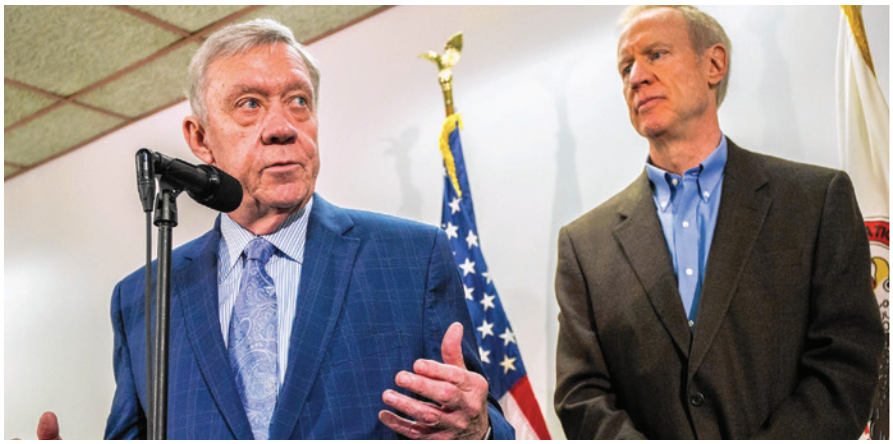
Illinois Families
Now & Forever®

Families by DCFS Foster Care, Adoption & Guardianship

DCFS transformation moves forward with strategic plan



Governor Bruce Rauner (right) and Director George Sheldon shared details of the DCFS transformation at a news conference on March 21.

When the lives of children are at stake, there is no time to waste. Director Sheldon joined the Department of Children and Family Services in February 2015. After just a little more than one year, Governor Bruce Rauner called a news conference on March 21 to applaud the progress at DCFS.

Changes begin as soon as children enter care and extend to programs that help launch youth into adulthood. For example, DCFS reduced the number of children in shelter care by 50 percent, focusing a renewed emphasis on finding receiving homes as soon as possible. There is a new directive that no child under the age of six spends a night in a shelter.

DCFS also secured more funding to provide services by recovering $20 million in federal reimbursements for services the agency provided to youth aged 18 to 21 in fiscal year 2016. The state is expected to recoup an additional $16 million in the coming years by fixing what boiled down to a paperwork issue.

"Today, under the leadership of Director George Sheldon, the agency has made an impressive transformation to ensure we are protecting our state's most vulnerable children," said Gov. Rauner.

While encouraged by progress, the director said that there is more work ahead. The DCFS Strategic Planning and Innovation Division created a BH Decree Implementation Plan for the federal court, responding to a long list of recommendations on how DCFS must improve services for youth. Then on May 12, Director Sheldon presented the 2016-2021 Illinois Child Welfare Strategic Plan. That report is on the DCFS website at www.DCFS.illinois.gov. Comments are welcome and can be sent to *dcfs.strategicplan@illinois.gov* by August 1. ♡

HIGHLIGHTS FROM BH CONSENT DECREE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The complete plan is available at www.DCFS.illinois.gov

Goal: Reduce the use of residential treatment and help children and youth succeed in living in the least restrictive, most family-like setting:

DCFS has started pilots to support youth who are involved in both the child welfare system and the juvenile justice system to include Regenerations and a Dually Involved Youth Pay for Success project. DCFS is also implementing Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) as an alternative to residential and other institutional placements.

Goal: Retrain and coach front-line staff to consistently provide children and their families access to a wide range of services.

Four "Immersion Sites" have been selected where DCFS will implement a core practice model that allows front-line staff to present families with a full array of interventions that are Family-centered, Trauma-informed and Strength-based (FTS). The new Model of Supervision Practice (MoSP) will instruct supervisors and provide them tools to keep caseworkers' activities and case progress aligned.

Goal: Improve permanency outcomes for adolescents who enter state custody at age 12 or older.

DCFS is expanding the age of eligibility for state-funded guardianship from 14 to 12. There is pending legislation to include foster parents in the definition of "fictive kin." This could open another path to permanency for youth who have strong connections with current and former foster families.

Message from the DCFS Director

This month, we recognize the amazing work of our foster families and mark May as Foster Parent Appreciation Month in Illinois.

We need to do more than simply express our appreciation for a month. We need to be sure you feel appreciated and respected every day of the year. Foster families have a tremendous responsibility. They have to replace the love and support and wisdom that may have been missing from the lives of children in care. There would be no child welfare system without foster families.

Foster parents are at the forefront of our need to bring normalcy to the children in foster. They're not "foster kids." They're just kids, like every other kid, and we need to give them the freedom to be like other kids without a lot of state rules and we need to give the foster parents the discretion to help their foster kids build friendships and take part in after-school activities and do all the things other kids do.

We also are recognizing that foster parents are more than "temporary parents" and actually need to have a place in the lives of foster children after they leave their foster home. We are expanding the state's definition of "fictive kin" to treat foster parents like relatives, with an enduring relationship with the child.

I hope you know that at DCFS our gratitude and our efforts on behalf of foster families began before May and will continue. We thank you all for striving every day to restore families and set children on a path for better lives.

George H. Sheldon
Director

Illinois celebrates Foster Parent Appreciation Month

Across the state, individuals are answering the call to open their hearts and homes to children. Foster parents are invaluable members of the child welfare team. May is a great time to highlight the contributions of Illinois foster parents as part of National Foster Care Month activities.

To learn more about how to raise public awareness of the important work of caring for children who have been abused or neglected, visit www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth for sample emails, graphics, letters to the editor and other materials to promote foster care in May and throughout the year. ♡

STATE OF ILLINOIS

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Proclamation

WHEREAS, *each year more than 4,000 children who have been abused or neglected cannot remain with their families safely, and these children need and deserve the temporary safe haven of a family home where they can be protected, nurtured, and loved; and,*

WHEREAS, *without volunteer foster families, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services would not be able to fulfill its mission to provide for the well-being of the nearly 15,000 children currently in its care; and,*

WHEREAS, *the department and its non-profit partners provide a wide range of support to assist foster families to provide a child's basic physical needs and to ensure her educational, emotional, and social well-being, none of which can be achieved without the dedication of foster families; and,*

WHEREAS, *foster families answer a noble calling to devote their time and energy to children to reunite families when possible, support other permanency options, and create opportunities for a successful launch to adulthood; and,*

WHEREAS, *foster families provide children with the one thing they need the most, love, which cannot come from a government or nonprofit agency, but only from the heart of another human being; and,*

WHEREAS, *foster parents change lives in many ways, and they deserve the utmost respect and gratitude for the lasting impact they have in the life of a child, in their communities, and on the future prosperity of this state;*

THEREFORE, *I, Bruce Rauner, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim May 2016 as* **FOSTER PARENT APPRECIATION MONTH** *in Illinois, extending thanks on behalf of the people of Illinois to the thousands of Illinois foster families, and encouraging all to consider joining them in their noble service to children, communities, and our state.*

In Witness Whereof, *I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to be affixed.*

Done at the Capitol in the City of Springfield, this THIRTIETH *day of* MARCH*, in the Year of Our Lord, two thousand and* SIXTEEN*, and of the State of Illinois, one hundred and* NINETY-EIGHTH*.*

SECRETARY OF STATE

GOVERNOR

CUT HERE AND RETURN ENTIRE PAGE

Families invited to State Fair August 11-21 with discounts

DCFS continues the annual tradition of offering caregivers a special invitation to attend the Illinois State Fair. This invitation is for currently licensed homes and includes youth in DCFS care, as well as children by birth, adoption or guardianship living in the home.

Fill in the requested information, cut out this page and return it by July 8 and you will receive by mail:

- A pass that includes parking and admission for all passengers in the car for one $3 fee.
- 1 refreshment ticket for each family member, worth $3 in food or drink.
- One ride ticket for each family member that provides unlimited rides for $15 (during designated hours ONLY on August 15 -19)

MAIL OR FAX NO LATER THAN JULY 8, 2016

DCFS Office of Communications
406 East Monroe Street, Station 65
Springfield, IL 62701-1498

Fax: 217-785-8068

Tickets cannot be requested by telephone. Clip and mail or fax this page. It serves as a receipt for auditing and must be returned to DCFS before tickets can be sent. This is the only invitation to the state fair. Please act today if you wish to attend. ♡

Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

Phone _____

Licensed by
(Agency/DCFS Region) _____

There will be ____ Family Members in our Party
(Names) _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

To request more than 8 tickets, we will need additional information for verification with the DCFS Inspector General.

Licensing/Subsidy Worker

_____

(Phone No.) _____

We are a licensed foster family, relative caregiver, a guardianship family or have adopted a child through DCFS, and we would like to attend the 2016 Illinois State Fair. We understand that only our foster, adopted and guardianship children and family members who live in our home consistent with DCFS licensing regulations are eligible for these special offers.

(Signature) _____

Child Abuse Prevention Month in April

Director George Sheldon helped young people decorate the trees with blue ribbons on Chicago's Michigan Avenue.

DCFS marked April as Child Abuse Prevention Month with unified activities from Chicago to Edwardsville, with stops in Peoria, Springfield and Carterville.

DCFS and community partners including Prevent Child Abuse Illinois and the Children's Advocacy Centers of Illinois sponsored blue ribbon campaigns, blue pinwheel gardens, news conferences and a Twitter "chat" with the University of Chicago Medicine to raise awareness to build safe, healthy families.

DCFS sponsored an exhibit at the James R. Thompson Center, featuring "Art from Youth in Care and From Others Who Care." At the State Capitol, Rep. Sarah Wojcicki Jimenez and Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth spoke up for youth with PCA Illinois.

"The impact of abuse and neglect on a child can take a lifetime to heal and that's where we as a community can help," said Director George Sheldon. ♡

DCFS water safety policies help prevent drowning deaths

Drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death for children ages one to four. DCFS is continually reviewing policies and practices to protect children when they are in pools or around water features outside and in the home.

Safety rules for pools

- Above-ground pools have to have non-climbable side walls at least 4 feet high or must be enclosed with fence that is at least 36 inches away from the pool's side wall, required all the way around the pool.
- When the pool is not in use, steps to access the pool have to be removed or enclosed by a fence.
- All hot tubs have to be fenced, or have a securely-fitted and locked cover.
- Portable pools must be fenced, or be emptied and sanitized daily.

Fences and barriers to entry

Fences that enclose pools must have gates that: open out and away from the pool; have a locking device and are designed to be self-closing and self-latching. All fences must be at least 5 feet in height, without decorative cutouts, indentations or protrusions that could be used as holds to climb the fence.

When a house wall serves as part of a pool barrier, any door or window that provides access to a swimming pool must be equipped with an alarm that sounds for 30 seconds or more within 7 seconds after the door is opened.

Foster homes that had a license or a permit on January 1, 2009 and have had a fence with a minimum height of 3'6" will be considered in compliance.

More specific requirements are found in DCFS Policy Guide 2014.14 Swimming Pool and Water hazards in Foster Family Homes.

Training and supervision

Foster care license holders whose homes have pools, hot tubs, ponds, outdoor fountains, decorative water ponds, fishponds or other pools of water must have current first aid and age-appropriate CPR certification.

A child in foster care of any age using a swimming pool, portable pool, spa, hot tub or other pools of water located on the premises of the foster home must always be within line-of-sight supervision by a foster parent or other adult authorized by the foster parent.

The licensed foster parent is responsible for keeping toxic chemicals related to pool maintenance locked up and inaccessible to foster children. When a swimming pool is in use, the foster parent must keep a weekly log to record water quality test results and otherwise maintain the pool in a safe and sanitary condition. ♡

Tips to stay safe around water

Baby pools

- Don't be lulled into a false sense of security because of the shallowness of baby pools. Children should always be supervised in a baby pool.
- Empty the pool right after use and store it upside-down.

Bathtubs

- Never leave a young child alone in a bathtub or rely on a bathtub seat for safety.
- Don't allow children to play alone in the bathroom.

Buckets

- Five-gallon buckets of water pose a threat to babies and toddlers who may topple into them and be unable to get out.
- Empty and store all buckets out of children's reach.

Toilets

- Secure the toilet lid. Curious toddlers could tip headfirst into a toilet, risking drowning.

Ponds, fountains and retention pools

- Be aware of access to water hazards and be prepared in case an emergency response is required. Children require constant supervision around these outdoor hazards.

Get water wise...
SUPERVISE!

Safety starts at home for young ones

Each year, throughout the year, the federal government announces major product recalls on cribs, strollers, clothing and children's toys that have caused injuries and even fatalities. It can be easy to overlook the notices or to underestimate the harm that could come. Caregivers have to be proactive to ensure that youth are safe in their homes.

DCFS rules require foster caregivers of children age six or under to check their homes for products listed as unsafe by the Children's Product Safety Act. Caregivers should check the lists and remove any recalled items already at home. It is also important to make informed choices about new items that you purchase or accept as gifts. Be on the look out for small pieces that could cause choking or long strings that might strangle.

During home visits, the licensing worker will discuss recalls and obtain needed signatures of the safety forms. Ultimately, it falls on the adults in the home to ensure the safety of the most vulnerable young ones.

Laundry pods and dishwasher tablets can poison children

Keeping children in clean clothes is a challenge that can also be a safety risk. The convenient laundry "pods" of pre-measured and pre-packaged detergent for a single load have contributed to poisonings of young children.

Children may see the packets and put them in their mouths, thinking it is candy. The highly concentrated detergent can cause comas, respiratory stress and death.

Caregivers should keep laundry pods and dishwasher tablets in a container that is closed, sealed and stored high, out of the reach of children. Call the local poison center at 800-222-1222 immediately if a child is believed to have come in contact with laundry detergent or a pod.

Check out Anchorit.gov for tips on anchoring furniture to avoid tip-over injuries

Every 24 minutes tipped furniture or a falling TV sends an injured child to the emergency room.

To prevent a tip-over tragedy…

- Use sturdy furniture
- Secure your TV to a wall, even if it isn't a wall-mounted TV
- Mount flat-screen TVs
- Follow manufacturer's instructions to secure TVs and furniture properly
- Secure top heavy furniture with anti-tip brackets
- Remove tempting objects from the top of the TV
- CRT televisions should be placed on furniture designed to hold a TV and be anchored.

Learn more at **www.anchorit.gov**

Online safety resources

Get tips on protecting children from preventable injuries at **www.safekids.org**

Sign up for email alerts and search for recalled products **www.recalls.gov**

Illinois Attorney General's **Product Recall Hotline 888-414-7678**

Know your rights and responsibilities in the Foster Parent Law

The Foster Parent Law, enacted in 1995, is a foundation for providing foster care in Illinois. The statement of 15 rights still helps foster parents, agencies and DCFS regional foster care programs know what role the foster parent will play as a respected member of the child welfare team. The statement of 17 responsibilities helps prospective foster parents know what will be expected of them before they decide to become foster parents and gives current foster parents a clear understanding of the general expectations of the agency or DCFS region. The Law also requires a grievance process for resolving Foster Parent Law related issues.

A full text of the entire Foster Parent Law is included in the Foster Parent Handbook and is on the DCFS website at www.dcfs.illinois.gov ♡

"The General Assembly establishes this statement of foster parents' rights and responsibilities, which shall apply to all foster parents in the State of Illinois"

(Source: P.A. 89-19, eff. 6-3-95.)

Foster Parents Have the Right to...

- Be treated with dignity, respect and consideration as a team member
- Appropriate, pertinent training to improve skills
- Supportive services from the agency
- Timely financial reimbursement
- Understand how the child's placement plan supports his family relationship and cultural identity
- Fair, timely and impartial investigations of licensing complaints
- Receive additional information to support the child while in placement
- Receive information specified in Children and Family Services Act and the Child Care Act of 1969
- Be notified of scheduled meetings and staffings in order to participate
- Information that is pertinent to the child's care, before placement
- Receive written notice and the reason for any change in a child's case plan or placement
- Timely notification of court hearings and right to intervene
- Be considered when a foster child previously in their home re-enters DCFS care
- Access the existing appeals process free from acts of harassment and retaliation
- Be informed of the Foster Parent Hotline and their rights when reporting misconduct by child welfare personnel

Foster Parents Have the Responsibility to...

- Communicate and share information with the child welfare team
- Respect the confidentiality of the child and his family
- Advocate for children in the foster home
- Treat the child and the child's family with dignity, respect and consideration
- Recognize their individual and family strengths and limitations and use available supports
- Be aware of the benefits of being involved with other foster parents and foster parent groups
- Assess ongoing training needs and take action to meet those needs
- Strategize with staff to avoid placement disruptions and support the child if disruption occurs
- Recognize the impact of foster care on relationships and take steps to minimize stress
- Promote the benefits of foster parenting
- Know the role, rights and responsibilities of foster parents, other professionals, the child and the child's own family
- Fulfill their role as a mandated reporter; and know policies in the event of allegations of abuse or neglect against foster parents
- Participate in Administrative Case Reviews, client service plans and court proceedings
- Know the child welfare agency's appeal process
- Maintain accurate records
- Share information about the placement with subsequent caregivers/parents
- Support the child's cultural needs and the child's relationship with his or her own family

Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Update

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council traveled to Alton in March to bring the meeting to the Southern Region. The April meeting was conducted by conference call.

Emergency Foster Homes

In Alton, council members received an update on plans to establish designated emergency foster homes. This pilot is slated to roll out in the next fiscal year. Emergency foster homes will provide children a traditional home environment for up to 14 days during the search for relatives and fictive kin. Caregivers would receive training and funding for this type of care. DCFS and private agencies are now identifying two-parent homes with only one parent working outside the home as potential emergency foster homes.

Implementation Plans Progress

The council completed scoring the 53 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plans. Members also conducted in-person agency reviews in April.

Jody Grutza, (left) DCFS deputy director for Strategic Planning Innovation and Chair Sarah Olson

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council was founded in conjunction with the Illinois Foster Parent Law. Membership consists of caregivers, agency representatives and other experts in child welfare, who are appointed by the DCFS director. The council holds open meetings at least six times a year, in locations around the state.

The next meeting of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council will be on **June 17** in Lisle at **9 a.m**. Call DCFS Caregiver and Parent Support at 217-524-2422 for details.

Learning continues after adoption

Adoptive and guardianship parents still have access to the DCFS training opportunities. As children grow older or when their needs change, caregivers should expand their knowledge with up-to-date training.

The in-service training modules are available online so a parent can learn at a time that is convenient and from anywhere with Internet access. Adoptive and guardianship families can also attend all DCFS training sessions that are open to foster parents. The list of online courses and the schedule for other offerings is on the DCFS Virtual Training Center (VTC) at www.dcfstraining.org. Questions can be directed to the Registration Line during business hours by calling 877-800-3393.

Illinois Adoption Advisory Council

The Illinois Adoptive Advisory Council meets six times a year with the mission to advise DCFS on all matters involving or affecting adoption and guardianship services.

The council addresses ways to preserve and expand funding for post-adoption and adoption preservation services, and to improve the permanency outcomes for teens and other children.

Council members are all appointed by the DCFS Director. Membership includes adoptive parents and adopted persons, as well as experts in child welfare and adoption from DCFS and other agency partner organizations. All meetings are open.

The next meeting of the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council will be **June 3** at **10 a.m.** in Normal. For details, contact DCFS Caregiver and Parent Support at 217-524-2422.

Cook County Advocate

News for Chicago Metro Area Families

2016 • Vol. 2

Message from the Cook County regional administrator

Jacqui Colyer

Foster parents respond to the call to care for children, to take them into their homes and to transition them into the next phase of their lives–sometimes for weeks, and sometimes for their entire childhood.

In my time as the regional administrator in Cook County, I have met many amazing, dedicated foster parents. I have also shared my own story of how I was called to foster care by a teenager who decided we should become the final, forever family for him. Our story continues now that he is an adult with his own children.

That is the beauty of foster care. We have the privilege of witnessing a child's potential blossom into a bright future. We also know that it takes time and effort to restore or re-build new families. My pledge to you is that I will do all that I can to help you as you help the children in your home. In Cook County we are focusing on adding resources and training for foster parents. I also encourage you to get involved with the DCFS regional foster care advisory council or one of the foster parent groups sponsored by private agencies and in your community. When we listen and learn from each other, good things can happen.

This month, when we honor our foster parents, please accept my gratitude for everything you do, every day of the year. ♡

Jacqui Colyer

Spanish foster parent info sessions

Held at 1026 S. Damen Ave., Chicago, IL (3rd Thursday, 5:30 pm) and 1701 S. First Ave., Maywood, IL (3rd Tuesday, 5:30 pm)

Contact Miriam.Mojica@illinois.gov

Save-the-date for Cook Youth Summit

Each year DCFS sponsors Youth Summits in locations across the state to help older youth look ahead to their next steps in education or life as an adult. The four Youth Summits will provide teens who are still in DCFS care (foster care or residential programs) skills to help them successfully achieve self-sufficiency.

The DCFS Office Education and Transition Services and the Youth Advisory Boards have prepared a slate of workshops with the theme "Driven by Ambition." There will be guest speakers and information tables to connect youth to resources.

More information will be sent directly to families with youth ages 14 to 21 who are still in care.

Cook Region Youth Summit
Wednesday, June 22
Northeastern University
Bus transportation available

Contact Lynda.Swan-McClendon@illinois.gov

Find strength among others in local foster parent groups

Foster care is not a solo effort. It takes a team. Sometimes the most valuable team members can be those fellow foster parents who can truly understand and share their experiences. Many of the agencies in Cook County and the DCFS regional foster care program sponsor support groups and associations to keep foster families connected and informed. Below is a list of groups that have asked to be part of the annual round-up. Find a meeting near your home and begin building your network.

Circle of Parents
Contact: Stacey Saffold
773-419-4660
Meets 1st Saturday
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Sherman Park Library
5440 South Racine, Chicago, IL

Cook Central DCFS Regional Foster Care Advisory Council
Contact: Denise Spires
773-338-6739
Meets 4th Tuesday at 9:30 a.m.
DCFS Office,
1701 First Ave., Maywood, IL

No December meeting.
Training credits offered.

Cook North DCFS Regional Foster Care Advisory Council
Contact: Edith Cruz
773-653-6851
Meets 2nd Tuesday at 10 a.m.
DCFS Office,
1911 S. Indiana, Chicago, IL

Cook South DCFS Regional Foster Care Advisory Council
Contact: Angela Barber
773-371-6444
Meets 3rd Tuesday at 10 a.m.
DCFS Office,
6201 S. Emerald, Chicago, IL

DCFS Cook South Suburban Support Group
Contact: Angela Barber
773-371-6444
Meets 4th Thursday of odd numbered months
9 a.m. to noon
DCFS Office
15115 Dixie Highway, Harvey, IL

For DCFS and private agency families.
Training credits offered.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Training and Support Group
Contact: Bryana Fishman
773-884-2200
fishmanb@metrofamily.org
Meets 1st Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Metropolitan Family Services - Midway
3843 W. 63rd Street, Chicago, IL

Open to any grandparent or older caregiver raising a child.

Hispanic Association (combines with Northeast Foster Adopt Parent Association)
Edith Cruz
773-653-6851

Jewish Child and Family Services Advisory Council
Contact: Noelle Folden
312-673-2765
Meets every other month on the 4th Thursday at noon
Alternating locations:
216 West Jackson or
the Avalon Library, Chicago, IL

Lutheran Social Services of IL Foster Parent Advisory Council
Contact: Joan Singleton-Lee
312-949-4862
Meets last Thursday of the odd months from 6 to 8 p.m.
1340 S. Damen, Ste. 205,
Chicago, IL

New Beginning Foster/ Adoptive Parent Association
Contact: Regina & Gladys Boyd
708-385-6263
Meets 1st Monday
from 6 to 8 p.m.
10436 S. Wallace
Fernwood Park , IL

Northeast Area Foster and Adopt Parent Association
Contact: Idalyia Jones
312-328-2063
Meets 3rd Thursday at 10 a.m.
Sherman Park Library
5440 S. Racine Avenue, Chicago, IL

Northern Illinois Foster/ Adopt Parent Association
Contact: Desiree Benbenek
847-948-6771 or 847-870-1234
Meets quarterly.

Open to all foster and adoptive parents in the north end of Chicago, and the suburbs from Evanston to Buffalo Grove, and to Streamwood.

Cook County Region Training

DCFS has scheduled sessions of in-service training modules and other courses in locations across the region.

To get specific dates and locations, visit the on-line Virtual Training Center (VTC) anytime at *www.DCFStraining.org*. Click on any of the links under Training Schedule to access course descriptions, in-service training and Educational Advocacy Training or call the DCFS Registration Line at 877-800-3393 during business hours.

The Virtual Training Center (VTC) is your tool to:

- See training news and general information
- Check available trainings
- View and print your training transcript
- Register and take on-line courses

DIGITAL TRAINING NOW AVAILABLE

DCFS Training has made many PRIDE materials available online at:

www.dcfstraining.org

Who do you call when...?

...A child in your home is having a psychiatric crisis that may require hospitalization? Call the CARES line at 800-345-9049. However, if a child is a danger to himself or others, call 911 first. The CARES line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

...You want information on becoming a foster parent or on adoption? The Illinois Center for Adoption & Permanency (ICAP) can answer your questions and connect you with a licensing agency. The toll-free number is 800-572-2390. ICAP also maintains information about the children who are featured in the newsletter.

...You have questions about your board check? Call the DCFS Central Payment Unit at 800-525-0499 if your check comes from DCFS. If your check comes from a private agency, contact the agency.

...You need to report a child missing or have information about a youth who has run away? To report information on missing youth call 866-503-0184. The toll-free number is available 24 hours a day every day of the week. If you feel the child is in danger, call 911 first.

...Your adoption or guardianship is final but you have questions about the subsidy? Call the subsidy worker assigned to the case or the Adoption Support Line at 866-538-8892 or 312-808-5250 so you can be connected to the right individual for help.

...You feel you aren't being treated fairly by DCFS or a private agency? If you've already tried to resolve the issue by going up the chain of command with the caseworker and supervisors, then call the Advocacy Office at 800-232-3798.

...You need to seek expense reimbursement for property damage or bodily harm caused by a child in foster care? Let your caseworker know you intend to submit a claim to the Foster Child Damage Reimbursement Program. Refer to DCFS form CFS851 or contact the office at 312-814-7294.

...You have questions about your child's medical card? Call 800-228-6533.

...You need to find a phone number for a caseworker? Call the main switchboard in Chicago at 312-814-6800 or the State Operator at 312-793-3500.

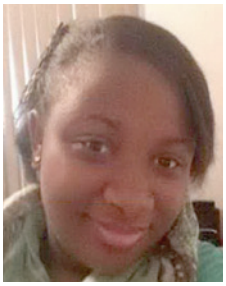
... The police request to interview or a child under DCFS care is detained by police? Call the DCFS Guardianship Administrator Office at 312-814-8600 if between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., if after 4:30 p.m. or before 8:30 a.m. call the 24-hour Child Intake and Recovery Unit at 866-503-0184 to notify DCFS and discuss possible legal assistance.

...You are having family problems with an adopted child? Contact the Adoption/Subsidized Guardianship Preservation Program that serves your area. Call the Adoption Support Line at 866-538-8892 or 312-808-5250.

...You are having a hard time getting services for your child at school? Most private agencies have an education liaison, and each DCFS region has education advisors who can help. Call your agency or nearest DCFS office to be connected to the right educational resource for your area.

...You have an idea for the newsletter? Email vanessa.james@illinois.gov in DCFS Communications.

A Family for Me: Call 1-800-572-2390 for more information



Briana, 12, is a young lady with a very pleasant personality. She gets along well with peers and adults. Briana also does well in school. Her current caregiver has very positive things to share about Briana and is very supportive. She says Briana works well and contributes to the household and has good behavior at home.

Briana's forever family is one that can work closely with child welfare professionals to help meet Briana's emotional and behavioral needs. You can also work with professionals within the school to help meet her educational needs. Briana would like a one or two parent home and prefers a family that resides in the suburbs of Chicago, but she is open. *[8344]*

Hanna,15, is an affectionate child who gets along well with others. She makes friends easily, loves playing with dogs and cats, and is respectful toward adults. Her hobbies include playing outside, coloring, and watching her favorite television shows. She is eager to be adopted, and is excited about the prospect of joining a forever family.

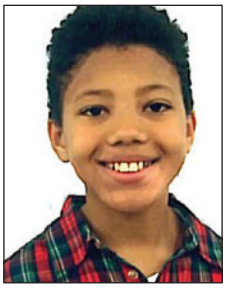
Hanna's worker says she is an intelligent child who listens to her teachers, enjoys doing her homework, and receives good grades in school.

Potential parents for Hanna can provide her a loving, supportive home environment. You can make sure she has plenty of positive outlets for her boundless energy. You can also work with professionals who can help you understand, and meet, her emotional and developmental needs. Hanna says, "I want to have fun and be part of a family!" Other children in the home should be older than Hanna. *[8147]*

Stetson, 13, is an inquisitive, open-minded young man who is constantly willing to try new things. He enjoys staying active and would love to have the opportunity to partake in various sports, such as basketball, soccer, and football. He also enjoys playing with remote control toys and building with LEGO pieces. Stetson is caring toward others and is always there to lend a helping hand to someone in need.

Stetson's caseworker reports that he is a generally friendly young man who is helpful when others ask for assistance. His teacher reports no issues with school behavior and says that she likes having him in her class because he continues to do well there. His teacher also says that Stetson is polite and cooperative.

To be the right family for Stetson, you can help Stetson explore his desire to be more involved in sports and other extracurricular activities. You can also continue regular visits with his brother, so the boys can maintain their close relationship. Stetson would do best with a family that can appropriately address his medical and educational needs, and that includes a positive male figure for him to look up to. *[8231]*



Tyrone or TJ, age 11, enjoys reading, especially historical books and the "Harry Potter" series of novels. He also likes to play video games; one of his favorites is "Minecraft." He is an active child who enjoys playing basketball and absolutely loves to swim. He is also interested in playing the trombone and the tuba. In school, he enjoys history and his greatest strength is in reading. TJ is helpful around the home, and always strives to please his foster parents.

TJ's future family should have experience with, or want to learn about, children who have had a traumatic childhood and display the behavior that can come along with that history. His adoptive family should be outgoing, understanding, and caring. They should also be active, inquisitive, and willing to spend a lot of one-on-one time with him. This family can work with professionals to address his educational and emotional needs. TJ would like a family that will "allow for me to still see my sister." *[8322]*

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ILLINOIS CENTER FOR ADOPTION & PERMANENCY

Please call the Illinois Center for Adoption & Permanency at 1-800-572-2390, or visit the iCAP website at www.illinoiscap.org if you are interested in adopting one of these children or learning about other children who are waiting to be adopted.

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