

# Jefferson County DSS Foster/Adoptive Parent Program



## Please consider becoming a foster parent

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Children are placed in foster care either by order of a court (involuntary) or because their parents are willing to have them cared for temporarily outside the home (voluntary).

As a foster parent, you are responsible for the temporary care and nurturing of a child who has been placed outside his or her own home. During a time of disruption and change, you are giving a child a home.

At the same time, your role includes working with the caseworker and the child's family so that the child can return home safely, when appropriate.

As a foster parent, you are part of a "team" working together for the sake of the family. Generally, the team consists of the foster parents, the birth parents, the child, the caseworker, and the law guardian. (In some cases, the birth parents may not be invited participants.)

It may also include service providers, health care providers, and other family members. This means that you are not alone in caring for the child. You have support. It also means that you meet with the child's family in visits and case conferences, and you keep the caseworker up-to-date on how the child is doing.



Foster parents play an essential role in providing temporary, safe, and nurturing homes to children when their parents are unable to care for them.



### A Letter from a Foster Child, Age 13, to Her Mother

Mom,

Because of you I hover over my food and eat it as fast as I can because I think it will be my last meal. I never feel full either.

I flinch and shield myself when people make fast movements around me.

I hate being alone and cannot have my back to any closed door.

The worst is the horrible flashbacks and traumatic nightmares about my past.

But I kind of want to say thank-you because it made me so much stronger.

The only thing that stopped me from dying was myself. Without me I wouldn't have survived...

You may not think what you put me through was wrong, but I do. You just need to remember and I'll never forget.

But yet after all you put me through for some reason I still love you. I also forgive you.

P.S. I hope you love me too!

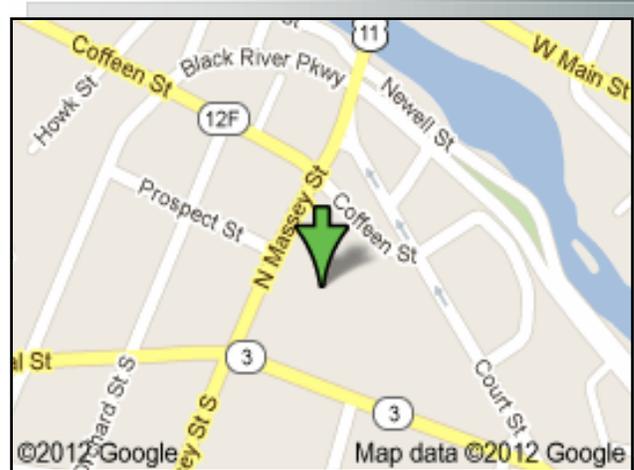


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## Contact Us



### To contact us:

**Jefferson County Department of Social  
Services**

250 Arsenal St  
Watertown NY 13601

Phone: 315-785-3000

Our parking Lot is located behind our office building on N. Massey St.



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## What are the requirements for certifying and approving foster homes?

Children who are placed in foster boarding homes are subject to standards set by state laws and regulations governing those homes. According to the regulations, a home study must evaluate the prospective foster parent's ability to address the child's health and safety.

Foster homes must be in compliance with criteria concerning physical condition, safety, resources, character, motivation, and willingness to cooperate with the agency or district in providing services needed and carrying out the permanency plan.

All applicants must complete the forms necessary to determine whether the applicant and any person 18 years of age or older who lives in the house of the applicant is the subject of an indicated child abuse maltreatment report on file with the [State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment](#) (SCR) as well as the [NYS Justice Center's Staff Exclusion List](#).

## Regulations:

A home study and evaluation of the members of the foster family household or the relative's family household must determine compliance with all of the following criteria for certification or approval:

•**Age:** Each foster parent must be over the age of 21.

•**Health:** Each member of the household of the foster family must be in good physical and mental health and free from communicable diseases. However, physical handicaps or illness of foster parents or members of their household must be in consideration only as they affect the ability to provide adequate care to foster children or may affect an individual child's adjustment to the foster family. Cases must be evaluated on an individual basis with assistance of a medical consultant when indicated. A written report from a physician on the health of a family, including a complete physical examination of the applicant, must be filed with the agency initially and biennially thereafter. Additional medical reports must be furnished upon the request of either the agency worker or the foster parent.

•**Employment:** Employment of a foster parent outside the home must be permitted when there are suitable plans for the care and supervision of the child at all times, including after school and during the summer. Such plans must be made part of the foster family record and must receive prior agency approval, unless only one of the two foster parents is working outside the home.

•**Marital Status:** The marital status of an applicant may be a factor in determining whether or not a certification or approval will be granted only as it affects the ability to provide adequate care to foster children. Changes in marital status must be reported to the authorized agency; existing certificates or letters of approval may be revoked, and new certificates or letters of approval issued consistent with the best interests of the child.

•**Character:** Each applicant for certification or approval must be required to provide the agency with the names of three persons who may be contacted for references. The agency must seek signed statements from these individuals attesting to the applicant's moral character, mature judgment, ability to manage financial resources, and capacity for developing a meaningful relationship with children, or interview the individuals in person.

•**Criminal Background Check:** As part of the required criminal history record check with the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), an agency must obtain a set of fingerprints from any prospective foster parent and each person over the age of 18 who is currently living in the home before the foster parent is finally approved or certified for the placement of a foster child. At the time a foster parent applies for renewal of their approval or certification, the same process takes place for each person over the age of 18 who is currently living in the home who has not previously had a criminal history record check.

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## MAPP Training

Jefferson County DSS uses the Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting/ Group Preparation and Selection (MAPP/GPS) Pre-Certification Training Program. The MAPP approach to foster parenting encourages open communication and trust among foster families, adoptive families, birth families and casework staff.

The MAPP program examines 12 criteria or skills necessary for successful foster/ adoptive parenting. Through role-playing, personal profiles, and other techniques, the home finder and the applicant make mutual decisions about foster parenting.

Objectives of the training for prospective foster and adoptive parents are:

- Learning what to expect and what services are available.
- Looking at one's own strengths and needs.
- Developing skills in giving love and attention to a troubled child.
- Learning about stages of child development.
- Helping children manage behavior.
- Understanding the roles and responsibilities of teamwork.
- Helping foster parents develop a good understanding of the child's parents.

Currently, MAPP training is for 10 weeks, approximately one evening per week. Training takes place twice a year, usually in the spring and fall of each year. If you contact us in between classes, we will put your name on our list for the next class.





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## Our Adoption and Foster Home Finding Supervisor and Sr. Caseworker

### Steve Barker

Grade B Supervisor of Adoption and Home Finding Unit

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