

BECOMING A FOSTER CAREGIVER

The memories you share with children today will stay with them forever

All children need a family

Whether through birth, a relative such as a grandparent, an adoptive or foster family, families come together in many different ways. Currently, Peel Children's Aid Society is looking for people who are open to welcoming new members into their family through fostering and adoption.

Fostering and adoption have many things in common. They also have a shared goal – ensuring children have lifelong connections they can count on. This is referred to as 'permanency' and happens when children who have come into care are reunited with family or when Peel CAS helps children find a new permanent family.

If a child can no longer safely remain with his or her family, our first step is to determine whether there are any relatives, community members, or other adults, that the child has a significant relationship with that can care for them. This is known as a Kin arrangement.

When this is not possible, children are then welcomed by foster caregivers to be part of their family until a permanent plan for their future can be established.

Why caregivers are so important

Caregivers are adults who provide children with typical day-to-day care and nurture them through difficult times. Caregivers unconditionally welcome children into their families. They support positive interaction with a child's own family and understand the huge impact it has on children in care.

We can't begin to imagine how difficult living with strangers could be for any child or youth. This is why careful planning is given to finding the most suitable family. This includes matching a child with a family with similar ethnic, cultural, community and religious practices. Not only does this make a child feel more at ease, and supports their identity, it may even feel like they are spending time with an auntie, uncle or other extended family.

Other factors taken into consideration are family dynamics, ages, lifestyles, and the ability of the caregiver to work with the child's own family.

Caregivers adopting

Every child or youth has a right to a family and a place to call home. Whether you choose to become a caregiver or an adoptive family, the application process is the same. At Peel CAS we welcome and support caregivers who are committed to adoption.

Everyone benefits when caregivers build strong, trusting relationships with a child and a child's own family. One of the greatest benefits of having foster caregivers adopt is that children and youth thrive in a supportive, permanent family from the moment they enter foster care.



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Deciding to become a caregiver

To become a caregiver, you do not need to be married, have children, or own your own home. You do need strong parenting skills, a love of children and the time to devote to a child's emotional and physical needs.

We are always looking for caregivers of diverse backgrounds to help children maintain their social, cultural, and religious connections. As the agency works toward helping bring children and families back together, caregivers may also be involved with the child's own family through visits, meetings and by being supportive. Accurate information is key to determine if fostering is the right decision for you and your family.

Some factors to take into consideration are:

- Ability to take on the responsibility of a child's day-to-day care and to be there for everyday activities and appointments
- Being financially secure
- Residing in a smoke-free home
- Having an available adult with a 'G' driver's license living in the home

How do I become a caregiver?

Your first step is to complete an application. You may do this by speaking with a recruiter at 905-363-6131 ext. 1819 or visiting www.peelcas.org and completing the fostering and adoption inquiry form.

Once the agency receives your application and you have spoken with a recruiter, a home visit will be arranged to meet with you and your family. The next steps include completing required documentation, attending training, and participating in a homestudy. The approval process takes approximately six months.

To learn more about fostering and adoption at Peel CAS, visit www.peelcas.org.

Quick facts

- There is no cost to participate in the process to become a caregiver.
- Training prepares caregivers to understand and respond to the challenges children and their families face.
- Caregivers receive a fixed daily rate to cover the expenses of children they care for but are not paid a salary.
- Priority is given to reuniting children with family or extended family. In some situations, children may be adopted by their caregivers.
- Applicants will require police clearances from any country that they have resided in from the age of eighteen until the present.
- Currently, Peel CAS is experiencing a need for caregivers for older children and those with complex needs, siblings and children of South Asian, French and Indigenous heritage.



This document is also available in French. If you require this information in a different format or in any other language, please contact the Communications and Service Relations Department at 905-363-6131 or via email at mail@peelcas.org.