

Becoming a Mercer County Resource Family

**“THERE CAN BE NO KEENER REVELATION OF A SOCIETY’S SOUL THAN THE
WAY IN WHICH IT TREATS ITS CHILDREN.”**

~Nelson Mandela

Overview

Thank you for your interest in becoming a resource family with Mercer County Children & Youth Services Resource Care Department. This packet is designed to give your additional information regarding resource care & the certification process.

Pennsylvania’s child welfare system is a county-administered program that is supervised by the state through the Department of Human Services’ (DHS) Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF).

The Resource Care Program is one of many agency services designed to help children who are under the legal custody of the Agency within Mercer County who cannot remain in their home of origin due to safety factors related to abuse and/or neglect. Children are placed temporarily outside of the home, such as in a foster home, while the parent and/or caregiver of origin works to resolve the issues that led to the child’s removal.

The Process

The process to become a certified resource family is an extensive one, but you will not be alone through this journey. A resource care caseworker will be assigned to your family to assist you throughout the certification process.

In addition, you will receive a Resource Family Manual that has extensive information and resources related to becoming a resource family with Mercer County CYS Resource Care Department.

Training is also an important part of process, and we will guide you through the necessary trainings as well as those that will benefit and assist you in your role as a resource family.

The minimum requirements to become a resource family are that the caregiver must be at least 21 years of age, pass a medical appraisal by a licensed physician, and pass extensive criminal and child abuse background checks.

In addition to the minimum requirements, there are several other steps to becoming a resource family. First, the family must complete an application (attached) indicating their desire to become a resource family and submit this application to MCCYS.

Child abuse and background checks are the next step in the process. Immediate grounds for disqualification can be found under 23 PA Cons Stat § 6344.

An assessment of the resource family's capabilities is also completed during the certification process. This assessment includes but is not limited to emotional and mental well-being, community ties, ability to accept & provide supervision and care of a foster child, the ability to work in partnership with the family of origin & the agency, as well as other factors.

A home inspection is also completed to ensure the home meets the minimum safety and residency requirements under PA regulation.

FAQS ABOUT MCCYS RESOURCE CARE

Who are the children that come into resource care?

Children in resource care are under the care and supervision of MCCYS due to being unable to safely remain in their home of origin, because of child abuse and/or neglect. Children can be 0-17 years of age; however, if interested, there is an opportunity to provide care to children 18-21 who voluntarily remain in resource care.

Children in resource care often have a trauma history and can display difficult and challenging behaviors. MCCYS is dedicated to providing services to assist resource parents in meeting the needs of foster children.

If relatives or kin are identified for a child in my home, will the child be moved to their home?

The short answer is yes. If relative or kin are identified for the child, and they are ready, willing, and able, the child or youth will be moved to their home. State and federal law prioritize kinship care for children and youth in out of home placement.

Will I have the opportunity to adopt as a MCCYS resource family?

Providing permanency for a child is always a possibility but it is important to note that resource care is designed to be temporary. Many children and youth return to their family of origin and many others achieve permanency with relatives and/or kin.

Am I financially responsible for the foster children placed in my home?

Raising and caring for children is expensive! As a resource family, you will receive a stipend to assist in the daily care of the child. There are additional stipends for clothing and social and extracurricular activities for the child. The child is also covered by medical insurance.

Questions?

The decision to begin the journey to become a resource parent is an important one. Resource care can be a complex and challenging yet extremely rewarding experience. The position takes a huge investment of time and emotional energy, as well as physical endurance. It also involves the entire family and takes into consideration the emotions of everyone within the home, as well as extended family and friends. It is important to examine your own feelings, and your own family's emotions regarding the boundaries of your home being expanded to assist those that need a safe and secure alternate setting.

We are here to help you! Please contact us with any questions or concerns that you may have, and we will do our best to assist you.

Additional Supports

There are many local and national supports for resource parents. Below are some that you can check out!

Pennsylvania Resource Family Association

<https://www.psrfa.org/>

National Foster Parent Association

<https://nfpaonline.org/>

Rise Magazine

<https://www.risemagazine.org/rise-magazine/>

Child Welfare Information Gateway

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/about/>

PA Department of Human Services

<https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/dhs/resources/adopt-pa-kids/foster-parent.html>

YOU MIGHT BE
TEMPORARY IN THEIR
LIVES. THEY MIGHT
BE TEMPORARY IN
YOURS. BUT THERE IS
NOTHING
TEMPORARY ABOUT
THE LOVE OR THE
LESSON.

~ TONIA CHRISTLE

CONTACT INFORMATION

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