

Illinois Families Now and Forever

Families by DCFS Foster Care, Adoption & Guardianship®

Keep holiday expectations low and patience high

At the heart of the holidays are values like family and home. Yet, even the beloved seasonal song “I’ll be home for Christmas” can have an entirely different meaning for children in foster care than it does for the adults humming along to the radio. Especially during the holiday season, I find it so easy to get caught up in creating the perfect holiday memories “for the children” that I forget to consider the children. It took several Christmas “shut-downs” and a few full-blown “melt-downs” for me to realize that my quest for perfect may not be best. Hopefully you can take something from my mis-steps.

Every child brings to our home a unique set of memories and a personal story that deserve acknowledgment and respect. As grownups, we have to learn how to welcome our children through foster care into our family traditions, while preserving their own. The first step is communication. Well before December 25 talk to your children about the holiday plans. Ask them about how they spent past holidays. Find out what they liked and what they didn’t like. Talk to their caseworker about what is feasible if they want to see family members or past foster caregivers. Talk to their counselors about experiences that might be triggers or difficult topics. Talk to your spouse, children and extended family. Long-standing traditions or trips to relatives may need to change,

depending on the roster of kids and their individual needs.

In our own home, when we had six teenagers with various permanency goals, I had to give up the notion of everyone piled into the minivan, laughing all the way to Granny’s house on Christmas day. Instead, there was usually one sulking, another nervously watching the clock until his aunt was to pick him up and one more trying to pick a fight with the three who were mildly happy. Thus, I had to shift my expectations to manage the few things that mattered most to me. We all wake up to waffles, open gifts, and as a gesture to my husband, we see an early movie together. After that, those who wish to can climb into the van. We could even pick up a sibling along the way; or we might do a drop off at their folks’ house after dinner.

I don’t mean to oversimplify, because it is difficult to bridge complex relationships and all of emotions that pique during the holidays. But it only gets harder if you set your expectations too high. Remember that something will go wrong so you don’t get surprised. Be patient. Take a breath; countdown from 10; or take a long soak with the music turned up loud. Years from now, after you crop the photos...no one will ever have to know that the holidays weren’t picture perfect.

—Vanessa James,
Editor

Bridging families during the holidays

Talk about holiday traditions from the child’s memory and find ways to incorporate them into your plans

Make a plan for a visit or phone call with the parents during the holiday break

Help children create and mail holiday cards or letters for their parents or siblings who are not together

Understand and support the child’s need for loyalty to his family

Take a picture of the foster family, including the caregivers and any birth children to display with holiday decorations

At a visit, snap a photo of the child and her parent. Display it at your home and frame a print as a gift

Host an overnight sibling visit while school is out



From the DCFS Director

Erwin McEwen

This is the time of year when we look back on our accomplishments and look forward to the year to come. Together, we made it through a very challenging year. We also made progress for the children in our mutual care.

Now that the number of youth in DCFS care is 15,500 as opposed to a peak of over 50,000, we don't have to make do, we can make things better. To that end, Governor Quinn signed three laws that beginning in January will offer us new ways to meet the needs of families.

First, under the Differential Response Program, when risk is low we will be able to assess the need for services, avoiding the trauma of an investigation. Next, the Foster Child Successful Transition Into Adulthood Act will allow emancipated youth the opportunity to continue services until age 21. We expect to see a reduction in homelessness and incarceration, along with improvements in education and employment. Lastly, the DCFS Service Plans Improvement and Foster Permanency Changes Act will help teens proactively manage the relationships with their parents, even when they can't be placed at home.

The momentum is building toward a very progressive 2010. Thank you for your commitment. Best wishes for the holiday season and beyond.

Holiday time is right for sibling visits

For children in foster care, regular visits with siblings can preserve connections when they have to be in separate homes. Visits can often ease the traumatic impact of separation and contribute to their long-term mental health. DCFS recognizes the power of sibling connections and will provide foster caregivers assistance and payment as they do their part in visits.

Visitation requirements

DCFS rules require that sibling visits among youth in DCFS care occur at least two times a month for a minimum of two hours each for all siblings placed apart. Exceptions to twice monthly visits include:

- A court order requiring less frequent or no visitation
- Requests by the child for less frequent or no visitation (requires regular counseling)
- Risk of physical, emotional or mental harm from the visit. (requires documentation)

If siblings are in residential care or are placed more than 150 miles apart, visits may be less frequent. However visitation may not be reduced based on the unavailability of a visit supervisor or as a form of discipline.

These requirements only apply to youth in DCFS care. After adoption, visitation is still an important factor for the adoptive family to consider, but it is not mandated by DCFS. The adults have to determine what will work best for the children and families involved.

Reimbursement Available

Foster caregivers who help children have visits with their siblings in

foster care can be reimbursed for supervising the visits and providing transportation. A foster parent who hosts an overnight or weekend visit in their home can be reimbursed \$100 for supervising the visit. Supervising shorter visits is reimbursed at \$25 an hour for up to four hours. Reimbursement for supervising visits is capped at a maximum of \$100 per month. Driving a child to or from a visit is also eligible for reimbursement at the rate of \$0.55 per mile (as of July 1). The maximum reimbursement for travel each month is capped at \$50.

The child's caseworker can help foster parents complete the form (CFS 315) for reimbursement. They can fill it out together during a home visit or the caseworker can complete the computerized version and bring a copy for the caregiver to sign. Sometimes caregivers participate in visitation, but don't complete the paperwork to be paid. This reimbursement could be a way to set aside extra funds for movies, dinner or activities for the next visit, but the caregiver has the freedom to decide how to put it to use.

If a caregiver is unable to or decides not to host sibling visits or transport a child to sibling visits, it is still important to provide positive support to the worker and the youth. Foster parents see the compounded trauma of children who are separated from their siblings. This is one tangible way to make a difference. Respecting and encouraging on-going family relationships sends a powerful message to a child. Caregivers with questions about sibling visitation or the reimbursement process should contact the child's caseworker.

Homeward-bound

When return home is the goal

DCFS has devoted resources to help caregivers meet the responsibilities of supporting reunification efforts. The Family Reunification Special Service Fee is a payment directly to the caregiver for reunification activities when the case has a goal of return home. Caregivers, parents and the caseworker can develop a monthly plan for activities that take place in a “family setting,” such as a parent helping with homework, or a “choice” activity like participating in court. Based on the level of interaction with the parent, a caregiver could qualify for a reimbursement of up to \$400 each month. Yet, even though the support is available, some caregivers are experiencing delays in payments that could be avoided by keeping the following in mind.

Document the forms correctly

Caregivers to children with a return home goal should document all of the reunification activities that are eligible for reimbursement. Date and describe each activity. The caregiver and the parent each sign the “log” on form CFS 1042 as the event happens.

Submit the forms each month

At the end of the month the caseworker should review the document, sign it and obtain a supervisor signature. Don't wait to submit several forms at once.

It is the caseworker's responsibility to submit the completed and signed form to the Central Payment Unit. Caregivers might consider making a copy of the forms for their records. They can also follow-up with the caseworker to be certain that the signed form was turned in for payment.

Keep up the reunification efforts

Stay committed and consistent with family interactions and shared parenting to the fullest degree possible. Caregivers are part role model, cheerleader and secretary. For all that goes into it, the rewards of seeing a family grow closer are immeasurable. The Family Reunification Special Service Fee is a tangible way to get assistance in this effort. Keep in close contact with the caseworker for more guidance.

CFS 1042-L
Rev 10/2007

State of Illinois
Department of Children and Family Services

Family Reunification Support Special Service Fee Log

Month _____ Year _____ Caregiver's Name: _____
Parent(s) Name(s): _____
Child(ren) Name(s): _____

Abbreviations for Place: CH= caregiver's home PH= parent's home RH= relative's home

Level #1	Date	Start/End Time	Place	Description of Activity	Parent Signature	Caregiver Signature
Family Setting Activity						
Family Setting Activity						
Choice						
Level #2						
Family Setting Activity						
Family Setting Activity						
Choice						
Level #3						
Family Setting Activity						
Family Setting Activity						
Choice						
Level #4						
Family Setting Activity						
Family Setting Activity						
Choice						

I have met together with the parent(s) and caregiver(s) whose signatures appear above to review the recorded events and plan continuing reunification support. I have reviewed this log with the caseworker. The parent(s) whose signature(s) appears above is progressing toward family reunification and I approve continued use of the support fee.

Caseworker's signature _____ Date _____ Supervisor's signature _____ Date _____

The Reunification Support Special Service Fee is available to caregivers of children whose families are making progress toward reunification. The log documents joint efforts of the parent(s) and caregiver(s) of a child in foster care toward family reunification. The focus is on support of parenting activities in a family setting. The log may be used to demonstrate the regular participation of the parent(s) in his/her/their child(ren)'s life to the court. It is also used to document reimbursable activities by the caregiver in support of family reunification. Caseworkers are encouraged to introduce this log and support its use from the time a child enters care.

Movin' on UP

For youth transitioning to adulthood

The Statewide Youth Advisory Board worked with DCFS to redesign the life skills program. For more than a year, young people from the six regions in the state contributed their ideas for what the program should cover and how it should be delivered. Based on their proposal, DCFS contracted with providers to launch the newly designed offerings.

Youth in foster care who are between the ages of 14 and 20 can learn the practical skills they will need to move to adulthood. This program covers important lessons like cooking nutritious meals, transporting themselves to appointments and budgeting their finances.

Finances will be especially important because youth who actively participate in the program will also receive cash incentives as they learn the skills needed for adulthood.

While life skills preparation can happen daily with caregivers in the home, each youth should take advantage of this focused training. Caregivers and young people can remind their caseworkers to complete a referral packet for these free programs. The Transition Managers from the DCFS Division of Service Intervention can also help:

Cook County
Ken Broady at 312-793-0887

Northern Region
Holly Bitner at 630-801-3446

Central and Southern regions
Johnny Williams
217-557-5710

Kwanzaa traditions can bridge cultures and build community



After the shopping and cooking frenzy between Thanksgiving and Christmas, there is another holiday that can help families focus on important values. The Kwanzaa celebration is a way to explore aspects of the African culture and build bonds within the family and the larger community. Kwanzaa is an African-American and Pan-African holiday that celebrates

family, community and culture. It is celebrated from December 26 through January 1 by an estimated 26 million people around the world. The tradition centers on the Kwanzaa symbols and the seven *Nguzo Saba* (principles) of Kwanzaa, which each get a day of devoted attention.

To celebrate Kwanzaa, the family chooses a central place in the home for the Kwanzaa Set, or the symbols of Kwanzaa. The set includes a table covering of African cloth, the *mkeka* (mat) and the *kinara* (candleholder).

The kinara holds seven candles to represent the seven days of Kwanzaa and the seven Kwanzaa principles:

- *Umoja* (unity)
- *Kujichagulia* (self-determination)
- *Ujamaa* (cooperative economics)

- *Kuumba* (creativity)
- *Ujima* (collective work and responsibility)
- *Nia* (purpose)
- *Imani* (faith)

On each night of Kwanzaa during the evening meal, the family members light one of the seven candles to commemorate the principle of the day. Everyone explains what the principle of that day means to them and how they practiced it during the day. Finally, everyone makes a commitment to practice and promote the particular principle throughout the year. Families can head into the new year connected, focused and inspired.

For more information on the Kwanzaa holiday, visit www.OfficialKwanzaaWebsite.org

Battle boredom with free holiday crafts, activities and school tools

For anyone in search of inspiration for a specific holiday or a winter seasonal craft, there is a web-based resource out there. These are just a few Web sites that offer free templates and directions for a wide range of ages and interests.

KidsHolidayCrafts.com

Find holiday and seasonal crafts, puzzles and other activities for kids ages 3 to 7 years old.

amazingmoms.com

Look at this Web site for craft projects and gifts that kids can make as presents.

holidays.kaboose.com

This Web site features recipes, directions for creating ornaments and gift projects.

familycrafts.about.com

In addition to the many craft ideas, the site also has templates for making your own gift tags and cards.

familyeducation.com

As well as all of the many educational resources, under the Holiday tab you can find a printable file of Christmas Carols. Be ready with the lyrics to popular songs in one handy printout.

northpole.com

The Elf Pal Academy is Santa's online classroom for fun Christmas-themed learning. There are flashcards, word finds and coloring sheets. You can also find traditional Christmas fun including letters to Santa and a good deed chart so he knows who has been naughty or nice.

www.Kidzone.ws

This site has loads of free printable worksheets that span academic topics and grade levels. You can keep things light as they learn from fun winter-themed puzzles, quizzes and handwriting exercises.

SAVE the DATE for 2010 Caregiver Institutes on teamwork

The theme for the upcoming 2010 Caregiver Institutes is “Fostering Success by Strengthening and Supporting Families.” The Saturday educational sessions will focus on the various programs and processes that caregivers can use as they navigate the child welfare system to advocate for the children in their homes.

The same slate of informative topics, including discussions with regional administrators, identifying community resources, and child and family teams, will be covered in four locations around the state. Caregivers will earn five training credits.

Make plans now to attend an institute. Registration information will be announced in the next issue of this newsletter.

March 6
6201 S. Emerald, Chicago

March 13
Kaskaskia College, Centralia

March 27
Danville Area Community College

April 24
Milan Banquet Center, Waukegan

Flu concerns continue this winter – vaccinate for protection

The combined impact of the seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu virus has created a concern for families and some confusion among the public. DCFS is reiterating the directions from public health officials to have all children and youth older than six months receive the vaccine for seasonal influenza, unless a doctor says otherwise. The Department is also encouraging the H1N1 (also called swine flu) vaccine for children and young people age six months through 24 years.

Vaccine availability

The seasonal flu vaccine may be widely available at doctors' offices, clinics and retail pharmacies. The vaccine for H1N1 influenza is planned to be made available through county and city health departments, hospitals, community and rural health centers, private physician offices and retail pharmacies that have agreed to provide the vaccine. H1N1 vaccine initially was available in limited quantities, so priority is given to some groups. Young children 6 months through 4 years of age, and

children 5 through 18 years of age who have chronic medical conditions are among the special segments of the population that have priority.

Medicaid coverage

The Illinois Medicaid Program covers both vaccines. There is no special approval needed in order for children to receive the vaccine for seasonal flu or H1N1. The Department's Consent for Routine and Ordinary Medical and Dental Care (CFS 415) is sufficient documentation for both vaccines. If a child receives vaccination at a mass community clinic, caregivers and caseworkers should remember to bring a copy of the signed consent form. Nothing more is required.

Everyday steps to avoid the flu

Additionally, everyone can take everyday actions to stay healthy. Remember to teach youth to cover their mouth and nose when they sneeze or cough, and remind them to wash their hands each time. They need to remember to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth, since that can spread germs. They should also try to avoid close contact with sick people.

Remember the three C's

- **Clean:** properly wash your hands thoroughly
- **Cover:** cover your cough and sneeze
- **Contain:** contain your germs by staying home if you are sick

A DCFS Information Transmittal on seasonal and H1N1 influenza is available for review on the DCFS Web site: www.state.il.us/dcf.



Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Update

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council had a very active fall. In September the group had a joint meeting with the Statewide Youth Advisory Board. In October the council concentrated on training for scoring the 2009 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plans. In November the group met with the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council to celebrate Adoption Awareness Month and to discuss mutual issues.

Meeting with Youth Board

When the foster parent council has its annual meeting with the Youth Advisory Board, it is always a lively session. This year, the two groups discussed a series of Teen Cafés, modeled after the Parent Cafés done by Strengthening Families

Illinois. Several foster parent council members were part of a design team that developed new discussion groups specific to the needs of foster and adoptive caregivers. Next, there will be cafés to give teens a safe and supportive venue to discuss their experiences. Teens will be recruited to serve as group leaders.

The Youth Board also updated the adult council on its progress in reshaping the life skills program. Based on their proposal, providers have new contracts to teach youth in foster care essential skills for tran-



Members of the youth Statewide Youth Advisory Board and the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council got to know each other better during an “icebreaker” activity.

sitioning to life as adults. Caregivers were encouraged to help teens enroll in the new courses to solidify the lessons they are learning at home.

Foster Parent Law Training

Each year the statewide council, by law, must evaluate the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plans that private agencies and DCFS regions submit. Council members score how well the plans uphold the rights and responsibilities outlined in the Foster Parent Law. The council developed the measurement tool to standardize how the members score the plans. At the October meeting, members underwent a refresher course on scoring.

All plans were due on November 30. The council members will spend many hours of personal volunteer time reviewing the plans during December and January.

November Joint Meeting with Adoption Council

At the November meeting with the Adoption Council, members celebrated Adoption Awareness Month, met with senior members of the administration, and participated in honoring members of the committee that plans the annual Adoption Day Celebration at the Winnebago County Court House. Next, several DCFS speakers joined the meeting to discuss topics of mutual interest, covering licensing standards, KinGAP subsidy program, deaf services and training.

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council was founded as part of the Illinois Foster Parent Law. Membership consists of caregivers, agency representatives and other experts in child welfare, who are appointed by the DCFS Director. The mandated positions for caregivers are spread among the DCFS regions.

The council holds open meetings at least six times a year, and more as needed, in locations around the state.

The next meeting of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council will be on Friday, January 18 beginning at 9 a.m. in Tinley Park. Call the Office of Foster Parent Support Services at 217-524-2422 for details.

Illinois Adoption Advisory Council marks Adoption Awareness Month

The Illinois Adoption Advisory Council held a joint meeting with the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council in November. This has become an annual event as the two groups jointly mark Adoption Awareness Month.

The council honored the Circuit Court of Winnebago County with a special award. For six years, judges have opened up the courthouse on the Saturday that marks National Adoption Day to conduct hearings for adoptive families. Working with a committee of staff from DCFS and private agencies, the judicial team makes sure that the event is special and memorable for the children and families involved. Members of the Winnebago County Adoption Day committee attended the council meeting to receive a plaque and recognition.

Director McEwen and members of his executive team had a spot on the agenda to congratulate the council for another year of advocacy on behalf of the state's adoptive and guardianship families. There are approximately three times as many children in post adoptive and guardianship homes than are in DCFS care. While many families are doing well, there will always be a segment of children who will need more attention. He said he is committed to helping those families succeed.

Recognition of the special role of adoptive parents goes to the top level of government. The advisory council members received copies of the proclamation from Governor Pat Quinn to declare November as Adoption Awareness Month in Illinois.



WHEREAS, adoption is a rewarding and enriching experience for individuals and couples who want to provide children with a stable, loving family environment; and

WHEREAS, Illinois is recognized as a national leader in finding permanent homes for waiting children, placing more than 50 thousand foster children into adoptive and subsidized guardianship homes since 1997; and

WHEREAS, largely because of its success in adoption recruitment, Illinois has become the first state in the nation to support more children in permanent adoption guardianship placements than in substitute care; and

WHEREAS, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, the Child Care Association of Illinois, the Adoption Information Center of Illinois, the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council, the Illinois Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, the Chicago Bar Association, and the many Illinois child welfare agencies and adoptive parent groups all encourage families to consider adopting a child in need of a home; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of children in Illinois are still awaiting adoption:

THEREFORE, I, Pat Quinn, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim November 2009 as **ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH** in Illinois, and encourage all families to consider adopting a child into their family.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to be affixed.



Esse White
SECRETARY OF STATE

Done at the Capitol, in the City of Springfield,
this TWENTY-NINTH day of SEPTEMBER, in
the Year of Our Lord two thousand and
NINE, and of the State of Illinois
the one hundred and NINETY-FIRST

Pat Quinn
GOVERNOR

ALP offers new online advocacy course



Becoming Your Child's Best Advocate is a new online training offered by Adoption Learning Partners. The course content focuses specifically on the needs of adoptive and prospective adoptive parents in Illinois. It helps adoptive parents:

- Understand why they are the best advocate for their adopted child
- Identify the information needed to develop a complete file of their child's history
- Determine their family's current need for services and project possible future needs
- Recognize resources available to their child and determine eligibility requirements
- Match their child's and family's needs with available resources

Adoption Learning Partners offers a slate of courses that address many topics for individuals at various points in the adoptive process. Online courses give caregivers the ability to learn at their own rate at times that are convenient. There is no charge for the courses. DCFS licensed caregivers can receive certificates and ALP will waive the fee.

For more information on courses visit the Web site at www.adoptionlearningpartners.org.

KinGAP guardianship in effect for relatives



On November 1, DCFS officially began the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program. This new subsidized guardianship program is the culmination of federal legislation that Illinois had a hand in shaping as far back as 1997. KinGAP, as the new program has come to be called, maintains many of the same features as the previous subsidized guardianship program. However, it is geared to make the transition to guardianship smoother for relative caregivers, after return home has been ruled out as a permanency option.

KinGAP features

KinGAP offers the same components as the previous guardianship subsidy:

- Payments for non-recurring expenses related to the transfer of guardianship
- On-going monthly payments, based on the needs of the child, that don't exceed the current foster care board rate
- Medicaid Card
- Needs not payable through other sources for pre-existing physical, emotional and mental health conditions
- Therapeutic daycare for children who are determined to have a disability requiring an Individualized Education Plan
- Employment Related Daycare for children under the age of 3 years if the guardian is employed

or in a training program that will lead to employment

- College Scholarships and Education and Training Vouchers, according to eligibility and selection guidelines

Key differences with new KinGAP program

Unlike the preceding subsidy program, the relative home now must be licensed for six consecutive months before a child is eligible to go into KinGAP. The child only needs to have lived in the Relative Foster Home for six months (after it has been licensed), as opposed to one year under the old program.

Previous subsidy agreements

Subsidy agreements completed before the KinGAP start date are still in place. Those caregivers should not see any differences.

Guardianship for non-relatives

The new KinGAP legislation only covers children who move to the guardianship of relatives. However, DCFS realizes that in some instances, guardianship for a young person living with an un-related caregiver may be an appropriate permanency option. The Department will make exceptions for youth 14 years or older.

When families need relief, respite programs come to the rescue



The decision to care for a child comes with many emotional costs that adoptive and guardianship parents willingly pay. However, the cumulative toll of meeting high-end, special needs can mount over time. At some point, parents may feel they need a break, or a period of respite, without the constant responsibility of day-to-day parenting.

Research done by the Center For Adoption Studies at Illinois State University showed that a segment of adoptive families was on the brink and that periods of respite could bring them back from the edge. Some families reported feeling like “prisoners in my own home” because children’s behaviors were so difficult to manage for normal activities. The study found that three to six hours of respite once or twice a month went a long way in improving family stability. It recommended that respite providers be trained and experienced in working with children with special needs. The report also noted that care needed to be consistent and predictable.

DCFS funds respite programs through the Adoption/Guardianship Preservation Programs. Several community agencies also provide some form of respite in each of the six DCFS regions. The forms and delivery of respite vary by program. For example, Healthy Families in Chicago does in-home respite and group activities for both children and parents. In central Illinois, The Baby Fold sponsors Camp Take-a-Break, a weekend camp for children staffed by teachers from a local therapeutic day school. In southern Illinois, Mat-

thews and Associates will arrange to take children out on field trips, so they can have “normal kid” social experiences.

Families who feel they could benefit from a brief stint of respite service should contact the Adoption Preservation Program contracted for their area or another community provider from the list. The agency will do an assessment and determine eligibility and availability.

Cook County

- **Catholic Charities**
312-655-8430
- **Chicago Family Health**
773-768-5000 x 1065
- **Healthy Families**
773-257-0111
- **Metropolitan Family Services**
708-974-5815

Northern Region

- **CHASI Rockford**
815-962-1043
Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, Jo Daviess, Lee Ogle, Stephenson, Winnebago and Whiteside counties
- **McHenry County Mental Health Board**, 815-788-4371
McHenry County
- **Metropolitan Family Services**
630-784-4861
DuPage Grundy, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will counties
- **Lutheran Social Services**
815-936-9166
Kankakee County

Central Region

- **The Baby Fold**, 309-454-1770
Champaign, Clark, Cumberland, Coles, DeWitt, Douglas, Edgar, Ford, Livingston, Macon, McLean, Moultrie, Piatt, and Shelby counties

- **Catholic Charities**, 815-223-4007
LaSalle, Bureau, Putnam, Marshall and Stark counties
- **Cornerstone**, 217-222-8254
Adams, Brown, Calhoun, Hancock, Pike and Schyler counties
- **Counseling and Family Services**, 309-682-4621
Peoria, Tazewell and Woodford counties
- **Family Service Center**
217-528-8406
Cass, Christian, Greene, Menard, northern Maucoupin, Montgomery, Morgan, Sangamon and Scott counties
- **Kids Hope United**, 217-345-6554
Coles, Cumberland, Clark, Douglas, Edgar, Shelby and Moultrie counties
- **Lutheran Social Services of Illinois**, 309-671-0300
Bureau, Fulton, Henderson, Henry, Knox, LaSalle, Logan, Marshall, Mason, McDonough, Mercer, Peoria, Putnam, Rock Island, Stark, Tazewell, Warren and Woodford counties
- **Project Success of Vermilion County**, 217-446-3200
Iroquois and Vermilion counties

Southern Region

- **Matthews and Associates**
618-988-1330
Alexander, Clay, Crawford, Edwards, Effingham, Fayette, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Lawrence, Marion, Massac, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Richland, Saline, Union, Wabash, Wayne, White and Williamson counties
- **CHASI-Granite City**
618-452-8900
Bond, Clinton, Madison, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair and Washington counties

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 get you started with the licensing process. The toll-free number is 800-572-2390. AICI also maintains information about the children who are featured in this newsletter.

...You have questions about your board check?

Call DCFS Central Payment Unit at 800-525-0499 if your check comes from DCFS. For others, contact your private agency.

...You have questions about your child's medical card?

Call 800-228-6533.

...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 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 have a general question about a child's case or a service?

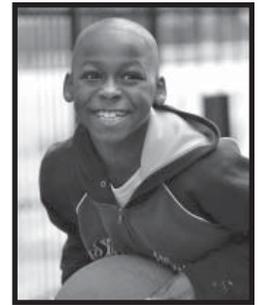
Call the child's caseworker or the caseworker's supervisor. If you don't have that contact information, call the DCFS Advocacy Office at 800-232-3798.

...you want to report an incidence of possible abuse or neglect?

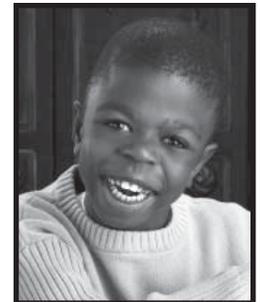
Call the Child Abuse Hotline at 800-25-ABUSE (800-252-2873) or 217-785-4020.

...You have an idea for an article in the newsletter?

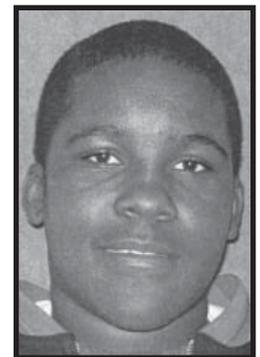
Each region has a regional reporter to help gather local news. The names and contact information are listed in the regional section of each edition. Or you can contact the Editor, Vanessa James, at 312-814-6824 or e-mail vanessa.james@illinois.gov.



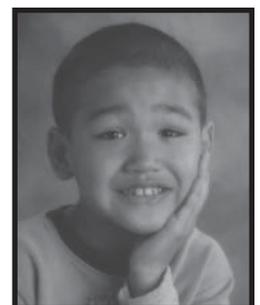
Darquel
(C7742)



Jaiombre
(7429)



Gregory
(C7027)



Josen
(C7760)

Please call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois at 1-800-572-2390.

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

Darquel [7742] Darquel, 11, is a friendly young man who is eager to meet new people. He is also very independent and capable of handling changes in his life. Darquel sometimes has difficulty accepting help from others, but his independence does not prevent him from expressing affection for those closest to him. Darquel's favorite toys are his wrestling figures, notably Hulk Hogan. He also likes to play football, as well as other sports. Darquel's worker says he is easy to get along with and can be very helpful. His foster parent says he is expressive and that he became affectionate once he got to know her.

Darquel's future forever family can provide a stable home and plenty of time for him to adjust to his new, permanent family. You can be affectionate and loving with Darquel, letting him know that you will be there for him when he needs you. Darquel is interested in finding a permanent family through adoption.

Jaiombre [7429] Jaiombre, 11, is an outgoing young man who enjoys playing superheroes with his friends. He especially likes pretending he's Batman or Spider-Man. Jaiombre also loves to eat, and his favorite foods are pizza, chicken and French fries. He enjoys trips to amusement

parks and hopes to visit Disney World some day.

Jaiombre's worker says he is sweet, lovable and polite. He enjoys computer time in school. The forever family for Jaiombre would be patient and loving, and you can provide ongoing supervision. A two-parent home is preferred. Other children in the home should be older than Jaiombre, so he can receive an appropriate share of parental attention.

Gregory [7027] Gregory, 14, is an athletic young man who loves to play basketball, football, and softball. He has earned praise for being a good teammate and has developed strong relationships with his coaches. Although he sometimes needs to be pushed in the right direction, Gregory has the capacity to make good, mature choices. With the proper motivation, he keeps his room clean and completes all of his household chores. When placed in a small group with positive classmates, he tends to succeed academically.

Gregory's foster parent says he is a respectful young man who doesn't engage in conversation often, but will open up from time to time. He has shown himself to be talented artistically as well as athletically.

The family for Gregory would be patient and kind, allowing him to develop a relationship with your family over time. You can encourage Gregory in his many athletic and artistic pursuits. You can also encourage him to express himself and provide for his ongoing emotional needs. Gregory would like to live with a loving family, and would definitely make use of any household basketball rim he had access to.

Josen [7760] Josen, 9, is an outgoing and energetic young man. He enjoys playing soccer, riding his bike, and spending time outdoors. Josen is also personable, polite, and easy to get along with. He enjoys playing with animals and always has a smile on his face. Josen's teachers say he is a very polite child. Josen's foster parent says he enjoys, and responds well to, structured activities.

Potential parents for Josen can provide him a loving, structured home environment. You can encourage him to acclimate to your home while showing patience and understanding throughout his transition. You can also make Josen's education a priority, working closely with teachers, counselors, and other professionals to make sure his needs are met.



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.



Illinois Families Now and Forever

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