



## **Therapeutic Foster Care Program Treatment Foster Parent Q & A**

1. As a treatment foster parent, will I need to become a licensed foster parent?

Yes, all non-relative foster parents in Illinois are required to be licensed by the State of Illinois.

2. How will I get my foster care license, and what are the requirements to become licensed?

As a supervising foster care agency, Hoyleton has the authority to prepare foster parents for licensure, and to recommend that a license be issued to the foster parents by the Illinois Dept. of Children and Family Services. Hoyleton employs licensing representatives who will help you through the licensing process. Generally, the licensing process for prospective foster parents involves:

- a. State and federal criminal background clearances.
- b. IL DCFS Child Abuse and Neglect Registry clearance.
- c. Physical health examinations.
- d. Meeting training requirements (before and after licensure).

The foster home itself also has to meet basic health and safety standards. Hoyleton's licensing representative will be responsible for performing health and safety checks in order for the foster home to be licensed initially, and on an annual basis thereafter.

3. Will I receive a "board payment" like traditional foster parents?

Yes, Hoyleton receives a reimbursement payment from the State of Illinois (IL DCFS) to cover the costs of this program. Hoyleton will forward the foster care board payment portion of the payment from the State directly to you as the foster parents.

4. How is the board payment supposed to be used?

The board portion of the State reimbursement payment is intended to cover the living expenses of the foster parents and foster children. The State reimbursement payment includes 2 components, 1 of which is paid directly to the foster parents (board payment), and 1 of which is retained by Hoyleton (administrative payment):

- a. Foster family supports and benefits.
- b. Rent, utilities, home maintenance, program personnel and other administrative costs (retained by Hoyleton).

(See accompanying document for payment amounts.)

5. Will the board payment cover all the costs of caring for foster youth?



Yes. In addition, the board payment will include allowance money to which youth are entitled by IL DCFS Rules. This allowance money is to pay for youth's clothing and spending money. You will be asked to help youth set up and manage debit and/or savings accounts for their allowance money to help them learn money management skills.

6. How often will I receive my board payment?

Hoyleton will disburse board payments every other week, preferably through direct deposit into the foster parent's bank account.

7. What additional supports will I receive as a treatment foster parent?

Treatment foster parents will be part of a treatment team composed of four additional people: a program supervisor/case manager, youth support specialist/recruiter, foster parent aide and a therapist. Treatment team members will be expected to work closely together on behalf of the youth in our care, and to be mutually supportive. Team members will be expected to be especially attentive to the need of foster parents for some time away and receive respite time.

8. Will I receive time off from being a foster parent?

Hoyleton has included money for respite pay (approx. \$100 per day for 28 days per year) in the foster care board payment to help cover the costs of lodging outside of the foster home. We'll expect our foster parents to plan formal time away with their team and to make sure that if foster parents need a few hours' break less formally, team members can help fill in. We've built in a part time, foster parent aide position into the program budget, and this person will be largely responsible for providing substitute foster care when the foster parents need or have planned respite time. We'll want our foster parents to help us identify a foster parent aide who they will feel comfortable with leaving the children in their care.

9. Should I maintain a separate residence?

This is completely up to the foster parents but if this is something you are able to do, we encourage it. Foster parents may feel most comfortable spending respite time in lodging that also feels like home.

10. What will be my relationship to Hoyleton? Will I be a Hoyleton employee?

No, you will not be a Hoyleton employee. Hoyleton will be your supervising foster care agency, and own the foster home.

11. Will I be able to consider the foster home as my home?



Hoyleton owns the foster home. The home will be yours to live in, with some restrictions. But we hope to make you feel at home.

Hoyleton will ask you to sign a Foster Home License Agreement with Hoyleton. This is separate from the foster care license you will receive from IL DCFS. The Foster Home License Agreement is similar to a lease, but provides Hoyleton with greater control as the owner of the home than a traditional lease or rental agreement.

The reason for this is simple, and has to do with Hoyleton's obligation to the children under our care. Our first responsibility is to always act in the best interests of children. At its most basic level this means to ensure that children are safe, and live in a stable environment. In a worse case scenario, for example, Hoyleton could expect one or both foster parents to vacate the foster home, at least temporarily, in response to a child abuse or neglect allegation. Typically, IL DCFS would expect Hoyleton to restrict foster parents during an investigation from having access to the foster children. If this were to happen, Hoyleton would not disrupt the children from their placement in the home.

On the other hand, Hoyleton expects to choose foster parents who can work with young people as members of a treatment team, guided by the CARE practice model. We are confident that if we all put CARE into practice and work to build a collaborative team, the likelihood of worse case scenarios is limited. With the backing of their team, we'll want foster parents to feel empowered to make decisions about the children's daily care. We also want our foster parents to feel completely at home, and comfortable, in this home.

The home that Hoyleton has invested in has been completely rehabbed by Neighbors for Renewal, a nonprofit development agency that relies mostly on retired craftsmen to rehabilitate homes in Belleville. The volunteers at Neighbors for Renewal have donated many, many hours of loving care to create a very comfortable, and beautiful, home environment for us. We hope that living in this home provides you with a sense of pride in your work, and in this home, that will be shared by the children who live here as well.

12. If the foster home is owned by Hoyleton, will I pay rent to Hoyleton?

The cost of rent, utilities and home maintenance will be automatically deducted by Hoyleton from the overall foster care board payment. The foster parents will receive the foster family supports portion of the board payment. (See accompanying document for exact payment amounts.)

13. Who is responsible for furnishing the home?

The home comes fully furnished.

14. If I don't care for the home's décor, can I redecorate?



Only with the written permission of an authorized Hoyleton representative.

15. Who is responsible for maintenance of the home and yard?

Hoyleton is responsible for the cost of maintenance and will expect to manage most maintenance requests. Foster parents and foster youth are expected to take care of the routine upkeep of the home. We want foster children to learn life skills, tailored to their developmental level, so we'll encourage youth to participate in home or yard care tasks that help them gain skills. If there are activities that foster parents like to engage in, e.g. lawn maintenance, gardening, etc. we'd simply ask the foster parents to work out these kinds of responsibilities with the program supervisor.

16. Will I be able to have friends and relatives visit the home? Can I have overnight guests?

We hope that as the foster parents and the rest of the treatment team and foster youth get to know one another that everyone will feel comfortable with visits at the home from foster parents' friends and relatives. Although everyone has to feel safe first, we also want the foster family to engage in normal family activities. The foster youth need to be able to see foster parents engage in healthy, positive relationships with others, and we want our foster parents to maintain their family and other social connections. The treatment team will need to work together to decide when everyone is prepared for those kinds of visits to occur.

17. What kind of record keeping will I be responsible for?

Much of the foster parents' responsibility for record keeping will involve gathering records, such as youths' school reports and records of medical visits. However, foster parents will also be asked to record medications provided to youth in a medication log, and maintain a log in which youth acknowledge receiving their allowance money. When youth are exhibiting symptoms of stress or other behavior concerns, the treatment team may ask foster parents to complete behavior checklists or logs to help identify the source of the concerns.

18. Do I need to keep receipts and turn in expenses to Hoyleton for reimbursement?

Generally, no. However, foster parents will be strongly encouraged to maintain a household budget. Foster parents will only need to turn in receipts if the foster parents and program supervisor agree that the foster parent will pay upfront for an expense that Hoyleton is responsible for and request reimbursement. Otherwise, maintaining receipts will be up to the foster parents. If foster parents struggle to pay for expenses covered by the board payment, expense receipts may be needed to help identify why that's occurring.

19. What if I'm injured while providing foster care? Who is responsible for my medical expenses?

The foster parents will be responsible for those expenses. A portion of the foster care board payment includes money to cover the foster parent's self-insurance costs. The Foster Home



License Agreement entered into between Hoyleton and the foster parents also indemnifies Hoyleton from liability for injuries incurred by the foster parents and their guests.

20. Will I have a say in which youth are placed in my foster home?

As members of the treatment team, foster parents will participate in all decisions related to youth's referral acceptance, pre-placement visits and the placement decision.

21. If I'm struggling with a foster youth, will I be able to have the youth moved out of the home?

Treatment foster parents are expected to work with their support team and youth to help youth achieve success in the program. This means that youth should successfully, and plan-fully transition from the Therapeutic Foster Care program to permanent, family placements at the appropriate time.

22. Can I have pets?

As pet lovers ourselves, if you're a pet lover, we hope so. There are DCFS licensing rules we have to follow to ensure pets are safe around children. We'll want the youth themselves to feel safe with pets. And pets have to be appropriately potty trained and non-destructive of the property. Pets can be valuable in helping youth heal emotionally and offer opportunities for them to learn responsibility. If you have a pet you'd want to bring along, once we verify they're safe around children, and trained, we'll work with you on introducing them to the youth and home.