

Dear Foster Parent:



Although we are facing many challenges, some old and some new, I think it is important to pause and recognize your efforts during foster parent appreciation month. You are a special group of people, trying to better the lives of children that have experienced abuse or neglect in some form.

The population of children you are working with has changed dramatically over the past 6 to 8 years, moving to older children with a more complicated array of challenges. As the Regional Administrator, I certainly recognize this challenge and applaud those of you struggling with our youth to meet their challenges and address the difficult issues and circumstances in their lives.

I recently sent a communication to you identifying the staff and chain of command for your local offices. I urge you to use that information as you deal with issues connected with serving our children.

Southern Region typically has events scheduled by various field offices to celebrate Foster Parent Appreciation Month. If there is an event in your local area, I urge you to participate, if not, know that we at DCFS recognize you as a valued partner. To that end, I commend all foster parents who go above the call of duty for the children.

Sincerely,

William H. (Bill) Peyton, MS, LCPC
Regional Administrator, Southern Region

A Student's Plea

*Teach me to strive for success:
challenge me
Let fantasy become reality
Allow my well of knowledge to run
deep
Develop this mind that I'll always
keep*

*Give me instructions and provide a
means
To see that the path is not always as
it seems
Give me assurance and let me believe
That with persistence, my dreams I'll
achieve*

*I want to prove no goal is out of reach
Show me the right direction, I beseech
Let me dissolve each mental boundary
So I can reach out and seize the
victory*

*Push me to extents far beyond
extremes
Do this, and you'll help me attain my
dreams*

Written by Carl, age 19

Changes to DCFS Licensing

For the past few months, foster care licensing has been in the process of reorganization statewide. Foster parents will probably not notice any changes in their day-to-day dealings with their licensing representative. The biggest change is that the unit is being centralized under Deputy Director Mary Sue Morsch in the Division of Placement and Permanency.

The Southern Region Licensing Supervisor continues to be Deborah Brewer. Her main office is in the Marion Area Office, and she can be reached at 618-993-7158. She also has an office in Fairview Heights, and her phone number there is 618-394-2100.

Foster Care Licensing Representatives in Fairview Heights are: Dock Conner, Ruth Townsend, Chandra Ramudamu, and Cathy Lang. They license foster homes in the East St. Louis sub-region. In the Mt. Vernon office, Tom Arnold, Cindy McCleary and Arden Ancona license homes in the northern part of the Marion Area. Vivian Robinson is housed in Marion and licenses homes in that area. The unit clerical person is Marcia English. She can be reached at 618-993-7100.

Please feel free to contact any of these staff members with your foster care licensing questions.

New format for the Southern Region Foster Care Advisory Council

The Southern Region Foster Parent Advisory Council has been redesigned. Regional Administrator Bill Peyton concluded that increased foster parent input into the Council's activities was needed, particularly in light of changes among the Foster Parent Support Specialists. He addressed this issue at the Council's February meeting, inviting a staff person and a foster parent from each site to attend.

After hearing the concerns and exploring many ideas, a proposal was accepted. Going forward, each DCFS field office will host a foster parent meeting once per year. Issues raised at these meetings will then be discussed at four quarterly meetings that will include all Council members. The quarterly meetings will be held at the Mt. Vernon Field Office, The Salem Field Office, and the East St Louis field office.

"The new structure of the Advisory Council and the local meetings are an attempt to give Southern Region foster parents more ownership of the Council and its vital activities," said Peyton.

After much discussion, a schedule for the local meetings was developed. The schedule for the remainder of the year is as follows:

- June: TBA, Murphysboro Field Office
- July: TBA, Carlyle Field Office
- July 29, 9 a.m., Harrisburg Field Office
- August 24, 6 p.m., Granite City Field Office
- August 25, 1 p.m., East St Louis, Salem, Marion F.O.s. Quarterly meetings
- September 12, 6:30 p.m., Marion Field Office
- September 12, 4 p.m., Effingham Field Office
- October 20, 10 a.m., Anna Field Office
- October 26, 1 p.m., Alton Field Office
- November 3, 1 p.m., Mt. Vernon Field Office Annual meeting

Questions about the Council can be directed to Michael Bollman at 618-394-2100.

OUR KIDS

Regional Reporter

Michael Bollman
DCFS Reporter/Editor
10251 Lincoln Trail
Fairview Hts., IL 62208
Phone: 618-394-2100
Fax: 618-394-2123

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

Southern Region Youth Advisory Board ready to take on new issues

The Regional Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) is a youth organization that promotes youth empowerment, self-advocacy, and information exchange. The board dedicates itself to addressing the issues and concerns of youth who are now or have ever been in care. All Southern Region youth in foster care, residential or adoptive/guardianship homes, ages 14 to 21 are invited to be part of this group.

The Southern Region Youth Advisory Board meets the first Tuesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. at the DCFS Regional office, 10 Collinsville

Ave., E. St. Louis and the DCFS State of Illinois Building, 2309 West Main, Marion.

The Youth Advisory Board focuses on programs such as:

- Youth in College
- Youth in Employment
- Transitional Living Programs
- Independent Living Programs

The Board also discusses important transition issues such as: college and scholarships, legislation that affects youth and life skills training for independence.

Staff will be present at all the meetings to help address

individual problems and to follow up until they are resolved.

Some youth may live too far away to actually attend the meetings. These youth can join the meeting by teleconference from the Marion field office.

If youth (or their caregivers) have any questions or would like more information, they may call the Youth Hotline at the toll-free number 866-459-6884 and ask for Leshonda Rogers or contact Marcus McCaskill at 888-472-0990 x 232 or Leslie Welch at x 242.

Statewide youth newsletter seeks material

The Statewide Youth Advisory Board is planning to produce a Newsletter that will be published quarterly beginning this summer. They are in the process of soliciting the following writing contributions:

Articles	Recognitions	News about the Advisory Board
Short Stories	Announcements	News about Regional Boards
Concerns	Topics of interest	Photographs
Accomplishments	Upcoming events	Cartoons

Submissions are not limited to this list. However, all entries must be approved by the Department of Children and Family Service's communications department. There will be no exceptions!

Send submissions to:
 Yvonne Jeffries
 Open Book Program
 435 E. 35th.Street
 Chicago, IL 60616
 jyma@sbcglobal.net
 Fax: 773-288-4345

Southern Region Training

FosterPRIDE In-Service Training

All licensed foster parents and adoptive parents are welcome to attend any or all of the PRIDE In-Service Trainings to enhance their skills and meet yearly training requirements.

Module 1 - *The Foundation for Meeting the Developmental Needs of Children* (Four 3-hour sessions = 12 training hours)

Module 2 - *Using Discipline to Protect and Nurture* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 3 - *Child Development* - New module being written

Module 4 - *Child Sexual Development and Sexual Abuse* (Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

Module 5 - *Supporting Relationships Between Children and Their Families* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 6 - *Working as a Professional Team Member* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 7 - *Promoting Children's Personal & Cultural Identity* (Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

Module 8 - *Promoting Permanency Outcomes* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 9 - *Managing the Fostering Experience* (Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

Module 10 - *Understanding the Effects of Chemical Dependency on Children & Families* (Five 3-hour sessions = 15 training hours)

Marion
618-536-7751

East St. Louis
618-650-3213

Module

Module

MT. VERNON - DCFS
Sept. 20, 27 9 a.m.-12 p.m. 4
October 4 (Tue)

ALTON - Holiday Inn
Aug. 22 & 24 6:30-9:30 p.m. 9
(Mon & Wed)

Module

FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS - Ramada Inn
Sept. 19 & 26 6:30-9:30 p.m. 9
(Mon)

Pre-registration is required for all classes! Call the number listed for your area.

Educational Advocacy

Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours

It is mandatory for one foster parent in each family to attend Educational Advocacy Training in order to be re-licensed. Educational Advocacy Training is offered following each Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE training and many additional times. This six-hour course covers information foster parents need to know so that they can advocate for their foster children's educational rights and needs.

Marion
618-536-7751

East St. Louis
618-650-3213

MARION *Ramada Limited* **FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS** *DCFS Office*
June 11 (Sat) 9 a.m.-4 p.m. June 8 & 15 (Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

MT. VERNON *DCFS* **BELLEVILLE** *Catholic Social Service*
Sept. 24 (Sat) 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Sept. 7 & 14 (Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

DCFS Contact Information

Chicago Headquarters
100 West Randolph Street
6-200
Chicago IL 60601
312-814-6800
TTD 312-814-8783

Springfield Headquarters
406 East Monroe Street
Springfield IL 62701-1498
217-785-2509
TTD 217-785-6605

Child Abuse Hotline
800-25-ABUSE

Missing Child Helpline
866-503-0184

Advocacy Office
800-232-3798

Day Care Information
877-746-0829

Foster Parent Hotline
800-624-KIDS

Inspector General
800-722-9124

Youth Hotline
800-232-3798