

READY OR NOT

You've heard about the need for resource parents in Orange County. Your heart is ready to care for a child in need of a safe home. But before you move forward, ask yourself some basic questions to assess your expectations and evaluate if you are indeed ready to commit to a child.

Can you commit to a child and the reunification process?

Reunification is the primary goal for children in care. Resource parents play a critical role in supporting and facilitating reunification. They understand reunification may be what is best for most foster children and accept a child/children into their homes knowing they may need to let them go at some point in time.

Are you looking to only adopt?

Resource parents are needed first and foremost to foster. There may be an opportunity to adopt a child when reunification is not possible, but fostering is the main focus. Private adoption agencies may be a better option for those wishing to adopt.

Are you open to caring for teens, older children, brothers and sisters, and/or children with medical challenges?

These children are most in need of resource parents. But before you make any commitment, consider your current family dynamics and what your family can manage. For more information about the children we serve, visit www.oc4kids.com/about.

Understand fostering will have an impact on your relationships/marriage and biological children.

Have a conversation with the whole family about what fostering will mean to them.

Do you have a strong support system of family and friends?

It's critical to establish a support system of people you can rely on before becoming a resource parent. Have an honest conversation about the type of help needed and what you can expect from them.

Is your home ready?

Your home should be large enough to provide adequate living space for a child. If your home is being renovated or you are planning to move in the near future, it may be best to wait until the project is complete or you are settled in your new home.

Do you have flexibility in your schedule to accommodate a child's court-ordered visits with their parents?

Remember, reunification is typically the goal for children in care. To facilitate this, the Juvenile Court will order a visitation plan between the child and his/her parents that is as frequent as possible. You will need to be available to transport and even supervise/monitor each visit.

Can you assist with remote/distance learning?

Because of COVID-19, many schools are closed and are holding classes virtually. If you have children attending school virtually, can you manage the rigors of remote/distance learning with more children?

Can you stay at home with the child during the pandemic?

With schools and daycare facilities closed due to the pandemic, children are staying home and attending school online. This will require one parent to stay home with the children to assist with school work and provide childcare.