



A Message from our Quality Assurance Manager

As the Quality Assurance Manager, my role is to ensure that we are providing the highest standard of care for the children in our foster care system. Every day, our dedicated team works diligently to create safe, nurturing environments for children who need it most. We understand that each child has a unique journey, and our commitment is to make sure their needs are met with compassion, respect, and diligence. We continuously monitor and assess the quality of care provided by our foster families and support them through training and resources to help them succeed in their important roles.

As we welcome the new season of Spring, we are reminded of the fresh beginnings and growth that come with this time of year. Just as flowers bloom and new life emerges, we are focused on the growth and well-being of the children in our care. Through regular reviews and feedback we identify areas where improvements can be made, and we collaborate with foster parents, Child Welfare Specialists, and community partners to develop effective strategies. Our goal is to not only ensure compliance with regulations but to go beyond that, fostering an environment where children can thrive emotionally, socially, and academically.

Together, we are building a future of hope and opportunity for every child in our care. Thank you for your continued support in making this possible.

LCFS is also excited to announce our new **“Professional Ambassador Program”**, designed to provide immediate, temporary care for our youth in need. If you are interested in learning more about this impactful program and how you can get involved, please reach out to me at cynthia_stockard@lcfs.org.

Cynthia R. Stockard, MA

Quality Assurance Manager for Foster Care

P.S. I would like to thank Shelley McLaughlin for her dedication during her time as Statewide Licensing Manager at LCFS. Her hard work was greatly appreciated. We wish her the best in her next chapter.

Foster Parent Appreciation

LCFS wants to thank you for all the hard work and dedication you put into fostering. Your love and commitment to the children in your care is making a lasting impact. Please know that you are appreciated, and your efforts are never overlooked.

This year, LCFS will be celebrating our foster parents at our annual Foster Parent Conference. Details and registration information for this awesome event are below. We are looking forward to celebrating you with food, presentations, training and prizes.



Foster Parent Fundamentals

LCFS' Statewide Foster Parent Conference

Sat. June 7, 9AM-4PM

Holiday Inn Bloomington-Normal
8 Traders Circle, Normal, IL 61761



Register by scanning QR code or visiting <https://qrcodes.pro/LCFS-FPC>





Hello Hello Foster Parents

As the days grow longer and the flowers begin to bloom, we welcome the season of renewal, growth and hope. Spring symbolizes fresh starts, and as foster parents, you are an essential part of that journey for the children in your care. This edition of our newsletter focuses on growth, connection, and the joys that spring can bring to your fostering journey.

Spring into Growth: Supporting Child Development

Spring is a season of new beginnings, and a wonderful opportunity to support the growth and development of children in your care. As the weather warms and the world outside comes to life, encourage outdoor play and exploration, which can have a positive impact on both physical and emotional well-being. Activities such as hiking, biking or visiting nature preserves allow children to connect with the environment and build a sense of wonder. These outdoor activities provide opportunities for teamwork, patience, and responsibility. Additionally, consider introducing new learning experiences like planting a garden or starting an arts and crafts project that allows children to be creative and express themselves. By nurturing their curiosity and fostering their confidence, you'll help them grown into resilient, well-rounded individuals.



Supporting Emotional Growth During Springtime

For many children in foster care, the transition to a new season can trigger a mix of emotions. The changes in the weather and routines can bring up memories or feelings of uncertainty. It's important to support your child's emotional health during this time by encouraging open conversations. Remind them that it's okay to feel a variety of emotions during seasons of change, and help them express themselves in healthy ways.

Did You Know?

- **Foster care parents make a lasting impact!** Research shows that children in foster care who are placed with supportive and loving foster families are more likely to thrive academically, emotionally, and socially. Your care helps create the foundation for a brighter future.
- **You're not alone!** There are thousands of other foster parents across the state who share your experiences. Connecting with other foster parents can provide valuable support and encouragement. Many communities have foster parent support groups—consider joining one.
- **Every child in foster care has a story.** While each child's journey is unique, all children in foster care have experienced some form of trauma. Understanding this can help you respond with patience and compassion as they work through difficult emotions.
- **The importance of consistency.** Children in foster care often feel unsettled due to changes in their lives. Offering a stable and predictable environment, with routines and clear expectations, can provide comfort and help them feel safe.

Seasonal Activities to Enjoy with Your Children

Spring offers a variety of fun activities that can help build lasting memories with the children in your care. Here are a few ideas to bring the joy of the season to life

- **Planting a Garden:** Planting flowers, vegetables, or herbs can be a hands-on way for kids to connect with nature. Plus, it teaches patience and responsibility as they care for their plants.
- **Nature Walks:** Take a walk through your local park or nature preserve. The changing weather and blooming flowers make it a great time to explore.
- **Spring Crafts:** Get creative with simple craft projects like making bird feeders, painting flower pots, or creating spring-themed cards.
- **Spring Cleaning:** Make spring cleaning a fun and engaging activity. Encourage children to declutter their rooms and decorate with bright colors and fresh ideas.



Seasonal Safety Tips: Preparing for Spring

With Spring's arrival, it's important to be mindful of new safety concerns that come with the season. As children spend more time outside, remind them to stay hydrated, and dress appropriately for the changing weather. Allergy season is also upon us, and some children may struggle with symptoms like sneezing, itchy eyes, or congestion. Keep an eye on their health and consult with a healthcare provider if necessary. Spring cleaning can also bring safety challenges, such as hazardous cleaning products or clutter in the home. Take this opportunity to do a thorough check of your living spaces, ensuring that sharp objects, chemicals, or other dangers are stored safely out of reach. Additionally, ensure that outdoor spaces like play areas or backyard structures are well-maintained and safe for children to use. By preparing ahead, you'll help prevent accidents and create a safe, healthy environment for children to enjoy.

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.

Please 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.

LCFS Foster Parent Forums

LCFS is excited to hear from you! We are hosting quarterly 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.

Mark your calendars for the next forum on Tuesday, June 24 from 6:00 to 7:00 PM. Each region will conduct their own forum in person at their office. More details to come soon.

Upcoming 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.

May 16	June 17	July 17
August 18	September 17	October 16
November 18	December 16	January 20, 2026

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.

“Fostering our Future” Monthly Trainings and Support Groups

We want to remind you of the monthly training sessions and support groups available to you. These are a great opportunity to connect with fellow foster parents, learn valuable tools, and receive support as you navigate the rewarding journey of fostering.

Upcoming Training Sessions

Whether you’re a new foster parent or have years of experience, there’s always something new to learn!

- April 25, 6:00 – 7:00 PM** | Supporting Biological Relationships and Foster Parent Rights and Responsibilities
- May 14, 6:00 – 7:00 PM** | Hair Care for Children of Another Race
- May 30, 6:00 – 7:00 PM** | Licensing Renewals, Monitoring, and Investigations
- June 17, 6:00 – 7:00 PM** | Understanding Developmental Age
- June 27, 6:00 – 7:00 PM** | ACR’s/Court/Advocacy
- June 15, 6:00 – 7:00 PM** | Children from Hard Places
- June 25, 6:00 – 7:00 PM** | Trauma Informed Care for Youth in Care & Foster Parent Rights and Responsibilities

Support Groups

Join us in our monthly support groups where you can share experiences, offer encouragement, and find solidarity with others who truly understand. It’s a safe welcoming space for all.

To register for any currently scheduled trainings or support groups, 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 meeting.

We encourage you to attend—your growth and well-being are just as important as the children you care for! We are here to support you every step of the way.

Reminders

Your opinion matters: The Child Welfare Specialists should have provided you with a survey during their visits in March. Please take a moment to complete the survey and share your thoughts on how we can do better.