



Developing a Clothing Closet Ministry

Children who are placed in foster care frequently come into care with only the clothes they are wearing, whether it be too big, too small, or not weather-appropriate. Even though foster parents may receive a small clothing allowance for the children placed in their care, this is not immediately available. A clothing closet for foster parents is a good option for churches to support foster families within their congregation or community. A place where families can go or someone to call when they receive the phone call that the worker is on their way with two little people who only have what they are wearing. Many foster care support groups have clothing closets and resources you can contact for additional support and ideas.

Here are some ideas to develop a clothing closet:

- Find some free space. This can be a classroom or a literal closet in your church building. A family within your congregation may have space in their home or garage to house items. Depending on how large you want your closet to be, it could be anywhere from several wire shelving units to a wall of shelves in a garage or basement.
- Request donations of new or gently used clothing. Be specific about requirements and needs (for example, there may be a need for more toddler items than infant items). Also, be specific about donation drop-off locations and times.
- Organize volunteers to sort, clean, and shelf donations
- Separate clothing into sizes. This could include infants, toddlers, bigger kids, and teens. You can also separate into summer or winter and girls and boys
- Market the clothing to members of your church and other churches within your community, in foster and adoption support groups, to local human services agencies, and through social media. If you are needing financial assistance, ask your church staff liaison for an opportunity to reach out to church members for donations.