

Fostering Health Program



Each year, approximately 500,000 children are in the foster care system in the United States. In Philadelphia, more than 6,000 children are in foster, kinship or residential care. These children often lack routine healthcare due to frequent changes in placement, and many have chronic health conditions and behavioral and emotional problems needing coordinated care. At The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, a team of specialists work together to help these vulnerable children.



Our Goals

Working closely with foster care families and Philadelphia's Department of Human Services (DHS) and its Community Umbrella Agencies (CUAs), the Fostering Health Program strives to ensure every foster child has access to continuous, high-quality care.

Specifically, our goals include:

- Prompt, comprehensive evaluations following foster care placement
- Establishing a primary care medical home for consistent health supervision
- Reducing preventable hospitalizations and visits to the emergency department
- Making earlier connections to the services children can benefit from
- Aiding the child's transition into a new living situation
- Assisting the foster parents in accessing services for unique healthcare needs

What We Do

Our team of experienced providers evaluates each child when they are placed into foster care.

The evaluation typically lasts one and a half hours. The child may see a series of specialists, including pediatricians, nurse coordinator, occupational therapists, and others. In advance of the appointment, we will work with the DHS case worker and prior providers to gather medical records and background information.

After the careful review of medical records and history and the physical evaluation and completion of standardized screens, our team creates a care plan. Our goal is to identify the child's medical, behavioral, emotional and developmental needs, and to make sure these needs are being met during the transition to foster care, or a

new placement, and beyond. The care plan is shared with the foster child's primary care provider, DHS case workers, the foster parent, and when appropriate, the biological parent.

Our Team

The members of the Fostering Health Program team are leaders in the field of child healthcare and welfare. Our team includes general pediatricians, child abuse pediatric specialists, nurses, occupational therapists, psychologists and a social worker.

How to Make a Referral

Many referrals come from the DHS and CUAs. We welcome referrals from primary care providers. Assessment criteria include:

- Children recently placed into foster care (initial and/or subsequent placement)
- Unknown prior healthcare provider
- Children who show previous fragmented care, such as mostly emergency department visits or more than 2 different primary care providers in the past year
- No prior care for more than 6 months in a child younger than 1
- No prior care in the past year in a child older than 1
- Immunizations at more than 2 sites in one year or no record of immunizations in the registry

To make a referral, call **267-426-0982**.
For general inquiries or to speak to a member
of the team, call **267-426-5005**.

www.chop.edu/fosteringhealth