



NEXT STEPS EVENT

A PEEK AT FOSTER CARE



FROM EDUCATION TO ENGAGEMENT

For many, the term "Foster Care" carries negative connotations, stereotypes, a certain overwhelming feeling, and most of all - many unknowns. And it's the fear of these unknowns that keeps people from engaging. That's why a Next Steps Event to bring reliable information, first hand experiences, and an opportunity to ask questions, is crucial to dispelling fears and empowering people to find their role in the foster care story. We are thrilled you and your faith community are committed to this goal! So here's your quick guide to creating a safe, educational, and no-commitment-required environment to tackle some of the more difficult questions and concerns.

“ Faith is taking the first step, even when you don't see the whole staircase ”

- Martin Luther King, Jr.





PLANNING YOUR NEXT STEPS EVENT

1		LOCATION Determine a warm, inviting location on your campus that can accommodate your estimated attendance.
2		CHILD WELFARE Notify child welfare of your upcoming event, and invite them to attend, meet your group and share their needs.
3		KEY SPEAKER Designate a strong, passionate speaker who is educated on foster care and is preferably someone of influence in the community.
4		HOST Arrange for and advertise refreshments for the event - whether coffee & dessert or a full meal to encourage attendees.
5		LOCATION Select a variety of panelists from foster parent & foster siblings-bio kids, to Wrap Around Support, child welfare specialists, etc. to share and participate in a Q & A.
6		PANEL Determine a warm, inviting location on your campus that can accommodate your estimated attendance.
7		WRAP AROUND Have your Wrap Around ministry follow-up with all interested in fostering/adopting to support and pray for them.



LOCATION

Most info sessions are held in government buildings. But we have found a known, warm environment like your church building to be far less intimidating and likely to greatly increase attendance.

INVOLVING CHILD WELFARE

It is important to be in open communication with your local child welfare office about engagement events you are planning as well as to offer your location as a host for training & certification classes.

BIOLOGICAL CHILDREN

One of the most frequently asked questions is how fostering affects biological children in a family. We highly recommend including one or more bio children in your panel to share their experience.

DISCUSSING TRAUMA

The best foster & adoptive parents are highly compassionate but also understand the difficulties of caring for children from traumatic backgrounds. It is crucial that your hosts and panelists discuss the good, bad, ugly and hopeful of foster care.

THANKING CHILD WELFARE

Developing regular communication and a supportive relationship with your local child welfare office is critical. They work long, hard days to serve children and rarely thanked. A thank you note or plate of cookies goes a long way in building trust with your new partner.

NO-COMMITMENT REQUIRED

The beauty of a Next Steps Event is creating a no-commitment environment where people can simply learn more. Reducing the "stakes" takes the pressure off and greatly increases attendance.

FOLLOW-UP

Don't forget to quickly give child welfare information of those interested in fostering & adopting and to arrange a training at your location. Additionally, give all "sign-up" information to your Wrap Around Ministry so they can connect support with perspective families and current families in need.