

**Step #9: Get your foster care license and welcome a foster child into your home.**



For more information on how to become a foster parent in Montana, please contact your local Child and Family Services office or e-mail: [askaboutfostercare@mt.gov](mailto:askaboutfostercare@mt.gov).



### Child and Family Services

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## Child and Family Services

### Become a Foster Parent



## A Step-by-Step Guide for Becoming a Licensed Foster Care Provider

Becoming a foster parent is a big decision. The process starts with a heartfelt wish to help children in need. Once you've decided to become a foster parent in Montana, you'll need to

complete the following steps to get licensed. Please keep in mind, there are plenty of people to help with the process.

**Step #1: Meet with a Family Resource Specialist (licensing worker) to learn about the application process and paperwork.**

**Step #2: Complete the foster care application and return the paperwork to your licensing worker.** The application helps us understand you, your home and your situation. The licensure process makes sure you meet certain standards.

**Step #3: Complete the Release of Information form and a fingerprint card for the Child Protective Service (CPS) and criminal background checks.**

To protect the safety of children in foster care, you'll need to let the licensing worker look at the CPS, criminal and motor vehicle background information for you and the people living in your home.

When a Child Protective Service Background Check is done, the licensing worker looks at any Child Protective history available on you in Montana. If you have lived in a state other than Montana, the worker will also look at your history in the states you used to live. Every adult in your household will also have his/her history checked. You will be told if the worker finds anything that shows you or any person in your home might be a risk to children.

**If any of these things come up in the background check, the licensing worker might have reason to deny a license:**

- 1) A substantiation of child abuse/neglect on any adult in the household.
- 2) A history that shows that you or any adult living in your home:
  - Had a child in their care adjudicated by a court as a youth in need of care

- Had a child involuntarily removed from their care
- Had children placed in foster care
- Had their caregiver rights to a child terminated

The criminal background check looks at your criminal history. The licensing worker sends your fingerprint card to the Bureau of Criminal Investigation and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to get your criminal history. If you or any other household member has had a **felony conviction at any time for one of the following crimes**, you will not be able to foster parent:

- crimes involving violence such as homicide; rape; sexual assault; aggravated assault; assault on a minor, officer, or with a weapon; kidnapping; aggravated kidnapping; prostitution, robbery or burglary
- crimes pertaining to children or families, including but not limited to child abuse or neglect, incest, child sexual abuse, ritual abuse of a minor, felony partner or family member assault, child pornography, child prostitution, internet crimes involving children, felony endangering the welfare of a child, felony unlawful transactions with children, or aggravated interference with parent-child contact
- conviction of abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an elderly person or a person with a developmental disability

Also, if you or another household member has had a **felony conviction within the past five years** for one or more of the following crimes, you cannot become a foster parent at this time:

- physical assault;
- battery; or

- a drug related offense, including alcohol related convictions

**Step #4: Get and submit references.**

The licensing worker wants to get a good idea of who you are before licensing you, and so we need to talk to people who know you and your family.

**Step #5: Complete a Personal Statement of Health.**

You will have to fill out a form (that we give you) that says you're healthy enough to foster parent. Everyone living in your home will also have to fill out the form. This is so that we can make sure of the health, safety and well being of children placed in your home.

**Step #6: Complete a fire and safety inspection.**

You will be given a checklist of things you need to do to make sure your home is safe in the event of a fire or other disaster. Your worker does a walkthrough of your home with you to ensure it meets fire and safety standards. It is important to follow the checklist and to make your home a safe place for a child.

**Step #7: Receive Keeping Children Safe foster parent training.**

Keeping Children Safe (KCS) training is provided to you for free to help you succeed as a foster parent. You must finish this training in order to foster parent.

**Step #8: A home study will be done by the licensing worker.**

The study asks a lot of personal questions, but helps make sure that foster children will be taken good care of in your home and also helps the licensing worker find out what type of child would do well in your home. The study is done in private and all information is kept confidential.