spouse works full time?**

**A:** Yes! Many of our foster parents do work full time. It is beneficial to take some time off when the child is first placed with you, to get the child comfortable and to take care of their needs. If you need help paying for ongoing childcare, the first step is to apply through the **CTSI Childcare Assistance Program**. Their program is based on your income. If you are denied help through the Tribal childcare program because your income is too high, contact ICW. You may be able to receive assistance through different sources.

**Q: What are the reasons children need to be placed in foster care?**

**A:** Children who have to be in foster care are often abused or neglected. They will range in age from newborns to teenagers, but usually they are school age and younger. They will be Siletz Indian children, but may or may not have had any exposure to their Native culture.

One common reason children are being removed today is exposure to methamphetamines and/or neglect due to parental methamphetamine abuse. Other reasons may be due to general neglect, physical abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse, other drug/alcohol abuse, and/or a combination of any of the above.

**Q: Will I be able to decide what age, and what 'type' of child I want to foster?**

**A:** Yes and no. Yes, the foster parent can certainly make clear their capabilities and their limits as far as the age and special needs of children they want to foster. The caseworkers will do their best to match the child with foster parents who are prepared and experienced with the child's age and needs.

**Q: How long do children need to stay in foster care?**

**A:** The time each child needs to remain in foster care widely varies. We need foster parents who are able to commit **at least 6 months, but knowing the child might be with you for a much shorter or longer time**. The assumption of foster care is that it will be temporary.

The Tribe always wants to have REUNIFICATION of a child with their family. For the child's sake, and if possible, it is good if they know they will ALWAYS be welcome in your home. The Tribe tries to limit the time the child is in foster care to 12-14 months.

**Q: Can I adopt a Tribal child?**

**A:** Generally, Tribal adoptions are rare. It is important for applicants to understand that almost every case begins with the plan of reunification. Sometimes a foster care placement ends up as a permanent guardianship or permanent foster care. The Tribe considers adoption a last resort, because that means the child's biological parents' rights must be relinquished or terminated.

**Q: What are the Tribe's placement preferences for children who come into care?**

**A:** The Tribe always prefers placement with qualified relatives, keeping in mind the child's known special needs (location, schools, community support, etc). We always try to keep siblings together. If we can't find family, (which includes tribal and non-tribal extended family) to take the child/children, they will be placed first with non-relative Siletz tribal foster parents, or if none are available, non-relative other Native foster parents. The last resort is non-native, non-family homes.

**Q: What kinds of trainings are necessary before I can become a foster parent for the Siletz Tribe?**

**A:** Currently, the Tribe does not have any formal training requirements, but the family must attest to having "child rearing practices and attitudes that will serve the best interest of foster children" and "a stable, harmonious and healthy living environment." If trainings are necessary to be able to provide this, the caseworker or certifier will recommend it on a case-by-case basis.

Contact our Foster Home Certifier if you want training on a specific topic. The certifier makes every effort to make foster parents aware of trainings available to them. The Oregon State Department of Human Services offers a wide variety of free trainings throughout the state that are free to Siletz foster parents.

**Q: What kinds of expenses should I be prepared for when a new child comes into my home?**

**A:** Foster parents should have the ability to support a child’s basic needs of food, lodging, and clothing. Often, the child or children do not have much when they come into a new foster home. ICW or the State agency can sometimes purchase some basics for the child, such as special furniture or safety equipment, if needed.

Foster parents are mailed a monthly check beginning the first of the month immediately following placement. The amount ranges between \$639 - \$823, depending upon the child’s age. For example, if a child was placed in your home on February 10<sup>th</sup>, you would not receive a check until March 1<sup>st</sup>. The checks are considered a “reimbursement” NOT a wage or salary. Foster parents cannot get both foster reimbursements and food stamps for a foster child in their home.

**Q: Am I expected to transport the child(ren) to their visitations, doctor/dentist/counseling appointments?**

**A:** Generally, yes. Keeping in mind the comfort of the child, it is usually best if they are not “passed through” too many people they don’t know or have an ongoing relationship with (acquaintances, neighbors, transporters, etc.) These children have been, far too often, left in the care of strangers. Even if the person is trusted by YOU, remember, the CHILD might not feel safe. Try to do as much of the transporting as you can. If you work full time and special arrangements need to be made, just call the certifier or the child’s caseworker.

**Q: A child has been placed in my home. What if I realize I am not the right person to care for this child?**

**A:** Contact ICW as soon as you begin having serious doubts. And just be honest with us. The sooner we know, the sooner we can help; either by developing a support plan for you, or a transition plan for the child.

It is also important to know that some kids intentionally try and sabotage their placement for various reasons. “Acting out” behaviors can also be a sign that the child is starting to feel comfortable enough with you to express them selves and can be taken as a good sign. The child may think if they misbehave, they will get to go home sooner. Knowing this beforehand can help you deal with their behaviors in an understanding way.

**More Questions?**

Contact:

**Foster Parent Certifier**

**1-800-922-1399 extension 1275**