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For Immediate Release

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## Illinois DCFS enhances procedures to promote the safety, adjustment and well-being of LGBTQ youth in care

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – On May 6, 2017, Illinois DCFS Director George Sheldon signed enhanced department procedures to be followed when providing services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) children and youth in the department's care.

The procedure includes increased mandatory LGBTQ training for anyone involved with LGBTQ children and youth in care; and clarifies protections for transgender/gender expansive youth in care.

"The youth in our care have the legal right to be free from verbal, emotional and physical harassment in their placements, schools and communities; and the adults involved in their care have a legal and ethical obligation to ensure that they are safe and protected," said Sheldon. "LGBTQ youth have the right to be treated equally, to express their gender identity and to have the choice to be open or private about their sexual orientation, gender expression and gender identity. They need to feel free to be who they are."

The signing took place during EqualityCon 2017, a daylong event organized by Equality Illinois that brought together the state's LGBTQ community and allies, progressive advocates, civic leaders and community groups to train and share insights on how to make Illinois and the nation more just and equal.

In 2003 Illinois DCFS became the first child welfare agency in the nation to develop an LGBTQ youth service policy. Visit the [DCFS website](http://www.DCFS.illinois.gov) for information about the rights of all youth in care.



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