

PATH  NORTH DAKOTA



Foster Hope. Foster Love. Foster Child. Foster Family.

Be a Foster Parent.

So, You're Thinking about Becoming a Foster Parent...

Being a foster parent can be one of the most rewarding roles you'll have, but it is certainly not for everyone. It takes training, flexibility, commitment, hard work, and a willingness to provide a safe and stable temporary home for a child who may have emotional or behavioral issues as a result of trauma they have experienced and circumstances beyond their control.

Caring for these youth requires patience, determination, and a lot of love. As a foster parent, you will give each youth you care for a chance to build a healthy and positive life by providing them with a loving home.

Being a foster parent is a commitment of time and energy. Foster parents work with the foster youth's care team, the youth's family, and many other professionals who are instrumental to the youth's success. You'll also need to consider the impact on your own family.

This pamphlet will help answer the most common questions around becoming a foster parent. As a foster parent, you will provide the healing, support, and guidance that can transform a youth into a self-assured, successful adult.



Who is PATH?

PATH ND is a private non-profit child and family services agency that began operation in North Dakota in 1994. Today, we offer a variety of services for North Dakota children and families: case management, assessments, treatment planning and coordination, relief care, parent-to-parent mentoring, crisis planning and intervention, emergency beds, family reunification, and specialized adoption. We have offices across the state with dedicated staff who are ready to help you become a foster parent.

What is Foster Care?

Foster care is the temporary placement of youth in a safe, nurturing environment when their parents cannot care for them. Foster care provides 24-hour care and strives to reunite each youth with his or her birth family when possible, or to find an adoptive family when the child cannot return home.

PATH serves youth ages birth to 21, who can benefit from support in a family setting. As part of our family-based care, we match the youth's unique needs with the strengths of a foster/adoptive family to better ensure a successful placement.

The youth referred to us typically have experienced traumatic life events that may include domestic violence, physical/sexual abuse, neglect, community violence and/or living with a caregiver with chemical dependency. We also care for youth with medically complex health needs, chronic illness, physical handicaps, and developmental delays.

Am I Qualified?

PATH recruits foster parents who have the capacity to provide care to the youth we serve. To become a PATH foster parent, you must have the following qualifications.

- Ability to meet licensing requirements of the North Dakota Department of Human Services
- Willingness and ability to work as a team member with social workers, probation officers, educators, and other human service professionals
- Ability to work with the youth's birth or adoptive families
- Ability to work with youth of different ages, ethnic backgrounds, socio-economic backgrounds, sexual orientation and various emotional/behavioral challenges
- Must be at least 21 years of age and living in a stable home environment
- At least one foster parent must have a flexible schedule to attend meetings, appointments, and to provide adequate supervision to the youth

How Much Time Does it Take?

PATH offers flexible foster parenting options, so you can find the right fit for you and your family.

Part-Time

PATH families mentor birth parents and work with children who are not currently in foster care but at-risk of being separated from their families. The child may spend a few nights a month with you and you may be the one they call in times of distress.

As-Needed

You can set your own schedule and frequency to help our full-time PATH families when they need support or respite.

Full-Time

As a full-time PATH family, a child joins your family. You are responsible for meeting their basic needs and playing a key role in their health and healing. You are part of the professional team focused on the their short- and long-term needs. You will provide a monthly assessment on the child's progress and find opportunities to nurture the child.

What about My Own Kids?

Many times, those considering the possibility of becoming licensed foster parents wonder about the effect that fostering will have on their own children. Overwhelmingly, our foster parents say that foster parenting has had a positive effect on their own children. Below are some of the benefits they've identified:

- An opportunity to develop better coping skills
- An opportunity to learn other skills they would not otherwise need to learn
- Exposure to difficult situations helps them develop empathy
- Become less self-focused and more aware of the real world
- Expands their definition of what a family can be
- Helps them to appreciate what they have
- Companionship
- Opportunity to make an impact on the lives of others



What Supports are Available to my Family?

- Medical and dental coverage is provided for foster youth
- Respite days are available throughout the year
- Education and ongoing training opportunities
- 24- hour support
- Pre-placement and overnight stays arranged prior to foster care placement
- Monthly Share & Support meetings with other foster parents
- Daycare expenses paid if foster parent(s) work outside of the home
- Financial allowances for clothing, activities, etc.
- Reimbursement is tax free

Ready to Be a Foster Parent?

Contact PATH. We will walk you through the licensing process and get you the appropriate training to be a foster parent.

Your PATH social worker will evaluate your requirements for licensing, as well as your family's strengths related to specific types of care.

During the licensing process, all necessary background checks, references, and home-safety checks will be completed. A series of interviews will also be conducted with all members of the family, including adult children and all household members. The length of the entire process varies on the family and agency's needs. Once licensed and properly trained, your worker will consider your family's strengths and work to match you with a youth in need.

We're Here to Help

PATH recognizes that your entire family is involved in foster care. Your PATH social worker will work with you to help maintain a strong, healthy family.

We work hard to help you and your foster youth succeed. As a PATH foster parent, you'll have access to 24/7 on-call assistance. We also provide opportunities for you to connect with other foster parents.

Don't wait. Call today. A child is waiting.

www.pathinc.org

877-766-7284

changing one life

CHANGES EVERYTHING

