

With the support of caring foster parents, this transition into young adulthood can be a successful and rewarding experience. DCFS also continues to develop services to support foster parents and youth during this very important time. These services include: the Community College Tuition Payment Program, independent living programs, life skills instruction, pregnant and parenting youth programs, youth employment services, tutoring and educational advocacy, and legal support services.

In addition, the Regional and Statewide Youth Advisory Boards partner with DCFS to provide advocacy and education for youth in care. They provide information about resources, opportunities and policies that affect all youth. The members are committed to youth empowerment, leadership, and achievement across the state.

For more information about these services, please refer to our companion brochure *"Self-Sufficiency Preparation Services"* or call the DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services at 309/693-5150 (Peoria); 312/814-5959 (Chicago) or 217/524-2030 (Springfield).

*If you are interested in the challenging and exciting opportunity to give a teen a brighter future, please call 1-800-624-KIDS.*

Office of Foster Parent  
Support Services  
406 East Monroe St.  
Springfield, IL 62701



## Support a Brighter Future for a Teen!



**IDCFS**  
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

Office of Foster Parent Support Services

## Are you interested in fostering or adopting older children?

Being a teenager can be challenging at times – facing new responsibilities and preparing for adulthood are just a few of the experiences that can make a teen’s future frightening. Add to it the lack of a stable environment, and to a teen, the future may seem hopeless.

If you are patient, a good listener, open-minded and fair when disciplining, you can make a difference in the life and future of a teen – by becoming a foster parent.

## What is foster care?

Foster care is the temporary placement of a child under 18 by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in a home other than his or her own. Foster parent licensing and training takes about 90 days.

Placement occurs after you receive your license and only when it is necessary to protect the child from abuse or neglect. In many cases, teenagers are available for adoption.

## Who can foster or adopt teens?

Foster and adoptive parents are as diverse as the children they care for. They include adults over 21 who have time to help a teen grow and reach his or her potential. They are:

- ◆ Single or married
- ◆ Part-time or full-time workers
- ◆ Parents who have other children and/or teenagers at home
- ◆ Gay or lesbian
- ◆ Homeowners or renters
- ◆ Households with open range incomes
- ◆ Relatives
- ◆ People a lot like you!

## What does a teen need from me?

- ◆ To take the time to get to know him or her
- ◆ Fair punishment and discipline
- ◆ A sense of humor and a positive attitude
- ◆ Open-mindedness and acceptance of differences
- ◆ To be treated as a family member
- ◆ Honesty, encouragement and love
- ◆ Patience, trust and respect
- ◆ My time

## What types of services do foster and adoptive parents receive?

- ◆ **Personal Support:** The agency that licenses your home has developed services that include foster parent support groups, newsletters, after-hours telephone numbers, crisis intervention training, and family or individual counseling.
- ◆ **Financial Support:** Foster parents in regular foster care programs receive a monthly payment based on the child’s age and any special needs. The payments cover the teen’s food, clothing, and personal allowance. In some situations, adoption subsidies are provided.
- ◆ **Medical Support:** Each foster child receives a medical card that pays for all necessary medical care and prescriptions. Other medical support services include physical therapy, counseling and medical equipment.

## What help is offered to teens?

As children grow into their late teens, they need to develop the skills and confidence to take on the responsibilities of young adults, such as working, attending college, and becoming self-sufficient.