

LIVINGSTON COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES COLLABORATIVE BODY

Health and Human Service Needs FACT SHEET

Foster Parenting in Livingston County

April 2015

Who are Foster Parents?

Foster parent is the term generally used to refer to adults who are licensed by the state or other designated agency to provide a temporary home for children whose birth parents are unable to care for them. To become licensed in the State of Michigan, foster parents are required to have a home evaluation including criminal history and medical clearances, and pre-service training.

What is the need in Livingston County for foster homes?

Last year, 89 children were removed from their families in Livingston County. This year, 23 children were removed from their homes between January 1 and March 31. When children are removed from the home, they are in need of foster home placements. Some children return home within a year, while others age out of the system, or remain in foster care until they are adopted. Many foster children are placed with relatives. Foster children require a safe, nurturing, patient, positive home environment while safety concerns are addressed with their family.

As of April 6, 2015, current foster care data for Livingston County is:

- There are 81 licensed foster homes in Livingston County.
- There are 187 children in foster care at this writing.
- Children of all ages are placed in foster care, from birth to age 18. There is a voluntary program for older youth to remain in care until age 21.
- Approximately 25% of children in foster care have the goal of adoption, not reunification.
- In January 2015 the breakdown of licensed foster homes by school district was as follows:
 - Brighton – 13 homes
 - Fowlerville – 8 homes
 - Hartland – 1 home
 - Howell – 26 homes
 - Pinckney – 7 homes
 - School districts surrounding Livingston County – 26 homes

What are the Specific Needs for Foster Parents in Livingston County? Livingston County has been very successful recruiting new foster homes over the past several years. Many of these new homes were licensed to only accept infants or young children. **There is always a need for foster homes for older youth, teens with challenging behavior or a history of delinquency, babies and sibling groups.** The goal is to maintain youth in their school district when possible; therefore homes are needed in each of the school districts in Livingston County. Additional foster homes in Livingston County willing to provide stability and support to these youth are always needed.

What are the Services and Supports in Livingston County to Assist Foster Families?

Foster parents are provided reimbursement for the cost of care as established by the State of Michigan. There are many agencies to assist with foster care and adoption cases. These organizations include:

Liv. Department of Human Services	(517) 548-0233
Livingston Co. Catholic Charities	(517) 545-5944
Livingston County Court	(517) 546-1500
Orchards Children's Services	(248) 258-0440
Forever Families	(248) 344-9606
Wolverine Human Services	(888) 625-8669
Lutheran Social Services	(517) 886-1380



FAKS

The local Foster, Adoption, and Kinship Services Workgroup (FAKS) of the Livingston County Human Services Collaborative Body regularly discusses needs of foster families and develops supports to meet those needs. Current supports offered to licensed foster families include:

- Pre-service training for prospective foster parents to learn what to expect
- Mentoring for foster parents to teach and support one another
- Monthly foster parent networking or support groups
- Family activities including a summer picnic and annual recognition dinner
- Post-licensing retention training to improve skills and maintain placements
- Case Management and Counseling support
- Some Guardian ad litem/attorney services

Go to www.livgov.com/hscb/pages/fosteradoptkinship. There is a local hotline for families interested in becoming foster parents: 517-548-0233.

What Can the Community Do to Help?

Foster parents for older youth, babies (especially when there are more than one; for example, 1 to 3 year old twins) and sibling groups are always needed. Please call the FAKS hotline to receive information about foster care. Other ways to assist in this effort include:

- Become a licensed foster parent
- Donate your time to assist foster families and youth develop life skills (budgeting, cooking, basic car repair, etc.), transportation to appointments and services, and general mentoring
- Sponsor a child to attend a summer camp
- Donate money to the FAKS fund which is used for immediate needs of foster families and children
- Join the FAKS workgroup of the Human Services Collaborative Body to assist in planning to meet these needs

For more information or to get involved, please contact the FAKS hotline at 517-548-0233