



Talking About Fostering Sibling Groups

As caring foster parents, you offer the children in your homes with unconditional love and take on the difficulties, the responsibilities and the joys that would be expected of any parent. Entering foster care is a traumatic experience for children. They are being taken away from everything they know and are put into unfamiliar surroundings. When siblings are brought into care, the ideal situation is to keep them together whenever possible. Keeping siblings together can help to minimize the trauma they are experiencing.

Staying with Siblings is Better

Several studies have shown that foster children who stay with one or more siblings in the same home are happier and have improved outcomes. Having a sibling provides children with a peer partner with whom they can explore their environments, navigate social and cognitive challenges, and learn skills (Richardson & Yates, 2014). Preserving ties with siblings can help buffer children from the trauma of maltreatment and removal to a foster home (Aguiniga & Madden, 2018).

Keeping siblings together in one home can also provide relief to the parents who are working to reunify. It is less stressful and easier to arrange visits with their children when they are in one home rather than several.

Preparing to Foster Siblings

If you think you might be willing and have the space to foster a sibling group, talk with your licensing worker. Fostering sibling groups is both rewarding and easier than parents might expect. Also don't be afraid to ask questions before accepting a sibling group into your home. LCFS will stand alongside you throughout the process to ensure you have the resources and support you need.

Tips for Fostering a Sibling Group

1. Be up front with your licensing worker before placements are offered to your family about what types of behaviors you may need additional support to handle.

2. Be patient. Forming attachment with each child in the sibling group takes effort and individual time with each child.
3. Set realistic expectations for what you will be able to accomplish, outside of parenting, for the early days and weeks of fostering a sibling group.
4. Line up support from friends and family for tasks such as housecleaning, laundry, yard work, cooking, etc.
5. Line up therapists and other professionals the children may need as soon as you have their information available to you.
6. Remember, siblings may have various reactions as they transition into your family, process their experiences, or behave once they are in a safe environment. It is best to remember each sibling will adjust at their own pace.
7. Try to plan a fun family activity each week that you can enjoy together. There is nothing like having fun together to build the bonds of trust, security and love.
8. Recognize that the children will likely grieve what they have lost before they are able to accept being in your home.
9. Be aware that the holidays might prove particularly challenging – especially the first one or two significant holidays that the children are in your home.
10. Older siblings may have taken on parenting roles before entering foster care. Be patient and let them know it is okay for them to be a child again.

By helping to keep siblings together in your home whenever possible, you're making a big difference in nurturing children and strengthening families.

Questions about fostering siblings or any other topic? We encourage you to reach out to your local LCFS licensing representative or child welfare specialist.

Message from LCFS' Vice President and Chief Program Officer

Dear Foster Parents:

First, I want to thank you for being one of our foster parents. The love, support, and advocacy you demonstrate is immeasurable and certainly, nurtures and strengthens the self-image of the children whom you parent. No words can adequately express how much all the staff at LCFS and I value you and all that you do every day.

The purpose of this message is to share with you some personnel changes recently made within LCFS' senior leadership. Mr. Holt, Ms. Mitchell, Ms. Husemann, and Ms. Martin are no longer working at LCFS. Your licensing representatives and supervisors, as well as your child welfare specialists and their supervisors should remain unchanged.

I also wanted to inform you of the personnel who are now overseeing LCFS' child welfare programs and the different regional offices at this time:

1. Ms. LaTasha Roberson-Guifarro – Associate Vice President (Child Welfare Statewide)
2. Ms. Erin Webb – Regional Director for Southern Illinois (Belleville and Mt. Vernon offices)
3. Ms. Rachaun Wilkins – Regional Director for Central Illinois (Decatur, Quincy, and Springfield offices)
4. Mr. Matt Bauman – Manager of the Chicago Office
5. Ms. Janelle Hamilton – Manager of the Joliet, Kankakee, and Oak Brook Offices

Finally, I want you to feel free to contact me directly if you have questions or concerns. My email address is: bev_jones@lcfs.org and my work number is 630-388-9037.

Thank you again for all you do for the children and families we serve.

Sincerely,

Beverly Jones
Vice President – Chief Operating Officer

Foster Care Board Payments

Listed below are the estimated dates LCFS board checks will be mailed for the remainder of 2022. Payment, by paper check should be received within 7-10 business days from the date of mailing. Payments by direct deposit should be received within 3-5 days from the scheduled mailing date. If you're interested in changing your payment method to direct deposit, you can download the enrollment form using the QR code shown or ask your worker for a copy of the form.

Please note that payments made on these dates are for the previous month, i.e. the payment received in January, was for the month of December, unless otherwise specified. If you notice payment discrepancies, have a change of address or do not receive your check after 30 days, please contact your worker for assistance.



Payment Schedule

February 17, 2022

June 16, 2022

October 19, 2022

March 16, 2022

July 19, 2022

November 21, 2022

April 18, 2022

August 16, 2022

December 19, 2022

May 17, 2022

September 19, 2022

Foster Parent Electronic Communication

LCFS desires to provide timely, consistent and relevant communication with all of our foster parents. To this end, the agency is moving toward more digital and electronic forms of communication in 2022, including transitioning LCFS' Foster Parent Newsletter to an electronic medium. If you'd like to receive electronic communications from LCFS via email and/or text messages, in regards to your role as a foster parent, please scan the below QR code and complete the opt-in form. Thank you.



Caring for Foster Children with Specialized Needs

There is a great need for foster families who are willing to receive extra training and/or competencies in order to care for children with higher need emotional, behavioral or medical challenges. Foster parents who choose to provide care to higher needs children are able to make incredible differences in the lives of foster youth who so desperately need it.

LCFS also provides additional training and ongoing support to specialized foster families to ensure they are fully-equipped to help with the children's individual treatment and behavioral plans.

If you're interested in learning more about providing medical, behavioral or respite care to children with specialized needs, please contact your licensing representative.



Foster Parents Make a Difference

Help us Recruit Foster Families

All types of people make good foster parents as we all have our own special talents. As a foster parent, you know better than anyone what it takes to answer this call. **So we need your help.**

Please consider referring individuals or families who you feel could do this important work. If you refer someone to become a licensed foster parent(s), and they complete the licensing process, you'll receive a **\$50 referral bonus**. Talk to your licensing representative or call your local office and speak to someone in foster home licensing.

Anyone interested in learning more about the benefits and challenges of being a foster parent can attend a virtual informational meeting or have a one-on-one meeting with an LCFS licensing representative.



Sharing Impact

Each holiday season, LCFS donors get excited about playing a role in making foster children's Christmas special. While we've held toy drives in the past, the last two years, we collected monetary donations and the money we raised ensured that LCFS could provide \$100 extra per foster child in your December board checks so you could purchase the gifts yourselves.

Our donors love to hear the impact of their donations. Please reach out to Mandy Widtfeldt, LCFS Community and Donor Engagement Manager, at mandy_widtfeldt@lcfs.org or 630-470-3853 if you'd be willing to share an anecdote about what the money for gifts meant to your family, how you spent it and your child(ren)'s reaction(s). We won't use any real names and all information will be kept confidential. Your help would be greatly appreciated!