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In partnership with:

**Oklahoma Association of Youth Services**



# FOSTER CARE PROGRAM

*Fostering hope for our community's children*



**LEARN HOW YOU CAN HELP A CHILD IN NEED!**



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## Payne County Youth Services, Inc.

“Dedicated to providing free, quality services for the positive development and recovery of children, youth and families.”



## Why Foster Care?

In response to the increase of children in out-of-home placement throughout Oklahoma, Payne County Youth Services, Inc., is partnering with Oklahoma Association of Youth Services and Department of Human Services to recruit, train, support, and retain high quality foster families in our area.

PCYS is looking for families in our communities who would like to make a difference and desire to support children who have been abused, neglected, and are homeless in Payne County.

Our goal is that community children in our Emergency Shelter and other local foster children would be matched to a loving community foster family and have an increased chance at permanency. Statistics show that children who are provided consistent, attentive care and stability have the best opportunity to overcome challenges, learning differences, and emotional and behavioral problems.

PCYS is committed to providing the support and training necessary for foster families to be successful. We hope to assist foster families throughout the entire journey and will match your level of service with the best plan for your own family.

## How can you help?

- **Volunteer** to spend time in our Emergency Youth Shelter
- **Become a Respite Home** and provide short-term child care for a foster family.
- **Become a Foster Family** and provide a safe and loving environment for children until they are reunified with their biological family or a permanent plan can be made for them.
- **Community Support** - support new foster families and their foster children by donating needed supplies like diapers, formula, new car seats, clothes, gift cards, etc.

If your family is interested in becoming a respite or foster home, please contact the Foster Care Program Coordinator to get more information and set up an initial interview.

A model tested for success.



The Roberts are foster parents at Youth and Family Services, El Reno. (Youth Services Agency Model Program)

## The Roberts Family Story

Courtney Roberts always knew she wanted to help children, but she didn't know it would be in the form of helping foster children until she and her husband Chad heard about the need for foster parents through their church.

“Once we realized how needed foster parents are, there was no way we could stop. It just became a part of us,” Courtney says.

The Roberts have fostered a total of 10 children since they began their foster care journey with Youth & Family Services, Inc. (YFS) about five years ago. Some have only stayed for a week, others for much longer. Their son Peyson was adopted this past August after being in their home for two years. He joined two biological children—their son, Tegan, who is seven, and daughter Haydn, who is two. At the moment, they have two foster children who are transitioning to live with a relative.

As soon as the Roberts met Peyson they knew he would become part of their forever family. Peyson is now a happy, outgoing, loving five-year-old boy who excels at athletics and “has an awesome way of showing his joy and love for others,” Courtney says. “We could not imagine our family without Peyson.”

Courtney and Chad acknowledge that they have experienced some challenges as foster parents, but the support and training they have received from the YFS community-based model of care has created a better foster care experience for her whole family.

“We would not still be foster parents if it wasn't for YFS,” Courtney says. “The support we get through training, the other foster parents, and the staff is amazing.”

Courtney and Chad's foster care experience is similar to hundreds of other families who foster through community-based youth services agencies, which can provide more personalized support services to families and children. Their support alleviates a lot of stress, and enables families like the Roberts to focus on what matters most: their children.

“These children are not just a statistic,” Courtney reminds us. “They are children, just like your own children.”

## Foster Families

Potential foster families must be at least 21 years of age and have the ability to love, understand, care for, and accept a child who has experienced some type of trauma.

PCYS will determine which families are a good fit for our program. Through interview, engagement, and the application process, we will have the opportunity to assure that each foster family understands and agrees with our model of care and the importance of helping each child have the stability and consistency they need.

Families that participate in our program will be treated as an existing family structure with appreciation given to the fact that they are willing to open up their homes and families to a child in need. Families will set up their own preference and choose their level of involvement in our program. Single persons, couples, working parents, retired parents, and adults of all different backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

## Support Services Provided by PCYS Foster Care Program

Foster families need support in a variety of ways to help them achieve success with their foster child as a part of their family. PCYS offers the following support:

- Supervision, consultation, and guidance throughout entire process
- Liaison services with DHS
- In-service training for parents and children
- Respite services
- 24 hour emergency on-call services
- Weekly phone/email contact
- Monthly home visit
- Advocacy
- Assistance with referrals for needed services
- Assistance with needed resources
- Counseling services
- Quarterly activities/outings
- Annual training

## Process for Becoming a Foster Family

The entire process to become a certified foster parent(s) can take anywhere from 2-6 months. But no need to worry, PCYS will be supporting you throughout the entire process.

