

What is WRAP?

Words of encouragement

Text, call & write letters of encouragement to families who are fostering children.

Respice care

Give foster families respite through acts of babysitting, taking children out for playdates, and more.

Acts of service

Providing meals, helping with housework, lawn care, and more.

Prayers

Spending time in intentional prayer for the family and everyone involved in the child's life.

COMMON CHALLENGES FAMILIES IN THE FOSTER CARE WORLD EXPERIENCE

1

FEELING ISOLATED AND MISUNDERSTOOD

Fostering and adoption simply aren't as culturally understood or sought after as forming a biological family. Because foster care is not well known to many, people who foster or adopt often feel disconnected, personified, or even negatively judged for their choice.

2

BEING "IN CRISIS"

As you'll learn, children and youth coming from foster care are all healing from a traumatic past, which changes their brain structure. While all parenting is challenging, parenting these children usually means dealing with intense behaviors and secondhand trauma that take a great deal of mental and emotional energy.

3

LACK OF SUPPORT FROM "THE SYSTEM"

Foster Care System professionals (social workers, lawyers, judges, counselors, etc) partner with foster parents to ensure the safety and well-being of the children in their care. However, these workers are chronically understaffed, underpaid, and overworked. Because of this, many foster parents feel unsupported by the workers with whom they must rely on for the various needs of the child(ren) in their care.

4

JUGGLING RESPONSIBILITIES UNIQUE TO FOSTER CARE

Unlike traditional parenting, foster parents have a great deal of documentation they have to keep up with about the child(ren) they are caring for. What's more, in addition to responsibilities like doctor's visits, there are also court appointments, therapy sessions, and often birth family visitations that have to be coordinated. This can all be incredibly overwhelming.

5

ASKING FOR HELP

Fostering/adoptive parenting, by default, takes someone who is passionate about helping others. This wonderful character trait, however, has the dark side of not wanting to ask for help, feel like a burden, etc, even when a person is in serious need of help.

3. UNDERSTANDING HOW YOU CAN MAKE AN IMPACT

Not everyone is called to foster or adopt, but everyone is called to care.

Fostering can be an incredibly rewarding journey **OR** an overwhelming, exhausting experience. What makes all the difference is **YOU**.

Be the difference in 3 Easy Steps

1 Get Wrapped!

Just like traditional families who just had a baby, foster families need loved ones to "wrap around" them and help out with all kinds of basic needs.

Need inspiration?

Check out the Wrap Around Support Model and see where you can jump in!



2

Get Checked: Background Checked

To help in any way that involves the actual children (babysitting, carpooling, etc) you must pass a basic background check.

3

Get started!

It's never too soon to start! Even if your fostering friend or relative is hesitant (again, they're used to *helping*, not being helped), be bold in your intention to support them. They are worth it!



Acts of Service

A short list of ideas to help you get started!

WHEN A CHILD MOVES IN

- Organize meals for the first two weeks
- Provide paper plates, cups and utensils (things are BUSY!)
- Donate socks, underwear, pull-ups, or diapers
- Deliver a basket of pre-packaged snacks
- Prepare a sensory box as a gift for the child/family
- Make a "Cuddle Kit": A new blanket, pillow, and nightlight
- Provide new pajamas, fun toothbrushes and toothpaste
- Organize friends to write cards to welcome child and send in the mail
- Create a welcome basket for the child (coloring book, crayons, a stuffed animal, etc.)
- Monogram a cup, water bottle, blanket, lunch box, etc. with child's name
- Hire a photographer to take a family picture
- Supply scrapbook & materials for child to begin to document new memories and adventures with foster family

WHEN A CHILD MOVES OUT

- Provide new duffel bags, suit cases or storage boxes to help parents pack all the stuff they have accumulated during their time in the family
- Offer to put together an album of pictures for the child to take
- Organize friends and family to write letters for the child to take and open daily as they transition

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SEASONAL IDEAS

- Purchase hat, gloves and scarf OR bathing suit, goggle and beach towel for child
- Help with school supplies when kids start back to school
- Help purchase gifts , stocking stuffers, or an ornament with child's name at Christmas
- Offer to host a birthday party for the child

GENERAL IDEAS

- Mow a family's lawn when they get a new placement or are having a hard week
- Prepare activity bags for kids to take to court with them
- Purchase a zoo (or other) membership for the family allowing foster parents to take kids out regularly to have fun together and build rapport
- Donate extra tickets to a local basketball game, football game or concert
- Sponsor a child's extracurricular activity (music lessons, dance, soccer)
- Take one child out at a time to the park or for ice cream to build a relationship with that child and give the parents a short break
- Provide child care for a few hours or pay for a babysitter so parents can have a date night OR offer to help with childcare for mandatory foster parent trainings so parents don't have to pay for a babysitter

Say **THIS** instead of

When is your next court date? Can I help with the kids that day?

Let me know when I can help with the kids!

I make a really great chicken soup. Can I bring you dinner on Tuesday or Friday?

You sure have your hands full! Wish I could help somehow.

I love to clean bathrooms. Can I come clean yours this week? What day?

I'd love to help. Call me if there is anything I can do.

We want to give you a date night. What time can we come over on Saturday to watch the kids?

Let us know if there is something we can do to help.

Give these phrases a try when offering to help a foster family!