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Licensing Unit's Mission

To enrich the lives of children and adults
By promoting safe and quality licensed care.



Child Foster Care
Licensing
14949 62nd Street N.
Stillwater, MN 55082

Launch of Binti

We are excited to announce the launch of our new software program, Binti! Binti allows for all licensing paperwork to be completed and stored online, which will help streamline the licensing process for new applicants, as well as ease the annual licensing process for already-licensed providers. One of the benefits of Binti is that some information, such as your name and address, will be stored electronically, eliminating the need for you to enter it repeatedly on various forms. Another benefit is that electronic signatures are used on all forms.

For those who are already licensed, you will start utilizing Binti when you are due for your next annual licensing visit. Sixty days prior to the due date for your annual visit, you will receive an email from Binti with information for logging in and completing the required annual paperwork. You will also receive a reminder email at the 30-day mark if your paperwork has not yet been completed.

As with the implementation of any new process, there will be a learning curve for all of us - licensors and families alike. We ask for your patience as we learn to use Binti together, and we welcome any questions that may arise as you are working in Binti in the future.

Child Foster Care Licensing Team

Annual Training Reminder

In March 2020, the Minnesota Department of Human Services temporarily extended the timelines for annual training requirements for foster care providers during the COVID-19 peacetime emergency. This waiver was amended to require license holders to resume most annual and other ongoing training requirements effective January 1, 2021; however, licensors could not issue correction orders for providers being out-of-compliance with annual training hours.

As of July 1, 2021, licensed foster care providers will need to be in compliance with all annual training requirements.

- If you have completed an annual licensing visit since March 2020 and have not provided documentation of completion of annual training requirements, you will need to provide your licensor with such documentation by July 1, 2021 or be subject to a correction order.
- For all annual licensing visits completed after July 1, 2021, a correction order will be issued if annual training requirements are not in compliance.
- Child Passenger Restraint Training (CARS): Due to the ongoing, limited availability of in-person CARS trainings, the deadline to renew this training every five years is extended during the peacetime emergency. We will let you know once the state reissues this annual training requirement.

Please contact your licensor with any questions.

Welcome New Child Foster Care Providers

March 2021

- **Ehrow & Saw Kyaw,**
Oakdale (Kin)
- **Genice & Victor Thompson,**
Woodbury (Kin)

April 2021

- **Paul Bednarek & Karen Kordell,**
Oakdale (Kin)
- **Cindy & Brad Chin,**
Woodbury (Kin)
- **Angie & Jerry Henery,**
Lakeland (Kin)
- **Camie & Seth Johnson,**
Cottage Grove (Non-Kin)
- **Hailey Neudecker,**
Forest Lake (Kin)
- **Twila & Zach Tift,**
Woodbury (Kin)
- **Mee & Dang Vue,**
Cottage Grove (Kin)
- **Becky & Chad Walker,**
Hugo (Non-Kin)
- **Rochelle West,**
Cottage Grove (Kin)
- **Sandy & Kevin Whitby,**
Hugo (Kin)
- **Kristine Wilkes & Tim Dupris,**
Oakdale (Kin)

May 2021

- **Simone & Reggie Megas-Harmason,**
Woodbury (Kin)

New Licensing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Website

The Washington County Licensing team has created a centralized website of resources for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) (www.co.washington.mn.us/LicensingDEI). This website was created to assist in extending cultural competency for our programs. *Washington County Licensing expects foster care providers to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all in the community.* It is the expectation and dedication of the county to continually work toward increasing our cultural competence.

Foster care providers may count the trainings, videos, and reading materials on the new DEI website towards their annual training requirements. **As a reminder, foster care providers are now required to obtain at least one hour of annual training on the topic of cultural competency.**

The DEI website can also be found by visiting the Child Foster Care Licensing home page on the Washington County website (www.co.washington.mn.us/childfostercarelicensing) by clicking on “Cultural Competency” on the left-hand side.

Financial Assistance for Post-Secondary Education

The Minnesota Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program provides funds to help current and former foster youth pay for post-secondary education. Eligible youth can receive up to \$5,000 per school year for post-secondary education at college, university, vocational, technical, or trade schools. The funds can be used to pay for tuition and fees, books, housing, living expenses, and other school-related costs. *The money does not need to be paid back.*

Applications for the 2021-2022 school year are accepted **July 1, 2021 – April 1, 2022.**

Eligibility:

All students applying to the ETV program must be accepted into an accredited, Federal Pell Grant-eligible institution of higher education, graduated from high school or received a GED, and be eligible to receive financial aid. At time of application, students must have their financial aid award letter, school acceptance letter, and class schedule available in electronic form.

First-time applicants:

You may qualify if you are under age 26 and at least one of the following describes your situation:

- You were in foster care for 30 consecutive days between your 17th and 18th birthdays.
- You were adopted from foster care after your 16th birthday.
- You were in foster care on or after your 16th birthday when the juvenile court ordered a transfer of custody to a relative.
- You were under state or tribal guardianship on your 18th birthday.

Renewal applicants:

You may reapply up to five years if you have not reached your 26th birthday and are making progress in completing your education.

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Additional information and application instructions can be found on the DHS website: <https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/children-and-families/services/adolescent-services/programs-services/education-and-training-voucher.jsp>. If you have questions about the ETV program, you can contact the ETV Program Coordinator at 651-431-4663 or DHS.ETVcoordinator@state.mn.us.

Celebrating Reunification

June is National Reunification Month! In celebration of reunification and family preservation, we wanted to share an excerpt from the *Birth and Foster Parent Partnership: A Relationship Building Guide*, which was published in June 2020 in collaboration with the Children's Trust Fund Alliance, Youth Law Center's Quality Parenting Initiative, and Casey Family Programs. View the full guide on our website: www.co.washington.mn.us/relationshipbuildingguide.

Keeping the Relationship Strong after the Family Leaves the Child Welfare System

After children and parents are reunited, it usually takes some time for the family to readjust to living together. In many situations, it is the positive and supportive relationship that the birth parent experienced with the foster parent/kinship caregiver that helped the parent gain the necessary skills and tools to successfully provide a nurturing and stable home for their children. We often see parents and caregivers continue to keep in contact with each other and provide support to each other. Many foster families/kinship caregivers stay closely connected with the birth family and build long-term relationships for the children and family. Some foster parents become known as "aunts" and "uncles" to the children. During post-reunification, a birth parent may wish to continue having contact and communication with foster parents/kinship caregivers to keep them involved as a support. The birth parent may ask the foster parent/kinship caregivers to attend family celebrations or to help with babysitting or respite care as is done in an extended family system.

Suggested ways for continuing your relationship with the birth parent and children during post-reunification and beyond:

- Continue to include the birth family in special family events, celebrations, and holidays.
- Provide assistance with child care or respite care.
- Let the birth parents know that you are available to them and will support them as they gradually learn to readjust to their role as the main caregivers.
- Remind birth parents that they do not need to be perfect and that everyone may need time to adjust and learn their new roles. This is especially important during the beginning stages of post-reunification.
- Let the birth parents know that you would be happy to participate in family outings, birthday parties, and other events whenever you are invited by the birth family.
- Talk with the birth parent about both of you sharing your positive collaborative experiences with other child welfare workers, foster parents, and other birth families still involved with the system.

Watch the "Yuvia's Story" video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdTyJUO5Vqw>) for a glimpse into how a mother and foster parent built a supportive relationship with a lasting impact even after the child's time in foster care.

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May 2021 continued

- **Jennifer & Felipe Torres,**
Lake Elmo (Kin)

June 2021

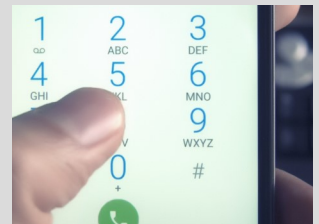
- **Kelly & Steven Farrell,**
Hugo (Non-Kin)

Fare for All

Fare for All is a non-profit, community-supported food group. They buy fresh fruit, vegetables, and meat in bulk to save you 30-40% off grocery store prices. Visit their website for more info.:

<https://fareforall.thefoodgroupmn.org>

New Contact Information



Please keep your licensor informed of any changes to your email address or home/cell phone numbers. You may contact your licensor directly or email us at:

ComSvsCFCLicensing@co.washington.mn.us

Foster Parents Needed!

Word of mouth is one of the best forms of recruitment to get new foster parents in Washington County. If anyone has said to you, "I've always thought about becoming a foster parent" or you know of someone who is good with kids, wants to help the community, and you think has what it takes to become a foster parent, please send them our way! We need people who can provide care to a variety of youth, such as teens, sibling groups, children with mental health diagnoses, developmental disabilities, and everything in between. We need foster parents in all areas of the county. Whether families can only commit to one or two weekends per month for respite care or be a placement resource, we have a need for both! Please pass the word on so we can keep kids in our local foster homes.

OUR NEXT CHILD
FOSTER CARE
INFO. MEETING:
Thurs., July 1 • 6-8 p.m.
Webex (online)
For more information,
call 651-430-8307.

Summer Activities for Youth and Families

Spend the summer exploring your own community! Check out these local events and activities for youth and families, many of which are free!

- **City of Cottage Grove:** Recreational activities and events for youth. www.cottagegrovemn.gov/252/Recreation-Programs-Events
- **City of Forest Lake:** Summer youth programming for Forest Lake residents. www.ci.forest-lake.mn.us/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=201
- **City of Oakdale:** Outdoor story time, art classes, youth summer camps, and more! Many are free for Oakdale residents. www.ci.oakdale.mn.us/782/Youth
- **City of Woodbury:** Puppet Wagon, Story Time in the Park, outdoor movies, and more! www.woodburymn.gov/departments/recreation/special_events.php
- **Stillwater Storytime Trolley:** Every Saturday morning starting June 5. *Pre-registration and tickets are required.* <https://stillwatertrolley.com/storytime-trolley>
- **Summer Tuesdays:** Live music, vendor market, and movies in the park in Stillwater – June 29-August 10. www.summertuesdays.com
- **Washington County Libraries:** Summer reading program for kids, teens, and adults. www.washcolib.org
- **Washington County Libraries:** Events and classes for kids, teens, and adults. www.washcolib.org/31/Learn
- **Washington County Parks:** Swimming beaches, day camps, story strolls, playgrounds, and more! www.co.washington.mn.us/492/Parks
- **YMCA Twin Cities:** Summer programming options for youth. www.ymcanorth.org/child_care_preschool/summer_programs/summer_at_the_y

U GOT THIS - Parenting Support Resource

Parenting can be stressful during the best of times. Throw in a pandemic, uncertainty in school and work schedules, financial worries and civil unrest, parenting can be overwhelming. We know that you've got this, and we want to support you during this time.

University of Minnesota Extension Center for Family Development is offering a free text messaging program that supports parents and caregivers of children birth to 18 years of age, called U Got This.

Parents and caregivers are invited to sign up to receive two text messages a week throughout the school year on topics of health and nutrition, developmental affirmations, parenting and school engagement, mental health and well-being, and financial capability. These text messages are designed to support you and your family as you are faced with making many and varied daily parenting decisions. You can choose to receive messages in English or Spanish.

To sign up to receive U Got This text messages, go to <https://z.umn.edu/ugotthis>. This program is free, but be aware some fees may apply depending on your cell phone service provider.

Child Foster Care Training

DISCLAIMER: In preparation of this newsletter, every effort has been made to offer the most current, correct, and clearly expressed information possible. Nevertheless, inadvertent errors in information may occur. For training information, please check the sponsor listing to be certain of all the details related to the training.

***Reimbursement Reminder:** Foster parents can seek up to \$100 training reimbursement per calendar year per household.

***Training Reminder:** 12 hours of training is required yearly. (13 hours is required within your first year of licensure.) This needs to include one hour on each of the following topics: children's mental health, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and cultural competency.

UPCOMING TRAININGS

WEBINAR: The Journey of Becoming a Success Story: Foster & Adoptive Young Leaders

Join us for a dynamic panel discussion with foster and adoptive young leaders from the nonprofit organization, Partnerships for Permanence (P4P). This webinar offers families and professionals a unique opportunity to engage and learn from young people with lived experience. Interactive discussions and reflections will focus on real life perspectives, motivational and inspirational stories of the journey of redefining the meaning of success while overcoming life obstacles.

Date/Time: Wednesday, June 16 • 6-8 p.m.

Location: Online webinar

Cost: FREE

Registration: <https://education.mnadopt.org/v2/?c=event&id=1891>

WEBINAR: Understanding Autism in Adoption and Foster Care

This workshop will help adoptive and foster parents, as well as professionals, better understand autism spectrum disorders. This webinar will include discussion on the signs of autism, appropriate diagnostic measures, and resources for caregivers. Participants will leave the workshop with tips and strategies for building what we hope will be lifelong relationships with individuals on the neurodiverse spectrum.

Date/Time: Tuesday, July 27 • 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Location: Online webinar

Cost: \$18/person

Registration: <https://education.mnadopt.org/v2/?c=event&id=1915>

WEBINAR: The Neurobiology of Attachment

Over one million children in this country per year are delivered to women who have used alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or illicit drugs during pregnancy. This session will explore the biological and psychosocial factors that impact the development of a nurturing relationship between the adoptive parent and her child with a history of substance exposure during pregnancy and will provide an overview of intervention strategies that can promote positive attachment, development, and learning.

Date/Time: Thursday, August 12 • 6-8 p.m.

Location: Online webinar

Cost: \$18/person

Registration: <https://education.mnadopt.org/v2/?c=event&id=1911>

WEBINAR: Affirming and Nurturing Racial Identity and Equality in Children

Caregivers have a unique opportunity to assist children in exploring and appreciating their own racial identity as well as adopting an antiracist worldview. Utilizing developmental research, this workshop explores messages and actions that caregivers may adopt to promote equality and justice as core values for children. Specific guidelines will be addressed for creating an environment where children learn to value diversity, prejudice, and discrimination.

Date/Time: At your leisure (pre-recorded)

Location: Online webinar

Cost: FREE

Registration: <http://centervideo.forest.usf.edu/video/qpi/nurturingracialidentity/start.html>

WEBINAR: The Impact of Fostering and Adoption on Birth Children

This double workshop addresses the impact of fostering and adopting on birth children of foster and adoptive parents. The presenter will provide insight into the challenges that birth children experience as their family dynamics change. Part 1 - Presenters will share a personal story as the birth child of kinship, foster, and adoptive parents and integrate that experience with research conducted on birth children's perspectives. Part 2 - A major focus is how to assess and ensure supports for

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birth children as their families engage in fostering and/or adopting.

Date/Time: At your leisure (pre-recorded)

Location: Online webinar

Cost: FREE

Registration: <http://centervideo.forest.usf.edu/video/qpi/florida/theimpact/start.html>

WEBINAR: The Mosaic: When Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) Meets Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)

Learn more about the diagnoses of Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Hear from two experts from different experiences, adoption therapist Deena McMahon and Wendylee Raun, adoptive parent of a now-grown daughter with FASD. Hear what they have learned over the 20+ years of working and living with RAD and FASD.

Date/Time: At your leisure (pre-recorded)

Location: Online webinar

Cost: FREE

Registration: www.mnadopt.org/product/1104d-downloadable-webinar-the-mosaic-when-reactive-attachment-disorder-rad-meets-fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorders-fasd/

WEBINAR: Transgender 101

What does it mean to be a “trans” person or to be gender nonconforming (“GNC”)? What can other humans do to make trans and GNC people feel welcomed and accepted? What actions or words should they avoid? How does “passing” or not “passing” or the absence of legal rights in many states play into a transgender person’s daily life? Join national speaker, diversity consultant, and author Ellen “Ellie” Krug as she shares what it means to be transgender and offers tips and advice on how to be inclusive toward anyone who identifies as trans or GNC. The talk will include some brief sharing of Ellie’s personal story and many basics about pronouns, “passing,” and “bathroom” issues.

Date/Time: At your leisure (pre-recorded)

Location: Online webinar

Cost: FREE

Registration: www.mnadopt.org/product/20210310-webinar-transgender-101

Trainings through MN ADOPT

For the past few years, the Washington County Licensing Unit has been partnering with MN ADOPT to offer free, online training opportunities for our foster care providers. Beginning in June, these monthly training opportunities will be sent in ONE email. This email will include links to four upcoming live webinars (free) and links to two pre-recorded webinars with coupon codes to access the trainings for free. *All six offerings are good only for that specific month.*

Please be on the look-out for this monthly email, as this is a great way to obtain free training hours towards your annual licensing requirements. The emails will continue to be sent from the following email address: ComSvsCFCLicensing@co.washington.mn.us. You may want to add this address to your email contacts to be sure these emails, as well as other important messages from the Licensing Unit, don’t end up in your junk folder!

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Visit our website:

www.co.washington.mn.us/childfostercare/licensing