

Central Connections



2002 Vol. 3

For Heart of Illinois Foster Parents

The Loy Family Meets the Needs of Children and Serves Foster Parents

Don and Joyce Loy's fostering experience started 15 years ago in front of the TV.

"It was one of those sappy, made-for-TV movies about homeless kids that makes your heart melt," Joyce remembers. Her husband suggested she call his aunt who is a foster parent to get advice on how to help. Before long they were trained and licensed foster parents - with no idea that they would eventually welcome more than 100 children into their Port Byron home.

The journey began with three toddlers who came three days before Christmas. The goal for Holly, 3, Brit, 2, and Tommy, 11 months, at that time was to return home to their birth father. The Loyes cared for the children while supporting that goal, even arranging for the father to visit their home.

Meanwhile, less than two years after the first group of little ones arrived, they got a call about a little girl newly born at the local hospital with medical problems. Don and Joyce brought Tiffany home, amidst a mass of tubes and monitors and started splitting shifts caring for her. Don took the overnight duty. Twice on his watch young Tiffany's heart problems prompted him into action to resuscitate her.

Undeterred, the Loyes saw the children in their home thrive, so they kept going. Often they found themselves with a full house, not stopping until they hit the maximum number of placements DCFS would allow. That growth prompted some interesting reactions from outsiders.

Joyce likes to tell the story of a time when she was taking the group of children downtown to a therapy session.

She recalls, "An elderly lady looked at me and Don and said 'Well, it's easy to see where they spend all their time.'" Joyce's response was, "If you only knew."

The couple often talks about their experiences to encourage others to become foster or adoptive parents. They can definitely back up what they say. They have opened their home to more than 100 boys and girls of all ages and with varying permanency goals.

"I especially like the times that kids get to go back home. It feels good to know that while a child had to be away, they had a positive experience in our home," Joyce says.



Not all of the children go back home, however. Joyce and Don have since adopted Holly, Brit, Tommy and Tiffany. They also find that several former teenage foster children often come back and spend time with the family as well.

In addition to helping the children, Joyce also spends time serving other foster parents. For many years, she volunteered on the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council. She also works as a Foster Parent Support Specialist, providing on-call service to families by being a resource or just a sounding board when needed.

"I know how challenging parenting can be. As a support specialist I can help. I can let families know their effort is appreciated as we work together," Joyce says.

Getting Ready for Back-to-school

Back-to-school time will be here soon. Some parents are excited, while others will miss the quantity and quality of time they spent with their children during the summer break. No matter what agency you are licensed with in Central Region, you will be out buying school supplies and registering children for school. Keep in mind that the school fees are waived for foster children and they receive free lunch; all you need to do is fill out the paperwork at the school.

If you are a DCFS-supervised home and had a schoolage, traditional child placed in your home on July 31, 2002 you will receive an additional \$50.00 to purchase school supplies. If you are private agency home, you will need to talk to your caseworker to see what the reimbursement policy is for school supplies, as each agency may handle it differently.

Teenage children who are already talking about taking Drivers' Education need to sit down with their caseworker to make sure everyone feels the child is responsible enough to take Drivers' Education. The foster parent can sign forms for class participation, however, the DCFS Guardian needs to sign for the permit and driver's license. Foster parents should also discuss with the caseworker payment arrangements for the fees to obtain the permit or license. Also, the cost for the driving class may be reimbursed by your agency.



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Sponsor

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Call with foster parent association news and schedules of local training, features on foster families and community members working for children, photos and news articles and supports all foster families can use.



Take Precaution with Medical ID bracelet

We all feel a need to keep our children safe. However, at times when foster parents are not with their children, how can you make sure that people have the information needed in case of an emergency? A medical emergency bracelet can tell doctors what they need to know when you or your child cannot.

These bracelets can be ordered in pharmacies located throughout the state. For example, at Walgreen's they cost \$9.99. For ten dollars, you could help prevent a real emergency from getting more complicated.

If, for example, a child got ill at a friend's house and needed an ambulance, right away medical staff could know about his allergy to penicillin. If he fainted on the field at soccer practice, the bracelet could speak if he could not.

There can be no price too large for such a huge safety precaution. Let's all work together to keep our children safe, even when we are not around. With school starting soon, this idea can bring a little reassurance that your child will be in good hands even if you are not around.

The Importance of Sibling Visits

One of the most common complaints of adults who were raised in foster care is that they were cut off from siblings. Keeping siblings together in foster care or at least helping them stay in touch with each other is an important teamwork responsibility.

The Department realizes how important sibling relationships are. DCFS rules require that sibling visits be scheduled and provided at least two times per month for all siblings placed apart. Visits may be less frequent under certain approved circumstances, but may not be reduced as a form of discipline or because of the unavailability of a visit supervisor.

Many Central Region foster parents are facilitating and supervising sibling visits. However, in some cases the documentation is not being completed. Often foster parents that do help children have sibling visits may not realize they can be reimbursed for supervising the visits and transporting children to visits.

If you host an overnight or weekend visit in your home, you can be reimbursed \$100.00 for supervising the visit. Supervising shorter visits is reimbursed at \$25.00 an hour, up to four hours. However, foster families cannot be reimbursed more than \$100.00 in one month.

If you take your foster child to a visit or pick up the siblings for a visit, you can also be reimbursed for transportation up to \$50 a month. If a foster parent uses his or her car for transporting children they will be paid at the current state rate of 34.5 cents per mile. This rate changes periodically. Reimbursement can also be made for public transportation and taxis for those foster parents who choose not to drive.

Many foster parents look at the reimbursement as a way to set aside extra funds for movies, dinner out or other fun on the next visit. To be reimbursed is a fairly simple process of completing two short forms that your caseworker can facilitate. If you have done a sibling visit or are planning to do a sibling visit, ask the worker to bring the Form CFS 315 and you can fill it out together to document the visit(s). Or when you are talking to the caseworker on the phone or in their office, he or she can usually complete the computerized form right then. The form does need a foster parent's signature so the worker can mail it to you or bring it out on the next visit. The caseworker will also need to fill out a form CFS 906-4 Special Service Fee and Payment Extension Form that initiates the reimbursement. In an effort to reduce the number of forms used in the Department, Best Practice is currently reviewing these forms. In the meantime, next time you do a sibling visit, let your worker know, so they can document the visit and help you be reimbursed as needed.



Central Region Training Calendar

FosterPRIDE In-Service Training

All licensed foster parents and adoptive parents are welcome to attend any or all of the PRIDE In-Service Trainings to enhance their skills and meet yearly training requirements.

Peoria Area
888-507-7433

LA SALLE - Catholic Social Service
September 16, 23 & 30 (Mon) 6:00-9:00 p.m. 3&4

PEORIA - Lutheran Social Services
Aug 27, Sept 3 & 10 (Tues) 6:00-9:00 p.m. 6

QUAD CITIES - Black Hawk College
Aug 29, Sept 5 & 12 (Thurs) 6:00-9:00 p.m. 3&4

OTHER In-Service Training

Transracial Parenting Training (9 hrs.)
CANTON - Wesley United Methodist Church
September 14, 21 & 28 (Sat) 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Adoption Conversion Training (9 hrs.)
CANTON - Wesley United Methodist Church
September 23, 30 & Oct. 7 (Mon) 6:00-9:00 p.m.

MACOMB - TBA
September 19, 26 & Oct. 3 (Thurs) 6:00-9:00 p.m.

PEORIA - Lutheran Social Services
September 5, 12 & 19 (Thurs) 6:00-9:00 p.m.

QUAD CITIES - BHC Outreach Center
September 19, 26 & Oct. 3 (Thurs) 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Springfield Area
888-817-1825

	Module	
JERSEYVILLE - Super 8		
August 1, 8 & 15 (Thurs)	6:30-9:30 p.m.	8
LITCHFIELD - St. Francis Hospital		
July 23 & 30, August 6, 13 & 20 (Tues)	6:30-9:30 p.m.	10
QUINCY - Days Inn		
September 9, 16 & 23 (Mon)	6:30-9:30 p.m.	3&4

OTHER In-Service Training

Transracial Parenting Training (9 hrs.)
SPRINGFIELD - Lincoln Land Community College
September 14, 21 & 28 (Sat) 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Adoption Conversion Training (9 hrs.)
QUINCY - Days Inn
August 3, 10 & 17 (Sat) 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

SPRINGFIELD - Lincoln Land Comm. College
September 7, 14 & 21 (Sat) 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Module 1 - The Foundation for Meeting the Developmental Needs of Children
(Four 3-hour sessions = 12 training hours)

Module 2 - Using Discipline to Protect and Nurture
(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 3 - Addressing Developmental Issues Related to Sexuality
(One 3-hour session = 3 training hours)

Module 4 - Responding to the Signs and Symptoms of Sexual Abuse
(Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

Module 5 - Supporting Relationships Between Children and Their Families
(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 6 - Working as a Professional Team Member
(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 7 - Promoting Children's Personal and Cultural Identity
(Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

Module 8 - Promoting Permanency Outcomes
(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 9 - Managing the Impact of Placement on Your Family
(Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

Module 10 - Understanding the Effects of Chemical Dependency on Children & Families
(Five 3-hour sessions = 15 training hours)

Champaign Area
888-467-6065

	Module
BLOOMINGTON - The Children's Foundation	
September 16, 23 & 30 (Mon)	6:30-9:30 p.m. 2
DECATUR - Decatur Civic Center	
September 10, 17 & 24 (Tues)	6:30-9:30 p.m. 2
PONTIAC - Salem Community Based Services	
September 12, 19 & 26 (Thurs)	6:30-9:30 p.m. 8

OTHER In-Service Training

Transracial Parenting Training (9 hrs.)
BLOOMINGTON - Comfort Inn
July 11, 18 & 25 (Thurs) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

CHAMPAIGN - IL Employment & Training Center
August 12, 19 & 26 (Mon) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Reactive Attachment Disorder (6 hrs.)
DANVILLE - TBA
July 27 (Sat) 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

MATTOON - Broadway Christian Church
September 21 (Sat) 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Adoption Conversion Training (9 hrs.)
CHAMPAIGN - IL Employment & Training Ctr.
August 1, 8 & 15 (Thurs) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

CHARLESTON - Human Services Center
September 9, 16 & 23 (Mon) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

DANVILLE - TBA
September 14, 21 & 28 (Sat) 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

NORMAL - The Baby Fold
August 10, 17 & 24 (Sat) 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Educational Advocacy

Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours

It is mandatory for one foster parent in each family to attend Educational Advocacy Training in order to be relicensed. Educational Advocacy Training is offered following each Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE training and many additional times. This six hour course covers information foster parents need to know so that they can advocate for their foster children's educational rights and needs.

Peoria Area ~ 888-507-7433

PEORIA	Lutheran Social Services
August 5 & 12 (Mon)	6:00-9:00 p.m.
	Catholic Social Service
August 20 & 27 (Tues)	6:00-9:00 p.m.
	First English Lutheran Church
July 18 & 25 (Thurs)	6:00-9:00 p.m.
	Professional Park Plaza
September 11 & 18 (Wed)	6:00-9:00 p.m.
September 26 & October 3 (Thurs)	6:00-9:00 p.m.
QUAD CITIES	BHC Outreach Center
August 5 & 12 (Mon)	6:00-9:00 p.m.

Springfield Area ~ 888-817-1825

LITCHFIELD	St. Francis Hospital
September 7 & 14 (Sat)	1:00-4:00 p.m.
SPRINGFIELD	Lincoln Land Comm. College
August 10 & 17 (Sat)	1:00-4:00 p.m.

Champaign Area ~ 888-467-6065

BLOOMINGTON	The Children's Foundation
September 24 & October 1 (Tues)	6:30-9:30 p.m.
CHAMPAIGN	IL Employment & Training Center
August 13 & 20 (Tues)	6:30-9:30 p.m.
CHARLESTON	Human Services Center
August 5 & 12 (Mon)	6:30-9:30 p.m.

Pre-registration is required for all classes!

Call the number listed for your area.