

What is  
**FOSTER CARE**  
about?



# What is Epworth Foster Care?

**We are a fostering agency under Epworth Community Services, and also the first fostering agency appointed by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF).**

We believe we can all play a part in developing the younger generation and building them up for greater things. All children are important to our future. Every single one deserves the opportunity to be nurtured to their full potential in a loving, supportive family.

Together, we have the power to restore a child's belief in family, their significance, and their future. Instead of being weighed down by the past, we will focus on nurturing the present in order to change the future. We believe that each child is special, wanted, and destined for great things.

***Will you join us in mending our children's hearts?***



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It all starts  
with space in  
your heart.



# Fostering in Singapore

## **Why are the children in foster care?**

Children require foster care because (i) their parents are unable to care for them, at least for a period of time, due to physical/mental illness, or being in jail, or life circumstances; or (ii) they have been mistreated or abandoned by their parents. We hope to provide loving and supportive homes for these children through foster care so that they can experience the love of a family.

## **How long do children stay with a foster family?**

The length of foster care can range from a few months to years, and varies with the child and for different families. The ultimate goal of fostering is to reunite children with their parents whenever possible. When this option is no longer available, adoption may be considered.

## Who can become a foster parent?

Everyone can play a part in supporting children in foster care. If you are able to provide a stable and loving home, and nurture a child to reach his/her fullest potential, you are prepared to make a difference in our vulnerable children's lives.

However, there are still certain criteria to be met to be a foster parent under the Ministry of Social & Family Development (MSF) Fostering Scheme.

**For more information on the fostering criteria, please visit [www.epworth.sg](http://www.epworth.sg).**



## How are foster families matched to the children?

Families are matched according to the child's needs and the family's ability to care for the child. Potential foster parents can indicate the age and gender of children whom they feel they can best care for. Every child is precious and valuable, even if they may seem difficult or unlovable. Many of these children have been through trauma and need a family who will love them regardless.

The key to  
their future lies  
in our homes.



# Application Process



**1** Submission of completed application and supporting documents



**2** Office interview and medical screening



**3** Home visit with household members



**5** Approved applicants will **await a match** with child referred from *MSF*\*



**4** Panel discussion with *MSF*\*



**6** Attend trainings

\* Ministry of Social and Family Development

An illustration of a child with brown hair, wearing a blue party hat and a green shirt with a red heart on it. The child is holding a white birthday cake with a single lit candle. Above the child is a pink sign with a dashed border containing the text 'Showing a child he matters today will change his tomorrow.' The background is orange with a repeating geometric pattern.

Showing a child  
he matters today  
will change his  
tomorrow.

# 5 Things to Know Before You Foster

**Fostering brings with it many joys and challenges. To help you in your consideration, here are some things you should know:**

**The application process can be long-drawn. *Be patient.***

It is worthwhile, knowing that a family can restore a child's belief in Family. Be ready to spend time answering personal questions, filling up paperwork and preparing your home.

**Your relatives or friends may question your decisions. *Be ready with answers.***

Some of them may have preconceived ideas that may include stereotypes and prejudices, or have concerns about your capacity to handle foster children. See this as a good opportunity to educate them about fostering.

**Your relationship with family members may be tested. *Be strong.***

When a family takes on the responsibility of a new foster child, there needs to be adjustments and changes in schedules to cater to a new member joining the family. There may also be differing views when it comes to parenting. It is important for your spouse and family members to constantly communicate and be supportive even through the toughest days.

**The parenting will be challenging.**

***Be equipped.***

Oftentimes, children coming into your care have undergone traumatic experiences that they struggle to express. Equipping yourself with knowledge and skills on handling trauma in children will better prepare you for the child who is coming into your home.

**You will one day say goodbye and it won't be easy.**

***Be mentally prepared.***

There will come a day when the child will leave your home, hopefully to return to their birth family. No amount of preparation will make you fully ready, but the knowledge that you made a lasting difference in this child's life will make it slightly easier.

**Family is  
homemade.**



# Are You Ready to Foster?

**Each child deserves a family that will welcome, treasure and love him. Here's a checklist for you and your family to think through:**

- We are fully in agreement about this commitment.
- We understand that while foster care is temporary and indefinite, our commitment to care for a foster child is still the same as that made to a birth child.
- We have examined our motivations and believe that we want to do this to love and support a child, rather than primarily to meet any needs in our own lives.
- We have the time, energy, health and resources to meet the often considerable needs of a foster child.
- We are able to give love, even when it is not readily returned.

**It takes a village to raise a child. There's a role for everyone.**



# We Are in This Together With You

## How will you be supported?

You will be assigned to a foster care officer who will support you in your fostering journey. There will be regular home visits, telephone contact, specialised training and support groups. In case of emergencies, our agency's 24/7 hotline is available for you. We also understand that you might need an occasional break from caring for an additional child, and that's why we offer respite care.

Foster children will receive financial support, such as school subsidies and a medical fee exemption card. You will also receive a monthly allowance of \$936 or \$1,114 to cover the foster child's basic necessities.

## Are there other ways I can support foster children?

Yes! You may not be ready to foster a child right now, but there is plenty you can do to make the journey for a new foster family smoother and more enriching.

Here are a few ways you can open your **HEART** to foster children:

## Help

You can help by becoming a volunteer with us. Become a trained befriender and bring foster children for outings, or play with and care for them while foster parents attend trainings. If you have a vehicle of your own, you may also help by ferrying them for therapy sessions and appointments.

## Enrich

Do you have skills that you can enrich our foster children's lives with? Children are very often eager to learn new things, and teaching them a new skill might uncover a hidden talent or spark a new interest. You can also use your skills, such as photography or balloon sculpting, for our roadshows or fostering events.

## Act on it

We welcome corporates to take action and collaborate with us through the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. If your organisation would like to donate, sponsor our fostering events, or even plan fun-filled and memorable events for our foster children, please contact us for discussion. If you are an individual who wishes to contribute as well, please also contact us.

## Reach out

Be a foster care advocate, and help us to reach out and raise fostering awareness in the community. Invite us to speak at your workplace, or organisations and groups you are connected with. You can also organise sharing sessions at the comfort of your home and invite us to speak to your friends. If you are open to explore this, please contact us.

## Talk

Do you know of friends or relatives who would make fantastic foster parents? Help us to talk to them about the need for more foster families. Link us up with them, and we will help them to understand and explore fostering. Do contact us if you need copies of our brochures.

Fostering a child  
is temporary.  
Fostering their  
future is forever.

Get involved today.

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