

FOSTER CARE PROGRAM

Services & Statement of Needs

The mission of Family & Children Services, Inc. is to support, strengthen and preserve the safety, wellbeing and dignity of children, individuals and families through a continuum of human services. This mission is accomplished through provision of a comprehensive program of critical human services for families, individuals and families.

The primary goal of foster care is to provide a stable living arrangement for children, regardless of age, ethnic background and behavioral needs. Ideally, the child's family is strengthened and the child returns home. When this goal is not attainable, the goal is to create another permanent plan for the child through adoption, Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care (YAVFC), guardianship or independent living.

In order to facilitate the best placement for a child or youth, Family & Children Services considers many factors regarding the need and characteristics of the child and the individual foster family prior to placement. Factors such as cultural background, ages and gender of the foster child and children already in a foster home and specific behavioral and emotional challenges are considered as well as any other factors known at the time a placement is being considered.

The types of foster care provided by Family & Children Services:

- Family Foster Care
- Relative Foster Care
- YAVFC
- Independent Living

Family & Children Services Foster Care Program accepts direct referrals from agencies in southwest Michigan such as Kalamazoo, Calhoun, Cass, Barry, St. Joseph, Van Buren, Allegan and Branch Counties.

Family & Children Services greatest need is for Foster Family homes for the following types of children:

1. Children ages 0-17
2. Sibling groups of two or more
3. Children with severe behavior and emotional needs
4. Medically fragile children
5. Teenagers

Services provided to foster children and foster families through Family & Children Services Foster Care Program include:

- On-going case management services
- Staff support, including 24-hour emergency On-Call
- Mileage reimbursement for out of county travel
- Foster parent training
- Retention activities/events
- Handle With Care-A specialized fund to meet the children's critical needs that cannot be met by any other funding source
- Medical Needs Fund