

*Note: These minutes are not official until approved by the Health and Human Services Committee at a subsequent meeting. Please refer to the meeting minutes when these minutes are approved to obtain any changes to these minutes.*

DeKalb County Government  
Sycamore, Illinois

**Health & Human Services Committee Minutes  
June 5, 2017**

The Health and Human Services Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Monday, June 5, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. in the Administration Building's Conference Room East in Sycamore, Illinois. Chairman Little called the meeting to order. Those Members present included, Ms. Askins, Mrs. Emmer, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Porterfield, Mr. Reid, Mr. Whelan, and Chairman Little. A quorum was established with all Members present.

Others present were Amanda Christensen and William Hart.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**It was moved by Mr. Whelan, seconded by Ms. Askins and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the May 1, 2017 Committee Meeting.**

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**It was moved by Mrs. Emmer, seconded by Ms. Askins and it was carried unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments made.

**REGIONAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT – ([Full Report](#))**

Regional Superintendent Amanda Christensen joined the Committee to present her 2015-2016 Annual Report. Ms. Christensen highlighted that the Regional Office of Education assists teachers seeking an Illinois Professional Educator License including applications, registrations, endorsements, and renewals. The ROE continues to be the resource for local educators who have licensure questions or who need training on the Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS). According to the ELIS statistics report, 893 educators registered a total of 1142 licenses, 498 new teacher licenses were issued, 54 new endorsements were issued, and 101 new paraprofessional licenses were issued.

The ROE maintains a database of all substitute teachers in DeKalb County. It also maintains the records for substitutes such as their blood-borne pathogens training, mandated reporter acknowledgement, criminal history records information, and proper licensure. All substitute teachers can guest teach in all of the school districts and private schools in DeKalb County. During the 2015-2016 school year, 401 substitute teachers took advantage of this service. The ROE continued its efforts to recruit and retain substitute teachers; an informational workshop was held on February 16, 2016. On August 6, 2015, the ROE in collaboration with local school districts also provided a one-day workshop to prepare substitute teachers. Topics included student safety, classroom management, and instructional strategies.

The Regional Office of Education has a digital fingerprinting system that allows a quick return of criminal background information to the local school districts at a cost of \$60.00 per employee, substitute, or student teacher. The ROE also provides this service to bus drivers, healthcare

workers, school volunteers, and county jail volunteers. The office conducted a total of 1280 fingerprints and criminal history records checks last year.

Ms. Christensen provided that thanks to DeKalb County making available a computer lab, the DeKalb ROE continues to be a PearsonVUE authorized testing center on Tuesdays 9am—4pm. Registrations are done online through the testing company or PearsonVUE. In FY16, 393 different candidates tested on a total of 506 tests. There were 52 actual testing days, averaging 10 candidates per day. Additional days were specially scheduled to serve testers who required accommodations such as extended time or adaptive equipment. The Constitution Test for the GED continues to be made available at no cost to the tester. The ROE also offers the ETS Paraprofessional Assessment. During 2015-16, 47 GED certificates and 109 GED transcripts were issued.

Ms. Christensen additionally review additional data pertaining to homeless students, truancy, student enrollments, and fund distribution.

She also shared that she has applied for a Federal Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) grant which helps with initiatives that are designed to help rural districts that may lack the personnel and resources to compete effectively for Federal competitive grants and that often receive grant allocations in amounts that are too small to be effective in meeting their intended purposes. Ms. Christensen shared that she was awarded \$15,000.00 from that grant and will be using those funds to fund a Marriage and Family Counselor. The counselor was hired in April and will be tracking as much data as possible and look at outcomes. The counselor will travel with the case workers to homes where there are truancy issues.

Another new item that Ms. Christensen shared was about a 501(c)3 that was now established. She noted that it was identified the ROE does not have enough funds to serve truants and homeless students and unless a student qualifies for truancy or homeless, there are no funds to help them or not funds available for early intervention. Because of this, a non-profit was started called Friends of DeKalb ROE. This is a completely separate organization from the County's Regional Office of Education. Friends of DeKalb ROE is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing goods and services to at-risk youth in DeKalb County. It is a tax-deductible 501(c)3 and is also part of Amazon Smile, where .5% of an Amazon Smile purchases will go to Friends of DeKalb Regional Office of Education.

Ms. Christensen additionally shared that she decided to withdraw the DeKalb ROE from the KIDS Professional Development Consortium that they have been in for many years. She added that being part of that consortium was not meeting the needs of the DeKalb County School Districts anymore. This past year was their last year with the consortium and in the meantime ROE has hired a part-time Secondary Instructional Coach, a full-time Elementary Instructional Coach, and a part-time Social/Emotional Learning Specialist. Doing all of this came about from a Planning Committee that represented Districts from all across DeKalb County as well as NIA and KEC. Ms. Christensen said that all parties involved with this change were in favor of instructional coaching as opposed to just workshop delivery. It is a change in philosophy and it is going to better provide for the County's small Districts what they have never been able to afford in the past. It was additionally added that this change bears no cost difference.

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Ms. Christensen additionally updated the Committee on additional new items that are happening with the ROE including, renting space in the County's Business Incubator for additional Professional Development Team staff, partnering with DeKalb County Community Gardens for a grant application for University Village, partnering with DeKalb County Community Foundation on a Kindergarten readiness initiative, and on June 21<sup>st</sup> they will be hosting their first Early Learning Summit. The group also discussed the issue of there not really being any accountability or numbers associated with youth that are being homeschooled. Lastly, it was shared that the ROE is hosting their second County-wide Institute Day on October 6, 2017. There will be six School Districts participating (850 participants) and there will be over 100 breakout sessions offered to teachers to further their professional development.

The Committee thanked Ms. Christensen for coming and presenting her Annual Report to them and requested that she come back in the fall when her newest data was available.

#### **DCFS FOSTER/ADOPTIVE PARENT AGENCY**

Mr. William Hart, Recruitment and Resources Specialist for Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) joined the Committee to provide information regarding criteria for becoming a DCFS Licensed Foster Parent and information about becoming a DCFS Emergency Foster Case Parent. Mr. Hart presented literature and informed the Committee on the differences of being a Foster Care Parent and an Emergency Foster Care Parent. He additionally shared that he wanted to provide this information to the Committee and spread the word farther that DeKalb County has an increasing need of both types of parents, especially for emergency foster care. *For more information, the literature that was provided to the Committee is attached to these Minutes.*

#### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

The Committee briefly reviewed potential future agenda items that they would like to explore.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**It was moved by Mr. Porterfield, seconded by Mr. Whelan, and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Maureen Little, Chairperson

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Tasha Sims, Recording Secretary

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**CRITERIA FOR BECOMING A  
DCFS LICENSED FOSTER PARENT**

**AND**

**INFORMATION ABOUT**

**BECOMING A**

**DCFS EMERGENCY FOSTER CARE PARENT**

**FOR MORE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**CONTACT**

**WILLIAM HART**

**The Recruitment and Resource Specialist**

**(815) 787-5362 DESK PHONE #**

**[William.R.Hart@illinois.Gov](mailto:William.R.Hart@illinois.Gov)**

## **Foster Care**

**Is providing a temporary safe haven for children who have been placed in the care of DCFS by the local courts. DCFS strives to reunite children with their birth families. When reunification is simply is not possible, as determined by the courts, many foster families choose to adopt the children they have cared for.**

## **Emergency Foster Care Parents**

**Provides a youth with a temporary, alternative home placement to support the immediate needs with intensive services and start long term planning at the outset of EFC placement. Placement could last anywhere from two weeks to one month. EFC bridge the foster parents and the birth parents together with child welfare professionals from the beginning and capitalize on the strengths of the child's connections.**

**The criteria for being a DCFS Emergency Foster Care Parent or (EFC) are:**

**Must complete eighteen hours of mandatory training and on-going training for the purpose of hone in their skills,**

**Foster Parent(s) are treated as professionals and are expected to engage in the decision making process with the EFC team,**

**Must be committed to partner with the birth parents, families and fictive kin,**

**Must be willing to provide a home to youths between the ages of zero to age seventeen, love working with adolescents or have a niche,**

**You cannot decline to take in a youth in care but each youth that is placed in your home is carefully screened well for appropriateness for a home environment,**

**One parent household can't work outside the home,**

**Two parent household can work outside the home while the other is committee fully to foster,**

**Maximum of number of youth is two unless designed as a sibling home, and**

**The EFC is fully supported by the Case Manager, the Intensive Placement Stabilization Team, the DCFS Foster Parent Support Specialist who is available 24/7, the DCFS Recruitment and Resource and other DCFS Regional Supports.**

**If you are interested in applying for this position or have more questions regarding being an Emergency Foster Care Parent please get in contact with:**

**Mrs. Lori Moreno the DCFS Northern Region Supervisor at (630) 801-3434, [Lori.Moreno@illinois.gov](mailto:Lori.Moreno@illinois.gov).**

# EMERGENCY FOSTER CARE ONE PAGER

- DCFS is changing the way we engage foster parents and biological parents in the foster care system. We seek first to sustain or reconnect youth to their families of origin and for foster parents to be the extension of the family partnering alongside the biological family and develop lifetime connections. It's a team approach to really look case by case on more sustainable longtime placement/permanency options.
- **Salary: \$1310 per month; Board Rate per child per day: \$65**
  - Salary is taxable and board rate isn't. Providers will get the monthly salary regardless of whether a youth is placed in the home or not.
  - Regardless of days a youth is placed, the EFC foster parent will get paid for the days the youth is placed in the home.
  - 2 separate checks as one is driven by salary and the other by the 906
- Foster Parents required to support youth with transportation to and from school, appts., visitation, etc. A matter of inconvenience for adults means something completely different for the youth tied to their family, community, schools, relationships and friends.
- All youth are not deemed appropriate for EFC as there is a gatekeeper to screen children in or out. (i.e. pattern of aggression, sexual predators, medically complex, etc.)
- The 18 hour mandatory EFC provides a basic framework for understanding the fundamental tenets of the impact on trauma and how it manifests itself and ways of handling this population.

Licensee A and B are required to take the trainings.

Ongoing monthly training is required to enhance the skill sets and knowledge base for foster parents to develop a specialty.

There is a team of supports to the EFC home including Mobile Response of IPS (2xs a week with child placement and 1x per week without), the Foster Parent Support Specialist (aka Foster Parent Advocate) visits weekly, case manager contact, licensing contact and hopefully mentor supports to the home in the future.
- Regardless of days a youth is placed, the EFC foster parent will still get paid for the days the youth is placed in the home.
- Foster parents and DCFS can terminate contract with 30 days notice.
- If foster parents get into the training and decide they do not want to do EFC, please encourage them to finish the course. It adds to their hours and they could benefit in the near future.
- EFC Foster Parents are being told to reach back to R & R in the region for updates, concerns and suggestions.
- They will also have a list of numbers provided to them for training, Mobile Response, FPSS, licensing worker, etc.



## Myths and Facts about Being a Licensed Foster Parent

Myth: In order to be a foster parent you must be married and living in your own home.

**Fact: The licensees can be either a single person or two persons in a marriage or civil union with each other.**

Myth: Only older people who have raised children can be foster parents.

**Fact: Foster parents shall be stable, law abiding, responsible, mature individuals, at least 21 years of age.**

Myth: Youth in care have been abused so much that they're beyond repair. I wouldn't really be making a difference anyway.

**Fact: If you are willing to be positively enthusiastic regarding the care of a child, an advocate for children and be willing to get to know the child or children as individuals you can make a positive change in the child placed in your care.**

Myth: Once I take a youth in care into my home, I'm on my own without any help.

**Fact: DCFS directly provides universal foster care information and overall support to licensed foster parents with other child welfare agencies and with foster care programs and community agencies.**

Myth: All Foster children when placed need individual bedrooms.

**Fact: Each youth in care shall be provided his/her own separate bed or crib. Children under six years of age may share a bedroom with related children of the opposite sex who are also under age six if each child is provided with a separate bed or crib. There shall be a minimum of 40 square feet, excluding the closet and wardrobe area, for the first child occupying a bedroom and a minimum of 35 square feet for each additional child sharing the room. A child in care shall not share the bedroom with an adult except under emergency conditions for a brief period of time, when a child is ill and needs frequent attention. Children over the age of six cannot share a bedroom with another child of the opposite sex.**

Myth: Foster parents have to stay at home with the children and I work full-time, I guess that excludes me.

**Fact: Foster parents and the licensing representative will discuss and assess options of support for the foster parent who is career oriented.**

Myth: You don't have any choice of the types of children who get placed in your home, whether they are perfectly healthy or have a disability.

**Fact: Potential Foster Care Clients while being assessed are allowed to request the age range and gender of the youth in care being placed in their homes. DCFS has different types of licensed foster parents such as Traditional, Relative-Fictive**

**Kin, Specialized, Adolescent, Child Specific, Emergency Foster Care. DCFS is looking for foster parents who have skills and affinity for working with adolescents, Spanish-speaking youth, and LGBTQ youth.**

Myth: Foster Parents are not allowed to take youth in care out of state for vacations, events and festivals.

**Fact: Foster Parents are allowed to take youth in care when they get approval from the worker with an Out of State Travel Form that requires specific, dated, time-limited, written consent and information.**

Myth: A DCFS Foster Care License is only good for one year.

**Fact: A foster family home license is valid for four years unless revoked by the Department or voluntarily given up by the licensee.**

**1. Why is it so important to find more foster families in the community they are from? Why is it important to keep kids in their communities?**

Children in foster care do better when they stay in their home communities. They experience trauma when separated from their birth families and we want to decrease the amount of changes that they experience to decrease future trauma. Children benefit when they can continue attending their same school, continue with services from and maintain bonds with nearby family members. Additionally, children who remain in their community are able to visit more frequently with their biological parents and the likelihood of family reunification improves.

**2. Has there been a decrease in the number of foster families across the state of Illinois? Or has there been an increase in the need of foster families?**

There is a general need of additional foster home statewide. Some foster parents adopt and surrender their license. Others may not renew their license after a few years of service or move out of state.

We are looking for families that will be able to open up their home to infants, sibling groups, Spanish Speaking children, children of color, and teenagers and those who are from the LGBT community.

**3. Who can be a foster parent?**

Foster parents need to be at least 21 years old, they can be married, single, or in a civil union. They must be financially stable, no history of indicated reports with the Department of Child Abuse/Neglect and able to pass a criminal background check. They also need to have adequate space in their home

**4. What steps need to be taken in order to become a foster parent?**

Prospective foster parents need to call DCFS at (815) 787-5362 and they will assist them with the application, background check, fingerprinting, and medical evaluations. The prospective foster parents also need to complete 27 hours of training that is provided free of cost. The representative will also complete a home assessment and cooperate with regular visit to the home to ensure compliance with the foster home licensing standards. A recruitment specialist will assist with any barriers.

**5. What are some of the challenges of being a foster parent?**

Foster parents need to work as members of a professional team and ensure that the children's social, emotional, educational, medical, behavioral, and developmental needs are met. Another challenge that often occurs is assisting with reunification when the foster parent is emotionally attached the child due to the length of time that they have spent in the foster home.

**6. What are some of the rewards?**

The greatest reward is that foster parents are an essential part to making a difference in the children's lives. They assist to provide reunification. Many foster parents keep in touch for years with children and families who have returned home. In some cases, when child are not able to return home foster parents may adopt or provide guardianship to the children they have fostered. Also, many foster parents continue to maintain lifelong connection with youth who they have cared for long after they have aged out of the system .

**Website:** [www.illinois.gov/dcfs/lovinghomes/fostercare](http://www.illinois.gov/dcfs/lovinghomes/fostercare) or call (815) 787-5362 and ask to speak to William Hart

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## Information About Foster PRIDE Digital In-Service Training

*Foster PRIDE digital in-service training modules* are now available for foster and adoptive caregivers licensed by either DCFS or private agencies. Nine modules are available on CD Rom and are designed for those circumstances when foster and adoptive caregivers have training needs that cannot be met in a traditional classroom format. For example:

- More training hours needed to maintain a foster home license.
- Caregiver requests a “refresher course” to help deal with a child’s changing needs or difficult behavior.
- Training needed as part of a corrective action plan for maintaining a license.

### Registration Process

- Caregivers contact their foster home licensing worker or Caregivers may call DCFS Registration directly to request one of the Foster PRIDE Digital in-service modules.
- To register for one of these in-service modules, telephone the DCFS Training Office toll-free at **1-877-800-3393 (TTY: 217-524-2070)** or e-mail the training office at [dcfstraining@il.gov](mailto:dcfstraining@il.gov) to request one of the digital training CDs be sent to the caregiver. Be prepared to update the caregiver’s address, phone number and e-mail address. E-mails should include the caregiver’s name, address, phone number and e-mail address. In the e-mail subject box, include “request for digital PRIDE”.
- Caregivers must have a computer, or access to one, to participate. They should also have access to a printer to print out the Certificate of Completion.
- Only one digital module may be requested per household at a time.
- The CD will be mailed to the caregiver within 2 days of processing the request, along with an application form for the Virtual Training Center (VTC). The application is required to set up a Virtual Training Center account and takes less than 5 minutes to complete on the computer. Or caregivers may print the application, complete it manually, and FAX it to the DCFS Registration Unit at **217-557-4349**.
- Instructions for the caregiver are enclosed with the CD.
- Assistance from a PRIDE trainer is available to participants using the digital training who would like more course information or have questions by calling the DCFS Training Office at 1-877-800-3393, or by sending an email request to DCFS Training at [dcfstraining@illinois.gov](mailto:dcfstraining@illinois.gov).
- Technical support will be available from Governor’s State University by calling **1-708-534-4094** or e-mailing [info@pridedigital.org](mailto:info@pridedigital.org)
- On completing the digital Foster PRIDE in-service module, the caregiver will be prompted to print a Certificate of Completion and evaluation. Both are returned to the DCFS Office of Training by e-mail, mail, or fax, to receive foster parent training credit hours.



**Course Description:**

The following computer-delivered training modules are available:

**Module One- Foundation for Meeting the Developmental Needs of Children at Risk 4 In-Service Credit hours**

How to build self-esteem in children; how kids act when they need recognition, power, freedom, enjoyment and belonging; how to listen to what kids say and not what we think they say.

**Module Two- Using Discipline to Protect, Nurture and Meet Developmental Needs - 3 In-Service Credit hours**

Practical information about effective discipline techniques such as “I-messages,” natural consequences, and time out; also, how to “catch” kids being good, and how to encourage positive behavior.

**Module Three - Addressing Developmental Issues Related to Sexuality**

**1 In-Service Credit hours**

Investigate the stages of sexual development. Review attitudes about sex, myths and values. Discuss developmentally appropriate information for various ages and how to respond to children’s questions

**Module Four- Responding to Signs and Symptoms of Child Sexual Abuse**

**2 In-Service Credit hours**

Differentiate normal from problematic sexual behaviors in children and youth, recognize signs and symptoms of sexual abuse, and learn ways to help sexually abused children.

**Module Five- Supporting Relationships Between Children and Their Families**

**1 In-Service Credit hours**

How to help kids attach to caregivers and stay loyal to birth families; how to prepare children for visits with the birth family and support them after; how to share the parenting role with birth parents.

**Module Six- Working as a Professional Team Member**

**3 In-Service Credit hours**

Team roles; when and how to be an advocate for children; conflict and your personal style for managing it; how conflict can be a “win – win” situation.

**Module Seven- Promoting Children's Personal and Cultural Identity-**

**2 In-Service Credit hours**

What “culture” means to a child’s self-esteem; how to manage cultural diversity in a foster home; how to discuss sensitive issues with children; how to help a child record his or her history.

**Module Eight- Promoting Permanency Outcomes -**

**4 In-Service Credit hours**

Supporting reunification of the children and parents.

**Module Nine- Managing the Impact of Placement on Your Family**

**2 In-Service Credit hours**

How fostering children can affect family relationships; how to minimize resulting stresses; what supports are available.