Foster Care and Infertility Treatment

Can I apply to become a foster carer if I am undergoing IVF?

No, you cannot foster a child if you are undergoing IVF. Children and young people who are in need of foster care arrangements require stability and a lot of time and attention spent upon them. They also need to feel as if they have a place in the family that is safe and secure, and obviously this may be more difficult to achieve with couples who are currently still actively engaged in expanding their family.

Many people state that they have felt worn down by the stresses and the losses associated with infertility. It's not uncommon for people to experience grief in response to the many losses experienced, as well as other emotional responses such as depression and anxiety.

We advise applicants to complete investigations and treatment and feel emotionally ready to move on before applying to become a foster carer. This is because of the emotional stress involved in fertility treatment and the need for applicants to be ready to devote their energies to fostering.

Reasons for guidelines on fertility treatment:

- The emotional impact and stress associated with assisted conception may be exacerbated by the assessment and/or placement process. Undertaking both processes concurrently may impact on an applicant's ability to complete the assessment process, associated training requirements and/or provide care for children.
- The potential for a period of significant distress to be suffered should applicants continue to be unsuccessful at conceiving a child. The associated difficulty of caring for vulnerable children during this time is also of concern for any applicants that are approved as carers.

> **To be eligible as a foster carer, an applicant must have finished their involvement with a fertility program for a period of not less than 12 months. Applicants must demonstrate an acceptance of their infertility and an understanding of the impact of infertility upon each of them as an individual and as a family.**