



FFM Volunteer Orientation

Care Team Model is used to support:

- Foster families
- Adoptive families
- Kinship families
- Vulnerable biological families

3 Topics

1. Why foster families and children in foster care need our support
2. Describe the volunteer roles available in a Care Community (Team) and role expectations
3. Essential guidelines for volunteering in foster care.
 - a. Confidentiality
 - b. Handling sensitive issues
 - c. Effects of childhood trauma

Why we need to support families caring for children in foster care

The Need:

In the US only _____ of foster families will continue fostering after their first year.

When supported by a care team more than _____ of foster families will continue to foster beyond that first year. Well supported families foster longer and stronger.

Our calling is to fulfill Psalms 68:6 and see “*God set the lonely in families*”.

We will do so through three goals:

1. Raise up more Christian foster homes.
Role of government is to keep children safe. A family helps children heal and grow.
2. Provide foster families with the support of a care team.
3. Keep children local.

There are more churches in America than children waiting in child welfare. If each church would recruit and support one foster family the crisis would be resolved.

Why do children come into foster care?

N _____: majority of children in child welfare

A _____: smaller number, often discovered after they enter care

A _____: often due to parents' incarceration

What is the best hoped-for outcome for a child placed into foster care?

Initial goal: Safely reunify with parents if possible or place with a family member.

Foster care is not a holding ground. It is meant to be a time of _____.

In some cases, reunification is not possible and parental rights are terminated making the child available for adoption.

What is it like to be a foster parent and how do care teams help them foster stronger and longer?

Foster care is u_____.

Foster care requires not only caring for the emotional health of all children in the household, but also managing all the additional appointments for counseling, doctors' appointments and visitation.

4 out of 5 children enter foster care with medical or mental health issues

Why does your volunteering matter?

M _____ make a difference.

M _____ and child care give much needed support to sustain the foster family.

P _____ are the key to supporting the foster family and keeping them from feeling isolated.

Relieves overworked caseworkers to provide key support to the foster family.

Serving in a Care Team (Community)

Church Champion (advocate) creating awareness in your church.

Volunteers: **prayer** is the foundation of your service.

Prayers for perseverance, guidance, empathy and justice

Care Team: 4-8 volunteers work as an extended family to support a foster family for one year.

- Help with transportation for families who have multiple weekly appointments.
- Provide back-to-school supplies and tutoring during the school year
- Bought clothing during seasonal changes

- Plan birthday parties for children in care
- Organized a monthly date night
- Prayed for case managers, judges and biological families involved in complex court decisions.

PAUSE: Review Church Champion, Care Team, Roles for FFM

Refer to FFM Care Team Model and refer to review slight difference in the names and roles. Then play video.



Team Leader: liaison between care team and family being served. 1 hour a week



Short call/contact to check in

Send group email to team to relay prayer requests and needs

Oversee meal rotation to meet the family's needs.

Family Helpers: provide practical day-to-day help for foster families.



Never unsupervised with foster children.

4 family helpers to each bring a meal once a month.

Run errands, gather clothing, help with yard work or housework

Help with foster family's biological children.

Child mentor: pour into a child like an aunt, uncle or grandparent.



Tutor, transport and provide occasional child care, spending quality time with children.

One routinely scheduled childcare a month as well as one additional unexpected need.

Requires additional agency specific background checks and fingerprinting.

Alternate Caregiver: overnight help in your home or foster home



Provides scheduled, routine childcare

Requires additional agency specific background checks, fingerprinting and orientation.

Roles of Child mentor and Alternate Caregiver vary if Reasonable and Prudent Parenting guidelines are in place. Foster family, church champion and FFM will have the appropriate guidance for your team which will reflect the practice of the agency/county involved.

All volunteers are asked for a one-year commitment.

What should you expect?

Placed in a Care Team.

Attend a get together to launch a new team.

Meet and greet with foster family to get acquainted.

While the foster family is waiting:

Pray with the family about the children who will be placed in their home.

Joining an existing team?

You will be added to the rotation and the email communication of the team.

END OF PART 1 Have a brief Q & A then move to PART 2 (14 min.)

Serving children that come from hard places.

Confidentiality:

Keep their story confidential

Do not post on social media

“That’s their story to tell”

Dealing with sensitivities:

If a past trauma or abuse is disclosed, do not probe. You may say: “I’m so sad that happened to you.” Then offer to pray with the child. Always inform the foster parents in writing.

If you suspect current maltreatment or abuse: “Oh my goodness, how did you get that bruise.” Inform foster parents.

Some children may exaggerate and make accusations about their caregivers.

Foster parents need to know about every scratch and minor accident.

In the event of an emergency: agency specific.

Always call the foster parent

Possible Emergencies

- Loss of consciousness
- Deep lacerations
- A broken bone
- An animal bite
- Poison ingestion
- An allergic reaction
- A fever of 102 or higher for children over 3 months of age
- A fever of 100 for children birth to 3 months of age

Call 911. If you would call for your own child, then call for the foster child. Then follow up with calls to foster family and agency.

If a child runs away: Stay Calm

911 Timeline:

- Call within 5 minutes if the child is 6 years old or younger, or, at risk of harm to self or others.
- Call within 30 minutes if the child is between the ages of 7 and 13, has significant impairment, or is at risk during severe weather.
- Call within an hour in all other cases.

Vulnerable children live in fear most of the time. *"The police are always in their rearview mirror."* They are safe in the foster home but don't feel safe. Felt safely is a process that takes much patience and time to develop.

Social and emotional development may be half of their biological age.

Give the child what they need so they can mature.

How can you successfully interact with a child from hard places?

Seek to build connection and trust.

Eye contact, read together, play games

Create an environment of predictability for them: showing up when you say you will and doing what you say you will. Be reliable.

Warnings or countdowns to transitions:

le:

Relax, expect the unexpected, stay calm, have a sense of humor!

Manners are learned.

Traumatized children have triggers. Be perceptive, patient and reassuring.

Isolation does not work with vulnerable children. Keep the close. Use a time in rather than time out.

Ask for a redo:

le:

Refrain from corporal punishment, or any discipline that will demean or humiliate a child.

Look for ways to connect.

Earn trust with older children by asking forward facing questions:

What do you want to be when you grow up?

What is your favorite hobby?

Do you like to play or watch sports?

What kind of music do you listen to?

Follow the Foster Family's Lead

Routines and habits reinforce consistency and increases child's feeling of felt safety.

Avoid "Disney Land" experiences.

Do not undermine foster family.

Remember, you are answering the call of James 1:27 to care for vulnerable children.

Take time for Q & A, give examples and have forms filled out. If not already assigned follow up with team info.

Q & A Forms

Volunteer Form, Confidentiality Form, State Law, optional: refer for Background Check & FBI fingerprinting if necessary.

When supporting a family from a private agency you may have additional guidelines to review. Your church champion will keep you informed of any additional steps.