



## Foster Parenting

### *Myths and Facts about Becoming a Foster Family*

**MYTH: Foster parents must be married and/or have children of their own.**

FACT: Foster parents do not need to be married or have children.

**MYTH: Older people cannot be foster parents.**

FACT: Foster parents must be at least 21 years old. There are no other age requirements.

**MYTH: People with police records are automatically ineligible to become foster parents.**

FACT: To ensure the safety of children in foster care, potential foster families are screened for past criminal activity. Convictions are reviewed by the Division of Child Protection Services on a case-by-case basis.

**MYTH: To become foster parents, a family must make a certain amount of money.**

FACT: Many foster families have part- or full-time jobs or do not work outside of the home. A family must be able to support itself financially outside of foster care payments.

**MYTH: People become foster parents just for the money.**

FACT: Foster parents are reimbursed monthly to help meet the essential needs of children placed in their care. Foster care payments are intended to cover the needs of the child placed in care.

**MYTH: Foster parents must own a large, expensive home in order to meet licensing standards.**

FACT: There are no licensing standards regarding the size of a potential foster parent's home. Licensing standards that do exist are in place to help ensure the home provides a safe environment for children in foster care.

**MYTH: Each child in foster care must have their own bedroom.**

FACT: Children in foster care can share bedrooms. However, children over the age of six can only share a room with a child of the same gender.

**MYTH: Foster parents must pay for medical expenses if they are caring for a child in foster care.**

FACT: Children who are placed in foster care by the South Dakota Department of Social Services receive medical coverage through the Department. Foster parents are not responsible for the medical expenses of children in foster care.

**MYTH: Birth parents can "drop in" and visit their children in foster care at any time.**

FACT: The child's Family Services Specialist approves all parental visitation plans and coordinates those plans, in advance, with the parents and foster family. Foster parents have the opportunity to mentor a child's family.

**MYTH: Foster parents who work outside of the home must pay for the child's child care expenses.**

FACT: If the child care is provided by a registered family daycare or a licensed child care center, child care costs can be reimbursed. The child care plan must meet reimbursement criteria as established by the Department of Social Services.



*Tiwahe Waj'agya Witayé*

# Strengthening Families

## *Benefits for becoming a foster parent*

In Lakota, Tiwahé Was'agya Witayé means Families Stronger Together and it is a time honored concept of the Tiospaye (extended family). There are no orphans in Lakota/Dakota/Nakota traditional society as children have family and others in the community to support them if a parent cannot. The concept of Wolakota means living in peace and harmony by being a good relative to those who come into our lives. These concepts cross all cultural lines as healthy families are the backbone of any society and by offering a helping hand to other families in our communities, we can build the Tiwahé Was'agya Witayé.

### Benefits for becoming a native foster parent

- You can work a full-time job.
- Become licensed to care for specific age of children.
- Help Native American children know their extended relatives, immediate family and community.
- Help Native American siblings stay together.
- Reduce the impact of historical trauma by restoring trust and hope.
- Kinship providers can become licensed to be a foster parent.
- The focus of recruiting Native American foster parents is to ensure Native American children maintain connections with their identify, tribal affiliation, native language, spiritual beliefs, culture of origin, extended family members and preserve bonds with immediate family and tribal community.

The focus of recruiting native American foster parents is to ensure native children maintain connections with their identify, tribal affiliation, native language, spiritual beliefs, culture of origin, extended family members and preserve bonds with immediate family and tribal community.

Many studies have been conducted about the importance of teaching or enhancing Indian identity as native children grow up. "Psychological research confirms that Indian children develop a more stable sense of identity and more positive life outcomes when parented by Indian adults. As a general matter, Indian caregivers are better able to transmit shared norms, values, and cultural knowledge to Indian children." (Haaland v. Brackeen Amicus Brief Nos. 21-376, 21-377, 21-378, 21-380)

