



99 Ways To Support a Foster Parent

WRITTEN BY FOSTER PARENTS

This list was written by foster parents in West Michigan who need your support now more than ever during COVID-19. Please be mindful of social distancing and CDC recommendations for each option and use adaptations when necessary.

1. Pay for a **Shipt** membership or offer to deliver groceries.
2. Mail **encouraging notes** to a foster parent.
3. Be a classmate who sends happy and inclusive **mail** to foster youth.
4. Take a **basket** of fresh fruits and vegetables to a foster family.
5. Drop off **hair care products** specific to African American hair needs.
6. Prepare a **freezer meal** and drop it off.
7. Stock a **first aid kit** (Tylenol, Motrin, Benadryl, etc.).
8. My kiddos get worried when they feel like there isn't enough food; drop off **packaged snacks**.
9. A friend of mine **addressed multiple cards** to me and gave them to other friends (and people I didn't even know) to write me letters of kind encouragement. They showed up randomly and always when needed.
10. Drop off **games, puzzles, or art supplies** to keep the kids busy.
11. Give a gift card for **back to school items**.
12. Be a person who **practices inclusion**, advocacy, understanding, and compassion.
13. Offer to be a virtual homework helper or **tutor** and set up weekly appointments.
14. Pay for an **Amazon Prime** membership.
15. Give **assertive help** - not a blanket statement like "let me know how I can help" but instead, "I'm about to do a grocery run for you. What kind of milk does your family drink and any special requests?"
16. Give a thoughtful gift like a **journal** and pen to a foster parent.
17. Bring over **hand sanitizer**, soap, and cleaning products.
18. Be that stranger who gifts and does **random acts of kindness**.
19. Give diapers/wipes/formula or set up an **Amazon diaper fund**.
20. Buy **printer ink** for stay at home learning worksheets.
21. Be a **teacher** who is eager to accommodate my foster child.
22. Set up **virtual dance** exercise lessons for our kiddos.
23. **Read a book virtually** to my kids and let them read back to you.
24. Set up times to play **games** virtually together.
25. Create a neighborhood **scavenger hunt** for our kiddos.
26. Ask when our child's birthday is and organize a **birthday drive-by**.
27. Be that stranger that gives a **smile**.
28. **Ask** what my child is into. My son loves to fish and some guys gave him odds and ends to help him build his tackle box.
29. Gift an **activity** to do with the kids, like zoo passes.
30. **Choose not to ask** all the questions that enter your brain.
31. Join us in rooting for and encouraging the **birth parents**.
32. **Check in** after the initial placement- when things calm down.
33. **Regularly bring** over milk and bananas so we don't need to go to the store so often for our younger kiddos.
34. Provide capable and caring **respite**.
35. Become a **mentor** - sometimes kids hear a different adult voice vs. their parent at home.
36. **Pray**, and let us know you are doing so.
37. Give **gift cards** to restaurants or for activities.
38. Send a **text** to ask how things are going.
39. Put together a **support group** for the foster parents.
40. Deliver **clothes** from Closet of Hope (or local clothes closet).
41. **Reserve** judgment.
42. Bring over **masks** that follow CDC guidelines for our family.
43. Share **positive stories** about foster care and adoption from my own experience.
44. Be an understanding and gracious **doctor or nurse** during appointments.
45. Help with house projects and **small repairs**.
46. **Educate yourself** about the rhetoric and the community.
47. Offer to do **yard projects** for us.
48. Give foster parents the opportunity for a **nap**.
49. Respect our **solitude** when we need it.
50. Ask for my child's size and give gently used in-style **clothing**.
51. Share your hobbies or teach **professional skills** to my kiddo.
52. Take the child **out for a day** to do something they are interested in.
53. Be a kid who invites a foster child to a virtual craft or **game night**.
54. When my kiddos are having an epic meltdown in the grocery store, show **empathy**.
55. Invite my kid to help you build something and teach **handy skills**.
56. **Holidays** can be exceptionally tough times; offer to help with regular tasks.
57. Give foster parents a break by giving **tickets** to an event.
58. **Educate** yourself and your kids on what not to ask.
59. Offer to take a child to an **appointment**.
60. Give the child a shirt with their **new school name** or team logo when they join a new school.
61. Pay for a month of our **Wi-Fi**.
62. Learn to say a foster child's **name** right- it matters so much.
63. Bring a cup of **coffee** the day after a new placement.
64. **Refer** to our kids as "your kids" and not "your foster kids".
65. A friend came over and told me to go for an hour or two anywhere (by myself!), because she was **babysitting** and feeding my kids dinner.
66. Pay for **summer camp** or extracurricular activities.
67. Learn to **listen** and not give advice or try to fix something-- just listen.
68. Invite us out to **dinner** and be accepting of the kids and who they are.
69. We could not do this without the **racial guides/mirrors** in our community that are an invaluable resource for my family.
70. Drop off **coats** that are in style and the right size for our kids.
71. Volunteer to do our **laundry**.
72. Offer to **clean** my house.
73. Give **chocolate!**
74. Put a note in my **church mailbox**.
75. Work with your kid to be **friends** with my kid, even when it is hard.
76. **Refrain** from asking questions, especially in front of the kids.
77. Become a foster **grandparent** - spoil and love on the kids.
78. **Hire** my teen to do a job and pay them.
79. Give the gift of a good **laugh**.
80. Stop asking where the **case** is at- be okay with not knowing everything.
81. Share your **list** of recommended babysitters.
82. Go on a **coffee** date with the foster parent.
83. Gift a streaming membership like **Disney plus**.
84. Care for the family's **pets** (I know our dog doesn't feel as loved during chaotic times).
85. Put together a **sensory bin** gift and drop it off.
86. Continue to **invite** our family to participate. Don't treat us differently now!
87. **Talk** to my child when you run into them at church, school, or wherever, and say more than the standard "Hi, how are you".
88. Learn proper and appropriate **terminology**.
89. Help advocate for **IEP** services or provide expertise on the subject.
90. Offer to call **daycares** to find openings.
91. **Include** our kids in extracurricular activities, even if it is hard.
92. Spend **one-on-one** time with the child and invest in building a relationship.
93. Do away with the "foster" **stigma**.
94. Throw a **creative shower** for new placements- gift card shower, freezer meal shower, or support sign-up sheet shower.
95. Be a foster parent who is ok with **asking for help**.
96. Our neighbor showed up to our kid's **basketball games** and cheered him on. It made a world of difference.
97. Teach my kiddos how to play a game like **chess**, virtually.
98. Be that **congregation** that listens and cares- our local church has really come alongside us and it means so much.
99. Our friends without kids were willing to **adapt** to our new lifestyle with kids- a tremendous gift.