Article published on July 26th 2012 | Family

Foster care perhaps has an unmerited stigma about being impossible to break into, with many people being dissuaded by mistakenly thinking they will not be accepted due to their race, sexual orientation or simply because the application process is too time consuming. This is not the case. You can apply to be a foster carer in the UK providing you are over 21, have a spare bedroom and most importantly, can devote the time and attention required to foster. Religion, marital status, race and sexual orientation are not factors when it comes to fostering. So bearing this in mind, how do you get started on the road to becoming a foster carer?

Well, the first step is to decide whether or not you wish to register with either your local authority or an IFA (Independent Fostering Agency). While local authorities are ultimately legally responsible for the children in their care, they do work closely with IFAs to deliver help for many children requiring foster care in the UK. You can only register with one IFA or a local authority so do your research carefully to decide which of these is best for you. IFAs are of course carefully regulated by both Ofsted and the Care Commission with some offering ongoing support and training to their carers. Some people believe they provide a more â€˜hands onâ€™ approach than local authorities given that their sole function is to deliver foster care.

The process to register can take around 4 to 6 months, with each unique case having to be individually and appropriately assessed. To begin with, it is standard for an initial home visit to be undertaken by a representative from the authority you have applied to. This normally takes the form of an in-depth discussion on foster care which will be used to decide whether or not to continue with your application. This is essentially a fact gathering session and gives you the opportunity to voice any queries you may have in order to better understand the process which will enable you to determine if fostering is right for you.

If your application is accepted, a series of assessments will then be carried out which includes criminal checks, medical screenings and safety inspections on your home. These are all legal requirements which are in place to protect both you and the children who may potentially come under your care. Providing that these checks are satisfactory, there will then be an assessment period during which you can expect visits from a social worker who will compile a report detailing your strengths and experience with regard to foster care. This report is then presented to a panel that will be responsible for making the final decision on your suitability to foster.

If you are considering fostering as a career, it may be an idea to do as much research as possible to fully understand the processes involved in both the application and long term outcomes.

Article Source:
http://www.articleside.com/family-articles/how-to-get-started-in-fostering.htm - Article Side

Bgiles - About Author:
Bruce Giles a fostering writes for a digital marketing agency.  This article has been commissioned by a client of said agency.  This article is not designed to promote, but should be considered

professional content.

Article Keywords:
fostering, adoption, adopting a child, foster care, fostering a child

You can find more free articles on Article Side. Sign up today and share your knowledge to the community! It is completely FREE!