

## *Foster Care as a Support to Families, Not a Substitute for Parents*

### **NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH FAQ**

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/about/faq/>

#### **What is National Foster Care Month?**

May is National Foster Care Month—a time to acknowledge the foster parents, family members, volunteers, mentors, policymakers, child welfare professionals, and other members of the community who help children and youth in foster care find permanent homes and connections. It is also a time to focus on ways to create a bright future for the more than 440,000 children and youth in foster care.

#### **How does the Children’s Bureau support National Foster Care Month?**

The Children’s Bureau—together with its information service, Child Welfare Information Gateway, and a host of other Federal, State, and local partners—supports National Foster Care Month through a website. The Children’s Bureau message on the website highlights the agency’s commitment to strengthening the capacity of families to nurture and provide for the well-being of their children, prioritize foster care as a service to families, and promote reunification.

#### **What resources are available on the National Foster Care Month website?**

This year, the theme for National Foster Care Month is “Foster care as a support to families, not a substitute for parents.” Resources on the National Foster Care Month website emphasize how the child welfare system—through community engagement, collaborative relationships, and targeted support services—can strengthen families, improve well-being, and increase the likelihood of successful reunification. Access the resources at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/resources/>.

#### **What are real-life stories?**

Each year, the National Foster Care Month website features real-life stories from families, youth, and caseworkers in which they share their experiences with foster care. These inspiring stories are a powerful way to connect people’s experiences with foster care to important practice issues and can be used as a tool for training new child welfare professionals, recruiting and training foster parents, and enhancing State and local media and awareness campaigns for National Foster Care Month. View the stories at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/reallifestories/>.

#### **How can I spread the word about National Foster Care Month in my community?**

There are a number of tools you can use to help promote National Foster Care Month in your community:

- Email signature blocks
- Sample email messages
- Sample social media posts
- Graphics

Check out ways to promote awareness at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/spread/>.

View sample National Foster Care Month proclamations issued by various levels of government at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/engagement/>. Visit our events tab on the Child Welfare Information Gateway Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/childwelfare/> to submit and learn about National Foster Care Month events going on near your hometown.

## How can I learn about what other States are doing for National Foster Care Month?

The National Foster Care Month Community Engagement page highlights what States and local communities are doing across the country to recognize National Foster Care Month and encourages community members to get involved. The page includes National Foster Care Month proclamations, State-specific contact information for child welfare leaders across the country, and examples of community-based programs promoting positive outcomes for families. Also, check out our events <https://www.facebook.com/childwelfare/> page on Facebook to learn about National Foster Care Month events going on near your hometown! Learn more at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/engagement/>.

## What is the history of the Children's Bureau and National Foster Care Month?

Throughout its history, the Children's Bureau has worked to assist parents, children, and youth involved with foster care; engage youth in decisions that affect their lives; and support foster families, kinship caregivers, child welfare professionals, and others who help these children. Learn more about how this work led to the establishment of National Foster Care Month at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/about/history/>.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
Children's Bureau

