



# Illinois Families Now & Forever®

*Families by DCFS Foster Care, Adoption & Guardianship*

## Water safety at foster homes



### PLEASE REVIEW

*the requirements if you are purchasing a pool. If you already have a pool or other water hazard on your property please abide by these requirements.*

### IT'S SUMMER. TIME TO GET OUTDOORS.

Over the past few months, we have had to change the way we think about almost everything in our lives. We are staying at home, we are wearing masks, we are practicing social distancing. Summer, as

we once knew it, has changed dramatically! And one of those changes is not being able to go to the local swimming pool. Some families are trying to navigate the new normal by putting swimming

pools in their yards. It's a great idea, but please remember that as foster families there are guidelines to be followed. Please read through the excerpt of our Licensing Standards below.

## SEC. 402.8 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FOSTER HOME

### h) WATER HAZARDS PROTECTION

Swimming pools, hot tubs and spas shall meet all State, tribal and/or local safety requirements.

1. All in-ground swimming pools located in areas accessible to children shall be fenced. The fence shall be at least 5 feet in height and secured by a locked gate.
2. All above-ground pools shall have non-climbable sidewalls that are at least 4 feet high or shall be enclosed with a 5-foot fence that is at least 36 inches away from the pool's side wall and secured with a locked gate. When the pool is not in use, pool's steps shall be removed or the pool shall be otherwise protected to insure the pool cannot be accessed.
3. Any swimming pool shall be equipped with devices that are manufactured and labeled as life saving devices and approved by the U.S. Coast Guard for sale as life saving devices.
4. A swimming pool shall have a working pump and filtering system when the pool cannot be emptied after each use.
5. Any hot tub not enclosed with a 5-foot fence shall have a securely locked cover.
6. Any portable wading pool not enclosed with a 5-foot fence shall be emptied daily.
7. Licensees in foster family homes with pools, hot tubs, ponds, outdoor fountains, decorative water ponds, fishponds, or the like must have current CPR certification.
8. Foster homes shall come into compliance with the above water hazard requirements by January 1, 2010. Foster homes that have a license or a permit on January 1, 2009 and have had a fence with a minimum height of 3½ foot shall be considered in compliance with the fence requirement.



## The Talk

Please use this information as guidance to communicate with youth. You play a key role in their lives; instilling core values that will lead them to become well-rounded adults.

### Having a voice/racial awareness:

Caregivers should speak with youth about race and carefully discuss the differences among the five races (American Indian or Alaska Native, White, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander) and the various ethnicities they will encounter. Youth should also be urged to understand and be aware of ethnicities outside of their homes and neighborhoods. The aim should be for youth to grow into race-conscious adults who are knowledgeable and accepting of people from different cultures. Caregivers should allow a safe space for youth to voice their confusion and ask questions about race and stereotypes. Telling personal stories and providing examples of problem solving will help teach youth empathy and skills to problem solve on their own. The key to this conversation is awareness, understanding and acceptance of the many ethnicities around the world.

### Responding to social unrest/concerns about racial inequality:

As a caregiver, it is important to allow youth to express their opinions on the current state of their community

and the world and that you carefully lead the discussion. Social unrest may lead youth to feel tired, confused, angry and annoyed with everyone and everything that does not represent their ideals and values. This range of emotions can raise their anxiety and cause them to withdraw from the realities of the world. To support youth, it is important to have healthy discussions focused on the current social unrest; where all participants are able to speak about the issues freely and respectfully, and work towards understanding each other's points of view.

### The Dos and Don'ts of social media and personal safety:

It is extremely important to have healthy discussion with youth to teach them the strength of their voices and the possible impact of the decision to post something on social media. What a young person posts on social media can drastically affect how they, your family or anyone associated with them is viewed. Youth are often unaware that seemingly innocent posts/reposts can put them and/or their family in physical danger and what they post may be seen by potential employers or others in the community. The aim of these discussions should be to develop



empathy and a deeper understanding of how their actions affect society and the people they love.

### Advocacy and community organizing:

Advocacy and community organizing should be encouraged and are healthy ways for youth to express themselves and develop leadership skills. Young persons who want to bring about social justice by supporting a cause in their community should make sure to have extensive knowledge of the social issue and understand how it affects their community. With understanding comes the ability to think about solutions.

Once the youth gains awareness and an understanding of how social issues impact the livelihood of community residents, they can become advocates for social justice and develop creative ways to interact with the community. Possible solutions to consider include: how to restructure power, developing alternative institutions and how to revitalize their community.



## Keep the conversation going!

Learn more here:

[www.blacklivesmatter.com](http://www.blacklivesmatter.com)

[www.racialequitytools.org](http://www.racialequitytools.org)

## Family Advocacy Centers: Serving the community during the COVID-19 pandemic



The 38 Family Advocacy Centers (FACs) located across the state are still accepting referrals during this time. Many centers have limited in-person availability but continue to work

with families who have been, or are currently involved with, DCFS as well as youth formerly in care through virtual avenues. Family Advocacy Centers tailor their services to the individual needs of the communities they serve. In addition to traditional counseling, referral and training services, a typical center may also offer the following services:

- 24-hour crisis response and systematic support services;
- Intensive mediation services;
- Counseling for women and children who are victims of domestic violence;
- After-school, summer and out-of-school programs;
- Parent coaching, mentoring and classes in English and Spanish;

- Execution of intervention strategies to support the family reunification process; and
- Court ordered supervised child visitation for non-custodial parents.

To access a statewide list of Family Advocacy Centers, visit the DCFS website: [www2.illinois.gov/DCFS](http://www2.illinois.gov/DCFS) and click on Brighter Futures.



**SPIDER**

To quickly find a FAC by zip code or your location, visit the Service Provider IDentification and Exploration Resource (SPIDER) website at

<https://spider.dcf.illinois.gov/>

- Enter your zip code or an address
- Select “Maximum Distance” from the dropdown
- Click “Locate Address”
- Click on “Keyword”
- Type in “Family Advocacy Center”
- Click “Search” and scroll down to see the listing of FACs nearest you



## The Burgos Consent Decree may give you the right to the following services:



The Burgos Consent Decree of 1977 is a federal mandate which requires the Department of Children and Family Services to provide services in Spanish to Spanish speakers and those requesting services in Spanish.

Families involved with DCFS who would like to receive services and other communications from the department in Spanish should convey their language preference to their caseworker:

- To have a bilingual social services caseworker in charge of your case

- To receive DCFS documents and correspondence in Spanish
- To receive services for your family, children and yourself in Spanish
- To have your child placed with a Spanish-speaking, bilingual foster family
- To have access to an interpreter whenever you request it at no cost

For more information, contact Burgos Consent Decree Coordinator Lourdes Rodriguez at 312-808-5264 or [lourdes.rodriguez@illinois.gov](mailto:lourdes.rodriguez@illinois.gov).



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[www2.illinois.gov/DCFS](http://www2.illinois.gov/DCFS)

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## Find resources in your community to help during COVID-19

- Find a coronavirus testing site near you: <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/testing-sites>
- Find resources for families and children: <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/resources-for-families-and-children>
- Find food pantries and soup kitchens with the Greater Chicago Food Depository's interactive map: <https://www.chicagosfoodbank.org/find-food/>
- Read information sent by Illinois DCFS to families, providers and staff: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dcfs>
- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website for current health information: <https://www.cdc.gov>



If you do not have access to a computer, please call the

**DCFS Advocacy Office at 800-232-3798**

for assistance locating resources during the coronavirus pandemic.