

#24FORFOSTERCARE

**THE AVERAGE TIME A CHILD SPENDS
IN FOSTER CARE IS 24 MONTHS...
WE CAN DO SOMETHING.
HELPING WITH THIS IS AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3**



How To Talk To Your Children About Foster Care

It may be hard for kids to understand what exactly foster care means. Foster care is not a place where all kids in foster care go. Many children in out-of-home care go to relatives or non-relative caregivers, who are a lot like friends of the family. Others go to group homes and non-family settings. A good simple explanation is: children in foster care live with a family, in a home, just like other children. The only difference is that a child in foster care is not living with his or her parents because it is not safe.

How many children are in foster care?

The numbers are staggering. Currently, there are over 22,500 children in out-of-home care in our country with more than 4,000 just in Hillsborough County. It's important to process with your children as a call to prayer and action as opposed to an insurmountable problem best left to other authorities. Older children can look at online data updated monthly that graphs the number of children removed from their homes along with gender, race, reason for removal, etc.

<https://www.myflfamilies.com/programs/childwelfare/dashboard/c-entering-ooH.shtml>.

Why are children in foster care?

The main factor is a child's safety. The most common reasons are neglect and abuse, but these cases often involve other underlying factors such as drug or alcohol abuse or parental mental health problems. All children can understand that when a parent is struggling to take care of their child, the goal is that the child can be safe and well taken care of while the parent gets the help they need to make the whole household better. The hope of foster care is that kids can return to their home, but that doesn't always happen.

What should I do if I know a child in foster care?

Be a good friend. Be very kind. Families look different, and children don't choose their families. Invite them into your home when appropriate to share in fun and play. If you think they need something or that they're struggling, talk to a trusted adult. Just understanding that some kids may have experienced difficult things in their lives and choosing not to judge them by those situations can be so helpful to a child in foster care.

What do foster families do?

Foster families go through a long process of paperwork and classes to be licensed to care for children. They do get to make decisions about how many children will live with them and the age range. They do not know how long the children will be with them. The average child is in care for 24 months. Two years is a long time! About half of the children go home to their parents. It is very difficult to say goodbye to a child that has lived with them. They do get too attached because that is the best and most loving thing they can do. Healthy homes are able to cope with their heartaches because that sadness is not as hard for them as knowing lots of children do not have safe homes.

How can we help foster children and foster families?

There are so many ways to support vulnerable children and those caring for them. Include them in your prayers. Local foster closets need high quality donations and items purchased to keep them stocked. Foster families are deeply encouraged by meals, childcare, visits, calls and help around the house. Learn more about wrap around care support provided by ministries such as Florida 1.27, Feeding the Fosters and Man Up and Go. Continue being informed and aware and let your child know they can ask more questions. NOMORE can help you be part of this solvable social crisis. Everyone can do something.