



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

THERAPEUTIC FOSTER CARE

Frequently Asked Questions YMCA OF GREATER SEATTLE

What does “Therapeutic Foster Care” mean?

Therapeutic foster care is an intensive, highly structured and individualized (unique to each child and family) mental health service provided to a child in a family setting, utilizing specially trained and intensively supervised foster parents. Therapeutic foster care utilizes a team approach, using an individualized treatment plan that builds on the child’s strengths and empowering the foster parents to act as a central agent in implementing the treatment plan. Therapeutic foster care provides intensive oversight of the child’s treatment. The team provides an array of therapeutic interventions to the child, the child’s family and the foster family. Interventions may include behavioral support services for the child, crisis planning and intervention, coaching and education for the foster parent and child’s family, mobile (home/community based) therapy for the child and the child’s family and medication management. Therapeutic foster care works with the child to learn appropriate skills and behaviors in order to transition successfully from therapeutic foster care to placement with the child’s family or an alternative family placement i.e. relative placement or adoption based on the child’s permanency plan.

Can you tell me more about these children and why they have these difficulties?

These children are between the ages of 6 and 17. The reason they are in foster care is different for each child. Some come from abusive or neglectful homes. As a result of the instability in their lives, many of these children/youth have emotional, behavioral and/or developmental challenges that have caused them to be unsuccessful in previous placements.

I worry about having high needs children in my home. Will you provide training or support?

Yes. All licensed foster parents are state-mandated to take a pre-service training both offered by the state and various private agencies. There, you will learn everything you need to know about why children enter foster care, more about the foster care system, and the role of the foster parent. The YMCA provides monthly trainings out of our Seattle office as well as a monthly foster parent support group. Therapeutic foster parents must take a total of 90 hours of training per license period (three years). The YMCA recognizes the time and effort it takes to accrue these hours and reimburses foster parents for their attendance. These meetings allow for the building of community and natural supports among our foster parents. Finally, you would have a skilled team of crisis and mental health professionals available to assist you day or night, 24/7.

I'd like to help but am not sure I can be a full-time foster parent. What else can I do?

We have a need for respite foster parents as well as full-time foster parents. A respite foster parent has a child in their home one or two weekends a month. A respite foster parent may also have a child in their home for one to two weeks a year if they choose. Respite foster parenting is a great way to find out if foster parenting is right for you while allowing the full-time foster parents a little time off. In addition, you could become approved (not licensed) to be an in-home provider. An in-home provider cares for youth within a foster parent's licensed home. This is beneficial for our program because it gives the foster parents a break while maintaining the youth's stability in routine and home environment. Another way you can help is by telling your friends and family about the need to provide care to foster youth whether it is with the YMCA, or any other program that is a good fit for their family. Finally, you can help by volunteering with the Y. Reach out to learn more about volunteering at: acceleratorvolunteer@seattleyymca.org

Who can be a foster parent?

Therapeutic foster parents come from all walks of life. They can be married, single, divorced, LGBTQ, have children and/or grandchildren of their own or not, rent or own a house or apartment; be older and retired or young and just starting out. Foster parents need to be at least 21 years old, have a bedroom for the child, the ability to pass a clearance, a source of income to support themselves independent of foster care reimbursements, and most importantly, a genuine fondness for children.

Will I receive any help covering the expenses of having a foster child in my home?

Yes. Full-time foster parents are paid between \$2,000-2,500 per month per child, while respite foster parents receive \$100 per day per child. Foster parents are also paid each time they attend one of the YMCA's meetings. In addition, the YMCA provides full-time foster families a clothing voucher for each child they provide care to, as well as reimbursement to buy birthday and holiday gifts each year.

As a full time foster parent, will I receive a break?

Yes. All Foster Parents are entitled to 2 days of respite leave each month. It is the philosophy of the YMCA that Foster Parents should take all granted monthly leave in the month in which it is earned to provide the safest and most effective care for the children and youth in their home. In keeping with this philosophy, Foster Parents may also accrue 2-5 weeks of respite depending on their tenure.

What are the requirements and time commitments for respite foster parents?

Licensed respite parents are required to meet all of the same requirements for full-time licensed parents. Each full-time foster parent accrues two days of respite each month they are licensed with the YMCA. Those foster parents who have been with the program for five years or more accrue additional respite. Full-time foster parents provide respite for one another, as well as utilizing the respite-only homes. We ask that foster parents commit to providing respite at least two days a month to meet the needs of the children and families in the program. This respite typically occurs on weekends to keep children in school and programs. Sometimes respite can occur during the school week in which case the YMCA tries to match the child with a respite provider who lives close. All foster parents are asked to coordinate their own respite transportation; however the YMCA can assist if possible. Most youth receive monthly therapy or services in which they will need transportation. This mostly occurs during the school week, however sometimes youth have court ordered visits with family members which can occur on the weekends. All respite foster parents can decline if the particular situation does not seem like a good fit.

I'm interested. How do I learn more?

For more information, visit our website: seattlemca.org/fosterparenting