



Learn more

Caregivers interested in guardianship can learn more by reading the department's Making the Adoption/Guardianship Decision and Post-Adoption/Guardianship Services publications found on the DCFS website.

Visit [DCFS.illinois.gov](https://dcfs.illinois.gov) and click on "Loving Homes".

Contact

For more information, contact DCFS Statewide Adoption/Guardianship Administrator Monica Mosley-Cantrell at 708 210-3623 or Monica.Mosley-Cantrell@illinois.gov.



Illinois Department of
DCFS
Children & Family Services

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Guardianship is a path to permanency for children and families



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Every child needs the stability and security of a permanent, loving home to thrive and develop into a successful adult. When a child is placed in the care of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), we work with parents to address the concerns that brought their child into care, with the goal of strengthening and reunifying the family.

We know that youth in care do best when they are able to remain in their own community, see their friends, attend the same school and stay connected to family members. If reunification is not possible, DCFS turns to other options to ensure children in our care grow up in safe, loving families. These include the well-known option of adoption, and an equally viable option, known as subsidized guardianship, which could provide the best outcome for many families and children.

Why guardianship?

Guardianship prevents children from staying in foster care longer than necessary and allows them to permanently live with relatives or a “fictive kin” caregiver – someone who has a strong, family-like relationship with the child – whom they know and love. These family relationships help children maintain a sense of belonging, identity and relationships with their parents and extended family. Because parental rights are not terminated, guardianship is sometimes the best fit for grandparents or other relatives who have strong ties to the child’s birth parents.

Once legal guardianship is granted, guardians assume the legal authority to make decisions that affect the child’s life and development, such as school enrollment and routine medical care; and can consent to the child’s marriage, major medical treatment and enlistment in the armed services. Although in most cases guardianship legally ends when the child turns 18, many guardians have family ties or a close relationship with the child and thus enter this commitment intending it to be a lifetime relationship.



When can guardianship be considered?

In Illinois, permanent legal guardianship can be considered for children who have been living for six consecutive months in the home of a relative or fictive kin caregiver who has been licensed for at least six months.

What supports are available?

Becoming a child’s guardian is a serious commitment, and DCFS offers a wide range of assistance and resources to caregivers who step up to provide a permanent home to a child in need. Families who become guardians of children formerly in the care of DCFS receive:



A monthly stipend to cover the child’s food, shelter, clothing and personal allowance.



Health insurance that pays for necessary medical care and prescriptions.



Other support services that may include counseling, physical therapy and medical equipment.



Additional payments for daycare services, when applicable.

Everyone benefits when our communities are full of strong families and thriving children. Guardianship preserves a child’s connections to his or her siblings, family members, friends and community, which are essential to their long-term well-being.