

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

National Foster Care Month Frequently Asked Questions

What is National Foster Care Month?

National Foster Care Month is an initiative of the Children's Bureau within the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is celebrated each May and is a time to acknowledge 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 also allows us to renew our commitment to ensuring a bright future for the more than 423,000 children and youth in foster care¹ and celebrate those who make a meaningful difference in their lives.

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 dedicated website that includes resources, stories from families, youth, and caseworkers, and outreach tools to help you spread awareness at the State and local levels. 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 is the history of the Children's Bureau and foster care?

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 the history of National Foster Care Month and how the Children's Bureau and its partners support the initiative today by visiting the Children's Bureau History with Foster Care section of the [National Foster Care Month website](#).

What resources will be available on the National Foster Care Month website?

Resources on the National Foster Care Month website emphasize this year's theme of promoting the foster care system as one that is actively focused on strengthening families. They seek to highlight how child welfare and legal professionals can work collaboratively to engage youth and their families in court hearings and permanency planning, as well as the benefits of helping young people establish and maintain meaningful connections during this process. These resources also showcase how the foster care system can expedite permanency and promote the achievement of long-term stability for all involved. To learn more, visit the [Resources section](#) of the website.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. (2020). *The AFCARS report: Preliminary FY2019 estimates as of June 23, 2020* - No. 27. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/afcars-report-27>

What are the narrative and audio stories?

Each year, the National Foster Care Month website features stories from families, youth, and caseworkers in which they share their experiences with foster care. These inspiring first person accounts are a powerful way to connect people's experiences with foster care to important practice issues. They also 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. Visit the [website](#) to hear from youth, families and child welfare professionals – in their own words.

How can I spread the word about National Foster Care Month?

There are several tools in the [Spread the Word section](#) of the National Foster Care Month website you can use to help promote National Foster Care Month in your community, including the following:

- Sample social media posts
- Sample email messages and signatures
- Shareable graphics
- Sample proclamations

Visit the [Children's Bureau](#) and [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#) Facebook pages to view easily sharable posts and learn about new initiatives, resources, and events going on across the country. [Sign up](#) to receive updates on how else to get involved throughout the campaign!



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