



# Is Fostering Right for You?

## Media Research Recommendation List

Are you in the early stages of exploring whether becoming a licensed foster parent is right for you? Are you looking to experience what foster and kinship care are like through movies, TV shows, and books? Enjoy this comprehensive guide as you begin your journey of opening your home to youth in need.

**1. Instant Family (2018) | Movie | PG-13 | 118 min**

*Why: The most accessible foster-care recruitment film shows chaos, humor, disruption, and growth without sugarcoating.*

**2. Foster (2018, HBO) | Documentary | TV-14 | 90 min**

*Why: Gold standard for realism. Youth voice, caseworkers, courts, foster parents — all present.*

**3. Short Term 12 (2013) | Movie | R | 96 min**

*Why: Best depiction of trauma-informed care and secondary trauma for staff. Excellent for professional training.*

**4. The Fosters (2013–2018) | TV Series | TV-14 | 5 seasons**

*Why: Long-form exploration of placements, reunification, adoption, identity, and system strain.*

**5. The Great Gilly Hopkins (2015) | Movie | PG-13 | 94 min**

*Why: Strong foster-youth perspective; good bridge between youth and adult audiences.*

**6. Anne with an E (2017–2019) | TV Series | TV-14 | 3 seasons**

*Why: Trauma, attachment, and belonging are portrayed gently but honestly.*

**7. Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot (2024) | Movie | PG-13 | ~120 min**

*Why: Shows large-scale foster/adoptive response while inviting discussion about capacity and sustainability.*

**8. Lilo & Stitch (2002) | Animated Movie | PG | 85 min**

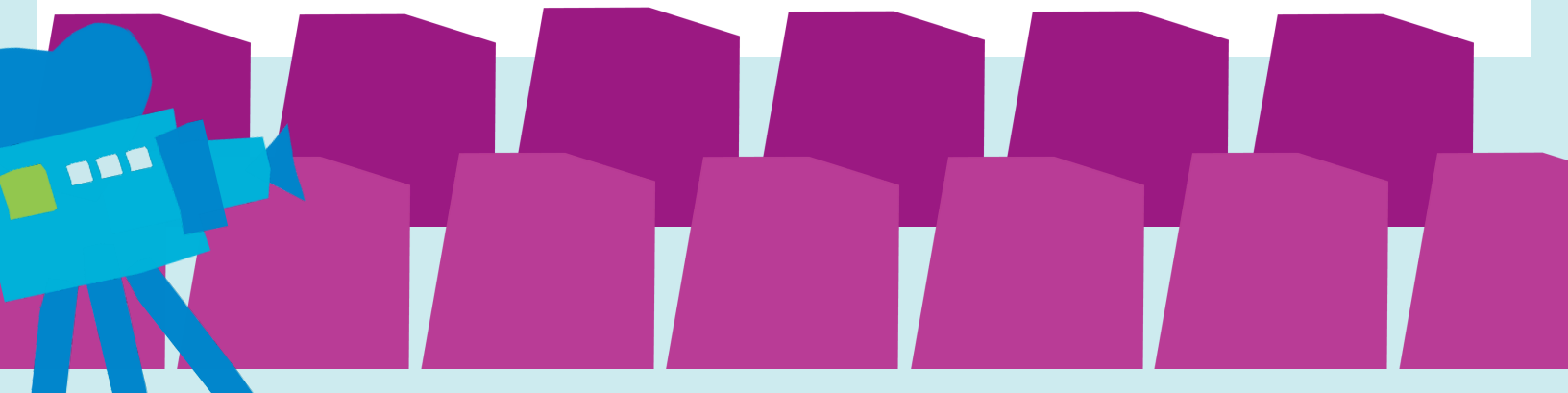
*Why: Excellent kinship-care story for younger children; social worker presence handled respectfully.*

**9. Rocket's Island (2012–2015, UK) | TV Series | TV-G | 3 seasons**

*Why: Rare example of calm, stable foster care shown as a long-term environment, not a crisis.*

**10. Matilda (1996) | Movie | PG | 98 min**

*Why: A child-friendly story about neglect, rescue, and chosen family — timeless and discussion-friendly.*



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### Movies & Documentaries

1. *Instant Family* (2018) | PG-13 | 118 min
2. *Foster* (2018, HBO) | TV-14 | 90 min
3. *Martian Child* (2007) | PG-13 | 106 min
4. *Lilo & Stitch* (2002) | PG | 85 min
5. *Lilo & Stitch (Live-Action)* (2025) | PG | ~108 min
6. *Despicable Me* (2010) | PG | 95 min
7. *Annie* (1982) | G | 127 min
8. *The Great Gilly Hopkins* (2015) | PG-13 | 94 min
9. *Angels in the Outfield* (1994) | PG | 102 min
10. *Earth to Echo* (2014) | PG | 90 min
11. *Shazam!* (2019) | PG-13 | 132 min
12. *Stuart Little* (1999) | PG | 84 min
13. *Meet the Robinsons* (2007) | PG | 95 min
14. *Matilda* (1996) | PG | 98 min
15. *America* (2009, TV Movie) | TV-PG | 89 min
16. *The Unloved* (2009) | TV-14 | 106 min
17. *A Long Way Home* (1981, TV Movie) | TV-PG | 120 min
18. *Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot* (2024) | PG-13 | ~120 min
19. *Lion* (2016) | PG-13 | 118 min
20. *Short Term 12* (2013) | R | 96 min

### Television Series

1. *The Fosters* (2013–2018) | TV-14 | 5 seasons
2. *Rocket's Island* (2012–2015) | TV-G | 3 seasons
3. *The Babysitter's Club* (2020–2021) | TV-G | 2 seasons
4. *Anne with an E* (2017–2019) | TV-14 | 3 seasons
5. *Lost Boys & Fairies* (2025) | TV-14 | 1 season





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### Books for Teens & Adults: Foster Care, Adoption, and Found Families

#### Realistic/Contemporary (Not All Heavy)

1. *Three Little Words* by Ashley Rhodes-Courter  
*An honest but accessible memoir, often recommended for foster parents.*
2. *Another Place at the Table* by Kathy Harrison  
*Reflective foster parent perspective that is humane, but not preachy.*
3. *Orphan Train* by Christina Baker Kline  
*A historical fiction work about displacement, resilience, and kinship across generations.*
4. *Before We Were Yours* by Lisa Wingate  
*A historical tale about a found family and child welfare abuses that is emotional but readable.*
5. *White Oleander* by Janet Fitch  
*About fictional foster placements from a strong teen perspective.*

#### Fantasy/Science-Fiction/Speculative (Found Family Themes)

1. *The House in the Cerulean Sea* by T.J. Klune  
*Highly recommended! A bureaucracy satire about a magical foster home that is very joy-forward.*
2. *The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaiman  
*A story about an orphan raised by ghosts that is gentle, eerie, and deeply about chosen family.*
3. *Good Omens* by Pratchett & Gaiman  
*This is not foster-specific, but it is very resonant and about a found family through chaos.*
4. *The Long Way to a Small, Angry Planet* by Becky Chambers  
*This is excellent for youth who don't want "issue books" and features a crew-as-family dynamic.*
5. *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card  
*A story about institutional care, isolation, and moral injury that often resonates with foster teens.*

#### Young Adult/Crossover Fiction

1. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon  
*Features caregiver breakdowns, system strain, and independence.*
2. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky  
*Features trauma, healing, and chosen support networks.*
3. *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* by Neil Gaiman  
*Features childhood neglect, magical protection, and emotional safety.*
4. *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman  
*Features an adult survivor finding connection and a hopeful arc.*
5. *We Are Okay* by Nina LaCour  
*Features grief, independence, and redefining family.*





# Is Fostering Right for You?

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### Books for Children & Youth: Foster Care, Adoption, and Found Families

#### *Ages 3–6 (Picture Books)*

1. *A Mother for Choco* by Keiko Kasza
2. *The Family Book* by Todd Parr
3. *Maybe Days* by Jennifer Wilgocki
4. *All Kinds of Families* by Suzanne Lang

#### *Ages 6–9 (Early Chapter/Transitional)*

1. *The One and Only Ivan* by Katherine Applegate
2. *The Wild Robot* by Peter Brown
3. *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo
4. *The Great Gilly Hopkins* by Katherine Paterson

#### *Ages 9–12 (Middle Grade)*

1. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling
2. *Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery
3. *The House with Chicken Legs* by Sophie Anderson
4. *Percy Jackson & the Olympians* by Rick Riordan
5. *A Series of Unfortunate Events* by Lemony Snicket

#### *Teens (13+ Young Adult)*

1. *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton
2. *Far from the Tree (YA Edition)* by Robin Benway
3. *Scythe* by Neal Shusterman
4. *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
5. *The Knife of Never Letting Go* by Patrick Ness



### Ready for the Next Step?

NewPath Child & Family Solutions invites you to attend upcoming Foster Parent Preservice Trainings. Looking for a little more information? Check out our Q&A Sessions, where you can ask us ANYTHING in [Becoming a Foster Parent 101!](#)

Scan or visit: [newpath.org/foster-parent-training-registration](https://newpath.org/foster-parent-training-registration)

