




readyreference

A HANDY GUIDE FOR FOSTER PARENTS

WESTERN REGION

A woman with brown hair in a ponytail, wearing a red and white checkered shirt and blue jeans, is smiling and talking on a mobile phone. She is leaning against a white kitchen cabinet. The background shows more kitchen cabinets and a window.

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 Western Region, composed of Juab, Millard, Summit, Utah, and Wasatch 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 — Foster-Adoptive Consultants 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 Support Group meetings, Facebook Groups, and the Foster Roster.

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 works with a child's biological parents to address the problems which warranted their removal, so the child may safely return home (reunification). Depending on whether your placement is a child you know or not, you'll be assigned either a Kinship Family Consultant or Resource Family Consultant (in some parts of the state one person might fill both roles). You'll also work closely with your child's DCFS caseworker. Finally, DCFS has specialists can help you transition older youth to adult living and assist you through the adoption process.

Word to the wise: DCFS refers to foster/adoptive parents as "resource families" and those families who care for children they already knew as "kinship families." You'll see this in forms and hear it from caseworkers.

FOSTER ROSTER

The Foster Roster is a bi-monthly magazine 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 the Foster Parent Resources section, which can be accessed from the "Foster Parent Resources" link at the top of the site. Here, you'll find upcoming events, relicensing requirements, digital copies of the Foster Roster, Wishing Well and Giving Tree request forms (explained on page 9), 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 page 6). They're your best guide to accessing all kinds of Utah Foster Care support opportunities found in this guide.

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 Cluster Support Group for foster parents (your Retention Specialist can show you how). Your Cluster Support Group will empower you as a parent by providing both educational and social support. Most Cluster Support Groups 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 GROUP

Once you're licensed, request to join your regional Facebook Group by emailing Heidi heidi.naylor@utahfostercare.org. You'll be invited to join 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 Support Group, 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: Each year, UFC hosts a conference - look in the Foster Roster and on Facebook for details. Foster/adoptive parents can attend for a minimal fee and hear nationally renowned speakers in the field of child welfare.

CPR Training: Each foster parent is required by the State Office of Licensing to have current CPR/first-aid training. CPR classes may be accessed online.

RSVP/Register: You will be notified of any changes or cancellations in Cluster Support Group trainings **ONLY** if you register by confirming on Facebook or by calling the trainer.

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

Raise the Future 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 raisethefuture.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 Support Group.

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

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: dcfs.utah.gov/services/youthservices.

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 dcfs.utah.gov/services/youthservices. Youths aged 16–25 can complete their GED requirement and receive job training at Utah Job Corps.

CPR Training

Online CPR courses are acceptable and you can take a totally free course on our website utahfostercare.org/cpr.

Check it out; you will be glad you did. If you don't like this site, you may choose another site, just know that some will have a small fee.



Mentoring!

Becoming a foster parent takes a great deal of consideration, preparation, and patience faced with uncertainty and multiple changes to a family when a child in care enters a home through foster care. Families willing to open their hearts and homes to a child in care will need support once they receive that initial call for placement. Utah Foster Care can help by pairing a seasoned foster family with a newly licensed family through our Mentoring Program.

Support Integration from the beginning of the foster care journey is necessary to empower outcomes and confidence in decision-making. Mentors will guide new foster families to understand and develop key values by instilling necessary skills to build confidence in themselves.

Foster parents need more support, but the support that is given should target various aspects of foster parent roles. To be most effective, support adjusts to meet the developmental stage of the foster parent. New foster homes are more likely to disrupt within the first year of a new placement due to lack of support. By offering support to new families during uncertainty, we minimize placement disruption for kids in care and retain families longer.

Mentors will encourage new parents to build and reinforce skills, using knowledge to find resources in their community, gain confidence and knowledge to care for the diverse needs of children in foster care through peer support. Mentors model through their own experience and knowledge to encourage new foster families to appreciate diversity and show respect to oneself, friends, fostering partners, children placed in their home and fellow foster parents.

The best learning does not come through lectures it comes from experience. A seasoned foster parent that can mentor a new family through experience and knowledge will encourage them to become their own best coach.

New families are encouraged to participate in the mentoring program upon receiving their first placement, however the program is also available for families that have had multiple placements and need support. Contact Michelle at Utah Foster Care for more information by calling 1-877-505-5437 or by email michelle.ostmark@utahfostercare.org

Who do I call? Western Region

Utah Foster Care

LOCAL STAFF

Heidi Naylor , <i>Retention Specialist</i>	heidi.naylor@utahfostercare.org	(801) 373-3006
Terri Rowley , <i>Trainer</i>	terri.rowley@utahfostercare.org	(801) 373-3006
LeishaAnne Corbett , <i>Trainer</i>	leishaanne.corbett@utahfostercare.org	(801) 373-3006
John Thill , <i>Foster-Adoptive Consultant</i>	john.thill@utahfostercare.org	(801) 373-3006
Jennie Sheperd , <i>Foster-Adoptive Consultant</i>	jennie.sheperd@utahfostercare.org	(801) 373-3006

STATEWIDE OUTREACH

Esmeralda Malili , <i>Spanish Speaking</i>	esmeralda.malili@utahfostercare.org	(801) 994-5205
Stephanie Benally , <i>Native Families</i>	stephanie.benally@utahfostercare.org	(801) 994-5205

CLUSTER SUPPORT GROUP FACILITATORS

Experienced foster/adoptive parents who plan Cluster Support Group meetings and trainings. Let them know if there is a training topic you need. Call any facilitator when you need a voice of experience.

Jessica , <i>North Cluster (Pleasant Grove - North)</i>	jessica.fostercare@gmail.com	(801) 432-0720
Beth , <i>Central (Lindon/Provo/Orem/Wasatch/Summit)</i>	snb8782@yahoo.com	(801) 372-9858
Teresa , <i>South Cluster (Springville - South)</i>	utahsouthcluster@gmail.com	(801) 489-4178
Jennifer , <i>Heber/Park City (Wasatch & Summit Counties)</i>	honeyvance@yahoo.com	(801) 489-4178
Ronnett , <i>Post-Adopt Cluster (All families past & present)</i>	adoptedfosterkids@gmail.com	(801) 369-9734
Anna , <i>Post-Adopt Cluster (All families past & present)</i>	annafechter@gmail.com	(801) 636-4723
Carmen , <i>Kinship (All families with kin placements)</i>	flybabycarmen@gmail.com	(801) 830-4646
Mitzi , <i>Level III (All families with Level III placements)</i>	mpinki30@msn.com	(801) 830-5807
Melissa , <i>Level III (All families with Level III placements)</i>	mnielsenmhn@earthlink.net	(801) 362-7566

Not sure who to call at Utah Foster Care - or have a question that isn't covered here? Feel free to call our statewide toll-free number: 1 (877) 505-5437.

The information in this Ready Reference was correct as of **December 9, 2021**...Please let your Retention Specialist (listed above) know of any errors. Thank you!

State Employee Phone Directory

Many of the State employees you'll work with are listed for you, here. Others may be found using the State's online directory: statephone.utah.gov/phone

Each child in foster care has their own DCFS-assigned caseworker, whose contact information will be found in the child's home-to-home binder.

After-hours Emergency Hotline: 1 (855) 323-3237

RESOURCE FAMILY CONSULTANTS (RFCS)

Ask your Resource Family Consultant (RFC) or Kinship Family Consultant (KFC) about placements in your home. Don't know your Consultant? Call the appropriate supervisor, listed below.

Jacque Burks	jburks@utah.gov	(801) 361-8720
Erica Wankier	ewankier@utah.gov	(435) 660-1174
Tristine Lytton	tlytton@utah.gov	(801) 755-6882
Nancy Brittain	nbrittain@utah.gov	(801) 699-0577
Mike Pickett	mikepickett@utah.gov	(801) 794-6700
Candice Whiteley	cwhitele@utah.gov	(801) 372-2781
Geneil Young	gbyoung@utah.gov	(801) 234-9187
Rachel Jones, RFC & KFC Supervisor	rrjones@utah.gov	(801) 368-5137

KINSHIP FAMILY CONSULTANTS (KFCS)

Priya Ellwood	pellwood@utah.gov	(801) 369-3936
Lisa Absher	labsher@utah.gov	(801) 362-2678
Alecia Stoker	astoker@utah.gov	(801) 376-0529
Benjamin Allison	ballison@utah.gov	(385) 535-1635
Janalee Burdette	jburdett@utah.gov	(801) 319-5942
Carly Cook	cbcook@utah.gov	(801) 763-0000
Bernie Pacheco	bpacheco@utah.gov	(801) 367-9309

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF LICENSING

Ask your licensor about licensing rules, requirements, and renewal. If you don't know who your licensor is, please call the supervisor, listed below.

Nichol Tidwell	ncraddoc@utah.gov	(385) 329-0215
Lauren Andrews	laurenandrews@utah.gov	(385) 329-0192
John Ortiz, Supervisor	jortiz@utah.gov	(801) 319-1441

DCFS OFFICE LOCATIONS

Heber City	69 North 600 West	(435) 657-4200
Am Fork	861 East 900 North	(801) 763-4100
Orem	1106 North 1200 West	(801) 224-7820
Salem	609 North State Road 198	(801) 794-6700
Provo	150 East Center Street, Suite 5100	(801) 374-7005
Nephi	1403 South Main	(435) 623-7207
Delta	39 South 300 East	(435) 864-3869
Fillmore	55 West 100 North	(435) 743-6611

Resource Shed

“The Shed” was created and operated by foster parents for foster parents.

There are clothing items, toys, baby items, and other things that have been generously donated by Kid to Kid and Plato's Closet as well as other community partners. These items are FREE to our foster families.

To access these donations, you need to join the Western Utah Resource Center Group on Facebook. It is a private group and cannot be found by searching. To be added to the group, please contact Beth or Teresa:

Beth	snb8782@yahoo.com	(801) 372-9858
Teresa	utahsouthcluster@gmail.com	(801) 489-4178

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 forms. 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, under "Foster Parent Resources" (utahfostercare.org/resources) or through your UFC Retention Services Specialist, as identified on page 6.

Wishing Well: Private donors contribute to this fund, allowing children in foster care to participate in common 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 generally limited to \$150.

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 or appreciation events, and through the Resource Centers described below. Notices may also be posted on the regional Facebook Group 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 Facebook Group or personal mail in the fall for details.

Resource Sheds: 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. For a list of resource sheds please see page 8.

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	
Mileage: Case Activity	Case activity miles, miles to and from reviews, court activities, case planning, staffing and placement transitions	FTC	\$42 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: dcfs.utah.gov/services/youthservices		