

# Illinois Families Now and Forever

Families by DCFS Foster Care, Adoption & Guardianship®

## Foster Parent Law Plans earn awards for 4 agencies

**E**ach year the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council receives, reviews and scores the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plans for every agency's and each DCFS region's foster care program. Council members spend many hours of volunteer time following a tool developed to discern how the foster care programs measure up against the rights and responsibilities outlined in the Law. They reviewed more than 70 plans, and some stood out as exceptional. Council members can go beyond the score to nominate a plan for special recognition in one of three categories:

- Dignity and Respect
- Organization/  
User Friendliness
- Foster Parent Involvement

This year four agencies submitted plans that received additional recognition, three in the category of Dignity and Respect and one for Organization/User Friendliness. In May, during Foster Parent Appreciation Month, Director Erwin McEwen joined the Council in honoring:

**Centers for New Horizons**  
**Children's Home + Aid**  
**Universal Family Connection**  
**Lawrence Hall Youth Services**

### **Dignity & Respect:** **Center for New Horizons**

*Dr. Sokoni Karanja*

*Director McEwen*

*Caregiver Cynthia Fulks*

*Caregiver Lodina Jones*

*Fabiene Rogers-Smith*

*Chair Robyn Harvey*



**Centers for New Horizons' implementation plan stood out for how the agency welcomes new foster caregivers and partners them with a mentor foster parent. From the beginning, the agency provides support and encouragement.**

Administrators and foster caregivers from each of the honored agencies came to the Council's meeting to accept their award.

"It is important that the Council recognizes what makes these plans special. When we raise the bar high, the agencies respond and that makes foster care better for everyone," said Chair Robyn Harvey.

This fall, agencies will be gearing up to submit the next Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. Plans must demonstrate caregiver involvement. To take part in reviewing or drafting the new document, contact the agency or regional advisory council or the person designated to be the Foster Parent Law Liaison.

### **Award Criteria**

#### **Dignity and Respect**

Plans had strong examples of the program's consideration of foster caregivers as professional team members, responsiveness to caregivers, and innovative means of demonstrating dignity and respect for caregivers.

#### **Organization/User Friendliness**

Plans were easier for caregivers to read and use than all or most plans. The text was non-technical, extremely caregiver-friendly and useful.

#### **Foster Parent Involvement**

Plans demonstrated extraordinary means of involving caregivers in the plan's development, implementation and accessibility.



## From the DCFS Director

Erwin McEwen

As you look forward to the school bell ringing soon, I hope you will keep in mind how powerful your influence is on children. From ABCs, to science fair projects, on up to algebra homework, education is crucial, and you are the most important teacher a child will have.

I spent a good part of June traveling to the six Youth Summits. Even if every youthful instinct says to “cut and run” from DCFS at 18, I encouraged teens to take advantage of the educational supports DCFS can provide. Programs including the DCFS Scholarship, Youth in College, Community College Tuition Payment and Education and Transition Vouchers can make higher education possible.

In high school and elementary school, the DCFS Education Advisors can help you sort out special education needs. The DCFS Local Area Network (LAN) Liaisons can connect you with local programs that we fund to avoid truancy, suspension or expulsion. Even our youngest learners are served through the School Readiness Initiative so you can receive help enrolling them in pre-kindergarten programs.

Like many things in life, you may not see the impact immediately, but the seeds you sow will eventually bear fruit. Even though at times you may not believe it, when caregivers make education a priority, that investment in time and energy can have an enormous payoff.

## Implementation plans (cont.)

### Plan Organization Children’s Home + Aid

- Nancy Ronquillo
- Deborah Pillers
- Director McEwen
- Caregiver CJ Godly
- Kurt Kalas
- Vice-Chair Angela Barber



**Children’s Home + Aid presented their plan with concise language, free of jargon and acronyms. The plan reported results and how staff was accountable for meeting the rights and responsibilities.**



### Dignity & Respect Universal Family Connection

- Chair Robyn Harvey
- Glendora Thomas
- Audra Rowe
- Director McEwen
- Carolyn Thomas
- Caregiver Camille Willis

**Universal Family Connection shares their implementation plan with the surrounding community, which promotes the important role foster parents have on the child welfare team.**

### Dignity & Respect Lawrence Hall Youth Services

- Vice Chair Angela Barber
- Tracy Levine
- Director McEwen
- Caregiver Mary Gonerka
- Caregiver Tony Gonerka



**Council members commended Lawrence Hall for the inclusive atmosphere the agency creates through foster parent roundtables and an active foster parent advisory board.**

# Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Bulletin



The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council recently had several guests present topics that affect foster caregivers.

## Director McEwen

In May, Director Erwin McEwen came to share in foster Parent Appreciation Month activities and to present Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan awards. He also updated the council on several new initiatives. The Department is working closely with the Governor's office toward the proposed merger with the Department of Juvenile Justice. Director McEwen noted that the model of care for youth involved with the justice system could benefit from the experience of providing trauma-informed care for children with DCFS cases. The two groups of youth share many of the same challenges such as needing a stable home environment, having few resources and facing educational deficits.

"We would approach this as a family problem, not just a youth problem. These are youth who could benefit from the right kinds of interventions to prepare them for life beyond the detention centers. That is what we do for the DCFS-involved youth," he said.



**Chair Robyn Harvey, Director McEwen and Vice Chair Angela Barber**

## Federal Review

In January 2010 Illinois received the final results of the Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). Joan Nelson-Philips, Deputy Director of Quality Assurance, presented a summary of the review that every state's child welfare program must undergo. DCFS results showed strengths in terms of permanency achievements and placement stability. Still, DCFS will need to develop a program improvement plan (PIP) that among other points will incorporate broad

use of Family Advocacy Centers, caregiver recruitment and retention initiatives and strategies to improve the quality of caseworker contacts with children, caregivers, parents and families. Council members will have input in drafting the PIP as it is developed.

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*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.*



**Robyn Harvey, Cecil Garner, Royann Garcia and Uli Senz leave the council after fulfilling their terms.**

**The next meeting of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council will be on September 17, beginning at 3 p.m. in Peoria. Call the Office of Caregiver and Parent Support at 217-524-2422 for details.**

# Truancy problems solved with involved caregivers plus local support

One of the problems that can prevent a young person from successfully entering the adult world is truancy. Truancy is defined as a child being absent from school without the consent of his or her guardian. The Illinois State Board of Education defines a chronic truant child as “a child subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for 10% or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days.”

Truancy places a young person at risk for a number of different problems. The most obvious problem caused by truancy is academic failure. Not only do truant children struggle when they are in school, they are significantly more likely to drop out of school than other children.

## LOCAL SCHOOL HELP

Through the Education Initiative, DCFS supports community programs in Local Area Networks (LANs) across the state that serve children at risk of truancy, suspension or expulsion.

These are free programs for all families, whether foster, adoptive or guardianship or birth. While the programs are tailored to the community, they have in common: individual case management, collaboration with school staff, and connections to other community resources.

Call the nearest DCFS regional office to reach the LAN Liaison for more details.

Failure to complete high school diminishes the long-term prospects for employment. However, in the near term, truancy can also lead to problems such as increases in substance use, criminal activity and teen pregnancy more than their peers who regularly attend school.

## Causes of truancy

Truancy is a complex behavior. Causes of truancy can be broken into four main categories: school issues, community issues, family issues and personal issues. Lack of involvement in school activities, as well as academic difficulties, increase a student’s risk of truancy. Additionally, an unsafe school environment or a situation where students are intimidated or bullied at school can lead to truancy. Outside of school, when a student’s cultural groups and peer groups do not value education, that too can lead to truancy. Family issues such as domestic violence, family substance abuse, lack of parental involvement, family financial difficulties, family childcare difficulties and frequent moves to new neighborhoods may also be significant factors. Finally, the student may have personal characteristics that could contribute to truancy, including substance use, gang involvement, mental health issues, learning disabilities, low self-esteem and social skill difficulties.

## What can caregivers do?

The best preventive measure is to get involved. This way, youth know you will find out if truancy becomes an issue. Caregivers and parents can also send a clear message that school is important.

- Know your child’s teachers and administrators

- Attend school meetings and conferences
- Establish open lines of communication and let your child know that you have a connection with the school
- Praise children for their academic efforts and encourage them to try their best and to be involved at school
- Know what the consequences might be for skipping school
- Know the child’s friends and their parents to be aware of activities outside of school

## Working with the school

View the school as a partner to help with the problem. Let the school know you are not willing to tolerate the truancy behaviors and join with them in developing a plan to stop this behavior. Know the school policies and help enforce appropriate consequences for truancy. The natural consequence for chronic truancy is a truancy ticket and a referral to court. Parents often try to prevent this from happening out of fear that their child’s “permanent record” might be tarnished or that they themselves will be punished. Truancy is a status offense and, as long as the child complies with the orders of the court, it is guaranteed to be expunged once they turn 18. Punishment alone rarely works. A good behavior management plan involves consequences for negative behavior and some sort of reinforcement for positive behavior. The school can help develop a behavior plan. If the school is not serving the student’s needs, there are also community-based programs that can bridge the family, student and school.

*Submitted by Joe Serio of the Kenneth Young Center*

## Be ready to go back to school with health, vision and dental exams



As students head back to school with fresh pencils and notebooks, they also need to go in good health with up-to-date dental and medical exams. When caregivers arrange routine visits, be sure to bring home a copy of the exam forms to turn in to the school.

### Health Exams by October 15

The state of Illinois requires school children to have a current physical (within the past year) and to be current with immunizations when they are:

- entering an Illinois school for the first time at any age
- starting kindergarten
- entering the sixth grade
- entering the ninth grade

A lead screening is required for young children entering daycare, preschool and kindergarten. Children entering kindergarten or first grade also must be immunized against chicken pox/varicella. In areas of high incidences of tuberculosis (TB) a TB skin test is required as part of the physical exam. Talk with the child's doctor to see if that is required in your locale.

The physical examination form that schools and the Illinois Department of Public Health require for documentation is the "Certificate of Child Health Examination" form. Most physicians and local health departments use this standardized form. Caregivers can also request a blank form from the child's caseworker (form number CFS 600) or download it from the DCFS Web site at <http://www.state.il.us/DCFS/docs/cfs600.pdf>.

Original copies of the Certificate of Child Health Examination, completed and signed by the physician, should be given to the school nurse where the child is enrolled. Don't forget to give a copy to the child's caseworker, and keep a copy for your own records. According to state law, children who do not have a current physical or shots by October 15 will not be allowed to continue attending school until the record is updated.

### Eye exams for Kindergarten

Along with a physical, all students entering kindergarten (or starting an Illinois school for the first time) must also have an eye exam performed by a licensed optometrist or a medical doctor who performs eye examinations. This required examination is beyond the screenings that are often part of a regular physical or are sometimes provided at the school. The doctor must sign the

Eye Exam Report that caregivers will submit to the school. The form should be turned in to the school by October 15. Students without this exam will not be excluded from school, but report cards could be withheld. Youth in DCFS care can use the state-provided medical card as payment for the eye exam. To locate a provider, call the Medicaid Health Benefits Hotline at 800-226-0768.

### Dental Requirements

Additionally, state law requires that Illinois children in Kindergarten, second and sixth grades have dental examinations by a licensed dentist. This includes all students attending public, private or parochial schools. Caregivers must present proof of examination before May 15 of the current school year. If not, the school may hold second and sixth grade report cards until receiving proof that the exam took place or will happen within 60 days of May 15. Each school must give notice of the requirement to the parents or guardians at least 60 days before May 15 each school year. Call the DCFS Office of Health Services at 217-557-2689 with questions.



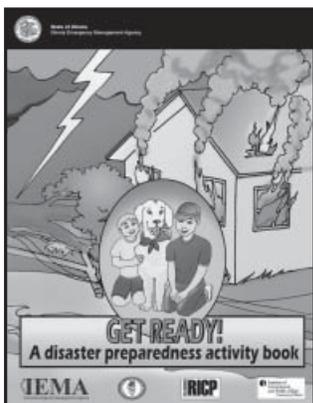
## Teach youth how to handle emergencies

Summer weather is a pleasure, but it can also bring some serious consequences. Children should know how to react to tornadoes, lightning and floods, as well as other emergency situations. It is especially important to educate and rehearse these scenarios with children who have experienced trauma or who have special needs.

*“Get Ready! A disaster preparedness activity book”* is a new tool that caregivers can use to help youth understand many types of emergency situations. Readers follow along with two young brothers as they learn about preparedness. Creative activities such as word searches, mazes and crossword puzzles teach children about emergency supply kits, weather hazards, fire safety and more.

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency recognizes that disasters are stressful times for both adults and children. It recommends helping children understand how they can prepare for disasters and stay safe when disaster strikes so they can stay calm.

The 50-page activity book and other preparedness resources can be found on the Web site [www.Ready.Illinois.gov](http://www.Ready.Illinois.gov).



## Statewide Provider Database puts 15,000 resources right at caseworkers' fingertips

Caseworkers have a valuable new tool at the ready to track down services for children and the families taking care of them. The Statewide provider database is the computerized “home” for more than 15,000 services provided by 2,700 agencies across the state. Caseworkers can access the database to search for services such as mental health, day camps, orthodontists, mentors or tutors, just to name a few.

The database is set up to make searches simple, and yet it provides details such as funding and proximity to the family home.

Dana Wiener from the DCFS Director's Office demonstrated the system to the Statewide Foster Care Advisory



**Dana Wiener**

Council. She said the project has been rolled out to DCFS and private agency staff, and many have been trained. If a caregiver is looking for a particular service or resource, this tool will make it much easier for the caseworker to respond quickly.

## *Watch kids near water and save a life*

Drowning is the leading cause of accidental death among children ages 1 to 4, and the second leading cause for children 1 to 14. Most drownings happen during a brief lapse in supervision, when a caregiver becomes distracted or involved in another activity. A young child can drown quickly and silently, in as little as two inches of water. The good news is that drowning tragedies can be prevented by supervising children at all times when they are in or near water.

### **Swimming pool safety tips**

- Keep ladders, patio furniture and toys away from above-ground pools. Toddlers are better climbers than you think!
- Fence in the pool and lock the gate. Pool covers and alarms provide added protection.
- Young children should wear or use personal flotation devices,

but they do not replace adult supervision.

- Remind babysitters and other caretakers not to leave children unattended near or in water.
- Appoint an adult who can swim to watch kids during pool parties.
- Learn CPR and keep rescue equipment, a phone and emergency numbers near all pools.

### **Lake and river safety**

If you are having a picnic in a park or camping near a river, find out where the bodies of water are so you know where to look FIRST if a child goes missing.

Swimming across a lake or river is not like swimming in a pool, and it is easy to misjudge the water. Children should always wear life vests when it is safe to swim in lakes and rivers.

## Homeward-bound

*When return home is the goal*

### *Parent councils and foster care advisory council have first meeting together*

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council for nearly 20 years has represented the interests of caregivers. More recently, DCFS developed the Partnering with Parents councils to provide a platform for parents who are or have been served by DCFS. In June, for the first time, representatives from both councils came together. For three hours, the adults who play disparate but equally important roles for children found they have more in common than they might have first assumed.

The third annual Partnering with Parents Summit brought parents from the nine regional councils to Bloomington. Their focus was to spend time going over the progress each group had made on its agenda items for the year. But first, they spent some time with another group they did not know so well. Many representatives of



**A foster care council member and a parent council member talk during a Parent Café**

the foster care council also traveled to Bloomington. Their plan was to meet with the parent groups before their regular council meeting.

A situation that could have been awkward was readily smoothed over when staff from Strengthening Families Illinois led everyone in a Parent Café. The café is an approach to encouraging frank, open group discussion in a supportive environment. The facilitators helped the parents and caregivers pair up and get to know each other through guided questions developed for this first parent-aimed caregiver café. With the ice broken on some introductory questions, they were ready to take it to the next level with probing questions like:

- What are the challenges to having positive interactions with parents and caregivers?
- How can we overcome them? What would a good relationship look like? What would happen?
- How would a good relationship benefit us and the children?

“It was an eye-opener to have someone open up about real things. I realized that I am in the same boat as she is,” said Jackie, a parent who has been reunified with her children. “No matter who you are, you have issues. The question is ‘Can we do this together?’”

After the café, the group had lunch and the conversations continued to flow. Parents and caregivers ate, talked and even laughed...together.

## Movin’ on UP

*For youth transitioning to adulthood*

Many DCFS youth are in college without the support of home that their fellow classmates enjoy. DCFS coordinates the Care Package Program for freshmen by linking them to a volunteer who will offer encouragement by mailing care packages once a semester. Some volunteers may also decide to establish a mentoring relationship with the student. Volunteers can decide their level of involvement.

Volunteers could:

- Send a box of goodies once a semester such as snacks, food staples, cookies, shampoo and hygiene products, stationery and art supplies or coupons for restaurants.
- Send a package for special events such as that student’s birthday, holidays or finals week.
- Send printed items such as books, articles or magazines.

The youth enrolled in the program are participating in the DCFS Youth in College/Vocational Training Program. They attend schools across the state and outside of Illinois. The students will note their preferences so volunteers will not have to guess what they might need or like. Students must also commit to sending a thank-you for each package they receive.

Those interested in volunteering can contact Patricia Diamantopoulos of the DCFS Division of Service Intervention at 312-814-6804 or [patricia.diamantopoulos@illinois.gov](mailto:patricia.diamantopoulos@illinois.gov).

## Subsidy workers can help



After an adoption or guardianship is done, caregivers may later have questions about the subsidy or services that may be needed. That is when you can call the subsidy worker in your area:

### Cook County regions

Supervisor: Pamela Mills  
312-808-5250

### Northern Region

Supervisor Don Vasich  
630-844-8496

- Joliet  
Norma Napper  
815-730-4086
- Aurora  
Deirdra Davis  
630-844-8966
- Rockford  
Jennifer Zaluckyj  
815-967-3763

### Central Region

Supervisor: Kevin Hauser  
217-278-5535

- Peoria  
Deborah Hawkins  
309-671-7944
- Springfield  
(pending)  
217-557-2668
- Urbana  
Elois Drake  
217-278-5417

### Southern Region

Bernice Stallings  
618-583-2184

- East St. Louis  
Carol Teague-Douglas  
618-583-2189
- Mt. Vernon  
Wendy Manna  
618-244-8424

## New law gives adopted adults right to original birth certificate stating parents' names



On May 21, a new law gave adopted individuals the right to see their original birth certificate with their birth parents' names. Supporters of the law, spearheaded by Rep. Sara Feigenholtz who is an adopted individual, see it as a natural outcome of a basic right to information that all Illinoisans who were not adopted have.

"For adult-adopted individuals, gaining information about their origins is more than a matter of curiosity, but a need for the raw materials to fill in the missing pieces in their lives," Feigenholtz said in a personal essay on the topic.

Because of the complications inherent in sealed adoptive records, there are some stipulations. The law is effective immediately, so anyone born in Illinois before January 1, 1946 can go to the vital statistics office and request his or her birth certificate. Those 21 years of age or older who were born after 1946 will have to wait until November 15, 2011 for the completion of a year-long public outreach campaign to allow notification of parents who allowed their children to be adopted under the expectation of legal anonymity. Birth parents will have the option of keeping their names private. They can complete and file a form stating how much, if any, information they allow to be shared if the child seeks it after he or she has turned 21.

The outreach campaign is designed to notify both birth parents and

adult adopted persons. It will include announcements in driver's license renewal forms; public service announcements and an informational website devoted to the new law.

Feigenholtz believes that the new law does not threaten the relationship between the adoptive parent and child. A growing body of research on why children search for birth parents supports that. According to a 2007 report by the Adoption Institute, more adoptive parents are helping their children search for birth relatives.

DCFS has a contract with the Midwest Adoption Center (MAC) to assist families at no charge with search and reunion. The family counselors can help adoptive parents sort out a workable approach to searching that spans from gathering available information anonymously to facilitating a connection. MAC works with families that have or had open DCFS cases and with DCFS-involved youth who are 18 or older.

For more information on search and reunion issues, contact the Midwest Adoption Center at 847-298-9096. To read the new law in its entirety go to [www.ilga.gov](http://www.ilga.gov) and search Public Act 096-0895, The Adoption Act, which was amended to include Original Birth Certificate Access.

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# Illinois Adoption Advisory Council Update



The Adoption Advisory Council last met June 4 in Lisle.

## Statewide Provider Database

The Council discussed the Statewide Provider Database, which was presented by Dana Wiener of the Director's Office. So far, the database holds information on more than 15,000 services offered by 2,500 agencies. Caseworkers can search the database for services that can be narrowed by need, payment options and proximity to the home.

## Integration of Juvenile Justice

James Jackson, Deputy Director of the Division of External Affairs-Dually Involved Youth, joined the June meeting to update the council on the proposal to merge the Department of Juvenile Justice with DCFS. He spoke of the various

committees exploring ways to best serve youth who are in detention centers. Jackson's DCFS responsibility is to oversee the care of youth who have open DCFS cases and have criminal cases in the juvenile court. He said that the expertise DCFS has in complex casework would be useful as the Governor's Office moves toward developing a new treatment model for youth in the juvenile justice system.

## Federal Review

In January 2010 Illinois received the final results of the Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). Joan Nelson-Philips, Deputy Director of Quality Assurance, presented a summary of the review that every state's child welfare program must undergo. DCFS results showed strengths in terms of permanency achievements and placement stability. Yet, DCFS will need to develop a program



**Co-chair Jim Jones with DCFS Deputy Director James Jackson**

improvement plan (PIP) that among other points will incorporate broad use of Family Advocacy Centers, caregiver recruitment and retention initiatives and strategies to improve the quality of caseworker contacts with children, caregivers, parents and families.

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**The next meeting of the IL Adoption Advisory Council will be on Friday, September 10 at 10 a.m. in Bloomington. Call the Office of Caregiver and Parent Support at 217-524-2422 for details.**

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# School assignments can be tricky for children who've been adopted



Parental instinct is to protect children from uncomfortable situations. Particularly in school, there are many things that could trigger confusion or hurt feelings for a child who comes to a family through adoption. While it is impossible to be everywhere all the time, there are proactive ways to manage sticky situations.

For example, teachers may not realize how assignments like "family trees" to teach history or genetics can be complicated for a child who was adopted. Even a game to match baby pictures to the present-day snapshot could be difficult if the family doesn't have a photo.

The magazine *Adoptive Families* addresses six of these typical, yet possibly sensitive assignments in a

classic article available for reprint. The article is called "Tackling Tricky Assignments." It presents alternative means of accomplishing the teaching objectives with flexibility around the adoption topic.

The topic of adoption in general is also likely to come up in class or on the playground. *Adoptive Families* also has suggestions for a letter parents might want to write to teachers in advance to explain or elaborate on their family. There is also a handout that could be distributed or discussed at home so children can prepare for how they can handle situations in a new school year.

These and more "clip and save" materials are online at [www.adoptivefamilies.com](http://www.adoptivefamilies.com)

## 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 to a licensing agency. The toll-free number is 800-572-2390. AICI also maintains information about the children who are featured on the back page of the newsletter.

**...You have questions about your board check?** Call DCFS Central Payment Unit at 800-525-0499 if your check comes from DCFS. For other checks, contact your private agency.

**...You feel you aren't being treated fairly by DCFS or a private agency?** If you've 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 have questions about your child's medical card?** Call 800-228-6533.

**...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.

**...You are having a family crisis with your adopted child?** Contact the Adoption/Subsidized Guardianship Preservation Program that serves your area. Call Christine Feldman at 312-814-1565 for more information.

**...You have an idea for an article in the newsletter?** Each region has a regional reporter to help gather local news. The names and contact information are listed in the regional section of each edition. Or you can contact the Editor, Vanessa James, at 312-814-6824 or E-mail [vanessa.james@illinois.gov](mailto:vanessa.james@illinois.gov).

**...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.

**CORRECTION: In an article in Volume 2, 2010 titled "Permanency still requires future planning" the time frame for a short-term guardianship was incorrect. Under the new statute, a short-term guardianship can stay in place for an entire year, 365 days. Illinois Families Now and Forever regrets the error.**



## Illinois Families Now and Forever

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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.

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Department of Children and Family Services©

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



Charmaine (4970)

**Charmaine [4970]** Charmaine, 14, is a happy, outgoing young lady who can make friends with virtually anyone. She participates in many activities, including dance, choir, and the Special Olympics. During the summer months, Charmaine enjoys camping, swimming, and swinging outside on a playground set. In her quieter moments, she likes to play with soft toys and stuffed animals. Charmaine's teachers report that she is making good progress at school. She can identify all the letters in the alphabet and can recognize mathematic symbols on her calculator.

To be the forever family for Charmaine, you would be able to provide close supervision and a structured daily routine. You could also help her remain in touch with her birth siblings and grandparents. Charmaine will need a family who can provide her with life-long care.



Dustin (7810)

**Dustin [7810]** Dustin, 9, is a creative, energetic young man who is always looking for something to do. Give him a book and he will delve deep into the story. Hand him a ball and he will make the most of his time outdoors. Give him LEGO pieces and he will build an impressive structure. Dustin is also interested in fishing and would like to learn more about it from a trusted father figure. Dustin's caseworker says he can be very caring. He tends to do well in small groups or one-on-one situations, both at home and in school.

Potential parents for Dustin would be able to provide a stable, loving home, complete with plenty of activities to help channel his energy. You can spend time with him one-on-one, offering praise for positive behavior as well as re-direction, when necessary. The ideal adoptive family would be a two-parent household with a caring, attentive father (and/or older brother) who can serve as a role model for Dustin. Dustin should ideally be the only child, or alternatively the youngest child, in his adoptive home.

**Nyshia [7789]** Nyshia, 8, is an energetic child who loves exploring the world around her. She is friendly and enjoys getting to know other people. Thanks to her happy-go-lucky attitude, Nyshia is able to give and receive affection and attach to people easily. She also likes to tinker with things in order to understand how they work. In her spare time, she enjoys playing with toy trucks, coloring, and reading. Nyshia's worker says she is friendly and outgoing. She is a loving child who can be helpful both at home and in school.

Possible parents for Nyshia should encourage her



Nyshia (7789)



Lamarcus (7735)



Fijuan (7787)

to explore, learn, and enjoy everything she can. You should show patience with her as she adjusts to your home, redirecting her behavior if needed. You can also advocate for her physical and educational needs, working with various professionals to make sure those needs are met. Nyshia should be the only child in her adoptive home.

**Lamarcus [7735]** This young man is constantly on the go! Whether Lamarcus, 12, is skateboarding, riding his bike, or playing with his wrestling action figures, he loves to be active at all times. Lamarcus can have trouble sitting still, but he can also be redirected by trusted adults. He is quick to attach to foster families and seeks the attention and approval of his caregivers. Lamarcus' caseworker says he is a likable child who is willing to help others and capable of working independently. He is an active, energetic child who has a tendency to run at "full tilt" the entire day.

The right family for Lamarcus would provide a stable, loving home with firmly established rules. You can also make sure he receives the medical support he needs, including consistency in taking his medication. Lamarcus would likely benefit from continued contact with his older brother, with whom he is very close. Lamarcus says he just wants to be part of a family for the rest of his life.

**Fijuan [7787]** Fijuan, 9, is a polite and respectful child who has no trouble meeting people's expectations of him. Although he struggles to relate to children his own age, Fijuan does get along with adults and older children quite easily. He also loves bowling. In fact, Fijuan is so taken with the sport that he becomes very excited when he learns he is going to a bowling alley and will talk about the experience for hours afterward.

Fijuan's teachers say he is well-behaved and works hard to complete his tasks. His foster parent says he does well in the home, despite not being a "morning person." Everyone who meets Fijuan is struck by how polite he is.

Fijuan's forever family is one that would encourage him to focus on schoolwork and stress the importance of education in his life. You would also be able to work with various service providers to ensure Fijuan's medical, educational, and emotional needs are met. Fijuan says he would like to live with a family that will let him ride his bike a lot. Other children in the home should be older than Fijuan.



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

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**[www.cocokeywaterresort.com/rockford](http://www.cocokeywaterresort.com/rockford) or 815-398-6000**

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