

SUPPORTS AVAILABLE TO ALL FOSTER CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

ADOPTION

Adoption Information Center of Illinois (AICI)

800-572-2390

**M-F 8 a.m.-8 p.m. /Voicemail
Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. / Sun. Closed**

- Information: Adoption process and adoption agencies.
- Adoption Listing Service: Descriptions and photos of waiting children.
- Post Adoption Clearinghouse: Services available for adoptive families.
- Refer prospective adoptive families to AICI, or to your agency.
- Foster families interested in adopting their foster child/ren, or another child, should contact their supervising agency.

Cook County ONLY

Expedited Adoption Program (EAP)

312-633-3425

M-F 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m./Voicemail

Foster parents of children whose cases meet one of these criteria should ask the worker if the case has been referred to EAP, or may call this program directly for more information.

Cook County caseworkers may refer children's cases meeting one of these criteria to this project :

- 1 parent deceased/ 1 parent signed surrenders or consents
- Both parents signed surrenders or consents
- Both parents deceased
- 1 parent's rights terminated/1 parent signed surrender
- 1 parent unknown/ 1 parent signed surrender or deceased
- Both parents unknown
- 1 parent signed surrender or deceased/ 1 parent's whereabouts unknown
- Both parents' whereabouts unknown

ADVOCACY

DCFS Advocacy Office for Children and Families

800-232-3798

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

Help for foster parents, workers, birth parents, and the public in:

- Understanding/verifying DCFS rule, policy, and procedure.
- Obtaining services for foster children.
- Understanding what can be appealed through the DCFS Service Appeal system or in filing a service appeal with DCFS, including emergency appeals.

Callers should have this information ready:

Child's name, birth date, identification number,
Caseworker and supervisor's name and phone numbers

Cook County ONLY

Relative Helpline

312-341-9452

M, W, TH 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m./ Voicemail

Information, training, advocacy, support group *for relative foster parents only*. In-office help is also available.

AIDS/HIV

DCFS AIDS Project

312-328-2284
M-F 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Help for foster parents and HIV/AIDS affected families with relatives in foster care:

- Referral to local and statewide services.
- Orientation and training about fostering HIV/AIDS children.
- Referral to agency foster parenting programs for HIV/AIDS children.

Illinois AIDS Hotline

800-AID-AIDS
M-F 9 a.m.-9 p.m., Sat/Sun 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Information and referral to local AIDS testing and programs.

APPEALS/MEDIATION

DCFS Appeals Unit

312-814-5540
M-F 8:30am-4:30pm

- Information about filing a service appeal or requesting mediation services.
- To file an appeal or request mediation services through DCFS.

See Section 8, pages 27-29.

ATTORNEY

For foster parents who are sued. . .as a result of being a foster parent.

See Section 8, page 17.

BEHAVIOR/MENTAL HEALTH

See Section 5, pages 17-22, for available services.

Behavioral Crisis Help

Placement Stabilization Program

800-345-9049
24 Hours

BOARD PAYMENTS—See Payments pages 18-20

BRACES—See Dental Care - Referral to an Orthodontist

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

DCFS Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline

800-25-ABUSE (800-252-2873)
Illinois Callers Only/24 Hours
Outside Illinois Callers: 217-785-4020

For mandated reporters and the public to anonymously report suspected cases of abuse or neglect. Foster parents are mandated to report suspected abuse or neglect of foster children placed with them. See Section 8, pages 31-37.

CHILDREN

General Resources for ALL Illinois Children

HELP-ME-GROW

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.

CLAIMS — Damages to Property or Bodily Injury Caused By A Foster Child

Foster Parent Reimbursement Program

312-793-8846
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 foster child.

See pages 16-17 of this section for what is covered, claim limits, and how to make a claim.

CLOTHING –See page 22.

CRISIS—Help In An Unexpected Crisis With A Foster Child

DCFS Placement Stabilization Program

800-345-9049
24 Hours

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

See Section 5: page 18.

COURT APPOINTED SUPERVISED ADVOCATE (CASA)

Cook County Only

312-433-4928

Outside Cook County

**To find your local CASA program, call the
CASA Statewide Office
877-227-2669**

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. Foster parents 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.

DAMAGES—See Claims

DAY CARE

See pages 12-15 in this section for:

- Who is eligible
- Statewide listing of Resource and Referral numbers to call to identify a local day care provider
- Where to call with questions or problems

Day Care Provider Licensing

For information about becoming a licensed day care provider, call your regional DCFS office. See DCFS office listing, Section 1, pages 7-8.

DEAF SERVICES

DCFS Deaf Services Coordinator

**800-526-0857
DCFS Relay Operator
Ask for 312-814-4117.**

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

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES (DCFS)

General Information and Referral

773-989-3450

Call to find caseworker's names and location, DCFS divisions or personnel.

Offices

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

Emergencies After Business Hours

**Statewide 800-252-2873
Cook County ONLY 312-989-3450**

Rules, Policy, Procedures (See website: www.state.il.us/dcfs)

**Questions of rule, policy or procedure Advocacy Office 800-232-3798
To order a single copy. . DCFS Office of Child and Family Policy 217-524-1983**

DENTAL CARE

Checkups

Doral Dental
888-286-2447

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

Cook County ONLY

Severely Disabled Children ONLY

773-296-7063

This special dental program is open to severely disabled children only. Call for an appointment and identify the child as a foster child.

EDUCATION

Advocacy

Help in obtaining services for a child. . .Contact the caseworker, supervisor, and agency. See Section 6.

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 for children 0-3 related to developmental delays and disabilities. See Section 6, pages 10-11. Call Help-Me-Grow 800-323-4769 for referral statewide.

Special Education Services

Legal Advocacy See Section 6, page 7, Special Education Law Project.

Questions About Special Education Services

Discuss your foster child's needs with the caseworker and the school. If you are still unclear, you may call the Educational Liaison for private agency families or the Education Advisor for DCFS supervised families. See Section 6, page 4 for more information.

Testing

Ask the caseworker to make the request from your local school.

EMERGENCY

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

Abuse/Neglect

Report suspected abuse/neglect of a child to the DCFS Hotline **800-25-ABUSE.**

Behavioral Crisis

Call Placement Stabilization

800-345-9049

24 Hours

Life-Threatening Behavior

Call the police. Contact your agency.

Medical Emergency

Go to your local hospital emergency room.
Contact your supervising agency or DCFS region.

Poison Hotline

800-942-5969

24 Hours

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.

Recalled Children's Products

800-638-2772

U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC)

Runaway

If your foster child runs away, make a police report. Contact your agency.

FOOD/NUTRITION

SHARE Food

M-F 800-961-7287/Voicemail

Monthly half-price preset food packages. Foster families should identify themselves to eliminate the 2 hour volunteer requirement. Call to find a local SHARE food program in your area.

WIC

800-545-2200/Voicemail

Women, Infants, and Children's Supplemental Food

M-F 8 a.m.-9 p.m.

Baby formula and age-appropriate food for children under 5 years old who are nutritionally at risk—many foster children qualify. Call for your local WIC program and how to apply.

FOSTER CARE

Recruitment of Prospective Foster Parents

**800-624-KIDS
or your agency**

DCFS maintains a statewide number for families who are interested in becoming foster parents. Refer prospective foster families to your agency's foster care program or to this statewide inquiry line.

FOSTER PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

The foster parent organizations in Illinois, the U.S., and internationally listed below do not have permanent headquarters and are staffed by volunteers. All information given here is accurate at publication.

Foster Parent Support/Networking Groups

Three sources of information:

- The Illinois Foster Parent Association (IFPA) can refer you to your local IFPA-affiliated group.
- Local DCFS offices (See Section 1, pages 7-8) will be able to connect foster parents with independent foster parent groups located within the region, which include both DCFS and private agency foster parents.
- Private agency foster parents should contact their agency about support groups.

Illinois Foster Parent Association

**847-949-8009
Kelly Hobbs**

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

National Foster Parent Association (NFPA)

800-557-5238

The only national organization of primarily foster parent members. Call the Information Service 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.

International Foster Care Organisation (IFCO)

**608-274-9111
Kara White**

Information about membership and the annual training conference held in various countries can also be obtained by calling Kara White, Administrative Secretary.

Mailing address: 2706 Badger Lane, Madison, WI 53713.

FOSTER PARENT REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM- See Pages 16-17

IMMIGRATION SERVICES - DCFS OFFICE OF

312-814-8600

Foster parents of foreign-born foster children 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 foster child's citizenship or legal residency and then contacting the Office of Immigration Services for assistance when needed.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Your child's HealthWorks primary care physician will immunize your foster children.

INSPECTOR GENERAL

800-722-9124

M-F 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m./Voicemail

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

LOCAL AREA NETWORK (LAN) - See Section 5, pages 21-25.

To Find Your LAN

800-871-8400

To identify your LAN, the Foster Parent LAN Liaison in your area, and how to participate in LAN meetings. Your child's caseworker and your agency should also be able to put you in touch with your LAN.

Services Available for Foster Children

You and your child's caseworker must TOGETHER request services from your LAN. See Section 5, page 22.

MEDIA — TV/Radio/Newspaper/Other

Permission for Publicity, Interviews, or Photos of A Foster Child

DCFS Communications

312-814-6847

See Section 8, page 23.

M-F 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

MEDICAL CARE

For referral to a HealthWorks primary health care physicians.

Cook County

800-KID-4345

Outside Cook County—Call your local HealthWorks agency listed in Section 5, page 3.

NEWSLETTER — Foster Parent

Fostering Illinois is the DCFS-sponsored newsletter written for all foster parents and all relatives raising children in DCFS care. Six issues are direct mailed annually. *Fostering Illinois* is provided to all DCFS staff, private agency staff as requested by the agency, and prospective foster parents who have applications pending one year or less. **Address changes:** Foster parents must notify their agency or DCFS region and the agency or region must submit an address change to DCFS Central Office. Each issue contains information about how to contact the Editor.

PAYMENTS - See Pages 18-21.

Payment Line (DCFS)

800-525-0499 / 24 Hours

DCFS foster parents: Pre-recorded information about foster care payment check mailing schedule. **Private agency foster parents:** 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

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

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

PUBLIC GUARDIAN

For foster children: 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.

RELATIVE HELPLINE Cook County ONLY

For relatives only.

312-341-9452

Answers to questions and advocacy. In-office help available.

M, W, Th 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

SCHOLARSHIPS

DCFS-sponsored: College (See Section 7, page 24)

217-524-2030

General Information/Where to Apply

See High School Counselor

High School/Private

Statewide and U.S.

Daniel Murphy Foundation

312-341-4080

Scholarships to private high schools in Illinois and boarding schools in U.S. for students who could not otherwise afford this type of education. Students need to apply in fall of 8th grade for following year. Call for application and deadline.

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) BENEFITS

Foster children eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) may have "excess funds" in their DCFS account which may be used for certain allowable expenses. See pages 24-25 of this section to determine how to inquire about existence and allowable uses of excess SSI funds.

TAX COUNSELING/PREPARATION

The Center for Law & Human Services

888-827-8511

- Tax Handbooks are mailed to foster parents annually in early winter with tax guidelines related to foster parenting.
- Free tax counseling and tax return preparation for foster families meeting annual low-income levels are available at sites around the state. The tax handbook lists tax preparation sites and hours of operation.
- Speakers are available for foster parent groups interested in tax implications of foster parenting.

TEENS - DCFS Sponsored Programs

Independent Living description - See Section 7, pages 21-28.

Pregnant and/or Parenting Teens

Services may be available through your agency or through DCFS.

See Section 7, pages 24-27 for information on supports, rights, and how to appeal decisions.

Youth Development Programs - Sponsored by DCFS

See Section 7, pages 21-24 for complete program descriptions of:

- Youth in Transition (YTP) (Age 17, not yet 21)
- Youth in College (YCP) (High school grad/GED enrolled full-time in college or vocational training)
- Supervised Independent Living Program (SLIP) (Age 16, not yet 21)
- DCFS Scholarships
- Consultation About Independent Living Programs

Contact your caseworker, agency or DCFS Regional PAL Coordinator about getting your youth into these programs.

TRAINING

Adoptive Parent Training

Adoption Conversion

Licensed foster parents who are adopting a foster child already placed with them can take a nine-hour training to answer questions and concerns during the transition to adoption. Participants have to be referred to this training by either their licensing or adoption worker.

Adopt Only

Families that do not foster and are only interested in adopting a legally free DCFS ward can take a nine-hour classroom training. These families also complete an individualized training program based on their strengths and challenges, and those of the child/ren they are adopting.

Foster Parent Training

Prospective foster parent training

Prospective foster parents may attend training after being referred by the agency or DCFS licensing worker. Families interested in being foster parents to children in the child welfare system can attend six-hour pre-licensing classroom training as part of the licensing process.

After licensing, families that are interested in being foster parents to non-related children in the DCFS child welfare system can take the additional 21 classroom hours of pre-placement training classes. Also, at least one parent in the foster family is required to take the six-hour Education Advocacy training on how to support children's educational needs.

In-Service training for licensed foster and adoptive parents

Foster and adoptive parents can self-enroll for any of the Foster PRIDE classes listed on the following page by calling the local training programs.

TRAINING (con't.)

PRIDE Modules

1. Foundation for Meeting the Developmental Needs of Children at Risk (12 hours)
2. Using Discipline to Protect, Nurture and Meet Developmental Needs (9 hours)
3. Addressing Developmental Issues Related to Sexuality (3 hours)
4. Responding to the Signs and Symptoms of Sexual Abuse (6 hours)
5. Supporting Relationships Between Children and Their Families (9 hours)
6. Working As A Professional Team Member (9 hours)
7. Promoting Children's Personal and Cultural Identity (6 hours)
8. Promoting Permanency Outcomes (9 hours)
9. Managing the Impact of Placement on Your Family (6 hours)
10. Understanding the Effects of Chemical Dependency on Children and Families (15 hours)

Transracial Parenting Training

Licensed foster and adoptive parents can call the college in the box below that is closest to them to register for this nine hour course developed for parents who have or may consider adopting or fostering a child of another race, culture or ethnicity.

Educational Advocacy Training

It is **mandatory** for one foster parent in each family to attend this training in order to be licensed or re-licensed. This six-hour training covers information foster and adoptive parents need to know so that they can advocate for their foster or adopted children's educational rights and needs.

DCFS Foster and Adoptive Parent Training Programs

Cook County; call Harold Washington College at	312/553-3031 or 5830
Aurora Area, call College of DuPage at	630/942-2903
Rockford Area, call Rock Valley College at	815/874-3000, ext. 2301
Peoria Area, call Black Hawk College at	309/755-2200 ext. 8234
Champaign Area, call Parkland College at	217/355-4644
Springfield Area, call Lincoln Land College at	217/786-2458
East St. Louis Area, call SIU-Edwardsville at	618/650-3213
Marion Area, call SIU-Carbondale at	618/536-7751

Only licensed foster or adoptive parents may call directly to register for FosterPRIDE, Transracial Parenting or Educational Advocacy Training.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Lending Libraries

One of the ways in which foster parents can obtain training credit is by using the resources in the Foster and Adoptive Parent Lending Libraries Catalog. This catalog lists over 100 books, videos and cassette tapes on 17 different topics that foster parents can borrow for two weeks from the above training programs. After the resource is read, viewed or listened to, the foster parent needs to complete the CFS 574 Foster Care Training Credit Approval Form and send it to the college with the returned material to get credit. The new expanded bright pink Lending Libraries Catalog was sent to each foster care home in August 2000. Foster parents who were licensed after August 2000 were mailed the catalog.

Funds for Training

Early Childhood Intervention Clearinghouse

800-852-4302

Foster parents, birth parents, siblings, spouses, and close family members of persons with a disability may be eligible for Illinois funding to attend training related to a person's disability. Only individuals, not agencies or organizations, may apply. Recent change: local, state, and national foster parent conferences do not qualify. Amount of funds available and eligibility guidelines may change from fiscal year to fiscal year. Call for the latest guidelines and an application.

**Requirements— Training required for foster parent license renewal
See Section 8, Licensing Standards.**

DAY CARE

Eligibility

DCFS will pay for child care for two-parent foster parent homes where both parents work, or single foster parent homes where the single foster parent works, or is in job training or educational programs which will lead to employment. DCFS may also pay for child care for other documented reasons, such as: disability of a foster parent, a disabling condition of a child or when day care is court-ordered.

In homes where there are two foster parents, both foster parents must be working, or at least one has to be working if the other is disabled. If a foster parent is disabled, a doctor's statement will be required. The statement must explain the extent of the disabling condition(s), including the duration, prognosis and how the disability impairs the person's ability to care for the child/ren in that home.

You are not eligible if, for any reason, you are not actually reporting to work, such as in the cases of seasonal/temporary employment, leave of absence, lay-off, etc. For example, a teacher would not be eligible for day care payment during the summer, if he or she were employed but did not actually go to work during the summer. You also are not eligible if you are looking for work or to attend foster parent training. Foster parents who enroll a child in day care and are not eligible are subject to paying for the day care. If you are in doubt about your eligibility prior to enrolling a child, contact the regional DCFS Office Day Care Service Unit or the Office of Child Development (for Cook County) at 312-808-5060.

Day Care Rates

The amount DCFS will pay for day care depends on: type of day care chosen (day care center, licensed family day care home, babysitter, relative, etc.) and your location within Illinois.

There are maximum day care rates which can be paid for each type of care. Most day care centers and homes accept the state rate. If you want to choose one not accepting the state rate, you must pay the additional amount. Check with your caseworker, or DCFS regional office (outside Cook County), or the DCFS Office of Child Development (Cook County ONLY).

Finding a Day Care Provider

Call the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) in your area. See page 15.

Identify yourself as a foster parent! The service will be FREE because you are inquiring on behalf of a foster child. The general public pays a modest fee for this service based on family size and income.

A CCR&R child care specialist will consult with you by phone and provide a list of local day care providers that meet your child's needs from a computerized database of child care information. Have this information handy: ZIP code; number of children needing day care and their ages; hours you will need day care; any special needs.

Tip: The caseworker must approve your selection of any day care provider. DCFS strongly encourages the use of licensed day care centers or licensed family day care homes. Ask the CCR&R child care specialist to discuss the advantages of licensed day care with you. Selecting a licensed day care provider makes the caseworker's approval decision much easier.

How to Make A Day Care Request

- 1) Contact your caseworker with your day care plan as soon as possible. The caseworker may have questions and must determine that the day care plan for the child/ren is appropriate.
- 2) You and your caseworker will:
 - Complete the day care application (CFS 2002).
 - Obtain the three signatures required: foster parent, caseworker and day care provider.
 - Attach needed documentation of employment and/or training.
 - Employment documentation may be a recent check stub or employer letter stating hours worked per week or tax forms for self-employed foster parents.
 - Training documentation can be a copy of your current class schedule or a letter from the school or training program.
 - Disability documentation would be a doctor's letter detailing the extent of the disability if one parent is employed and one parent is disabled.

Keep copies of the application submitted, and all required documentation of employment or training. In case of loss or future questions, you will have what you need at your fingertips.

- 3) Submit the completed application and all documentation to your regional DCFS Office Day Care Service Unit; or the Office of Child Development (for Cook County cases) at 312/808-5060.

Ways to Eliminate Payment Delays and Non-Payment

Completed applications with all signatures and documentation must be submitted no later than 30 days after the start of day care services to ensure timely payment. Submissions of day care applications after this time may result in payment delays to the day care provider and possible nonpayment.

Non-Employment Related Day Care and Day Care for the Children of Foster Teens

Contact your regional DCFS Office Day Care Service Unit; or Office of Child Development (Cook County) to obtain the correct application form and procedures about how to apply.

Day Care Payment Approval Notification

After day care applications are approved by the regional DCFS Office Day Care Service Unit or Office of Child Development, both the foster parent and the day care provider will receive a computer-generated approval letter. Keep the approval letter in file for future reference.

Day Care Provider Billing

Shortly after the day care provider receives the approval letter, and at the end of each month of service, DCFS mails a computer-generated billing form to the day care provider. The billing form should be completed, signed and returned without delay. Payments will normally be received within 2-3 weeks after bills are submitted.

Questions After Day Care Approval

Call your regional DCFS Day Care Service staff.

Be ready to give the staff the following information when you call:

- Your 5-digit Family I.D. number shown on the approval letter.
- The name of the day care provider.
- The 6-digit day care provider number shown on the approval letter.
- Specific month/s of payment that are in question.

Re-Determining Eligibility for Day Care

After you begin receiving day care, you must notify DCFS if

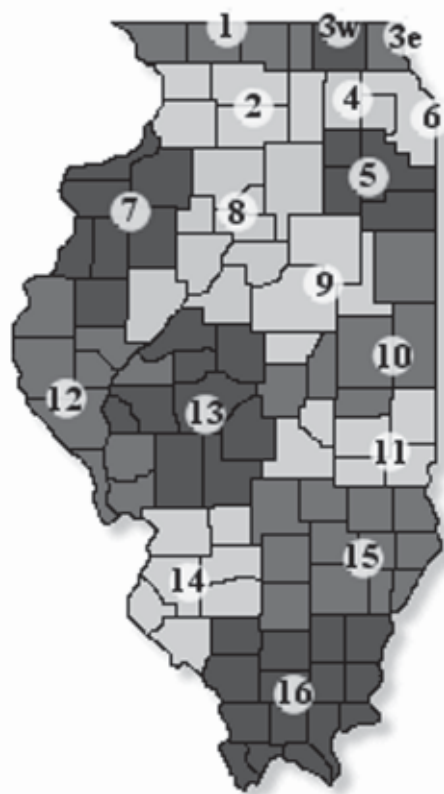
- Either foster parent stops working or attending school for any reason, including a leave of absence or disability.
- The child no longer needs day care.
- You change day care providers (this will require a new application).
- The day care provider's address changes.
- You adopt or become a subsidized guardian to the child/ren.
- The child no longer resides in your home. Note: Day care approval does not transfer to a child's new foster parent or to the birth parent when the child returns home. This will require a new application by the current caretaker.

Eligibility for day care services must be re-determined every six months or as deemed necessary by the regional DCFS Day Care Service Unit or the Cook County Office of Child Development. Completion of the re-determination, including the submission of any required documentation for employment, training or disability will be required for the continuation of day care service payment. You may contact the regional DCFS Office Day Care Service Unit or the Office of Child Development (for Cook County) at 312-808-5060 if you have questions or need assistance with the re-determination.

Call Your DCFS Office for Day Care Applications/Rates/Questions

Cook County	DCFS Office of Child Development 1921 S. Indiana Ave. Chicago, IL 60616	312-808-5060 312-808-5131 fax
Rockford/Aurora area	DCFS Day Care Unit 107M N. 3 rd Street Rockford, IL 61101	815-967-3735 815-967-3737 fax
Peoria area	DCFS Day Care Unit 5415 N. University Ave. Peoria, IL 61614	309-693-5400 309-693-2582 fax
Champaign area	DCFS Day Care Unit 2125 S. 1 st Street Champaign, IL 61820	217-278-5500 217-278-5557 fax
Springfield area	DCFS Day Care Unit 4500 S. 6 th Street Springfield, IL 62706	217-786-6830 217-786-6771 fax
E. St. Louis area	DCFS Day Care Unit 10 Collinsville Avenue E. St. Louis, IL 62201	618-583-2100 618-583-2141fax
Marion area	DCFS Day Care Unit 2309 W. Main St. Suite 108 Marion, IL 62959	618-993-7122 618-993-5467 fax

Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Service Delivery Areas



Service Delivery Area	Counties
1	Daviess, Stephenson, Winnebago, and Boone
2	Carroll, Ogle, Whiteside, Lee, and De Kalb
3-E	Lake
3-W	McHenry
4	Kane and DuPage
5	Kendall, Will, Grundy, and Kankakee
6	Cook
7	Rock Island, Henry, Mercer, Henderson, Warren, Knox, and McDonough
8	Bureau, Putnam, La Salle, Stark, Marshall, Peoria, Woodford, Fulton, and Tazewell
9	Livingston, McLean, Ford, and De Witt
10	Iroquois, Champaign, Vermilion, Macon, Piatt, and Douglas
11	Moultrie, Coles, Edgar, Shelby, Cumberland, and Clark
12	Hancock, Adams, Schuyler, Brown, Cass, Pike, Calhoun, Greene, and Jersey
13	Mason, Menard, Logan, Scott, Morgan, Sangamon, Christian, Macoupin, and Montgomery
14	Madison, Bond, St. Clair, Clinton, Washington, Monroe, and Randolph
15	Fayette, Effingham, Jasper, Crawford, Clay, Richland, Lawrence, Marion, Jefferson, Wayne, Edwards, and Perry
16	Franklin, Hamilton, White, Jackson, Williamson, Saline, Gallatin, Union, Johnson, Pope, Hardin, Alexander, Pulaski, and Massac

To Find Day Care

Call Your Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Agency

Service Area	CCR & R Agency	Phone #
1	YMCA of Rockford	800-872-9780
2	DeKalb 4-C	800-848-8727
3	YWCA of NE Illinois (Lake County)	800-244-5376
	YMCA of McHenry County	815-459-4459
		or 847-516-0037
4	YMCA of Metro Chicago	630-790-8137
5	Child Care Resource & Referral	800-552-5526
6	Cook County CCR &R	773-769-8000
7	Community CCR &R Center	800-369-3778
8	Illinois Central College Child Care Connection	800-421-4371
9	CCR & R Network	800-437-8256
10	U of I: Child Care Resource Service Champaign County	800-325-5516 217-333-3252
11	Eastern Illinois University CCR &R	800-545-7439
12	West Central Child Care Connection	800-782-7318
13	Community Child Care Connection	800-676-2805
14	CHASI CCR &R	800-467-9200
15	Rend Lake College: Project Child	800-362-7257
16	John A. Logan College CCR &R	800-232-0908

Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies
<http://www.aces.uiuc.edu/~ILCare/>

FOSTER PARENT REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM



What is it?

This program provides *secondary insurance coverage* for foster parents (over and above any other valid and collectable insurance held by the foster parents) for property damage and bodily injury caused by a foster child while the child is “in the care, custody and control” of the foster parent. DCFS AUTOMATICALLY provides this coverage at no cost to all foster parents and relative caretakers. The coverage is described in full in DCFS’ Administrative Procedure 13, which will be sent to foster parents who file a claim or request a copy.

What specifically is covered? What are the limits?

Physical Damage to the Property of Others

Description: When a foster child causes property damage to other people’s property.

Limits of Coverage: \$5,000 per fiscal year. Payments will be made based on an “actual cash value” basis, the amount it would cost to repair or replace the damaged property with material/s of like kind and quality, less allowable deductions for normal physical deterioration and depreciation based on the age, condition and normal life expectancy of the property.

Physical Damage to the Property of the Foster Family

Description: The foster child causes damage to the foster family’s property.

Limits of Coverage: \$5,000 per fiscal year (\$50 deductible per incident). Payments will be made based on an “actual cash value” basis as described above as well as in Administrative Procedure #13.

Bodily Injury to Others

Description: The foster child injures someone outside the foster family.

Limits of Coverage: \$5,000 per fiscal year

Bodily Injury to Members of the Foster Family

Description: The foster child injures a member of the foster family.

Limits of Coverage: \$5,000 per fiscal year (\$50 deductible per incident)

How do foster parents file a claim?

Immediately notify the child's caseworker that a claim needs to be filed. The caseworker will view the damage and request that a claim form be sent directly to the foster parents.

Complete the claim form, have the child's caseworker sign it, attach all pertinent receipts and other supporting documents, and have the worker make a copy of everything for the foster parent before they mail it to:

Foster Parent Reimbursement
Program Coordinator
Department of Children & Family Services
17 N. State St., 7th Floor
Chicago, IL 60602
Phone: 312-793-8896
Fax: 312-793-2084

Note: The *insured* foster parent must provide the names, addresses and the policy numbers for any homeowner or health insurance that is currently in force, including employer or school insurance. The *uninsured foster parent* must provide a notarized written statement that there is no primary insurance coverage.

How does DCFS handle the claim?

The DCFS Program Coordinator will review the claim to ensure that all necessary information is present and forward it to the Review Committee.

The Reimbursement Review Committee meets every month. Once a decision for payment is approved or denied, the foster parent will be contacted by mail. If payment for the claim is approved, the foster parent will receive reimbursement within 8 to 12 weeks.

All payments for claims will be paid to the party which incurred the damage or sustained the injury.

When can a foster parent NOT collect?

- If the damages caused by the foster child resulted from inadequate supervision on the part of the foster parent/s OR as a result of the foster parent/s not following the standards and requirements set forth in the DCFS Licensing Standards.
- If the foster parent/s are covered for the full amount of the claim by their own insurance policy.
- Foster parents must, in most cases, file a claim with their own insurance FIRST, before making a claim with DCFS.
- If the claim does not contain proof of payment or the estimated replacement cost of an item, from an established business.
- If an act allegedly occurs, but cannot be proven, such as the foster child denying a theft which cannot be verified.
- If the claim is untrue, false, fraudulent or the actual facts have been tampered with or distorted.
- If damages arose out of the business pursuits of a foster parent.

FOSTER CHILDREN'S PERSONAL AND PHYSICAL MAINTENANCE

FOSTER CARE PAYMENTS

Most foster parents are volunteers and do not get paid for their services. The State of Illinois through the Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS), however, *reimburses* Illinois foster parents monthly for each foster child's:

- “board” (food, housing, utilities, etc.)
- clothes
- child's personal allowance

Monthly reimbursement payments are not income for foster parents and should not be reported as income for federal or state income tax purposes.

**Licensed Foster Care
Monthly Reimbursement Payments
(As of January 2002)**

The amount of the licensed monthly reimbursement payment is based on the age of the child and is commonly referred to as the “foster care board rate”. Any changes to the regular foster care rate must be approved by the Illinois legislature within DCFS' annual budget.

Age of Child	Board	Clothing	Child's Allowance	Total
0 thru 11 mo.	\$315.70	\$34.85	\$10.25*	\$360.80
1 thru 4 yrs.	\$317.75	\$39.98	\$11.28*	\$369.01
5 thru 8 yrs.	\$319.80	\$52.28	\$12.30	\$384.38
9 thru 11 yrs.	\$325.95	\$61.50	\$22.55	\$410.00
12 yrs. & Over	\$334.15	\$69.70	\$41.00	\$444.85

Effective 7/1/00

*The personal allowance for children age 4 years and under is to be used by foster parents for incidentals (toys, rattles, etc.), which become the property of the child.

The majority of Illinois foster children are cared for by families receiving the licensed foster care reimbursement rates shown. Some foster children, however, have severe behavioral, emotional or medical problems that require foster parents with training and/or competencies beyond those of the regular foster parent. In those incidences, the child's case maybe referred to an agency that has a specialized program to meet his or her identified needs. If you are interested in finding out more about fostering children with severe behavioral, emotional, or medical problems, ask your agency if their contract with DCFS includes children which match your special skills or interests.

Standard-of-Need Rate Payments Unlicensed Foster Parents

Effective January 1, 2001, the standard-of-need rates were increased for all *unlicensed* relative foster parents. The rates are as follows depending on the county of residence and the number of children in the home. These rates do change so unlicensed relative foster parents should always check with the Central Payment Unit (800-525-0499) for the most current rate.

Group I includes counties: Boone, Champaign, Cook, Chicago, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, Ogle, Whiteside, Winnebago and Woodford.

Number of DCFS Children in the Home	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Payment amount per caregiver	\$292	\$576	\$714	\$916	\$1085	\$1164	\$1253	\$1344	\$1440	\$1540

Group II includes counties: Adams, Bureau, Carroll, Clinton, Coles, DeWitt, Douglas, Effingham, Ford, Fulton, Grundy, Henry, Iroquois, Jackson, JoDaviess, Knox, LaSalle, Lee, Livingston, Logan, Macon, Macoupin, Madison, McDonough, McLeen, Mercer, Monroe, Morgan, Moultrie, Peoria, Piatt, Putnam, Rock Island, Sangamon, St. Clair, Stephenson, Tazewell, Vermillion, Wabash, Warren, Will and **any out-of-state homes.**

Number of DCFS Children in the Home	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Payment amount per caregiver	\$278	\$556	\$693	\$892	\$1055	\$1140	\$1218	\$1312	\$1404	\$1510

Group III includes counties: Alexander, Bond, Brown, Calhoun, Cass, Christian, Clark, Clay, Crawford, Cumberland, Edgar, Edwards, Fayette, Franklin, Gallatin, Greene, Hamilton, Hancock, Hardin, Henderson, Jasper, Jefferson, Jersey, Johnson, Lawrence, Marion, Marshall, Mason, Massac, Menard, Montgomery, Perry, Pike, Pope, Pulaski, Randolph, Richland, Saline, Schuyler, Scott, Shelby, Stark, Union, Washington, Wayne, White and Williamson.

Number of DCFS Children in the Home	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Payment amount per caregiver	\$270	\$540	\$681	\$864	\$1030	\$1110	\$1183	\$1272	\$1368	\$1450



Monthly Foster Care Check Distribution

DCFS-supervised families and all caregivers who receive the Standard of Need rate receive a monthly check mailed directly from DCFS. Private agency-supervised licensed foster families receive a monthly check from their private agency, which has received the funds from DCFS.

How Monthly Foster Care Payments Work

- A foster care payment begins on the day a child is placed in the foster home and ends on the day before the child leaves.
- Foster parents receive a check for the previous month.

Example: If the child is placed on October 18th, the foster family will receive payment for October 18-31 (14 days) on or about November 20. In December, the foster family will receive payment for the entire month of November, if the child was in their home for the entire month.

- When a child moves into a higher age category, the licensed foster care rate is increased automatically. Children move into higher categories on their 1st, 5th, 9th and 12th birthdays.
- *Private agencies determine monthly payment times for licensed foster parents under their supervision, but payments must be made monthly.*

If You Do Not Receive Your Monthly Foster Care Check

Licensed Private Agency Foster Parents

Contact your agency. Your agency is responsible for getting your monthly payment to you. Make sure that your agency has your correct address.

Licensed DCFS Foster Parents

If you have questions, or believe there is a problem, contact the caseworker or your Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) or the local DCFS office for assistance. Make sure that DCFS has your correct address. For an automated 24-hour message about when the last check was sent, or when to expect your next check, call the DCFS Payment Line at 800-525-0499.

Unlicensed Caregivers Receiving the Standard of Need Rate

Private agency caregivers receiving the Standard of Need rate shown on page 19 should call the 24-hour DCFS Payment Line at 800-525-0499 for the voicemail check mailing schedule. Staff is available during business hours to assist you with questions or problems.

Note: If there is a pattern of mishandled financial matters or circumstances meriting investigation, contact the Office of the Inspector General at 312-433-3000.

Questions: Who Pays For What?

Ask your agency for its policy and ask questions. DCFS Policy 359 explains exactly what DCFS pays for in DCFS-supervised foster homes, private agency supervised foster homes, group homes and in residential care. Questions about DCFS policy may be answered through the DCFS Advocacy Office for Children and Families at 800-232-3798.

One-Time Payments

DCFS has bottom-line responsibility for providing for a foster child's needs. If you believe your foster child needs something, ask the caseworker and the agency. If they agree, they will determine how to get it—from within the agency, from outside the agency, or from DCFS. If they don't know how to get something for a child, it is their responsibility to ask DCFS for help.

Before requesting a one-time payment from DCFS, the caseworker and agency must consider:

- Appropriateness of the request according to individual circumstances surrounding the child, the case, or the foster family
- DCFS' contractual agreement with the agency
- Other more appropriate sources of funding or services, such as from the school district or another state government department
- DCFS Policy

What DCFS will pay for and the circumstances under which DCFS will pay are given in DCFS Rule Section 359.7. Some of the major categories are explained in this section of the handbook.

All one-time payments from DCFS have a maximum allowable amount. Caseworkers will request the amount appropriate based on individual case circumstances or funding available from other sources. Maximum allowable amounts of each type of payment mentioned in this section are not given because they are subject to change. The current allowable amounts may always be found in Appendix A of DCFS Procedure 359.7, which is public information. Single copies of this, or any DCFS procedure, may be requested from DCFS by calling 217-785-1700.

Questions About Payments

Agency Policy and Supports — Ask your child's caseworker and the agency.

DCFS Policy and Supports — Anyone with questions about DCFS payment policy or procedures may call the DCFS Advocacy Office for Children and Families at 800-232-3798.



Tip from experienced foster parents: When the worker makes the request for goods or a service your child needs, find out from whom he is making the request—the agency, another community service provider contracted to DCFS, an outside source, or DCFS.

If your caseworker and agency and/or DCFS, do not agree that your child needs the goods or service, you have the right to file a Service Appeal. (See Section 8, pages 27-28).

Clothing

The monthly licensed foster care payment includes funds to pay for a child's clothing according to age, *including school clothes and school uniforms and new clothing needed due to changes in season and normal growth.*

The caseworker/agency may request additional funds from DCFS for clothing under the following circumstances.

Initial Placement: Clothing/Personal Hygiene Expenses

When a child is placed, foster parents should review the child's current clothing situation with the placing worker. Sometimes, when a child is removed from his/her home quickly, the worker will bring his/her clothes later. If the child has been in another foster home, all clothes, toys, personal hygiene items and belongings should be sent to the new foster home. If the child's clothing appears inadequate, the caseworker may request an "initial clothing voucher" for a child in his/her first placement outside the home. *The initial clothing voucher may be requested at the time the case is opened or within 6 months of case opening.*

The child's current wardrobe will be taken into account. If several placements are, or have been involved, using several purchase orders, the total expenditure *must not exceed the maximum amount allowable.* That means that if a child comes to your family within the six month time frame, after having been with another foster family, the total or partial amount of the initial clothing voucher may have been already used by the previous foster family. Ask the child's caseworker.

Initial personal hygiene items may also be requested by the caseworker for a child in his/her first placement outside the home when the case is opened. Examples of necessary items are: toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush/comb/pick, deodorant, feminine hygiene items, baby bottles, diapers, baby powder, baby oil and other essential items. Not allowed: make-up, perfume, jewelry, hairdryers etc. The intention is to take care of the child's immediate, basic needs.

Replacement Clothing

Foster parents are expected to replace a child's clothing using the monthly foster care payment.

The caseworker/agency may request additional funds from DCFS for replacement clothing under these circumstances:

- A child whose clothes are unsuitable due to health or medical reasons, such as extraordinary weight gains or losses, excessive growth, or damage done to clothing to accommodate casts or braces.
- Destruction of clothing by fire, flood, or the child's willful destruction.
- Pregnant teens needing maternity clothes.
- Foster children who had been in a Department of Corrections (DOC) facility and are now returning to foster care.
- Foster children who returned home for an extended period of time and then returned to foster care.

Notice to Foster Parents of Inadequate Clothing

If the child's caseworker does not feel that the child's wardrobe is adequate at any time during the placement, he/she will inform the foster parent/s *in writing*. The foster parent/s will be given 30 days to replenish the child's wardrobe. If this does not happen, the caseworker may request that funds be deducted from the monthly payment to the foster parent/s, up to a maximum allowed for replacement clothing.

Infant Equipment

Sometimes, not having infant equipment can be a barrier to a foster parent taking the sibling of a child already in their home, or in taking an infant. A caseworker may request purchase authorization for a foster or relative home for infant care *equipment for a specific child age 2 and under*. The foster parent must sign the Infant Care Equipment Grant Application (DCFS Form: CFS 932C) and return a completed Infant Care List (DCFS Form: CFS 932D) for the appropriate items. The foster parent/s *must return the infant equipment to DCFS* if they stop providing infant care within one year of receiving the equipment.

Visitation Fees

Hosting Sibling Visits

DCFS recently announced new changes to visitation policies that will reimburse foster families for transportation to sibling visits and compensate them for supervising short and overnight visits.

Under the new plan foster parents will receive reimbursement of up to \$50 per month for mileage (currently 34.5 cents per mile), public transportation, bus or taxi. The special service fee must be requested by the worker and be approved according to the visitation plan developed for the child.

Foster parents who support sibling visitation by supervising visits may also request reimbursement through their worker at a rate of \$25 per hour (excluding travel time) for a maximum of four hours (\$100) each month. If the visit is overnight or longer, the foster parents may be reimbursed \$100 for the entire visit.

TIPS ABOUT PAYMENTS FROM EXPERIENCED FOSTER PARENTS

- Know your agency's unique policies about payments or other types of supports. If you don't have the agency policy in writing—ask!
- Document—in writing—your child's need for services, or obtain written documentation from teachers, schools, therapists, etc. This will lend weight to your request with the caseworker. Also, documentation is required when making any request to DCFS. If you already have it, the caseworker can more easily and quickly make the request within the agency and from DCFS.
- Think ahead—don't wait until the last minute to make a request. Your caseworker may have to talk to the teacher, doctor, or others and will need to submit the request within the agency for approval before it goes on to DCFS. All of these steps take time.
- If you question an answer given to you by the caseworker or agency about DCFS policy or procedure, call the DCFS Advocacy Office for Children and Families at 800-232-3798. To verify your agency's policy, call the supervisor or administration.

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) BENEFITS



Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a Federal Government Program that provides cash assistance to persons age 65 or older and to blind or disabled persons of any age, that have limited income and assets. Children, including foster children, adopted children and children in guardianships may qualify for SSI if they have a severe physical or mental impairment, or a combination of impairments, that significantly limit the child's ability to function in an age-appropriate manner. Even though a child meets the disability requirements, other factors may prevent entitlement to SSI.

For example:

- If a foster child is receiving assistance from another Federal Program (Title IV-E) he or she will not be eligible for SSI.
- Part of the income and assets of the adoptive parents count when determining the income and assets of an adopted child until he or she reaches 18. This may make their child ineligible for SSI.
- If a subsidy is paid to a guardian who has accepted responsibility for a child with disabilities that was formerly in foster care, the amount of the subsidy may count as income to the child. Counting the subsidy may reduce or eliminate the SSI payment.

How does a foster child apply for SSI?

SSI claims are filed with the Social Security Administration. DCFS as legal guardian of children in foster care is the appropriate agency to file the SSI applications. DCFS has contracted with two organizations to handle Social Security matters, including SSI, for foster children. MAXIMUS takes care of Cook County children. The Center for Law and Human Services (CLHS) through the Downstate Children's SSI Project files the applications for children outside of Cook County. Foster parents in Cook County may contact MAXIMUS at 312-782-5300. All other foster parents should contact the CLHS office in Springfield at 800-841-2812. These organizations review a child's records to decide if he or she is a candidate for SSI. They welcome referrals from foster parents. MAXIMUS and CLHS staff prepare the application packages and send them to DCFS for the signature of the Guardianship Administrator. DCFS forwards the application packages to Social Security. The disability decisions are made by the Department of Human Services (DHS) - Bureau of Disability Determinations Services, located in Springfield.

These two organizations also file appeals of denied claims, if they feel the denial of benefits is not correct. Also, if a case is approved, Social Security must review the case periodically to see if the child continues to be eligible. These reviews are called Continuing Disability Reviews. MAXIMUS and CLHS complete the forms required for these reviews, if a child is still in foster care when the review comes up on the Social Security schedule.

What should foster parents do to support SSI claims?

First, foster parents should refer children to either MAXIMUS or CLHS if they think the children may be eligible for SSI. If a foster parent is not sure about SSI, they should make the referral and let the organization decide if a claim is appropriate.

Second, when MAXIMUS or CLHS prepares an application, Continuing Disability Review or files an appeal, they will contact the foster parent for information about the child's daily activities. It is important for the foster parent to cooperate in providing detailed information about the child's condition. Remember that the person making the decision about the application does not see the child. It is vital to the process that the people who see the child most often and know the child well give accurate reports for the application package.

Adjudicators from the DHS Bureau of Disability Determination Services will contact foster parents:

- To discuss the child's condition. Foster parents should cooperate fully with the adjudicators who are trying to decide if the child in foster care has limitations that meet the Social Security requirements for disability.
- When there is not enough medical evidence in a child's file, foster parents may be asked to arrange for an examination by a doctor working with the Bureau of Disability Determination Services. It is especially important that the foster parent cooperate with the doctor and the adjudicator in seeing that the child attends the examination.

What happens to the SSI money when an application is approved?

DCFS receives the checks on behalf of the children in foster care. These funds are used to pay the foster care payments for room and board of the child. If a child has needs that are not being met by the foster care payment, the foster parent should contact the caseworker. The caseworker can contact the staff that oversees the SSI funds. This staff can verify the amount of funds that may be available for these special circumstances or needs and will advise the caseworker if there are any SSI benefits available. Social Security Regulations define how SSI benefits may be used. The caseworker and other staff work together to insure that these regulations are followed.

What about adopted children and those in guardianship?

Even if DCFS has helped a child obtain SSI while he or she was in foster care, the parent or guardian becomes responsible for conducting all SSI business with Social Security when the child has left foster care. The parent or guardian should contact the local Social Security office for help with SSI. To find the address of the nearest Social Security office, call 800-772-1213. More information about Social Security for children no longer in foster care can be found in *Crossroads*, a DCFS publication for young people transitioning from the child welfare system. *Crossroads* is mailed to youth 15 and older who are in DCFS care or were formerly in care. Families can also request *Crossroads* from their caseworker or the DCFS Office of Communications at 217-785-1700.