

A dvocate

News for Chicago Metro Area Foster Parents

Share the Power of A Wish!

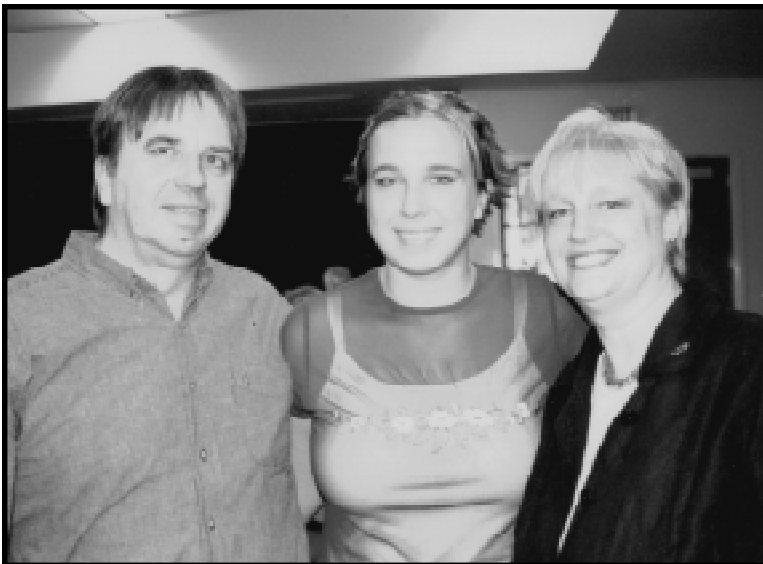
Make-A-Wish Foundation is waiting to make your seriously ill child's fondest wish come true! Foster families, caseworkers, a child's parent, legal guardian or medical staff are invited to call with names of eligible children. Even the children themselves can call.

Children battling a life-threatening illness and between ages 2 ½ and 18 are eligible to have their fondest wish come true. If a child lives outside the United States, but is receiving treatment from a local medical facility, he/she is also eligible. *Financial status is never a factor in eligibility.* No child under age 18 and a legal resident who meets the criteria is ever turned away.

Children's wishes are as unique as the children themselves, but usually fall into the categories of "I want to be..." or "I want to have..." or "I want to go..." or "I want to meet...". Make-A-Wish includes the immediate family on a wish experience and takes great care in involving everyone in the process. Confidentiality of the child and family is always maintained.



Pam Devereux, Executive Director



Nora Will is a childhood cancer survivor who is now a healthy college student. She and her parents, Corwin and Wendy, spoke recently to Make-A-Wish volunteers about the positive impact her 1996 Make-A-Wish experience had on all of their lives.

"Many people have the mistaken idea that only dying children are eligible for a wish to be granted," says Make-A-Wish Executive Director, Pam Devereux. "We fulfill the wishes of not only terminally ill children, but also children living life-threatening illnesses with the hope of full recovery. We're trying to get more people to call on behalf of children. Make-A-Wish is NOT a last wish! For many, many children it's inspiration to keep going to recover and live a long, full life. But we can't grant wishes unless you call."

The Northern Illinois Chapter of Make-A-Wish covers the 24 Northernmost counties of Illinois, including Cook County. If you would like additional information about referring a child living in Cook County or one of the other counties, call 312-943-8956. Make-A-Wish is a national organization with chapters throughout the U.S. Anyone nationally who would like to make a child referral to a local Make-A-Wish chapter can call 800-722-9474.

New DCFS Policy — Cook County

Adoption Attorneys Negotiate Subsidies

An adoptive parent's choice of an adoption attorney just became even more important for families who anticipate adoption subsidies for children who are now under DCFS responsibility. Effective with new attorney contract beginning January 2000, adoption attorneys became responsible for reviewing and negotiating adoption subsidies to completion, per DCFS Policy 2000.04.

The DCFS-sponsored Adoption Attorney Panel for Cook County lists only qualified attorneys trained in adoption law and practice, who have completed DCFS training on adoption assistance agreements and adoption issues. If adopting parents choose an attorney from the panel, DCFS will act as the fiscal agent and pay the attorney directly. However, adopting parents may choose an attorney who is not on the panel, as long as the attorney is licensed to practice law in Illinois. In this case, the Department pays the foster parent for the non-recurring adoption expenses (maximum of \$1500).

Documentation of A Child's Needs

Obviously any adoption attorney needs caseworker and foster parent help in documenting a child's special needs to negotiate a subsidy. The following excerpt from DCFS Policy 2000.04 addresses the caseworker's responsibility in giving the attorney documentation from the child's case file:

Upon attorney request, Departmental (DCFS) staff will supply needed documentation for the attorney to successfully review the subsidy. Such documentation would include anything that relates to the child's special needs (i.e. medical documents, psychological assessments, school reports). If the supporting documentation contains confidential information, such as the name or address of the birth parent, said information should be redacted from the document prior to forwarding to the attorney.

Adoptive families also need to give their adoption attorney any similar documentation from their files, as well as input, to establish the child's current or future needs — the basis for the subsidy.



*Christina Schneider, Supervisor
DCFS Permanency Unit*

"Choosing an adoption attorney from the DCFS-sponsored Cook County Adoption Attorney Panel list also has another advantage for some adoptive families: DCFS will pay the attorney directly on behalf of the adoptive parent/s. The Cook County Adoption Attorney Panel list is available by calling 312-633-1801 or through the DCFS web site: www.state.il.us/dcfs."

Life Long Learning and FUN!

Enroll Foster Children Ages 7-14



Enroll your foster child now in an exciting summertime learning experience at the beautiful Chicago Botanic Garden!

Join your foster child at the Sixth Annual Pathways To Development – Chicago Botanic Garden Project. Parents are also welcome.

Amid rolling hills, surrounded by beautiful flowers, exotic trees and sparkling lakes, students will:

- ☞ Plant, maintain and harvest their own vegetable and flower garden.
- ☞ Learn gardening skills as apprentices to expert gardeners – adult to student ratio will be 1:3.
- ☞ Take home vegetables and flowers they grow.
- ☞ Visit specialty gardens, such as the Japanese Garden, the Fruit and Vegetable Garden and the Prairie.
- ☞ Engage in fun, hands-on science and nature activities
- ☞ Learn to make connections between scientific concepts and what they experience in their daily lives.
- ☞ Participate in a challenging and stimulating art class.

When: Every Thursday June 22 through August 17, 2000.

Time: 9:45 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Where: Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe, Illinois

Transportation: Available from Chicago's South and West sides — no cost.

This wonderful opportunity is limited to 40 students. It's not too late! Your child – and you – can participate, so enroll now by calling

Leah Blakely at 312-814-1386 or Sheri Carbone at 312-814-4118.

Developmental Screenings

Children Ages 3 to 5

—Molly McGrath, DCFS Early Childhood Services Director

What are they?

A developmental screening is a brief check on how a pre-school aged child is learning and growing. Usually a group of professionals work questions and playing simple games to see how they are doing. By doing this on how a child is learning to talk, move, take care of themselves, get along and learn about the world around them. It takes less than an hour and it is for the child to have a screening while they are with someone who knows :



Why get one?

Sometimes children in foster care have had difficult things happen in their past and these things can make it harder for them to learn as expected. A screening can help you understand what your child needs to be ready for Kindergarten when they turn five. After each screening, professionals will help you find services for your child. Those services could be Head Start, Pre-Kindergarten, a Home Visiting program or Special Education. It is very important to get services for children who need them as early as possible in their lives so that they can make the most of their education in the future.



How to get one?

The Chicago Public Schools provide, developmental screenings for children in foster care in Cook County. They have twelve different places to get screenings every month — see schedule on this page. All you have to do is pick a place near your house and get a consent form from your case manager. You don't even need an appointment — just show up and tell the screeners you are with your foster child.

Chicago Public Schools CHILD FIND COMMUNITY SCREENINGS

Site	Address	Screening Date	Screening Hours
Mcfetridge Park	3845 N California	Last Thursday	8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Jefferson Park Library	5363 W Lawrence	First Monday	9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Ekhart Park	1330 W Chicago	Third Wednesday	8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Riis Park	6100 W Fullerton	Second Tuesday	8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Jones Magnet High School	606 S State	Second Tuesday	8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Legler Library	115 S Pulaski	Fourth Tuesday	9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Kinara Community Services	2255 S Michigan	Fourth Wednesday	12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Gage Park	2411 W 55 th St	First Tuesday	9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Chicago Child Care Society	5467 S University	Fourth Wednesday	12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Chicago Lawn Library	6120 S Kedzie	First Monday	9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Bessmer Park	8930 S Muskegon	Third Tuesday	9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
United by Faith	2501 W 103 rd St	Fourth Monday	8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Schedule is valid through August 2000. Always call 773-553-1900 to confirm dates and locations.

Gangs Are Only As Strong As A Community Allows Them To Be

From the Chicago Police Department

Gangs are usually a product of the area in which they are active. Gangs rarely invade a community. Instead they develop within the community. The best defense against gangs begins at home.

Be Prepared: Educate Yourself

The Chicago Police Department and many suburban police departments hold workshops, including questions and answer discussions, to assist community parents in learning how to recognize gang symbols and behavior in children, how to cope and how to fight back. Call the Neighborhood Relations Office in your CPD district or call your suburban police department.



Chicago Police Officer Ronald A. Rufo is a certified Gang Resistance Education and Training instructor who has trained the Cook Central Foster Parent Advisory Council about gangs. He encourages Chicago foster groups wishing a speaker, or parents with questions about gangs, to call their Neighborhood Relations Office of their local police district or their suburban police department.

Observe Legal Curfews

Most communities have set curfews for children. Observing curfew laws is another way to avoid gangs and gang activity. In Chicago, children under 17 must be inside by 10:30 p.m. Sunday through Thursday nights and 11:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights.



Chicago Police Department's new non-emergency phone number "311" can provide information and referral to services. Click on Chicago Police Department within the City of Chicago web site for sexual offender lists, a police district directory, monthly neighborhood crime statistics by police district, crime alerts and information about gangs and other useful topics: www.ci.chi.il.us.

Talk to Your Kids About Gangs: Be Alert!

Direct your children into constructive activities. Know their friends. Parents need to watch for gang identifiers and be observant so they do not appear on the personal articles of children. Book bags, posters and gang colors are used to convey the gang message. Parents should be alert so their homes are not being used by a gang to hide contraband.

Remove Graffiti from Your Property

Graffiti indicates that gang activity is in your community. Once the community allows graffiti to remain, it is seen as giving in to the gang. Your wall becomes their wall. Graffiti is NOT a juvenile prank! It puts forth the message from the gang that it controls your neighborhood. For a community to rid itself of gangs, the graffiti must be removed. Call Graffiti Blasters at 312-744-1234 for free removal.

Report Gang Activity Anonymously

Don't be intimidated or look the other way. You are not alone! Call 312-746-GANG to anonymously report gang crime activity in your neighborhood.

To My Foster Parents,

If I had the words I could tell you how much it means to Share your gaze and see you smile back at me. You are Mommy and Daddy to me and love me just because. . .

You may know nothing of my history, of my family or where I'm headed, but it doesn't matter. I am new in the world and you know I need a hand. You're right there loving me and giving me an opportunity to love you back.

I know after just a few days with you the smell of your skin, the sound of your voice and your hope that all will be right with me. I feel love when you place your finger in my tiny fist and let me squeeze. I feel love when you sing to me and hold the bottle just right. So I won't get bubbles.

Your heart is as big as the world and you are my world, seeing me through discomfort and staying up with me all hours of the night.

You wrap me warm in your arms and clean my nose and put my snowsuit on and even though I cry and turn red, I know you love me.

You don't know what's in store, you hope I will be all right and you're not sure that you've made a difference. For the time we have together, for the time I feel secure, nourished and loved, it does have an impact — you DO matter, you DO make a difference.



From the author . . .

Marla Rosen, Cook Central Birth to Three Services Coordinator, "I wrote this poem out of love and respect for the job foster parents do. I value their expertise so much. They are needed at each screening because they know the baby better than anyone else. They know if the baby smiles when they're tickled under the chin, or if the baby can feed himself a teething biscuit. If a foster parent can't come to the screening for some reason, someone like the day care provider who knows the baby well, needs to come. Foster parents coming to the screening need to bring the baby's Health Passport, immunization records and the social history from the caseworker. We're looking forward to helping you help your child!"

Quality Assurance Committee Needs Your Ideas

A regular topic has been on the agenda at the Cook Central Foster Parent Council's monthly meetings since March — how to improve services to foster parents and children within the Cook Central Region. The new Quality Assurance Committee composed of staff and foster parents is leading the discussion and is also interested in other ideas to improve communication. The Council meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the DCFS office located at 3518 W. Division from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Private agency and DCFS foster parents are encouraged to participate.

COOK
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Fabulous Free Stuff

On the Web

- **Printable coupons.** Enter your zip code to find offers and discounts from retail supermarkets and online vendors. **ECoupons** – www.ecoupons.com
- **Stamp Collector magazine for kids.** Subscribe to *Stampers Cool-lectibles*, a free quarterly magazine that is educational and fun. **U.S. Postal Service** – www.stampsonline.com/catalog/stmpr.htm
- **Girl Power.** Address book, diary, poster, stickers and more. **National Clearinghouse on Alcohol and Drug Information** – www.health.org
- **Soccer Poster.** Free poster of the World Cup-winning U.S. Women's Soccer Team. Offered as part of the government's antismoking campaign. **National Cancer Institute** – www.smokefree.gov/poster.html
- **National disaster information for kids.** Includes coloring books, stickers, hurricane tracking maps. **Federal Emergency Management Agency** – www.fema.gov/kids/freebie.htm



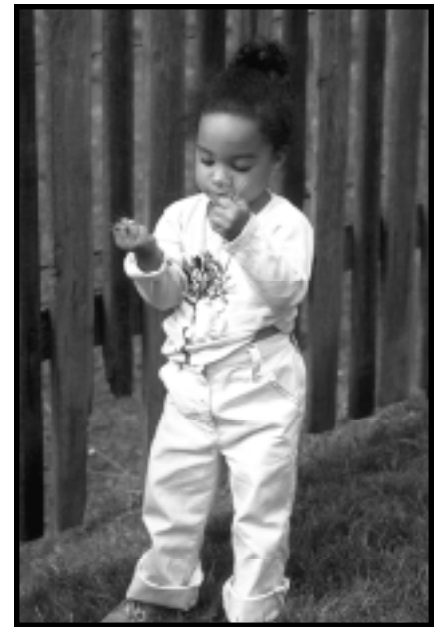
LAN 63 Residents ONLY

Services Tailored to Community Families

Meet Local Area Network (LAN) 63, located within the Cook North area of Chicago. Earlier issues of *Fostering Illinois* featured other Cook North LANs to encourage foster parent readers to attend meetings to represent both foster parent and foster children's need for local programs and services. This time, Cook North would like to inform foster parents and other residents of LAN 63, of specific service programs available. Anyone *living within LAN 63* and interested in the programs below should call the phone number shown.

Spanish Parenting Classes

Parents with at least one child, age newborn to 18, can network with others and learn more about Human Development, Communication in the Family and Conduct Management. Classes are held once a week at 4751 N. Kedzie, Chicago, either on Mondays from 6-8 p.m. or Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to Noon. CTA tokens are provided, if needed. Added bonus: Follow-up to classes is a home visit to parents by staff. Contact: Luz Carrasco, Youth Outreach Services, 773-478-4500 or 773-539-7605



Foster Youth Ages 13-15: Adolescent Permanency Initiative

Many youth this age need extra support to help them gain a permanent family through adoption, returning home or guardianship. The program helps assess what the youth and family need through wraparound service planning, and then provides training, support groups, multi-families activities and 24-hour placement stabilizations and crisis intervention services. Contact: Jennifer Paoletti, Youth Outreach Services, 773-777-6377, Ext. 286.

LAN 63 Neighborhoods

Albany Park
Belmont-Craigin
Dunning
Edison Park
Forest Glen
Hermosa
Irving Park
Jefferson Park
Montclare
Norwood Park
Portage Park
O'Hare

Monthly Meetings

Second Tuesday
Youth Outreach
Services
6417 W. Irving Park Rd.,
Chicago.
For exact dates,
times, or more
information,
call 800-871-8400.

Respite Services

Families in crisis may find both in-home and out-of-home short-term respite care, training and support through Lydia Home Association's Respite Service. The program targets children ages 3 to 15 who are at risk for being moved outside the home due to emotional/behavioral problems such as aggression, poor impulse control, oppositional behavior, ADHD, school problems or emotional/psychiatric difficulties etc. The goal is to reduce tension and conflict. *Adolescents with substance abuse or criminal behavior are not eligible.* Contact: Respite Coordinator, 773-736-1447.

Children 2-7: Early Intervention Behavioral Therapy

Do you have a child this age continually displaying oppositional behavior through tantrums, noncompliance or hyperactivity? The Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) program wants to target problematic parent-child relationships and intervene before abuse, or out-of-home care occurs. PCIT is a short-term program (12-14 weeks) with two phases: Child Directed Interaction to strengthen the positive parent/child relationship and Parent Directed Interaction focusing on teaching behavior management skills and then refining them to meet the unique needs of the child. Contact: Counseling Center, 773-736-1447.

Parents of Children 0-5: Educational Drop-In Center

English, Spanish, Polish Spoken

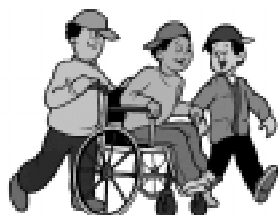
Peer support, advice from trained professionals, family activities, a lending library of books, tapes and videos and vision, hearing and developmental screenings are all available two mornings a week through the Parents Plus program offered by Metropolitan Family Services at 3445 N. Central Avenue, in Chicago. Monthly speakers offer interesting topics like the "terrible twos" and "what to do about sibling rivalry". Meet other parents who share your parenting interests! Call for exact days and times. Contact: Sandra Stumme, 773-282-9535.

Is Your Child Eligible for Special Education?

Special education refers to individualized education services for children up to age 21 with disabilities who require special services and support to receive the maximum benefit from their education.

Children with the following disabilities may be eligible for special education services:

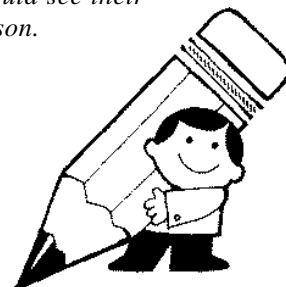
- Mental disability
- Specific learning disability
- Behavioral/emotional disorder
- Speech/language impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Vision impairment
- Physical disability
- Autism
- Traumatic brain injury
- Other health impairments
- Deafness-blindness
- Developmental delay
- Multiple impairments



Instructional services may include special teaching techniques, material, equipment, facilities and services. All special education services are at no cost to families.



Yasmina Sefane-Johnson, South Suburban Educational Advisor; and Cook Suburban Assistant, Richard Baker, are available to help South Suburban DCFS foster families who need educational information and advocacy. Mr. Baker brings a unique perspective to his position because he grew up in foster care in Chicago. South Suburban DCFS foster parents may reach them at 773-854-2208. South City DCFS foster parents should call Marguerite Chapman, Educational Advisor, at 773-371-6029 or Assistant, Shirley Lumpkin, 773-371-6028. Private agency foster parents should see their agency's Educational Liaison.



New Free Special Education Publications

National Information Center for Children & Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)

Basics for Parents: Your Child's Evaluation

First in a new Basics of Parents Series, this publication describes the steps school systems take to evaluate a child to determine if he/she has a disability and is eligible for special education.

Questions Often Asked by Parents About Special Education Services

A "Q and A" helps parents learn about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and explains how students with disabilities access special education and related services.

Individualized Education Programs (IEP)

Substantial guidance about the legal requirements for developing a student's IEP is given. A verbatim reprinting of federal regulations about IEPs and Appendix A to the IDEA 97 with a series of questions and answers about federal regulations on the IEP is also included.

The first copy is free. Additional copies are \$2.00. These and other publications, including those available in Spanish, in either text-only or PDF format are on the web site: www.nichcy.org. A free publications catalog is also available.

Contact NICHCY
P.O. Box 1492
Washington, D.C. 20013-1492

800-695-0285
E-mail: nichcy@aed.org

Cook County Training Calendar

FosterPRIDE In-Service Training Call 312-553-5829 or -5830

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)

COOK NORTH - Site to Be Announced

Aug. 14, 16, 21 & 23 (Mon/Wed)
Sept. 16 & 23 (Sat - 1½ days)

Sept. 25, 27, & 29 (Mon/Wed/Fri)

COOK CENTRAL - Site to Be Announced

Aug. 22, 24, 29 & 31 (Tues/Thurs)
Sept. 2 & 9 (Sat - 1½ days)

Sept. 18, 20 & 22 (Mon/Wed/Fri)

COOK SOUTH - DCFS South Area Office

Aug. 15, 17, 22 & 24 (Tues/Thurs)
Aug. 19 & 26 (Sat - 1½ days)

Sept. 11, 13 & 15 (Mon/Wed/Fri)

Sept. 18, 20 & 25 (Mon/Wed)
Sept. 18, 20 & 25 (Mon/Wed)

6:30-9:30 p.m.
9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

6:30-9:30 p.m.
9:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.
9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

6:30-9:30 p.m.
9:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.
9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
6:30-9:30 p.m.
6:30-9:30 p.m.

Module

1
2
3 & 4
1
2
3 & 4
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2
3 & 4
5
9

Educational Advocacy

Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours

COOK NORTH

Aug. 7 & 9 (Mon/Wed)

COOK CENTRAL

Aug. 12 (Sat)

Aug. 9 & 14 (Mon/Wed)

Sept. 14 & 21 (Thurs)

COOK SOUTH

Aug. 8 & 10 (Tues/Thurs)
Aug. 12 (Sat)
Sept. 30 (Sat)

Sept. 14 & 19 (Tues/Thurs)
Sept. 30 (Sat)

Jewish Children's Bureau

6:30-9:30 p.m.

Lutheran Child & Family Services

9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Sequin Services

6:00-9:00 p.m.

Hephzibah

6:30-9:30 p.m.

DCFS South Area Office

6:30-9:30 p.m.

9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Habilitative Systems

6:30-9:30 p.m.

9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.



New Hotline Helps West Side Kids Stay Out of Foster Care

When a family needs help, where does a relative, parent, neighbor or clergy go to find help? Navigating the social service system can be difficult. To make it easier, DCFS has awarded a contract to the Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health, a non-profit advocacy group, to coordinate referrals and follow-up care for families with children in the 7th Congressional District on Chicago's West Side.

The new hotline will offer families referrals to eleven agencies. DCFS hopes early contact with agencies will cut the number of children taken from their families because of severe problems. The hotline, now in service, is 800-KID-4345.

New Cook County Juvenile Court Orientation Date Announced

Foster parents, caseworkers, students and new court staff are invited to a half-day orientation session on Cook County Juvenile Court operations held every other month. The next date is August 30, 9 a.m. to Noon

Reservations are required. Call 312-433-6990. Adults only — no children will be admitted.

Pre-registration is required for all classes!