Illinois Families Now and Forever®

Families by DCFS Foster Care, Adoption & Guardianship

Bobbie Gregg,
Acting Director

From the DCFS Director

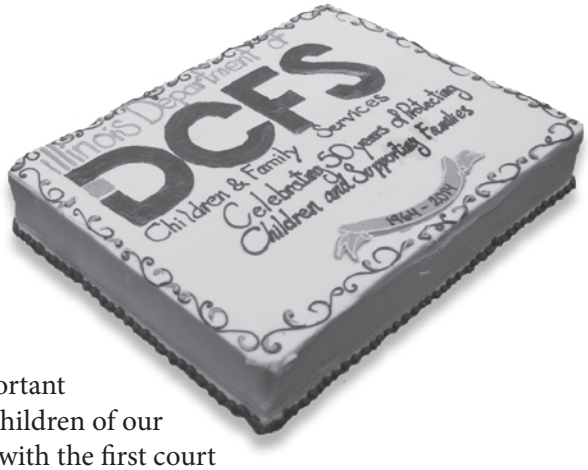
It is a privilege to work with foster parents, birth parents, staff and agency partners, all united in our joint mission to protect children and support families.

We share the tremendous responsibility of caring for children when it is not safe for them to live with their parents. When it is safe to do so, we experience the satisfaction of reunifying families. Thank you for sharing your homes with these children who have been traumatized by abuse or neglect.

Together we can help children build positive, permanent family connections. For the past 50 years, foster parents have been at the front of the front line. I hope that the upcoming rate increase will encourage you to keep fighting. You have my commitment to work alongside you as we enter the next era.

DCFS marks 50th Anniversary

Past directors, officials, staff & public gather to celebrate service to children



Illinois has had several important firsts to protect vulnerable children of our state. Illinois led the nation with the first court for juveniles in 1899. On January 1, 1964 Illinois was the first state to elevate child welfare services to a cabinet-level department.

For five decades DCFS has responded to shifts in the economic climate, challenging societal pressures and an evolving legal landscape. At times more than 50,000 children were shielded by DCFS. Now that number has consistently settled near 15,000.

On June 17, a crowd of more than 250 DCFS professionals, service providers and the public gathered at the James R. Thompson Center for a ceremonial cake-cutting. The program even included a spirited chorus of "Happy Birthday" sung to the agency dedicated helping children.

Several past directors of the agency came back for the event, joining DCFS Acting Director Bobbie Gregg and Samantha Fields of the Governor's Office. The magnitude of the 50 year milestone rang true with the words of April Curtis who left the "system" and is now an ambitious child welfare professional.

"Thank you for understanding and knowing that my voice and the voices of all my brothers and sisters in care matter. We are strong. We are resilient. We aren't going anywhere and we appreciate being seen as partners at the table," Curtis said.

Foster parents to see 4% increase in August checks

The new state budget includes a cost of living adjustment (COLA) for licensed foster parents who are providing traditional foster care. Foster parents should see the new rate in checks issued in August. Adoption subsidies that were finalized after July 1 will also reflect the increase. Agencies that provide foster care and residential services will also receive increases to support their programs.

Statewide Foster Care Council honors Implementation Plans

On June 6, the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council bestowed awards to three foster care programs that submitted outstanding Foster Parent Law Implementation Plans.

Every foster care agency and DCFS regional program must develop an annual implementation plan that demonstrates how the program upholds the rights and responsibilities outlined in the Law. They are due on November 30. Then council members spend hours scoring each plan with a tool developed for reliability and fairness.

This year, of the 56 plans submitted and scored, none were graded as unacceptable and several stood out. When members discover an exceptional plan, they 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 voted to recognize Envision and Lakeside Community Committee for "Organization/User Friendliness" because of the way they presented the agencies' accomplishments. Webster Cantrell Hall's plan was honored for the plan's focus on treating foster caregivers with Dignity and Respect.

Caregivers are at the core of the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plans. Foster parents are expected to give input to the drafts. Every licensed caregiver should receive a copy of or be able to view their agency/DCFS region's plan.

ENVISION: Organization Award

Envision's plan struck a very positive tone that was solidified in the real examples of how staff and caregivers communicate.

The plan included specific guidelines for foster parents, rather than generalities.

Chair Cathy McCoy (far L) and Craig Missell of DCFS (far R) congratulated caregivers Richard McNeil and Pamela Webb with Addie Hudson and Anthony Rozell.

LAKESIDE COMMUNITY COMMITTEE: Organization Award

Lakeside's plan stood out because it is easy to follow and is designed to be a living document.

Staff bring it out during child and family team meetings so foster parents can clearly understand their roles and the support they should expect from the agency.

Craig Missell (far L) and Council Chair Cathy McCoy (far R) celebrated with caregivers Trafalger Price (with award) and Marcella Sanders(R) and executive staff members Rosa Price and Jackie Sharp.

WEBSTER-CANTRELL HALL: Dignity and Respect Award

Webster-Cantrell foster parents are empowered to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate foster care services for children placed in their homes, as highlighted in the implementation plan.

The agency trains staff in positive ways to interact with and support caregivers in their role.

Craig Missell (far L) and Council Chair Cathy McCoy (far R) congratulated Webster-Cantrell Hall's foster care program, represented by caregivers Cynthia Cherry and Mildrea Bass (center) with Denise Walters.

Back-to-school tips and reminders for a successful academic year

The DCFS Education Advisors offered a few reminders to help caregivers get ready for the start of a new school year.

- School districts are required to provide students with copies of school discipline policies and to provide copies upon request. Be sure to review the procedures with children.
- Contact the DCFS education advisor's office in your region for assistance with enrollment, suspension and expulsion issues.
- Any time a child is suspended more than twice in a semester the caseworker and caregiver should meet with the school and develop a Response to Intervention (RtI) plan or revise a behavior plan for the student.
- Any student who faces expulsion can be ensured legal representation through the DCFS Guardian's Office.
- Be sure to sign the Application for free or reduced price school meals (commonly referred to as the free lunch form). Students who have an open DCFS case will automatically qualify for free meals.

However, once a child moves to adoption, his or her case is closed; there is no longer an automatic qualification. Even if the family doesn't qualify, adoptive parents can write "decline to apply," sign and return the form to the school.

- If a child has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or special needs, be sure to communicate with the teacher(s). Provide a letter with tips on how your child learns and how to contact you.

Chicago Public Schools eases suspension/expulsion policies

On June 25, the Chicago Board of Education unanimously approved the Suspension and Expulsion Reduction Plan (SERP).

The new conduct code includes these changes:

- Eliminates mandatory expulsions for students below sixth grade for any infractions except those involving weapons.
- Students caught with a cellphone will not face suspensions unless they're using it to harass, incite violence or disrupt other students.
- Does away with the concept of "persistent defiance."
- School administrators are required to call in police only in cases that involve possession of firearms or drugs.

CPS is also encouraging charter schools to adopt the new conduct code.

Foster Care

Know what to sign when the school forms come home

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 parents 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
- Attending sporting events
- Extra-curricular activities (excluding 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.

Adoption

Illinois Adoption Advisory Council update

The Illinois Adoption Advisory Council met June 6 in Bloomingdale. The first portion of the meeting was a shared agenda with the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council. For the afternoon, the adoption council broke off to address adoption specific items.

New courses for caregivers

Adoption Conversion course is in the process of being redesigned. The training committee reported that the new version will be more interactive and focus on skill acquisition and demonstration. The next version will demonstrate the interconnectedness with PRIDE foster care licensing training. It will look at the adoption process and each stage. It will also cover predictable crisis periods and possible triggers. The redesign is funded for the next fiscal year.

The Adoption Advisory Council is also reviewing the re-draft of the PRIDE foster care pre-service training. The revamped training is anticipated to roll out in the fall of 2014.

Adoption Day Celebration

Plans are already underway for the National Adoption Day celebration, typically held on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. The council's committee is determining an event that will honor adoptive families and highlight the importance of adoption to broader audiences. Members will work with the DCFS office of Communications to round out ideas.

Co-chair Jim Jones thanked Claudia Dancy-Davis and Karen Taylor for their service on the council.

Membership update

The members of the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council are volunteers, appointed by the DCFS Director. They are adoptive and guardianship families across the state, individuals who were adopted and professionals from the adoption field. The end of the fiscal year marked the end of terms for several members. Co-chair Jim Jones thanked outgoing members Claudia Dancy-Davis and Karen Taylor (pictured above) and Tamara Guy and Billie Ray Lewis who were not at the June meeting.

There are currently openings for adoptive families in Cook, Central and Southern regions. Call 217-524-2422 for details on the nomination process.

Adoption procedures

Council members provided input to the Office of Child and Family Policy as DCFS updates the adoption home study form, the report of investigation and checklist that caseworkers have to include in the adoption subsidy packet. Next they will refresh the affidavit of complete information.

NEW TOLL-FREE PHONE NUMBER FOR ADOPTION SUPPORT LINE

866-538-8892 or 312-808-5250

Adoptive parents will now reach the Statewide Adoption Unit by calling a new phone number. The new number is in service as of June 9.

After dialing the new number, an automated greeting will ask callers to select the area of state where they live. DCFS staff will then direct the caller to the office or adoption worker needed to resolve the question. During regular business hours, callers will be connected directly to the individual. The adoption workers have voicemail to manage other calls.

Adoptive parents (both prospective or post-adoption) can also contact their adoption worker directly.

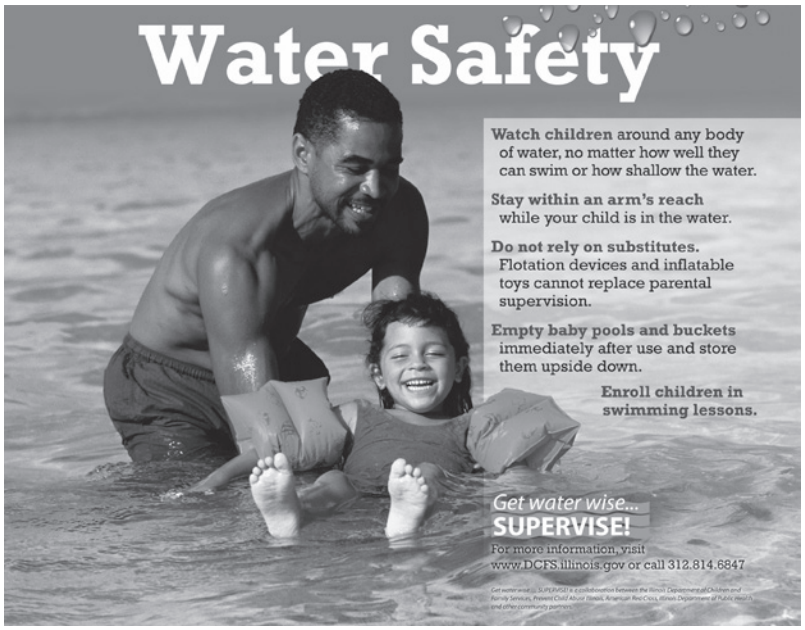
THE NEXT MEETING

of the Illinois Advisory Council will be September 9, 2014 in Bloomington at 10 a.m.

Call DCFS Caregiver and Parent Support at 217-524-2422 for details.

To keep children safe, *Get Water Wise ... Supervise!*

In May and June of this year eight Illinois children lost their lives in water-related accidents. Adult supervision could have prevented these deaths. Children cannot be left unattended around water even for one moment without the possibility of something tragic happening. Drowning can occur in seconds and with as little as two inches of water in pools, bathtubs, buckets, and even decorative garden ponds.



It is up to the adult caregivers to be diligent about water hazards. Lock access to pools, empty buckets when they are not in use, and make sure there are enough adults to adequately supervise the number of children around water. It is also important to teach children to stay away from water until an adult is present. Following are some safety tips to help protect children from water-related tragedy:

Swimming pools

- Keep ladders, patio furniture and toys away from above-ground pools. Toddlers are better climbers than one might 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 the need for diligent 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.

Bathtubs

- Never leave a young child alone in a bathtub or rely on a bathtub seat for safety.
- Don't allow children to play alone in the bathroom.

Baby pools

- Don't be lulled into a false sense of security because of the shallowness of baby pools. Children should always be supervised when in a baby pool.
- Empty the pool immediately after use and store it upside-down.

Bathtubs

- Never leave a young child alone in a bathtub or rely on a bathtub seat for safety.
- Don't allow children to play alone in the bathroom.

Buckets

- Five-gallon buckets of water pose a threat to babies and toddlers who may topple into them and be unable to get out.
- Empty and store all buckets out of children's reach.

Toilets

- Secure the toilet lid. Curious toddlers could tip headfirst into a toilet, risking drowning.

Ponds, fountains and retention pools

- Be aware of access to water hazards and be prepared in case an emergency response is required. Children require constant supervision around these outdoor hazards.

Plan now to meet school health exam requirements

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.

Email alerts for health issues

DCFS is encouraging all foster parents to enroll in the email alert system by submitting an e-mail address to Linda.D.Davis@illinois.gov

The alerts will provide vital health information that could positively impact the children and youth.

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 what is required.

An increase of reports of pertussis (whooping cough) led to the 2012 requirement for students entering grade six through 12 to show proof of receiving one dose of Tdap (defined as Tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis) vaccine regardless of when they may have had their last DTaP, DT or Td dose. Immunization to prevent Pertussis is the first line of defense against the disease not only for children but also for adults. Young children are especially at risk because they will not be fully immunized until six months of age. Adults who care for young children may also be at risk, as their immunity from the shot they likely received as adolescents may have decreased over time. Check with the physician for more details.

Give a completed "Certificate of Child Health Examination" form, signed by the physician, to the school nurse and the child's caseworker, and keep a copy for 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 Examinations

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. Call the DCFS Office of Health Policy at 217-557-2689 with questions.

Central Connections

News for Central Region Families

2014 - Vol. 4

Education Advisors assist DCFS caregivers with school concerns

The DCFS Education Advisors of Northern Illinois University can advocate for families with children served by the DCFS foster care program. Many of the private agencies have similar counterparts called Education Liaisons.

These advocates can help caregivers work with the school on assessments and Individualized Education Plans (IEP) for special education. When there are behavioral issues, they can work out an intervention with the children. They can answer caregivers' questions and attend school meetings with them. They will help caregivers obtain appropriate educational services. They also help caregivers plan for education after high school.

The DCFS Education Advisors each have experience in the school and know what children have the right to expect from schools. The advisors are well-versed in the federal and state education system and DCFS Rule 314, which concerns what services must be provided to children in DCFS care.

Homes served by private agencies can contact their agency for details. DCFS-supervised homes can contact:

Ann Wells
Champaign Region
217-875-6797
Ann.S.Wells@illinois.gov

Mary Chepulis
Springfield/Peoria Regions
217-557-3985 or 309-671-7952
Mary.Chepulis@illinois.gov

DCFS Foster Parent Customer Service Line

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

The calls can be about issues or concerns that caregivers have not been able to resolve through normal channels. The goal is to have a response time of 24 to 48 hours for all calls. This is not set up to be an emergency response line. If a caregiver has an urgent request, it is best to call the field office or the after-hours number.

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

Graduation Day

Youth in foster care who graduated high school this spring were invited to the Central Region Graduation Celebration on June 12 at the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield.

Acting Director Bobbie Gregg (C) greets Youth Advisory Board President Jasmine Stewart and Secretary Tyshiana Jackson

The "Hats Off" celebration included keynote speaker Isaac Puckett, a DCFS alum, who is entering graduate school for engineering.

All 74 guests were served lunch and each graduate was awarded a certificate recognizing their accomplishment.

Central Region Foster Care Advisory Council Updates

The Central Region has seven Local Advisory Councils for foster parents. These local councils meet quarterly and provide an opportunity for foster parents to bring forward issues they may be experiencing. They also regularly address the Central Region's Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. The advisory council is an important platform for caregivers to stay informed and to have a say in new policies and procedures that impact the foster care program.

If an issue has the potential to affect foster care homes across the state, the regional representatives can elevate it to the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council. Three foster parents represent central Region: Jan Rizzo, Lee Coffman and Bill Moorehead.

Central Region's Steering Committee

In addition to the local area councils, Central Region has a Steering Committee made up of representatives from the area offices. The Steering Committee affords an opportunity for individuals to share concerns they may have about foster care. The regional steering committee meets quarterly via teleconference.

If you are a foster parent in the DCFS regional program and are interested in representing your area office on the quarterly teleconference you can contact your Area Administrator at your local DCFS office.

Peoria/Pekin Area

In the first two meetings of the year the Peoria/Pekin Field offices presented helpful trainings for foster parents. The February topic was *"Being a Good Advocate: Solving Problems Productively"* and in April the council presented *"Understanding Services Available After Adoption."* This group meets from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Peoria Field Office. To find out about upcoming meetings, contact Elizabeth Richmond at 309-671-7919.

Urbana/Danville Area

The Urbana Field Office's local advisory council meeting was held on July 10. Danville will hold a meeting on August 7 for its local advisory council. Both offices will be talking about the Juvenile Court System and foster parent rights.

The council is requesting foster parents to bring their ideas and calendars as the group will be setting their next meeting date and topic with foster parent input. For more information contact Julie Cebulski at 217-278-5400 (Urbana) or Darla Knipe at 217-443-3200 (Danville).

Decatur Area

On May 20th the Decatur Field Office held its local advisory council meeting. Area Administrator Maria Miller spoke to the group about current DCFS policies.

Information was given on proper car seat installation and summer safety. For information on upcoming meetings contact Maria Lightner at 217-875-6750.

Bloomington Area

The Bloomington Field Office meets on the Second Tuesday of every month at 11 a.m. Meetings are held at the Bloomington Field office located a 401 N. Brown. The group is pleased to have representation from most local agencies as well as DCFS. Each month they discuss a portion of the Foster Parent Law and welcome suggestions from foster parents.

Charleston Area

Charleston held their local advisory council meeting on January 13. They had a panel of child welfare professionals to answer foster parent questions. The most recent Advisory Council meeting was held on June 2. This event was an informal meeting, with a picnic for foster parents and staff.

JOIN AN AREA ADVISORY COUNCIL

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

Foster families honored for effort during appreciation month

The month of May brought many ways to celebrate Foster Parent Appreciation Month. Staff from DCFS offices put their heads together to make sure that foster families could carve out a little time to relax. From fine dining to gifts to celebrate the work of families, Central Region's DCFS staff did their best to make foster parents feel truly appreciated throughout May and even into June. They added special touches to show that caregivers' contributions would not go unrecognized. Here's a sampling of appreciation events in Central Region.

Decatur Field Office staff hosted their foster parents for a meal at the Italian restaurant Il Forno on June 24. The evening provided a well-deserved night of no cooking and no dishes to wash.

The Urbana Field Office presented foster parents with gift bags. Each gift was personally delivered by staff members to foster parents at their home.

The Charleston Field Office celebrated the hard work and dedication of their foster parents with a delicious meal from the famous Yoder's Kitchen.

The Bloomington Field Office honored foster parents with a dinner and celebration at Heartland Community Church. Foster parents were presented with flowers and a gift basket.

Danville Field Office staff presented certificates of appreciation to all the foster homes. Those homes with children in current foster care placements received a gift basket put together by Foster Parent Support Specialist Darla Knipe.

Peoria and Pekin staff invited DCFS foster parents to a "Happy Hour" event at Landmark Recreation Center on May 16. There was good food, lemonade and a competitive game of DCFS bingo and pop culture trivia.

Foster parents and youth share insights at unique joint training

The Rock Island Field Office recently offered a training with a twist. This training included foster and adoptive parents, children who had been in foster care or had been adopted and also the birth children of caregivers. Everyone was in the same room. The training consisted of a panel presentation by selected youth. The children in the audience wrote down their questions for those on the panel.

Examples included:

How did you feel when you first went into foster care?

Did other kids ask questions every day?

Do you have any nightmares about having to go back into foster care?

The responses were age appropriate and very positive. The youth in the audience and the adults learned what foster care can be like from another perspective.

"The kids on the panel showed the others that they are not alone. Their feelings seemed more normal," said Joyce Loy, foster and adoptive parent. The foster parents have requested that DCFS conduct more joint trainings. They said it is more beneficial to hear from people who have been through it. They prefer that to listening to someone speak in theoretical terms.

"The kids on the panel showed the others that they are not alone. Their feelings seemed more normal."

Central Region Training

DCFS has scheduled sessions of in-service training modules and other courses in locations across the region.

To get specific dates and locations, visit the on-line Virtual Training Center (VTC) anytime at ***www.DCFStraining.org***. Click on any of the links under Training Schedule to access course descriptions, in-service training and Educational Advocacy Training. Or call the DCFS Registration Line at 877-800-3393 during business hours.

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

- See training news and general information
- Check available trainings
- View/Print your training transcript
- Register for courses
- Download course materials to use in class or to access after training
- Take online courses, including PRIDE in-service modules for licensed caregivers.

DIGITAL TRAINING MATERIALS NOW AVAILABLE

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

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

Who do you call when...?

...A child in your home is having a psychiatric crisis that may require hospitalization? Call the CARES line at 800-345-9049. However, if a child is a danger to himself or others, call 911 first. The CARES line is available 24 hours a day, everyday.

...You want information on becoming a foster parent or on adoption? The Adoption Information Center of Illinois (AICI) can answer your questions and connect you with a licensing agency. The toll-free number is 800-572-2390. AICI also maintains information about the children who are featured in the newsletter.

...You have questions about your board check? Call the DCFS Central Payment Unit at 800-525-0499 for DCFS issued checks. If your check comes from a private agency, contact the agency.

...You need to report a child missing or have information about a youth who has run away? To report information on missing youth call 866-503-0184. The toll-free number is available 24 hours a day every day of the week. If you feel the child is in danger, call 911 first.

...Your adoption or guardianship is final but you have questions about the subsidy? Call the subsidy worker assigned to the case or the Adoption Support Line at 866-538-8892 so you can be connected to the right individual for help.

...You feel you aren't being treated fairly by DCFS or a private agency? If you've already 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 find a phone number for a caseworker? Call the main switchboard in Chicago at 312-814-6800 or the State Operator at 312-793-3500.

...You are having family problems with an adopted child? Contact the Adoption/Subsidized Guardianship Preservation Program. Call the Adoption Support Line at 866-538-8892.

...You are having a hard time getting services for your child at school? Most private agencies have an Education Liaison, and each DCFS region has Education Advisors who can help. Call your agency or nearest DCFS office to be connected to the right educational resource for your area.

...You have an idea for an article in the newsletter? Each region has reporters to help gather local news. The names and contact information are listed on the back of each edition. You can also contact the Editor, Vanessa James, at 312-814-6800 or send an email message to vanessa.james@illinois.gov.

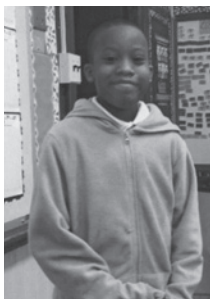
A family for me: Call 1-800-572-2390 for more information

Zeyvion
Zeyvion, 11, is a curious young man who loves to ask questions. He enjoys spending time with adults and learning from their experiences. He also enjoys cutting and styling hair, and hopes to be a barber when he grows up. In his spare time, Zeyvion nurtures his creative side by singing, listening to music, and performing in school plays. He can become anxious at times, but he can also be loving and engaging when he is comfortable with his surroundings.

Zeyvion's worker says he is a smart, observant child who listens to people and remembers important details about them. His foster parent says he is a helpful child, and adds that she enjoys spending time with him.

The forever family for Zeyvion is able to provide plenty of structure and routine for Zeyvion as he transitions to your home. You can establish clear household rules and develop de-escalation techniques to help manage his behavior. You can also work with various professionals who can help you understand and meet his educational and emotional needs. Zeyvion should be the youngest child in his adoptive home.

Tarasha



Jacob

Janee

Tarasha, Jacob and Janee
These siblings are ready to join a loving, permanent family. The oldest, Tarasha, 12, is a creative child who loves listening to music. She also enjoys getting her hair done and updating her wardrobe. Jacob, 10, is an affectionate child who likes giving and receiving hugs. He also enjoys singing, dancing, and the attention that comes with expressing himself. Janee, age 6, is a talkative child who loves to engage others in conversation. She also enjoys playing with dolls, shopping with her foster family, and trying on new clothes.

Potential parents should establish clear limits and boundaries for Tarasha, Jacob, and Janee. You can also advocate for their educational and emotional well-being. The ideal family would have a strong support system and a flexible schedule, and would help them maintain relationships with their brother, including regular visits. A Cook County area family is recommended.

Kevin If there's a professional wresting show on TV, Kevin will want to sit down and watch. If there's a professional wrestling aisle at the store, Kevin will want to spend *a lot* of time browsing. This 13 year old has decorated his room with dozens of WWE posters, magazines, and action figures. Kevin is developmentally delayed, and while he sometimes struggles to remain on task, he is generally friendly, capable, and independent. He maintains regular contact with his birth mother and older sister, a practice that should continue as he transitions to a new family.

Kevin's teachers say he has made significant strides over the past two years in terms of his focus, his behavior, his social skills, and his ability to work independently.

Potential parents for Kevin can help him stay organized and on task by giving him prompts, reminders, and time limits, and by stressing the importance of his daily routine. You can provide plenty of opportunities for him to play with children his own age. You can also work with various professionals who can help you understand, and meet, his educational, social, and academic needs. The ideal family would consist of two parents living in a rural community.

Mierra
Mierra, 14, is a social child who likes to engage others in her favorite activities. She is hard-working and intelligent, and is eager to share what she has learned in school. Mierra is an especially talented writer, as evidenced by her participation in an extracurricular literary journal program. She also enjoys reading books, telling jokes, and hanging out with her friends.

Mierra's worker says she is an outgoing child who enjoys participating in group activities. She is very familiar with computer technology, and is eager to use these skills in order to help others.

The right family for Mierra will be able to set clear expectations regarding the rules of your home, and enforce those rules in a firm, consistent manner. You can also communicate openly and honestly with Mierra, and encourage her to identify and express her emotions in return. Mierra would like to join a family that includes siblings, pets, and "caring" parents who are eager to spend time with her. She would benefit from continued contact with her siblings and other members of her birth family. A Cook County family is preferred.

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

Illinois Families Now and Forever®

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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, and adoptive and guardianship families receiving subsidies. An electronic version is sent to all DCFS and private agency staff.

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Department of Children and Family Services©

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100 West Randolph - 6th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60601

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SPRINGFIELD, IL
PERMIT NO. 763

Illinois Department of DCFS Children & Family Services

Celebrating 50 Years of Protecting Children and Supporting Families

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

Printed by Authority of the State of Illinois
DCFS #50 – July 2014 – 6,788 copies