

Foster and Adoptive Family Profile

What is it?

This profile is a tool that allows your church or organization to get to know your foster and adoptive families so as to better support them throughout their journey. This comprehensive inventory includes questions ranging from 'What is your family's favorite restaurant?' to 'What kinds of tangible needs or household tasks would be most helpful to you?' to 'How can we be praying for you and your family?'. With this information, your ministry can identify a variety of unique ways to serve and encourage these families.

Why is it important?

Community and connection are essential to the success of a family's foster care or adoption journey. Studies show that the national average of families who continue fostering after their first year is about 50%, but when supported by a wraparound or support team, 90% continue fostering into a second year.¹ Serving and supporting these families from the beginning of their process enables them to get an early taste of what it feels like to be cared for by those around them while also allowing for the depth of relationships between families and volunteers to grow over time.

The difficulty of the front-end process of foster care and adoption is often overlooked, but in reality, the burden of home studies, paperwork, interviews, training, etc., can sometimes be overwhelming enough to cause people to quit. Families need support and encouragement just as much during this time as when they are bringing a child into their home, and this tool enables people to step in and encourage them from the moment that they begin the process.

This could be as simple as a volunteer sending a family going through the foster training process a gift card to their favorite restaurant as a way of saying, "We see what you're doing and we want you to know that we love you and are inspired by you. Enjoy a good meal on us!" Or maybe it looks like blessing a family as they wait for an adoptive placement with a fun Saturday adventure at their favorite place in town as a way of saying, "We're here for you and love you!"

This approach to serving foster and adoptive families also emphasizes the 'Everyone Can Do Something' model within your church or organization by providing a variety of specific opportunities for volunteers to engage in serving and wrapping around these families as soon as those volunteers express interest.

Additionally, it helps to solve a uniquely complex problem. Often, churches or ministries will have people ready and willing to serve and support families, but those families still have months of training and process to go through before a child is placed in their home. What do the volunteers do in the meantime? How can we capture their eagerness so that it doesn't wane off as they wait? This resource allows them to jump in immediately in supporting families -- and not simply wait until those families have children in their home.

How can your church or organization use this tool effectively?

Consider distributing this document to families to be filled out and returned at their first point of interest in starting the foster care or adoption process. This could be an orientation class, a training event, or your equivalent of a "we're in and ready to start" point. The intent is to gather the information from the profile as early on in their journey as possible in order to provide the most thorough level of support and care for them as they take their next steps.

Ultimately, this resource is intended to be used in whatever way best serves your specific community of families, so we encourage you to adapt and edit it to fit the context and needs of your ministry. Make the document more personal to your ministry by inserting your organization/church name or logo in the given space of the top right corner, and you can visit the [Family Profile Resource webpage](#) to access the original text files and other supplemental resources that your ministry can use to further customize the profile.

Adapted from:

CAFO | CHURCH ministry

A special thank you to Fostering Family, a CAFO member organization in Houston committed to strengthening foster/kinship families and the communities that surround them through training and collaboration. This resource was largely inspired by their work. Learn more at www.fostering-family.org.