



# Illinois Families Now & Forever®

*Families by DCFS Foster Care, Adoption & Guardianship*



## Message from the DCFS acting director

May is a special month where we make a point of showing our deep appreciation for all you do and recognize the profound impact you have on the children and youth you open your home to. Thank you for giving love and attention to a child that needs you. Thank you for being a foster parent.

You made a choice to share your home and your family with a child when they need it most. It won't always be easy being a foster parent. Like any parents, you encounter situations and challenges that can be overwhelming. But you are never in this alone. Here at DCFS, you have countless people on your side who are excited to support you.

I am thrilled to be a part of this journey with you in my new role as acting director of DCFS. I am grateful for the extraordinary opportunity to lead a department with a rich history and a mission close to my heart. I am moved by the commitment of people in the community, people like you, who are inspired to help us protect and care for children.

I look forward to working with you and learning how DCFS can be a support to you as a foster parent. If there are things we could do better, I want to hear from you. If we are doing something well, please let us know. As we strive to fulfill our mission at DCFS, we know we can't do it without you.

On behalf of everyone at DCFS and on behalf of the thousands of children who have a brighter future because of you, thank you!

**Marc D. Smith**  
Acting Director

## May is Foster Parent Appreciation Month



*Governor Pritzker's official proclamation  
setting May as Foster Parent Appreciation Month*

**DISCOUNTED TICKETS! – SEE PG 5**



## Travel rules and tips for the summer

By Stephanie Tesreau,  
Director of Communications  
and Marketing,  
Hoyleton Youth & Family Services

It's that time of year where you may be getting tired of the cold weather, so you decide to plan your family summer vacation. Before you start packing your family's shorts and swimsuits, make yourself aware of the traveling guidelines provided by DCFS when taking your foster child(ren).

According to Policy Guide 2017.07. Appendix A, if you and the child travel in-state or out-of-state for more than 48 hours, you must first notify the permanency worker/case manager of your travel plans; and also provide the said



permanency worker/case manager with the youth's location and contact information.

If the child will be traveling out of state for more than 30 days, then you will need consent from DCFS guardian or an authorized agent from the consent unit. The same

procedure is required for out-of-country travel affairs.

Going on vacation is fun and exciting – but be sure to take the proper steps required by DCFS and Illinois state law to travel with your foster child(ren). ♥

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## Quit smoking – better health for you and your children



*Courtesy of the CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics websites*

### **Smoking hurts the smoker as well as their loved ones**

- On average, smokers die 10 years earlier than nonsmokers.
- Cigarette smoking is responsible for more than 480,000 deaths per year in the United States, including more than 41,000 deaths resulting from secondhand smoke exposure. This is about one in five deaths annually, or 1,300 deaths every day.
- Secondhand smoke causes stroke, lung cancer and coronary heart disease in adults.
- Babies who breathe secondhand smoke are more likely to die unexpectedly from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), also called crib death.
- Babies and children who breathe secondhand smoke are sick more often with bronchitis, pneumonia and ear infections.
- For children with asthma, breathing secondhand smoke can trigger an attack. The attack can be severe enough to send a child to the hospital. Sometimes an asthma attack is so severe that a child dies.
- Children can't hide from secondhand smoke at home. Here's why:
  1. Smoking in another room like a bathroom or bedroom pollutes all the air in your home. In an apartment, smoke in one room can go through the whole building.
  2. Smoking outside in a hall or stairwell does not protect children inside. Smoke goes under doors, windows and through cracks.
- To protect the children inside, homes and apartment buildings must be smoke-free.
- Opening a window or using a fan does not protect children.
- Air purifiers and air fresheners do not remove smoke's poisons.
- Smoke from one cigarette can stay in a room for hours. Don't smoke at home, even when children aren't there.

*(Cont'd pg 3)*

## Quit smoking (Cont'd)

### Start your quitting journey today!

- Call a quit hotline: **1.800.QUIT NOW** (1-800-784-8669)



- Download the quitSTART app - a free smartphone app that helps you quit smoking with tailored tips, inspiration and challenges.

- Sign up for free texts - Free 24/7 quit help texted to your phone! Text START to 47848, answer a few questions and you'll start receiving messages.
- Make a quit plan - One of the keys to a successful quit is preparation. A great way to prepare to quit smoking is to create a quit plan.
- Find social support - Social support can help you beat nicotine addiction and live a smoke-free life. Search for SmokefreeUs and Smokefree Women on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest to find motivation and support from others who are on the journey to becoming smoke-free.

- Manage your cravings - When a craving is triggered, it's important to have a plan to beat that urge to smoke.

1. Calculate your savings. Cigarettes are expensive! Add up the money you'll save, and decide what to do with it. This is a great way to stay motivated and kill time while you let a craving pass.
2. Call or text someone - talk to a friend or loved one or call the Quit helpline
3. Play some music - Cravings last the length of a few songs! Make a playlist to distract yourself.
4. Remind yourself why you want to quit smoking. This can be a powerful motivator to keep you smokefree.
5. Keep your mouth busy. Chew a stick of gum instead of picking up a cigarette. Keep hard candy with you. Drink more water.
6. Do something else. When a nicotine craving hits, stop what you're doing

immediately and switch to doing something different. Simply changing your routine might help you shake off a craving.

7. Go for a walk or jog. Or go up and down the stairs a few times. Physical activity, even in short bursts, can help boost your energy and beat a craving.
8. Take slow, deep breaths. Breathe through your craving. Inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth. Repeat this 10 times or until you're feeling more relaxed.
9. Visit a public place. Most public places don't allow smoking. Go to a movie, a store or another smoke free place where you can't smoke.
10. Consider nicotine replacement therapy. Nicotine replacement and other medical treatments are available both over-the-counter and by prescription from your healthcare provider ♡

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## What is a Foster Parent Support Specialist?

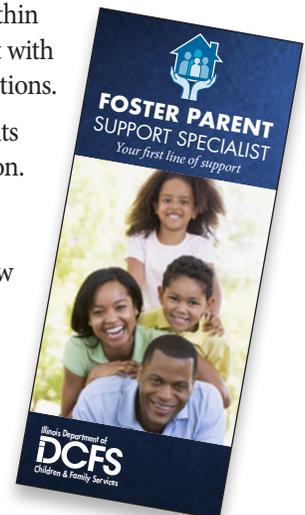
Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS) work with licensed DCFS foster families and home of relative. Upon approval, FPSS staff can service POS agencies, Fictive Kin and unlicensed relatives.

The FPSS program assists with:

- Preventing placement disruptions
- Promoting family reunification
- Stabilizing foster care placements
- Facilitating youth development
- Assisting with the safety, permanency and wellbeing of children in care
- Crisis support through in-home visits or by phone
- Assisting in identifying training needs to maintain licensure
- Brainstorming strategies to support children in your home
- Attending school meetings, court hearings, ACRs, or child and family team meetings as needed
- Facilitating foster parent support groups
- Acting as a liaison with multiple agencies

FPSS are current or previously licensed foster parents in the state of Illinois. Each FPSS participates in ongoing training to stay current on DCFS policy and procedure. FPSS can help you understand your rights and responsibilities as a foster parent. You can call during a crisis for assistance in decision-making or to locate resources within your community. FPSS can assist with advocating for you in many situations.

FPSS are assigned to foster parents based on their geographic location. Even as children enter and leave your home, a FPSS will remain available. If you are unsure of how to identify or reach out to the support specialist in your area, call your DCFS licensing worker or caseworker; or contact Michelle Grove at the Office of Parent and Caregiver Support, 217-524-2422.



*A brochure describing the foster parent support specialist is available online (CFS1050-24-3) at [www2.illinois.gov/DCFS](http://www2.illinois.gov/DCFS)*

## Foster Parent Law



The Illinois Foster Parent Law provides our foster parents with established rights and responsibilities. The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council oversees the implementation of the law which requires DCFS regions and agencies doing foster care by contract to submit annual plans to implement the law.

The first right listed is the right to be treated with dignity, respect and consideration as a professional member of the child welfare team. Foster parents have day-to-day knowledge of the children in their care and should be included in decision-making as

respected members of the professional team.

Their first responsibility listed is to openly communicate and share information about the child with other members of the child welfare team. They should be trained regarding the type and importance of open communication.

The full text of the Foster Parent Law is available on the DCFS website, [www2.illinois.gov/DCFS](http://www2.illinois.gov/DCFS), under *About Us > Policies, Rules and Forms > Laws*.  
♡



### **TOLL-FREE FOSTER PARENT CUSTOMER SERVICE LINE: 866.368.5204**

Available weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., excluding state holidays.

*Agency-supervised homes should work directly with their licensing agency.*

### **ILLINOIS ADOPTION ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING – JUNE 7**

Northern Illinois University  
254 Holmes Student Center  
DeKalb, IL 60115

### **STATEWIDE FOSTER CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING – JUNE 21**

Lisle Sheraton  
3000 Warrenville Rd  
Lisle, IL 60532



## Sequoia SSI referral

### **Caseworkers and foster parents:**

*You can help your child!* We want to ensure youth in our care get all the benefits to which they are entitled. Your child may qualify for SSI benefits and Sequoia Consulting Group can help. If your child has a medical or physical condition or you believe your child might qualify for another reason:

### **Please utilize one of the following to contact us:**

Email us at: [DCFS.SSIReferral@illinois.gov](mailto:DCFS.SSIReferral@illinois.gov)

Call us at: 1-217-535-2295

- *When making a referral, please include the following information:*
- *Youth's name*
- *Youth's CYCIS ID, if known*
- *Youth's date of birth, if known*
- *Your name*
- *Your telephone number*
- *Your relationship to the youth*

A Sequoia SSI eligibility determination specialist will contact you as soon as possible.



### **Sequoia Consulting Group**

133 S 4th Street, Ste 304  
Springfield, IL 62701

**217.535.2295**

# Families invited to Illinois State Fair with discounts



DCFS continues the annual tradition of offering caregivers a special invitation to attend the Illinois State Fair. This invitation is for currently licensed homes and includes youth in DCFS care, as well as children by birth, adoption or guardianship living in the home.

Fill in the requested information, cut out this page and return it by July 6 and you will receive by mail:

- **A PASS THAT INCLUDES PARKING AND ADMISSION** for all passengers in the car for one \$3 fee.
- **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 hours ONLY on Mon 8/12, Wed 8/14, Thurs 8/15 & Fri 8/16)

**MAIL OR FAX THIS ENTIRE PAGE  
NO LATER THAN JULY 5, 2019**

**DCFS Office of Communications  
406 East Monroe St., Station 65  
Springfield, IL 62701-1498**

**Fax: 217-785-8068**

Tickets cannot be requested by telephone. Clip and mail or fax this page. It serves as a receipt for auditing and must be returned to DCFS before tickets can be sent. This is the only invitation to the state fair. Please act today if you wish to attend ♥

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE** \_\_\_\_\_

**LICENSED BY**  
(AGENCY/DCFS REGION) \_\_\_\_\_

**THERE WILL BE** \_\_\_\_ family members in our party.  
Include first and last names of all who will attend:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

To request more than 8 tickets, we will need additional information for verification with the DCFS Inspector General.

**LICENSING/SUBSIDY WORKER**

\_\_\_\_\_

**CONFIRMATION**

*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 2019 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.*

**SIGNATURE** \_\_\_\_\_

**DO NOT CUT. MAIL OR FAX ENTIRE PAGE**

## Avoiding the summertime slump 2019



- Encourage children to continue building their skills over the summer by visiting websites like IXL and Khan Academy
- Go to your local library and check out passes to many local museums.
- Take a trip to your local library and attend programming (often free) offered.
- Pick a book to read and discuss as a family.
- Encourage reading through comic books and graphic novels.
- Visit your local “Y” (YMCA, YWCA)
- If traveling by car use a paper map to plot out your course and identify activities to complete along the way.
- Encourage maintaining a regular sleeping schedule.
- Use Pinterest to create arts and crafts or at-home science projects
- Take the summer to learn a new skill such as coding, photography or a new sport.
- Journal throughout the summer and create a photobook to commemorate your family plans.

## PATH phone line

Last year, DCFS made significant updates to the phone support line for families seeking services after adoption or guardianship. The toll-free phone number (866-538-8892) is the entry point to get connected to all the resources available to families. Now callers will hear a greeting that welcomes them to “Path Beyond Adoption,” where PATH stands for **Partners Available to Help** adoption and guardianship families. The new theme will encompass all of the services and outreach available to families that move to permanency with DCFS or by private or international adoption.

The phone line is now an automated system that will guide callers to information for both subsidies and family-building services. It also includes a new tracking system so that calls and messages can be handled within 24 hours and followed through resolution.

**Call 866-538-8892 during business hours or leave a voicemail message at any time.**

Don't wait to get answers to your adoption or guardianship questions.

Call to:

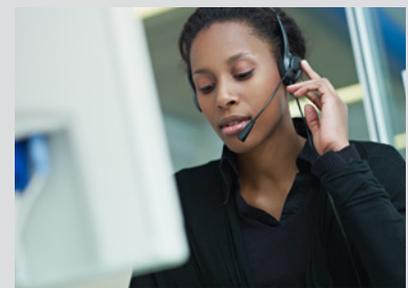
- Connect to resources
- Get answers to questions
- Seek counseling and other services
- Understand your subsidy agreement
- Locate a support group
- Update your address and phone number

DCFS also created the PATH Beyond Adoption website to provide adoptive and guardianship families with tools and information in one spot on services and resources that support them throughout the stages of family life. The website also provides a way for families to contact

DCFS with a question or concern.

The website can be accessed at

[www.PathBeyondAdoption.illinois.gov](http://www.PathBeyondAdoption.illinois.gov)



### PATH Beyond Adoption Support Phone Line

For adoptive and guardianship families

**TOLL-FREE:  
866.538.8892**

## Help Wanted.



DCFS and many area companies are partnering to hire current and former youth in care for full and part-time positions.

Contact Corey Shannon at 312-405-0491 or email [corey.shannon@illinois.gov](mailto:corey.shannon@illinois.gov)



### YOUTH SUMMITS 2019 THEME: LIVE MY BEST LIFE

#### JUNE 6 SOUTHERN REGION

Kaskaskia College  
27210 College Road  
Centralia, IL  
8:00 am – 3:30 pm

#### JUNE 13 NORTHERN REGION

Kishwaukee College  
21193 Malta Road  
Malta, IL  
8:00 am – 3:30 pm

#### JUNE 14 CENTRAL REGION

ISU Bone Student Center  
Normal, IL  
8:30 am – 3:30 pm

#### JUNE 20 COOK REGION

Northeastern Illinois University  
5500 N. St. Louis Ave  
Chicago, IL  
9:00 am – 3:30

# Normalcy. Making everyday decisions.

Every child in DCFS care is special, but he or she is still a normal child. Often that child wants (and needs) to have normal childhood experiences through activities like sleepovers with friends, going on vacation or playing on sports teams. In 2017, the department authorized all caregivers for all youth in out-of-home placements to use “Normalcy Parenting and the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard” to give or withhold permission for age-appropriate enrichment, extracurricular and social activities.

Normalcy parenting empowers caregivers to make common decisions without seeking prior approval or consent from the permanency worker or other child welfare staff. The goal is to allow children in care the opportunity for normal growth and development through activities that would be typical for all children.

Policy Guide 2017.07 includes definitions and examples of the types of decisions caregivers can make using the reasonable and prudent parenting standard. It also covers the instances where specific state or federal laws limit the consent authorization to DCFS, such as consenting to medical and dental care, and disclosing mental health information.

The reasonable and prudent parent standard balances careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the health, safety and best interests of a child, while at the same time encouraging his or her emotional and developmental growth.

Caseworkers should discuss normalcy at each visit to the foster home. Caregivers can also take the on-demand training course on Reasonable and Prudent Parenting on the

Virtual Training Center (VTC) at [www.dcfstraining.org](http://www.dcfstraining.org).

This table, excerpted from Policy Guide 2017.07 Appendix A, provides examples of common situations when foster parents can consent as part of “normalcy” and when the DCFS Guardian or an authorized agent must provide consent. It is not intended to be exhaustive, since it is impossible to predict every potential event that may arise in a child’s life. If an event is not listed in Appendix A, the caregiver should consult with the permanency worker.

The Normalcy Parenting and the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard policy guide with the appendix is available on the DCFS website [www2.illinois.gov/DCFS](http://www2.illinois.gov/DCFS) under the *About Us* tab.

## CONSENT GUIDELINES

Activity or situation to consider for consent:	Foster Parent	DCFS Guardian	Additional details
 Athletic participation: school extracurricular or recreational	●		
 Behavioral/Mental Health Services for a child/youth in care under age 18		●	or an Authorized Agent. Youth ages 12-18 must also consent to release their mental health info.
 Dating	●		
 Driver’s license / Learner’s permit	●		Foster Parent viewed as the “responsible adult” under Illinois Driver Licensing Law
 Media requests: Release forms or requests to interview child/youth in care		●	
 Overnight/Sleepovers, less than 48 hours (e.g., at friend’s home or other planned activity)	●		
 Release of Liability forms		●	or an Authorized Agent
 Routine school activities: field trips, school enrollment, report cards	●		
 School extra-curricular activities (including athletic participation)	●		
 School photos and yearbook pictures	●		Photos are allowed. However captions or other info cannot identify the child as being in foster care.
 School suspension / Expulsion notices		●	Notify the DCFS Guardian
 Social media – Facebook, Instagram, etc.	●		
 Travel with the caregiver in-state and out of state, no more than 48 hours	●		
 Travel more than 48 hours	●		Foster Parent must notify caseworker with location and contact information
 Travel out of state, 30 days or more		●	



**Illinois Families  
Now & Forever**

J B Pritzker, Governor

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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.

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