



Tips for Selecting an Agency

When you foster a child you won't just change their life. They'll change yours forever.

Choosing an agency is an important decision. It's more than just training schedules and agency location. Please take the time to research and select the agency that's right for you. Follow your intuition. Remember, you are hiring them to supervise and support you! Choose the agency with whom you feel most comfortable. Here are a few questions you might want to ask:

- What sets your agency apart from other agencies? Some agencies specialize in certain populations, such as: kinship families, faith-based communities, LGBTQ communities, or assisting with behavioral health issues. Others may provide additional training opportunities or additional respite hours.
- Does your agency's requirements exceed the minimum state licensing requirements in any areas? Some agencies have additional requirements prior to licensure. These may include training over and above the basic pre-service training, requiring a stay-at-home parent for young children, requiring immunizations beyond state guidelines, or restricting certain dog breeds.
- Does your agency offer special events, camps, or activities for children and families? How frequently?
- Does your agency offer support groups for children *and* parents? If so, are the children's groups open to all children (foster and biological) in the home?
- Are behavioral health services available for foster and adoptive families *in addition* to services for children?
- Are advanced training opportunities available?
- How many respite hours does your agency provide? How does a family request respite?
- Is support available from the agency after an adoption is finalized?
- All agencies are required to be available to support and respond to the emergency needs of their families 24/7. What does that look like in your agency?
- How easy is it to reach a licensing specialist or administrator when contacting your agency?
- How quickly are calls returned?
- What is the average licensing worker caseload?
- Could I talk with some of your current families to get their perspectives on your agency?