

# 2026 *Happy New Year* JANUARY NEWSLETTER



## FOSTER PARENT SHOUT OUT!

The **Dingledine** family was licensed in May of 2025 and quickly stepped into their role as foster parents with dedication and enthusiasm. Well prepared at the time of licensure, they were eager to begin supporting children and families in need. The family initially provided respite care, one instance of which has since transitioned into a long-term placement for a young, school-aged foster son.

They have done an excellent job helping the youth adjust to their home and transition smoothly into a new school environment. The Dingledines are genuinely happy to have him in their home and is committed to meeting his physical, emotional, and developmental needs. They work collaboratively and effectively with their foster son's casework team and consistently approach new challenges with flexibility and care.

In addition to supporting their foster son, the Dingledines work diligently to maintain a nurturing and stable home for their own children. They remain open and enthusiastic about providing additional respite care and considering another placement in the future. Their willingness to go above and beyond to ensure each child receives the best possible care reflects their strong commitment to fostering and to the well-being of children they serve.



## RELATIVE CAREGIVER CERTIFICATION ROLLOUT!

On January 12th, 2026, DCFS is rolling out the new Relative Caregiver Certification Process. This process is pertinent only to our **unlicensed relatives**. If you are an unlicensed relative, you can expect that your licensing worker and caseworker will be providing details about how to become certified. DCFS and The Baby Fold are encouraging all of our unlicensed relatives to become certified. Intentional changes have been made to make the process of certification as simple and streamlined as possible.





THE BABY FOLD'S

# FOSTER CARE

## FLU SHOT REMINDER!

Friendly reminder, all Youth in Care are required to get an **annual flu shot for all children 6 months and older**. Now is the perfect time to make sure you and your family are protected by getting your annual flu shot.

Find your local clinic here: [vaccines.gov/find-vaccines](https://www.vaccines.gov/find-vaccines).

Stay healthy and take good care this season!



## REFERRAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Don't forget—if you refer a family who becomes fully licensed and has a child placed in their home, you'll receive a \$150 reward! The referred family must identify you as the referral within the **first three days** of beginning the licensing process. If you have any questions, please contact your licensing worker.



## PLEASE JOIN THE BABY FOLD'S FOSTER CARE FACEBOOK PAGE

A private group created exclusively for our foster parents to stay updated on upcoming events and trainings. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out. Join using the link below or by scanning the QR code:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/g/17kGBfFaA>



## WHY THE BABY FOLD MAY CALL YOU ABOUT PLACEMENT



Illinois DCFS is required by policy to make "diligent efforts" to find a safe placement for children and youth who need immediate care. This means DCFS or a contracted agency (e.g., The Baby Fold) must contact **all possible placement options**, including relatives, fictive kin, and **all licensed foster homes**, even if a foster home has previously shared that they are not currently able or willing to accept a placement.

Emergency placements are temporary and are used to help children stabilize during a crisis or when first entering care, while a longer-term plan is being identified. Because DCFS must document that every option was explored, foster parents may receive a call from The Baby Fold even when the agency understands they are not available. **Receiving a call does not mean there is an expectation to accept a placement—only that the agency is meeting its required diligent-effort standards.**



THE BABY FOLD'S

# FOSTER CARE

## FOSTER PARENT LAW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN MEETING

Foster parents play an essential role in providing input into The Baby Fold's Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan, and we would be honored to have your input as we review and discuss The Baby Fold's 2027 Implementation Plan. Your feedback and perspective are incredibly valuable, and your participation helps ensure our services truly meet the needs of the children and families we serve.

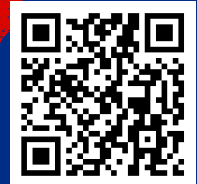
Please join us for a hybrid meeting on **Monday, January 26, 2026**, from 12:00pm–1:30pm. You're welcome to attend either in person or online.

 In-Person Location:

1500 Ft. Jesse Rd  
Normal, IL 61761

 Join via Zoom:

<https://tinyurl.com/yc8mbnze>  
Meeting ID: 862 5474 7152  
Passcode: 708910



We truly hope you'll take part in this important conversation. Your voice matters, and we look forward to learning from you!

## FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES #1

### Foster Parents' Rights:

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

### Foster Parents' Responsibilities:

#1. The responsibility to openly communicate and share information about the child with other members of the child welfare team.

# TRAININGS & SUPPORT

## TBRI

Trust-Based Relational Intervention is an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. TBRI uses Empowering Principles to address physical needs, Connecting Principles to meet attachment needs, and Correcting Principles to disarm fear-based behaviors. Virtual training every Wednesday 9am-12pm January through February. For questions reach out to Ken Summers at KSummers@thebabyfold.org. To register: <https://tinyurl.com/bddjhumr>

## DADS SHARPEN DADS

A safe place for dads to share their unique challenges, as well as education and support for each other to be their very best. Meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 7:15pm. For more info, email Ken at KSummers@thebabyfold.org for more information.

## WEDNESDAY NOON GROUP

Provides education and support related to parenting, trauma, and self-care within the context of adoption and foster care. Meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month. Email Melissa at MLegendre@thebabyfold.org for more information.

## GRANDPARENT CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Fostering a grandchild? This group is for you! Meets once a month at Community Care, located at 3601 General Electric Rd. Suite #2, Bloomington, IL 61704. Caregivers and children are able to meet together to do activities, crafts, share a meal, and get acquainted. If you would like more information, please call Angie Raymer at 309.661.6400.

## SIDE BY SIDE MINISTRIES

This ministry exists to engage the church & local community in consistent loving support of families involved in foster care by providing access to physical, relational, and spiritual resources. For more information, send an email to: sidebyside1712@gmail.com.

### Cindy Musick

Family Development Specialist  
cmusick@thebabyfold.org  
309.557.1004

### Brittany Tweedt

Family Development Specialist  
btweedt@thebabyfold.org  
309.557.1108

### Stephanie Tanner

Family Development Supervisor  
stanner@thebabyfold.org  
309.310.9867