

Time to Recognize Foster Families

May is National Foster Care Month, a time to recognize the foster families who care for vulnerable children.

On behalf of everyone at LCFS, we want to express our deepest appreciation and gratitude for your extraordinary dedication and commitment as foster parents. Your selfless contributions to the lives of children in need is truly remarkable, and we cannot thank you enough for the love, care and support you provide to them each day.

Foster parenting is a calling that demands immense compassion, patience and understanding. You exemplify these qualities in every aspect of your role. Your willingness to open your hearts and homes to children facing challenging circumstances is nothing short of inspiring. Through your unwavering kindness and generosity, you are making a profound difference in the lives of vulnerable children, helping them heal, thrive and build brighter futures.

Your dedication does not go unnoticed. We see the countless hours you devote to nurturing, guiding and advocating for the children in your care. Your unconditional love and commitment create a safe and nurturing environment where they can flourish and grow. Your willingness to go above and beyond to meet their needs, both big and small, demonstrates your deep compassion and genuine concern for their well-being.

We understand that foster parenting comes with its own set of challenges, but your resilience and determination never waver. Your ability to provide stability, encouragement and a sense of belonging to children who may have experienced trauma or loss is truly commendable. Your impact extends far beyond the walls of your home, shaping the lives of the children you care for in profound and meaningful ways.

As an agency, we are immensely grateful to have you as part of our foster care community. Your partnership, collaboration and unwavering commitment to our shared mission of providing safe and nurturing environments for children in need are invaluable. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of children and families, and your contributions are an integral part of that effort.

Please know that your dedication does not go unnoticed or unappreciated. You are truly heroes in the eyes of the children for whom you care, and your kindness leaves an indelible mark on their lives. Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, for your selflessness, compassion and generosity as foster parents.

With deepest gratitude,

Mary Thomas, M.S.

Associate Vice President of Child Welfare

Celebrating All Mothers & Fathers

Wishing a belated Happy Mother's Day and an early Happy Father's Day to all of you. Your love, guidance and strength are a source of inspiration to us all. We celebrate you and the profound impact you have on your children's lives. Thank you for all that you do!





Foster Parent Conference Recap

Thank you to all our amazing foster parents who came from around the state last month for a joyful day of recognition, learning and sharing at our annual Foster Parent Conference. You are so greatly appreciated! This year's theme was, "The Balance: Taking care of yourself to care for children." Our keynote speaker Pamela Nicole Dukes from Awakening Aspiration helped us explore how self-care makes you a more resilient foster parent and uplifts your whole family. Also another big thank you to all our staff, speakers and volunteers who made the day possible. Hope you can all join us next year!



Training Resources

The DCFS online Learning and Development Center (LDC) is the entry point for training-related information and resources. Foster parents can use the Learning and Development Center (LDC) to:

- See training news and general information.
- Check available trainings.
- View/print training transcripts.
- Register and take on-line courses.
- Download course materials to use in class or to access after training.

To access the Learning and Development Center, go to <https://learning.dcf.illinois.gov/en/>.



NEW - Best Start Support Groups

LCFS is excited to announce that in July 2024 we will begin offering Best Start for Families statewide for our foster parents. Best Start for Families provides motivation, tools and skills to assist parents in navigating the challenges of parenting successfully, especially where child trauma has been experienced.

Best Start Parenting Programs are well-loved by parents who've attend through community-based settings. The parenting group sessions are offered as a 14-week series and are extremely helpful, engaging, enjoyable, and supportive through the challenges and joys of fostering.

The upcoming sessions for our foster parents will be facilitated by LCFS' own child welfare staff. The initial programs are being offered both virtually and in-person at our Joliet office beginning this summer.

Contact Rachel_Fuentes@LCFS.org to receive a program flyer with information and registration links. **Space is limited.**

Virtual Group: Weds, July 17 - Oct 2 (5 to 6:15pm)
(Facilitators: Chris Daum & Rachel Fuentes)

Joliet In-Person Group: Dates & Times TBD
(Facilitators: Chris Daum + another TBA)

We will keep you updated on this and other opportunities from LCFS' Best Start for Families.

Summer Experience Registration

Beginning June 17-29 on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, The What's Your Forté Foundation, Ada S. McKinley, and Youth Guidance will provide up to 300 attendees ages 12-18 with activities and tools to enjoy their summer break by fusing educational sessions alongside physical and entrepreneurial opportunities. The majority of the Summer Experience will take place Thursday - Saturday evenings from 5:00-10:00pm at the House of Hope, while other Summer Experiences will take place offsite.

ATTENDEES: This experience is for all Chicago youth who yearn for alternative avenues for experiencing Chicago and those who are interested in workforce options that will engage each participant to become connected to successful life outcomes.

When: June 20-22 & June 27-29

Where: 752 E 114th St, Chicago, IL 60628

Learn more and register at <https://whatsyourfortefoundation.org/summer-experience/>

The Summer Experience includes:

- Transportation
- Dinner
- Field Trips
- Table Top Game Days
- Soccer
- Vibe with VIP's
- Basketball & Football Tournaments
- Double Dutch
- VR Adventures
- Chalk Talks & Forté Explorations
- Empowerment Sessions
- Next Steps Facilitation



Camp for Your Foster Children

Check out Camp Wartburg's 2024 Summer Brochure with the schedule and descriptions of the various camps at www.campwartburg.com. If you are interested in having your foster children attend camp this summer, you can register them on Camp Wartburg's website using the steps below.

1. Select **Register for Camp** in the upper right corner
2. Select **New User** and add the camper(s)
3. Select **Register**
4. Select session & proceed through the registration process
5. On the discount page, select **LCFS**, enter discount code **2024LCFS**
6. Please do not exit until you have selected **Complete Order**

After registering, there will be forms to complete. These can be found on the Account Overview page at the top, **Incomplete Tasks** or by selecting the icon in the left corner of the page and then **Document Center**.

Transportation

Camp Wartburg will provide transportation this year the week of July 7 – 12. They will be doing pick-ups at LCFS' Bourbonnais, Decatur and Springfield offices.

If you have questions about camp, need assistance registering or to reserve a spot in the van, please contact Faith Morris at faith_morris@lcfs.org or (618) 939-7715 ext. 1.

Did You Know...

Fostering, Adoption, Kinship Care? What's the difference?

Kinship Care is the temporary placement of a child with a family member or someone close to the family. The ultimate goal of kinship care is for the child to reunify with their birth family.

Fostering is the temporary placement of a child in your care after their removal from an unfit living environment. The ultimate goal of foster care is reunification with their birth family.

Adoption is the permanent placement of a child in your care. You become the legal guardian of the child, and the birth family's involvement in the child's life may vary from case to case.

Refer Foster Parents and Receive Rewards

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.

If you refer someone new to become an LCFS foster family, you can receive:

\$100 if the referred individual/family submits an application to LCFS and gets fingerprinted.

\$150 more if the referred individual/family then becomes licensed.

Be sure the prospective foster parent lists your name on their application under who referred them.

Questions? Contact your LCFS licensing worker.

2024 Board Payments

Below are LCFS Board Payment Mailing Dates. Payment is made for the prior month's service. For example, the payment received in January is for the month of December.

June 18	July 17
August 16	September 18
October 16	November 18
December 17	



Monthly Foster Parent FAQ Sessions

Hosted by LCFS' Associate VP of Child Welfare and Licensing Manager. Sessions will be held virtually from 10 AM to 12 PM on the following dates:

Friday, May 31	Friday, Jun 28	Friday, Jul 31
Friday, Aug 30	Monday, Sep 30	Thursday, Oct 31



Your participation is highly encouraged as these sessions are an excellent opportunity to stay informed, engaged and ask questions. Scan the QR code to join a meeting or follow the information below to join on Teams:

Web Link to Join: <https://qrcodes.pro/0nTmvO>
ID: 282 866 431 041 **Passcode:** JPd4n

The Foster Parent Law Corner

SUBPART B: FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 340.40 Foster Parent Rights

a) A foster parent's rights include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) The right to be treated with dignity, respect, and consideration as a professional member of the child welfare team.

Sign Up for Email

LCFS desires to provide timely, consistent and relevant communication with all of our foster parents. If you'd like to receive electronic communications from LCFS in regards to your role as a foster parent, please scan the QR code above and complete the opt-in form. Thank you.

