
CAREGIVER RESOURCES

QUICK REFERENCE

Adoption

Adoption Information Center of Illinois (AICI)

800-572-2390
M-F 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Voicemail available 24-hours

- Information: adoption process and adoption agencies
- Adoption Listing Service: descriptions and photos of waiting children
- Refer prospective adoptive families to an agency for a home study
- Foster families interested in adopting children already in the home, or another child, should contact their supervising agency.

Adoption Support Line

855-548-5505
8:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. (Monday through Thursday) and
8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. on Fridays

Staff with high-level experience in adoption can help adoptive and guardianship families with:

- requests for numbers to field offices, replacement Medicaid cards;
- questions about subsidy agreements;
- obtaining services covered in the subsidy agreement; and
- handling family situations that may require Adoption Preservation Services.

Advocacy

DCFS Advocacy Office for Children and Families

800-232-3798
217-524-2029 (if calling from out of state)
M-F 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. /Voicemail

Help or information for foster caregivers, workers, parents, and the public in:

- understanding/verifying DCFS rule, policy, and procedure;
- obtaining services for children in foster care, adoption or subsidized guardianship homes;
- understanding what can be appealed through the DCFS Service Appeal system or in filing a service appeal with DCFS, including emergency appeals; and
- parental inquiries and referrals.

Callers should have this information ready:

- child's name, birth date, identification number; and
 - caseworker and supervisor's name and phone numbers.
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Appeals/Mediation

DCFS Administrative Hearings Unit

312-814-5540
M-F 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

- information about filing a service or licensing appeal; and
- how to file an appeal through DCFS.

See Section 8: pages 27-29.

Attorney

For caregivers who are involved in legal actions as a result of being a foster caregiver.

See Section 8: page 16.

Behavior/Mental Health

Crisis and Referral Entry System (CARES) Helpline

800-345-9049
24 Hours

System of Care (SOC) community and outreach-based service system to stabilize children whose placements are at risk due to emotional or behavioral issues.

Provides assessments, 24-hour crisis intervention, Child & Family Team meeting facilitation and wraparound planning, individual and family counseling/therapy, linkage to community resources and assistance in obtaining services/goods (as necessary) that will help stabilize the placement.

See Section 5: pages 16-17 for available services.

Board Payments

See Payments While Children are in Foster Care, Section 9: pages 1-3.

Child Abuse/Neglect

DCFS Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline **800-25-ABUSE (800-252-2873)**
TTY: 800-358-5117

For mandated reporters and the public to report suspected cases of abuse or neglect. Foster caregivers are mandated to report suspected abuse or neglect of children placed with them.

See Section 8: pages 32-34.

Child Development and Health

General Resources for ALL Illinois Children
HELP-ME-GROW and WIC information **800-323-4769**

Referral to ALL Illinois programs which directly impact children, including Early Intervention programs for children 0-3 and programs related to disabilities and Women, Infants and Children.

Claims: Damages to Property or Bodily Injury Caused by a Child in Foster Care

Foster Child Damage Reimbursement Program **312-814-7294**
(Formerly the Foster Parent Reimbursement Program) **M-F 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

Call for information about filing a claim for damages to your property or the property of someone else, or for bodily injury to you, a member of your family, or someone else caused by a child in foster care.

See Section 9: pages 13-14 for what is covered, claim limits, and how to make a claim.

CRISIS: Help in an Unexpected Crisis With a Child in Foster Care

**Crisis and Referral Entry System (CARES) Hotline 800-345-9049 Hotline
24 Hours**

Call if a child's unexpected behavior threatens his or her safety or placement with your family. A crisis worker can come to your home within 60 minutes (city) or 90 minutes (rural) *if you request*.

- Community-based agencies provide mental health Screening, Assessment and Support Services (SASS) for children who appear to be ready to harm themselves or others.
- Call if a child's unexpected behavior threatens his or her placement with your family. If a SASS evaluation indicates that the child should be hospitalized, the child will be admitted for inpatient treatment.

See Section 5: pages 16-17.

Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)

Cook County Only 312-433-4928

**Outside Cook County To find your local CASA program, call the
CASA Statewide Office: 217-528-0275 or illinoiscasa.org**

Judges may appoint a CASA volunteer, who is a specially trained advocate, to work with all parties and to give an opinion to the court as to the reason/s for case delays. Caregivers may want to discuss the possibility of a CASA worker being requested with the child's Guardian ad litem if CASA intervention may help the child find a permanent family more quickly. CASA volunteers are always needed.

Deaf Services

DCFS Deaf Services Coordinator

Relay Voice Operator: 800-526-0857
Ask for 312-814-4117; TTY: 800-526-0844

Call to find services for children who are deaf or hearing impaired, or to identify your family as a possible foster family for a child with a hearing impairment. If you or someone in your family knows sign language for the deaf, foster families with this capability are needed.

Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

General Information and Referral/Case Tracking

773-371-6161

- Caseworker's names and location, DCFS divisions or personnel
- Screening and case tracking

DCFS Offices

See Section 1: pages 7-8
for office phone/fax list

Emergencies After Business Hours

Statewide: 800-252-2873
Cook County: 312-989-3450

Rules, Policy, Procedures

See website: www.DCFS.illinois.gov

Questions of rule, policy or procedure
To read online

Advocacy Office: 800-232-3798

See website: www.DCFS.illinois.gov

Dental Care

Checkups

Dentaquest Dental of Illinois
888-286-2447

Referral to an Orthodontist - Your child's regular dentist must make a referral to an orthodontist who takes the Medicaid card.

Education

DCFS/NIU Education Advisors

312-814-5959

DCFS Bureau of Operations, Youth and Family Development

Education advisors, located in the DCFS regions:

- provide caregivers with advocating for a child's school needs, meeting with school personnel and developing education plans; and
- support foster families in DCFS-supervised homes. Homes supervised by private agencies have Education Liaisons at the agency to address school concerns.

Legal Assistance Regarding Special Education and Discipline

Help and advice for foster parents in understanding legal options in advocating for your foster child's rights. See Section 6: page 7.

Services

Educational services may be provided through the school district where the child attends school, your agency, or DCFS. See Section 6, Educational Services. Your child's caseworker, the supervisor, and/or the agency is responsible for helping you determine how to meet your child's educational needs or need for special educational services.

Early Intervention Programs

Early Intervention Programs for children 0-3 related to developmental delays and disabilities.

See Section 6: pages 11-12. Call Help-Me-Grow 800-323-4769 for referral statewide.

Emergencies

In any emergency with a child, do what is necessary first, and then contact the child's caseworker and the agency. Private agency caregivers should have an emergency after-hours number to contact their agency in case of emergency. DCFS-supervised caregivers should obtain emergency numbers from their foster parent support specialist or DCFS region.

Abuse/Neglect

800-25-ABUSE (252-2873)

Report suspected abuse/neglect of a child to the DCFS Hotline

Behavioral Crisis: CARES Hotline

800-345-9049**24 Hours**

Life-Threatening Behavior

Call the police. Contact your agency.

Medical Emergency

Call 911 or go to your local hospital emergency room. Contact your supervising agency or DCFS region.

Poison Hotline: Illinois Poison Center**800-222-1222**

To obtain immediate instructions for saving the life of an adult or child who has taken poison. Have the product container handy, if possible, to read specific contents to the specialist answering the hotline.

Runaway**866-503-0184****DCFS Child Location Services****Toll-free, 24 Hours**

If the child runs away, make a police report. Contact your agency or DCFS foster care program.

Foster Parent Organizations**Foster Parent Support/Networking Groups**

There are numerous foster parent associations, advisory councils and support groups to serve families across the state. To find local organizations caregivers can:

- contact the local DCFS office where the foster parent support specialists can connect caregivers to regionally-based groups;
- contact the private agency that supervises the foster home license for information about groups sponsored by that agency; and
- check the Foster Parent Appreciation issue of the newsletter each May for an updated listing of groups and associations that serve foster/adoptive families.

DCFS Regional Foster Care Advisory Council

Each DCFS region sponsors an advisory council to keep caregivers informed of DCFS policy and to address local issues. Call the nearest regional office or the DCFS foster parent support specialists for details.

Illinois Foster and Adoptive Parent Association
Gladys Boyd, President

773-720-0669
president@ifapa.org

This is the Illinois affiliate of the National Foster Parent Association (NFPA). Call for information on membership, scholarships for children, IFPA training conferences held in Illinois, or to find your local IFPA-affiliated foster parent support group.

National Foster Parent Association (NFPA)

800-557-5238

The only national organization whose members are primarily foster parent members. Call the National Foster Parent Association office shown for information on: membership, scholarships for your children or foster children, or the NFPA annual training conference held in various locations in the U.S.

Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council is mandated by law. Its primary functions are to advise DCFS on foster care and to ensure that caregivers' rights and responsibilities under the Foster Parent Law are followed in everyday operation of child welfare agencies and DCFS foster care programs. Contact Caregiver and Parent Support at 217-524-2422.

Foster Child Damage Reimbursement Program

See Section 9: pages 13-14.

Immigration Services, DCFS Office of

312-814-8600

Caregivers of foreign-born children under DCFS care with questions about the child's legal resident status should discuss the issue with the child's case manager. Case managers are responsible for verifying the child's citizenship or legal residency and then contacting the Office of Immigration Services for assistance when needed.

Inspector General

800-722-9124

M-F 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m./Voicemail

Call to report misconduct, illegal, or unethical acts or behavior by DCFS or private agency staff or others providing services to children in care and/or foster families.

Media: TV/Radio/Newspaper/Other

DCFS Communications Office

312-814-6847

M-F 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Permission for publicity, interviews, or photos of a child in foster care. See Section 8: page 22.

Medical Card

If you have lost the child's state medical card, or have questions, call 800-228-6533.

Medical Care

Cook County

800-KID-4345

Outside Cook County

**Call your local HealthWorks agency
listed in Section 5: page 3**

For referral to a HealthWorks primary health care physician.

Newsletter

312-814-6800

Vanessa.James@illinois.gov

The Illinois Families Now and Forever® newsletter is published six times a year to serve families raising children who are or were involved with the DCFS child welfare system.

- all issues are posted on the DCFS website with archives back to 2003; and
- the newsletter is mailed to homes, or caregivers can request the digital version.

Payments

Payment Line (DCFS)

800-525-0499 / 24 Hours

See Section 9: page 17.

DCFS-supervised foster homes: Pre-recorded information about foster care payment check mailing schedule. **Private agency foster homes:** Because your agency sends you your foster care payment check, contact your agency about the distribution schedule. Payment problems? First, private agency families should contact the caseworker or other agency staff.

DCFS-supervised families should contact their caseworker or foster parent support specialist first and then the payment line.

Public Assistance

Public Assistance Hotline

888-893-5327

M-F 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

For the general public – answers to questions about public assistance and service.

Public Guardian

Guardian ad litem (GAL)

Cook County ONLY:

312-433-4300

Outside Cook County:

Call the juvenile court

To find your child's GAL to: enlist help in obtaining needed services for your child; report key facts; or discuss your testimony prior to court. See Section 2: pages 3-4.

Scholarships

DCFS-sponsored: College (See Section 7: page 25)

217-557-2689

Needs-based financial aid:

FAFSA.com

Free Application for Federal Student Aid

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Benefits

Children eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) may have "excess funds" in their DCFS account which may be used for certain allowable expenses. See Section 9: pages 16-17 of this section to determine how to inquire about existence and allowable uses of excess SSI funds.

Teens: Programs and Services

312-814-5959

www.youthincare.illinois.gov

Training

Virtual Training Center

**www.DCFStraining.org (24 hours)
877-800-3393 (regular business hours)**

The DCFS Office of Professional Development, Caregiver and Parent Support develops and presents Foster PRIDE pre-service and in-service training modules and other courses in locations across the state. In addition to classroom courses, caregivers can also take advantage of videos, books and online training. See Section 4: pages 21-22 for details.