

FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions

We appreciate your interest and invite you to contact us with any additional questions you may have about the Crisis Nursery and our services.

1. What age children do you care for at the Crisis Nursery? The Nursery shelters children newborn through age six. If families have children seven or older, we help the family problem solve to identify where those children might be able to go. Sometimes there are friends or family who could take an older child, but not the younger ones.

2. How do families hear about you?

Families hear about the Nursery through word of mouth, other agency referral processes and resource publications, hospitals and medical professionals, public and social media. The Nursery distributes brochures and has posters in the community.

3. How often can parents use the Nursery?

We do not have a limit on the use of the Nursery since a crisis or emergency has no limit. Our respite are planned through our Director of Programming and the family and are based on the family's need.

4. What do you consider a crisis?

The families who use our services define their own "crisis". The Nursery does prioritize crisis situations in order to always be responsive to the "crisis" that has the highest risk to the child.

5. How do you know parents aren't abusing your services?

Although the Nursery feels that we would always "err on the side of the child," if a parent tried to abuse our services, our staff is well trained to be able to ask the right questions. If they feel that a parent is trying to abuse our services, we meet with them to basically confront them and help them find more appropriate services.

6. Does DCFS place children here?

We are not a foster care agency and DCFS does not place children here. They do refer open family cases who are having problems and need extra help to our Parent-Child Interaction groups. In-home families can utilize Nursery care to assist them in meeting their goals.

7. Where do you refer clients for housing, food, clothing issues?

Our Family Specialists have an extensive list of agencies/services that can be utilized to assist clients. We do give out baby food, clothes and diapers to our clients in need.

8. What do you do if you feel that it is not safe for the children to go home with the parents when they come to pick up their children?

If the Family Specialist is concerned when a parent comes to pick up the child, they will approach the parent with their concerns and offer a longer stay for the parent to take care of the difficulty. If the child is not being abused or neglected, we must release the child into the parent's custody.

9. What happens if we suspect abuse or neglect of a child?

The Nursery staff are mandated reporters and must report any abuse or neglect to the DCFS Hot Line.

10. If a report is made what happens to the children?

DCFS determines whether to take the report and would investigate. If the report is founded, the court will determine whether the child remains home with follow-up as an 'in-home' case or goes into foster care.

11. Where do you get the money to support your programs?

Crisis Nursery has a very diverse budget with each area being vital to our entire budget. 25% of our budget comes from private sources which include individuals, businesses, schools, organizations, and foundations, 31% from federal, state, and local government sources, 13% from special events, 7% from United Way designations and allocations, 3% from interest and endowment, and 21% from in-kind donations. We receive in-kind donations of diapers, clothing, cleaning and office supplies. Our beautiful landscaping is provided through a University Extension Master Garden program. OSF provides regular outdoor maintenance, laundry services, warm meals, and so much more. Check out our [Annual Report](#) for more details.

12. What is your relationship to OSF Heart of Mary Medical Center?

OSF is a generous benefactor and provides approximately in-kind support to the Nursery - Crisis Nursery is not a part of OSF Heart of Mary Medical Center.

13. How many employees do you have?

The Nursery has the equivalent of 18 Full time employees, many of which have part time schedules to enable the best use of staff filling the 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year services to children. We also have a list of substitutes and utilize scheduled volunteers to assist the child care workers.

14. What are the qualifications of the staff?

Our staff and volunteer are trained extensively using BabyTALK and our own specifically developed adult-child interaction philosophy and training, as well as in-depth in-services focusing on such topics of social and emotional development, challenging behaviors, transitions, health issues and cultural diversity issues. All staff and volunteers meet DCFS licensing standards and are screened.

15. How do staff and volunteers handle children when they “act out”?

The Nursery has developed a training program utilizing positive, accepting, non-shaming methods to re-direct the child’s attention and provide alternatives to unacceptable behavior patterns. These are also shared with parents.

16. Do you accept gently used clothing and toys?

We accept gently used children’s clothing, diapers, formula, snacks, small equipment and new toys. We cannot accept stuffed animals and used toys due to health and hygiene issues. You can find our donation policies and Needs & Wish List [here](#).

17. Do children go to school while they are sheltered at the Nursery?

We cannot provide transportation to and from a school situation. Most children who are staying with us are not in school.