

# CEDARS

Here for kids. Here for families.



6601 Pioneers Blvd. Ste. 1  
Lincoln, NE 68506  
402-434-5437 CEDARSkids.org

## FOSTER CARE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

CEDARS Foster Care program is designed to serve children birth to 18 years of age, whose needs can be met in a structured, nurturing, foster home environment. We facilitate growth in clients and families through the coordination of psychological, medical, educational, vocational, and recreational services. Crisis intervention services are offered to foster parents and foster care youth on 24 hours a day, seven day a week basis.

CEDARS Foster Care is contracted through the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and St. Francis, a private agency responsible for case management of state wards in Nebraska's Eastern Service Area, and is a registered provider through the Office of Probation. Youth are referred to CEDARS Foster Care by DHHS, St. Francis, or Probation when it is determined that a child cannot safely remain at home. Children who are referred by DHHS or St. Francis (the entity responsible for case management of state wards in the eastern services area) are wards of the state, with DHHS serving as their legal guardian. For Probation youth referred by the Juvenile Probation Office, their biological parents remain the legal guardians and maintain all legal rights. As such, the parents of Probation youth must consent to all services and must be kept informed of their child's progress while in foster care. Regardless of the referral source and who serves as the child's legal guardian, it is important to maintain open communication and actively engage the biological parents for all youth in foster care.

CEDARS primary obligations are to recruit, train, and license foster families; support foster homes to prevent placement disruption; and to assist with youth's readiness for visits with biological families and permanency.

## ADOPTION SERVICES

CEDARS Foster Care does not actively recruit adoptive parents. When people call to inquire about foster care and/or adoption, they are interviewed to gauge their intentions of providing foster care and/or adoption. If it is determined after this initial interview that they are only interested in adoption, they are referred to [www.adoptionnebraska.com](http://www.adoptionnebraska.com) for additional resources. If they are interested in foster care with the possibility of providing permanency, CEDARS will conduct an initial prescreening on the home, determine if they have satisfactory background checks, and determine if they are suitable to start training classes. If the home meets all these initial requirements, they will be invited to attend our foster parent training, TIPS-MAPP. TIPS-MAPP is a mutual selection process in which CEDARS will spend ten weeks getting to know the families and determining if they meet our standards for providing care. This will also allow the foster parent to finalize their desire as a family to provide foster care.



CEDARS Foster Care program writes adoption home studies for:

- Youth who have resided in the CEDARS foster home for at least six (6) months.
- Families who are foster parents with CEDARS and are being served in our program.

CEDARS will not complete home studies for families seeking to complete adoptions for children not currently placed in a foster home through CEDARS. This is subject to change based on policy changes within DHHS.

CEDARS Foster Care program will not:

- Participate in relinquishments or termination of parental rights as this is the responsibility of DHHS.
- Complete ICPC's or be in charge of monitoring ICPC's completion with other agencies as this is the responsibility of DHHS.
- Participate in conversations about adoption subsidies or promise the foster parents that they will receive a subsidy as this is the responsibility of DHHS. All questions about subsidies will be directed to the assigned DHHS Case Manager.

## Preparing the Adoptive Parents for Adoption

Prospective adoptive parents will participate in an orientation with their assigned CEDARS Foster Care Specialist as well as the DHHS Case Manager that will include the following:

- An overview of the lifelong process of adoption and its meaning;
- The process for completing an adoption;
- The needs of children awaiting adoption;
- Benefits and responsibilities of openness in adoption and the range of openness as discussed in TIPS-MAPP;
- The DHHS Case Manager will discuss the availability of adoption subsidies.

Prospective adoptive parents are prepared for adoption through education, training, information, and support provided by the CEDARS Foster Care Specialist in conjunction with the DHHS Case Manager that address the following:

- Attachment and bonding;
- Possible impacts of adoption on the family;
- Changing roles and relationships from foster youth to adopted youth;
- Maintaining connections with the child's community;
- Child development and parenting techniques;
- Raising a child of a different race, ethnicity, culture, or religion;
- Caring for a child with special needs if applicable;
- Helping a child cope with separation and loss.

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Much of this information is provided during the initial TIPS-MAPP training to prepare families for foster care and adoption. Additional training and information are available on an ongoing basis. The CEDARS Foster Care licensing specialist who completes the adoption home study will also train each prospective adoptive home on the Seven Core Issues of Adoption during the adoption home study process. This training covers the concepts of loss, rejection, guilt and shame, grief, identity, intimacy, and mastery and control. A CEDARS therapist can also help facilitate this training or be available for additional counseling and consultation if needed.

When a child is placed with a potential adoptive home prior to termination of parental rights and CEDARS is aware that the foster home would like to adopt, CEDARS will:

- Inform the prospective adoptive parents of the risks involved;
- Assist with the child's transition into the home by offering preplacement visits;
- Provide accurate information on the needs of the child.