

Family & Children Services

A S o u r c e o f H o p e

FOSTER CARE PROGRAM AND NEEDS STATEMENT

The mission of Family & Children Services, Inc. is to support, strengthen and preserve the safety, wellbeing and dignity of children, individuals and families through a continuum of human services. This mission is accomplished through provision of a comprehensive program of critical human services for families, individuals, and children.

The primary goal of foster care is to provide a stable living arrangement for the child, at the present time and then permanently. Ideally, the child's family is strengthened and the child returns home. When this goal is not attainable, the goal is to create another permanent plan for the child through adoption, long-term foster care or independent living.

In order to facilitate the best placement for a child or youth, Family & Children Services considers many factors regarding the needs and characteristics of the child and the individual foster family prior to placement. Factors such as cultural background, ages and gender of the foster child and children already in a foster home and specific behavioral and emotional challenges are considered as well as any other factors known at the time a placement is being considered.

The types of foster care provided by Family & Children Services

- Family Foster Care
- Kinship Care
- Respite Foster Care
- Pre-Adoptive Foster Care
- Specialized Treatment Foster Care

Family & Children Services Foster Care Program accepts direct referrals from agencies primarily in Kalamazoo, Calhoun, and Barry Counties, although referrals are accepted from throughout the state. This service is available to children 0-18 years of age and their parents of all races and ethnic backgrounds. This service is provided when children cannot be assured of adequate parental care in their own home or when parents make a voluntary plan for foster care as part of a pre-adoptive process or to assist in meeting specialized mental health needs.

Family & Children Services needs a minimum of ten homes for the following types of children:

1. Children ages 12-17
2. Sibling groups of two or more
3. African American children, ages newborn through 17 years
4. Children with behavior and emotional impairments due to trauma

5. Children who require specialized treatment foster parents to provide intensive services
6. Developmentally disabled children of all ages and disabilities
7. Medically fragile children

Services provided to foster families through Family & Children Services Foster Care Program include:

- On-going case management services
- Staff support, including a 24-hour emergency On-Call
- Foster parent support group
- Mileage reimbursement
- Handle With Care – A specialized fund to meet the children's critical needs that cannot be met by any other funding source
- Medical Needs Fund
- In-home outreach counseling
- Foster parent training
- Case-aide support
- After every 365-paid days of foster care provided, foster parents are entitled to an extra two days of payment to use for a free substitute care weekend