

Frequently Asked Questions About Becoming a Resource Parent with UMFS

Q: How is a resource parent different from being a foster or adoptive parent?

A: UMFS trains families with the PRIDE curriculum. A Resource Parent is a parent that is trained and approved to provide both foster care and adoptive services. This allows families to foster, adopt or do both without having to attend additional trainings.

Q: What are the requirements for being a resource parent?

- A:**
- You must be 21 years of age
 - Each parent must attend all training sessions
 - You can be married, single or legally divorced
 - You must have a valid driver's license, no more than -5 points on your DMV record
 - You must have a stable form of income
 - Your home must meet the minimum licensing requirement for a foster home in Virginia
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Q: Can I adopt the children who are placed?

A: It depends on several factors. Some children are eligible to be adopted; others have a goal to return to family or be placed with relatives. Sometimes the process of changing a goal to adoption is very lengthy. You will know the status of the child prior to placement into your home. However, if the child's goal changes to adoption while they are living in your home, there is a strong possibility that you will be given the opportunity to adopt that child if the child is a good match for your family. Ultimately, that decision lies with the child's legal guardian, the Virginia Department of Social Services.

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Q: Will I know all the behaviors of the child before I decided to take him/her into my home?

A: You will be given any information we have about the child. You will read their file, before you make the decision to become his/her resource parent. Although we believe in being completely open and honest about a child's history, we do not always know the full picture when the child comes into our care. We can promise, that any information that is shared with UMFS, will be shared with you.

Q: Do I get babysitting if I need it?

A: Each of our families is given 10 days of respite per year, per child placed in their home. You can have UMFS Resource Families provide the respite or you may have friends or family become certified as respite providers, by having them complete a respite packet, which includes Child Protective Services and criminal checks, DMV records and a health statement. Respite can be used for short or longer periods (i.e. for a week) if your family needs to take a break. It does take careful planning, so that we can account for the respite family's schedule as well.

Q: Can I go on vacation with or without the child?

A: We encourage you to include the children on family vacations as you would your own child. However, we also know that your family may need a break at times. UMFS will work with you to find respite providers if needed.

Q: I'm worried about being able to afford this. Do I get compensated?

A: You will receive a room and board for each child that is set by the state, and also receive a stipend for you as the family provided by UMFS. The amount depends on the level of need of the child. A UMFS staff can go over this with you in detail.

Q: Do I need to provide health insurance and pay for medical bills?

A: You will not for foster care. Insurance is provided and all medical bills are paid for with Medicaid. If you choose to adopt a child, they may also be eligible for Medicaid, based on their level of need. However, if they are not eligible for Medicaid, you would be expected to add them to your own insurance.

Q: What kind of support do I receive for the child placed in my home?

A: UMFS makes every effort to individualize the services for the child and resource family. At a minimum will have case management services, support groups, 24-hour staff on-call, and training. For all Treatment Foster Care children, we are required to visit the child and family at a minimum of once every 14 days, more often if the child has a higher level of need. If the child needs it, he/she will also be provided with in home counseling.

Q: What if I need to stop being a resource parent for a period of time?

A: Some resource parents choose "take a break" between children. UMFS respects that request. The family can let us know when they are ready to resume. Your home can be re-opened for the placement of children in the future as long as your home is up to date on all yearly licensing requirements.

Q: Do I get training so I know how to work with these children?

A: Yes, you receive 27 hours of pre-service training and on-going training monthly.

Q: Am I eligible to be a resource family if I rent a home instead of owning one?

A: There is no requirement that you must own your home to be a Resource Parent. Many of our resource families live in rental apartments or houses. Your home just needs to meet the Virginia State licensing requirements. For further information, please call the regional center closest to you (see contact page of website) and they will give you all the information you need to determine your eligibility.

Q: Can I speak to a current resource parent to get further understanding of what it's like?

A: Yes, please call the regional center closest to you (see contact page of website) and they will put you in contact with a current resource family.

Q: Am I ineligible if I have been charged with a crime in my past?

A: You cannot be approved as a Resource Parent if you have been convicted of a felony in the past 5 years. Also, some crimes (called barrier crimes) prohibit individuals from becoming a resource family. If the crime is not a barrier crime, the Program Director will take into consideration the nature of the conviction and how long ago it occurred, along with personal references, in determining whether you can be approved. For further information, please contact your regional center and they will give you all the information you need to determine your eligibility.

Q: I understand the children may have special needs. What does that mean?

A: The children we serve in our programs are children who are considered at risk for future problems if they do not receive additional services. The children we serve have a wide range of special needs, from mild to severe.

A special needs child can be:

- An older child (over 8 years of age)
- A child with emotional or behavioral challenges
- A sibling group
- A child with medical needs or developmental delays.