

Illinois Families Now and Forever

Families by DCFS Foster Care, Adoption & Guardianship®

Illinois celebrates Foster Parent Appreciation Month

As nature springs forth in May, caregivers should take a moment to see how the seeds of hope and perseverance they nurtured in children have taken root. Foster care is a year-round effort, but Foster Parent Appreciation Month is one where folks can take time to smell the roses. Beautiful flowers sometimes come with thorns. They even need some unpleasant fertilizer to help them grow. When working day in and day out with children dealing with the affects of trauma, it can be difficult to see what can be. However, like the first tulips, lovely surprises can break through rough ground.

Nationally, there are nearly 12 million foster care alumni. Many are thriving adults who go on to raise children of their own. In Illinois several young people who had been in foster care were featured in television and print ads with the slogan "I'm Doing Good." They went through foster care to finish school, gain employment and start families. A more recent advertising campaign featured the caregivers who helped youth. It had the catch phrase "In it for the kids." That sums up the reason so many dedicate so much.

With time and energy the public perception of foster care can continue to point toward positive. As that shift takes place, caregivers will continue their quiet, important work on behalf of children.



WHEREAS, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services' mission is to provide for the well-being of over 16,000 children and young people in the State of Illinois' care; and,

WHEREAS, foster parent caregivers provide a safe haven for children when they cannot safely be in their homes of origin due to abuse or neglect; and,

WHEREAS, foster caregivers are called upon to devote their time and energies to children, their parents and agency staff in order to reunite families when possible or support other permanency options; and,

WHEREAS, foster parent caregivers tirelessly tend to children's physical, emotional, material and educational needs, providing them the possibility to move from the child welfare system to safe and successful lives; and,

WHEREAS, in return for the immeasurable effort they extend, foster parent caregivers deserve the respect and gratitude for their present contributions and the ongoing positive impact they have in their home communities:

THEREFORE, I, Pat Quinn, Governor of the State of Illinois, do proclaim May 2011 as FOSTER PARENT APPRECIATION MONTH in Illinois.

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



Deese White
SECRETARY OF STATE

Done at the Capitol, in the City of Springfield,
this FIFTH day of APRIL, in
the Year of Our Lord two thousand and
ELEVEN, and of the State of Illinois
the one hundred and NINETY-THIRD

Pat Quinn
GOVERNOR



From the DCFS Director

Erwin McEwen

As I think about how to put my personal appreciation for you into words every May, I have to do it against the backdrop of the state's annual budget-making process. This year, the state must work through funding shortfalls of crisis proportions. So for me, taking time to recognize Foster Parent Appreciation Month is an especially welcome bright spot. You and the love you pour into foster care are so critical. This agency is required to do so much that simply would be impossible without you.

You deal with the effects of trauma every day, so you know how high the stakes are for families during an economic crisis that affects everyone. I know and appreciate that you have responded to the challenges by embracing a trauma-informed approach for helping children. So many of you attended the caregiver institutes and other trauma trainings to learn trauma's impact and how to adjust your parenting perspective.

To recognize all your efforts, in May each DCFS region and many of the private agencies will host events so that you can draw support from each other and remember how much we all appreciate your kindness and generosity. I believe that foster caregivers are the greatest human resource we have. I thank you with all my heart. I will continue to do all I can on your behalf.

10 Ways to Celebrate Foster Parent Appreciation Month

Here are a few ways to make sure Foster Parent Appreciation Month is a special time:

- * Take a look at your rights under the Foster Parent Law and remember there is a state statute to support your efforts.
- * Join a foster parent support group and take a friend.
- * Flip through family photo albums before bed to guarantee sweet dreams.
- * Serve a cake with candles for dessert and show the kids you deserve a special day.
- * Make plans with another foster family to trade an afternoon watching the others' kids. Take the time to do something to refresh yourself.
- * Send a card to encourage a caregiver who is having a rough time.
- * Make a list of good parenting decisions you have made lately. Tuck it away for a "rainy day."
- * Write a letter to your local newspaper explaining the importance of foster care. Make the public take notice.
- * Meet a couple of foster parent friends over coffee.
- * Declare a "Good News Only Day." Let someone else field the phone calls from school and settle the squabbles. You'll have to take your turn one day the next week.

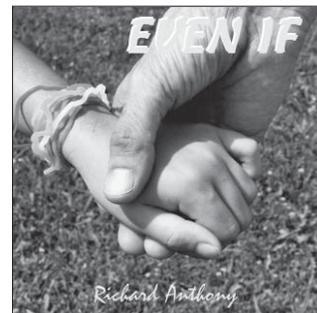


For more information on ways to raise awareness about foster care, spend some time exploring the National Foster Care Month Web site (www.fostercaremonth.org). There one can find resources

and sample materials for reaching out to elected officials and the media. The site also has logos and statistics to help build the case for more public involvement in foster care.

Feelings about foster care inspire new song

Richard Goberville, a caregiver from Joliet, turned his feelings about his first foster care placement into a song. The lyrics to "Even If" express his promise to remain true to then six-year-old Nick even if he returned home. Even If puts into words and music the way a caregiver's temporary help can have a lifelong impact. As it turned out, Nick's path led to adoption by Goberville. But the story doesn't end there.



Goberville decided that his song could reach a wider audience than just the family members who had enjoyed his music for years. He worked with a producer to include Even If on a CD. The single is now available on iTunes under his professional recording name Richard Anthony. Goberville is using the proceeds of the song as donations to the Guardian Angel Home in Joliet and Mercy Home for Boys and Girls. Details are at www.richardanthonymusic.com.

Homeward-bound

When return home is the goal

Frequent, high quality visitation yields better results

When the courts determine that children cannot safely be at home with their parents, caregivers step in to receive them. While in foster care, the “system” states how many visits are required. But for a child, those rules are just obstacles keeping them apart from the person they love – no matter the circumstances. The caregiver serves as a vitally important bridge connecting the child, the caseworker and the parent. It is sometimes difficult spanning what can be a broad divide. However, when all parties understand how frequent visits can help and know what supports are available, visitation can work to promote permanency.

Why is visitation so important?

Visits allow children and parents to maintain important connections. That can reduce the affects of the trauma that brought them into the child welfare system. Sometimes, caregivers feel visits compound trauma. They may often notice that a child acts out after a visit. The natural inclination is to think that visits should stop. But often, the better response is more visits to alleviate the child’s stress and confusion around separation. Research shows that, frequent, high-quality family visits:

- promote child well-being;
- diminish children’s anxiety and sense of loss; and
- are essential to and can promote timely and successful reunification, guardianship or adoption.

Changes to improve visitation

Every parent’s service plan will include a visitation plan. This plan takes into consideration the permanency goal and safety factors, along with the parents’ strengths and needs. DCFS is committed to arranging frequent and high-quality visits. Caregivers who are involved with reunification cases understand this now incorporates opportunities for shared parenting and visits in “family-settings.”

The Department has also created trainings on visitation for all DCFS supervisors, direct service staff at private agencies and court personnel. The court training in Cook County last November was mandated by Judge Patricia Martin, Presiding Judge for the Child Protection Division, and included public defenders, state’s attorneys, GALs and judges.

“The judges seemed very positive. They see visitation as a way to gain real evidence about how the case is moving,” said Norma Ginther, the trainer for the two-day course.

Resources to help caregivers support visits

DCFS continues to work with court personnel to increase awareness about the importance of frequent visitation. There are also discussions about using mediation to rectify visitation obstacles. The child’s caseworker is the caregiver’s first source for help in supporting visits. The caseworker can also explain the Reunification Special Service Fee, which reimburses foster caregivers up to \$400 monthly for supporting reunification through specific visitation and shared parenting activities.

Movin’ on UP

For youth transitioning to adulthood

Teens across the state will have “one-stop shopping” for information to help them prepare for life as adults. The DCFS Division of Service Intervention is planning four Youth Summits. Teens who participate in summits will obtain educational and survival skills to help them successfully achieve self-sufficiency and independence. Teens have helped plan workshops covering financial planning, life skills, employment training, academics, nutrition and health.

Youth will co-facilitate sessions to keep the discussion relevant and interesting. They have also injected some fun with food and prizes at each event. Youth (and their caregivers) should save the date for the Youth Summit. Youth and their caregivers should plan to spend the day at the Youth Summit.

Cook County June 23

Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) Hermann Hall, Chicago

Northern Region June 17

Kishwaukee College, DeKalb

Central Region June 23

Miller Park Pavilion, Bloomington

Southern Region June 4

Kaskaskia College, Centralia

For more information contact:

- Gail Simpson (Central)
217-524-2425
- Johnny Williams (Southern)
217-557-5710
- Lynda Swan-McClendon (Cook)
312-814-5991
- Holly Bitner-Duck (Northern)
630-801-3446

Foster Parent Law strengthens rights and responsibilities

A large part of appreciation lies in respect. Respect comes from understanding roles and expectations. That is where the Foster Parent Law comes in. This Illinois statute clearly defines the rights that caregivers have and their responsibilities as they perform the service of foster care with DCFS and private agencies that have DCFS foster care contracts. Sixteen years ago, caregivers came together to compile a “bill of rights” in the hope to provide fair and consistent treatment for children in foster care and the families that opened their homes to them. Statewide outreach, public hearings and legislative debated culminated in the Foster Parent Law, signed by Governor Edgar at a foster parent conference in June of 1995.

The Foster Parent Law contains the Foster Parent Bill of rights. The statement of rights helps foster parents, agencies and DCFS regions know what role foster parents will play on the child welfare team and the consideration they can expect to receive. The statement of responsibilities helps prospective foster parents know what will be expected of them before they decide to become foster parents and gives current foster parents a clear understanding of the general expectations of the agency or DCFS region.

The rights and responsibilities stipulated in the Foster Parent Law get put into practice through the DCFS rule-making process. The rule concerning the Foster Parent Law can be found in Rule 340, titled Foster Parent Code.

Continued on page 5

Rights under the Foster Parent Law

Foster parent caregivers have the right to:

1. Be treated with dignity, respect and consideration, as a professional member of the child welfare team.
2. Be provided pre-service and ongoing training to meet needs and improve skills.
3. Be informed on how to contact the placement agency for assistance to access support services.
4. Receive timely financial reimbursement for care included in the service plan.
5. Be provided with information about the agency’s plan for placement, that includes supporting family relationships and cultural heritage.
6. Be provided fair, timely and impartial investigations, including mediation and/or administrative review and explanations of decisions concerning licensing.
7. Receive additional or necessary information relevant to the child’s care anytime a child is placed with the foster parent.
8. Be given information concerning a child from DCFS as required under the Children and Family Services Act and from a child welfare agency as required under the Child Care Act of 1969.
9. Be notified of scheduled meetings concerning the child. Be informed of decisions. Have input in developing the service plan. Communicate with other professionals.
10. Have any information the caseworker has about the child and his family that pertains to the child’s needs and care.
11. Receive written notice of any changes in the case plan or plans to end placement, along with the reason.
12. Receive timely notification of court hearings.
13. Be considered as a placement option for foster children formerly in their care when those children come back to care.
14. Have access to an agency’s or DCFS’s appeals process without retaliation
15. Be informed of the Foster Parent Hotline and information on reporting staff misconduct.

Responsibilities under the Foster Parent Law

Foster parent caregivers have the responsibility to:

1. Openly communicate and share information about the child with designated other members of the child welfare team.
2. Respect the confidentiality of information concerning foster children and their families.
3. Advocate for children in their care.
4. Treat children in their care and their children's families with dignity, respect, and consideration.
5. Recognize their own individual and familial strengths and limitations when deciding whether to accept a child into care. Recognize their own support needs and utilize appropriate supports.
6. Be aware of the benefits of relying on and affiliating with other foster parents and foster parent associations.
7. Assess ongoing individual training needs and act to meet those needs.
8. Strategize to avoid placement disruptions.
9. Know the impact foster parenting has on individuals and family relationships and try to minimize the stress as much as possible.
10. Know and promote the rewards and benefits to children, parents, families, and society that come from foster parenting.
11. Know the roles, rights and responsibilities of foster parents, other child welfare professionals, the child, and the child's own family.
12. Serve as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse/neglect. Know procedures regarding allegations that foster parents have committed child abuse or neglect.
13. Understand administrative case reviews, client service plans and court processes, and actively participate.
14. Know the child welfare agency's appeal procedure for foster parents and the rights of foster parents under the procedure.
15. Maintain accurate and relevant records regarding the child's care, following the child welfare agency's procedures.
16. Share information through the child welfare team to help the child adjust when moving to a new foster home.
17. Respect and maintain a child's culture. Provide care and services, which are respectful of, and responsive to, the child's cultural needs and are supportive of the relationship between the child and his/her own family.

Foster Parent Law, con't.

The statement of rights and responsibilities is a good starting point to avoid or to resolve issues between caregivers and other members of the child welfare team. The Law also requires agencies to have a grievance process specific to the rights and responsibilities listed in the Foster Parent Law.

Each agency and DCFS region prepares an annual Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan that demonstrates how the rights and responsibilities are incorporated into practice. The Foster Parent Law also gives the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council authority to make sure the Law is implemented every year in the DCFS regions and the private agencies that provide child welfare services under contract with DCFS. So, every year the Council scores all the implementation plans required by the Law and conducts on-site reviews at certain agencies and regions in order to make sure staff are implementing the Foster Parent Law in their daily work with foster parents.

Additionally, programs are required to involve caregivers in drafting the implementation plan and to make the plan available for review. Many foster care programs send copies of the implementation plan directly to caregivers. Others have the plan ready as requested.

Caregivers with questions about the Foster Parent Law or implementation plans can contact their agency or call the DCFS Office of Caregiver and Parent Support at 217-524-2422.



Illinois Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Bulletin

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council held their February Meeting in Elgin and the March meeting in Effingham.

News from the Office of Training

Cheryl Lawrence reported that Training has revised the Training Credit Approval Form that caregivers complete to document training hours. For courses or meetings where DCFS Training is not delivering the material, regional training managers will be working with the provider to ensure the training meets the stated objectives. Some caregivers may be contacted about eligibility of hours. If this happens they can work with the training manager. The new form will make it easier to track approved credits and to make an individual plan for training.

Foster Care Utilization Review Program

The council viewed a presentation on the research project Foster Care: What Distinguishes Children with Multiple Moves from Children who Experience Stability. Highlights of the findings and recommendations included these points:

- A history of instability does not foreclose long term permanence.

- Evaluate foster parent recruitment and support to successfully manage needs of the current population.
- Ensure provision of individualized services to foster parents and the children in their care.
- Impact of previous instability should be clinically considered more closely when making system-related placement changes.

As follow up, the council formed a work group to determine criteria for measuring the qualities caregivers need to foster stability.

Update on Foster Parent Law Implementation Plans

After receiving and scoring all plans from DCFS and private agency foster care programs, the council nominated plans for awards. Nominations are open for plans that are exemplary in the categories of : Dignity and Respect, Organization/User Friendliness and Foster Parent Involvement. The plans selected for honorable mention will be announced in June at the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council meeting in Oak Brook. Caregivers and staff representing the outstanding plans will be invited to attend.

Caregiver Institutes teach how to manage trauma

In March and April the DCFS Caregiver Institutes made the annual tour around the state. This year's topic: Turning Trauma Around at Home and in the Classroom drew 200 interested foster caregivers, adoptive parents and guardians to devote six hours

on a Saturday, learning how to manage the effects of trauma.

The DCFS Office of Caregiver and Parent Support with the Office of Training presented a dynamic course in Chicago, Mt. Vernon, Springfield and Joliet. The session included an update from the leadership of the DCFS region, an Introduction to "Psychological First-Aid" and a custom presentation on trauma's effects on learning. The highlight of the institute this year and every year so far was again the youth panel, where young people who are or were in care DCFS discussed the topic from their unique vantage point. In addition, at two sites 50 caregivers received certification in CPR to fulfill licensing requirements.



Carrie Williams took home a Peace Lily that was awarded to a caregiver to remember the contributions of foster parent support specialist Adrienne Welenc.

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

The council holds open meetings at least 6 times a year, and more as needed, in locations around the state.

The next meeting of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council will be on June 10 in Oak Brook at 9 a.m. Call the Office of Caregiver and Parent Support at 217-524-2422 for details.

DCFS INVITES YOU TO THE ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

August 12 - August 21, 2011

Corner of Peoria Road and Sangamon Ave., Springfield



Foster Families, Relative Caregiver Families, Adoptive Families, and Guardianship Families - Choose Your Own Discount Day!

Complete the form below if you would like to attend the Illinois State Fair and get the discounts available for caregivers. If you return the form now, in July you will receive by mail:

A ticket that will get your vehicle and everyone in it into the Fair and parked for one fee of \$3.

One refreshment ticket for each family member, worth \$3 in food or drink.

One ride ticket for each family member that provides unlimited rides for \$15
(during designated times ONLY on Monday, August 15 - Friday, August 19.)

A special map of the fairgrounds made just for you.

COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS FORM BY MAIL OR FAX NO LATER THAN JUNE 24, 2011

DCFS Division of Communications
406 East Monroe Street, Station 65
Springfield, IL 62701-1498
Fax: 217-524-0014

Tickets may NOT be requested by telephone. *Nothing will be sent to you unless you return this form.* This is your ONLY invitation to the State Fair. Act NOW if you wish to attend.

We are a licensed foster family, relative caregiver, a guardianship family or have adopted a child through DCFS, and we would like to attend the 2011 Illinois State Fair. We understand that only our foster, adopted and guardianship children and family members who live in our home consistent with DCFS licensing regulations are eligible for these special offers.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

There will be _____ family members in our party. Number of vehicles _____ (limit 2)
If requesting more than 8 tickets, please print the name and phone number of your licensing or subsidy worker.

Worker's name _____ Phone number _____

Caregiver Name: _____ Signature: _____

Mailing Address: _____ Apt. No. _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

For foster families only:

We are supervised by DCFS _____

We are supervised by a private agency _____ Agency Name _____

Note - Please bring a copy of this invitation or a copy of a recent board or subsidy invoice with you when you attend the Fair. You may be asked to show this invitation or invoice in order to use the tickets. It is illegal to duplicate or sell these tickets, or to transfer these tickets to any person who is not a family member living in your home.

Caregivers can help prevent suicide and strengthen vulnerable youth

It is rare for a young person to take his or her own life; in fact, only one in 50,000 youth under age 18 die by suicide each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Still, every year in the United States, that “one in” number translates to more than 4,000 youth and young adults who die by suicide and 130,000 others who are treated in emergency rooms for self-harm injuries. Researchers have found a link between mental illness and suicide. Caregivers can bear witness to the proven higher rates of mental illness among youth in foster care. While suicide will not come up as an issue in every foster home, against this background, it is crucial that every caregiver knows the risks, learn how to interpret the warning signs and can strengthen a youth who may be vulnerable to self harm.

It must be stated that most youth who have a mental illness do not attempt suicide. But, most who die by suicide also have a mental illness such as depression, other mood disorders, or substance use disorder. Furthermore, youth in foster care have more mental illness and are more likely to be drug dependent than other youth, making their risk for suicide attempts and suicide higher. One study found that children in foster care were almost three times more likely to have seriously considered suicide and almost four times more likely to have attempted suicide than those never in foster care.

Know the risk, see the warnings

Many young people who are thinking of killing themselves exhibit warning signs—behaviors and statements that indicate a high level of risk. Knowing the warning signs and risk factors can help foster parents intervene and

These behaviors are considered signs of imminent risk of suicide.

If you hear or see a child:

- *threatening to hurt or kill him or herself, or talking of wanting to hurt or kill him or herself*
- *looking for ways to kill him or herself by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means*
- *talking or writing about death, dying or suicide, when these actions are out of the ordinary for the child*

Call 911 or seek immediate help from a mental health provider.

get the youth connected to help. It also helps the concerned adults to address issues and build protective factors that may minimize the child’s thoughts of suicide and suicide attempts.

Get help from a mental health professional if you believe a child is feeling: hopelessness, a sense of being trapped, anger, rage or vengeance. Also look out for recklessness or risky behavior, withdrawal from friends, increased alcohol use, anxiety or agitation, inability to sleep or too much sleeping and dramatic mood changes. If the youth is not already connected to a mental health provider, contact the caseworker or call the CARES Line at (800)-345-

9049 to initiate a crisis referral. This crisis line can link families to services throughout Illinois.

Step in and help out

Caregivers may be reluctant to explore a child’s emotional or behavioral issues. The boundaries can be unclear when you are responsible for a child who may have been with you only for a short time. You may fear uncovering problems that might require getting outside support. But there are steps you should take to address his or her issues and promote mental health. Build a child’s protection from suicide by increasing family connectedness, getting access to effective care, providing supervision by caring adults, and restricting access to lethal means.

Here are some specifics that caregivers can do:

- Ask the tough questions.
- Get support and be ready for emergencies.
- Stay with your child if you think he or she is at imminent risk of suicide.
- Reduce access to lethal means for suicide.
- Be persistent.
- Request a full risk assessment by a trained mental health professional.

The Web site for the Suicide Prevention Resource Center at www.sprc.org has more material tailored to foster caregivers.

Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) for crisis counseling, suicide intervention, and information about resources in your area.

Also urge youth to call the hotline to talk with trained staff.

The Lifeline is accessible 24/7 in English and in Spanish.

Contacting post-adoption & guardianship staff: NEW phone number for Cook County



The Cook County Post Adoption and Guardianship Unit has a new phone number. Caregivers should call 855-548-5505. This is the number to use with questions about the subsidy, to get approval for additional services and to provide updates to contact information or other changes.

The new phone number will be maintained by staff at a central location who can track the caller's request, ensure it goes to the appropriate individual and track the responsiveness.

Contacting Subsidy Workers at the Cook County Unit

Call new toll-free number 855-548-5505

Contacting Subsidy Workers outside of Cook County

Northern Region

Supervisor Don Vasich 630-844-8496

Joliet: Norma Napper 815-730-4086

Aurora: Deirdra Davis 630-844-8966

Rockford: Jennifer Zaluckyj 815-967-3763

Central Region

Supervisor: Kevin Hauser 217-278-5535

Peoria: Deborah Hawkins 309-671-7944

Springfield: (pending) 217-557-2668

Urbana: Elois Drake 217-278-5417

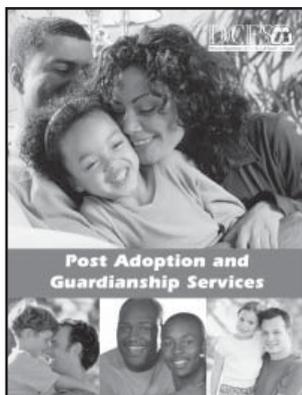
Southern Region

Supervisor: Bernice Stallings 618-583-2184

East St. Louis: Carol Teague-Douglas 618-583-2189

Mt. Vernon: Wendy Manna 618-244-8424

New Post Adoption and Guardianship Services Booklet ready for caregivers



A new version of the Post Adoption and Guardianship Booklet is now available. Adoption workers will distribute the booklet to prospective adoption and guardianship families.

Those families who have already moved to adoption or guardianship can all access the new version. It is on the DCFS Web site for download at www.state.il.us/dcf in the Library section. Caregivers can also call their subsidy worker to request a booklet.

Illinois Adoption Advisory Council



The Illinois Adoption Council held its April meeting in Bloomington.

Diligent Recruitment Grant

June Dorn, Statewide Administrator for Post Adoption introduced Debbie Saucedo to update the group on the grant Illinois won to improve permanency through building connections with relatives. The five-year grant will focus on older youth and develop and test an intense family-finding process.

New from the Office of Training

Cheryl Lawrence announced that Training is developing an on-line course for the Adoption Certification class. The on-line version will not replace in-person, classroom training. However since this course is time-critical to the adoption process, an on-line version will offer prospective adoptive parents more flexibility.

Adoption Celebration plans

Even though National Adoption Month is not until November, the council started laying the groundwork for this year's Illinois Celebrates Adoption activities. Caregivers who may be interested in participating in the planning or letting the council know about local plans can contact the Office of Caregiver and Parent Support at 217-524-2422.

The next meeting of the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council will be on June 3 in Lisle at 10 a.m. Call the Office of Caregiver and Parent Support at 217-524-2422 for details.

Who do you call when...

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

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

...You have questions about your board check? Call DCFS Central Payment Unit at 800-525-0499 if your check comes from DCFS. For other checks, contact your private agency.

...You feel you aren't being treated fairly by DCFS or a private agency? If you've tried to resolve the issue by going up the chain of command with the caseworker and supervisors, then call the Advocacy Office at 800-232-3798.

...You have questions about your child's medical card? Call 800-228-6533.

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

...You are having a family crisis with your adopted child? Contact the Adoption/Subsidized Guardianship Preservation Program that serves your area. Call Christine Feldman at 312-814-1565 for more information.

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

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

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

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



Pat Quinn, Governor
Erwin McEwen, DCFS Director
Published by: DCFS Office of
Caregiver and Parent Support

Editor: Vanessa James
Phone: 312-814-6824
Fax: 312-814-4131
E-mail: vanessa.james@illinois.gov

Regional Editors
Central – Sam Saladino
Northern – Colleen Woolwine
Southern – Chiquita Adams
Cook North – Joann Niemuth
Cook Central – Clyde Thompson
Cook South – Rod Mulford
Graphics: Jenny Florent
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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.

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Department of Children and Family Services©

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



Aaron (C7877)

Aaron [7877] Aaron, 13, is an adventurous young man who loves to camp, fish, and ride his bike. He is a bundle of energy, and spends as much time as he can outdoors. Aaron is also friendly and outgoing. He enjoys hanging out with his friends, and will engage anyone and everyone in conversation. In his quieter moments, he enjoys playing video games, spending time on the computer, and caring for his foster family's pets. Aaron's worker says he is a bright, articulate child who loves to talk. He is well-behaved at home, where he is surrounded by people who care for him.



Heidi (C7847)

The right family match for Aaron would provide lots of positive outlets for Aaron's boundless energy. You can also work with doctors and other professionals who can help you meet his medical needs. The ideal family would consist of a single female parent who would encourage Aaron to maintain relationships with his siblings.

Heidi [7847] Heidi, 14, is a sweet young lady with a strong creative streak. She enjoys drawing and spends lots of time writing in her journal. Heidi has difficulty forming relationships with her peers, but she has also shown the ability to attach to people she trusts. She is generally well-behaved, both at home and in school. Heidi's foster parent says she enjoys having her in the home. Heidi's teacher says she is a good student who does her classwork and is well-behaved in school.



Resinald (C7832)

Potential parents for Heidi can provide a loving, supportive home for her. You can show Heidi that you care for her and want what is best for her. You can also work with specialists to make sure Heidi's emotional and medical needs are met.



Sharon (C7796)

Resinald [7832] Resinald or Reggie at age 7 is a polite, respectful young man who always says "please" and "thank you." He craves adult attention and is eager to engage adults in conversation. Reggie is a loving child who likes watching television, playing video games, participating in board game nights, and going on family outings. He also loves being around his foster family's new puppy, and spends almost every afternoon playing with it. Reggie's teachers say he has good social skills and interacts well with other children. He has formed a bond with his foster parent and is quick to tell her, "I love you."

Parents for Reggie can dedicate lots of time to

caring for, and supervising, Reggie. You can establish clear rules and consequences, and provide plenty of positive attention when he meets your expectations. You can also work with specialists to help mitigate and redirect Reggie's behavior, when necessary. A family with no more than two children in the home is preferred.

Sharon [7796] Break out the pots and pans, because Sharon, 11, is quickly becoming a culinary master. She enjoys cooking, shopping, and watching food-themed television shows. Sharon also likes to help out around the house, and tries very hard to please others. In her spare time she likes using the computer and going on family outings. Sharon's worker says she is helpful, caring, and eager to please. The forever family for her is one that would be loving and patient with Sharon as she adjusts to your home. You can establish clear expectations for her behavior at home and in school. You can allow Sharon to maintain regular contact with her previous foster family, with whom she lived since she was a toddler. Other children in the home should be older than Sharon.

Elizabeth & Katrina [7863-64] Elizabeth, 13, is a loving, caring child who seeks acceptance from adults and peers alike. She can be shy at times, but warms up to people once she gets to know them. In her spare time, Elizabeth likes to read books and watch movies. She also enjoys participating in TaeKwonDo classes. Elizabeth's younger sister, Katrina, age 8, is a happy, fun-loving child. She sometimes struggles when interacting with children her own age, but still finds ways to entertain herself. She particularly enjoys playing with baby dolls, watching Dora the Explorer, eating pizza, and having her nails painted. Elizabeth's worker says she is a thoughtful child who is protective of her siblings. Katrina's worker says she is polite, helpful, and, at times, talkative.

The potential parents to these sisters can provide a structured, consistent, and nurturing environment for them. You can encourage them to pursue positive relationships with their peers. You can also work with doctors and other professionals who can help you understand and meet their medical and emotional needs. Elizabeth and Katrina would benefit from a continued relationship with their brother. Other children in the adoptive home should be older than Elizabeth and Katrina.



Elizabeth & Katrina
(C7863-64)



Please call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois at
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if you are interested in adopting one of these children or learning
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Vanessa James, Editor
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