Illinois Families
Now & Forever®

Families by DCFS Foster Care, Adoption & Guardianship

Home for the Holidays Secures More Than 300 Homes

There's no place like home, especially for a child when circumstances bring him under the care of DCFS. In a concentrated, end of the year boost, more than 300 children will be in permanent homes by the end of December.

"A safe, loving home is always the goal. The holiday season helps us build momentum to work even harder to create stable, permanent homes for children," said George H. Sheldon, acting director.

The Home of the Holidays concept took shape with the involvement of adoption staff, permanency enhancement specialists and the DCFS administration. It is a coordinated effort to streamline the permanency process so that children can be reunified with family or move to adoption during the holiday season. The goal is to have these children enjoy the holidays assured that they are home to stay. As of the end of November, more than 275 were in permanent situations. Additional permanency results are expected in December as case managers continue to work toward closing cases.

There's no place like home . . .

Some of the recent holiday homes included children with adoptions finalized as part of National Adoption Day activities held special court sessions. At the Richard M. Daley Center in Chicago, six families became "official" on November 20. Nearly a dozen others entered interim orders to adopt. In Rockford, more than 20 families came to the Winnebago County Court for a once a year Saturday court call on November 21 to finalize their adoptions. That included a celebration with refreshments for the new families.

DCFS Guardian Debra Dyer Webster (center) with the Gooden Family and the Dorsey Family at court to adopt Gabby and Jose.

Two households are now united as one family in a most unusual twist that unfolded in November. Two sisters and their husbands adopted a brother, age 6 and a sister, age 8 on November 20. The story began when new foster parents Angela and Darya Gooden visited the siblings while they were living with a relative. After seeing how well the visits went, the aunt supported a placement. Angela was retired with adult children. While she had room for the sibling group, it was a lot to handle as first-time foster parents. She looked to sister, Annette and brother-in-law Ronald Dorsey, who didn't have children. They became the home for Gaby and José. The two children go to the same school. The families live near each other in the South suburbs so spending time together happens often.

"It's wonderful to have the kids together and part of our family," said Arlene. "Every day is special."

November kicked off a busy holiday season that also included two birthdays for the children. The story doesn't actually end with these adoptions. There is another sibling in foster care and… Annette and Angela have another sister. They are looking forward to making that yet another forever family. ♡

Message from the DCFS Acting Director

As 2015 comes to a close, I am also close to wrapping up my first year with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

When I came to Illinois, the department was reeling from intense pressure from the media and suffering from a lack of consistent leadership for the last five years. Yet, one thing that never wavered was the dedication of our foster and adoptive families. With your commitment to our children and the hard work of department staff and agency partners, I truly feel that we are on the right track to rebuilding this department into something for which we can all be proud.

System change is going to be a process. I realize that I have to work to earn your trust. This year, I have learned so much from talking with foster parents in council meetings and having fun at the state fairs. I have spoken with youth at the graduation events across the state and met with them one on one. Last month I "talked turkey" with foster care alumni at a Thanksgiving celebration. The honest critique and heartfelt concerns have me even more convinced of what is at stake and why we must succeed.

So, I'm thankful and looking forward to what 2016 will bring. I'm incredibly optimistic that together, we'll be able to continue our work to improve the department and improve the lives of the children and families in our care.

Thank you again for all that you do. May you and your family have a very happy and safe holiday season.

George H. Sheldon
Acting Director

Keeping Brothers and Sisters Connected

Maintaining connections between children who are in different households is complicated, but is also important. While the primary goal is to keep brothers and sisters together when a substitute placement becomes necessary, it may not be possible. Legislation passed in 2015 reinforced the importance of connections as a key factor in a child's development while in DCFS care and after. While youth are in foster care, there are rules about the frequency of visits that must take place each month.

Still even outside of the foster care guidelines, caregivers should support a visitation plan that could include siblings adopted by another family or children with the mutual parent or family members. Foster parents may find that visits can be complicated logistically and emotionally. It's important to remember that staying connected is a continuum that could range from overnight stays during the holiday break or a phone call on the weekend. The child's case manager can help iron out the snags and work toward a beneficial solution.

Online Training on Sibling Connections

DCFS launched a new training prepared specifically for children and youth in foster care who have brothers and sisters who are also (or used to be) in foster care. The training provides information on the new law for sibling rights and the new policies and procedures.

In child-friendly terms, the course explains the importance of sibling relationships and the youth's right to be connected with their brothers and sisters. It also discusses the ways the adults involved in a child's life will support the connections between sisters and brothers.

The training takes about 10 to 15 minutes. It is available on demand on the DCFS Virtual Training Center at www.dcfstraining.org. It is included under the public content menu so children will not need to have a VTC account. They or their caregiver can simply select the course and begin watching. ♡

Search for Family Members with Midwest Adoption Center

Often a child who was adopted or the adopted parent decides to reconnect with a birth relative. A child may have a strong desire to contact siblings or other birth family members. The parent may want to build a relationship with additional family, need information for medical care or have to respond to questions the child is asking. In some situations, adoptive parents need information that was not found in the agency files.

If a child was adopted through DCFS, Midwest Adoption Center is under contract to provide search services. If the birth relative is located, MAC staff will attempt to facilitate any communication that is agreeable to both parties.

Using information found in the DCFS files and databases, MAC staff attempts to locate the sought after individual. MAC also has access to all important commercial database services that are instrumental in achieving a high rate of search success. When the person is located, MAC staff will attempt to establish whatever type of connection is comfortable for both parties. If the sought-after person is under 21 years of age, the outreach must be made to his adoptive or guardianship parent. Anonymous communication by letters through MAC is often the first step, allowing both the adoptive family member and the relative to make a more informed decision about how to proceed. If both the adoptive family and the 'found' birth relative choose to have direct contact, consents will be signed allowing MAC to release identifying information. Another option is to continue corresponding through MAC.

MAC also provides closed file information to adults who were adopted or to adoptive parents. Even adult individuals who were not adopted can request a copy of their file (redacted) and use search services. There are many potential benefits for the child and the parents when positive connections are made in a sensitive and thoughtful manner. Caregivers can learn more about these issues by using adoptive parent supportive networks and working with adoption professionals to make the best possible decisions for all members of the family.

MIDWEST ADOPTION CENTER

2720 S. River Rd., Ste. 50
Des Plaines, IL 60018

Toll-Free 1-800-526-9022
Phone 1-847-298-9096

info@macadopt.org
www.macadopt.org

DCFS Policy Updates

All DCFS policy guides, rules and procedures are available on the DCFS website at **www.dcfs.illinois.gov** in the *About Us* section.

Here is a list of recent policy changes that may affect foster families. For more information, link to the specific policy or contact the DCFS Office of Child and Family Policy at **cfpolicy@idcfs.state.il.us**

2015.18 - Mandatory School Attendance Exemptions, *October 1, 2015*
Requires documentation for any medical condition that would make school attendance not possible

2015.17 - Permanency Hearings and Goals, *October 1, 2015*
Provides instruction for involving youth age 14 and older in service plan development

2015.16 - Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard, *October 1, 2015*
Outlines federal "Reasonable and Prudent Parent" standard when determining a child's participation in activities

2015.15 - Illinois Foster Child and Youth Bill of Rights, *November 2, 2015*
Recognizes the many rights of children and youth in foster care as Public Act 99-344, Illinois Foster Child and Youth Bill of Rights

2015.14 - Consents for Ordinary Medical and Dental Care and Athletic Participation, *September 4, 2015. Substitute caregivers may consent for a child's participation in athletic activities*

2015.08 - Enhanced Firearm Safety in Foster Family Homes, *May 1, 2015*
Summarizes new licensing requirements requiring trigger locks and other safety practices for firearms in foster family homes

Joint Meeting of Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council and the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council

Each November the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council and the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council conduct their business meeting together. The two councils explored issues that overlap both the foster care and adoption aspects of the child welfare system.

DCFS Strategic Plan

The afternoon portion of the meeting was devoted to discussing the new direction of DCFS with key members of the administration. Jody Grutza, deputy director for the Division of Strategic Planning and Innovation provided insight into plans to reinvest in programs that are proven to work. She also discussed ways to get more foster families engaged at the local level by providing supports where they are needed.

Two DCFS alums who are now child welfare professionals are part of the strategic team. April Curtis and Jeremy Harvey both participated in the Statewide Youth Advisory Board while they were in care. Now they are helping to shape new plans that will impact youth and families. The Foster Care Advisory Council members will continue to work with DCFS as the new strategic plan comes together.

Director Sheldon

George Sheldon, acting DCFS director joined the council meeting to provide an update and answer questions. He reviewed the department's responses to the crisis in residential facilities and steps taken to reduce the inappropriate reliance on that type of intensive placement.

"If we can, in a strategic way, have fewer residential placements it's better for kids and it's a huge cost savings that we can roll back into the system," said Sheldon.

Acting Director Sheldon also invited council members and foster parents to make specific recommendations about areas of potential reform.

"We now have a team in place who can begin to be much more responsive. My message to folks is to have a sense of urgency and common sense," he said.

Members of both councils had many questions for Acting Director Sheldon on topics that included the budget and future services. He pledged to return for future meetings with updates on progress.

Charles Krause explained the new DCFS program to certify mental health providers.

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 NEXT MEETING
of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council will be on
January 15
in Normal at 9 am.

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

Jody Grutza, DCFS deputy director and Sarah Olson, chair of the foster care advisory council

Newest foster care council members: (left to rt.) Cheri Dreska, Gordon Hannon, Hope Carbonaro, Donna Gregory and Rachel Hoyt

Illinois Adoption Advisory Council to Share Common Issues

Clinical Practice Initiatives

The councils had an opportunity to learn about two important new programs from the Division of Clinical Practice from Jen Marett and Charles Krause of DCFS.

In keeping with the renewed focus on improving placement stability for youth and families, the department's System of Care (SOC) program will now be known as Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS). Along with the name change there are new policies that will widen the population of at-risk youth being served, beginning with any youth in care with two or more moves in the previous year. It is expected that this policy change will add over 1,600 youth to the population eligible for services, including nearly 700 adolescents who experience the greatest barriers to placement stability and permanence. Caseworkers can also make referrals at the request of foster parents.

IPS will also be adding the therapeutic service model TARGET, that is designed for children with trauma exposure and resulting symptoms that impact their emotional and behavioral functioning in many different settings. Children in care with cases that meet IPS criteria will be automatically selected for intervention.

The division is addressing the need for trauma-informed therapy on the provider side as well. DCFS is establishing methods to identity and credential the professionals who complete higher levels of training to better serve children in DCFS care.

Jen Marett presented the Intensive Placement Stabilization program.

Retiring chair James C. Jones receives a certificate of appreciation from Acting Director Sheldon.

Newest members of the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council: Laura Dillard, Tiffany DeRoaches, Kristie Kunstman-Stern , Michelle Price, Heather Feltman, Julie Yelerton and Karla Blake

Adoption Advisory Council member Carole Sheley created a cake to share at the meeting in honor of National Adoption Day

THE NEXT MEETING
of the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council will be on
Friday, February 5
at 10 am via teleconference.

For details, contact
DCFS Caregiver & Parent Support at
217-524-2422

ASAP Support When Adoptive Families Face Tough Issues

Families created through adoption or guardianship may experience problems that require intensive services to help them gain stability and to reduce the risk of out-of-home placement. The adoption preservation agencies recently announced a change to their name. The adoption preservation agencies' programs will now be referred to as Adoption Support and Preservation (ASAP). This name change emphasizes the department's commitment to adoption preservation and ensuring responsiveness.

. . . preservation services . . . serve the whole family to keep the family together

The Adoption Support and Preservation Program recognizes that families built through adoption or guardianship may have characteristics significantly different from those created through birth. This can result in unique challenges for the family. The Adoption and Guardianship Preservation Program helps families who often feel they are at the end of their rope, by offering family-centered support and services. Testimonials from families who have used preservation services reveal that these services worked, while other traditional, less intensive services they had tried did not. DCFS contracts with agencies statewide to provide adoption and guardianship preservation services.

The goals of all preservation programs are to help parents:

- Feel better about their ability to parent
- Understand adoption and guardianship and its impact on children
- Connect current behavior to past history
- Understand the child's past losses
- Gain skills to help their child

The key to preservation services is that they serve the whole family to keep the family together. The preservation specialists work with all members of the family, not just the child, to identify ways they can work together as a unit. The adoption and guardianship preservation service agencies understand the rhythms of the special families they serve and are able to respond to crisis situations.

Preservation services are provided to adoptive and guardianship families by nine private child welfare agencies that serve specific geographic areas. Families that find they need intensive intervention to keep their family together can call the Adoption Support line to be connected to the ASAP provider in their locale. Families are encouraged to reach out to the unit for support and assistance prior to things becoming too stressful and overwhelming. To find an adoption preservation and support agency near you, please contact the adoption unit at 866-538-8892 or 312-808-5250.

Each ASAP Agency Can Provide Services to Help Meet the Following Needs

Comprehensive Assessment/Crisis Intervention
Preservation staff will respond by phone within 24 hours and make an in-home visit within three days. A therapist will help a family identify their own strengths, complete an assessment and develop a family treatment plan within 30 days of the referral to the program.

Clinical services
The therapist will provide the clinical services in the family treatment plan.

Support groups
Support groups are offered for both parents and youth at times and locations that meet the family's needs.

Case management/Advocacy services
The preservation agency will manage the case and the services as outlined in the family treatment plan.

Children's mental health advocacy services
If a child has significant mental health needs, the program will provide or facilitate the services.

Cash assistance
If a family participating in the program experiences economic hardships or require specialized services that cannot be obtained through other resources, a cash assistance payment (limited to $500 per family per fiscal year) may be provided.

HPV Vaccine Protects Boys and Girls from Common Cancers and Sexual Infections

As youth get physicals for camp and school, doctors are recommending the HPV vaccine to protect against the cancers and other diseases caused by variations of the human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI), affecting 50 percent of sexually active men and women at some point in their lives. This is a vaccination that doctors recommend all girls and boys receive at age 11 or 12. While adults might think that is too soon to think about an STI, that is one reason why it's recommended. It is optimal to vaccinate against HPV before any sexual activity occurs. The shots can also be given up to age 26.

HPV is an infection that someone can carry without showing symptoms. It can be passed through sexual contact. HPV causes genital warts and most cervical cancer cases. It is also related to cancers of the vulva, penis, throat and anus. There is no cure for HPV after a person is infected.

The HPV vaccine is proven to guard against the most prevalent and serious strains of the disease, essentially preventing cervical cancer and genital warts. There is no evidence that getting the HVP vaccine or discussing it will promote sexual activity. It is given in three shots, spread over six months. The shot is covered by the medical card and physicians can give it as routine treatment.

The Office of Health Services has been checking that children in care are up-to-date with the required and recommended shots. Questions about HPV can be directed to the Office of Health Services at 217-557-2689. The Centers for Disease Control also has information at www.cdc.gov/hpv/vaccine.html.

Fresh Start Corrective Surgeries

Fresh Start
Surgical Gifts

The DCFS Office of the Guardian has entered into a partnership with Fresh Start, a California-based nonprofit that provides free reconstructive surgery and related healthcare services to infants, children and teens with physical deformities caused by birth defects, accidents, abuse or disease.

Fresh Start has expanded into Chicago by partnering with the University of Chicago Medical Center's Comer Children's Hospital. Earlier this year, a young man in DCFS care was part of the surgery weekend in Chicago. His ear had been severely deformed in an altercation. Now, his future is brighter without the detraction of his injured ear.

Fresh Start sponsors surgery weekends three times each year for multiple children. There is room to assist more children in what may be life changing surgeries that could be impossible to obtain without Fresh Start.

Children do not have to live in Chicago to be eligible for the program. If you would like to refer a child to Fresh Start or have questions about the application process, including completing the application, go to freshstart.org or ask your caseworker for more details.

GET DIGITAL DELIVERY

Many caregivers have decided to skip the paper and request electronic versions of the newsletter, *Illinois Families Now and Forever®*.

When you move to the online version, you still receive all the same valuable information with more benefits. It comes faster, is easier to file, saves money and protects the environment.

To make the switch, send an email to vanessa.james@illinois.gov (there is a dot before "james") Be sure to include your name and mailing address. We will stop the hard copies and send you an email each time a new issue is ready to read online.

Cook County Advocate

News for Chicago Metro Area Families

2015 • Vol. 6

Foster Care Alums Celebrate Thanksgiving Together

Thanksgiving came early for young people who had once been part of the child welfare system in Cook County. The Foster Care Alumni of America, Illinois Chapter, held its fifth annual holiday dinner on Saturday, November 21. The dinner originated in one living room for youth who would otherwise go without a traditional family celebration on Thanksgiving. This year, the celebration extended to more than 100 older teens and young adults, plus 30 volunteers.

(left to right) Jeremy Harvey, First Lady Diana Rauner, April Curtis, James McIntyre and acting director George Sheldon

The event was held at UCAN, a residential facility for youth under DCFS care on Chicago's West Side, with room for tables, a buffet and entertainment. Jewel provided turkey and ham with traditional side dishes. Illinois Institute of Art chefs prepared and donated trays of macaroni and cheese, greens, handmade rolls, desserts and condiments. Many individuals also contributed their specialties to add a true "home-style" feel to the spread.

All afternoon youth could eat, catch up and listen to music at a gathering designed under the banner of "It Begins With Us: Giving Youth a Place to Go for Thanksgiving."

DCFS Director George Sheldon also extended an invitation to other cabinet heads so they could witness the positive impact of encouraging young people after they leave the child welfare system. Public sector volunteers included: First Lady Diana Rauner, Supreme Court Justice Anne Burke, Public Guardian Robert Harris and the heads of the Illinois departments of Public Health, Human Services and Healthcare and Family Services.

Young adults who were in DCFS care came together for a holiday meal.

Mark Your Calendar

The Cook County regional foster care advisory councils are open to all DCFS and private agency caregivers. Stay informed about new policies and build relationships with other caregivers.

Cook North Council meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 10 a.m. in the DCFS office at 1911 S. Indiana in Chicago.

Cook Central Council meets the fourth Tuesday of the month 9:30 a.m. at the DCFS at 1701 First Ave. in Maywood.

Cook South Council meets at the 6201 S. Emerald office in Chicago on the third Tuesday of the month at 10 a.m.

South Suburban Support Group meets the fourth Thursday of odd numbered months at 9 a.m. to noon, at 15115 Dixie Highway, Harvey.

Holiday Cheer Across Cook

Foster parent Vaniscia Easter-Adams

Acting Director Sheldon

DCFS Foster Care Holiday Party

The families served by the DCFS foster care program in the three Cook County regions celebrated the spirit of giving at the annual holiday party on December 12. Hundreds of children and their foster families gathered at the Kroc Center Chicago. DCFS arranged buses to leave from local offices to reach the south side venue. This allowed families across the Cook County region to take part in the festivities that included food, games, songs and gifts.

The holiday party is the culmination of many months of planning and countless hours of volunteered time. This year the Walter and Connie Payton Foundation spearheaded the party that was coordinated by the DCFS Office of Communications and the local offices. Caseworkers and the foster parent support specialists gathered wish lists from children. Volunteers matched Christmas wish lists to donations, unloaded trucks and triple checked to make sure every thing and every one was accounted for.

When the party day finally arrived Santa and Acting Director Sheldon were on hand to greet children and pass along the presents. It takes a battalion of elves to make everything work during the event. Blue Cross/Blue Shield had employees volunteer their day to lead games, serve pizza and hand out health information. The long list of individual donors and organizations included: Crain's Chicago Business, First Communications, Harlem-Irving Plaza, Illinois Housing Development Authority, Lake Shore Unitarian Society, Northwestern Memorial Healthcare, Orthodox Churches, South Side Church, St. John's Lutheran Church, United Airlines and Yaskawa America.

Cook North Holiday Party

Foster families served by the Deerfield and Waukegan offices also had a special celebration. An additional party was sponsored for families in the northern portion of the region thanks to the Baxter Corporation.

Holiday Fun at Emergency Centers

Holiday cheer also made its way to children who are not yet with foster families. The Homeland Security Unit in Illinois sponsored two parties for youth staying at the Emergency Resource Centers. Older youth enjoyed an outing at Dave & Busters game center. Younger children had fun with refreshments and gifts brought to them. ♡

Santa arriving to the delight of the children.

NEW Cook County Regional Administrator

Jacqui Colyer is the new DCFS Regional Administrator for Cook County. Colyer came from Miami Florida with more than 25 years of administrative experience in child welfare, housing and workforce development. She is also personally experienced in foster care, having adopted a teen who was involved in the juvenile justice and foster care systems of Florida.

Colyer welcomes foster parents to reach out to her with ideas and concerns. She is based in the DCFS office at 1911 S. Indiana in Chicago. ♡

National Adoption Day

The judicial staff, adoption attorneys and DCFS coordinated a celebration at the Daley Center. Each child received a teddy bear, gift bag, books and cake. ♡

Cook County 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 and print your training transcript
- Register and take on-line courses

DIGITAL TRAINING NOW AVAILABLE

DCFS Training has made many PRIDE materials available online at:

www.dcfstraining.org

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 Illinois Center for Adoption & Permanency (ICAP) can answer your questions and connect you with a licensing agency. The toll-free number is 800-572-2390. ICAP 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 if your check comes from DCFS. 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 or 312-808-5250 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 need to seek expense reimbursement for property damage or bodily harm caused by a child in foster care? Let your caseworker know you intend to submit a claim to the Foster Child Damage Reimbursement Program. Refer to DCFS form CFS851 or contact the office at 312-814-7294.

...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 that serves your area. Call the Adoption Support Line at 866-538-8892 or 312-808-5250.

...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? Email vanessa.james@illinois.gov at the DCFS Office of Communications.

A Family for Me: Call 1-800-572-2390 for more information

William, 14, is a friendly, polite child who is eager to learn about the world around him. He enjoys spending time outdoors, and likes new experiences. He also has a special talent for building things. William is generally well behaved, both at home and in school. He sometimes struggles to express himself, but he is still able to form meaningful attachments with adults and peers alike.

William's foster parent says he is a sweet boy. His teacher says he has many interests, and is eager to talk about his goals for the future.

The right family for William would be able to make sure he has opportunities to play, build, learn, and explore his many interests. You can also encourage him as he learns to identify and articulate his feelings. William says he would like to join an "outdoors family who takes me lots of places." [7971]

Kyla is excited to be 11! She learns well, both inside and outside of school. She is able to solve problems, and will ask for help when needed. She is very creative, and enjoys art activities and playing with baby dolls. She is also a kind person who cares for people and animals alike. When Kyla is content, she is polite and enjoys spending time with others. When she is stressed, she can display small tantrums and will run to her room to take a break. She has good insight and recognizes that there are areas where she needs to make improvements. School is a positive setting for Kyla, and she typically does well there.

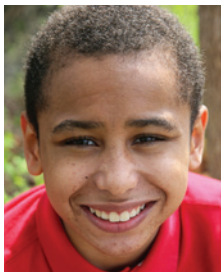
Her teacher says, "Kyla is doing great so far! She's polite, follows directions, plays well with others, and completes her work."

Kyla's forever family would need to work closely with professionals who could help them understand, and meet, her emotional needs. The family would also need to be consistent with rules and expectations. Kyla would prefer a two-parent family with no other children in the home. If this is not possible, then other children in the home should be older than Kyla. [8306]

Joyanna, 11, loves spending time with people. Whether she's singing, dancing, or playing with her siblings, Joyanna likes to be in the middle of the action. Her enthusiasm extends to school as well, where she does well academically and regularly volunteers to answer questions in class. During her quieter moments, she enjoys playing cards (especially Uno) and video games (especially Wii Sports).

Joyanna's worker says she is a caring child who enjoys helping others, and goes out of her way to assist younger children.

Potential parents for Joyanna should be willing to remain patient as she adjusts to her new, permanent family. You can also help her maintain relationships with her siblings, including regular visits. Joyanna would like to join a family that is "nice" and "likes to have fun." Other children in the home should be older than Joyanna. [7743]



Darius, 15, can be shy and reserved at first, but he is still able to form attachments with others. He is a fan of sports, and enjoys watching football and playing basketball with his friends. He also enjoys playing video games and listening to music. Darius has trouble concentrating at times, and also needs to be reminded to clean up after himself, but he is generally cooperative, both at home and in school.

The staff members at Darius' school say he is well behaved. His worker says he is usually quiet and well mannered.

Darius says he wants to live in a stable home. The right parents for Darius would be able to assure him that he is a permanent part of your family. You can be patient with him as he adjusts to your home. You can also work with professionals who can help him understand his emotions and develop appropriate coping techniques. Other children in the home should be older than Darius. [7975] ♡

ILLINOIS CENTER FOR ADOPTION & PERMANENCY

Please call the Illinois Center for Adoption & Permanency at 1-800-572-2390, or visit the iCAP website at www.illinoiscap.org if you are interested in adopting one of these children or learning about other children who are waiting to be adopted.

Illinois Families Now & Forever®

Bruce Rauner, Governor

Published by

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Editor: Vanessa James
Phone: 312-814-6800
Fax: 312-814-4131
E-mail: vanessa.james@illinois.gov

Regional Reporters

Central: Julie Cebulski
Northern: Norm Suire
Southern: Claudia Dancy-Davis
Cook North: Edith Cruz & Desiree Benbenek
Cook South: Angela Barber
Cook Central: Alice Couch

Production

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Illinois Families Now and Forever
Vanessa James, Editor
Department of Children & Family Services
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Inside this issue:

Page 1 Home for the Holidays Secures More than 300 Homes
Page 2 Message from the DCFS Director
Keeping Brothers and Sisters Connected
Page 3 Searching for Family Members with MAC
DCFS Policy Updates
Page 4-5 Joint Meeting of the Foster Care and Adoption Council
Page 6 ASAP Support when Adoptive Families Face Tough Issues
Page 7 HPV Vaccine Protects Boys and Girls
Page 8-10 *"Cook County Advocate"* regional news
Page 11 *"Family for Me"* profiles of waiting children

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