

Danville Division of Social Services
P.O. Box 3300
Danville, VA 24543

TO:



Foster Care & Adoption in the City of Danville



Thinking about fostering or adopting?

- Learn more about the need for foster/adoptive families
- Consider if fostering or adopting from the foster care system is for you
- Explore the process, determine your next steps

A word of thanks . . .

... from Danville Division of Social Services for inquiring about foster care or adoption. There are over 1,000 children in Virginia’s foster care system; many will return home, some may find a permanent home with kin, while countless others wait for adoption—a “forever family” to call their own.

Today’s Foster Care System is a family support service, working to build skills in birth families so that children can live with their own parents and siblings. Unlike the horror stories on “Dateline” or “20/20,” most birth parents do not intend to harm or neglect their children—they face overwhelming circumstances like poverty and addiction, and have few resources nearby to help them overcome those challenges. When reunification cannot happen, many foster families choose to adopt the children in their care; when that is not possible, foster parents work with the pre-adoptive family or kin to make the change as easy as possible for kids.

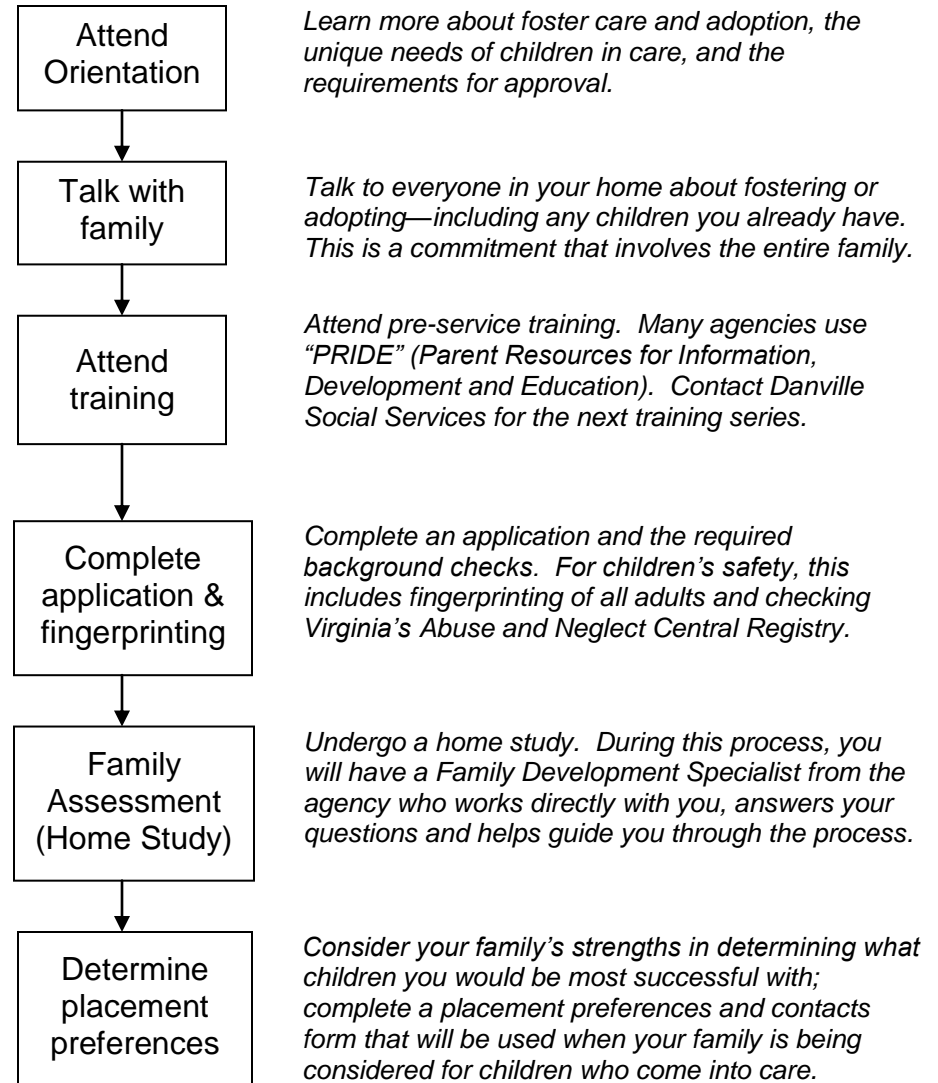
In Virginia, we believe that children grow up best in families. Without foster families, children move around the system or “age out” of care with no permanent connection. *Growing up is hard enough—imagine doing it alone.* Within this booklet you will find general information about foster care and adoption. Danville’s Resource Family Team can tell you more about the children in care and any specific local requirements. Thank you, again, for your interest in our children.

In service to children and families,

Danville Resource Family Team



The steps to foster care/adoption:



At any point, if you decide that fostering or adopting is not right for you or your family, you can withdraw from the process with our appreciation for your time and interest.

What is foster care? How does adoption work?

Today's foster care system is designed to protect and nurture children and support *permanency*—most often this is to return home, but can also be adoption, placement with relatives, or living independently but connected with a family. Children in foster care have been removed from their homes because of abuse, neglect, or special family circumstances. Even though this is for children's well-being, it is still a difficult time for them. Foster families provide not only a home, but also caring, understanding and guidance. When returning home is not possible, adoptive families provide the permanency every child deserves—a "forever family" to call their own.

Who are the children in foster care?

In Danville, children in the foster care system and/or available for adoption are of all ages, with a large percentage of youth between 11 – 18. Some have special needs, medical issues, or academic challenges. All of them are unique individuals with potential, who need an "everyday hero"—maybe you—to help them. Like all children, they need a safe, stable and nurturing family.

Is fostering or adopting just like raising my own children?

Raising a child who is or was in foster care is different from "regular" parenting. It can be more challenging; kids in care have experienced many hardships. It can be more complex, but foster and adoptive parents are supported as a part of a team. Foster and adoptive parents receive special training, help to meet children's individual needs, access to medical care for the child and reimbursement for certain expenses. Good foster and adoptive parents know that, above all, this is about selecting families for children who need them, not just about putting children into families who want them. It takes a village to raise a child—our village, more than ever, needs families to help do this.

"Children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future."

John F. Kennedy

A note from the foster care/family placement team:



Local Agency Information:

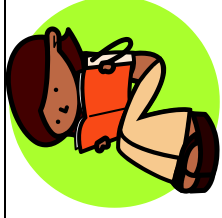
Danville Division of Social Services

510 Patton St

P.O. Box 3300

Danville, VA 24543

Phone: 434-799-6540 Fax: 434-799-5442



Am I Ready to Be a Foster/Adoptive Parent?

Circle “T” for true or “F” for false, for each statement below. This questionnaire will help you determine if you may be eligible or ready to become a Foster/Adoptive Parent.

1. I HAVE ENOUGH ROOM IN MY HOME FOR A FOSTER/ADOPTED CHILD. T / F

You must have adequate bedroom space for a foster/adopted child. A foster/adopted child may share a bedroom with another child of the same sex but the child cannot share a bedroom with anyone over the age of 18 years old.

2. I AM READY TO HAVE A SAFETY INSPECTION OF MY HOME DONE NOW. T / F

It is important that your home is safe and free of hazards. During the family assessment (“home study”) process, a checklist is completed that includes a safety inspection of your home. You must have working smoke detectors and a fire extinguisher; in some places a fire inspection will be completed by the Fire Marshal.

3. I AM IN GOOD PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH. T / F

Being a parent can be demanding. You must be healthy and emotionally stable to care for children who are in foster care or who are available for adoption. Part of the assessment process includes verification of your physical health as well as a check for certain communicable diseases (like a “TB test”).

4. I HAVE NEVER HAD A FOUNDED ABUSE OR NEGLECT CASE WITH AN AGENCY. T / F

If you have had a founded Child Protection case, you may not be able to become a Foster/Adoptive Parent. We will review our records as well as any other state where the applicant(s) resided.

5. I HAVE ADEQUATE INCOME TO MEET MY CURRENT FAMILY’S NEEDS. T / F

You do not have to be rich to become a Foster/Adoptive Parent; however, you must have enough income to meet your own family’s needs. During the assessment process, you will be asked to provide proof of income and to review family expenses.

6. I AM LEGALLY SINGLE OR LEGALLY MARRIED. T / F

Foster/Adoptive Parents can be single, married, divorced or widowed, but may not cohabitate.

7. NO ADULT IN MY HOME HAS EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF A CRIME. T / F

If you or any adult residing in your home has been convicted of certain criminal offenses, you cannot become a Foster/Adoptive Parent. Each household member over the age 18 will be fingerprinted.

8. I AM READY TO BEGIN THE HOME STUDY PROCESS NOW. T / F

You may be ready to begin the assessment/home study process if your life and home are stable. “Stable” means that you are not about to move or undergo major renovations, and are not having financial, marital or emotional difficulties or will be making any major life changes in the near future.



IF YOU ANSWERED “TRUE” TO ALL OF THE STATEMENTS, you are ready to begin the process of becoming a foster/adoptive parent! Contact Danville Division of Social Services at 434-799-6540 to begin the approval process.

IF YOU ANSWERED “FALSE” TO ANY STATEMENT, it will be helpful to talk with a foster care or adoption worker. A foster care or adoption worker can give more information or answer questions you may have about the approval process.