



Foster CARE in Weld County

Foster Hope ♥ Foster Love ♥ Foster Weld

Foster Care Self-Assessment Guide

A useful tool to help you make an informed decision about fostering a child

Your answers to the following statements will help you more fully understand how you feel about fostering a child. This guide is solely yours—we won't ask you to turn it in or share it with others, although you may wish to discuss the results openly and honestly with your partner and/or family. Once completed, this guide should be able to help you make an informed decision on whether becoming a foster parent is right for you and your family.

Foster parent beliefs and attitudes

	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1. I need a foster child so I won't feel so unhappy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Foster children are easy to please because they are so happy to have a home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Providing a foster home is a way to rescue children from a difficult situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The money paid by the state for foster care will help me meet all my household expenses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. All that foster children need is a lot of love.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I can contribute to a better society by being a good foster parent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I did a pretty good job with my children so I think I'll be good with a foster child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. My child needs a playmate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Having a foster child is a good way to prepare for adopting a child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Childhood can be a difficult time. I feel I can relate to children going through rough times.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What can you learn from your responses?

1. I need a foster child so I won't feel so unhappy.

Give yourself one point if you said "disagree." If you are unhappy you should think twice about becoming a foster parent. It is not fair to the child to expect their presence to improve your mood. Speak to a counselor first. If you are able to manage the depression successfully for a six-month period, then you may reconsider being a foster parent.

Record your score _____

2. Foster children are easy to please because they are so happy to have a home.

You get a point if you said "not sure" or "disagree." While many foster children are happy to have a safe home, they may not be so easy to please. Most will test your patience by acting out, being sad and/or shy. Don't expect foster children to be extra grateful and obedient. They didn't ask to be put in their position and they don't owe you anything because you accepted them into your family.

Record your score _____

3. Providing a foster home is a way to rescue children from a difficult situation.

Score a point if you chose "not sure" or "disagree." Folks who have a rescue approach to foster care are likely to resist reasonable contact with the foster child's birth parents. Remember that foster care is temporary and the goal of foster parents is to work with agency professionals so that families are reunited.

Record your score _____

4. The money paid by the state for foster care will help meet all my household expenses.

A point for checking "disagree." Being a foster parent should not result in financial sacrifice. However, nobody should decide to become a foster parent because they think it will help them financially.

Record your score _____

5. All that foster children need is a lot of love.

A point for those who said "disagree." While a lot of love is a nice thing to provide, foster parents also must have good parenting and communication skills and an understanding of their role as foster parents. Being patient, consistent and following through on rules and expectations are all important. It takes more than a loving attitude to be a successful foster parent.

Record your score _____

6. I can contribute to a better society by being a good foster parent.

If you said "agree" give yourself two points. Score one point for "not sure." A good foster parent can put the needs of the child, the child's family and society ahead of personal needs. Viewing oneself as providing a necessary service to the child and to society is a positive reason for becoming a foster parent.

Record your score _____

7. I did a pretty good job with my children so I think I'll be good with a foster child.

A point for those who "agree" or are "not sure". Having been a successful parent indicates that you have certain skills and personality traits that make you an effective parent. Wanting to use these talents to help out as a foster parent is a plus.

Record your score _____

8. My child needs a playmate.

A point if you "disagree." Being a foster parent is about caring for others and contributing to society in general. Your need to have a playmate for your child should not be a significant factor in your decision.

Record your score _____

9. Having a foster child is a good way to prepare for adopting a child.

A point if you checked "agree" or "not sure." Being a foster parent will help you determine your suitability to be an adoptive parent. While adoption is occasionally possible, it should not be your primary purpose for becoming a foster parent.

Record your score _____

10. Childhood can be a difficult time. I feel I can relate to children going through rough times.

A point if you selected "agree" or "not sure." If you were a foster child or experienced other significant hurdles, you indeed "know what it's like." Even if you didn't have a difficult childhood you feel able to understand how troubling childhood can be. However, be cautious if you feel your childhood experiences have left you angry, depressed or resentful. Strong negative emotions from your own childhood could hinder your efforts to be a positive parent figure. If you feel you have such difficulties to a significant degree, you should seek personal counseling before becoming a foster parent.

Record your score _____

Total of all scores _____

How did you do on the survey?

With a possible score of eleven, compare your total to the scale below.

Total score What it means

- | | |
|------|---|
| 9-11 | Your beliefs and attitudes suggest you will be a successful foster parent. |
| 5-8 | You are a good candidate for being a foster parent but should think about some of your beliefs and attitudes. Can you accept the other point of view? |
| 4-7 | Your beliefs and attitudes are not consistent with being an effective foster parent. Examine your position closely and see if you can accept the need to change your thinking in some areas. |
| 0-3 | Think again about your reasons for becoming a foster parent. Talk over your belief system with a professional in the field of foster care. If you can see the areas where you need to change and can make changes, you may be a good candidate for being a foster parent in the future. |

What are the characteristics of successful foster parents?

- Cares deeply about children, wants to "parent" children
- Able to make and keep commitments
- Willing to help another family
- Offers love, without expecting it in return
- Ability and desire to sacrifice
- Is flexible, able to adjust to the unexpected/unknown
- Strong family/neighborhood/church support
- Tolerant of other's mood swings, feelings and beliefs
- Sense of humor
- If married, both spouses are equally committed to foster care and/or adoption

What are the best reasons for becoming a foster parent?

The best reasons are those that do not involve intense personal needs such as feeling lonely or wanting the self-satisfaction of "saving" a child. The key idea is that your actions are for others rather than to fill a personal need. If you can say "My life is good, I care about others," then being a foster parent is an enrichment of an already fulfilled person. This makes for a foster parent who can be reasonably objective and keep the child's welfare as the number one priority.

If your thoughts are most like the person in the left column below, you are likely to have a positive foster care experience. If you are more like the person described in the right column, you should think things over and perhaps talk to a professional counselor before applying to be a foster parent.

You are ready!

I care about children and want to share my good fortune.

I am kind and loving but can be firm when it's required.

Foster children have had it tough. I want to make their life a little easier and more fun.

I didn't have children. By being a foster parent I can share my home and give my time and attention to a worthwhile cause.

I did a good job as a parent and know how to work with children. I'd like to use my skills to help other children.

As a foster parent, my job is to make this child feel comfortable and accepted in my home. I know that someday the child will leave and that's okay.

Think it over!

I am depressed and think I could feel better if I had a child to fuss over.

I just love children and don't feel they should ever be disciplined.

These children have been abused and neglected - I want to protect them from their birth family members.

I don't have children, and I feel that having a foster child will fill a lonely void in my life.

I don't know much about children, but I believe that if you just love them enough everything will be okay.

These poor children have been mistreated and I want to protect them or even adopt them so their family never hurts them again.