**Getting Started with Fostering & Adoption**

We have been continually inspired by people that are willing to really open their hearts and their homes to a child in need. Their over-arching desire is to parent and provide care and love and security for kids.

0:24

The first step is for applicants to give us a call and that's just to get some basic information about fostering and adoption. Having personal contact with our applicants is really important because we get to know them better and we can have that connection with them right from the beginning. When we receive inquiries from people we make it a priority to respond to them as soon as possible. We don't put pressure on people to make decisions because we realize that there is a lot that they need to consider before they move forward, and we assist with guiding them through the process.

1:00

We're open to a wide variety of families in terms of parents - single parents, same sex couples, unmarried people - we're looking for families of diversity.

The first thing that happened was that I had a very cheerful lady on the phone, and she sent me an information package. The worker that we were paired with was supportive and helpful and was able to listen to us and understand us.

1:28

Many times when people call in, they will tell me that they have thought about fostering or they've thought about adoption for a very long time and what I would encourage people to do - if you're thinking about it, just pick up the phone and call. There's no need to wait. Just call and get your questions answered and maybe we can get you on the road to fostering or adoption.

1:48

PRIDE training is the training that all applicants need to complete before they move on in the next step of the process. It really is our responsibility to make sure that families who are coming forward who want to foster or adopt are well-prepared. So it's a time to gather all the information that you can about working with a children's aid society, about how kids come into care and to connect with other applicants in the room who are going through the same process, which is just as valuable as the information that you're getting.

They have maybe two or three different workers from the agency that are teaching and also an experienced foster parent. Having that father there to teach us was invaluable. They were able to answer our questions, they were able to provide us with reassurance and that was really positive. Family & Children's Services were very supportive, very helpful, and opened our eyes and prepared us, you know, we can do this.

2:48

The home study process is a series of interviews where we are coming to your home and we're sitting down talking to you both individually and, if you're in a couple situation, together as a couple. We're trying to get to know you as much as we can, about your own interests, hobbies, what you like to do, how a child would best fit into your home and into your lifestyle.

It really is necessary to do a homestudy because in a short period of time I would need to get to know a family well enough to place a child in their home and trust that that is a safe place for the child to remain. It determines people's readiness, willingness and ability to do this.

3:29

Once you have gone through your training and homestudy process, you are now an approved adoptive applicant with the agency and from there you're assigned an adoption worker or a foster parent resource worker. The workers are there to support you in terms of any questions that you have around adoption or foster care. We're all part of a team and we're there to support the foster parents. There's a lot of questions I'm sure that they have and I wouldn't want them to feel that they were alone in that.

The people were great, and after the fact it's been nothing but support. Whenever we've needed it no matter what kind of support it was, it was always there.

4:12

I would reassure someone and say it's an amazing process and clearly at the end there's a great result. Something magically happens and you feel like they’re a part of you even though you didn't give birth to them. They're not biologically yours, you get attached to them. You can't fake love.

Stability and love is the crucial foundation for all other things in a child's life. You're there for them and very quickly you start to see them flourish and that has to be the most rewarding part of fostering.

The support that they need most is somebody to be there. When we look at how children thrive and blossom and overcome difficult beginnings, it's a parent.