



Foster youth often say that their family and friends have “disappeared” or “don’t care about me anymore.” Even a call or letter from you can make their world a better place.

To find out about a youth in foster care

PLEASE CALL

(707) 565 - 4300

The receptionist can connect you with the Youth’s Social Worker .

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT, COUNTY OF SONOMA
FAMILY, YOUTH AND CHILDREN’S SERVICES
P.O. BOX 1539
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

KEEPING IN TOUCH

With a Youth in Foster Care

If you have a special connection to a youth who has been placed in foster care,



**You are the youth’s
LIFELONG CONNECTION
and he or she
NEEDS YOU!**

From the
SONOMA COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT,
and the
SONOMA COUNTY LIFELONG CONNECTION CONSORTIUM

Working to achieve permanency for youth in foster care so that no youth leaves care without a lifelong connection to a caring adult.

Dear Relatives & Friends of a Youth in foster care,

Often the relatives and friends of children and youth in foster care do not understand the system, and are not aware of how to maintain contact with the youth over time. Some family members lose touch, believing that the youth has been adopted or returned to the parents or guardians. Years later, some youth are still in foster care and age out of the system (at 18), having no one to call upon for guidance and support.



The Foster Care System and You

During the first year, the main goals of the social worker are to keep the youth safe and to aid parents to reunify with their child by resolving the problems that brought their child into foster care.

Visitation during this initial period is primarily with the parents and siblings, with the goal of preserving and improving those central relationships for the youth.

If you are not able to have a visit during this time, do not get discouraged. Call the social worker again. You are important in the life of a foster youth!

Be a Part of the Youth's Permanent Plan

After about a year (or at the most, 18 months) the court will decide on the long-term plan that is best for the youth.

The majority of youth in foster care will be reunified with their original parent(s) or guardian(s) or will be placed in the care of a relative.

Of those youth who cannot return to home, many will be adopted. However, some youth are not adopted and remain in long-term foster care. Or, in some cases, an adoptive or guardianship placement is "reversed", and the youth returns to foster care.

Years later, some youth, are still in foster care, some preparing to age out of the system at eighteen. Some have no connections to family or friends, no one to call on for guidance and support.

"After a life of trials; I found someone who can almost make me forget a lot of the hurt and bad relationships. He is my sixth grade music teacher, my mentor, my savior through 11 placements."

- Schylar, age 18

- ⇒ The average age that young adults in America leave home is 26 years old.
- ⇒ Foster youth leave the system at 18, often with no adult connection to guide or even notice how they are doing.
- ⇒ Without you, homelessness and despair are a possible outcome.



Our Youth Need Lifelong Connections

There are many ways that you can be a part of your youth's life.

- Adoption or legal guardianship
- A place to live without a legal relationship
- A lifelong connection is someone who makes a mutual commitment with a youth to maintain an unconditional parent like relationship.
- Mentoring
- A home for the holidays
- A place to do laundry
- Job search and employment assistance
- Someone to call and say "hello" to