



foster parent NEED TO KNOW



Currently, there are approximately 6,000 children in foster care in Kansas. You're doing a tremendous, much-needed service.

In an ongoing effort to ensure effective communication between foster parents, the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF), foster care providers and community partners, we would like to provide you with a summary of what you need to know as you begin or continue your service as foster parents.

In this packet, you will find a list of 20 rights to which you are entitled as a foster parent. Please keep this list handy in case you need to refer to it down the road. Also in the packet, we have provided contact information for our contracted foster care providers. As of July 1, 2014, we have a new Foster Parent and Youth Ombudsman. In this packet, Niomi Burget will introduce herself to you and provide her contact information. She is available to you to help you in any way as you serve children in foster care.

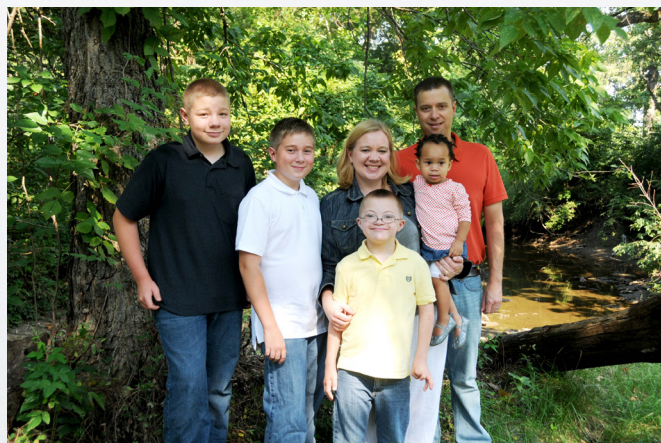
For your convenience, we have included the Report from Foster Parents form. Should you need this form, please complete it and submit it to the court.

We hope you find this information useful. We look forward to working closely with you to protect and serve Kansas children.

2014

The Vesper Family

The Vesper family was called to help children in need after watching a news story three years ago, about a little boy with down syndrome who allegedly suffered abuse at the hand of his mother. The Vespers were moved to tears and immediately contacted a foster care provider for the State of Kansas. They took the required classes, obtained their licensing and opened their home to a baby girl. Thirteen months later, the little girl became a permanent member of the Vesper family. They invite others to take this same journey and feel the joy of bringing love, security and hope to a child in need.



Kansas Foster Parents' Rights



As a Kansas foster parent, you are a valued member of the child welfare system. We are here to let you know your rights as a foster parent and provide you any assistance that you may need. Foster parents are volunteers who provide care for children who are in the custody of the Department for Children and Families (DCF). They play an integral, indispensable and vital role in the State's effort to care for dependent children displaced from their homes. We believe Kansas foster parents should play an active role in the child welfare system and be supported. You are entitled to the following rights:

1. The right to be treated by DCF and other partners in the care of abused and neglected children with dignity, respect and trust as a primary provider of foster care and a member of the professional team caring for foster children.
 2. The right not to be discriminated against on the basis of religion, race, color, creed, gender, marital status, national origin, age, or physical handicap per Kansas statute.
 3. The right to continue with their own family values and beliefs, so long as the values and beliefs of the foster child and the biological family are respected and not infringed upon. Consideration shall be given to the special needs of children who have experienced trauma and separation from their families.
 4. The right to exercise decision making in connection with foster child, consistent with the limits of the policies, procedures, and other directions of DCF, Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and within the limits of state and federal law.
 5. The right to receive standardized pre-service training by DCF or the placing agency and at appropriate intervals to meet mutually assessed needs of the child and to improve foster parents skills.
 6. The right to receive timely financial reimbursement according to agreement and applicable law and to be notified of any costs or expenses for which the foster parent may be eligible for reimbursement.
 7. The right to receive information regarding services and to reach DCF and/or DCF contracted provider personnel during regular business hours and the right to have information for contact number after business hours in the event of an emergency.
 8. The right, prior to the placement of a child, to be notified of any issues relative to the child and known to DCF and/or DCF contracted provider at such time and which may jeopardize the health and safety of the foster family or the child or alter the manner in which foster care should be administered.
 9. The right to discuss known information regarding the child prior to placement. DCF will provide such information as it becomes available as allowable under state and federal laws.
 10. The right to refuse placement of a child in the foster home or to request, upon reasonable notice, the removal of a child from the foster home.
 11. The right to receive any available information through DCF regarding the number of times a foster child has been moved and the reasons therefor; and to receive the names and phone numbers of the previous foster parents if the previous foster parents have authorized such release and as allowable by law.
 12. The right, during the time a child is placed with the foster parent, to receive from DCF information known to DCF and relevant to the care of the child.
 13. The right to provide input and participate in the case planning process regarding the child and the right to participate in and be informed about the planning of visitation between the child and the child's biological family, recognizing that visitation with the biological family is important to the child and necessary to the success of timely reintegration if reintegration is the case plan.
 14. The right to communicate with the child's Child Welfare Provider Case Manager (CWPCM) and to share and obtain relevant and appropriate information regarding child in placement.
 15. The right to communicate for the purpose of participating in the case plan of the foster child with other professionals who work with such child within the context of the professional team including, but not limited to, therapists, physicians, and teachers, as allowable by regulation, state and federal law.
 16. The right to be notified in advance, of any court hearing or review where the case plan or permanency of the child is an issue, including periodic reviews held by the court and the right to submit a completed Foster Parent Court Report Form per DCF policy.
 17. The right to be considered, where appropriate, as a placement option when a child who was formerly placed with the foster parents has re-entered the foster care system.
 18. The right to continue contact and/or communication with child subsequent to the child moving from the foster parent/s' home, subject to the approval of the child and child's biological parent/s whose rights have not been terminated.
 19. The right to direct questions to KDHE regarding information, concerns, policy violation and/or a corrective action plan relating to licensure as a foster family home.
 20. The rights and responsibilities enumerated hereinabove shall be given full consideration when DCF develops and approves policies regarding foster care and adoptive placement.
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Independent Living Outreach

Helping youth as they age out of foster care



Bubba Dowling - DCF Independent Living Outreach Coordinator

Bubba has recently been hired in the Independent Living Program where he is the new Independent Living Outreach Coordinator. His job is to reach out to agencies, community groups, and faith-based organizations to inform them about the services DCF offers to young people aging out of foster care. There is a great need to let people know of the supports that are available to these youth, and Bubba is helping DCF meet that need. If you or your organization wants to know more about what DCF can offer to help youth learn to live on their own, seek employment, get career training, further their education, and apply for medical benefits, Bubba is available to provide you with that information. As part of his efforts, Bubba works closely with the Kansas Youth Advisory Council (KYAC) to gather feedback and ideas on how to better serve youth. For more information, call 1-785-296-4653 or visit IL.dcf.ks.gov.

Foster Care Statistics

- There are currently 6,019 children in foster care in Kansas.
- Approximately 2,500 family foster homes are licensed in Kansas.
- Approximately 380 children are available for adoption in the state.
- 96 percent of children in foster care are placed in a family-like setting.
- The average age of a foster child is eight.
- 43 percent of children in foster care are under six; 15 percent are 16 or older.
- Children who will be reunited with their parents, spend an average of eight months in foster care.

(Data provided, as of May 2014)

To be a successful foster parent:

1. Know your own family.
2. Communicate effectively.
3. Know the children.
4. Build strengths; meet needs.
5. Work in partnership.
6. Know about loss and attachment.
7. Manage behaviors.
8. Build connections.
9. Build self-esteem.
10. Assure health and safety.
11. Assess impact.
12. Make an informed decision.

Kansas Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (KFAPA)

The Kansas Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (KFAPA) is an excellent resource for foster parents. KFAPA helps families access support, services and information. To learn more, visit KFAPA.com.



“Help me succeed!”

DCF Contracted Providers

Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) has two contracted foster care and family preservation services providers. Saint Francis Community Services works with foster families in DCF's West and Wichita regions. KVC provide foster care services in DCF's East and Kansas City regions. Feel free to contact the provider in your area.



**Saint Francis
Community Services®**

Strengthening Families Since 1945

509 E. Elm St.
P.O. Box 1340
Salina, KS 67402
1-785-825-0541
1-800-423-1342



KVC

Kansas

people matter

KVC Kansas
7940 Marshall Dr.
Lenexa, KS 66214
1-913-322-4900
1-888-655-5500



upcoming **TRAINING**

The Children's Alliance has offered trainings since 1998 for current and potential foster and adoptive parents, as well as for child welfare agency staff, case workers and supervisors. Many offerings are made available through the courtesy of child placing member agencies. Grant and contract funding enables them to offer classes free to anyone who lives in the State of Kansas and works in the child welfare field.

For a complete list of foster care classes, visit <http://Childaily.org/train/>.



My name is Kendra, and I am here to help! Feel free to call me toll free at 1-844-279-2306 or by email at fosterparent@dcf.ks.gov

