**Foster Parents Needed!**

The United Keetoowah Band Indian Child Welfare (ICW) department is currently seeking Keetoowah foster families to provide care and a safe, temporary home for Keetoowah children who have been removed from their home. A child's time in a foster home could be as brief as 48 hours or as long as a year until they are returned to their families or if parental rights have been terminated. If possible, children are placed in a Keetoowah home with Keetoowah foster parents. In most cases, these individuals understand and appreciate the culture and it is a more normal environment for the child.

Foster parents are paid monthly depending on the age of the child they are providing a home. Children can range from newborns to 17-year-olds. The foster home may also be a group home. ICW prefers to keep siblings together if at all possible. Foster parents may be a married couple, a single person, an elder, or the child's family member. *Our main goal is reunification of families.*

We work with parents to complete a treatment plan by setting them up in programs such as Parenting Classes, Anger Management and Family Counseling. We also refer clients to other programs and resources for such problems as substance abuse or mental illness. Some of these children who are placed in the system have physical, medical, psychological, emotional, social, and behavioral needs. ICW helps meet those needs by coordinating with the foster parents and other agencies that provide these services.

**Qualifications of Placement Resource Homes**

Whenever an application is received to become a Placement Resource (foster) home for the United Keetoowah Band, the applicants will be assessed to ensure they meet qualifications. Some of the key criteria are listed in this section:

**Membership:** Basic qualification requirements include enrollment of the applicant (or spouse) as an exclusive member of the UKB or another federally recognized Indian tribe, or a relative of a child in the custody of the tribe or state.

**Background Investigations:** Each member of the resource family household and any individual who assists with the care and supervision of children, age 18 or over, shall submit to a background investigation and should be free from unacceptable criminal and child welfare backgrounds.

**Health**: Each member of the resource family household or any individual, who assists with the care and supervision of Cherokee children, shall be in sufficiently good physical and mental health to provide necessary care for a child.

**Age**: The minimum age requirement to become a placement resource home is 21. The placement resource must also be able to provide adequate guidance, care and protection to the child.

**Income**: The Placement Resource family should have sufficient income to meet their own family's basic needs before any planned additions to the household are considered.

**Employment**: Employment, education, and/or training pursuits of placement resources are evaluated in regard to the ages and needs of the child(ren) for whom they wish to provide care. When both parents in a two-parent home and when single parents are employed, suitable plans for day care and/or supervision of the child must be approved by the agency.

**Cultural Values**: Placement Resource families must show respect for the child's individual cultural heritage. Efforts must be made by the Placement Resource families to provide similar cultural experiences, to the background of the child, when possible.

**References**: Each household should supply a minimum of six references who can attest to the placement resources ability to care for children. Two of the six references may be from family members. Four references should be from persons familiar with the family and from a variety of perspectives that can provide a well-rounded picture of the family functioning and character. These could include friends, coworkers, church acquaintances, school officials, mental health care or other individuals.

**Home Assessment:** The certification workers will be taking into consideration the home environment and physical surroundings for safety and suitability.

Generally speaking, if you have a stable home and some solid parenting skills, you can become a foster parent. You can be single or married and it doesn't matter if you have children of your own. People who work outside the home can also be foster parents. There are some specific requirements you have to be able to meet. You must be at least 21 years old. Have enough room (and beds) in your home for a foster child to sleep and keep his or her belongings. Have a home that can meet basic fire, safety and sanitary standards. Be physically and emotionally capable of caring for children and have no alcohol or drug abuse problems. Be able to pass a criminal background check and have no substantiated record of abusing or neglecting children. Make enough money to provide for your own family, so you do not need to depend on the foster care reimbursement you might receive as income. If you meet these requirements, come and see us or call one of us at 918-871-2800.