

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

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.)

Know what to sign when the school forms come home

- 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.



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

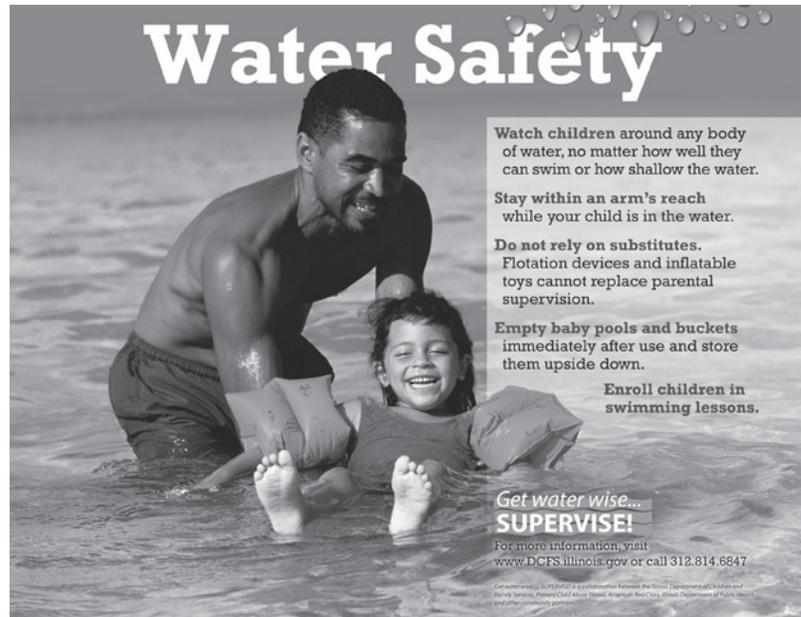
- Keep ladders, patio furniture and toys away from above-ground pools. Toddlers are better climbers than one might think.
- Fence in the pool and lock the gate. Pool covers and alarms provide added protection.
- Young children should wear or use personal flotation devices, but they do not replace the 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.



Dream of foster care turn into reality and new family for children

When Troy Horton and Brandon Bird became a couple eight years ago, they had one life passion in common. They both felt compelled to work with children and help them through foster care and possibly adopting. Three years ago they decided to make their foster care dream happen. They finished the needed paperwork, background checks, fingerprints and home inspection. Then they graduated from PRIDE pre-service training. They were licensed on March 6, 2012. Just two days later they got “the call.”

Sierra, then four years old, came into their lives. The goal of return home eventually changed to adoption. On May 3, 2013, Sierra became their daughter. A three-month-old girl also came to live with them in 2012. Her goal has now been changed and Troy and Brandon will soon become her forever family.

So far, in two seemingly very short years, Troy and Brandon have provided care for eight children. Brandon’s son by birth has made the transition of having other brothers

and sisters very well. He likes that there always seems to be a playmate around.

Both Troy and Brandon are enthusiastic advocates of foster care. They try to recruit whenever they can. They proudly display recruitment posters in the business they own.

“The best thing about fostering is knowing that we are making a difference in a child’s life,” they both agreed. Seeing to the child’s safety and health and giving each child unconditional love is their life goal with foster care.

They said the hardest aspect of fostering is watching the child return home and worrying about

the child’s well being. The emotional attachment does not get broken off when the child leaves. Troy and Brandon know that return home is the primary goal for children, but it is still very difficult to see them leave.

One way Troy and Brandon help manage the emotions of separation is through lifebooks. They believe and want to remind others that whether the child is with a family for a few days or a lifetime through adoption, the child’s life needs to be documented. That way there will be no empty areas of the child’s time spent in care.

Troy and Brandon feel that fostering and adoption have given them a blessing beyond any comparison.



Troy Horton and Brandon Bird share the foster care message with others.

Staff go above, beyond for Foster Parent Appreciation Month

The Month of May brought many ways to celebrate Foster Parent Appreciation Month. Staff from DCFS offices and agencies across the region put their heads together to make sure that foster families could carve out a little time to relax. They added special touches to show that caregivers' contributions would not go unrecognized. Here's a sampling of appreciation events in Southern Region.

- The DCFS office in Olney marked foster parent appreciation month by hosting a roller skating party for all the foster parents and their families on May 19.
- Staff from the DCFS Sparta and Carlyle office showed their appreciation to foster parents by giving them a gift card and a certificate of appreciation for all of their hard work and dedication.
- The Murphysboro, Marion, Mt. Vernon and Harrisburg DCFS staff treated their foster parents to a night out at the ballpark. The families attended a Miners baseball game on Friday evening May 30. On



Miners' mascot "Lucky" welcomed foster families

top of a great game there was a spectacular fireworks display. The families also received a meal ticket for chips, hotdog and a drink.

- DCFS Effingham staff hosted a picnic at the park on May 15 to show foster parents their appreciation. The event included lunch and inflatable slides to make the event fun for the children.
- The Belleville DCFS staff hosted a Foster Parent Appreciation Family Fun Day on May 17, at the Belleville Jaycees Hall. Childcare was available for the children so foster parents could enjoy the appreciation program. Staff and families had lunch together. There were also giveaways, circus games and prizes for caregivers. The children enjoyed the bounce houses, face painting and a balloon artist.
- The Anna, Metropolis and Cairo offices honored their foster parents by inviting them to a breakfast buffet at the Rivercrest Restaurant in Metropolis on May 17. Foster parents were also given beautiful gift baskets as a token of appreciation for their dedication to foster children.
- The staff from the Madison County DCFS office hosted a foster family barbeque picnic on May 17 at the Airplane Park in Edwardsville. The children played in the playground. Hot

dogs and hamburgers were grilled and staff brought many side dishes, desserts and drinks. The foster parents also received a small gift of appreciation for serving children.



United Methodist presented certificates to foster families.

- United Methodist Children's Home in Mt. Vernon hosted a potluck luncheon on May 8 to show their appreciation for foster parents. Families received certificates and photos. Local media covered the event for an article in the Mt. Vernon Register newspaper.
- Illinois Mentor staff from the O'Fallon area honored seventy foster families by hosting a family evening on Friday, May 16 at the Moody Park in Fairview Heights. Families had a relaxing time over dinner, topped off by an appreciation cake. The children enjoyed various activities and games run by volunteers. Caregivers left the event with prizes and gifts.
- Caritas Family Solutions gifted families a t-shirt with the new logo and the letters MVP for Most Valuable Parent, as players and partners on the child welfare professional team.

Southern Region celebrates youth moving toward adulthood

The Southern Region hosted the annual Youth Summit on June 5th, at the Kaskaskia College in Centralia. The summer event was for youth ages 14 to 21. It included workshops on safe relationships, transitional living, housing concerns, and money management. To keep the energy level up, there were also gift giveaways and live entertainment.

On Friday, June 30th, the region celebrated youth graduating from high school or college or a vocational program and those who earned the GED, or

associate's degree. The tribute program kicked off the fun at Splash City in Collinsville.



Young adults enjoyed the buffet at the youth summit.

TRAINING FOR IL/MO BORDER FAMILIES

Illinois foster families in the greater St. Louis metropolitan area should save the dates for the Foster/Adoptive Coalition Training Extravaganzas held in St. Louis.

Saturday, August 2 and Saturday, October 11

Topics will be announced through the agencies that are in the coalition and at www.foster-adopt.org.

Illinois foster parents are able to receive 6.5 in-service hours.

Childcare for 100 children will be provided, via a lottery system. Lunch and snacks will be provided for foster parents (and their children if they are selected for child care).

For more information contact Jan Joeckel at 314-367-8373 ext. 227

Make your voice heard with regional foster care advisory council

The Southern Region Foster Care Advisory Council meets regularly to discuss DCFS policy and practices that affect caregivers who do foster care and those who have moved to adoption or guardianship. The advisory council is structured to accommodate the vast area that comprises Southern Region. Caregivers can participate in-person at one of several DCFS offices or by phone for each quarterly meeting.

The meetings begin in each site at 6:00 p.m. to discuss issues related to the Foster Parent Law. The regular agenda starts at 6:30 p.m.

Caregivers can meet at the DCFS offices in:

- Belleville
- Cairo
- Effingham
- Marion
- Mt. Vernon
- Wood River

The various offices and individual callers will be linked by teleconference.

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. Southern Region is represented by Mark McDaniels and Michael Simpson.

The region's administration encourages caregivers to take an active role in these meetings each quarter. Key staff also attend to aid in answering questions and resolving concerns.

Contact the local DCFS for more details and to get the toll-free teleconference number.

Meeting Dates:

- **October 21, 2014**
- **January 20, 2015**

Southern 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 all PRIDE In-service modules for licensed caregivers.



DIGITAL TRAINING RESOURCES AVAILABLE

DCFS 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



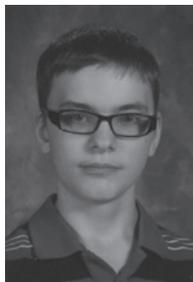
Janee

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

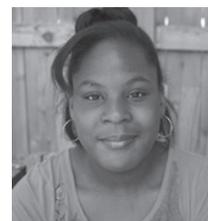
If there's a professional wrestling show on TV, Kevin will want to sit down and watch. If there's a professional wrestling aisle at the store, Kevin will want to spend

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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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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*Celebrating 50 Years of Protecting
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