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Illinois Dept. of Children and Family Services PSA Focuses on New Fictive Kin Law

SPRINGFIELD, Ill – The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services today released a service announcement to educate the public on a new law that expands the definition of family to include others who are important family figures in a child’s life. This relationship is known as fictive kin.

“This law is a crucial step in keeping children who are involved in our system connected with safe, stable, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime,” said George H. Sheldon, Acting Director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. “Illinois believes that keeping children and families connected is an essential part of successful permanency achievement, and this law helps us accomplish that.”

The law, PA 98-846, became effective on June 1, 2015, and expands the definition of fictive kin to include any individual, unrelated by birth or marriage, such as a stepfather, stepmother or stepsister, who is shown to have close personal or emotional ties with the child or the child’s family prior to the child’s placement with the individual. The relative definition also includes a partner, or adult child of a partner that is in a civil union with the child’s mother or father.

This change allows for increased placement opportunities for children and youth with an emphasis on lifelong connections and relationships for children and families. It works to keep children in their communities and remain connected to those who will have a significant impact on their wellbeing.

To be considered fictive kin for placement purposes, individuals must be 21 years old or older and have a close emotional tie with the child or the child’s family prior to the child’s placement with the person; or is part of the family support system.

To listen or download the public service announcement:
<http://www.illinois.gov/cms/agency/media/radio/SitePages/PSA.aspx>

To see full summary of the expanded definition, [click here](#).

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DCFS receives, investigates and acts upon a report of child abuse or neglect every five minutes. Tens of thousands of children are safer thanks to those who call our Child Abuse hotline, 1-800-25-ABUSE (252-2873) each year. Working together, we can ensure a safe, loving home and brighter future for every child.

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