



**Have a Heart...**

**Give a Child a New Start**

### You Can Make a Difference

## **Foster Care and Adoption Options**

All children need a stable, nurturing family to grow and develop to their full potential. We urgently need to expand family options for several specific groups of young people. Their needs present rich opportunities for foster or adoptive parents to make a positive, lasting difference in their lives.

### Sibling Groups

When a home environment is unsafe, CFSA must often remove all children in the family. After this upsetting experience, the best thing for brothers and sisters is to stay together. Foster parents who open their homes to siblings reduce trauma and maintain some stability for these children. They provide a safe, family environment where these youngsters can sustain their bonds while continuing to learn and grow. When brothers and sisters stay together in foster care, their family is temporarily divided—but not scattered. It is easier for the children to maintain contact with their parents, a critical factor in family healing that often leads to speedier reunification. We also have a number of brothers and sisters in need of adoption as a group. Adoptive parents who choose siblings allow them to preserve deep connections critical to their well being while thriving through new opportunities in an enduring home.

### Teens

Young people age 14 and above present foster and adoptive parents with vast opportunities for major impact. Behind the typical skepticism of older children who have endured many disappointments and too much instability are young people hungry for acceptance, guidance, and support. They have an urgent need for mature, caring input as they make important life choices. Most also have much to learn about everyday life that teens outside the system take for granted—following regular homework and chore routines; gaining job skills, and managing money, for example. People who foster or adopt teens have a chance to bestow the blessings only a family environment can provide at a critical time in the lives of these young people. Helping them develop their unique talents can be an unforgettable experience.

### Children with Medical Issues

Some children in foster care have medical issues ranging from mild to challenging. Many are hoping to be adopted. Non-communicable health problems should not automatically consign these children to a life in an institution. With regular medical treatment and proper care, they can thrive in family settings. CFSA provides special training and support for foster and adoptive parents willing to open their hearts and homes to children with medical issues. Although we do not require previous health care training or experience, people with these skills are often ideal candidates to foster or adopt these children.

### Emergency Placements

Tragically, child abuse and neglect occur around the clock and take no vacations. Sometimes, we must remove children from unsafe situations in the middle of the night, on weekends, and even on holidays. Following emergency removals, we urgently need foster parents prepared to accept children with little advance notice and/or outside "regular" hours. Expanding the number of family foster homes available in emergencies will allow us to make better placements, even under pressure, and greatly improve stability

*What is most appealing about young folks, after all, is the changes, not the still photograph of finished character but the movie, the soul in flux.*

Thomas Pynchon, Author

for children. Foster parents willing to welcome young people in distress play an invaluable role in protecting children and reducing trauma for them.



Are you a responsible, caring adult ready to share your wisdom, compassion, time, and home with our children and/or teens? Please let us know how you want to contribute as a foster or adoptive parent so we can find the best option for you and our children. ■