

Illinois Families Now and Forever

Families by DCFS Foster Care, Adoption & Guardianship®

Council awards outstanding implementation plans

Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council members spend many hours of volunteer time reviewing and scoring every one of the 65 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plans submitted by foster care agencies and the DCFS regions. The members follow a rating tool to determine how the foster care programs measure up against the rights and responsibilities outlined in the Law. For an exceptional plan, council members can go beyond the score to nominate it for special recognition in one of three categories:

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

This year the council put the spotlight on three agencies that submitted standout plans. In June, administrators and foster caregivers from each of the agencies came to the Council's meeting to accept their award. The Council honored the plans submitted by Hephzibah Children's Association, Kemmerer Village and Seguin Services.

In drafting the 2011 implementation plan,



SEGUIN SERVICES: ORGANIZATION/USER FRIENDLINESS

Angela Barber, Council Chair
Patrice Vining, FP Law Liaison
Johnnie Brown, Foster Parent

Denice Murray, DCFS Executive Deputy Director
Casseola Barnes, Foster Parent
John Voit, President

Hephzibah Children's Association was able to point to several successes. More caregivers attended training sessions, the appreciation event and advisory council meetings than the year before. The agency also developed online surveys as another communication tool. These items stood out to the council as prime examples of the dignity and respect shown to foster parents.

Dignity and respect for the role of the caregivers was

also a consistent theme of the plan from Kemmerer Village. Caregivers are informed of and involved in any meetings regarding case planning, decisions affecting the child's placement, and meetings with the biological family to discuss progress and concerns. The agency also holds several special events throughout the year to celebrate the dedication of caregivers.

Seguin Service's plan included many programs that serve caregivers.

One highlight was the expectation of 24-hour access to staff. However, it was the clear and concise way that they presented their plan that made it stand out for Organization and User Friendliness. The agency said it takes the plan's development seriously and involves caregivers in drafting it.

"We on the council have seen how agencies and DCFS keep raising the

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From the DCFS Director

Erwin McEwen

It will soon be time to turn attention back to academics. One of the most important roles we ask of our caregivers is to be a voice for children at their school. To advocate, you have to speak up. Sometimes you may even have to turn up the volume. I hope you will share your expertise with teachers at the beginning of the school year. You have insight into how the child you care for everyday learns and behaves. You know the triggers; you have figured out the best responses. Speak up and insist that there is a plan with reasonable goals that everyone will work toward.

If you need “back up,” talk to the caseworker or call on the DCFS Education Advisors and private agency Education Liaisons. They can accompany you to meetings with school personnel. The DCFS LAN Liaisons can link your students to community programs that are designed to catch students before they fall through the cracks.

We know that the trauma our students have experienced could knock anyone off track. Still, there is much that we can do to make school a stable and positive part of a child’s development. Education can be a path that can lead them beyond the trauma that brought them to us. With help at home and in the classroom, there is no limit to how far they can go.

Plans, con’t.

bar on their implementation plans. It is gratifying to be able to honor those who go above and beyond,” said Angela Barber, chair of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council.

Now, the agencies and the DCFS regions will work on the 2012

implementation plans due November 30. Caregiver input to the plan is required when developing the drafts. Agencies and regions typically announce meeting dates and invite their caregivers to be part of the process.



KEMMERER VILLAGE: DIGNITY AND RESPECT

*Mel Cloe, Director of Community Services
Sandra Moffett, Assistant to the Director
George Brizendine, Foster Parent*

*James Hunt, Foster Parent
Denice Murray, Executive Deputy Director
Angela Barber, Council Chair*



HEPHZIBAH CHILDREN’S ASSOCIATION: DIGNITY AND RESPECT

*Heather Schumacher, Council Vice Chair
Juanita Broscheit, Foster Parent
Anne O’Malley, Foster Parent*

*Denice Murray, Executive Deputy Director
Amy O’Rourke, FC Services Coordinator
Julie Dvorsky, Dir. of Family Based Services*

Homeward-bound: *When return home is the goal*

Communication is always important, but when reunification is the goal it is critical. Children benefit when they see caregivers and parents build a healthy relationship. Relationships don't just happen, they are developed. Similarly, the relationship of DCFS and parents has grown since DCFS created the Partnering With Parents councils as a way to open dialogue with parents about the child welfare system and how it can support their unique needs.

The fourth annual Partnering With Parents Summit brought parents from the state's local councils to Morton for a day of council business. Their focus was to go over the progress each group had made on its agenda items for the year. The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council joined them for a second time to share highlights from their year. Beyond the status updates, there was

something even more important happening.

"The value of these annual meetings is that they get parents and caregivers talking. They notice that they have much in common," said Larry Chasey, the DCFS acting deputy director for operations.

The two groups shared their thoughts by discussing the questions: what is DCFS doing well? and what could DCFS do to better serve us? From the responses, they discovered similar frustrations and many overlapping needs around responsiveness and resource availability.

Director Erwin McEwen traveled to the meeting to hear the comments and to offer insight into DCFS initiatives that especially pertain to caregivers and parents.

The day included two other presentations that were especially enriching.

Dr. Diane Zosky of Illinois State University shared information on how exposure to domestic violence affects children. Representatives of Alcoholics Anonymous came to discuss their journeys in battling their addictions. The three men put a personal face and a unique perspective on a situation that can have a devastating impact on families. They also provided hope and suggestions on how those affected can work together toward a positive outcome.

Regional Administrator Bob Blackwell and Parent Terry (full name withheld for privacy) kept the program on point as co-emcees. With help from Cathy Smith and Andrea Detra in the Peoria office and assistance from the DCFS Office of Caregiver and Parent Support, the councils had an event that received high-marks on the evaluations.

In 2004, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) began new efforts to involve birth parents in conversations about their experiences with the child welfare system and its staff and services. This was a monumental event, in that it marked the modest, but important, beginning of DCFS efforts to change the way staff view and work with parents.

Now, the Partnering with Parents program has fostered councils in Rockford, Chicago, Danville, Peoria, Springfield East St. Louis, Mt. Vernon and Cairo (representing the "Southern 7" counties.

The mission of the Illinois child welfare system, to keep families together through intact services and reunification, is being pursued with renewed energy, enthusiasm, and approaches. Parents are important partners in these efforts, and they are being engaged in new ways.

Training available for reunification foster care

The DCFS Office of Training has scheduled several sessions of Reunification Training for this coming fall. The recently updated course will help caregivers understand the importance of reunification and the critical role while children are in foster homes. Caregivers will learn how to determine if they are

candidates for reunification foster care and, if so, how to support visitation and shared parenting. They will also discover the resources in place to assist them in this type of foster care.

Caregivers to children whose cases have a goal of reunification can dis-

cuss this course with the child's caseworker or with the licensing representative. Information on the schedule is available on the online Virtual Training Center: www.dcfstraining.com or the Office of Training Registration Line at 877-800-3393.

Back to School tips and reminders for a successful academic year

The DCFS/Northern Illinois University Education Advisors compiled this simple list of tips to get ready for the school year.

The Education Advisors are able to help DCFS-supervised homes with school-related concerns. They also serve families who have adopted or have guardianship.

To find the Education Advisor assigned to a specific area, contact the nearest DCFS regional office or call the DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services at 312-814-5959.

B	Before school begins, set (and stick to) an after school routine. This routine should include completing homework and other activities designed to ease the morning rush (e.g., packing lunches and backpacks, picking out clothes for the next day)
A	Attend all conferences, registration meetings, and school functions. Your attendance at these events helps you get to know the other adults in your student's life. This will also help you stay informed of upcoming events at your student's school.
C	Check backpacks and folders each night. Look for any school notices, papers requiring signatures, and other updates. You can also help your student keep a tidy backpack by removing (or asking her to remove) unnecessary items.
K	Keep accurate records of your communication with the school. It helps to keep a notebook containing meeting dates and people with whom you've spoken. When concerns come up, remember - if it isn't documented in writing, it didn't happen.
T	Take time to talk to your student's teacher when things are going well. You will have established a positive home-school relationship, which will help you feel more comfortable talking to the teacher if concerns arise.
O	Observe your student to see how he learns best. Your thoughts and comments are critical in designing your student's school environment.
S	Share information about your student's background only when it is relevant to her education, emotional well-being and/or safety.
C	Consult your local education advisor for educational assistance whenever questions arise.
H	Homework should have 1) a set spot, 2) a set time and 3) a set purpose. When the expectations for homework are clear, everyone can work together to get it done.
O	(Turn) Off the television and other distractions during homework time.
O	Ongoing encouragement helps students stay motivated to succeed. Catch students being "good" whenever possible. You might say something like, "Wow, I'm really impressed with how you've been bringing your homework home each night. Keep up the good work!"
L	Learn to laugh at and about school! Whatever it takes, help your student enjoy her time at school. Children are in school too many hours each day to be miserable. It is our job to make learning fun.

Don't miss out on returning school lunch forms

Among the many forms that schools require families to complete, one that is especially important is the application for free or reduced price school meals (commonly referred to as the free lunch form). Funding from federal resources is often based on the number of students eligible for free or reduced lunch. Additionally, the income information from the applications can determine what programs a school may be able to offer.

Students who have an open DCFS case will au-

tomatically qualify for free meals. Part 3 on the form asks "is the application for a child who is the legal responsibility of a welfare agency or court?" The caregiver does not have to complete the household income information on the rest of the form. However, once a child moves to adoption, his or her case is closed; there is no longer an automatic qualification. Adoptive parents will have to complete the form to determine if the family is eligible for free or reduced lunch based on income.

Some families choose not to apply, knowing their income will not be eligible. Still, it is important to write that on the form, sign it and return it. From the school's perspective, every form counts.

Some caregivers have reported that their child received meals at a reduced rate without a form, and then received a bill at the end of the year. The DCFS Educational Advisors urge caregivers to return the forms so they take advantage of the benefits and avoid possible problems.

Every family should fill out and return the form for "free school lunch."

All children in DCFS foster care qualify.

Federal funding for many programs is often based on the data from this form. It is important that all be returned and counted.



Caregivers need to know which school forms they can and cannot sign

When school gets underway, stacks of papers will come home stuffed in book bags waiting for an adult's signature. For children in DCFS foster care, there are guidelines about what a caregiver can sign. Foster caregivers are authorized and encouraged to sign consents for general school-related activities, including but not limited to:

- Field trips within Illinois
- Routine special events (picnics, school parties, etc.)
- School enrollment
- Attendance at sporting events
- Extra-curricular activities (excluding participation in sports)
- Cultural events
- Case study evaluations
- Individualized Education Plan
- Three year re-evaluations of special education services

While children are in foster care, caregivers are not authorized to sign consent for the following activities. Instead, they must contact the caseworker when consent is needed for:

- Athletic participation
- Media coverage/events
- Slide show productions
- Voice reproductions
- Research projects
- Field trips outside of Illinois
- Liability releases
- Medical exams or care

If there is ever a question about what consent a caregiver can provide, first ask the child's caseworker.

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, pre-school and kindergarten.

Children entering kindergarten or first grade also must be immunized against chicken pox/vari-cella. 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 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 the home record. 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 they have received the care and their 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 Policy at 217-557-2689 with questions.

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- entering an Illinois school for the first time at any age
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Illinois Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Bulletin

Partnering with Parents

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council participated in the Fourth Annual Partnering With Parents Summit on May 12th in Morton. This is the second year that the Council, at Director McEwen's suggestion, has joined the group of parents who are or were involved with DCFS. The foster care council members shared the activities with parents from seven of the nine downstate Partnering With Parents (PWP) Councils and a representative from Cook County. After listening to presentations and reporting on each council's progress, all agreed that the foster care council should be included in next year's PWP Summit.

Implementation Plans

The Council's final meeting of fiscal year 2011 was a day-long meeting in Lisle on June 10. This was their annual meeting at which the Council recognized the three foster care agencies or DCFS regions that

members selected as having outstanding features in their Foster Parent Law Implementation plans for 2011. This year the winners were Seguin Services for Organization, Kemmerer Village for Dignity & Respect, and Hephzibah Children's Association for Dignity & Respect.

DCFS Executive Deputy Director Denice Murray helped conduct the recognition ceremony while Director McEwen attended a youth event in another part of the state. She, along with Council Chair Angela Barber and Vice Chair Heather Schumacher, presented award certificates to leadership of the agencies and the caregivers who accompanied them to the meeting.

The council always looks forward to this event. It is an opportunity to meet with those who demonstrate that the Foster Parent Law, which is at the center of the council's mission, is actively doing good for families.

Congratulations to the Council leadership for FY 2012

The Council finished up the current year's work by electing their new officers for fiscal year 2012, which began July 1, 2011.

Members re-elected Angela Barber to be chair and Andrew DeLao to serve as vice chair. The council elects its own officers, who serve one-year terms. No officer can serve more than two terms.



Council Chair Angela Barber and Vice-Chair Andrew DeLao

Thank you and farewell to departing members

As council by-laws limit members to no more than two terms, the June meeting was the last for Heather Schumacher, Leann Montgomery and Rolinda Robinson. Schumacher most recently served as vice chair. Montgomery represented Northern Region and served as hospitality chair. Robinson represented Cook Central and was chair of the nominating committee. The council presented them each with a certificate of appreciation.



Rolinda Robinson and Heather Schumacher completed their terms with gratitude from Council Chair Angela Barber.

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 6 times a year, and more as needed, in locations around the state. The Council finished up the current year's work by electing their new officers for fiscal year 2012, which began July 1, 2011.

The next meeting of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council is on July 15 in Fairview Heights at 9 a.m. Call the Office of Caregiver and Parent Support at 217-524-2422 for details.

Developmental Disabilities Coordinators link families to services

Dr. Michael Wonderlich and Rita Seggelke, LCSW are specialists who co-ordinate services for children with developmental disabilities and the families that care for them. Seggelke was recently hired to serve families outside of the Chicago metropolitan area. Wonderlich continues to supervise the program and cover the Cook County cases. They both are available to consult with caseworkers and families where developmental disabilities call for specialized resources.

Children with developmental disabilities will have been identified through screenings and have their needs identified in regular case planning. Through schools and community programs, there

are myriad resources to help a child find his potential. However, one area that can be difficult to navigate is the transition to adulthood and the adult service arena when the youth turns 18.

Adult services are available through the Department of Human Services Division of Developmental Disabilities, rather than DCFS. The young person, with his or her caregivers, needs to make plans and those plans need to start early. Caseworkers are instructed to begin transition planning when the youth is 14 and a half.

“Every youth should have a transition plan in place before they are 17 and a half,” said Dr. Wonderlich. “That would

give enough time to look at all the options and to get things lined up before time runs out on child welfare resources.”

Options could include:

- CILA (Community Integrated Living Arrangement)
- ICF (Intermediate Care Facility)
- Host home
- Independent living

At age 17 and a half, DCFS refers cases to Kaleidoscope, an agency contracted to provide the Transition to Adult Services program (TAS).

TAS implements and monitors each youth’s plan. Staff from TAS will help gather the documentation to determine eligibility for adult services. Then

they will assist with the move to the adult service providers.

Caregivers will be involved in these plans and could ultimately be named a guardian or host home. The key is to start the plan early to determine what will be best for the youth and the caregiver family.

For more information on resources for youth with developmental disabilities contact:

Dr. Michael Wonderlich
312-814-5558
michael.wonderlich@illinois.gov

Rita Seggelke, LCSW
217-786-7160
rita.seggleke@illinois.gov

Summer time fun near water needs watchful eye and precautions

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.





Illinois Adoption Advisory Council

Meeting Highlights

The Illinois Adoption Advisory Council held its last meeting of the fiscal year in Lisle on June 3.

Resources for Older Caregivers

Barbara Schwartz of the Illinois Department on Aging and Barbara Sittler of the DCFS Office of the Inspector General (OIG) presented information on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren programs and other resources for older caregivers. The Senior Help Line (800-252-8956) can take calls from caregivers who are age 60 and over to connect them to local services. There are programs that can help older caregivers get respite, legal assistance and help with school-related expenses, for

example. There are also support groups established in regions around the state to allow older caregivers to network with their peers.

The Office of the Inspector General also works closely with the Department on Aging to address the needs of older caregivers. The OIG will help mediate disputes and navigate the provider landscape to find the support they need.

Diligent Recruitment Grant

Debbie Saucedo from the DCFS Post-Adoption and Guardianship Unit provided an update on the grant DCFS was awarded to help youth develop lasting connections to family members. The grant will focus on youth

entering the foster care system and on a segment of older youth.

She reported that there is already progress at the Cook County Court. A committee is developing training for attorneys and judges. They have also arranged for space to meet with families after the temporary custody hearing to get started identifying family members who could continue to play an important role while children are in substitute care.

Training Update

Cheryl Lawrence of the DCFS Office of Training reported that the new on-line course for relative caregivers is now available. The office also completed an update to the

Adoption Certification course. Beginning in July there are more sessions scheduled to meet the demand. Lawrence also announced that the PRIDE pre-service training, which is rolling out later this year, now emphasizes reunification, trauma, cross-cultural foster care, among other enhancements.

Adoption Celebration

With November designated as National Adoption Month, it was time to start making plans for the council's adoption celebration. This year, the council is partnering with the adoption supervisors to plan a major event in Cook County. It would include adoption-related workshops, resources and fun activities.

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

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. The 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.

...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 want to report suspected abuse or neglect? Call the Hotline at 800-25-ABUSE (800-252-2873). The toll-free number is available 24 hours a day every day of the week. All calls are confidential.

...You want to find or register for foster care training? For the most up-to-date and complete schedule information for classes offered in your area, visit the on-line Virtual Training Center anytime at www.DCFStraining.org or call the DCFS Office of Training at 877-800-3393 during regular business hours.



Illinois Families Now and Forever

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Department of Children and Family Services©

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



Daniel & Gene
(C7893-94)

Daniel & Gene [7893-94] Daniel, 12, is a smart, expressive young man. He is active in school, and contributes regularly to classroom discussions. His younger brother, 10-year-old Gene, is an avid writer who is able to pick up on things quickly. He is very social, and likes to initiate conversations with his peers. Both boys like to relax by playing wrestling video games on their Xbox 360.

Daniel's foster parent says he is caring and considerate. Gene's foster parent says he is a lovable child. The foster parent has enjoyed having both brothers in her home.

Permanent parents for Daniel and Gene can be patient with them as they adjust to their new, permanent family. You can also help them remain connected to their great aunt, with whom they've had ongoing visits. Daniel would like to join a family that loves him. Gene would like his new family to be "good."

Destini [7637] Destini, 10, has so many interests it can be hard to keep track of them all. She is an active child who enjoys swimming, riding bicycles, and jumping on trampolines. She is curious about her surroundings, and spends a lot of time reading, listening to music, and building things out of LEGO pieces. Destini thrives on positive attention, and can be very personable in one-on-one situations.

Destini's worker says she is a big fan of books. She enjoys being read to, and also reads independently. She completes her school assignments, and is making progress in all of her subjects.

The forever family for Destini can provide her with lots of love, support, and one-on-one attention. You can establish clear, consistent rules for your home. You can also encourage Destini to maintain a relationship with her brother, including ongoing visits. The ideal family would live in a medium-size or large city. If the family includes children, they should be older than Destini so she can receive an appropriate share of parental attention. Destini said she would like to join a family that is "nice."

Kimberlynn [7887] Get ready to smile because Kimberlynn, 15, has a great sense of humor.

This young lady has a sharp wit, and likes to laugh and joke with her friends. She is also very smart, and has a good understanding of herself and her surroundings. Like many teenagers, Kimberlynn values her privacy. She has difficulty accepting hugs or positive feedback, but still appreciates it when adults are honest and authentic around her. In her spare time, she enjoys singing, listening to music, and watching scary movies. Kimberlynn's worker says she has a great personality and shows a lot of potential.

Potential parents for Kimberlynn can provide a loving, understanding home environment. You can establish clear rules for your home, and articulate the consequences for not complying with those rules. You can also support Kimberlynn as she navigates adolescence and matures into an adult. Kimberlynn would like to join a family that appreciates her sense of humor. She would also benefit from ongoing visits with her sister. Other children in the home should be older than Kimberlynn.

Stephan [7711] Stephan, 16, is an athletic young man who enjoys playing football and basketball, in addition to skateboarding with his friends. When he is not playing sports, he enjoys watching wrestling and mixed martial arts on television. Stephan is respectful and follows the rules set for him by adults. He enjoys attending church on Sundays and held a volunteer position at a local YMCA for nine months.

Stephan's teacher says he is an intelligent young man who likes school and enjoys learning new things. Stephan's worker says he thrives on positive attention from adults, but also likes being independent and solving problems on his own.

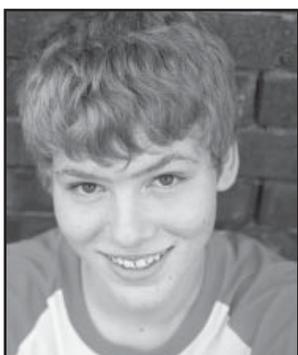
Stephan's forever family should be able to provide him one-on-one attention and affection, without expecting him to reciprocate immediately. You can give Stephan encouragement and structure so he can succeed and feel good about himself. Stephan would like to join a two-parent family, but would also be happy with a single-parent family. Other children in the home should be of junior high school age or older.



Destini (C7637)



Kimberlynn (C7887)



Stephan (C7711)



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.

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