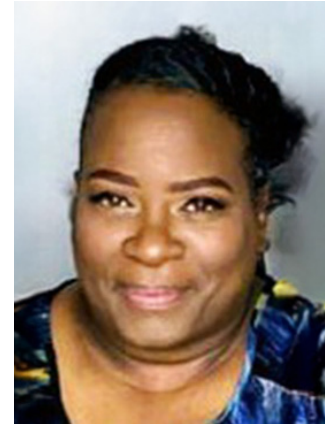


Quality Corner: Supporting and Empowering our Foster Families

We're excited to introduce **Cynthia R. Stockard** as LCFS' new Quality Assurance Manager for Foster Care! Cynthia brings a wealth of experience in child welfare and a true passion for helping children and families thrive. In this new role, she will focus on ensuring our programs and services are the best they can be, with the safety and well-being of the children we serve always at the center of everything we do.

Cynthia will also be working closely with our foster care team to find ways to grow and improve, so we can keep supporting you—our amazing foster parents—in the important work you do every day.



A Message from Quality Assurance

As foster parents, you're the heart and soul of what we do. You're not just providing a home—you're champions for the educational, mental, medical, and emotional needs of the children in your care. These kids have faced challenges that no child should ever have to endure, and your role in their lives is absolutely life-changing.

Here's how you make such a big difference:

- **In School:** You're their biggest cheerleaders—advocating for special education services, individualized learning plans, or accommodations to help them succeed. Staying connected with teachers and school staff helps keep things on track and ensures the best outcomes for your kids.
- **Mental Health Matters:** You know these kids best, so you're often the first to notice when they're struggling with trauma or behavioral health issues. You can help ensure they receive the counseling, therapy, or other mental health services they may need to heal and grow stronger.
- **Health and Wellness:** From doctor's appointments to managing medications, you play a crucial role in navigating complex healthcare systems on behalf of the youth in your care to ensure they get the basic and specialized medical care they need.
- **Emotional Support:** Your home is their safe place, a space where they can begin to process their past, build resilience, and feel a sense of belonging. You can advocate for their emotional needs by connecting them with mentors, support groups, or other resources that assist them in developing self-esteem and confidence.

In short, you're essential advocates who act as the bridge between youth in care and the services they need to thrive. You help these kids overcome adversity and reach their full potential. We see you, we appreciate you, and we're here to support you every step of the way.

If you ever need assistance accessing resources or services for your child, please don't hesitate to reach out to your Child Welfare Specialist. We're all in this together, and we're so grateful for everything you do.



Foster Parent Fundamentals

LCFS' Statewide Foster Parent Conference

Save the Date! June 7, 2025

Holiday Inn Bloomington-Normal

8 Traders Circle, Normal, IL 61761

The Foster Parent Law Corner: LCFS Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan of 2025

Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois (LCFS) improves the well-being of people across the state by protecting children, strengthening families and building futures for those who have experienced trauma. The LCFS Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan of 2025 serves as a comprehensive resource for foster parents, outlining their mutual rights and responsibilities as defined by the Illinois DCFS Foster Parent Law Rule 340, also known as the Foster Parent Code, to ensure clarity, collaboration, and informed caregiving.

This plan will be reviewed and discussed throughout the year during monitoring and home visits, foster parent forums and staff meetings with foster parents and LCFS staff. The implementation process includes reviewing LCFS' plan and having each foster parent sign the LCFS Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan of 2025 Signature Page which will then be placed in his/her licensing record, acknowledging the receipt of the information and understanding of his/her rights and responsibilities as a foster parent in the State of Illinois.

Please scan the QR code provided or visit <https://qr.codes.pro/FPLaw2025> to review the 2025 Plan. Contact your licensing representative if you have any questions, comments or suggestions.



Foster Parent License Renewal

Renewals for foster parent licenses are conducted every four years. To ensure a smooth renewal process, applications will be sent out six months prior to the expiration date. We encourage all foster parents to complete their required training each year to avoid any last-minute rush as the expiration date approaches.

Please be aware that if you are involved in an adoption or guardianship process, your renewal cannot be finalized until all training hours have been completed.

- **For a traditional foster parent**, this includes a requirement of 16 training hours, along with additional training in LGBTQ+ issues and educational advocacy. (4 training hours per year)
- **For specialized homes**, such as those providing educational advocacy, a total of 64 training hours is required, including the aforementioned topics. (16-17 training hours per year)

In addition to completing training, please ensure that the following items are up-to-date for your renewal:

1. **A current physical examination**
2. **Recent pay stubs**
3. **Current insurance cards**
4. **Up-to-date pet vaccinations**
5. **Completion of a renewal application**

Licensing staff will continue to monitor and assist you in completing your yearly training requirements as you approach your expiration date.

Thanks for your commitment to providing a safe and nurturing environment for the children in our care!



Did You Know? The 2025 DCFS Scholarship Application is Now Open!

The 2025 DCFS scholarship application for current and former youth in care opened on January 1. Students can create an account now and log in to apply. Please encourage 2025 high school graduates and current college students to apply and submit their application early to allow time for the DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services to confirm completeness and request additional documentation from the student if necessary. The deadline to apply is March 31, 2025. For more information, visit apply.mykaleidoscope.com/program/ILDCFS2025.

Guidelines for Good Interaction with the Children in Your Care

Emotional:

- Showing positive feelings toward the child.
- Following and responding to the initiatives of the child.
- Establishing an intimate dialogue, both verbal and nonverbal, with the child.
- Praising and giving approval to the child.

Mediational (Comprehension):

- Sharing experiences and helping the child to focus on things and situations in their environment.
- Conveying meaning and enthusiasm for the child's experiences.
- Expanding and enriching the child's experience by connecting topics and making comparisons through imagination and logic.



Mediational (Regulation):

- Supporting the child with boundaries by planning step-by-step to help the child to develop self-control.
- Supporting the child with scaffolding (gradual support) to encourage initiative and competency.
- Using situations and set routines to guide behavior.
- Regulating and guiding the child's actions by positively setting consequences to develop responsibility and moral understanding.

This valuable and important information was taken from one of the manuals of our parent training from "Best Start for Families."

If you're interested in getting training through our "Best Start for Families" program, please reach out to your licensing representatives for more information. This training will count towards your annual license renewal hours.

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.



Laughing Together

What's a spider's New Year's resolution?

To spend less time on the web.

What New Year's resolution should a basketball player never make?

To travel more.

Why did the cell phone get glasses?

Because she lost all her contacts.

2025 “Fostering our Future” Upcoming Training Events

LCFS will be offering a series of foster parent trainings throughout 2025. All trainings will be virtual at this time. Each training attended is worth one hour of continuing education training credit.

To register for any currently scheduled trainings, contact LCFS Training Coordinator Janet Palkon at janet_palkon@lcfs.org or 224-775-5865. Once registered, you'll be sent the link for the virtual training.

February 19, 6:00 – 7:00 PM | Self-Love

February 27, 6:00 – 7:00 PM | Common Childhood Mental Health Diagnosis

March 18, 6:00 – 7:00 PM | De-escalation Techniques for Youth in Care

March 28, 6:00 – 7:00 PM | Differences Between Discipline and Punishment

April 15, 6:00 – 7:00 PM | Birth & Foster Parent Healthy Relationships

April 25, 6:00 – 7:00 PM | Supporting Biological Relationships and Foster Parent Rights and Responsibilities



2025 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.

January 17	February 18	March 18
April 16	May 16	June 17
July 17	August 18	September 17
October 16	November 18	December 16

For Direct Deposit Enrollment, payment discrepancies, or if you do not receive your check after 30 days please send an email to Finance_Team@lcfs.org or call 708-771-7180 option 3.

2025 LCFS Foster Parent Forums

LCFS is excited to hear from you! In 2025, we will host open forum discussions designed specifically for our foster families. These forums will provide a valuable opportunity to collaborate, share ideas, and discuss how we can work together to best support the children in our care. We also want to hear your thoughts on how LCFS can better serve and support you as foster parents.

The forums will be held quarterly in March, June, September, and December, with sessions organized within each region. For March, the forums are scheduled during the second and third weeks of the month.

Stay tuned for exact dates and additional details—we look forward to seeing you there!

Keep Your Contact Info Updated!

Attention foster parents! Staying connected is crucial for ensuring you receive important updates, training opportunities, and resources to support your vital role. If your contact information—such as your phone number, email address, or home address—has changed recently, please update it with your licensing representative as soon as possible.

Thank you for your dedication to the children in your care.