

Cook County Advocate

2007 • Vol. 2

News for Chicago Metro Area Families

Child psychiatric clinic has new name

The success of the Integrated Assessment Program highlighted the need for adolescent psychiatric care by experts who understand child welfare needs and can respond quickly. In 2006, the DCFS Division of Clinical Services and Professional Development opened the Bridge Clinic. That clinic is now known as PACT (Psychiatry for Adolescents and Children in Transition). PACT - Cook South Clinic provides immediate mental health services to children as they enter the child welfare system. It will be able to aid with psychiatric assessments and medication needs.

"If the Integrated Assessment shows a child is depressed, we can't have him in a foster home for weeks without treatment while the caregiver looks for a community provider," said clinic director Dr. SooMi Lee, a pediatrician and child psychiatrist. "PACT will fill in that gap."

The PACT-Cook South Clinic is located on the grounds of LaRabida Children's Hospital at 65th and Lake Michigan. The child's caseworker can assist caregivers if services are required as part of the Integrated Assessment.



S.O.A.R. connects kids to free summer camps

The DCFS S.O.A.R. program has arranged with the Chicago Park District and several suburban camps in Cook County to provide day camp for children in foster care and children with open intact family cases. Children ages 6 to 12 are eligible. DCFS has already identified eligible youth in placement and contacted caregivers with instructions on how to register for programs.

In Chicago, DCFS will provide caregivers with forms that confirm that the registration fee will be paid by DCFS. Transportation costs are not covered. Foster parents can enroll children in the camp program at the park of their choosing. Caregivers who would like to register their children for one of the funded programs should take forms provided by DCFS with them when they go to register at the park program of their choice.

The Chicago Park District has day programs running all summer in parks across the city. Before and after care is available in many sites. Registration begins April 21 and continues through the first week of camp. See www.chicagoparkdistrict.com for more details.



The Department is also making arrangements for youth day camp programs with several suburban camps in Cook County. Potential suburban program locations include: Harvey, Hazel Crest, Maywood Park, Bellwood, Country Club Hills, Homewood and Flossmoor. These programs will be funded for DCFS youth currently in foster care. However, transportation costs, if applicable, are not included.

For more information on day camp, contact the S.O.A.R. Program at 312-814-4145.



DCFS takes "Action for Children" to make pre-K enrollment easier

While reading and writing skills usually come in Kindergarten, pre-Kindergarten programs lay the social and emotional foundation for learning. Under the DCFS School Readiness Initiative, all children at age three or older should be enrolled in a Head Start program, state pre-Kindergarten program or an accredited child care center. Now with a recent state agreement, all children in DCFS care are automatically eligible for Head Start and state pre-K programs, regardless of household income. DCFS and Action for Children recently announced new procedures to help caregivers in Cook County identify, evaluate and enroll in a Head Start or state pre-K program more easily.

As a child approaches his or her third birthday, the caseworker should begin the process for enrollment in pre-Kindergarten. Action for Children is the local organization that provides referrals to connect families with child care providers. DCFS and Action for Children have set up an enhanced referral process so children in DCFS care receive special service.

Caseworkers will contact Action for Children on the designated enhanced referral phone line. The agency will confirm the child's information and then call the foster parent to discuss the type of program the child needs.

"Our role is to provide resources and educational consultation to the parent," said Shanta Payton-Scott. "We go over what caregivers should look for in a program and the questions they may want to ask."

Action for Children will find programs that match the family's criteria and then confirm openings. Next, they provide the foster parents with a profile sheet of applicable programs. The caregiver can then contact the providers, make a decision and enroll the child.

Foster parents of children who are three years old and not enrolled in a Head Start or Pre-Kindergarten program should contact their caseworker right away. Quality preschool gives children academic readiness, and it also helps them learn to play, make friends, and receive positive attention from adults. Youth in foster care especially need the stability of an early educational program that can help them "catch up" from any educational and developmental setbacks due to problems in their family life. Then, when they reach kindergarten, they will understand how school works and will be ready to perform well.

Watch for age 0-5 development

Last year, DCFS concentrated efforts to make sure that all young children in care received developmental screenings. Children entering care for the first time under the Integrated Assessment Program received these important screenings as part of their assessment.

During IA, the screeners will talk with the child and the foster parents. If the child needs services for a developmental delay or a social/emotional disorder, DCFS will make a referral for intensive services. Alternatively, the screenings could find that the child would benefit from a referral to an enrichment program. Even children who pass the screenings without any developmental concerns will still later receive a follow-up screening, as required for their age. The service providers often contact foster parents directly. When this happens, caregivers should respond and make the child available for all follow-up services.

In addition to the mandated screenings, foster parents should continue to watch for potential signs of developmental delay and discuss their concerns with the child's caseworker. It is possible to request another evaluation through the Child and Family Connection (CFC) providers in Cook County, which are listed on the following page.

Chicago and Cook County early childhood resources

North Suburban

Child & Family Connections #6
Clearbrook Center
1835 W. Central Road
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
847-385-5070

Including the following zip codes
60004, 60005, 60006, 60007,
60008, 60010, 60016, 60018,
60022, 60025, 60026, 60028,
60029, 60043, 60052, 60056,
60062, 60067, 60068, 60070,
60074, 60076, 60077, 60082,
60089, 60900, 60091, 60092,
60093, 60106, 60107, 60120,
60143, 60157, 60173, 60192,
60193, 60194, 60195, 60201,
60202, 60203, 60204, 60712 and
60714

Central Suburban

Child & Family Connections #7
Suburban Access, Inc.
4415 West Harrison Street, Ste. 201
Hillside, IL 60162
708-449-0625
CFC Manager: Laverne Whitaker

Including the following zip codes
60104, 60130, 60131, 60141,
60153, 60154, 60160, 60162,
60163, 60164, 60165, 60171, 60176
60301, 60302, 60303, 60304,
60305, 60402, 60455, 60513,
60525, 60526, 60534, 60546,
60558, 60666, 60706, 60707 and
60804

Chicago Southwest

Child & Family Connections #8
Easter Seals Society of Metro
Chicago
9455 S. Hoyne
Chicago, IL 60620
773-233-1799

Including the following zip codes
60620, 60628, 60629, 60633,
60638, 60643, 60652, 60655,
60805 and 60827

Chicago Central/West

Child & Family Connections #9
Hektoen Institute for Medical
Research
Cook County Children's Hospital
1901 West Harrison
Fantus Clinic - Room 209
Chicago, IL 60612
312-864-6575

Including the following zip codes
60601, 60602, 60603, 60604,
60605, 60606, 60607, 60608,
60612, 60616, 60623, 60624,
60632, 60644 and 60661

Chicago Southeast

Child & Family Connections #10
LaRabida Children's Hospital
950 E. 61st Street
Chicago, IL 60637
773-324-7434

Including the following zip codes
60609, 60615, 60617, 60619,
60621, 60636, 60637, 60649 and
60653

Chicago North

Child & Family Connections #11
945 W. George Street, Suite 300
Chicago, Illinois 60657
312-942-7800

Including the following zip codes
60610, 60611, 60613, 60614,
60618, 60622, 60625, 60626,
60630, 60631, 60634, 60635,
60639, 60640, 60641, 60645,
60646, 60647, 60648, 60651,
60656, 60657, 60659 and 60660

South Suburban

Child & Family Connections #12
Easter Seals Society of Metro
Chicago
17300 S. Ozark Ave., North Building
Tinley Park, IL 60477
708-429-8231

Including the following zip codes
60406, 60409, 60411, 60415,
60426, 60428, 60429, 60430,
60438, 60439, 60443, 60445,
60448, 60452, 60453, 60455,
60456, 60457, 60458, 60459,
60461, 60462, 60463, 60464,
60465, 60466, 60467, 60469,
60471, 60472, 60473, 60475,
60476, 60477, 60478, 60480,
60482, 60499, 60501 and 60803

* * *

Cook County also has two Early Childhood Coordinators who support families and staff on developmental issues. Lynnare Deutsch-Claudio focuses on children up to age three. She can be reached at 847-745-3065 or by e-mail at lynnare.claudio@illinois.gov. Robin York specializes in youth age three to five. Contact her at 312-328-2748 or robin.york@illinois.gov.

Car seat safety needs change as children grow

Just as caregivers have to keep children safe in the home, they also have to think about safety in cars. Motor vehicle crashes still remain the number one killer of children ages 4 to 14 in America. While 98 percent of America's infants and 93 percent of children ages 1 to 3 are now regularly restrained, not enough children ages 4 through 7 are restrained *properly* for their size and age. As children grow, how they need to be secured in a car, truck, van or SUV changes. For maximum child passenger safety, parents and caregivers simply need to remember and follow the *4 Steps for Kids*:

- 1) For the best possible protection keep infants in the back seat, in rear-facing child safety seats, as long as possible up to the height or weight limit of the particular seat. At a minimum, keep infants rear-facing until a minimum of age 1 and at least 20 pounds;
- 2) When children outgrow their rear-facing seats (at a minimum age 1 and at least 20 pounds) they should ride in forward-facing child safety seats, in the back seat, until they reach the upper weight or height limit of the particular seat (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds);
- 3) Once children outgrow their forward-facing seat (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds), they should ride in booster seats, in the back seat, until the

vehicle seat belts fit properly. Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest (usually at age 8 or when they are 4'9" tall);

- 4) When children outgrow their booster seats, (usually at age 8 or when they are 4'9" tall) they can use the adult seat belt in the back seat, if it fits properly (lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt across the chest).

Benefits of booster seats

Children ages 4 to 8 who use booster seats are 59 percent less likely to be injured in a car crash than children who are restrained only by a seat belt, according to a study by Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Children ages 4 through 7 are generally too small for adult seat belts and need a "boost" to ensure the seat belt will fit securely across their chests and low across the upper thighs—to help prevent internal injuries, neck, head and spinal injuries, and even ejection and death in the event of a crash.

Sometime children will complain about being in a booster seat, or parents see them as an inconvenience. Still, safety restraints up to age eight is the law, and booster seats are the safest for "big kids" who are actually still small.



Is your car seat really safe?

The three most common mistakes in installing a child safety seat are (1) not attaching the seat correctly and tightly to the car or truck, (2) not fastening the harness tightly enough, and (3) not using the chest clip or using it incorrectly. Many communities offer car seat safety checks by trained inspectors.

- The South Suburban Traffic Safety Coalition offers education and events to promote automobile safety. Visit the organization's web site at www.childseatssave.org for a schedule of local child safety seat inspections.
- Caregivers can also see a listing of safety checks in other communities at the internet resource www.seatcheck.org.

Cook North Region hosts programs to help with school problems

Last year, the Department's Family Centered Services Initiative focused on creating programs in the LANs (Local Area Networks) to stabilize children in their current educational settings. These programs provide academic support to children and their families when students are at risk of truancy, suspension or expulsion. Each program is available to all families, including adoptive and guardianship families. Caregivers or caseworkers can contact the individual programs for services in their communities. For information on LAN programs in the Cook North suburbs, contact JoAnn Niemuth or Joanne Nett at 847-745-3000.

Chicago Near North & Northside

LAN 63—Metropolitan Family Services—Making the Grade (773-371-3707; 3249 N. Central Ave, 60634), contact: Karen Allen; for ages 6-18.

Metropolitan Family Services will provide individualized services to reduce suspensions, expulsions and truancy of children in educational settings. The services will include support for parents and children and individual/family counseling when appropriate. Services will be delivered through case management, advocacy, information and linkage with needed resources. The emphasis will be on providing knowledge, skills and ability to problem solve to help families and their children.

LAN 63 Youth Outreach Services—Academic Support Program (773)777-7112; 6417 W. Irving Park Rd, 60634), contact: Charley Smith; for grades 5th-8th and older youth on a case-by-case basis. The program provides home-based services aimed at supporting families of children who have been targeted for school performance issues.

LAN 65—Uhlich UCAN—Home-works Program

(312-742-4550; 217 N. Jefferson, 60606) Contact: Lamont Boswell; for grades 7th-9th (younger children may be accepted on a case-by-case basis). UCAN will provide a continuum of services to LAN 65 families to help decrease truancy, dropouts and prevent expulsions among students. UCAN's program is based on the belief that all of a student's systems work together to impact the student's overall stability.

LAN 65—Community Counseling Centers of Chicago—Parent Education Program

(773-765-0829; 4740 N. Clark, 60640), contact: Katherine Bensinger; for ages 7-16.

Community Counseling Centers developed an eight-week series of positive parenting skills, coupled with three specialized home visits including case management services, and an on-going support group. The program is designed to improve parent-child interactions and to increase parents' access to information and services that help prevent child maltreatment and school delinquency issues.

Chicago Near South & Southside

LAN 76 - Passages – Project March Refocus (312-225-3800; 10 W. 35th St, 60616), contact: Cherry Howze; for ages 7-21.

Passages will address the issues of suspensions, expulsions and truancy by providing supportive services and experiential learning opportunities through three 14-week sessions during the program year. Children will connect to their talents, their guardian/family and the community through a process of self-discovery. As they experience success within the program components, students will learn to self-regulate themselves so they are able to navigate in education, employment and community settings.

LAN 80—Chicago Child Care Society—Educational Support Program

(773-643-0452; 5467 S. University, 60615), contact: Valencia Phillips; for grades K-12.

This program will work with youth who are experiencing issues of truancy as well as behavioral and/or academic difficulties. An educational assessment will be completed to determine the youth's strengths and needs. In addition, the youth will be assigned an educational coordinator who will work closely with the youth, school, parent or caregiver. An educational mentor will also be assigned to work closely with the youth throughout the school year. The program objective is to help the youth achieve success in the classroom.

Cook South Foster Parent Advisory Council grows

The rebuilding effort for the Cook South Regional Advisory Council is succeeding. Attendance has grown steadily for several months running, with more than 30 foster and adoptive parents coming together for meetings. Caregivers are excited about the opportunity to have input in regional activities and new avenues for communicating with each other and regional staff.

The group meets at 6201 S. Emerald on the third Wednesday of the month at 10 a.m. Foster, adoptive and guardianship families from DCFS and private agency programs are welcome. In addition to the regular business agenda, there will often be presentations on new programs and policies.



Michael Byrd

"We try to tailor the meetings so caregivers get the information they need to help their families," said Michael Byrd, Regional Administrator.

Byrd is also encouraged by seeing many new faces at the meetings. He believes new people with new perspectives will blend nicely with existing members, leading to better outcomes.

Cook South offers supports for grandparents raising grandchildren

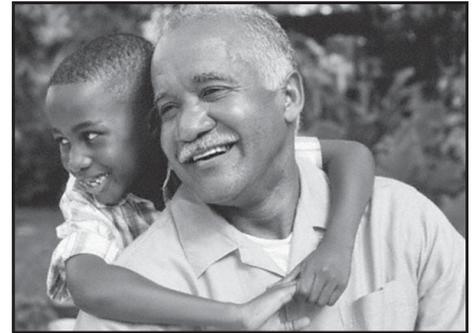
In Illinois there are over 200,000 children that are being cared for by their grandparents. The Cook South region is fortunate to have many grandparents who have adopted or continued to provide foster care. Being a grandparent raising grandchildren can be complicated, bringing up issues that could include housing, financial and emotional concerns. The new chapter of parenting is difficult, but there are resources that can help.

The Illinois Department on Aging offers many programs, including: Legal Counsel, Family and Individual Counseling, Support Groups, Information and Assistance, Benefits Check Up, Gap Filling Services, Senior Save Program, Meals on Wheels Chicago, Transportation Programs and more.

There are also several senior parent support groups in the Chicagoland area. Support groups are a great way to become active and share concerns with other grandparents that are facing, or better yet, have overcome similar circumstances. The groups often have conferences, sponsor rallies and direct political advocacy.

In the Cook South region, these Department on Aging centers can assist grandparents 60 years and older who are raising children:

- Southwest Regional Center, 6117 S. Kedzie Ave. 312-747-0440



- Southwest Satellite Center (Englewood) 653-657 West 63rd St. 312-745-3328
- Southeast Regional Center, 1767 East 79th St. 312-747-1089
- Southeast Satellite Center 49 East 95th St. 312-745-3493
- SSSO Senior Satellite Center, 6012 S. Archer 773-288-0428

Barbara Schwartz is the statewide director for senior parent programs. Contact her by e-mail at Barbara.Schwartz@illinois.gov or call the Senior Parent Hotline at 888-727-5889.

DCFS also works with Metropolitan Family Services on the citywide Older Caregiver Project. It is designed to help foster, adoptive and guardianship families face the aging issues that can arise for older caregivers. They provide home-based assessments of needs, connection to resources, advance planning to prepare for a caregiver's death, and financial and housing consultation. Call 773-884-2235 for more information or a referral.

Cook Central Regional Advisory Council makes meetings time to learn

The Cook Central Advisory Council believes its monthly meetings should be more than just another meeting. Jerry Welenc, council chair and a foster/adoptive parent, aims to have a learning component at each.

"Time is precious when you care for children, so we make sure to use our time together wisely to learn something that will help us with our kids," said Welenc.

Since the start of the year, in addition to the regular business agenda, the council has had several presentations to inform children and their caregivers. In



Birdia Jenkins



Andre Robinson

January, Patricia Welander helped parents understand the potential harm that can come to youth on the Internet. In February, The Center for Economic Progress explained the federal tax laws and benefits for foster, adoptive and guardianship families. In March, the Chicago Fire Department will discuss fire safety and the new requirement for carbon monoxide detectors. The Chicago Park District will also have a representative describe summer programs for youth at neighborhood parks.

The foster parent advisory council provides a way for caregivers to become aware of DCFS policy as it plays out in the region. Cook Central also has two representatives to the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council. Birdia Jenkins and Andre Robinson report on the activities of the local council to the statewide members and bring back news to the region.

The Council meets at 3518 W. Division on the last Tuesday of each month at 9:30 a.m. All Cook Central foster, adoptive and guardianship families licensed by DCFS and private agencies can attend.

25 x 3 equals 75 years serving foster families

The three foster parent support specialists for Cook Central have been on their posts for 25 years. Adrienne Welenc, Alice Couch and Denise Spires each started on February 2, 1982.

The offices that they called headquarters are long gone. The addresses 4820 W. Montrose (Denise first worked in Cook North region) and 3636 S. Western are memories. Yet, the three are still active from their present base at 3518 W. Division. From there, they reach out to families whose licenses are supervised by DCFS. Coverage spans from the northwest side of Chicago into the neighboring western suburbs.

The role of the foster parent support specialist is to be an advocate for foster parents. They can help caregivers navigate the child welfare system because they too have walked the path as foster or adoptive parents. To reach Lead Support Specialist, Adrienne Welenc, call 773-292-7879.



Cook Central Foster Parent Support Specialists Denise Spires, Adrienne Welenc and Alice Couch

Cook County Advocate reporters

Cook South ~ Jacquie Johnson

773-371-6468 office

773-371-6065 fax

Jacqueline.M.Johnson@illinois.gov

6201 S. Emerald, Chicago, IL 60621

Cook North ~ Sari Rowitz

312-328-2484 office

312-328-2688 fax

Sari.Rowitz@illinois.gov

1911 S. Indiana Ave., Chicago, IL 60616

Cook Central ~ Joyce Hall

773-292-7700 office

773-292-7861 fax

Joyce.Hall@illinois.gov

3518 W. Division, Chicago, IL 60651

Anyone can call the regional reporter with foster parent association news and schedules; local training notices; features on foster families and community members working for children; photos; and ideas for news articles or supportive services that would be helpful for caregivers to know.

Cook Region Training Calendar

Training for caregivers in the Cook County region is now being coordinated by DCFS in Springfield. The new schedule for In-Service training classes for April and May was unavailable at press time. However, the DCFS Office of Training is making frequent updates with additional courses throughout the Cook County.

For up-to-date information, readers can view the training schedule on the DCFS web site at www.state.il.us/dcfs. The schedule is posted under the features tab. For more information call the Office of Training toll-free at 877-800-3393.

DCFS Lending Library offers alternatives for education credits

The DCFS Lending Library can be used as a convenient alternative for obtaining approved training credit for license renewal. Licensed foster and adoptive parents can borrow materials for a two-week period at no charge.

The Lending Library catalogue highlights a multitude of books, audio cassettes and videos for self-directed training in parenting and family life, spanning 17 categories. Following are a few titles of interest:

Winning Cooperation From your Child

by *Kenneth Wenning, Ph.D.*

This book provides strategies for parents to help a defiant child develop behavioral and emotional control when provoked, teased, or frustrated. Credit: 2 hours

Taming The Dragon In Your Child: Solutions for Breaking the Cycle of Family Anger

by *Meg Eastman*

This book discusses how to determine whether anger is a normal expression of hurt, fear, and frustration, or if it is a warning sign of a more serious cycle of family stress. Practical answers about how to stop angry tirades and teach children to express anger responsibly are provided. Credit: 4 hours

Managing the Defiant Child

by *Russell A. Barkley*

Sometimes parents need to modify their own behavior in order to change their child's behavior. The day to day struggles of three families who have children with Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) are followed in the video.

Credit: 30 minutes

Common Sense Discipline: Building Self-Esteem in Young Children

by *Grace Mitchell*

This book provides you with information and strategies on successfully disciplining your child. You will learn to teach children to feel better about themselves and enable them to be "happy and confident" so they may not feel the need to act out. Real life stories are used as examples. Credit: 4 hours

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To borrow these or one of the myriad titles in the Lending Library, simply fill out the order form at the back of the catalogue. Send it to the DCFS Office of Training, Station 122, 406 E. Monroe, Springfield IL 62701.

To request a catalogue, call 877-800-3393. The catalogue is also available on the DCFS web site: <http://www.state.il.us/DCFS/docs/lendinglibrary.pdf>.

Lending Library Categories

- Child Sexual Abuse
- Children with Sexually Aggressive Behaviors
- Children with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Children with Behavioral Disorders/Emotional Disturbances
- Disciplinary Strategies for Difficult Children
- Separation and Visitation
- Drug-Affected Infants and Children
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects (FAS/FAE)
- The Medically Complex Child
- The Child With HIV/AIDS
- Promoting Educational Success Through Improved Learning Skills
- Building A Healthy Self-Esteem in Kids
- From Foster Care to Adoption
- Child Development and Parenting
- Parenting Adolescents
- Families and Diversity-Parenting with Greater Understanding
- Children With Mental Health, Language and Physical Challenges