

Illinois Families Now and Forever

Families by DCFS Foster Care, Adoption & Guardianship®

Stay connected even as teens look to leave the nest

One of the toughest jobs a caregiver has is to make a home for a child who will be leaving. Foster parents learn to come to terms with the concept when children return home to their parents. Yet, somehow it feels different when a child you have watched grow up chooses to leave. It might help to remember that eventually most children (whether through foster care, adoption or birth) will leave home at some point to launch a life of their own. Caregivers have to make the most of the time and resources available to ensure that the young people can get the best start on the path to adulthood. But it doesn't stop there. Youth need dependable adults to stay with them as they navigate this new terrain. Sometimes you will walk alongside, other times you might have to wait for them to catch up or even push them from behind.

The Division of Service Intervention offers many programs for youth still under the guardianship of DCFS through foster care, residential placements or with an independence goal. The programs help with education, employment and housing. For youth who have moved to adoption or guardianship, the expectation is that much of that type of support will come from parents, so they may not be eligible for as many programs. However, those young people can continue to take

advantage of the Education Advisors, apply for the DCFS Scholarship, and depending on their age at adoption, may be eligible for some of the services described in detail on pages 4 and 5.

Regardless of the permanency goal, young people still need to lean on you. The “pull-apart/push-away” dynamic is part of the natural development, and may be intensified by the trauma of abuse and neglect. The lasting connections they make with caregivers will help them through their teens and into adulthood.

As patience thins, caregivers may need backup from other caregivers, support groups, counselors or caseworkers. The DCFS Office of Training offers two teen-specific modules 1) Understanding and Promoting Preteen and Teen Development and 2) The Teen in Foster Care: Supporting Attachment, along with many lending library materials. DCFS-sponsored respite programs and the adoption/guardianship preservation programs can help caregivers and teens work through issues. It takes enormous emotional energy to stand by someone who seems to want nothing more than to leave. However, the rewards are immeasurable when you see the successes your steadfast support can bring about.

Youth in Care Web site goes live

The DCFS Office of Service Intervention recently announced a new Internet resource to help youth prepare for successful futures while they are in foster care and after as adults. The Web site, which is found at www.youthincare.illinois.gov, brings together information on DCFS programs for:

- Education
- Housing
- Money Smarts
- Life Skills
- Teen Parenting
- Legal System

The site is geared to assist youth as young as 8 and up to 21. Using the theme “Get Goal’d” young people can explore the different paths to adulthood and make informed decisions. The site also is the spot for news on the regional youth boards, issues of the youth newsletter and updates on recent policy changes.

Be sure to explore all of the resources available at www.youthincare.illinois.gov.



From the DCFS Director

Erwin McEwen

As we go into the new year, we often think about fresh starts and goals for the months ahead. I hope that you will share that kind of optimism with the young people in your care. We spend so much time focusing on the past and present hurts that it can sometimes be hard to see a healed future.

I coached a Little League squad of great kids, including some who faced many obstacles on and off the field. We didn't win every game, but we led off each inning like we could. In DCFS we have a segment of older youth who need a chance at bat in a family. These are youth who are in residential facilities, but who could flourish in a family setting. They want to be part of a family. To meet that goal, they need you.

We are looking for more foster caregivers to help teens transition from residential placements into foster care. The data show that in a family setting they can achieve better outcomes for behavior, socialization and permanency. In this issue you can learn more about what DCFS and agencies can offer as you care for older youth. With the right supports you could help a young person achieve the goal of finding a family and a future.

Relatives benefit with foster care license

For over a year, the Department with the cooperation of private agencies has been engaged in an intense effort to work with relative caregivers so they can gain a foster care license. When relatives caring for children placed with them by DCFS become licensed, they receive the benefits of more training and increased monthly payments to provide for children's needs. DCFS also receives more federal money to support children and families. In the last year, more than 650 relatives have successfully gone through the licensing process.



Becoming licensed provides more training

During a family crisis, caregivers need to prepare for the realities of caring for children in need of child welfare services. Training will help relative caregivers understand the developmental and emotional stages of the children in their care. By learning in advance what foster parenting can entail, they will be better able to handle the challenges that may come along.

Relative caregivers can take a six-hour course in class or watch recorded training materials in their home. Many substitute caregivers decide to go on and take the full 27-hour Foster PRIDE series of classes required to be a foster caregiver to non-related children.

More financial assistance for licensed relatives

When relative caregivers become licensed, they also become eligible for the foster care board rate. This monthly payment is typically higher than the "standard of need" rate for unlicensed relatives. For example,

an uncle in Champaign providing care for his 9-year-old nephew could receive \$301 a month at the standard of need rate. After becoming licensed, he would receive \$435 for the child's clothing, board and personal allowance.

Caseworker support available

Both DCFS and private agency caseworkers received training on how to help unlicensed relatives become licensed. These relatives have to comply with current licensing standards, including fingerprinting, medical exams and training. In some cases, workers can request waivers to allow an applicant to become licensed, even though they are not in full compliance with a specific licensing standard.

Taking care of a child during a family crisis that requires DCFS involvement is not an easy task. Becoming licensed will give relative caregivers more educational and financial resources. Unlicensed relative caregivers should discuss with their caseworkers all of the benefits of licensing, as well as the supports available to help them through the process.

REGISTER NOW for Caregiver Institutes

Enrollment is open for the 2010 Caregiver Training Institutes: Fostering Success by Strengthening and Supporting Families. Call the DCFS registration Hotline today at 877-800-3393.



The institutes are open to all foster, adoptive and guardianship caregivers. This year's institutes focus on teamwork. By working as an active member of the child welfare team, caregivers can find support and get what they need for children. The agenda will include:

- Panel discussion with former youth in care
- State of the region address by the Regional Administrator
- DCFS vision for better outcomes through teamwork
- Training on Child and Family Team meetings, practical tips for team-building, accessing resources through Local Area Networks

Participants will earn five training credit hours to meet licensing requirements when they sign in on time and participate in the entire session.

Registration opens at 8 a.m. with the program beginning at 9 a.m. and finishing by 3 p.m. Refreshments and lunch will be provided for participants. The institutes are an adult-only event. There are no accommodations for childcare at the institutes, and children must not attend.

There may be limited funds available through the DCFS regions to reimburse DCFS supervised caregivers for child care or mileage (not lodging) expenses to attend this training. Caregivers should follow normal procedures within their own regions to check on potential reimbursement before attending. Attendees from private agencies should contact their agencies in advance to determine whether they can be reimbursed for those expenses.

The same training content will be presented at each institute, so plan to attend only one institute, choosing the time and location that is most convenient. Space is limited at each site. CALL 877-800-3393 to register.

March 6
6201 S. Emerald, Chicago

March 13
Kaskaskia College
Centralia

March 27
Danville Area Community
College

April 24
Milan Banquet Center
Waukegan

From the editor

We made it through to see another year! Hopefully Illinois Families Now and Forever provided you with the tools you needed to get the job done for your families. It is very gratifying when readers call me and say, "...I read in the newsletter, that..."

The staff who manage different programs for caregivers tell me that they brace themselves for a barrage of calls when I write about their services. They don't say it as a complaint, but rather as a testimony to the big difference a little information can make for families.

This year we are making plans to ensure that more staff have access to the newsletter. Better outcomes are accomplished when everyone is on the same page, literally. So keep saving your newsletters or cut out the pages you might want to come back to. During your caseworker's next visit, pull that article out and ask the questions. You and the children you are caring for deserve accurate, understandable answers.

That is truly the point of this publication. The six regional reporters, the graphic designer, the production team, and me, the editor, all strive to break down policy and present it to you in a useful way.

If you want to offer input or advise us on how we can best serve you, please fill out the survey on page 9 and send it in.

Thanks for reading.
Vanessa



Students from foster care and adoption get a break on college funds

The first step in qualifying for financial aid is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form (FAFSA). All assistance based on financial need requires filling out the FAFSA. After completing and returning the application, the student will receive the Student Aid Report (SAR) that lists the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The EFC is what the family is expected to pay, based on their family income, on top of any financial aid that is awarded.

For students who have been in the child welfare system, the major factor for financial aid is the student's status as "dependent" or "independent." As an independent student, the parent's (parent by birth or foster caregiver) income will not be included in the

financial need formula. That typically results in eligibility for more financial aid.

Youth in foster care or subsidized guardianship would automatically qualify as independent students. Alternatively, for youth who left DCFS care through adoption, the adoptive parents' income will be included, unless special circumstances apply. However, new guidelines that went into effect July 2009 could benefit some adopted youth.

Now youth adopted from foster care after age 13 can apply for financial aid under the recently expanded definition of independent student. Students should talk to their guidance counselors and college financial aid

advisors for more specific details on the new criteria.

It is important that each youth complete and mail or e-mail their applications early in the calendar year, in order to secure the maximum benefits. Students can get forms starting in January from their school counselor or via the Internet at the official website www.fafsa.edu.gov.

The DCFS Education Advisors can also help families make plans for college. The advisors are assigned to each region. For more information contact the DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services at 312-814-5959.

Use the Web warily to research reliable resources for financial aid

While there is boundless information on the Internet, families should depend on trusted sites for financial aid information. Parents and students who are anxious to find ways to pay for college can fall prey to scams. Keep the following tips in mind:

- Use the free lists and be wary of programs that require payment.
- Don't give out credit card or bank information in advance.
- Checkout any program or contest that says "you have been selected" or "you are a finalist" as these could be scams.

These sites are a good jumping off point for students and families starting research on college funding.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid Commission

www.fafsa.edu.gov

The first stop for the federal financial aid program.

Education Finance Council

www.efc.org

Offers financial aid resources specific to youth in foster care and other special circumstances.

College Board

collegeboard.com

This same organization that runs the SAT exam helps students prepare and pay for college. Students can use the search engine of more than 2,300 sources for funding.

Illinois Student Assistance Commission

www.collegezone.org

Fastweb scholarship search

www.fastweb.com

United Negro College Fund

www.uncf.org

Black Excel College Help Network

www.BlackExcel.org

Minority Scholarships

www.free-4u.com/minority.htm

Orphan Foundation of America

www.orphan.org

DCFS offers programs to support youth in college or at work

The DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services administers several programs to support youth who go on to post-secondary education. Call 312-814-5959 in Chicago for more information on these programs.

Youth in College/Vocational Training program

Youth who plan to go to college or pursue a vocational training program can get some added resources from DCFS. This program is only open to young people still under the care of DCFS. Those who moved to adoption or guardianship cannot apply.

The benefits of the Youth in College/Vocational Training Program include

- A monthly grant of \$471 for up to four years or until age 23 (apply by 21 years old)
- Medical card for Illinois students up to age 21
- Reimbursement for book expenses not covered by financial aid
- One-time start up funding of \$200 for initial living expenses

Students can choose to attend an accredited vocational school, four-year college or community college. To be eligible, students should contact their caseworker for assistance in filling out CFS 449, the application for Youth in College. Vocational Training Program. Youth must have a high school diploma or GED certificate or be enrolled as a full-time student in an accredited university or vocational training program. They must be maintain full-time status with at least a C average each semester. Grades and a schedule must be submitted each term. More details are available on the application.

DCFS Scholarship applications available now

Apply before March 31

DCFS annually provides 48 college scholarships to youth who are currently under guardianship of the Department or who left DCFS guardianship through adoption or private guardianship arrangements. This is a competitive scholarship based on academic achievement, personal accomplishments and community service. Scholarship recipients receive up to four consecutive years of tuition and academic fee waivers to be used at participating Illinois state colleges or universities, a \$471 monthly stipend and a medical card up to age 23. Applicants must have a high school diploma or GED by the end of the current school year. Scholarship Program Student Applications (CFS 438) are available now.



Education & Training Vouchers

The Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program assists youth with post-secondary education related expenses not covered by financial aid grants. Qualifying students can receive payment of up to \$5000 annually for education related expenses such as tuition, fees, books, supplies, uniforms, equipment, and/or transportation not covered by other grants or scholarships. Funding is available until age 21. However, if the student is enrolled in a post-secondary program before age 21 and making satisfactory progress toward completion of the program, funding is available until age 23.

Youth for whom DCFS is legally responsible or who aged out of care at age 18 or older are eligible.

Young people who achieved permanency at age 16 or older through either subsidized guardianship or adoption can also apply.

Employment Incentive Program

Students who choose to work after high school, can take advantage of the Employment Incentive Program (EIP). Through on-the-job work experience or job training programs, they will develop employment skills and work ethic necessary for a successful transition to independence. They receive a monthly grant of \$150 for up to 12 months or until the 21st birthday and assistance with job-related start up costs. The program is open to youth in DCFS care from age 17 to 21 with a high school diploma or GED.

CAYIT staffings help team decide the best next move for teens

The CAYIT (pronounced SAY-it) meeting brings together the key individuals in a child's life to discuss potential changes in placement or type of placement. CAYIT is the acronym for Child and Youth Investment Team. There are several situations that will trigger a CAYIT to be scheduled, including multiple moves within a short time frame. For teenagers, the impetus for a CAYIT is often the discussion of a move to an independent living program, a transitional living program or gaining status as an emancipated youth.

Many older teens will eagerly reach for their perceived notion of independence. The CAYIT staffing helps ensure that they don't reach beyond what they are ready for and examines the supports that they will need to be successful.

Lee Annes, one of the co-statewide coordinators for the CAYIT program, describes the process as a negotiation between the youth, the worker and other adults in the young person's life, facilitated by CAYIT staff.

"Older youth are at an age where you have to weigh their motivation and perceptions, along with their ability and needs," he said.

At a CAYIT staffing, the group works toward consensus to find a solution that everyone can agree to support. The final outcome may not always be a move. In many situations it could be better for the youth to continue living in the foster home, with supports to help with employment or school. As another example, a transitional living program (TLP) with on-site staff and counseling

might be the first step before an apartment.

The CAYIT is where the teen can make his or her case for a change. The youth is expected to fully participate. Caregivers should also be at the table to provide their perspective on the youth's strengths and needs. With the guidance of the CAYIT team, the group works out the best solution, matches resources and puts the plan in motion.

Caregivers can ask the caseworker to convene a CAYIT or can call Lee Annes 312-793-6052 or Teddy Savas at 312-793-0110 for more information.

Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Update

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council spent December and into January scoring the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plans submitted by all foster care programs. The council members in January provided an update on the progress toward completing the scoring.

The council invited Dr. Paula Jaudes, the DCFS Medical Director and members of her staff to discuss the Health Passport program, which tracks a foster child's medical records. Dr. Jaudes also sought input from the council members on ways to better communicate directly with caregivers about health emergencies such as the H1N1 flu outbreaks. Ideas such as direct mailings and e-mails alerts were considered. Dr. Jaudes and her staff will determine a plan that meets the need.

Council members also received an update from DCFS Office of Training. Joan Langan discussed a new course for caregivers focusing on reunification work. She also updated the council on progress in conducting registration through the Virtual Training Center and how that impacts the delivery of courses in caregiver communities.

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council was founded as part of 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 6 times a year, and more as needed, in locations around the state.

The next meeting of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council will be on Friday, February 19 beginning at 9:00 a.m. in Rock Island. Call the Office of Foster Parent Support Services at 217-524-2422 for details.

Tax season can bring benefits for foster, adoptive and guardianship families

The decision to support children through foster care and adoption can bring benefits at tax time. Key areas to explore yourself or with your tax preparer are:

- Uniform Definition of Child, which allows for a child who has lived in the home less than 12 months to be claimed as a dependent.
- Adoption Tax Credit of up to \$12,150, which can offset income and potentially lower taxes, even if there were no actual expenses associated with the adoption.

As caregivers prepare for tax season, they can look to these free publications at the Web site for the Internal Revenue Service www.irs.gov. under the forms and publications section.

Pub 17, Your Federal Income Tax

Pub 501, Exemptions, Standard Deduction and Filing Information

Pub 596, Earned Income Credit

Form 8839, Qualified Adoption Expenses

Topic 607, Adoption Credit

Caregivers who need further assistance, can look to the Center for Economic Progress, which offers free tax preparation services in sites across Illinois for families with income less than \$50,000. For more information, call 312-701-1326 or 888-827-8511 or visit the Web site at centerforeconomicprogress.org.

Join 2010 support group listing

If you lead a support group or association for foster or adoptive families, you can be included in the directory of support groups, published in May. Please send the following information by March 1.

Name of group

Meeting schedule (e.g. 2nd Tuesday monthly at 10:00 a.m.)

Meeting location

Contact name with phone number/e-mail

Any other notes (e.g. potluck dinner, child care provided, RSVP required, etc.)

New listings and updates should be sent in writing by e-mail or post to:

Vanessa . James@illinois.gov

Vanessa James, DCFS

100 W. Randolph, 6th fl.

Chicago, IL 60601

Updated post-adopt services booklet ready for families

The Division of Service Intervention has prepared an updated version of the Post Adoption and Guardianship Services booklet. The booklet overviews the adoption and guardianship programs; provides phone numbers for programs and answers many frequently asked questions caregivers have before and after an adoption or guardianship.

The booklet is available for download on the DCFS Web site at www.state.il.us/dcfs. Select the Library tab and scroll down to Publications. Caregivers can also call their Post-Adoption worker to request a printed copy.



Questions about your subsidy for adoption or guardianship? Call a subsidy worker:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Cook County
Pamela Mills
312-808-5250, ext. 339 | • Springfield
Gail Mayer
217-557-2668 |
| • Joliet
Norma Napper
815-730-4086 | • Urbana
Elois Drake
217-278-5417 |
| • Aurora
Deirdra Davis
630-844-8966 | • East St. Louis
Carol Teague-Douglas
618-583-2189 |
| • Rockford
Jennifer Zaluckyj
815-967-3763 | • Mt. Vernon
Wendy Manna
618-244-8424 |
| • Peoria
Deborah Hawkins
309-671-7944 | |

Free retreats refresh

Children's Home + Aid developed a program to address the stress that adoption or guardianship of a child can place on a couple's relationship. Adoptive Families Together is designed to strengthen and support those adult relationships to the benefit of the entire family. One unique aspect of the program is a free weekend retreat. The Relationship Enhancement Retreat provides couples an opportunity to get away, have fun, relax, and enjoy each other's company.

The retreats are interactive and cover topics such as: communication, commitment, friendship, expectations and conflict resolution. To learn more about Adoptive Families Together or to register for an upcoming retreat, call Ann Siegel at 815-962-1043 or see the agency's website at www.childrenshomeandaid.org.

March 26-28, 2010
Embassy Suites
Peoria, Illinois

April 30-May 2, 2010
Country Inn & Suites
Galena, Illinois

July 23-25, 2010
George Williams College
Williams Bay, Wisconsin
Registration begins 3/8/10

September 17-19, 2010
Grand Geneva
Lake Geneva, Wisconsin
Registration begins 5/17/10

November 5-7, 2010
Pheasant Run
St. Charles, Illinois
Registration begins 7/6/10

Get more info from DCFS closed files



Sometimes, adoptive parents find that there is a lot about their child's history that they don't know – and wish they did. There are many reasons you might want to know more. Your child may be asking questions to which you have no answers. He or she may begin to talk about vague memories. You may need information to assist in treatment planning by a health care provider. Files that you had may have been lost. Midwest Adoption Center (MAC) is under contract to help adoptive and guardianship parents obtain information from DCFS closed files.

At the request of the adoptive parent or guardian, MAC will attempt to locate all of the files in the DCFS system that pertain to the child and prepare a written report. Caregivers will receive all information found in the available files that is specified by law to be provided, at no charge. Information about events in the child's family history and more detailed health history may be found in Department files – including the child's own file, birth parent files and even sibling files. If available, the following types of information are included in the written report:

- Placement summaries
- Family background information about birthparents and grandparents
- A description of the circumstances at the time he came into care
- General medical information as required by law (This includes

the child's own medical information as well as birth relatives' conditions that could have a genetic component such as alcoholism, mental health diagnosis, and other health problems such as cardiac disease.)

- Child's birth history
- Educational history

Reports, medical records, and other material that may be found in the files that contain significant information will be redacted (with certain parts blacked out for confidentiality) then copied and attached to the standard format. In general, any reports that could reasonably be assumed to be helpful to you as the parents, to therapists or to other health care providers will be copied and included.

Families have said that learning about the child's past has helped them to understand current behaviors. Expanded health data allows for early diagnosis, and possibly treatment and interventions for developmental problems and conditions. Having this information aids the individual, as a child and later as an adult, to develop an accurate picture of the personal traits that came from the birth family and those that were developed and nurtured in their present family.

For more information about the DCFS Closed File Information and Search Program, contact Midwest Adoption Center at 847-298-9096.

2010 Reader Survey

Please help us make sure Illinois Families Now and Forever offers what you want to know. After circling your answers on both sides, simply fold, seal and mail the survey back. Or visit the DCFS Web site at www.state.il.us/dcfs to fill it out on-line. You may also fax both sides to 312-814-4131. Thank you in advance for your input.

CIRCLE: 1=GREAT interest 2=SOME interest 3=NO interest X=NOT applicable

Working Within the Child Welfare System

- | | | | |
|---------|----------------------------------|---------|------------------------------------|
| 1 2 3 X | Foster care rules/procedures | 1 2 3 X | Child and family teams |
| 1 2 3 X | Adoption rules/procedures | 1 2 3 X | Confidentiality |
| 1 2 3 X | Guardianship rules/procedures | 1 2 3 X | System of Care service network |
| 1 2 3 X | Governmental rules/legislation | 1 2 3 X | Integrated assessments |
| 1 2 3 X | Licensing policy | 1 2 3 X | Intake/child investigation process |
| 1 2 3 X | Obligations of foster parents | 1 2 3 X | Juvenile Court |
| 1 2 3 X | Recruiting foster/adopt families | 1 2 3 X | Resolving DCFS/agency disputes |

other topics/comments: _____

Adoption and Guardianship

- | | | | |
|---------|----------------------------------|---------|------------------------------------|
| 1 2 3 X | Financial implications | 1 2 3 X | Subsidy agreement |
| 1 2 3 X | Advocating for the adopted child | 1 2 3 X | Rights and responsibilities |
| 1 2 3 X | Obtaining community resources | 1 2 3 X | Accessing free post-adopt services |

other topics/comments: _____

Medical and Mental Health

- | | | | |
|---------|-----------------------------|---------|------------------------------------|
| 1 2 3 X | Depression | 1 2 3 X | Developmental disabilities |
| 1 2 3 X | Attachment disorders | 1 2 3 X | Medically-fragile children |
| 1 2 3 X | Eating disorders | 1 2 3 X | Sexual abuse |
| 1 2 3 X | Self-esteem | 1 2 3 X | Resources for medical specialties |
| 1 2 3 X | Fetal alcohol/drug exposure | 1 2 3 X | Resources/info for dental services |
| 1 2 3 X | Asthma | 1 2 3 X | Resources for mental health |
| 1 2 3 X | Diabetes | 1 2 3 X | Using the Public Aid medical card |

other topics/comments: _____

Education

- | | | | |
|---------|-------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|
| 1 2 3 X | Working with schools/teachers | 1 2 3 X | Tutoring |
| 1 2 3 X | Special education services | 1 2 3 X | DCFS Education Advisors |
| 1 2 3 X | Scholarships | 1 2 3 X | Education after high school |

other topics/comments: _____

Age-related Topics

- | | | | |
|---------|-----------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------|
| 1 2 3 X | Early childhood intervention | 1 2 3 X | Independent Living |
| 1 2 3 X | Tantrums, biting, aggression | 1 2 3 X | Services for teens |
| 1 2 3 X | Safety (home, playground, school) | 1 2 3 X | Housing for transitioning teens |
| 1 2 3 X | Pre-teen sexuality | 1 2 3 X | Youth Advisory Boards |
| 1 2 3 X | Teen sexuality | 1 2 3 X | Runaways |

other topics/comments: _____

Family Life

- | | | | |
|---------|--------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 2 3 X | Behavior management/discipline | 1 2 3 X | Foster/adoptive family networking |
| 1 2 3 X | Sibling rivalry | 1 2 3 X | Family traditions/activities |
| 1 2 3 X | Impact of placement changes | 1 2 3 X | Camps |
| 1 2 3 X | Handling stress | 1 2 3 X | Arts, music, sports activities |
| 1 2 3 X | Family therapy/counseling | 1 2 3 X | Travel |
| 1 2 3 X | Self-care for parents | 1 2 3 X | Free services, products |

other topics/comments: _____

Tell us how you feel about the regular features currently offered in each issue:

CIRCLE: 1=GREAT interest 2=SOME interest 3=NO interest X=NOT applicable

Regular Features

- | | | | |
|---------|--|---------|--------------------------------|
| 1 2 3 X | Director's Message | 1 2 3 X | Regional edition insert |
| 1 2 3 X | Foster/adoptive parent profiles | 1 2 3 X | Training schedule |
| 1 2 3 X | Tell It Like It Is question/answer | 1 2 3 X | Homeward-Bound (Reunification) |
| 1 2 3 X | Movin' On Up (for transitioning youth) | | |
| 1 2 3 X | Family for Me photos of children | | |
- other topics/comments: _____

Fold here _____

Vanessa James, Editor
Families Now and Forever
IL Department of Children and Family Services
James R. Thompson Center
100 W. Randolph, 6th Floor
Chicago, IL 60601

Fold here _____

Please tell us about yourself:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| _____ # foster children currently in your home | _____ # children by birth |
| _____ # children you have adopted | _____ private agency supervised home |
| _____ # foster children previously in your home | _____ DCFS office supervised home |
| _____ # children you have taken guardianship of | _____ relative caregiver (yes / no) |
| | _____ DCFS/agency staff (yes / no) |

Circle your DCFS region: Cook Central Cook North Cook South Southern Northern Central

Would you be interested in receiving the newsletter by e-mail? Yes No

Would you be interested in reviewing the newsletter on the DCFS Web site? Yes No

What do you like **best** about the newsletter? _____

What do you like **least** about the newsletter? _____

Other comments: _____

Please offer your Name, Address and Phone Number, if you wish.

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

Jordan [7461] Jordan, 10, is an active young man who loves playing sports, especially baseball. When he is not outside, he enjoys playing video games and entertaining himself with action figures. He is a social child who makes friends easily, but also can be influenced by his peers.

Jordan's worker says he is a very helpful young man. He can be affectionate and demonstrates considerable academic potential. The right family for Jordan would be able to provide a loving, structured home for him. You could work closely with teachers, counselors and other professionals to make sure his educational and emotional needs are met. You could also help him maintain a relationship with his younger sister.

Jordan says he would like an adoptive family that is nice and where he would not be the only child. Other children in the home should be older than Jordan.

Darnell [7761] Darnell, 9, is a fun, outgoing child who tries to help his peers whenever possible. He thrives when given one-on-one attention, but also likes group activities such as sports. When he is not playing outside, manipulating action figures or racing toy cars, Darnell likes to take it easy. He enjoys chess, playing cards, and a variety of board games.

Darnell's worker says he behaves well in school and works hard to succeed. He enjoys working and playing with his classmates, friends and siblings.

Darnell's "forever family" would provide a loving home for him while also establishing boundaries and setting consistent rules for him to follow. You can give him plenty of one-on-one attention and encourage him to pursue his various educational and recreational interests. Darnell says he would like to live with a mom, a dad, and a brother his own age.

Genevieve [7770] Genevieve, 7, is an outgoing, affectionate child who likes to help everyone around her. She enjoys playing with dolls and likes to help adults care for younger children. She also loves dogs and cats and has a fish tank in her room. Genevieve is very social and loves to play sports with her peers. She is particularly fond of baseball and swimming. Her favorite toy is a child-sized guitar that she is eager to learn to play.

Genevieve's worker says she is very sweet and fun to be around. She does well in school, where she is cooperative, sociable, and hard working. Genevieve is also a problem-solver who tends to figure things out quickly.

Potential parents for Genevieve would be able to welcome her into your home with open arms. You could encourage her love of sports and outdoor activities. You could also be consistent with Genevieve and be attentive to her needs. She would like to live with a fun, active family that would take her swimming. Other children in the home should be older than Genevieve.

Jared [7622] Jared, 11, is a cheerful young man who gets along well with others. His favorite activity is fishing with his foster parents. He also enjoys playing with toy cars and watching cartoons. Jared uses a wheelchair to go from place to place. While he has some difficulty speaking, his comprehension is good and he can nod "yes" or "no" to many questions.

His worker says Jared is sweet and respectful. He waits his turn to interact with others and is always willing to help with his care.

The right family for Jared would be loving, patient and supportive. You could offer plenty of time for his care. A family in central Illinois is strongly preferred so Jared could remain in contact with his siblings and grandparents after he is adopted.



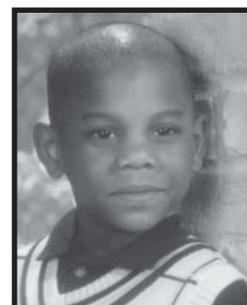
Darnell (C7761)



Genevieve (C7770)



Jared (C7622)



Jordan (C7461)



Please call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois at 1-800-572-2390, or see the AICI Web site – 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

Pat Quinn, Governor
Erwin McEwen, DCFS Director

Published by:
DCFS Office of Foster Parent
Support Services
Ray Gates, Administrator

Editor: Vanessa James
Phone: 312-814-6824
Fax: 312-814-4131
E-mail: vanessa.james@illinois.gov

Regional Editors
Central – Sam Saladino
Northern – Catherine Johnson
Southern – Michael Bollman
Cook North – Joann Niemuth
Cook Central – Merrylee Guge-
Jorgenson
Cook South – Rod Mulford
Graphics: Jenny Florent
Produced by: DCFS Print Shop

Purpose: To help busy families more effectively parent children currently or formerly in DCFS care. To bring them the best information from the most knowledgeable sources. To promote statewide teamwork in finding permanency for children.

Address Changes: Families must notify their licensing representative, who will notify DCFS. Agencies should change office addresses or request staff copies through the Editor.

Illinois Families Now and Forever is published six times a year, bi-monthly, and mailed to licensed foster parents, unlicensed relative caregivers, adoptive and guardianship families receiving subsidies, DCFS staff, and private agency staff as ordered.

Material may not be reprinted in whole, in part or in any form whatsoever without permission from the Editor or DCFS. Opinions expressed by experts writing articles are no substitute for professional answers or opinions about a family's or child's specific situation. Consult a competent professional for answers to your specific questions.

Department of Children and Family Services©

Illinois Families Now and Forever
Vanessa James, Editor
Department of Children & Family Services
100 West Randolph - 6th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60601

PRESRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SPRINGFIELD, IL
PERMIT NO. 763

Save the Date for the DCFS/Illinois Foster & Adoptive Parent Association Conference

August 27 - 29, 2010

Marriott Oak Brook Hills Resort

Look for registration details in the May issue

Inside this issue:

- Page 1** Stay connected with teens as they prepare to leave
- Page 2** Relatives benefit from foster care license
- Page 3** Register today for a Caregiver Institute
- Page 4** Resources for college financial aid
- Page 5** DCFS offers teens education and job support
- Page 6** CAYIT staffings help teens make best move
- Page 7** Information for tax preparation
- Page 8** MAC retrieves information from DCFS closed files
- Page 9** Reader Survey
- Page 11** Family For Me profiles of waiting children