



Illinois Families Now and Forever®

Families by DCFS Foster Care, Adoption & Guardianship

Governor appoints Bobbie Gregg DCFS acting director

Announced April 29, Bobbie Gregg will be the acting DCFS director pending Senate confirmation. Gregg served as interim director since February.



“Bobbie Gregg is a problem solver who brings a fresh perspective to DCFS,” said Governor Quinn.

Gregg came to DCFS in 2013 as deputy chief for the Bureau of Operations. She brought administrative expertise from the DuPage County Health Department, social work experience while at a human services agency and legal skills gained as an assistant U.S. attorney and in corporate law.

Colleagues in child welfare and members of the legislature noted that Gregg’s legal background and work in the private sector will provide a solid platform to build on DCFS’ past successes and address new challenges.

“We have much work to do. Our mission – protecting children and supporting families – is what unites us. Together we can accomplish great things,” said Gregg.



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 nonprofit partners provide a wide range of supports to assist foster families in meeting not only a child’s basic physical needs, but also 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 energies 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, which cannot come from a government or nonprofit agency, but only from the heart of another human being: love; and,

WHEREAS, it is impossible to quantify the minute and magnificent ways foster parents change lives, 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; and,

THEREFORE, I, Pat Quinn, Governor of the State of Illinois, do proclaim May 2014 as FOSTER PARENT APPRECIATION MONTH in Illinois, extending thanks on behalf of our 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.



Dease Witt

SECRETARY OF STATE

Done at the Capitol in the City of Springfield, this _____ NINTH day of _____ APRIL, in the Year of Our Lord, two thousand and _____ FOURTEEN, and of the State of Illinois, one hundred and _____ NINETY-SIXTH.

Pat Quinn

GOVERNOR

Make Foster Parent Appreciation Month special for all of May

Here are a few ways to make sure Foster Parent Appreciation Month is a special time:

- * Take a look at your rights under the Foster Parent Law and remember there is a state statute to support your efforts.
- * Join a foster parent support group and take a friend.
- * Pay a visit to the district office of your state legislators. Ask how they will address issues that are important to your family.
- * Set a movie night to watch foster care/adoption themed movies. *Despicable Me*, *Martian Child*, *Meet the Robinsons*, *Annie*...
- * Serve a cake with candles for dessert and show the kids you deserve a special day.
- * Make plans with another foster family to trade an afternoon watching the others' kids. Take the time to do something to refresh yourself.
- * Send a card to encourage a foster parent who is having a rough time.
- * Make a list of good parenting decisions you have made lately. Tuck it away for a "rainy day."
- * Write a letter to your local newspaper explaining the importance of foster care. Make the public take notice.
- * Declare a "Good News Only Day." Let someone else field the phone calls from school and settle the squabbles. You'll have to take your turn one day the next week.
- * Pose for a family picture with all the kids who are at home.
- * Reconnect with an older youth who was once in your care.
- * Meet a couple of foster parent friends over coffee.
- * Use social media: change your profile picture to a foster care graphic from the website www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth
- * Tweet about foster care with a new post (non-confidential) each day.
- * Share your own ideas on the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Facebook page: www.facebook.com/IllinoisDCFS.

Illinois focused statewide spotlight on child abuse prevention month during April

In April, the blue bows were prominent as DCFS and its child welfare partners brought attention to the issue of child abuse prevention. The annual honor began with an event in Springfield at the Gus and Flora Kerasotes YMCA on March 31. DCFS Central Region Administrator Cathy Smith was joined by foster parent Jessica Janicki, Angie Sowle of the YMCA, Roy Harley of Prevent Child Abuse Illinois, and representatives of the offices of the Mayor of Springfield and Gov. Pat Quinn. With entertainment from the "Rainbows" class of the Children's House day care, the month of events was off to a festive start.



On April 1, Denice Murray, DCFS deputy director for Regulation and Monitoring, joined with Children's Home+Aid to launch this year's Blue Bow campaign in Chicago. Similar events took place in Edwardsville, East Moline, Carterville and Rock Island. Bows could be found in trees, offices and front yards, highlighting the need to keep children safe.

Background checks now only after 18 years old

At the start of the year, the changes to the Juvenile Court Act changed the age a youth is determined to be an adult from 17 to 18.

In order to bring consistency to DCFS rules, the agency now requires FBI criminal background checks and fingerprints only after the individual's 18th birthday. Families where a 17-year-old youth lives in the home will no longer have to have a fingerprint background check until that child turns 18.

Keep this in mind for foster home licensing. This became effective January 1 and the updates to DCFS procedures are nearly complete.

MOVIN' ON UP: *News for youth as they transition to adulthood*

As the school year comes to an end, this is also a time for older youth to look ahead to their next step in education and life as an adult. To help them in that transition, each year DCFS sponsors Youth Summits in locations across the state.

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 of Youth and Family Development and the Youth Advisory Boards have prepared a slate of workshops on a wide range of topics covering: finances, personal care, education, housing and emotional/social development. There will be guest speakers and information tables to connect youth to resources.

During the youth summit, DCFS will also honor students' academic accomplishments and give special recognition to those who earned

a high school diploma or GED or completed a vocational program.

Save the date for the events listed below. More information will be sent directly to families with youth ages 14 to 21 who are still in care.

Cook/Northern regions

Brianna Pitassi, 773-696-1014

Central/Southern regions

Leshonda Rogers, 217-789-2908

Cook Region

Youth Summit

June 18, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago

Northern Region

Youth Summit

June 20, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Kishwaukee College
Malta

Central Region

Youth Summit

June 26, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Illinois State University
Bloomington

Southern Region

Youth Summit

June 5, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Kaskaskia College
Centralia

Caregiver families invited to State Fair August 8 - 17 in Springfield

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.

Complete and return this page by June 20 and in July 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 11 -15)

MAIL OR FAX NO LATER THAN JUNE 23, 2014

DCFS Office of Communications
406 East Monroe Street, Station 65
Springfield, IL 62701-1498
Fax: 217-524-0014

Tickets may not be requested by telephone. *Nothing will be sent to you unless you return this coupon.*

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. They are:

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

Name of licensing or subsidy worker

Phone number

We are a currently-licensed foster family, relative caregiver, a guardianship family or have adopted a child through DCFS, and we would like to attend the 2014 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 _____

Illinois Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Bulletin



The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council met in Alton for the March meeting and conducted business via teleconference in April.

Implementation Plans

The review of the foster care programs' implementation plans was completed. Several plans were nominated to receive special recognition. Council members voted and will publicly commend the recipients at the June meeting. Next, the council continued its in-person agency reviews. This two-layered process ensures that the spirit of the Foster Parent Law is also demonstrated through interactions between the agency and families.

Legislative Issues

The Council keeps watch for bills that could impact foster families.

The legislative committee in March briefed the council members on several ways to follow legislation and be in touch with elected officials. The General Assembly website at www.il.ga.gov allows anyone to identify specific members by district. The progress of bills and committee work can be tracked. It is also possible to watch a live stream of official business.

Foster Home Recruitment

The council asked for an update on the new resource recruitment effort. The supervisor from Southern Region explained the statewide focus to bring more licensed foster homes to specific areas. One key objective is to ensure that youth can stay connected by having more local placement options, avoiding disruptions to school, family and cultural ties.

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 mandated positions for caregivers are spread among the DCFS regions.

The council holds open meetings at least six times a year, and more as needed, in locations around the state.

The next meeting of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council will be in Bloomington on June 13 at 9 a.m.

Call the Office of Professional Development, Parent and Caregiver Support at 217-524-2422 for details.

Foster Family Handbook updated for 2014 online

The 2014 edition of the Foster Family Handbook is now available to read online or download to a device for reference or to print. This valuable resource was completely refreshed to reflect the latest policy and practices. It was also redesigned to be easier to read and to search relevant topics.

Foster families will find the new version an important tool to stay informed about child development, child welfare services and practical tips for caring for youth during and after their time in DCFS care.

The DCFS Office of Professional Development, Parent and Caregiver Support coordinated the

overhaul of the book and designed it to be an online resource that can readily be updated with future policy changes.

In order to conserve resources, it will be available on the DCFS Virtual Training Center (VTC) at www.dcfstraining.org and on the public DCFS website at www.DCFS.illinois.gov. DCFS will have a limited number of hard copies available for foster parents who have no means to access the Handbook online. Those individuals can contact the regional training manager or call the DCFS Registration Unit at 877-800-3393.

Get digital delivery

Many caregivers have decided to skip the paper and request electronic versions of the newsletter, Illinois Families Now and Forever®.

When you move to the online version, you still receive all the same valuable information with more benefits. It comes faster, is easier to file, saves money and protects the environment.

To make the switch, send an email to vanessa.james@illinois.gov (there is a dot before "james"). Be sure to include your name and mailing address. We will stop the hard copies and send you an e-mail each time a new issue is ready to read online.

Foster Parent Law defines caregivers' rights and responsibilities

Before 1995, the rights and responsibilities for the individuals providing foster care were not clearly defined. Without a clear job description, caregivers, agencies and DCFS had struggled in placing caregivers' rights and responsibilities within child welfare policy. It took a lengthy, coordinated effort from individual caregivers, foster care advocacy organizations, legislators, and child welfare personnel to bring about the Foster Parent Bill of Rights. That document provided the foundation for the Foster Parent Law, signed on June 3, 1995.

The Foster Parent Law clearly defines 15 rights and 17 responsibilities for all Illinois families who provide foster care to children in DCFS care. The statement of rights helps foster caregivers, agencies and DCFS regions know what role caregivers will play on the child welfare team and the consideration they should receive. The statement of responsibilities helps caregivers know what will be expected of them and gives a clear understanding of the general expectations they should have of the foster care agency or DCFS regional foster care program.

The accompanying Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Law established the council to advise DCFS about foster care issues. The council also has the responsibility to oversee the implementation of the Foster Parent Law.

Details and the full text of the Foster Parent Law are included in the Foster Family Handbook. Caregivers can also request their foster care program's annual Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. Call DCFS Caregiver and Parent Support at 217-524-2422 for further information.

Caregivers have the right to:

1. Be treated with dignity, respect and consideration
2. Be provided pre-service and appropriate ongoing training to improve skills
3. Be informed on how to receive supportive services from the agency
4. Receive timely financial reimbursement commensurate with child's service plan
5. Be provided a clear, written understanding of the plan concerning the child's placement and how it will support his family relationship and cultural identity
6. Fair, timely and impartial investigations of licensing complaints
7. Receive additional information to assist in the care of a child while in placement
8. Receive specific information from DCFS and private agencies listed in Children and Family Services Act and the Child Care Act of 1969
9. Be notified of scheduled meetings and staffings in order to participate in case planning and decision-making
10. Be provided, before placement, with any information a caseworker has that is pertinent to the child's care and the permanency plan
11. Receive written notice of any change in a child's case plan or of plans to terminate the child's placement, along with the reasons for the change or termination
12. Timely notification of court hearings and right to intervene or request mandamus
13. Be considered as a placement option when a foster child who was formerly placed with the foster parents re-enters DCFS care
14. Access the existing appeals process with the assertion that the appeal will be free from acts of harassment and retaliation.
15. Be informed of the Foster Parent Hotline and the rights for foster parents when reporting misconduct by child welfare personnel

Caregivers have the responsibility to:

1. Communicate and share information with the child welfare team
2. Respect the confidentiality of information about the child and his family
3. Advocate for children in the care of the foster parent
4. Treat the child and his or her family with dignity, respect and consideration
5. Recognize their individual and family strengths and limitations and to utilize appropriate supports as appropriate
6. Be aware of the benefits of relying on and affiliating with other foster parents and foster parent associations
7. Assess their ongoing training needs and take action to meet those needs
8. Strategize with agency representatives to avoid placement disruptions and support the child if disruption occurs
9. Recognize the impact of foster care on relationships and take steps to minimize stress as much as possible
10. Positively promote the benefits of foster parenting
11. Know the role, rights and responsibilities of foster parents, other professionals in the child welfare system, the child, and the child's own family
12. Know and fulfill their role as a mandated reporter and know policies regarding allegations that foster parents have committed abuse or neglect
13. Know the purpose of and to participate in Administrative Case Reviews, client service plans and court proceedings
14. Know the child welfare agency's appeal process
15. Maintain accurate records
16. Share information about the placement with subsequent caregivers/parents
17. Provide care that respects the child's cultural needs supports the relationship between the child and his or her own family



Illinois Adoption Advisory Council update

The Illinois Adoption Advisory Council held its April meeting in Springfield.

Adoption policy and practice

The council submitted a list of priority issues around policy changes and adoption practices to Cheryl McIntire, DCFS statewide adoption administrator. Luann Gab from that office came to update the council on progress. McIntire has instituted a full tracking system to aid in timely completion of subsidy agreements. From the moment a subsidy is sent to be reviewed, it is tracked.

Additionally she formed an Adoption Workgroup of DCFS and private agency adoption-related staff, mostly supervisors, who come together every other month. Their goal is to evaluate policy, make

changes to improve practice, and address any problems that come up to reduce delays and errors. Representatives of the Illinois Adoption Council will also be a part of the work group. The group is recommending ways to decrease common, delay-causing errors through additional training and automation. It is also developing the means to have more consistency in adoption practices throughout the state, despite the judicial jurisdiction.

Medical insurance transitions

The implementation of the Affordable Care Act opened up new resources for some young adults in care or who were in care. It also raised questions about specifics around coverage. The council invited Jamie Ursch from the Department of Healthcare and Family Services to discuss the

new programs and how they relate to young people who have been adopted from DCFS care with the state medical card as part of the subsidy. She answered some questions and explained that procedures were still being developed for some situations, for example when there is a gap between the end of the subsidy and eligibility for an individual plan. She took away a list of follow up items and will return for another council meeting.

Training curriculum review

The adoption advisory council continued to review the latest round of proposed changes to the PRIDE pre-service curriculum. Members of the council are involved in the workgroup tasked with revamping PRIDE. The council also discussed the adoption conversion course that is required when moving to adoption from foster care. One suggestion under consideration is to make training materials available after completing a course. The training subcommittee will continue to follow these topics.

Call Adoption Support Line: 855-548-5505



The Adoption Support Line has expanded capacity to serve callers statewide through one toll-free number at: 855-548- 5505.

The Adoption Support Line allows all adoption-related calls to come to a centralized location. Trained responders with adoption experience will be able to answer questions or direct calls for follow up.

All calls will be assessed on an individual basis and documented to forward on to the assigned caseworker or supervisor if needed.

Staff can also handle the types of calls that do not require follow-up. These could be requests for numbers to field offices, replacement Medicaid cards or making con-

nections to educational advocacy resources.

When a caregiver calls about an intense issue that requires immediate attention or crisis intervention, he or she can immediately get referred to Adoption Preservation providers or connected to an adoption supervisors without delay.

The Adoption Support Line has extended hours so caregivers can call outside of the regular business day. Operating hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. (Monday through Thursday) and 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays.

Calls requiring a normal response will be routed to the assigned worker and supervisor for follow-up to occur within 24 business hours.

The Illinois Adoption Advisory Council meets six times a year to discuss issues and make recommendations to DCFS regarding the concerns of adoptive and guardianship families. The Council is made up of parents, professionals in the child welfare field and adopted individuals.

The next meeting of the Illinois Advisory Council will be on June 6 in Bloomington at 10 a.m.

Call the Office of Professional Development, Parent and Caregiver Support at 217-524-2422 for details.

Blend of marriage, foster care, adoption (and pets) is the right mix

The Davis family has found many rewards and successes as foster parents. They say that everyone in the family is invested in making their home the best that it can be. However, they could not have achieved the happiness and positive outcomes without the support of their extended family.

Darcy Davis said that she and her husband Jay always knew that they wanted to adopt. Jay himself was adopted. They began the licensing process in October of 2012 and were licensed by December of the same year with Cunningham Children's home in Urbana. It wasn't long until the first child came to their home. Jay and Darcy then realized how much support they had in their family and friends. All the branches of their family have been part of their success as foster parents.

Jay and Darcy have a "blended" family in the truest sense. They both have two children from previous marriages and they have a daughter by birth. Darcy's ex-husband and his wife Jill have been a great support. Jill, herself adopted, has made blankets for the children and put together gift bags, which included items such as nail polish, hair accessories and bath and body products. "Jill has been wonderful for the kids," said Darcy.

Darcy describes their home as "organized chaos" and says their beloved pets are an important part of

their family. Andy, an 85-pound boxer rescue dog heads the welcoming committee. Darcy reports that Andy just seems to know that a new child coming into the home needs extra comfort. Andy can often be found close by the child, providing comfort with his calm presence. He will usually sleep on the floor next to a child who has just moved into their home. Andy inspired the Davises' to have one of their children begin animal therapy. Their twin daughters are beginning to work with Hooves of Hope, a horse therapy program in Potomac.

Darcy said that the community and church have gone out of their way to make their children in foster care feel important. When their 16-year-old foster daughter decided at the last minute to attend the homecoming dance they were overwhelmed with generosity. Because of a friend's thoughtfulness, their daughter got her hair and make-up done professionally. Several people provided dresses for her to choose from and Jay's daughter's fiancé brought a corsage.

Ellen Baxter, Cunningham Children's Home licensing worker, said of the Davis family, "They are friendly and cooperative. I enjoy



Darcy and Jay Davis (center back) create a foster home supported by family relationships and friends.

visiting their home...One can tell a lot about a family by observing their pets."

Their pet menagerie allows the young ones to learn how to be good caretakers. Jay's adult children who are 22 and 20 are also close by to serve as role models and to lend a hand. That is appreciated since there are six children who need attention: Darcy's children at ages 17 and 14; Jay and Darcy's seven-year-old daughter; 13-year-old twin daughters by adoption; and a 16-year-old daughter through foster care. When you add in the network of friends and church members, everyone gets what they need to feel special.

DCFS administration marks Foster Parent Appreciation Month



Since last May, DCFS has experienced changes in leadership at the state and regional level. We mourned the passing of Director Calica and celebrated the positive changes he brought to the Department. While change is challenging, it also presents the opportunity to renew our commitment to Illinois

children and families. One thing that hasn't changed is our appreciation for the important role foster parents play in helping us meet our mission to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being for each child who comes to our attention. That has been true for staff in the local field offices across Central Illinois.

The Region has continued to hold Quarterly Foster Parent Council meetings in most of our offices. These meetings provide a chance to interact with local staff and include training opportunities. We also review and discuss the Foster Parent Bill of Rights as it applies to local practices. If you haven't participated in a local meeting, I encourage you to join us. Just

contact the local office and ask for the next Foster Parent Council date.

As Regional Administrator, I appreciate the work you do every day in order to provide consistency and a sense of well being for the children in your care. You provide a safe and loving environment. You advocate for them in school, court and your communities. When they need a hug or a guiding hand, you provide it. You seek out training and resources to help you meet their needs, and when the caseworker forgets to do something, you remind them. Please know I reinforce to all Central Region staff that foster parents are the most important part of our team, and I set the expectation for staff to be responsive and respectful in their interactions with you.

On behalf of the agency and Central Region staff, thanks again for sharing your home and hearts with our children. We could not meet their needs without you!

Cathy Smith, Regional Administrator

Central Region DCFS Foster Care Advisory Council Updates

The Central Region has seven Local Advisory Councils for foster parents. These local councils meet quarterly and provide opportunity for foster parents to bring forward issues they may be experiencing and to address the Central Region Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan.

Central Region's Steering Committee Additionally, Central Region has a Steering Committee, made up of a representative from the seven area offices. The Steering Committee affords an opportunity for individuals to share concerns they may have about foster care. The regional steering committee meets quarterly via teleconference. During their March meeting, representatives shared updates from their most recent local advisory council meetings.

The steering committee also conducted a survey of foster parents to

assess training that foster parents would like to receive. There were 501 surveys sent to foster parents and 117 surveys were returned. The surveys gave great insight into the trainings that foster parents made high priorities. The results of the surveys were given to the committee and leaders in the local advisory council. The goal is to address these training needs in future local advisory meetings.

Rock Island Bill of Rights group

Foster parents from the Rock Island field office asked for CPR training at their last Bill of Rights meeting on January 22.

Thanks go out to Tom and Jan Rizzo, who reached out to Hammond Henry Hospital about CPR training. Hammond Henry Hospital sponsored the CPR training at a minimal cost to foster parents on March 1.

Statewide Issues

Families in the Central Region also have a conduit to the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council. Foster parents Jan Rizzo, Lee Coffman and Bill Moorehead participate in the local councils and are representatives to the statewide council.

They ensure that local issues that could affect families on a broad scale can be elevated. They also share information about broad policies with Central Region homes.

To reach one of the statewide members, contact DCFS Caregiver Support at 217-524-2422.

[To take part in an area advisory council meeting, find the schedule, or review the minutes, call the nearest area office or the Central Region Foster Parent Help Line at 866-368-5204.](#)

DCFS Foster Parent Customer Service Line

The number for the DCFS Central Region Foster Parent Customer Service Line is 866-368-5204. This toll-free line is operational Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., excluding state holidays. The line is equipped with voicemail.

The calls can be about issues or concerns that caregivers have not been able to resolve through normal channels. The

goal is to have a response time of 24 to 48 hours for all calls. This is not set up to be an emergency response line. If a caregiver has an urgent request, it is best to call the field office or the after-hours number.

The Customer Service Line is designed for calls from foster families whose licenses are supervised by DCFS Central Region. Agency-supervised homes should work directly with the agency that monitors their license.

Central Region families find strength in numbers within groups

DCFS, private agencies and community organizations sponsor many support groups and associations to assist foster and adoptive parents. The following list can help identify a group that may suit your family. This list will be updated annually. Please contact the editor, Vanessa James at vanessa.james@illinois.gov with any corrections or additions for next year.

Central Illinois Foster Parent Support Group

Contact: Stephanie Jones at 217-433-5671
Meets the third Monday from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.
First Christian Church
3350 N. MacArthur Rd., Decatur
Childcare is provided.

Center for Youth and Family Solutions

Specialized Foster Caregiver Support Group
Contact: Shannon Doubet at 309-323-6542
Meets the first Thursday from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.
2610 W. Richwoods Blvd., Peoria

Foster Caregiver Support Group

Contact: Carol Bennett-Barker at 309-323-6529
Meets the third Tuesday of each month (except May and December) from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.
2610 W. Richwoods Blvd., Peoria

Children's Home Association - Art of Parenting

Contact: Melissa Millinger at 309-687-7321 or mmillinger@chail.org
Nine-week series of classes for anyone in a parenting role. Schedule of classes is based on the participants availability. Next group starts in July 2014.
Children's Home Association of Illinois
2130 N. Knoxville, Peoria

Circle of Support

Contact: Elizabeth Richmond at 309-671-7919 or elizabeth.richmond@illinois.gov
Meets monthly. Call for schedule and location.

Serves Peoria-area foster, adoptive, guardianship and relative caregiver families.
Approved training credits. Call to register.

DCFS Central Region Foster Care Advisory Council

Meets quarterly by local area offices throughout the region. Call the Central Region Foster Parent Information Line for details at 866-368-5204.

Healing Birth Family Support Group

Contact: Mary Wake at 309-671-0300 Ext. 285 or mary.wake@lssi.org
Meets the third Thursday of the month at 6 p.m.
3000 W. Rohmann, West Peoria

Keeping the Promise - The Baby Fold Adoption Preservation Program

Contact: Kathleen Bush at 309-454-1770 or kbush@thebabyfold.org
Serves families receiving adoption preservation services with Keeping the Promise.

Lutheran Social Services of IL - Adoptive Families Together

Contact: Susan Goble at 309-786-6400 x228 or susan.goble@lssi.org
The Galesburg group meets four times a year on Saturdays from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
The Rock Island group meets four times a year on the third Thursday of the month from 6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Call for dates and locations.
Childcare is available with reservations. Snacks are provided.

Central Region Training

The DCFS Office of Professional Development, Parent and Caregiver Support 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 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 Office of Professional Development, Parent and Caregiver Support at 877-800-3393 during business hours.

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

- Get training news and information;
- Check available trainings;
- View/print your training transcript;
- Register and take on-line courses;
- Download course materials to use in class or to access after training; and
- Get alerts for changes in course schedules.

DIGITAL TRAINING MATERIALS NOW AVAILABLE

As we move into the digital age and aim to use fewer printed resources, DCFS Training has made many PRIDE materials easily available on the home page of the Virtual Training Center at www.dcfstraining.org.

Anyone may print the materials or download them onto almost any electronic device and bring their device to training class. Trainees who have no digital access should speak with their trainers when they arrive in class, so we can accommodate everyone.

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 Adoption Information Center of Illinois (AICI) can answer your questions and connect you with a licensing agency. The toll-free number is 800-572-2390. AICI 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 888-96-ADOPT so you can be connected to the right individual for help.

...You are having family problems with your adopted child?

Contact the Adoption/Subsidized Guardianship Preservation Program that serves your area. Call the Adoption Support Line at 888-96-ADOPT.

...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 of Illinois Operator at 312-793-3500.

...You feel you aren't being treated fairly by DCFS or a private agency?

If you've already tried to resolve the issue with the caseworker and his or her supervisor and are not sure where to turn, call the Advocacy Office at 800-232-3798.

...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 questions about programs for youth approaching adulthood?

Contact the transition coordinator that serves your area, by calling the nearest DCFS regional office. The transition coordinator can advise on programs such as life skills training, preparation for higher education and employment assistance. Details on these programs can also be found at the Get Goal'd website www.youthincare.illinois.gov.

...You have an idea for an article in the newsletter?

Each region has reporters to help gather local news. The names and contact information are listed on the back page of each edition. You can contact the Editor, Vanessa James, at 312-814-6800 or send an e-mail message to vanessa.james@illinois.gov.

A family for me: Call 1-800-572-2390 for more information



Crystal (C8062)

Crystal [8062] Crystal, 14, is a sensitive young lady who is aware of herself and her surroundings, and who strives to make and maintain connections with people. She is able to identify her feelings, but would benefit from continued guidance on how to best process and express those feelings. Crystal enjoys writing and listening to music, and also enjoys being active. She is particularly fond of dancing, jumping on trampolines, and participating in gymnastics.

Crystal's worker says she has a "sweet personality." She enjoys having conversations with adults and peers alike, and is eager to form positive, trusting relationships.

The future family for Crystal is one that can provide a loving, structured home environment for her. You can encourage her as she learns to express her feelings appropriately. You can also establish and enforce boundaries with respect to personal space and appropriate topics of conversation. Crystal would like to have a "mom that cares." She would also like to join a family with other children, particularly girls that are close to her in age. Other children in the home should be older than Crystal.



Dallas (C8092)

to talk about his many interests. He also takes stock of the thoughts and feelings of others, and does his best to make others happy. When he is not engaged in conversation, he enjoys reading fantasy books, playing sports, and collecting Pokémon and Bakugan cards.

Dallas' worker says he is an expressive child who is able to clearly communicate his wants, needs, and emotions. Potential parents for Dallas can provide a structured home environment for him. You can establish clear boundaries and enforce the rules of your home in a fair, consistent manner. You can also encourage Dallas as he works to establish relationships that are based on mutual respect. Dallas would like to connect with a family that includes a mom, a dad, and, possibly, older siblings.

Darius [7975] Darius, 14, can be shy and reserved at first, but he is still able to form attachments with others. He is a fan of sports, and enjoys watching football and playing basketball with his friends. He also enjoys playing video games and listening to music. Darius has trouble concentrating at times, and also needs to be reminded to clean up after himself, but he is generally cooperative, both at home and in school.

The staff members at Darius' school say he is well-behaved. His worker says he is usually quiet and well-mannered.

To be a forever family for Darius, you would need to provide a loving home and assure him that he is a permanent part of

your family. You can be patient with him as he adjusts to your home. You can also work with professionals who can help him understand his emotions and develop appropriate coping techniques. Darius says he wants to live in a stable home. Other children in the home should be older than Darius.

Quadaysha [7974] This young lady is independent, strong-willed, and resilient. Quadaysha, 15, enjoys shopping, playing on the computer, and hanging out with her friends. She also enjoys spending time with her siblings, and benefits greatly from maintaining relationships that have been consistent and positive over the years. It usually takes Quadaysha a long time to open up to new people, but she has shown herself to be willing to embrace people who have earned her trust and proven they will be there for her.

Quadaysha's foster parents say she has a good heart. They add that she can be charming and helpful to others. Quadaysha's teachers say she is very intelligent, and earns good grades in school.

The right parents for Quadaysha can remain patient with her as she adjusts to her forever family. You can show unconditional commitment, which may in turn help you earn her trust. You can also help her maintain strong relationships with her siblings, including regular visits. Quadaysha wants to join a family that cares about her and is in it for the long haul. Other children in the home should be older than Quadaysha.



Darius (C7975)



Quadaysha (C7974)



Please call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois at 1-800-572-2390, or see the AICI website – www.adoptinfo-il.org if you are interested in adopting one of these children or learning about other children waiting to be adopted.



Illinois Families Now and Forever®

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*Celebrating 50 Years of Protecting
Children and Supporting Families*



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Current and back issues of *Illinois Families Now and Forever®* are available online in English and Spanish at www.DCFS.illinois.gov