



Blue Earth County Human Services  
 410 S. Fifth St.  
 Mankato, MN 56001  
 (507) 389-8319

BLUE EARTH COUNTY

Design Services  
 provided by:



www.sarincreative.com  
 507.947.3795

Printing Services  
 provided by:



It takes a village...  
 Building Family  
 and  
 Community  
 Through Foster  
 Care

## Who needs foster care?

Children may need foster care because:

- They have been emotionally, physically, or sexually abused;
- Their parents are physically or mentally incapacitated;
- They are abandoned;
- Members of their family abuse drugs, alcohol, or other chemicals;
- They have behavioral or emotional problems; or
- Of the separation, divorce, or death of their parent(s).

All children in foster care require specific considerations from foster parents, such as:

- Emotional considerations - Separation from their home, family, and friends is traumatic. Foster parents help ease the pain that separation can cause.
- Behavioral considerations - Separation reactions vary. Some children withdraw, while others act-out at home, school, and in the community. Foster parents help children express their feelings.
- Special needs considerations - Some children and youth bring some special needs with them into foster care placements – such as medical, emotional/behavioral, or educational needs; they may be a sibling group needing placement together or a teen dealing with pregnancy. Foster parents may need special training or support services.



“It is important that children who for various reasons cannot live at home, have the support of foster families in a time of crisis.”

Judge D. Mason,  
Fifth District Court

“We need good foster families to provide unique parenting and support for kids who have special needs or circumstances. It takes a healthy community to raise healthy children.”

Dr. Lon Knudson,  
Mankato Clinic

## The Coreys: A Testament to the Rewards of Foster Care



Lee and Mary Lee Corey have been foster parents for 22 years. When they started, their own biological children were ages 8, 6, 3, and 8 months. The Coreys were in the process of a foreign adoption when Mary Lee became pregnant with their fourth child. The agency they were working with stopped their adoption and said the Coreys chances to adopt in the future were slim since they already had four children. Because the Coreys were unable to complete their goal of "giving a deserving child a home and family," they pursued foster care.

Lee and Mary Lee live on a farm in rural Vernon Center and custom raise hogs. Mary Lee is also a school paraprofessional and Lee works as a carpenter. The Coreys biological children are now adults living away from home.

"A lot of the children we care for are in foster care because of their parents' inability to be good parents -- not because the children are the problem. Some of the children eventually go to adoptive homes and it is fun to be a part of that process," says Mary Lee. After providing a foster home for Josh when he was only 22 months old, the Coreys had the opportunity to adopt him when he was 4 years old.

The Coreys say they keep in touch with several of the children they cared for. "Our oldest foster daughter is married and has four children. Her oldest child is the same age as Josh, so they have fun when we get together," said Mary Lee, "Siblings that were 5 and 6 years old when they left our home are now 18 and 19. They have visited us every summer, and we have become very close friends with their adoptive parents."

The Coreys say their children have learned a lot from some of the children who were difficult to care for. The Corey's oldest son is the director of a land trust that helps low-income families purchase homes and also teaches a class at a domestic abuse center. The Corey's other son spent two summers while in college working with juvenile sex offenders. One daughter works for the Red Cross and has a personal mission to teach HIV prevention, and the other is planning a summer internship at a battered women's shelter. "And Josh now enjoys playing with the foster children that come to stay at our home now!" says Mary Lee.

"For our family, being a foster family has greatly influenced our lives. Along with the sacrifices came the joy of seeing families reunited or children finding their 'forever family' through adoption," says Mary Lee, "And a phone call from a boy who was 13 when he left our home, and finding out that at age 17 he wears a size 12 shoe, is 6 feet tall, and is very happy and doing great ...well, it tends to just make our day!"

"For our family, being a foster family has greatly influenced our lives. Along with the sacrifices came the joy of seeing families reunited or children finding their 'forever family' through adoption."

Mary Lee Corey,  
Foster Parent of 22 Years

# Foster Parents are People Who...

- Are genuinely concerned about the well-being of children and families in their community.
- Recognize not all families have the physical, intellectual, or emotional resources to provide children with what they need to grow into healthy, happy, productive adults.
- Are aware of the crisis, stresses, and social problems that result in the abuse and neglect of children.
- Appreciate that teens also suffer when their needs aren't met. They know these teens are especially vulnerable to the stresses of adolescence and need strong support to avoid poor choices.
- Realize that sometimes family conflicts become so severe that children must leave home until problems can be solved.

Foster parents provide the daily basics of food, clothing, shelter and the love, stability, guidance, and discipline that all children need. Foster Parents are not paid for their service, but do receive a monthly reimbursement that covers room, board, clothing and other essential expenses plus medical and dental coverage.

## Who can be a Foster Parent?

Foster parents represent different ages, races, and income levels. Most foster parents are married, but there are single foster parents, too. Many foster parents have biological or adopted children living at home. Some have never had children of their own, and still others have raised their own children to adulthood.

The basic requirements for becoming a foster parent generally include that you:

- Are 21 years of age or older;
- Are in good physical and emotional health;
- Meet your state and local requirements for housing safety, space, and equipment;
- Have the skills, attitude, and stamina to effectively deal with the many behaviors and feelings displayed by children and youth;
- Have a non-punitive attitude and can demonstrate some level of acceptance toward the parents of the children in care;
- Can work cooperatively with Blue Earth County Human Services staff; and
- Are accepting of the temporary nature of foster care and can help a child transition back to his/her family or move on to a permanent or adoptive placement.

## Types of Foster Care

There are a number of types of foster care to choose from. Some families choose to provide one kind of care while others offer a variety of care.

- **Ongoing care** - Care to children who need to be out of their family home for one month to a year or more.
- **Emergency shelter care** - Care to children who are experiencing a child protection crisis or family crisis requiring a separation from their family.
- **Respite care** - Care provided for families who need brief and often regular time away from stresses they are experiencing in the family.
- **Relief care** - Care provided to children already in ongoing foster care for the purpose of supporting the work of the ongoing foster parent by allowing time to nurture their own biological family needs.
- **Permanent care** - A rare form of care provided to children who cannot return to their biological family and are not appropriate for termination of parental rights and adoption.

For more information on how to become a licensed foster parent, visit Blue Earth County's web site at [www.co.blue-earth.mn.us](http://www.co.blue-earth.mn.us) or contact Blue Earth County Human Services at ~~389-8319~~.

...to raise a child.