

YOU CAN

# ILLUMINATE DARKNESS

*in the lives of children*



## LICENSE YOUR HOME

If you have an extra room or rooms in your home and have the capacity to minister and love on a child or children by bringing them into your home then reach out to a foster agency and take the foster care licensing course. You can provide short term (respite) or long term care for a child in your city. Showing hospitality and love to God's children in this way is impacting eternity.

## COOK A MEAL

This is a simple yet impactful way to bless a family fostering in your church body or community. With the added responsibility of children, appointments, school, and every day life a home cooked meal can radically bless a foster family and let them know they are supported and cared for.

## AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Many foster parents struggle to find after school care for the children placed in their home from the time school gets out until they get off work. It could be 30 minutes to 2 hours. If you have children at home they could play with, or are an empty nester with a table they could do homework at, letting a foster family know that you can help love on their children in this way is profoundly impactful on the family and children.

## TRANSPORTATION

Foster families with multiple children may need help picking kids up from school, taking them to or from practices, or taking them to therapy or counseling. If you have availability during the week and reliable transportation this small task makes a huge impact.

\*\*Some families would love to foster sibling sets or additional children they simply don't have adequate transportation for the number of kids. Donating your van or SUV to a foster family could provide the opportunity. A fundraiser or church raising money to buy a 15 passenger could be all that is needed to change a families world.

## MENTOR A CHILD

There is little that is more impactful than giving of your time to mentor a child in foster care. At a time when they feel alone, unheard, and are experiencing many changes, someone to walk beside them, root for them, listen to them, encourage them, and pray for them is MASSIVE! We all know that sometimes it is hard to talk to a parent, so a weekly mentor can play a role that will impact a child for the rest of their life.



## BABY SITTING

Sometimes a foster family just needs a break, a date night, or a day to run errands and get some shopping done. Offer to baby sit or provide childcare for a foster family. It's a simple task but it provides love and care to both children and parents.

## LISTEN

Anyone can do this - Be a listening ear! For a foster parent, a care worker, even a child. Offer to take them out for coffee or ice cream and just ask them about their day. What are the victories? The struggles? How can we pray? How can we help? Then be their advocate, encourage them, rally others around them, and pray regularly for them. Listening shows that we care about them and are for them!

## MEET A NEED

Foster parents and children have many needs. It could be school supplies, diapers, bedding, additional clothing, shoes, back packs, pool passes, anything really. Regularly check in with the foster parents you know and ask them what practical needs they have. Don't wait for them to come to you - be proactive and seek them out.

## CARE PORTAL

Care Portal is an organization run by the Global Orphan Project. The agency is a Christian organization that provides a lot of international support, but Care Portal is their foster care initiative. They have an online system where they connect churches in the community to anonymous needs for children and families in foster care. It helps meet the needs for beds, money towards a car, plumbing services, car repair services, whatever you can imagine... and these are all miraculously met by churches and individuals.

[www.careportal.org](http://www.careportal.org)



## EMERGENCY HELP

Every family has the occasional emergency situation. A child get's hurt, someone is sick, a car breaks down, it could be anything. Reach out to a foster family and let them know that you're available. That you will become their SOS call. Someone they can call at any hour of the night or day that will be there for them, help out where needed, and provide support. This tells foster families they aren't alone and that the church body is there to help!

## SUPPORT GROUPS

If you have space in your home or church you could begin a foster parent and or adoption support group. You can study the bible together and even invite in professionals for specific trainings and encouragement. By doing this you create a safe place to seek up, share needs, pray for one another and support each other. Sometimes we just need to know that we are not alone.

## SLEEP OVERS

If you have children near the ages of a families foster children, then you don't have to be a licensed home for them to stay the night at a friends house. This is something that a lot of foster kids miss out on because families and our children are not proactive in creating these opportunities. Build relationship with foster families in your church, school, neighborhood and do life together.

## PRAYER

God hears our prayers, answers our prayers, and works through our prayers. This is something that should not be put off or neglected. Get a list of foster parents in your church, area, neighborhood and pray regularly for and over them. Pray also for the foster children in your community. Start a prayer group that emphasizes this and is intentional about reaching out to families and children.

## SPONSOR A CHILD'S SUMMER CAMP

Summer is a hard time for many foster families because they have to pay for childcare or find something for their kids to do while they are at work each day. Summer camps can be expensive and hard to manage the extra cost (especially if a family has multiple kids). But they provide a new and impactful opportunity to the child and parent. Reach out to families or your local agency and sponsor the cost of a child's camp.

# SPEAK UP

Everyone can do this! Get the facts, numbers, and stats about the need for foster care in your community. Share what you and your church are doing with others. Bring it up in conversation, post about it on social media, talk to your employer, co-workers, and neighbors. The first step in getting people involved is informing them of the need.



# THROW A PARTY

This one is fun! Throw a welcome party for a family who is receiving a new placement. Help throw a birthday party for a foster child. Reach out to families and agencies and do something special for the foster kids in your community. They often miss out on the routine experiences of life because of ever changing circumstances. Don't hold back, go all out, show these children they are seen, loved, and cared about. Movie nights, dances, themed parties - be creative with it.

# BABY SHOWER

Families who are licensing for infants and small children might not always have all the necessary equipment and gadgets. When you hear of a family getting placements (or reach out to an agency and do this for a stranger) offer to throw a baby shower. Lavish them, support them and encourage them. Provide diapers, presents, and all the needed necessities to care for the children being placed in their home.

# OFFER RESPITE CARE

This is powerful. Maybe you can't take a long term or even short term placement in your home for various reasons. Still license your home and offer respite care. Respite may be emergency care or weekend care for a foster family who may need a break, have to go out of town on business, become sick, etc... Having a licensed home who is willing to support the long term foster parents is essential for thriving children and parents. Not to mention you get to become the cool aunt or uncle or spoil them like grandma and grandpa.

# HIRE A FOSTER CHILD

Do you have odd jobs that need done around your home? Do you own a business? Hiring a foster child provides the opportunity for a foster child (especially teens) to earn some money of their own, learn valuable work skills, and obtain community references for future employment.

**\*HAVE OTHER IDEAS - WE'D LOVE TO HEAR ABOUT THEM\***