

Kinship Foster Parent Approval Process

Date: _____

Dear

We appreciate your interest in becoming a kinship foster parent. Kinship foster parents are needed when children are in foster care. The local department of social services has legal custody of the child or youth and decides where a child in foster care lives. In Virginia, children in foster care must be in approved placements. In order to be considered, you must complete the process of becoming an approved kinship foster parent. When children remain connected with loving and supportive relatives and fictive kin, the trauma of separation from family is significantly reduced. The role of a kinship foster parent involves supporting family reunification and preserving family relationships. Being a kinship foster parent is a big undertaking and it is important for you to know what is involved in the process of becoming approved as a kinship foster parent.

In order to be an approved kinship foster parent, you must be willing to allow a representative of the local department of social services to meet with you in your home to begin the process, which includes:

1. Completing the Permanency Assessment Tool conducted by the local department of social services. The tool will provide an opportunity for discussion about the process of becoming an approved kinship foster parent and will assist the local department in determining how best to proceed.
2. Agreeing to all adult household members submitting to all background checks, to include criminal history and central registry of abuse and neglect. Also, Department of Motor Vehicle record checks if driving the child/youth. However, a driver's license is not required to be approved as a kinship foster parent.
3. Completing kinship foster parent training, which is focused on the needs of the child, the role of a kinship foster parent in the life of the child, and supporting reunification of the child and parent.
4. Engaging in a mutual family assessment conducted by the local department. You will be asked to provide certain documentation such as income verification, marriage certificates, divorce decrees, personal references. The assessment is to ensure that you can demonstrate the ability to:
 - a. protect and nurture children,
 - b. meet the developmental needs and address developmental delays,
 - c. support children's relationships with their families,
 - d. connect children to safe, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime
 - e. work as a member of a professional team
5. Obtain a physical examination for kinship foster parents and tuberculosis screenings for all household members.

When children enter foster care, it is critical that they remain connected to their families and communities in order to preserve the relationships that allow them to heal from the trauma that they have experienced. If you wish to proceed in seeking approval as a kinship foster parent, contact:

Respectfully,