



# GETTING STARTED

Your Foster Care Journey



# What is foster care?

- Temporary placement for children who cannot stay at home due to abuse or neglect
- Foster parent provide a safe & nurturing temporary home
- Biological parents get support services to help their child come home safely







# Who are the children in foster care?

Ages birth -  
21 years

Victims of  
Abuse or Neglect

Trauma Survivors



# Common Foster Parent Myths

## Myth

"I have to own my home to become a foster parent."



## Fact

You do not have to own your home. In fact, many foster parents rent their residence.





# Common Foster Parent Myths

## Myth

"I have to be married to be a foster parent."



## Fact

You do not have to be married to, or in a relationship, to be a foster parent.





# Common Foster Parent Myths

## Myth

"I have to already have children to become a foster parent."



## Fact

You do not have to have children to be a foster parent.





# What is required to become a foster parent?

- ✓ Be at least 21 years of age
- ✓ Complete a criminal background check
- ✓ Be in good health both mentally and physically
- ✓ Have a stable income
- ✓ Be willing to complete a free training and assessment process
- ✓ Be part of a professional team willing to voice perspectives and concerns
- ✓ Be willing to partner with the child's family





# How do I get started?

If you meet the qualifications for becoming a foster parent, contact the Children's Division to set up a meeting with a team member who will go over:

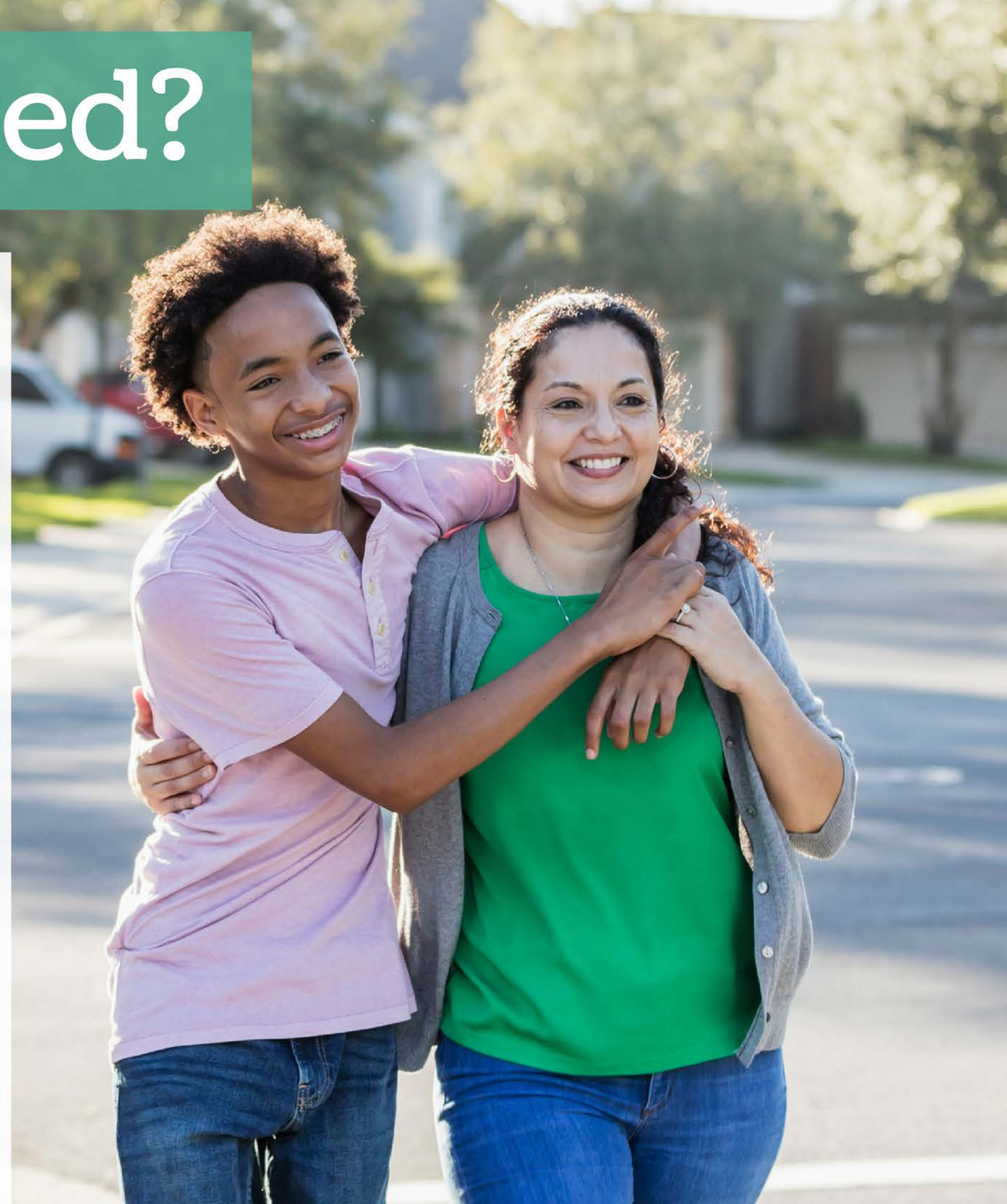
- Rewards and challenges of being a foster parent
- Services available to foster parents and children



**800-554-2222**



**[Moheartgallery@raisethefuture.org](mailto:Moheartgallery@raisethefuture.org)**





# What is the STARS Program?

**S**pecialized  
**T**raining  
**A**ssessment  
**R**esources  
**S**upport & Skills



STARS is a required program that introduces prospective foster and adoptive families to the rewards and challenges involved in caring for Missouri's most vulnerable children.

These training sessions also offer an opportunity for prospective families to:

- Ask questions
- Build relationships with other parents and agency staff
- Determine if foster or adoptive parenting is the right choice



# Do I have to take in every child?

The assessment and licensing process is ongoing, and enables agencies to place children based on:

- Your specific parenting skills
- The capacity of your home
- The information you provide
- The child's unique needs

Even if your home is selected for a foster child, you always have the option to decline the placement.





# What type of support is available?

You will be assigned a Children's Division team member who will support and guide you in:

- Finding and completing the required training
- Learning more about support and respite care





# What type of support is available?

Foster parents also receive:

- A monthly maintenance payment to help cover the costs of care
- Healthcare coverage through Missouri Medicaid for the child's medical, psychological, and dental needs
- Help paying for child care services if they work or go to school full time





# Questions?

 [fostercare@dss.mo.gov](mailto:fostercare@dss.mo.gov)

 [dss.mo.gov/cd/foster-care](http://dss.mo.gov/cd/foster-care)





# Are there other ways I can help?



## Provide **Respite Care**

Respite Care provides temporary care for children in foster care.



## **Donate**

Donate

- money
- gift cards

For a more comprehensive list of donation items, visit:  
[tinyurl.com/DSS-MO-FosterSupport](https://tinyurl.com/DSS-MO-FosterSupport)



Host a  
backpack or  
luggage drive



## Become a **Volunteer**

Donate your professional services to youth in foster care



## Tutor or Mentor

Tutor or mentor youth in foster care