



2026

November

NEWSLETTER



GRATITUDE TO OUR FOSTER PARENTS

Dear Foster Parents,

As we gather with family and friends this Thanksgiving, we want to take a moment to express our sincere gratitude for you and the extraordinary difference you make in the lives of children.

Foster parenting is an act of love that often happens quietly, behind the scenes, and without the recognition it deserves. You open your homes, share your families, offer comfort in moments of uncertainty, and provide stability when a child needs it most. You give children something every child deserves: a safe place to grow, someone to trust, and the opportunity to experience hope.

We recognize that fostering is not always easy. It requires patience, compassion, flexibility, and a willingness to care deeply, even when the journey is uncertain. Your commitment to children, particularly those who have experienced trauma and loss, reflects the very best of the human spirit.

At The Baby Fold, we believe every child deserves love, hope, and healing. Through your generosity and dedication, those words become more than a mission statement. They become a daily reality for the children entrusted to your care.

This Thanksgiving, please know that you are valued, appreciated, and an essential part of our mission. The difference you make may not always be immediately visible, but every moment of reassurance, every act of kindness, and every reminder that a child matters can have a lasting impact.

Thank you for choosing to make room in your hearts and homes for children who need you. We are deeply grateful to walk alongside you in this important work.

May your Thanksgiving be filled with peace, joy, and the knowledge that your love is making a difference.

With sincere gratitude,

Clete Winkelmann
President and CEO



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THE BABY FOLD'S

FOSTER CARE

THE FESTIVAL OF TREES NOVEMBER 19TH – NOVEMBER 21ST, 2026

The Baby Fold's Festival of Trees is Central Illinois' premier holiday extravaganza to kick-off the holiday season!

Located at the Interstate Center in Bloomington, the Festival of Trees offers an immersive winter wonderland experience for the whole family. Explore a variety of festive displays, including beautifully decorated Christmas trees, holiday wreaths, gingerbread creations, seasonal centerpieces, and so much more! The festival also features special events, including the Gala, Avanti's Family Night, and Breakfast with Santa. Please note that these events require separate tickets and are not included in general admission.

Please reach out to your licensing worker if you would like tickets to Festival of Trees!

The Baby Fold looks forward to celebrating the holiday season with you!

Find out more information regarding the hours and schedule for The Festival of Trees down below:

<https://e.givesmart.com/events/OXg/>



Interested in celebrating someone special at The Festival of Trees....

Dedicate a personalized ornament that can be placed onto one of The Baby Fold's trees

Please find the link to dedicate a personalized ornament to celebrate someone special down below or on The Baby Fold's official website:

<https://secure.qgiv.com/for/tbf-tributetrees-25>

Want to learn more about The Festival of Trees and other upcoming events and trainings?

Join The Baby Fold's Foster Care Facebook page, where you can stay updated on upcoming events and trainings

JOIN USING THE LINK
BELOW OR BY
SCANNING THE QR
CODE:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/g/17KGBFFAA>





THE BABY FOLD'S

FOSTER CARE

CAMP TAKE-A-BREAK

Located on Lake Bloomington at the East Bay Camp Facility, this Therapeutic Camp offers children a fun experience while giving parents a weekend break.



- Children attend camp from 7:00pm Friday evening to 12:30pm Sunday afternoon.
- Staff members are highly trained and have extensive experience working with children with a range of needs, including emotional and behavioral problems.
- Activities include: Hiking, year-round swimming, crafts, games, sports, movies, and community outings.
- Meals and snacks provided (accommodations can be made for dietary restrictions)

Eligible Kids

- Children must be enrolled in a qualifying TBF program
- Children must be 6 to 14 years old
- Children must have the physical and mental ability to participate in 80% of the camp activities.
- No phones, video games, or tablets allowed

Camp Dates Fall 2026

- November 20-22, 2026
- December 4-6, 2026



Please reach out to your caseworker for more information about registration!



Foster Home Experience Spotlight

"We had such a wonderful experience! He had the opportunity to participate in fun activities, meet new friends, and spend time with others who share similar life experiences. While he especially loved the pool and crafting, one of the greatest benefits was being able to connect with people who understand him in a way that doesn't always happen in everyday settings. It was an experience that brought plenty of fun and meaningful connections"

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

FLU SHOT REMINDER!

Friendly reminder, all Youth in Care are required to get an **annual flu shot for all children 6 months and older**. Also, all licensed foster parents **licensed for ages 0-1** are also required to have a flu shot. Now is the perfect time to make sure you and your family are protected by getting your annual flu shot.

Find your local clinic here: vaccines.gov/find-vaccines.

Stay healthy and take good care this season!



REFERRAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM!

Don't forget—if you refer a family who becomes fully licensed and has a child placed in their home, you'll receive a **\$150 reward!** The referred family must identify you as the referral within the **first three days** of beginning the licensing process. If you have any questions, please contact your licensing worker.





THE BABY FOLD'S

FOSTER CARE

FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Foster Parents' Rights:

#14. The right to have timely access to the child placement agency's existing appeals process and the right to be free from acts of harassment and retaliation by any other party when exercising the right to appeal.

Foster Parents' Responsibilities:

#16. The responsibility to share information, through the child welfare team, with the subsequent caregiver (whether the child's parent or another substitute caregiver), regarding the child's adjustment in the foster parent's home.

REVIEW OF 402 LICENSING STANDARDS FOR FOSTER HOMES

SECTION 402.24 CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION:

All personal or identifying information concerning a foster child, including but not limited to, his background, his family, and the identity and location of all other persons or families with whom he has been, or will be placed, shall be treated as confidential by all persons involved with the child.



DO

- Keep information about children and families confidential
- Share concerns directly with your child's assigned caseworker
- Protect a child's story, background, and general information.
- Be supportive of other foster families without discussing youth-specific details
- Ask your caseworker if you are unsure whether the information can be shared



DON'T

- Discuss a child's care, history, behaviors, or family situation with others.
- Share identifying information on social media.
- Talk about other youth in care with friends, family members, or other foster families.
- Share details about placements, court involvement, services, or visits.
- Assume that because someone works with children, they are entitled to confidential information.

REMEMBER:

Every child in care deserves dignity, privacy, and respect. Many people are involved in supporting children and families, and everyone has a responsibility to protect confidential information.



TRAININGS & SUPPORT



DADS SHARPEN DADS

A safe place for dads to share their unique challenges, as well as education and support for each other to be their very best. Meets on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at 7:15pm. For more info, email Ken at KSummers@thebabyfold.org for more information.

WEDNESDAY NOON GROUP

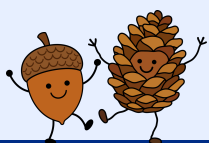
Provides education and support related to parenting, trauma, and self-care within the context of adoption and foster care. Meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month. Email Melissa at MLegendre@thebabyfold.org for more information.

GRANDPARENT CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Fostering a grandchild? This group is for you! Meets once a month at Community Care, located at 3601 General Electric Rd. Suite #2, Bloomington, IL 61704. Caregivers and children are able to meet together to do activities, crafts, share a meal, and get acquainted. If you would like more information, please call Angie Raymer at 309.661.6400.

SIDE BY SIDE MINISTRIES

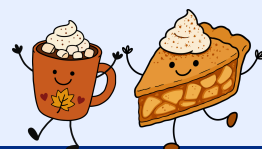
This ministry exists to engage the church & local community in consistent loving support of families involved in foster care by providing access to physical, relational, and spiritual resources. For more information, send an email to: sidebyside1712@gmail.com.



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