



Thank you for your interest in Crossnore's Foster Care and Adoptions program! Crossnore Communities for Children is one organization in three locations in Avery County, Winston-Salem, and Hendersonville, North Carolina.

Crossnore Communities for Children was established January 1, 2017 from the merger of The Crossnore School in Avery County and The Children's Home in Winston-Salem. The Crossnore School and The Children's Home each brought over 100 years of serving children and families. The common vision brought the two organizations together under one name, one leadership team, and one mission:

To grow healthy futures for children and families by providing a Christian sanctuary of hope and healing.

The Crossnore site in Hendersonville launched in January 2018 which provides Foster Care and Adoption services as well as outpatient therapy services to the area.

CROSSNORE PROGRAMS

Foster Care & Adoptions

Foster Care and Adoptions services are provided in each of the three locations. Crossnore has several specialized programs to meet the needs of children and families involved with the Child Welfare System.

In Community Foster Care, children are placed in individual foster homes across the state of North Carolina. More detailed information follows.

Residential Foster Care is provided on both the Avery campus and the Winston-Salem campus. Cottages are available on each site and provide homes for children and youth while they are not able to be with their biological families. Each cottage has two sets of cottage parents who care for the children 24 hours a day, seven days a week on alternating weeks. This creates a family environment for children. Cottages are especially beneficial for allowing large sibling groups to stay together, as the capacity in each home is greater than what foster homes in the community are able to provide.

The *Bridging Families* program has foster parents who are full-time caregivers employed by Crossnore. These foster parents provide enhanced partnership with biological family members to promote speedy reunification of families separated due to out-of-home placement.

Adoptions & Post-Permanency services support children and youth who cannot return to their biological family due to ongoing safety concerns. When they cannot be reunited, a loving, permanent living environment is the next best option. Crossnore can support foster families in the transition to adoption, when appropriate, and can also support children and youth toward other permanency options like guardianship or transitioning to independent living as an adult.

Family Preservation services have a goal of keeping families together. Whenever possible, Crossnore works to prevent the traumatic separation of children from their parents or caregivers.



Our *HomeBuilders* program is an in-home service offered to families at risk of separation due to out-of-home placement. A team of clinicians meets with the family 3-5 times per week to promote family health and safety.

Therapy & Medical Services Clinical services are available to children, youth, and families in other Crossnore programs as well as the surrounding communities. Clinical services include psychiatric care and medication management, outpatient therapy, and school-based

counseling.

Youth Independent Living

Available in all three locations, Youth Independent Living (YIL) provides support for young adults aging out of foster care. YIL works with youth and young adults ages 16-26.

BUSINESSES

Crossnore has multiple businesses that support the organization as well as provide opportunities for students to gain meaningful work experience. Please visit our website to learn more!

- Miracle Grounds Coffee Shop & Cafe
- Crossnore Weavers
- Fine Arts Gallery
- Blair Fraley Sales Store
- Miracle Grounds Farm
- Miracle Heights Adventures

THE SANCTUARY MODEL®: Organizational Model of Care

What is Sanctuary?

“A traumatic experience impacts the entire person—the way we think, learn, remember, the way we feel about ourselves, about other people and the way we make sense of the world...”

- Dr. Sandra Bloom, Founder of The Sanctuary Model®.

The Sanctuary Model® is a trauma-informed organizational standard for creating or changing the organization’s culture and to promote healing at all levels. It shifts the question from “What is wrong with you?” to “What has happened to you?”

The Sanctuary Model®’s Four pillars:

1. Trauma Theory: Trauma Theory is the foundation for creating an environment of hope and healing for children and adults. Trauma theory speaks to how we deal with life experiences and how these life experiences shape the way we think, the way we learn, the way we remember things, the way we feel about ourselves and other people and the way we make sense of the world.

2. The S.E.L.F. Model: The language of Sanctuary focuses on S.E.L.F. This acronym stands for safety, emotional management, loss and future. S.E.L.F. Framework is an acronym for four important parts of healing.

3. The Seven Commitments: The Sanctuary Model has seven core values.

- Nonviolence
- Emotional Intelligence
- Social Learning
- Shared Governance
- Open Communication
- Social Responsibility
- Growth and Change



4. The Sanctuary Tool Kit: As a part of The Sanctuary Model our agency uses several tools to support our service delivery and operations. You may learn about and use these and other tools as a part of your services at our agency:

- Community Meetings
- Safety Plans
- Red Flag Meetings
- Psychoeducation
- Self-care plans
- S.E.L.F. Treatment Planning

COMMUNITY FOSTER CARE & ADOPTIONS

Crossnore Communities for Children offers several types of foster care:

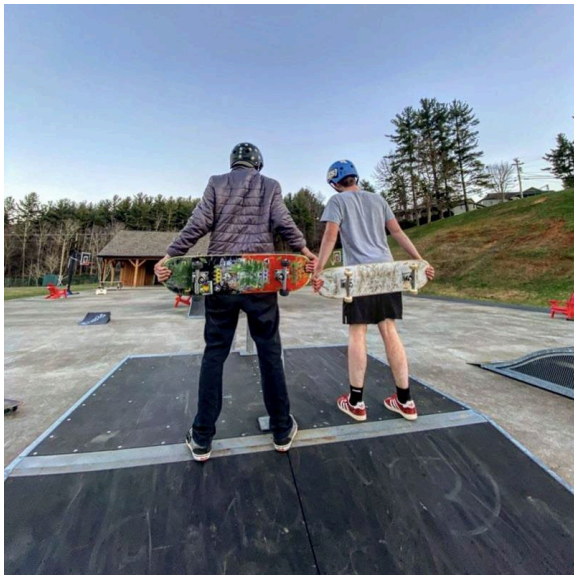
Family Foster Care

Family foster care is for children and youth who need caregiving in a nurturing and safe environment. Children may not be able to live with their biological families due to abuse, neglect, or having no viable caregiver.

The local county Department of Social Services (DSS) gets involved with a family following reports of abuse and/or neglect. DSS takes custody of a child when it is determined they are unsafe in their homes and removing them is the only way to keep them safe. The child is assigned a social worker from their county of origin who becomes the legal guardian.

If there are no safe family supports or kinship options, the county DSS may contact agencies like Crossnore to find a licensed foster home available for the child. Children in foster care come from all races, backgrounds, and range in age from newborn to 21 years old. There is a great need for families who are able to serve multiple children in sibling sets.

Foster care is intended to be temporary, and every child will have a *permanency plan* so that the child's team is always working toward a permanent living option for the child. When a child enters foster care, the goal is to return them to their biological family whenever possible. If the biological family does not make the needed changes with DSS support, other permanency options may be explored. Other permanency options include guardianship with a relative or other court approved caregiver, adoption, or AAPLA (Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement), which is typically an option for older teens to help them transition to independence.



Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC)

This service is for children/youth with mental health needs that cannot be met while in their own families. TFC is considered mental health treatment in a family setting. A therapist or psychiatrist must complete a clinical assessment to determine that it is medically necessary for the child to be in a therapeutic foster care program. Children may be in the custody of DSS, it may be a court-ordered service, or their biological parents may voluntarily seek treatment for the child. Although there are some younger children who qualify for therapeutic foster care services, many are adolescents.

This family-based program helps children succeed through a network of supportive and involved relationships between Therapeutic Foster Parents, youth, their families, and Family Caseworkers. Therapeutic foster parents are trained to effectively use evidence-based behavior management strategies to support children in their growth and behavioral change.

Therapeutic foster parents are required to receive additional training. Ten additional hours of training are available during the pre-service training process, and Crossnore will then provide additional therapeutic training opportunities after licensure. Therapeutic parents will meet higher expectations for documentation as well as coordination of services for the child/youth. The demand on therapeutic foster parents is higher, however the support provided by the agency is also higher.

Internal Respite Foster Care

Internal respite foster care is short-term foster care for children/youth who are already in the care of Crossnore Communities for Children in another foster family. The length of time for respite ranges from hourly respite to overnight/weekend respite, or up to 30 days.

Respite may be requested by a foster family in need of a short break from foster parenting responsibilities, or the family may need to go somewhere where it would not be appropriate to take the child in their care with them. A child or youth may request respite as well. Crossnore staff may also incorporate administrative respite when staff determines the family and the child in the home would benefit from a short time apart. Respite may be used as a strategy to preserve a child's placement.

Some foster families elect to be a respite family only. It is a great opportunity to help children when families are unable to make the commitment to caring for a child in their home full-time. Many other families both provide and use respite in addition to taking full-time foster care placements.

External/Community Respite Foster Care

CCC provides community respite care for other foster care agencies, Departments of Social Services (DSS) or Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). These are typically short term respite (3-7 days) for a client in the community. This type of respite is often needed on an emergency basis.



Adoption Services

Crossnore assists families in adopting through the child welfare system. Crossnore has a foster-to-adopt program, meaning that all prospective adoptive parents become licensed foster parents. Often, foster families welcome children in their home while their plan is still reunification and allow the case to progress. If the child eventually becomes available for adoption, that family may desire to become the adoptive family. This is often ideal, as it reduces the number of transitions and disruptions the child experiences. Recent national statistics tell us that about 70% of foster children who are adopted are adopted by the people who have been fostering them. As far as how often adopting becomes an option, typically about 50% of children in foster care are reunited with their parents and around 25% are eventually adopted.



Many families ask about taking pre-adoptive placements only, as they would like to have less likelihood of a child leaving their home. There are two categories of pre-adoptive placements:

- Legal risk placement: Child's permanency plan is adoption but parental rights have not been terminated, so the parents still have the opportunity to work toward reunification.
- Child is legally free: Parental rights have been terminated and the child is available for the adoption process to begin.

Families can request to take only legal risk/legally free placements. In North Carolina alone, there are over 1,250 children waiting to be adopted. However, it is important to know that children in the foster care system who are waiting for adoptive homes are often older, are part of sibling groups, or have higher levels of need in some area. Additionally, referrals for adoptive placements are less frequent than foster care placements.

Whether a child comes to a home for foster care placement or for pre-adoptive placement, Crossnore requires families to foster a child for 6 months prior to adoption. This allows families to have the greatest support possible during the initial adjustment period.

Qualifications for Foster/Adoptive families

- Be at least 21 years old.
- Pass a home safety inspection and fire safety inspection.
- Have a stable income and the financial ability to help support another child in the home.
- Pass extensive criminal and child abuse record checks.
- Be in good physical and mental health.
- There is no marriage/relationship requirement.
- Complete all pre-service training.
- Recommendation by Crossnore to be a foster home.



The training and licensing process is called “mutual selection.” Foster parent applicants will assess their strengths and needs to make an informed decision about becoming a foster/adoptive family. Crossnore staff will also provide feedback on strengths and needs and assist the family in deciding if fostering/adopting is right for their family.

Foster Home Licensing Process

1. Complete our program application. The application is available online at <https://family.binti.com/users/signup/crossnore-family-application>. Hard copies of application materials are also available upon request. Following receipt of your application and any needed discussion, Crossnore staff will contact you to inform you with the status of your application and how to proceed.

We also offer open informational sessions on a monthly basis which you are welcome to attend at any point before beginning training, before or after applying. The dates, times, and locations (virtual or in-person) are available on the events page of our website at crossnore.org.

2. Complete our pre-service training. The training is a big commitment, and it is important to prioritize attending all training sessions. We consistently hear from families that they really enjoy the training classes and are impacted by what they learn.

- Crossnore will provide 30 hours of foster parent training for licensure as required by the state. Training is offered at various times throughout the year and schedules are available on the Events page of our website.
- Other required trainings include Medication Administration and CPR/First Aid. Crossnore will provide these training opportunities for you.

- Ten additional hours of training are required for therapeutic licensure.

3. Complete licensing paperwork, background checks, home visits, and inspections.

- You will work with a Licensing Family Caseworker who will guide you through the process.
- Our online foster parent portal, Binti, will provide you with a checklist of needed documentation and options for completing those documents electronically.
- There will be at least two home visits with your Licensing Family Caseworker to assess the safety of your home. They will also spend time talking individually with each applicant and with family members about their personal history and their suitability for fostering children.

4. Submit licensing application to the State of North Carolina. Licensing staff compiles information on your family and submits your foster home application to the state, who approves, denies, or requests additional information about each application.

- NC Foster Home Licensing typically responds to applications in 1 – 3 weeks.
- For families who are diligent about paperwork and the process, it is possible to be licensed in about 4 months from beginning the pre-service class.

Additional Information

There is a helpful foster parent orientation video at NCSWlearn.org. The orientation takes about 20 minutes and discusses becoming a foster parent in North Carolina. Completing this orientation is a requirement before beginning training, and will also be a great starting point as you explore fostering.

Cost

There are no agency fees for becoming a foster parent.

Some requirements do have associated fees, including background checks (varies \$15-\$50), fire inspection (typically around \$50), driving records (approximately \$10), and a physical exam. Foster Parent Applicants should be prepared to cover these fees. Amounts will vary depending on applicant location and number of background checks required, such as if the applicant has lived in other states. Your Licensing Family Caseworker can assist you with estimating the total fees.

You may be required to make adjustments in your home for safety, which will be at your expense.

Post-Licensure

Once your license has been approved by the state, you will transition from your Licensing Family Caseworker to a Permanency Planning Family Caseworker (PPFC). Foster families are

primarily in contact with their PPFC going forward. Caseworkers directly supervise foster parents to provide support, guidance, and ensure that the needs of any child in the home are being met. PPFCs are foster parents' "go-to" resource for any questions, concerns, or needs.

Referrals

Once a family is licensed, they are eligible to receive referrals for children needing foster care or adoptive placement. For family foster care placements:



1. County DSS agencies contact agencies like Crossnore when there is a child needing a foster home.
2. The foster family's PPFC contacts them to provide information on the child for the family to consider.
3. The foster family decides if they would be open to having the child placed in their home.
4. The county DSS chooses a family out of those who have agreed to be open to placement.

Many family foster care placements happen on an emergency basis, meaning there may not be an opportunity to meet the child before deciding about placement.

For therapeutic placements, the treatment is a planned service and there will typically be an assessment meeting between the child and the family. Clinical information is available on the child. Both the family and the child/youth (as age appropriate) will have the opportunity to agree to or decline placement.

For pre-adoptive placements, referrals may come from DSS agencies, from within Crossnore, or families may inquire about children whose profiles are available online. The referral and transition process will be determined by a number of factors. The family's caseworker will offer guidance and support to the family in this process.

Once a child is placed in the home, the foster family will have a variety of commitments in addition to the day-to-day caregiving of the child. Some of these responsibilities are:

Agency Commitments

- **Supervision:** Once a month meeting with your caseworker to discuss the child's

progress and how the foster family is doing. Foster parents receive support and guidance from staff.

- **Child and Family Team Meetings (CFT):** Once a month meeting in the home with the child, your Family Caseworker, the child's social worker, and other service providers to review the child's progress in all areas.
- **Quarterly Visits:** Once a quarter compliance review for your foster home license, typically in the home.
- **Support Group:** Twice a month training opportunity for foster parents. Each foster parent is required to obtain 10 hours of continuing education per year to remain a licensed foster parent.
- **Paperwork:** To be submitted monthly and includes medication records, medical forms, educational documents, etc.

Case Specific

- **Shared Parenting:** Foster parents will help the child maintain connections with their biological family and support family efforts toward reunification.
- **Family Visits:** Most children in foster care will have weekly visits with their biological family members. Foster parents are expected to provide transportation as they are able and to support ongoing visits as ordered by the court.
- **Appointments:** Foster parents are responsible for arranging and taking a child to the doctor, dentist, therapy appointments, and other services needed to support their well-being.
- **Case reviews and court hearings:** Foster parents are invited to attend court hearings pertaining to the child in their care. There are also meetings with the Department of Social Services where foster parents are invited to come and share about the child's progress in the home. Foster parents are encouraged but not required to participate. Your Family Caseworker is typically available to attend with you as a support.

We have single working foster parents, two working parents, and homes in which one parent stays at home. All have been able to foster successfully. While families of all kinds are able to make foster parenting work, it is important to think ahead of time what adjustments you will need to make with work and other obligations in your life. We encourage families to talk with your employer(s) early in the process about your plans to foster.

Financial Support

While fostering, there is a monthly stipend to help cover the costs of caring for the child. This stipend is not considered income, but reimbursement. For family foster care, these rates are set by the state of North Carolina and are based on the age of the child.

- 0 – 5 years old: \$514 per month
- 6 – 12 years old: \$654 per month
- 13+ years old : \$698 per month

For therapeutic foster care, the amount of the stipend increases with experience, but begins for Level II placements at \$1100 per month. The step-down Level I is \$1000 per month.

Some families use the stipend to cover the increase in their grocery expenses and bills. Other families are able to place the entire stipend in an account set aside for the child. Most families are somewhere in between. Crossnore does expect that foster families will provide an age appropriate allowance to children out of this stipend, as well as cover the cost of field trips, participating in sports activities, etc.

Daycare expenses are often covered by DSS vouchers, provided the county budget allows, when the foster parent(s) are working.



Moving Toward Adoption

If a child in your home becomes eligible for adoption, an Adoptions Family Caseworker will complete a Pre-Placement Assessment for your family and will support you in adopting the child in your home.

Adoption fees, including the filing fee, are typically reimbursable through the state following the adoption finalization for children in foster care.

Why Crossnore Communities for Children?

Our Foster Care and Adoptions staff bring years of experience in child welfare combined with a personalized, compassionate approach in our work with children, families, and foster families. Your assigned Caseworker will work extensively with your family and any child in your home.

Our Caseworkers have manageable caseloads that allow them to be accessible to you on a regular basis. Additionally, Crossnore offers an array of services that are open to the children in our care, including outpatient therapy and psychiatric services as needed.

We are thankful for your heart for helping children! We also appreciate your time in considering partnering with Crossnore to make a difference in the life of a child. Please contact us at FHLicensing@crossnore.org with questions or to get more information about taking the next step.