

# Illinois Families Now and Forever.®

Families by DCFS Foster Care, Adoption & Guardianship



Bobbie Gregg,  
Acting Director

## From the DCFS Director

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

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

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

## DCFS marks 50th Anniversary

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



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

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

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

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

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

### **Foster parents to see 4% increase in August checks**

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

# Statewide Foster Care Council honors Implementation Plans

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

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

This year, of the 56 plans submitted and scored, none were graded as unacceptable and several stood out. When members discover an exceptional plan, they can go beyond the score to nominate it for special recognition in one of three categories:

- **Dignity and Respect**
- **Organization/User Friendliness**
- **Foster Parent Involvement**

This year the council voted to recognize Envision and Lakeside Community Committee for “Organization/User Friendliness” because of the way they presented the agencies’ accomplishments. Webster Cantrell Hall’s plan was honored for the plan’s focus on treating foster caregivers with Dignity and Respect.

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

## ENVISION: Organization Award

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

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



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

## LAKESIDE COMMUNITY COMMITTEE: Organization Award

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

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



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

## WEBSTER-CANTRELL HALL: Dignity and Respect Award

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

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



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

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

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

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

- Be sure to sign the Application for free or reduced price school meals (commonly referred to as the free lunch form). Students who have an open DCFS case will automatically qualify for free meals.

However, once a child moves to adoption, his or her case is closed; there is no longer an automatic

qualification. Even if the family doesn't qualify, adoptive parents can write "decline to apply," sign and return the form to the school.

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

## Chicago Public Schools eases suspension/expulsion policies

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

The new conduct code includes these changes:

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

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



## Foster Care

When school gets underway, stacks of papers will come home stuffed in book bags waiting for an adult's signature. For children in DCFS foster care, there are guidelines about what a caregiver can sign.

Foster parents are authorized and encouraged to sign consents for general school-related activities, including but not limited to:

- Field trips within Illinois
- Routine special events (picnics, school parties, etc.)

## Know what to sign when the school forms come home

- School enrollment
- Attending sporting events
- Extra-curricular activities (excluding sports)
- Cultural events
- Case study evaluations
- Individualized Education Plan
- Three-year re-evaluations of special education services

While children are in foster care, caregivers are not authorized to sign consent for the following activities. Instead, they must contact

the caseworker when consent is needed for:

- Athletic participation
- Media coverage/events
- Slide show productions
- Voice reproductions
- Research projects
- Field trips outside of Illinois
- Liability releases
- Medical exams or care

If there is ever a question about what consent a caregiver can provide, first ask the child's caseworker.



## Illinois Adoption Advisory Council update

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

### New courses for caregivers

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

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

### Adoption Day Celebration

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



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

### Membership update

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

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

### Adoption procedures

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

## NEW TOLL-FREE PHONE NUMBER FOR ADOPTION SUPPORT LINE

**866-538-8892 or  
312-808-5250**

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

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

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

### THE NEXT MEETING

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

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

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

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

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

## Swimming pools

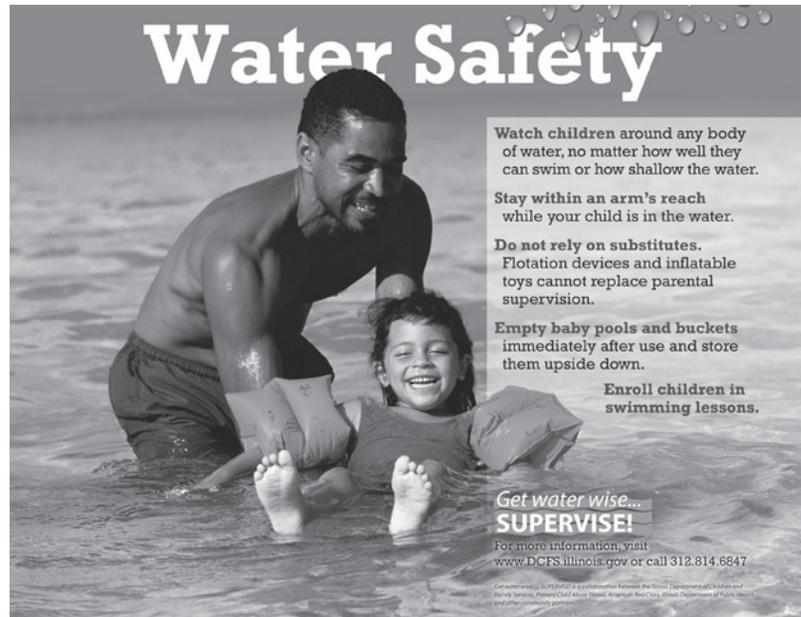
- Keep ladders, patio furniture and toys away from above-ground pools. Toddlers are better climbers than one might think.
- Fence in the pool and lock the gate. Pool covers and alarms provide added protection.
- Young children should wear or use personal flotation devices, but they do not replace the need for diligent adult supervision.
- Remind babysitters and other caretakers not to leave children unattended near or in water.
- Appoint an adult who can swim to watch kids during pool parties.
- Learn CPR and keep rescue equipment, a phone and emergency numbers near all pools.

## Bathtubs

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

## Baby pools

- Don't be lulled into a false sense of security because of the shallowness of baby pools. Children should always be supervised when in a baby pool.



- Empty the pool immediately after use and store it upside-down.

## Bathtubs

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

## Buckets

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

## Toilets

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

## Ponds, fountains and retention pools

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

# Plan now to meet school health exam requirements



The state of Illinois requires school children to have a current physical (within the past year) and to be current with immunizations when they are:

- entering an Illinois school for the first time at any age
- starting kindergarten
- entering the sixth grade
- entering the ninth grade

A lead screening is required for young children entering daycare, preschool and kindergarten.

## Email alerts for health issues

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

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

Children entering kindergarten or first grade also must be immunized against chicken pox/varicella. In areas of high incidences of tuberculosis (TB) a TB skin test is required as part of the physical exam. Talk with the child's doctor to see what is required.

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

Give a completed "Certificate of Child Health Examination" form, signed by the physician, to the school nurse and the child's caseworker, and keep a copy for the home record. According to state law, children who do not have a current physical or shots by October 15 will not be allowed to continue attending school until they have received the care and their record is updated.

## Eye Examinations

Along with a physical, all students entering kindergarten (or starting an Illinois school for the first time) must also have an eye exam performed by a licensed optometrist or a medical doctor who performs eye examinations. This required examination is beyond the screenings that are often part of a regular physical or are sometimes provided at the school. The doctor must sign the Eye Exam Report that caregivers will submit to the school. The form should be turned in to the school by October 15. Students without this exam will not be excluded from school, but report cards could be withheld. Youth in DCFS care can use the state-provided medical card as payment for the eye exam. To locate a provider, call the Medicaid Health Benefits Hotline at 800-226-0768.

## Dental Requirements

Additionally, state law requires that Illinois children in Kindergarten, second and sixth grades have dental examinations by a licensed dentist. This includes all students attending public, private or parochial schools. Caregivers must present proof of examination before May 15 of the current school year. If not, the school may hold second and sixth grade report cards until receiving proof that the exam took place or will happen within 60 days of May 15. Call the DCFS Office of Health Policy at 217-557-2689 with questions.



## Weathers family builds bond through communication



*The Weathers family appreciates the cultural diversity that comes through foster care.*

Upon discovering that they were unable to have children, Derrick Weathers suggested to his new wife, Stephenal, that they explore foster care. They had a large, old empty house that both had envisioned full with children. Since they made the decision to become foster parents 14 years ago, their house has remained full. They have made a home for more than 30 children of different races and cultures. Today, their immediate family consists of a 12-year-old son and an 11-year-old daughter by adoption, along with two children who are in foster care.

Being able to make a difference in the lives of wounded children has been a fulfilling experience for the Weathers. One of Derrick's deepest satisfactions

from fostering is maintaining friendships with children who used to be in foster care. Some still return to their home and sometimes share about the wisdom the Weathers instilled in them. Another highlight is being able to witness the educational progress many of the children make. Several have become honor students. The Weathers also enjoy sharing the basic life lessons. Derrick has helped the boys practice carpentry. The children also learn to cook in the kitchen and on the grill. They learn to do their fair share

of household chores and how to manage their allowances. The children especially love the backyard pond and caring for the fish in the six aquariums.

This deep level of mutual respect is built on two parenting pillars. Patience and trust are two character qualities Stephenal and Derrick believe it takes to be a good foster parent.

"It is imperative that one leaves a child with enough space to process their pains in their own way, in their own rhythm. Leave room for error, as many are accustomed to not obeying rules," said Stephenal.

They learned through experience that by not rushing the trust-building stage of the relationship, the children would eventually

open up at their own pace and share all sorts of things. Gradually, nearly all of their foster children gravitated to addressing them as "dad" and "mom," even when the Weathers wanted to reserve that for their parents.

Derrick said it is especially fulfilling to be a father and to have someone who needs him to fill that role. For both, foster care has made them more of a complete family. Their adult friends enjoy seeing the camaraderie among their multi-ethnic clan, experiencing a true family.

*"It is imperative that one leaves a child with enough space to process their pains in their own way ..."*

The family ties don't come easily; they require effort and attention. Because family time is so important, they hold family meetings on a regular basis, where all participate and each person has a turn to express his or her opinion. Derrick and Stephenal also carve out alone time as a couple that they regard as near sacred. That may merely consist of spending time in a separate room watching a movie. In addition to letting them recharge, they say sometimes they feel like two generals strategizing their next moves.

## Northern Region foster parent groups give caregivers a voice

### Regional Foster Care Advisory Council

The Northern Region Foster Parents Advisory Council is designed to serve as a conduit for the exchange of information and a platform to foster changes in practice and policy.

The May meeting topic was the importance of self-care and featured a presentation on relaxation techniques for foster parents. Caregivers enjoyed a light dinner together before the discussion. Marvin Koenig and Alicia Holley are the co-chairs of the Northern Region's council. The council decided to have two chairs, representing DCFS-supervised homes and homes licensed through private agency partners.

The council meets the first Thursday of the month at 6 p.m. at the DCFS Aurora office, located at 8 E. Galena, on the 3rd floor.

### New support group for northern Kane

The Northern Kane County Foster Parent Support Group had its inaugural meeting in May.

The first meeting featured Kristie Sams from Its Out Little Secret, a volunteer organization devoted to improving the lives of foster children. She spoke about several of the agency's programs: You Can Be A Hero

Program, Money Matters 101, Psycho-Educational Support Group for Adult Survivors, Project Willow Tree, and Project CAKE. These programs help fill gaps of foster care programs and ease foster parents' burden.

For more information on the support group, contact Diana Waden at dianawaden@yahoo.com

The support group meets 1st Thursday of the month from 6:15 to 8:15 p.m. at the Highland Oaks Nursing Home in Elgin (*near the corner of Randall Road & Highland Avenue*)

### New support group for DuPage foster families

Foster families in DuPage County can join a new support group. This is a support group for foster, adoptive, and Safe Family parents. A meal is provided for adults only. Childcare is provided for children under the age of 13. Contact: Jenn Ranter, 331-442-7313 or jennr@YSBIV.org.

The group meets at the Church of the Resurrection, 935 Union Street, Wheaton, IL 60187

**3rd Thursday of the month, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.**

**4th Friday of the month, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.**

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## Northern Region celebrates youth moving toward adulthood



DCFS Northern Region Youth Summit's "You Only Live Once" event was held on Friday, June 20th at the Kishwaukee Community College, Malta, IL, (near NIU) from 9:00 to

3:30 p.m. The summer event included workshops on safe relationships, transitional living, housing concerns, and money management. To keep the energy level up, there were also gift giveaways and live entertainment.

At lunch, DCFS celebrated all those who graduated from high school, college or a vocational program and those who earned the GED, or associate's degree. A raffle with prizes was also held.

### Join Youth Advisory Board

The Northern Region Youth Advisory Board hosts monthly meetings that promote youth empowerment and information exchange.

Youth between age 14 and 21 learn to work collaboratively and advocate for others. Those young people who are elected to leadership positions will then represent the Northern Region on the Statewide Youth Advisory Board.

Caregivers should encourage youth in their care to get involved with the advisory board. Accommodations for transportation to meetings are available. Contact Brianna Pitassi 773-696-1014.

## Foster families honored for effort during appreciation month

The Month of May brought many ways to celebrate Foster Parent Appreciation Month. Some offices took advantage of the June weather so staff could make sure that foster families could carve out a little time to relax. They added special touches to show that caregivers' contributions would not go unrecognized. Here's a sampling of appreciation events in Northern Region.

### Northern Kane County

On Friday, June 26, the Northern Kane County Foster Family Appreciation Picnic was held at Primrose Farm in St. Charles. Families had fun in the outdoor setting with food and activities planned by the DCFS staff.

### Southern Kane County

On Tuesday, June 24, foster families from the southern portion of Kane County Family attended an Appreciation Picnic. This annual event was held at Phillips Park Zoo in Aurora. Foster Parents and their children had an opportunity to have fun and spend time with the DCFS staff in a relaxing setting.

### DuPage County

On Wednesday, June 18, the families served by the DCFS offices in DuPage County came together for a picnic in Northside Park, located in Wheaton.

Approximately 50 people enjoyed the meal that the volunteer staff coordinated. The children had fun outside and played games with prizes.



### Will County

The staff that works with foster families out of the Kankakee office hosted a Foster Parent Appreciation Tea Party on May 5 at the Quality Inn & Suites in Bradley. The foster parents received potted plants to take home to plant with their children.

## Education Advisors work through school concerns

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

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

help caregivers obtain appropriate educational services. They also help caregivers plan for education after high school.

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

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

### Advisor: Rhonda Best

200 South Wyman St., Suite 201  
Rockford, IL 61101

Phone: 815-967-3750

[rhonda.best@illinois.gov](mailto:rhonda.best@illinois.gov)

Counties covered: Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, Jo Daviess, Kane, Kankakee, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside and Winnebago

### Advisor: Robena Morgan

1619 W. Jefferson St.

Joliet, IL 60435

Phone/Fax: 815-730-4342

[robena.morgan@illinois.gov](mailto:robena.morgan@illinois.gov)

Counties covered: DuPage, DeKalb, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, and Will

## Northern 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](http://www.DCFstraining.org). Click on any of the links under Training Schedule to access course descriptions, in-service training and Educational Advocacy Training. Or call the DCFS Registration Line at 877-800-3393 during business hours.

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

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

### DIGITAL TRAINING MATERIALS AVAILABLE



DCFS has made many PRIDE materials easily available on the home page of the Virtual Training Center at [www.DCFstraining.org](http://www.DCFstraining.org).

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

## Who do you call when...?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**...You need to find a phone number for a caseworker?** Call the main switchboard in Chicago at 312-814-6800 or the State Operator at 312-793-3500.

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

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

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

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



### Zeyvion

Zeyvion, 11, is a curious young man who loves to ask questions. He enjoys spending time with adults and learning from their experiences. He also enjoys cutting and styling hair, and hopes

to be a barber when he grows up. In his spare time, Zeyvion nurtures his creative side by singing, listening to music, and performing in school plays. He can become anxious at times, but he can also be loving and engaging when he is comfortable with his surroundings.

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

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



Tarasha



Jacob



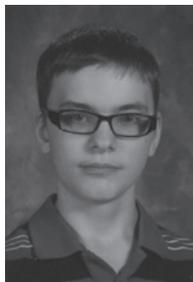
Janee

### Tarasha, Jacob and Janee

These siblings are ready to join a loving, permanent family. The oldest,

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

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



### Kevin

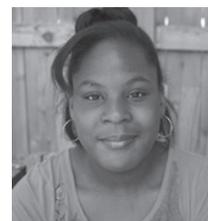
If there's a professional wrestling show on TV, Kevin will want to sit down and watch. If there's a professional wrestling aisle at the store, Kevin will want to spend

a lot of time browsing. This 13 year old has decorated his room with dozens of WWE posters, magazines, and action figures. Kevin is developmentally delayed, and while he sometimes struggles to remain on task, he is generally friendly, capable, and independent. He maintains regular contact with his birth mother and older sister, a practice that should continue as he transitions to a new family.

Kevin's teachers say he has made significant strides over the past two years in terms of his focus, his behavior,

his social skills, and his ability to work independently.

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



### Mierra

Mierra, 14, is a social child who likes to engage others in her favorite activities. She is hard-working and intelligent, and is

eager to share what she has learned in school. Mierra is an especially talented writer, as evidenced by her participation in an extracurricular literary journal program. She also enjoys reading books, telling jokes, and hanging out with her friends.

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

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



Please call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois at 1-800-572-2390, or see the AICI website – [www.adoptinfo-il.org](http://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®

Pat Quinn, Governor

Bobbie Gregg,  
DCFS Acting Director

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Professional Development, Parent  
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Editor: Vanessa James

Phone: 312-814-1307

Fax: 312-814-4131

vanessa.james@illinois.gov

Sponsor: Cathy Smith, DCFS  
Central Regional Administrator

### Regional Reporter

Julie Cebulski  
Urbana Field Office  
508 S. Race St.  
Urbana IL 61801  
217-278-5400  
Fax: 217-621-5421  
julie.cebulski@illinois.gov

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currently or formerly in DCFS care.  
To bring them the best information  
from the most knowledgeable  
sources. To promote statewide  
teamwork in finding permanency  
for children.

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Vanessa James, Editor  
Department of Children & Family Services  
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