

What Makes a Great Foster Parent?

Rural Region Compilation for Nov. 17, 2014

- Builds trust and relationship with child
 - Nurturing, genuine and open
 - Is fair and consistent with child (rules, routines, etc.)
 - Provides child clear boundaries, expectation and consequences
 - Gives child appropriate responsibilities
 - Listen to child with empathy; allow them to express their concerns and how they feel
 - Understands what has happened to the child and meets the child where they're at
 - Gives child praise, respect and empowerment
 - Understand the child is a unique individual with their own specific needs
 - Allows child the freedom to be a child
 - Supportive of child's cultural background (food, religion)
 - Explains complicated things (like adoption) in a simple age appropriate way
 - Educate self of child's needs; advocates for child's needs (education, health, social development, etc.)
 - Advocate through being the child's voice
 - Keeps child's behavior in perspective (doesn't take it personally)
 - Sticks with child even with problem behaviors; perseverance in the placement
 - Is patient, puts own emotional needs second to the child's
 - Provide child a tour of home when they are placed
- Assumes all necessary duties and responsibilities
 - Respect confidentiality
 - Learn how the "system" works and it's limitations
 - Understands the responsibility of being a mandatory reporter
 - Has a great support system; provide mutual support and mentoring with other foster parents
 - Advocate for self; confident and comfortable enough to reach out for support
 - Comfortable and confident in expressing concerns and needs and has their opinion respected
 - Continues learning, attending trainings, learning new skills, helps other parents
 - Is trustworthy, dedicated, responsible and follows through with commitments
 - Does not take on more than you can do
 - Advocates to receive all necessary documents and information ongoing regarding child
 - Maintains a safe, calm, peaceful, comfortable and inviting environment
 - Understands trauma behavior and adjusts environment to facilitate healing for the children
 - Treats child the same as they would treat your own child
 - Makes the child feel a full part of his/her foster family
 - Involving the child with the whole family
 - Include child in family activities/outings and family vacations
 - Takes them into the community; makes them part of the community
 - Involved in sports
 - Social interactions
 - More opportunities for activities
 - Helping them develop strengths and interests

- Works collaboratively with caseworker to meet child's needs
 - Helps with health appointments, family visits, educational needs, other needed actions
 - Candid communication (but appropriate) with caseworker; about services child is getting or needed, what is going on in the home, school, visits, etc.
 - Access community supports to help child overcome challenges and enhance strengths
 - Be professional in in dealing with the “system”
 - Develop professional partnership
- Participates on CFT and provides input on case
 - Foster parent is full part of CFT
 - Takes part in case plan discussion
 - Communicates with other CFT members
 - Respectful of the roles of others on the team (not using CASA as childcare)
- Attends every meeting for the child
- Participate in court hearings
- Someone who can model how they solve their mistakes
 - Someone who is able to admit their mistakes
- Someone who knows their limitations and expectations
 - Someone who can say no to maintain his or her own limitations.
- Is able to have the necessary flexible when needed to meet child's needs
- Being aware of and supporting child's permanency plan
 - Assist with reunification efforts
 - Explaining permanency plan to child
 - Participating in permanency plan
 - Gives input to court
- Open to working with and having a relationship with birth parents
 - Empathy for birth parents
 - Respectful to birth parents; treat them like people, not the enemy
 - Doesn't disparage birth parents to others
 - Non-judgmental of parents
 - Be hopeful for change; hopeful of success
 - Realize that parents are important to kids and respecting that relationship
 - Creates a co-operative parenting dynamic (mentor relationship)
 - Modeling parenting, validating bio parents partnered with offering strategies
 - Encouragement and suggestions in parenting skills
- Supporting the child's relationship with siblings; and other existing family relationships
 - Encouraging them to stay involved with family
- Help and support the child when they are transitioning out of your home
- Create and continue a long term family relationship with foster children after they transition home or to another placement
 - Continued contact with former caregivers
- For relative caregivers: understand the unique difficulties that can occur when fostering kin