

## Are you ready for hurricane season? Get a Game Plan!

Part of our Child Welfare responsibilities is to ensure the safety of the children in state custody. This means we need to know where you will be with the children in your care during a natural disaster or other emergency. If you have not done so yet, please take a few minutes now to update your [Emergency Contact Form](#).

We also want you and your family to be safe during hurricane season, which started June 1 and continues through November 30. "Get a Game Plan" has been prepared by the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) to help you think of all things you need to know and prepare for in the

event of a hurricane or other emergency, including

- What to have in a basic Disaster Supply Kit
- How to develop your family plan
- A financial first aid kit
- How to plan for children and adults with disabilities

Visit the GOHSEP [website](#) at to learn more and make your plan. Another helpful site for children is [Ready Kids](#).

As we say in Louisiana, we hope for the best and prepare for the worst. Wishing us all a safe hurricane season!

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## New reimbursable costs for caregivers with children in a child care or early learning center

As of May 15, foster caregivers can now be reimbursed for early learning service fees for children in foster care. Both certified and non-certified relative/kin caregivers are eligible to request reimbursement for a child in foster care who is attending one of the following types of care centers:

- Licensed Type III
- Licensed military
- Family child care home
- In-home care provider

If you qualify, you can be reimbursed for registration fees up to \$400 per enrollment in an early learning center, and no more than \$1,000 per year. Diaper and supply fees should not exceed \$20 per enrollment.

Please notify your caseworker before you pay the registration fees if you plan to request this reimbursement. You can then use [Form 435](#) to

request reimbursement and attach the receipt(s) within 90 days of payment. No fees will be reimbursed after 90 days.

If you have questions about enrolling a child in your care in an early learning center, or about the reimbursement, please contact your Foster Care caseworker.

## Phone directories link caregivers with regional, state staff

You should have recently received a phone tree listing the staff members for Foster Care, Adoptions, Home Development, and Extended Foster Care for your region, as well as State Office staff. The lists, which include contact names, phone numbers and email addresses, can also be found by region [here](#). These will be updated monthly.

We always ask you to share your concerns or questions with your caseworker first. However, when you need additional help or to talk to someone right away, you can now reach out to your caseworker's supervisor, manager, and on up the chain of command to get a resolution.

## Youth Summits a great chance for older youth to connect

If you have a 16- or 17-year-old youth in your home, who is currently in foster care, make sure they don't miss out on one of this year's Youth Summits. The Summits, which share the same theme of, *"Empowering Youth Voice: The Art of Expression,"* will be held in each tri-region to make it easier for youth across the state to attend.

All youth are encouraged to participate in a summit near them, and caregivers are welcome to volunteer. As a foster caregiver, you can also receive training hours for your participation. Space is limited, so register soon!



### 2025 Youth Summits

#### Friday, July 18 (North)

8:30 am – 2:30 pm

Lincoln Parish Library  
910 N. Trenton St.  
Ruston, LA 71270

#### [North Summit Registration](#)

North Summit - [Volunteer Registration](#)

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#### Tuesday, July 22 (Orleans)

9 am – 2 pm

Tammany Oaks Church of Christ  
3700 Hwy 59  
Mandeville, LA 70471

#### [Orleans Summit Registration](#)

Orleans Summit - [Volunteer Registration](#)

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#### Thursday, July 31 (Central)

9 am – 2 pm

Howell Park BREC Center  
5509 Winbourne Ave  
Baton Rouge, LA 70805

#### [Central Summit Registration](#)

Central Summit - [Volunteer Registration](#)

### New foster caregivers "Equipped to Care" with updated training

We're excited to announce, "Equipped to Care," our new pre-certification training tool for foster and adoptive caregivers. Every child who comes into foster care has experienced some level of trauma. This training is designed to equip caregivers with practical tools and strategies to promote their healing and resilience.

What makes this training unique is that it brings together all caregivers – relative, kinship, foster, and adoptive – to promote understanding, breakdown barriers, and encourage collaboration in the best interest of the child(ren) involved.

"Equipped to Care" was developed by members of the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development at Texas Christian University in partnership with Crossroads Louisiana and leading child welfare experts across the nation. Built on real-world experience and evidence-based practices, the training offers practical, actionable things caregivers can do to better support the children in their care.

After hearing from caregivers about previous limitations and challenges, we are proud to offer this enhanced training. We believe it will help build a more connected and compassionate support network for the children we serve.

If you know someone interested in becoming a foster caregiver, tell them about this new training, and encourage them to [sign up](#) today!

## Free State Parks annual pass still available for foster caregivers

If you're looking for something to do as a family this summer, where you can enjoy nature and maybe learn a little while having fun, the Office of State Parks is still offering a free pass to all state parks and museums to foster caregivers.

Sharon, a foster caregiver for 11 years, has already been to [Lake Bistineau State Park](#) with her family. They visited during the 2024 holiday season when the park had an interactive trail set up, which her children enjoyed.

With biological children, one child adopted from foster care and other children in her care, Sharon is excited to take her family to more parks this summer.

"I recommend it," Sharon said, "take time to explore the state parks and see what they have to offer."



*Coy and Sharon have enjoyed the free State Parks pass for foster caregivers.*

Jennifer became a foster caregiver in 2022 and has since taken in children for overnight emergency placements, respite care and long-term care. She also has three biological children, and she loves that the parks are something the whole family can do together.

"Sometimes our biological children can get shuffled around while we're taking care of the foster child," said Jennifer, "so it's great to have

opportunities to do things as a family."

Jennifer and her family have visited the [Fort Jesup State Historic Site](#) while they were re-enacting how life was in the 1800s. Her children saw how laundry was done without a washing machine, how food was prepared without electric stoves and microwaves, and how families survived without cell phones!

Jennifer plans to take all of her children – biological and foster – to other parks this summer. Not only do the children enjoy it, but she sees being outside in nature as a benefit to them.

It's easy to [apply for the State Parks pass](#), but you will need a current 406 Foster Care certification card. If you did not receive the 406 card when you became certified, or your card has expired, please let your Home Development worker know. He or she will get you an updated card so that you can fill out the application.

If you are a relative/kin caregiver, you should have received your card in the mail. If you did not, please let your child's Foster Care worker know, and he or she will get you the card you need.

Learn more about Louisiana's State Parks and plan your next trip [here](#)!

### Foster Caregiver Resources

- [DCFS's Foster Caregiver Resources webpage](#)
- [Louisiana Foster Care Support Organization - Statewide list of resources](#)
- Foster Care Support Organization's [Foster Care Mentors](#)
- [UNITE Ministries' Foster Friendly App](#)
- [Siblings Supporting Siblings](#)
- [Mobile Crisis Response Hub](#)
- [988 and Louisiana988.org](#)
- [Homework Louisiana](#)

## Caregiver questions answered, concerns heard at first Foster Care Town Hall

DCFS leadership met with more than 200 foster caregivers on June 3 during our first Foster Caregiver Town Hall. The meeting gave us a chance to thank caregivers, like you, for the sacrifices you make to care for our children, as well as to provide updates, answer questions and hear your concerns.

The Town Hall was so well received, we decided to hold one every quarter. **Save the Date for Tuesday, September 9, from 9 to 11 a.m. for the next Foster Care Town Hall!** We will send out a registration link in the coming weeks.

Below are some of the questions and issues addressed in the June Town Hall.

### Continuing Education Hours

**Why are we suspended as a foster home if we don't complete our continuing education (CE) hours by the end of the fiscal year (June 30)?**

Policy has been changed to extend the suspension for 14 days. You should be receiving regular notices about your training hours status by your Home Development caseworker throughout the year, either in person or via email, text or mail.

If you have not received any updates, please talk to your caseworker to ensure your correct email address and phone number are entered in TIPS/LARE.

You can also check your training hours in your Moodle account; watch [this video](#) to learn how.

**How can I get more continuing education hours?**

You can take courses online through the [Louisiana Child Welfare Training Academy](#), [FosterClub](#), and [Foster Parent College](#). Ask your Foster Care caseworker about earning CE credits for other trainings you are interested in.

Foster Care caseworker home visits may qualify for up to six hours of documented instruction. You can also receive CE credit for attending your regional Foster Care Community Collaborative, Independent Living Training, or other foster care related workshops or events. Just be sure you submit any sign-in sheet or certificate for any events you attend.

### Medical

**How do I get a Medicaid card for a child in my care?**

Ask your Foster Care caseworker for a copy of the child's Medicaid card.

**How do I find a medical provider?**

- Call Member Services for the child's Medicaid provider.

**Healthy Blue:** 1-844-521-6941

(M-F, 7 am – 7 pm)

**Aetna:** 1-855-242-0802

(24/7)

OR

- Search by your zip code and type of service needed on the [Medicaid website](#)

### Did you know?

- Both Aetna and Healthy Blue have Case Managers who can work with you to find solutions for the specific needs of the child in your care. Ask about Case Management when you call Member Services.
- LDH has a list of [medical resources by region](#).

**Can we receive a training about allergies, anaphylaxis and the treatment needed?**

Our Medical team will work with the Louisiana Child Welfare Training Academy to find an appropriate training for this topic.

*continued on next page*

## Town Hall, *continued*

### Daycare

#### How can we find more daycares in rural areas that accept Child Care Assistance Program?

We know that there is a shortage of facilities, and we are working with the Louisiana Department of Education to identify and license early learning centers in rural areas. When a Type III facility is not available, you can request that the Foster Care caseworker seek approval from State Office Foster Care to use a Type R (family child care) or Type U (in-home child care) provider until a Type III becomes available.

#### Can we receive more reimbursement for daycare costs?

Policy has been updated to increase the reimbursement fee; see the article on page 2!

### Court

#### Why don't caregivers have a voice in court proceedings?

You do! At least 20 days before each Case Review Hearing, your Foster Care caseworker should mail or provide to you a Notice Letter of your right to be present and heard in court. If you are not receiving those notices, please talk to your caseworker and use your regional phone tree to ensure you receive it in the future.

If you are unable to attend the court hearing, you can submit the [Foster Caregiver Progress Form](#) to your Foster Care caseworker to turn in to the court on your behalf. Learn more about court processes and your legal rights [here](#).

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***Save the Date for the next Town Hall!***  
**Sept. 9, 2025**

#### Want your question answered during the next Town Hall?

Let us know by scanning the QR code or clicking [here](#).



## Updates made to Special Board Rate assessment, guidance

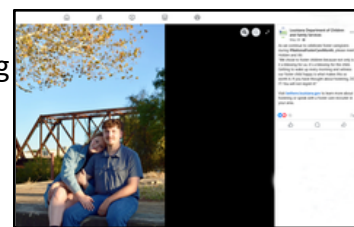
As of July 1, all Foster Care staff have been educated on and provided a new Special Board Request Form to use when assessing a child for special board compensation. Staff will assess the child's characteristics, behaviors, and condition that indicate whether he or she may require additional care, supervision, and attention.

The child's caseworker or their supervisor will prepare the form with the most accurate information about the child's condition so that the most appropriate level of special board compensation is provided. The special board compensation assessment should be approved at six months and can be retroactive.

If you have questions about a child in your care and the special board rate, contact your caseworker or their supervisor.

## Want to be featured on DCFS' social media?

We are looking for foster caregivers willing to share their story on our social media platforms. This involves a quick chat



or email exchange with one of our Communications staff. As always, we will not share your last name or the names of the children in your care. Here is an [example from foster caregivers Holden and Ali](#) (pictured above)

If you want to participate, email [DCFS.Info@la.gov](mailto:DCFS.Info@la.gov) with the subject title, "Foster testimonial." We are looking for every opportunity to recruit more caregivers like you, and we hope your participation in this social media campaign might spark interest in potential new caregivers.



## Foster Care Month filled with appreciation, fun events

May was Foster Care Month, and events were held around the state to show our appreciation for our foster caregivers. Lake Charles, Lafayette and Thibodaux regions held their events early, while Monroe and Covington had theirs during May. Orleans, Shreveport and Alexandria followed in June, and Baton Rouge will hold their event in

August. Be on the lookout for details soon.

Many thanks to the sponsors who helped us put the events together, to the staff members who gave of their time and energy to ensure everyone had a good time, and to the foster families who joined us to celebrate. Check out some photos of the fun had across Louisiana!



Thank  
You!



## Join the next Foster Care Community Collaborative in your region!

Our collaborative meetings continue to be held across the state, with more community partners and caregivers joining together each month. These meetings are a time for caregivers to share local needs and to work with community partners to find solutions. The Orleans region will have its first collaborative in the coming months, giving us one in each region.

The collaboratives are led by the regional Foster Care Recruitment and Support Consultant. The

“recruiters” as we know them are working to recruit new foster caregivers, as well as provide any support a caregiver needs as they go through the certification training. If you know of someone who is interested in becoming a foster caregiver, connect them to your local recruiter. And don’t forget to join the power of your community collaborative!

Check out the regular meeting times and contact information for each recruiter below.

### Orleans

*Collaborative Coming Soon!*

#### Recruitment/Support Consultant:

Debra Cyprian, [debra.cyprian.dcf@la.gov](mailto:debra.cyprian.dcf@la.gov)

### Baton Rouge

*Second Tuesday, 11:30 am - 1 pm*

Family & Youth Service Center

1120 Government St., Baton Rouge, LA 70802

#### Recruitment/Support Consultant:

Kellye Worley, [kellye.worley.dcf@la.gov](mailto:kellye.worley.dcf@la.gov)

### Covington

*Third Wednesday, 1 - 2:30 pm*

Alternates between Bogalusa & Hammond

#### Recruitment/Support Consultant:

Evan LaRoche, [evan.laroche.dcf@la.gov](mailto:evan.laroche.dcf@la.gov)

### Thibodaux

*Re-launch Thursday, August 21, 10 - 11 am*

MacDonell Children Services

8326 E. Main St., Houma, LA 70363

#### Recruitment/Support Consultant:

Kathryn “Katie” Kilpatrick,  
[kathryn.kilpatrick.dcf@la.gov](mailto:kathryn.kilpatrick.dcf@la.gov)

### Lafayette

*Last Monday, 10-11:30 am*

Location varies

### Lafayette

#### Recruitment/Support Consultant:

Keena Lewis, [keena.lewis.dcf@la.gov](mailto:keena.lewis.dcf@la.gov)

### Lake Charles

*Fourth Wednesday, 5 - 6:30 pm*

Sale St. Baptist Church

1611 W. Sale Rd., Lake Charles, LA 70605

#### Recruitment/Support Consultant:

Jessica Sias, [jessica.sias.dcf@la.gov](mailto:jessica.sias.dcf@la.gov)

### Alexandria

*Third Monday, 6 - 7:30 pm*

Location varies

#### Recruitment/Support Consultant:

Rochelle Madden, [rochelle.madden.dcf@la.gov](mailto:rochelle.madden.dcf@la.gov)

### Shreveport

*Third Monday, 10 - 11:30 am*

Broadmoor Baptist Library, Room 1400

4100 Youree Dr., Shreveport, LA 71105

#### Recruitment/Support Consultant:

Courtney Young Sanders, [courtney.young.dcf@la.gov](mailto:courtney.young.dcf@la.gov)

### Monroe

*Second Wednesday, 12 - 1 pm*

First West Church, 500 Pine St. Webber Room

West Monroe, LA 71292 (park & enter at 3<sup>rd</sup> St.)

#### Recruitment/Support Consultant:

Angela Scriber, [angela.scriber.dcf@la.gov](mailto:angela.scriber.dcf@la.gov)