Commonly Asked Questions and Answers From Foster Parents Regarding Education

Compiled by
The Center for Child Welfare and Education at Northern Illinois University
For
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
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Training for Caregivers:

1. **What kind of training is available to help me advocate for educational issues?**
   A 6-hour education advocacy training class is available from DCFS Office of Training and is required for foster parents prior to re-licensure. The course consists of what you and your child’s rights and responsibilities are as well as knowing what to do and where to go to get help.

2. **How will I know when the training is and how to sign up?**
   Training opportunities are often included in foster parent newsletters. You can also contact the DCFS Office of Training at (217) 557-4349 to register for the next available training.

3. **When there is more than one foster caregiver (e.g., husband and wife) do all caregivers of record need to attend the training?**
   No, but it would be helpful since parenting is a partnership and at any time one or another caregiver may be called upon to provide advocacy.

General Educational Information:

4. **What am I expected to do regarding school?**
   You are expected to:
   - Within 2 days after placement in your home, enroll the child in school.
   - For children birth through five, assist the child’s caseworker in obtaining a developmental screening for the child.
   - For children birth through three who qualify for early intervention services make sure they participate in those services.
   - For children three through five enroll in a state-funded early childhood program.
   - For children and youth between ages 5 through high school graduation, make sure they attend school regularly.
   - Regularly visit the child’s school or participate in early intervention services.
   - Talk to the child’s teacher or others involved on a regular basis to monitor progress.
   - Work as a team with the child’s caseworker.
   - Exercise your rights and responsibilities regarding special education/early intervention including, but not limited to, consents for evaluations and initial placement, participation in all meetings and decisions, and utilizing procedural safeguards such as complaints, mediation and due process if needed.
   - Represent the child in a positive manner in all dealings with the school.

5. **How will I know what to do when it comes to making educational decisions?**
   As a foster parent/caregiver you spend more time with and know the child better than anyone else. You see the child in many situations and can share the valuable information that you have on what the child needs with the child’s caseworker and teacher/early intervention provider. For the details on the processes of special education and early intervention, there will be training provided.
by DCFS and if you need help there are education liaisons and education advisors available to help you.

6. I work during the school day, how can I attend all of these special education/early intervention meetings?
Your participation is very important. School districts and early intervention providers must schedule planning meetings and eligibility conferences at a mutually agreed upon time, date and place. The meetings do not have to take place only during school hours or at school. Sometimes, parents participate by speakerphone. A meeting may be held without you if the school district has a record of attempts made to mutually arrange a time and place, but you have been unable to attend.

7. What about confidentiality? Can I take anyone I want to an IEP meeting like parents who are not served by DCFS do?
You should always follow guidelines on confidentiality. You may take appropriate people, like an education liaison or education advisor to IEP or other educational meetings. To support a good relationship with the school, always notify the school in advance whom you are inviting to the meetings.

8. The school wants to know why my foster child is in foster care. Do I have to tell them?
You are required to share information with the school that is educationally relevant. If you feel any information about your child’s history is relevant to obtaining appropriate services at school, you are free to share it with only those school staffs that need to know. Consult with your caseworker, education liaison or education advisor if you need assistance in determining what is appropriate to share.

9. My foster child wants to continue attending the school they were attending before living with me. What do I need to do?
The Illinois School Code allows DCFS to determine if a child should remain at their current school. Work with the child’s caseworker to decide if it is in the child’s best interest. If so, the caseworker will notify the school that:
♦ DCFS has guardianship
♦ DCFS has decided it is in the child’s best interest to maintain attendance at the current school
♦ Current placement information regarding names and addresses.

10. Can I home school my child?
Generally, the DCFS Guardian does not grant permission for home schooling. It may be considered if there are extenuating circumstances; contact the appropriate education advisor for assistance.

11. Can I enroll my foster child in a private school?
You may enroll your foster child in a private school but only after discussing this with the child’s caseworker and determining it is in the child’s best interest. You most likely will be responsible for the cost of the private school.

12. The school district says we live too close to school for bus service but I don’t think my foster child will be safe crossing busy streets. What do I do?
Talk to your child’s caseworker and then in collaboration contact the school district and ask them to submit an “Application for Determination of Serious Safety Hazard” to IDOT. If approved, the caseworker will request the school district to provide transportation.

13. My foster child is struggling in school and behind his/her classmates. What do I do?
Talk to the child’s teacher and caseworker and see what extra help can be given and supports can be put into place. If this does not appear to be adequate you may make a referral for an evaluation for special education.

14. I want my foster child to repeat a grade and the school doesn’t agree. Who gets to decide?
The school makes the final decision. If the reason you want your child to repeat the grade is because he or she is not keeping up with the other students consider having the child evaluated for special education services. If the child is currently receiving special education services meet and look at what services need to be added or revised to the IEP. Having a child repeat a grade without knowing why the child is falling behind is not a good idea.

15. Can my foster child be in extra-curricular activities?
Yes! We encourage participation in extra-curricular activities. Children enrolled in extra-curricular activities are more likely to get better grades, have better attendance and graduate from high school.

Registration:

16. How do I know what school my foster child should attend?
You would register the child in the local school and depending on local school district attendance policies a school will be identified unless it has been decided that the child should continue attending his/her current school. Children who are in foster care have the right to attend the school they are currently attending when they come into placement or change foster homes when you and your caseworker determine it is in the child’s best interest.

17. What paperwork do I need to register my foster child in school?
You will need:
- DCFS Placement form (CFS 906) to verify residence
- IDPA Medical Card
- Certified Copy of Birth Certificate
- Copies of IEP, IFSP or 504 plan if the child has one
- ISBE Student Transfer Form (from previous school district stating the child is in good standing).

18. What if there is no birth certificate available?
If a certified copy is unavailable, the caseworker can provide a notarized affidavit verifying the child’s identity and date of birth.

19. What do I do if the school refuses to allow my foster child to attend school within two days of the child coming to live with me?
You should contact the child’s caseworker for assistance. If you and the caseworker continue to have difficulty enrolling, the caseworker will contact the appropriate DCFS education advisor or POS education liaison for assistance within 5 days.
20. **Can a school district refuse to enroll my foster child without a copy of his/her IEP?**  
The district must enroll the child with or without the IEP. You should help obtain one if possible but this cannot be used as a reason not to have the child attend school.

**Fees and Payments:**

21. **Who pays for school fees and books?**  
Illinois school districts are required to provide free use of required textbooks and instructional materials for children who are eligible for the free lunch program, which all of the children that DCFS is legally responsible are. Each district has individual policies regarding the waivers of other school fees. Check to see what your district’s policies are. Fees that are not waived are to be paid in accordance with DCFS Procedures 359, Authorized Child Care Payments.

22. **My child has unpaid school fines (library, lost books, etc.). Can they withhold his transcript?**  
Yes, the school district can withhold the official transcript but can provide you with a non-certified copy until the unpaid fines are resolved.

23. **Do I need to buy school supplies?**  
DCFS provides foster caregivers $50.00 per school year to cover regular school supplies. Private agency (POS) caregivers should ask their agency to determine how payments are provided.

24. **The school says my foster child needs tutoring. Who pays for it?**  
DCFS will pay for tutoring only after all other resources have been exhausted. In order to do so a written recommendation by the child’s teacher is required. Some of the reasons tutoring would be purchased are:

- The child needs remedial help after entering DCFS or changing schools.
- The child has one or more failing grades.
- Tutoring is recommended by the school on the DCFS Education Report Form (CFS 407)
- The child has been retained one or more years.
- Tutoring is recommended to compensate for extended absence from school.
25. Who pays for summer school?
   Your child’s caseworker should ask for a waiver of fees. If the school district doesn’t waive the fees
   DCFS or your private agency will pay for summer school.

Preschool:

26. Does my 3-5 year old foster child have to attend preschool?
   Yes, all children aged 3 to 5 in foster care must be enrolled in a state-funded early childhood
   program.

27. What if there is no state funded preschool available where we live?
   Work with your child’s caseworker and the appropriate DCFS education advisor or POS education
   liaison for assistance.

Special Education:

28. Who represents children in foster care for special education purposes?
   You do. With the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA ’97)
   foster parents/caregivers are considered parents for special education purposes. For youth
   residing in residential facilities an educational surrogate parent will be appointed through the
   Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

29. I work during the school day, how can I attend all of these special education/early
    intervention meetings?
   Your participation is very important. School districts/early intervention providers must schedule
   planning meetings and eligibility conferences at a mutually agreed upon time, date and place. The
   meetings do not have to take place only during school hours or at school. Sometimes, parents
   participate by speakerphone. A meeting may be held without you if the school district has a record
   of attempts made to mutually arrange a time and place, but you have been unable to attend.

30. What if I make a wrong decision?
   Usually there won’t be wrong decisions made but rather uninformed decisions made. If you are
   unsure about a decision or are afraid that you have made a wrong decision, contact the
   caseworker, education liaison and/or education advisor for assurance or assistance. There is
   usually no decision that can’t be reversed when you have the appropriate information.

31. What happens if I don’t want to represent the child in school matters?
   As a foster parent, it is your responsibility to advocate for the educational needs of children in your
   care. Talk to your child’s caseworker and have them help you problem solve. Your child’s
   caseworker also has the responsibility of working with you as a partner in school matters and can
   assist you.
32. To what extent should a child’s biological parents be involved in school meetings?
A child’s biological parents should generally be involved in the planning process for any child who is in placement with a goal of “returning home.” However, the Department maintains legal responsibility for the child as his/her guardian and only the foster parent has signature and decision-making authority regarding the child’s special education planning and programming.

33. The school is insisting that my child’s caseworker sign all special educational forms. Why can’t I sign?
You must. Several years ago the federal and state laws were changed to have foster parents serve as the parent for special education services. Some school districts still haven’t caught up with the changes.

34. How do I make a referral for special education services and how long does it take?
Make the referral to your child’s school in writing explaining why you think the child may need special education services. If the school district agrees to evaluate your child for special education eligibility, the school will ask you to sign consent for a case study evaluation. From the time you sign the consent the school must complete the evaluation and develop an IEP if eligible within 60 school days. This works out to be about 3 months.

35. My foster child has been diagnosed with a mental illness but the school says he isn’t eligible for special education services, why?
Having a medical diagnosis is not a guarantee of special education eligibility. IDEA has specific eligibility categories and the disability must have an impact on the child’s education. Often students in this situation are eligible for a Section 504 Plan which will provide needed supports.

36. The school says my child isn’t eligible for special education but he/she still needs help. What can I do?
School districts often have resources to help students that can assist your child. Ask the student’s teacher or principal what extra help is available. If you don’t think this is sufficient or meeting your child’s needs, contact your caseworker and work with the POS education liaison or the DCFS education advisor.

37. The school isn’t doing what the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) says. What do I do?
First, talk to the teacher and ask for her assistance in determining why the IEP isn’t being followed and what can be done. If the IEP isn’t being followed because the child’s needs have changed, ask for an IEP meeting and revise the IEP.

If the IEP isn’t being followed because all of the people who should be delivering services don’t know what they are to be doing make sure they have copies of the IEP and know what is on it. If your child has gone for a significant amount of time without the services, ask for compensatory services. Compensatory services are additional services to make up for the ones that were missed.

If the IEP isn’t being followed because there is a lack of school personnel to deliver the services, ask for an IEP meeting. At the IEP meeting revise the IEP for an interim period (short period of time) until school personnel can be hired. After school personnel are in place, reconvene the IEP and ask for compensatory services for the time that services weren’t given.
If you need assistance, contact the child’s caseworker, education liaison (POS) or education advisor.

Discipline:

38. My foster child keeps getting sent home from school for misbehaving. What do I do?
All students are entitled to a full day of instruction. The only reason a child should be sent home for behavior is if they were issued a suspension. Any time a child is sent home for ANY part of an instructional day, for anything other than illness or an emergency, this is considered a suspension. Rather than sending your child home, the school should be evaluating whether your child needs behavioral support to be successful in school. If your child already has an IEP, a behavior plan should be developed. If your child doesn’t have an IEP, consider requesting an evaluation for special education.

39. The school wants my foster child to attend an alternative school for misbehaving. Can they do that?
Only in certain situations:
♦ Any child can be administratively transferred for up to 45 days to an alternative school for: 1) bringing guns or weapons to school or to a school function, 2) possession or use of drugs or alcohol at school or at a school function, and 3) physical aggression leading to severe bodily harm at school or at a school function.

♦ A child who has been expelled by the school board may be offered attendance at an alternative school during the term of the expulsion. This is at the sole discretion of the board.

♦ An IEP team may determine that an alternative school is an appropriate placement to meet the needs of a student in special education.

40. The school says my child can’t attend school until the doctor prescribes medication for his ADHD. Can they do that?
No, they cannot require medication for school attendance, but find out why the school is asking for your child to be medicated. Discuss the school’s concerns with your child’s caseworker and physician.

41. How often can my foster child be suspended?
There are different rules for children in regular education and special education:
♦ A regular education child may be suspended as often as a school determines it is appropriate, as long as any one term of suspension does not exceed 10 school days. In order for a school to keep a child out longer than 10 school days for one incident, the school board would need to consider expulsion.

♦ A special education child may only be suspended for 10 cumulative school days in a school year. Once a child has been suspended for 10 school days, an IEP meeting must be held to develop a behavior intervention plan.

42. What do I do if my foster child is expelled from school?
As soon as you are notified of a pending expulsion, contact your child’s caseworker and work with the education liaison (POS) or education advisor (DCFS) in referring for representation from a
lawyer under the legal services contract. All students undergoing an expulsion hearing should be represented by a lawyer.

For students receiving special education services who are expelled, special education services must continue to be provided. For students who are not eligible for special education, your caseworker will work with you to find an alternative place for the student to be educated while expelled from the public school.

43. The school is threatening to drop my 15 year old for not attending school; can they do that?
No. The mandatory school attendance age has been raised to age 17, and they have the right to remain in school until they reach age 21 or until they graduate. One exception to the rule is that a student can be dropped for one semester after age 17 if they are truant for 2 straight semesters or have received a GPA of less than a 'D' for 2 straight semesters. In addition, once a student reaches age 19, they can be dropped if they would be unable to complete the credits required for graduation by age 21.

Graduation/GED:

44. When teens change high schools, how do I know if they will have enough credits to graduate?
Get a copy of the student's transcripts and make an appointment with the current school's guidance counselor as soon as possible. While Illinois has basic graduation requirements each district may have additional requirements.

45. My foster child is 17 and doesn't want to go to high school. Can he enroll in a GED class?
According to DCFS procedure, a high school diploma is the preferred method of high school completion. A student must be 18 years old and his/her high school class must have graduated in order to pursue a GED. There are certain special circumstances under which a 17-year old may enroll in GED classes. Contact your POS education liaison or DCFS education advisor for more information.

46. Who covers graduation expenses?
Each student is allowed up to $500.00 for graduation expenses. The student must be in his or her Junior or Senior year and the expenses covered include pictures, yearbook, cap and gown rental, class ring, new clothing for graduation and other related fees. Contact your caseworker to determine how payment will be made.
College/Vocational Training:

47. Can my foster child live with me as she starts college?
Yes, we encourage youth who are comfortable in their foster homes to stay there and begin post secondary school. The local community college is very affordable and offers both academic and vocational programs. Youth can take advantage of getting either a vocational program certificate or a transferable associate’s degree at a very low cost. As soon after January 1 as possible, assist your child in completing and filing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Generally, the student receives enough ‘free’ financial aid to pay for the tuition, fees, or books at the local community college, AND gets a refund of Pell. The student will need to file their FAFSA making sure to indicate all possible schools they wish to have their financial aid information sent and then need to make sure all of the financial aid paper and enrollment paper work is completed at the school.

48. What is this ETV we keep hearing about?
Education and Training Voucher (ETV) money can provide up to $5000 per fiscal year for expenses not covered by other financial aid grants. It can be used for tuition, fees, books, supplies, uniforms, equipment, or transportation as long as the student is enrolled, attending, and making satisfactory academic progress in an accredited academic or vocational program. Other education related costs may be considered such as tutoring, health insurance, and housing on a case by case basis. The youth must use ETV prior to age 21 and will remain eligible until age 23 if satisfactory academic progress is being made in the program of study. An application must be submitted each term which will include the application forms, a current schedule, previous grades, and financial aid award notification. Contact Pat Palmer at Patricia.Palmer@illinois.gov or 630-801-3453 for additional information about this program.

49. If my foster child decides to go away to college, will DCFS pay for everything, including housing?
No, DCFS does not pay for all college expenses. ♦ DCFS has programs that will help with college expenses, but will typically not cover all expenses. For this reason, it is required that a student apply for grants and scholarships by filing a FAFSA form. If it is determined that financial aid is not sufficient to pay for tuition, fees, books, housing and room and board, the student can apply for the Education and Transition Voucher (ETV) program which can provide up to $5,000 per fiscal year to cover expenses not covered by financial aid. The student will need to ‘do the math’ to determine if the chosen school can be paid for with a combination of grants and ETV funding. If not, the student will have to find other funding sources such as scholarships or loans to pay the balance. This is why we encourage youth to get their associates degree at their local community college and transfer to the four year school in order to minimize expenses.

♦ Youth can receive additional help with college living expenses by entering in the Youth in College/Vocational Training Program (YIC/VT). If the youth complies with the program requirements, a monthly board payment of $471 will be sent to the youth (instead of it going to the foster parent). This $471 should be used to help pay for the room and board expenses at school that are not covered by other financial aid. The case worker will work with the youth to submit an application for the YIC/VT program. Cook County applications are to be sent to
50. Can't my child just get one of the DCFS scholarships?
There are 48 DCFS Scholarships awarded each year, and it is a very competitive process. Applications are mailed starting January each year, and all are due in Springfield by March 31st. The average number of applications received is 250, and each one is reviewed by 3 different people who rate the applicant’s ACT/SAT score, Grade Point Average, letters of recommendation, volunteer and/or work experience, and personal essay. The DCFS Scholarship is the only program open to both current and former wards. Awardees receive a waiver for tuition and mandatory fees at Illinois state funded universities or in district community colleges. In addition, they receive a monthly grant of $471, a medical card until age 23, and assistance with books not covered by financial aid grants. The tuition waiver does not cover any expenses at private schools, out of state schools or vocational schools – only state funded universities and community colleges. Contact the DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services at 217-557-2689 or 312-814-5959 for questions about the Department’s Scholarship program.

51. As a Foster Parent, do I have to provide my tax information when my foster child applies for financial aid?
No, if your foster child answered the question on FAFSA regarding dependency status correctly, you should not be asked to provide your tax information. If the school requests this information, the student will need to correct this question on the FAFSA filing. The child will want to answer ‘yes’ to question 55 (At any time since you turned age 13, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court?) Financial aid should be applied for in January of the youth’s senior year, and they should bring documentation from the caseworker verifying that they are under the guardianship of DCFS. Call the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) at (800) 899-4722, or visit collegezone.com for questions about financial aid.

52. What can I do as a Foster Parent to help prepare my child (ren) for college or vocational training?
♦ The most important thing you can do is to talk to your children about what they want to be, or what they want to study, and help them believe that they can achieve their dreams and goals if they work for them. Knowing what field they want to pursue a career in can help them narrow down the choices for a college. During the senior year of high school, help your child access the career exploration programs available through the high school guidance counselors. If the guidance counselors cannot offer enough assistance, go to your local community college and ask to work with the career counseling center or the new Illinois Student Assistance Corp member.
♦ As soon after January 1 as possible, assist your child in completing and filing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). This will need to be filed each year so that the federal government can determine the amount of financial need and then send that information to the schools that the student has listed on the FAFSA form. Once the student has successfully completed the FAFSA, a Student Aid Report (SAR) will be sent to the student showing what the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) will be – this will help determine what school may be financially best for your child. The child then will need to complete the financial aid paper work at the school s/he enrolls in so that financial aid is actually awarded to the student. If your child needs further assistance in completing the FAFSA, they should contact their high school guidance counselor or the financial aid department of their chosen school.
Supports and Help:

53. What happens if I need help supporting my child’s education?
   In addition to the child’s caseworker, there are a variety of resources available to help. Unless the child is in imminent educational/developmental harm, it is suggested they be contacted in the following order:
   ♦ Education liaisons for private agencies
   ♦ Appropriate Parent Training and Information Centers
   ♦ Education advisors
   ♦ DCFS legal service contract with Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation
   ♦ Notify the Guardian ad Litem
   ♦ DCFS’ general counsel’s office - DCFS guardian

54. What responsibilities does my child’s caseworker have in educational decisions?
   The primary role of the caseworker is to support you in supporting your child’s education. There is an expectation that caseworkers and foster parents/caregivers work as a team in making educational decisions. Your child’s caseworker does have certain responsibilities spelled out in Educational Procedures 314 that guide them as to their responsibilities for the child’s education. For example, your caseworker is required to visit the school/early intervention provider twice a year and have quarterly contact with the child’s teachers or early intervention provider in order to monitor educational performance.

55. How do I know which education advisor to contact?
   Education advisors are available in every DCFS Region across the state and are assigned based on where your child resides. Consult the following list to determine the Advisor that serves your area:

**Cook County Regions**

**Cook North – Chicago**
Advisor: Donnis Briscoe
Office Address: DCFS, 1911 S. Indiana, 10th Floor, Chicago, IL 60616
Phone: 312-328-2519
E-mail: donnis.briscoe@illinois.gov

**Cook Central – Chicago**
Advisor: Dawn Overend
Office Address: DCFS, 3518 W. Division, Chicago, IL 60651
Phone: 773-292-7732
E-mail: dawn.overend@illinois.gov

**Cook South – Chicago**
Advisor: Diane Fitzhugh
Office Address: DCFS, 6201 S. Emerald, Chicago, IL 60621
Phone: 773-371-6029
E-mail: diane.fitzhugh@illinois.gov
Cook North – Suburbs
Advisor: Yasmina Sefiane
Office Address: DCFS, 8300 McCormick Blvd., Skokie, IL 60075
Phone: 847-745-3008
E-mail: yasmina.sefiane@illinois.gov


Cook Central – Suburbs
Advisor: Yasmina Sefiane
Office Address: DCFS, 1701 S. First Ave. S-1033, Maywood, IL 60153
Phone: 708-338-6637
E-mail: yasmina.sefiane@illinois.gov

Areas covered: Bedford Park, Bellwood, Berkley, Berwyn, Bridgeview, Broadview, Brookfield, Burbank, Cicero, Countryside, Elmwood Park, Forest Park, Franklin Park, Hillside, Hodgkins, Indian Head Park, Justice, LaGrange Park, Lyons, Maywood, Melrose Park, McCook, Northlake, North Riverside, Oak Park, River Forest, River Grove, Riverside, Schiller Park, Stickney, Summit, Westchester, Western Springs

Cook South – Suburbs
Advisor: Rebecca Lawrence
Office Address: DCFS, 15115 Dixie Highway, Harvey, IL 60426
Phone: 708-210-3051
E-mail: rebecca.lawrence@illinois.gov


Downstate Regions

Northern Region
Advisor: Rhonda Best
Office Address: DCFS, 107 N. Third Street, Rockford, IL 61107
Phone: 815-967-3750
E-mail: rhonda.best@illinois.gov

Counties covered: Boone, Carroll, Jo Davies, Lake, Lee, McHenry, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside, Winnebago
Advisor: Robena Morgan  
Office Address: DCFS, 1619 W. Jefferson, Joliet, IL 60435  
Phone: 815-730-4342  
E-mail: Robena.morgan@illinois.gov

Counties covered: DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Will

**Central Region – Champaign Sub region**
Advisor: Ann Wells  
Office Address: DCFS, 2900 N. Oakland Ave., Decatur, IL 62526  
Phone: 217-875-6568  
E-mail: ann.s.wells@illinois.gov

Counties covered: Champaign, Clark, Coles, Cumberland, DeWitt, Douglas, Edgar, Ford, Iroquois, Livingston, Macon, McLean, Moultrie, Piatt, Shelby, Vermillion

**Central Region – Peoria Sub region**
Advisor: open – contact Bessie Peabody - 618-583-2125  
Office Address: DCFS, 2001 NE Jefferson, Peoria, IL 61603  
Phone: 309-671-7952  
E-mail: kristal.shelvin@illinois.gov


**Central Region – Springfield Sub region**
Advisor: Mary Chepulis  
Office Address: DCFS, 521 S. Eleventh Street, Springfield, IL 62703  
Phone: 217-557-3985  
E-mail: mary.chepulis@illinois.gov

Counties covered: Adams, Brown, Calhoun, Cass, Christian, Clark, Coles, Cumberland, Greene, Jersey, Logan, Macoupin, Mason, Menard, Montgomery, Morgan, Pike, Sangamon, Schuyler, Scott, Shelby

**Southern Region**
Advisor: Bessie Peabody  
Office Address: DCFS, #10 Collinsville Avenue, E. St. Louis, IL 62201  
Phone: 618-583-2125  
E-mail: bessie.peabody@illinois.gov

Counties covered: Bond, Clay, Clinton, Crawford, Edwards, Effingham, Fayette, Marion, Jasper, Jefferson, Lawrence, Madison, Monroe, Richland, St. Clair, Wabash, Washington, Wayne

**Southern Region – Marion Sub region**
Advisor: Robin Van  
Office Address: DCFS, 1210 Hanson St., Murphysboro, IL 62966  
Phone: 618-687-1733  
E-mail: Robin.Van@illinois.gov

Counties covered: Alexander, Franklin, Galatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jackson, Johnson, Massac, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Randolph, Saline, Union, White, and Williamson