



readyreference

A HANDY GUIDE FOR FOSTER PARENTS

SALT LAKE REGION



We know the child welfare system can be a bit complex, and we are eager to help you navigate the sea of agencies and acronyms, positions and people.

This handbook will help you:

Understand *who* does *what*, and the structure of the child welfare system in Utah

Know how to access various *resources and supports* available to you

Access *contact* names, numbers, and e-mails to those who can assist you

Thank you for becoming licensed and for your willingness to help children in need.

thank you!

So who does what in child welfare? How do I stay in the know?

As a foster parent, you’ll interact with three different agencies. Services for foster families in each of these agencies is organized by region. You live in the Salt Lake Region, composed of Salt Lake and Tooele counties.

UTAH FOSTER CARE (UFC)

That’s us! We’re a private, nonprofit agency responsible for finding, training, and nurturing the foster families who serve Utah’s children in foster care. We have a contract with the State to provide these services—including ongoing support for licensed foster families, outlined in this reference guide.

Each UFC regional office has staff responsible for: recruitment, education, and retention — recruiters shepherd prospective families through the process of becoming licensed; trainers educate prospective and current families; and retention specialists work closely with families, and have answers to questions about special funding resources, appreciation events, Cluster meetings, e-Clusters, and the FosterRoster.

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF LICENSING (OL)

This State agency is responsible for processing your paperwork, conducting a homestudy, issuing your initial foster parent license, and renewing that license each year.

UTAH DIVISION OF CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES (DCFS)

This State agency is responsible for protecting children from abuse, neglect, or dependency. It places children with foster families and oversees their care. Part of that oversight includes a wide range of services (many of which we discuss in this guide).

DCFS also works with the child’s biological parents in an effort to address the problems which warranted the child’s removal, so the child may safely return home (reunification). You’ll work closely with your child’s DCFS caseworker and Resource Family Consultant (RFC). Specialists are also available to help you transition older youth to adult living and to assist you through the adoption process.

Word to the wise: DCFS refers to foster/adoptive/kin parents as “resource families”. You’ll see this in forms and hear it from caseworkers.

FOSTER ROSTER

The Foster Roster is a bi-monthly newsletter for foster/adoptive families and is published by Utah Foster Care. Licensed families receive it in the mail and it’s available online: utahfostercare.org/fosterroster.

The Roster contains important, time-sensitive information about upcoming trainings, events, available donations, policy changes, relicensing requirements, opportunities for children in care, and a variety of helpful articles. You’ll also find regional contact names and numbers. If you’re not receiving the Foster Roster, please call us at 1 (877) 505-5437.

WEBSITE

Our site, utahfostercare.org, contains a wealth of information. Most of what you’ll use is located in your region’s section, which can be accessed from the “I’m a Foster Parent” link at the top of the site, or directly at: utahfostercare.org/saltlake. Here, you’ll find upcoming events, relicensing requirements, digital copies of the Foster Roster, Wishing Well and Giving Tree request forms (explained on [page 6](#)), links to other agencies, and contact information for local UFC staff who are happy to answer any questions.

Webinars of both pre-service and in-service classes are available at any time for review and assistance: utahfostercare.org/webinars

Take a few minutes to explore all the ways Utah Foster Care can help support you in your role as foster parent.

UFC RETENTION SPECIALIST

Once you’re licensed, get to know your UFC Foster Family Retention Specialist (see the insert). They’re your best guide to accessing all kinds of Utah Foster Care support opportunities found in this guide.

UTAH FOSTER ADOPTIVE FAMILIES ASSOC. (UFAFA)

This nonprofit is a group of foster and adoptive parents who partner with DCFS and Utah Foster Care to lobby for foster/adoptive/kinship family rights and for the children in their care. They provide support to foster parents during allegations of wrongdoing—or any time a family needs a listening ear. Like them on Facebook to receive legislative updates and find UFAFA leader contact information.

Resources

OKAY, I'M LICENSED. NOW WHAT?!

The best way to advocate for your child in foster care is to become knowledgeable. Resources outlined below are available to help you stay informed, proactive, and connected to support systems for you *and* the kids in care.

GET INVOLVED: YOUR LOCAL CLUSTER

One of the first things you should do is to join your local foster parent support group, called a Cluster (your Retention Specialist can show you how). Your Cluster will *empower* you as a parent by providing both educational and social support. Most Clusters meet monthly, usually offering a training that helps you develop the skills necessary to understand and parent children who have experienced trauma and abuse. These in-service trainings help you meet the requirements to renew your license annually (see below).

Clusters are also an informal network for seeking respite care providers, listening ears, and advice on a host of issues. Moreover, meetings are a good time to get to know DCFS and UFC staff. Finally, donations from the community are frequently distributed during Cluster meetings.

STAY CONNECTED: FACEBOOK E-CLUSTER

Once you're licensed, request to join your regional e-Cluster: facebook.com/groups/ufcf.clusters.saltlake. You'll be added once your license is verified. These groups are a great way to receive reminders about trainings, special events, and recent donations; they also serve as a vital link to other licensed families in your area.

KEEP CURRENT: TRAINING

Foster parents are relicensed on an annual basis. To meet minimum training standards, foster parents need to complete 16 hours of approved courses, annually. If there are two caregivers in the household, the 16 hours is the total number of in-service training hours required for both caregivers combined — with neither caregiver having fewer than four hours.

Any training offered through your Cluster, Utah Foster Care, or DCFS, is automatically approved. Other training offered through work, school, or community sources may be approved in advance by your DCFS-assigned Resource Family Consultant (RFC).

Webinars: You can earn up to four hours of in-service credit by watching short training videos on a variety of topics at utahfostercare.org/webinars.

Annual Symposium: Every spring, UFC hosts a conference at the Zermatt Resort in Midway. Foster/adoptive parents can attend for a minimal fee and hear nationally renowned speakers in the field of child welfare.

CPR Certification: Each foster parent is required by the State Office of Licensing to have current CPR/first-aid certification. While CPR classes may be accessed online, final CPR certification must be an in-person certification. A partial list of local CPR classes is on the facing page →

RSVP/Register: You will be notified of any changes or cancellations in Cluster trainings ONLY if you register by confirming on Facebook or by calling the trainer. It also helps us order enough food, since most Cluster meetings include refreshments.

Don't Let it Lapse: It's much easier to renew a license than to have it lapse and need to go through the process of becoming relicensed. **Lapsed licenses have real consequences: Medicaid cards and state payments can only be sent to licensed providers and children can only remain in licensed homes. A lapsed license means stress and trouble for everyone — especially the child.**

BECOME KNOWLEDGEABLE

The Adoption Exchange offers a free lending library, featuring children's books, titles about drug exposure, grief and trauma healing, mental illness, parenting advice, sexual abuse, and special-needs adoption.

You can check out up to three titles at a time by mail and keep them for up to 6 weeks. Return postage will be included with your order. To check out selections or place an order, call (801) 265-0444, or visit utdcfsadopt.org.

HAVE FUN TOGETHER: FAMILY EVENTS

Appreciation events offer families a great way to get out, have fun together, and get to know other licensed families. Swim parties, skate parties, BBQs, bowling nights, and getting lost in a corn maze are just a few of the free activities that are organized through your Cluster.

Local and statewide events occur throughout the year, so watch your e-Cluster and Foster Roster for the next one in your area.

CPR Certification

The following is a partial list of individuals or organizations which offer CPR/first aid certification. Other resources, not listed, likely exist in your area and may also be used. The resources below have not been vetted by UFC, and UFC does not guarantee that they meet the requirements set forth by the State.

If you have any questions, you should contact your licenser at the Office of Licensing, directly.

<u>American Heart Association</u> Salt Lake City (801) 702-4420	<u>Gold Cross Ambulance</u> Salt Lake City (801) 975-4335
<u>American Red Cross</u> Salt Lake City (801) 323-7000	<u>Sandy Fire Department</u> Sandy (801) 568-2940
<u>Primary Children's Medical Center</u> Salt Lake City (801) 662-3517	<u>An Act of Caring</u> Taylorsville (801) 598-8370
<u>Shriners Hospital for Children</u> Salt Lake City (801) 536-3515	<u>Unified Fire Authority</u> Taylorsville (801) 743-7200
<u>Utah Emergency Medical Training</u> Salt Lake City (801) 562-2663	<u>Pioneer Valley Hospital</u> West Valley City (801) 964-3733
	<u>Cintas First Aid & Safety</u> Salt Lake City (801) 975-1167

** Ask for Foster Parent Discount

Teens!

We talk a lot about teens, here at Utah Foster Care — and with good reason. For one, half of all children in care are over the age of 10, so we're eager to find families willing to open their hearts to older children. Also, teens in care are literally running out of time — time to find a permanent family and to receive the love and support they need to thrive as adults.

Of course, with added urgency, there are added supports. The State, in fact, has an entire website dedicated to state supports for teens: justforyouth.utah.gov

WHAT ARE SOME OF THESE SUPPORTS?

Medical and adoption resources: There are health services, post adoption subsidies, and post-secondary education grants available. Medicaid covers medical, dental and mental health services to age 18 (with some children qualifying for extended coverage) and an adoption subsidy may be available, based upon the youth's needs.

Education and employment: Federal Pell grants are available to pay college tuition and other expenses. Youth may apply for the Olene S. Walker Transition to Adult Living Scholarship (up to \$5,000 for degree or certificate programs), Education Training Vouchers (ETV), and other grants at justfor youth.utah.gov. Youths aged 16–25 can complete their GED requirement and receive job training at Utah Job Corps.



What reimbursements and resources are available?

In *addition* to your monthly stipend, there are funds available through both the State (via DCFS) and Utah Foster Care (UFC). Supplemental DCFS funds are *contingent on funding from the legislature* and are summarized in the adjoining chart. UFC funds are made available through *private donations*.

STATE OF UTAH

DCFS funding is requested through your caseworker or Resource Family Consultant (RFC). Receipts may be required for reimbursement. Copies of receipts are to be turned in with payment form. Original receipts are to remain in the home-to-home book.

A word about mileage: Routine trips are not covered (for example travel to the store, shopping center, a friend’s house, school, or to recreational activities). If transporting more than one child at the same time, mileage can only be submitted for one child. You must document all reimbursable mileage claims on the appropriate Child & Family Services form that includes odometer readings, purpose of travel, and destination.

Mileage claims are *submitted monthly* for reimbursement. All mileage claims and receipts must have a one-time payment form from DCFS submitted with them. These forms can be located online: dcfs.utah.gov/forms or from your caseworker.

UTAH FOSTER CARE

Access all UFC funding online, in your region’s section under “Resources” (utahfostercare.org/saltlake/resources) or through your UFC Retention Services Specialist, as identified in the contact list insert.

Wishing Well: Private donors contribute to this fund, allowing children in foster care to participate in normal childhood activities, or purchase needed items not covered under state funding. If special needs funds through DCFS have been used or are not available, you, your caseworker or the RFC may request up to \$300 per child annually through the form on our web site. Wishing Well funds may be used to provide music, dance or karate lessons, vacation expenses, team fees and equipment, or any number of other great childhood activities. Teens may be interested in purchasing contacts, school rings, yearbooks or formal wear for prom.

Vacation requests are limited to \$150.

Clothes for Kids: These funds can be accessed any time of year to help you provide needed clothing, outerwear and footwear for your child in care. CFK funds can be accessed once a year and are limited to \$100 per child ages 0–11, and \$200 for children ages 12–18. Receipts must be submitted for reimbursement to your UFC Retention Services Specialist.

OTHER HELPS & RESOURCES

Donations: Books, blankets, quilts, school supplies, and backpacks are some of the donations that have been made available to kids in care from the community. When available, donated items are distributed during Cluster meetings and appreciation events. Notices may also be posted on the regional e-Cluster Facebook page or in the Foster Roster.

Holiday Help: Generous donors and community service groups aid UFC staff in providing gifts and needed items for kids in care during the holiday season. Watch your e-Cluster or personal mail in the fall for details.

Foster Family Camp at Aspen Grove: This highly anticipated event for foster/adoptive families takes place each September at the beautiful BYU Alumni camp above Sundance in Provo Canyon. Camp information and dates are mailed to families. Registration takes place online and is first come, first served with preference given to families who have never attended. Spots fill quickly every year, so don’t delay if your family would like to attend.

DI Discounts & Vouchers: Occasionally available for Deseret Industries and other area attractions. Watch the Foster Roster and the Facebook e-Cluster for details.

Resource Centers: Storage units are located throughout the state, and stock donated clothing and household items for licensed families. They are run by foster parent volunteers and have set operation days. Appointments can be made in advance if you are traveling in from out of the area.

Families may search through donations and take whatever they can use. Ask your retention specialist for the resource center closest to you—or ask the helpful folks in your e-Cluster:

facebook.com/groups/ufcf.clusters.saltlake

Type of Service	Description	PSA Code	Rate
Initial Clothing Payment	One-time, emergency clothing needs when the child lacks basic clothing at time of placement. Must be used within 30 days of placement.	ICP	Limited to \$163
Special Needs: Baby	Special baby needs such as diapers, special formulas, baby furniture/equipment.	SNB	\$200 max, for all combined special-needs requests, per six month period.
Special Needs: Clothing	Clothing needed over and above the \$41 included monthly in the provider payment.	SNC	
Special Needs: Gifts	Additional Christmas gifts, birthday, graduation, etc.	SNG	
Special Needs: Lessons/Equipment	Lessons (music, art, swimming, dance, drama) and rental/purchase of musical instruments.	SNL	
Special Needs: Recreation	Recreation (trips, vacations, fishing licenses, summer camps, etc.), sports equipment, bicycles, etc.	SNR	
Special Needs: School Expenses NOT FOR TUITION!	Student body fees that cannot be waived (locker costs, school supplies, summer school, yearbook, graduation pictures, etc).	STP	
Special Needs: Miscellaneous	For other expenses not covered under other special needs codes.	SNM	\$5000 max, following procurement rules.
Mileage: Case Activity	Case activity miles, miles to and from reviews, court activities, case planning, staffing and placement transitions	FTC	\$38 per mile
Mileage: School of Origin	Cost of reasonable travel (out of foster parents’ school boundaries) for a child to remain in the same school they were attending prior to placement.	FTE	
Mileage: Visitation	Visitation miles to and from visits with parents, siblings and other relative/caregivers.	FTV	
Mileage: Miscellaneous	Medical and other essential miles – only mileage to and from medical, dental and mental health appointments and to and from caseworker approved, essential, extraordinary activities.	FTP	
Joyous Seasons Payment	All children in service receive this payment – not included in \$200 special needs limit. This is an auto run payment the first week of December. No receipts are required.	JSP	\$50, ages 0–5; \$60 6–12; \$65, 13 and above.
Teens	A full list of resources for teens in care is available online: justforyouth.utah.gov		



Utah Foster Care
5296 South Commerce Drive, #400
Murray, UT 84107

utahfostercare.org

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