

## Frequently Asked Questions – Foster Care

**Q. Who can be a foster parent?**

**A. This is a question that is asked a lot. Many people assume that they can't be a foster parent for one reason or another. The main qualifications are that you have to be at least 21 years of age and you have to be able to pass background checks. Other qualifications include appropriate space in your home and being able to provide for yourself and your family financially. There is a detailed assessment process that all foster parents must go through in order to become licensed as a State of Wisconsin foster parent. Foster parents must be willing to adhere to the Wisconsin Administrative Code Ch. DCF 56.**

**Q. How does someone become a foster parent for Manitowoc County?**

**A. The process usually starts when someone contacts a member of our team to express interest in becoming a foster parent. This contact may be made by phone, email, in-person, via someone else, via the foster care website, etc. At this point an initial phone call is made to the person who made the inquiry. After learning some basic information from the person, an inquiry packet is sent to their home address. The inquiry packet will include an application, a SAFE questionnaire for each adult, and background check forms for everyone age 12 and older. There will be additional information explaining what foster care is and an explanation of what it is not. Once this paperwork is returned, the applicant is called and told the next step in the process which is typically to send out for reference checks and background checks. As these are in process, a home visit will be set with the family to do a walk-through of their residence to see what may be required in order for them to do foster care. These items may include smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguishers, railings, and other safety features. Bedroom space will be noted to see how many children the family can potentially be licensed for. Also during this visit initial licensing paperwork will be completed and other requirements (fbi fingerprinting, health exams for all family members, school references, fire safety check, fire evacuation plans, pet vaccinations, vehicle insurance, home or renters insurance, etc.) will be discussed. At the second home visit the applicants' history will be discussed. Further home visits and interviews will be conducted to talk with each adult separately and to complete the SAFE #2 questionnaire. If there are children living in the home each of them will also be interviewed. In between home visits the assessment begins as everything is considered. If a decision is reached to approve the applicants, a home study will be completed on ewisacwis and a foster care license issued.**