

FOSTER CARE STATISTICS

- ♥ There are over 5,000 children in foster care in Virginia
- ♥ 33% of children in foster care in Virginia have the goal of adoption
- ♥ 56% of children in foster care in Virginia are over the age of 10 years old
- ♥ 11% of children in foster care in Virginia are living in group homes or residential care
- ♥ 50% of children in foster in Virginia entered foster care because of neglect
- ♥ 0.5% of children in foster care in Virginia are diagnosed with a disability
- ♥ In the last year almost 600 young people (22% of youth who exited foster care) aged out of foster care in Virginia without connection to family. These young people are at much higher risk than the rest of the population for homelessness, low educational attainment, reliance on government assistance, unplanned pregnancy, incarceration, and even early death.

TERMS TO USE

SAY THIS	NOT THIS
Kids in Foster Care	Foster Kids
Children who are legally free for adoption	Orphans
Birth parent; biological parent	Real Parent
Birth child; biological child	Real child; own child
Make an adoption plan; choose to adopt	Give away; put up for adoption
Unplanned pregnancy	Unwanted pregnancy; mistake
Parent	Adoptive parent/foster parent
Their child	Their adopted child/foster child

TERMS TO UNDERSTAND

Foster Care – temporary care of a child with the goal that the child would be reunited with their birth family. Foster care can be long term or short term.

Foster-to-adopt – When a child in foster care is not able to reunite with their birth family, they may become legally available for adoption. Some families foster with the goal of adoption for children who may need an adoptive family.

Treatment Foster Care – Treatment Foster Care entails specialized training with a treatment foster care agency and a higher level of support from the agency in order to care for children who have treatment needs. Treatment needs could include medical, emotional, behavioral, and/or mental health needs. Treatment foster care may also be necessary for children who have experience trauma, teenagers, large sibling groups, children who have experience in the criminal justice system, or pregnant or parenting teens.

Respite Care – A respite care provider cares for a child short term (usually less than a week, but could be up to 30 days) to give foster parents a break. This may be a planned break or in the case of an unexpected emergency.

Kinship Care – is when a relative or someone who had a relationship with the child prior provides care for the child. Kinship care can be formally arranged through the Department of Social Services or informally arranged within a family.

FOSTER CARE RELATED SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 24:19-21 and **Deuteronomy 26:12-13** - The Israelites were commanded to leave parts of their fields unharvested so the fatherless, the widows, and the foreigners could eat from them. Similarly, we are to take care of the vulnerable in our society.

Psalms 68:5-6 - "A Father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families."

Matthew 25:31-46 - The story of the Sheep and the Goats. Jesus talks about feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, welcoming the stranger, etc. He says, "whatever you do for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you do for me."

James 1:27 - "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."

There are many verses in which God commands his people to protect and defend the fatherless and the widow:

- o **Exodus 22:22-24** - "Do not take advantage of the widow or the fatherless. If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry. My anger will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children fatherless."
- o **Deuteronomy 10:18** - "He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing."
- o **Deuteronomy 14:29** - "So that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the Lord our God may bless you in all the work of your hands."
- o **Deuteronomy 24:17** - "Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge."

SCRIPTURE CONTINUED

- o **Deuteronomy 27:19** - "Cursed is anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow."
- o **Job 29:11-12** - "Whoever heard me spoke well of me, and those who saw me commended me, because I rescued the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to assist them."
- o **Psalms 10:14** - "But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted; you consider their grief and take it in hand. The victims commit themselves to you; you are the helper of the fatherless."
- o **Psalms 10:17-18** - "You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror."
- o **Psalms 82:3-4** - "Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."
- o **Psalms 146:9** - "The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked."
- o **Proverbs 23:10-11** - "Do not move an ancient boundary stone or encroach on the field of the fatherless, for their Defender is strong; he will take up their case against you."
- o **Isaiah 1:17** - "Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow."
- o **Jeremiah 7:5-7** - "If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, if you do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your ancestors for ever and ever."

SCRIPTURE CONTINUED

- o **Jeremiah 22:3** - "This is what the Lord says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place."
- o **Zechariah 7:10** - "Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other."

Verses about God adopting us:

- o **Romans 8:15** - "The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'"
- o **Romans 8:23** - "Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies."
- o **Romans 9:4** - "Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises."
- o **Galatians 4:4-7** - "But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.' So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir."
- o **Ephesians 1:5** - "He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will."

SCRIPTURE CONTINUED

Scriptural examples of caring for children who couldn't be cared for by their birth parents:

- o **Exodus 2:1-20** - Moses was cared for by Pharaoh's daughter
- o **2 Samuel 9:3** - Mephibosheth was cared for by David
- o **2 Kings 11:1-12** - Joash was cared for by Jehosheba
- o **Job 31:16-18** - Job cared for orphans
- o **Esther 2:7** - Esther was cared for by her cousin, Mordecai
- o **Matthew 1:18-24** - Jesus was cared for by Joseph