

2026

MARCH NEWSLETTER



FOSTER PARENT SHOUT OUT!

Latysha Watson has been a foster parent with The Baby Fold for 4 years. During that time, she has provided care for 9 children. Latysha does all that she can for the youth who are in her care and to be a team member. She has been willing to provide transportation and to also supervise visits with birth parents, even if they are out of town. Latysha also makes sure that children in her care are able to maintain contact with siblings placed with other families. She also takes great efforts to ensure that youth in her care are able to have a variety of experiences in the community, including trips to the zoo and to Polar Express rides. Latysha is always looking for activities to do with the youth in her home, and she is a strong advocate for youth in her home. She is willing to request services to make sure that a child's emotional and educational needs are being met. Latysha is also responsive to requests from casework and licensing staff, and always managing to do so in an upbeat manner. Latysha is also quick to thank staff for their efforts in supporting her and the youth in her home. We appreciate all she does for the youth in her home and for being a positive member of the team!





YOUTH ENRICHMENT & SUPPORT (“YES”) FUNDS

yes!

The purpose of “YES” funds is to enhance access to enrichment activities, and other goods and services for the support and stabilization of youth in DCFS care. Please talk to your caseworker directly how to access these funds. Please do not purchase any of these activities/items first because we will not be able to reimburse. **All purchases must be made by the caseworker.**

Some examples of items that can be purchased using YES funds include:

- Camp expenses (when not covered by the DCFS Day Care Eligibility and Reimbursement Program)
- Lessons in recreation or artistic endeavors (i.e., music lessons, dancing lessons, athletic instructions)
- Music instrument purchase or rental
- Membership fees and equipment for Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, YMCA, YWCA, etc.
- School supplies
- Gym shoes and equipment
- Graduating expenses
- Local School trips (no overnight stay)
- Tutoring
- Summer school fees
- Travel unrelated to placement (will require approval as extraordinary travel)
- Medical expenses not covered by the YouthCare Program

RELATIVE CAREGIVER CERTIFICATION ROLLOUT!

As an update, DCFS is still actively in the process of 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 will be reaching out to provide details about how to become certified and to schedule an orientation. 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.





CPR/AED/FIRST AID TRAINING

Gain an understanding of basic CPR and first-aid skills. Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), how to provide breaths with a barrier device, how to relieve an airway obstruction, and how to use an AED (automated external defibrillator). A CPR/AED/First Aid certification card will be emailed after successful completion of the hands-on first aid skills and manikin practice. Certification is valid for two years. Certification is approved by DCFS for day care providers. This class is not intended for healthcare professionals.

Date:

• Saturday, April 18, 2026 | 8:30–11:45 AM

Location:

Normal Readiness Center
Illinois National Guard Building 1101/1102 – Classroom
Normal, IL



Cost:

\$65 (includes certification card and textbook)

💡 Grant funding may be available for up to 50% off the cost. To see if you qualify or for more information, contact Mary Jo Murphy at (309) 268-8824 or maryjo.murphy@heartland.edu.

FOSTER PARENT RIGHT #3 & RESPONSIBILITIES #3 & #4



Foster Parents' Rights:

#3. The right to be informed as to how to contact the appropriate child placement agency in order to receive information and assistance to access supportive services for children in their care.

Foster Parents' Responsibilities:

#3. The responsibility to advocate for children in the care of the foster parent

#4. The responsibility to treat children in their care and their families with dignity, respect and consideration.



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!



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>



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.

TRAININGS & SUPPORT

ONLINE FOSTER PARENT CAFÉS – IDCFS AND BE STRONG FAMILIES

March Cafés are all about growth, connection, and taking action. Strengthen relationships with other foster parents, build confidence, explore financial insight, recognize opportunity, and engage with community supports. Through group and one-on-one conversations, participants will gain practical tools, fresh perspective, and meaningful connections that inspire positive steps forward all month long. Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/mmejmx6>

ONLINE SCHEDULE

March 3, 2026: Connecting the Dots

March 10, 2026: Every Shot Counts

March 17, 2026: Feeling Lucky

March 24, 2026: Invest in Yourself

March 31, 2026: Connecting with My Community

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 1st and 3rd 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 1st and 3rd 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.

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