

The STAR Newsletter

Child Issue

Inside This Issue

- Meet the... CFC Licensing Team
- When Placement is Needed
- Welcome New Providers!
- New Contact Info.
- Utilizing & Providing Respite Care
- Recognition Survey
- Foster Parents Needed!
- CFC Complaints
- How to Bond with a Child in FC/Adoption
- Incentive...Referrals
- CFC Training
- Complaint & Grievance Policy

Child Foster Care Licensing Team's Mission

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



Community Services
Child Foster Care
Licensing
14949 62nd Street N.
Stillwater, MN 55082
[Child Foster Care
Licensing Website](#)

Meet the Washington County Child Foster Care Licensing Team

Our Child Foster Care (CFC) Team is complete. Please meet the remainder of the CFC team below.



New case aide, Rebecca Kimbell.

Hi, I'm **Sarahjo Sannerud**! I'm so happy to be here in Washington County, serving this beautiful community. I come from previous county work where I was an on-going child protection social worker. I've been working in social services on and off for the last 10 years. I worked within the metro area at different nonprofit agencies. I have done a lot of work with human/sex trafficking, working to educate community members, and providing support and resources to victims. In my personal life, I enjoy working out, cooking, and hanging out with my dog, Carl Watson.

New licensor, Sarahjo Sannerud.

Hello, my name is **Rebecca Kimbell** and I am new to the Licensing team. I started with the county in the navigator program. Prior to that I worked in special education, adolescent treatment, and emergency placement. Throughout my experience working in these roles, I have demonstrated a commitment to helping families navigate complex challenges. I believe that families and support systems can take many different forms, and all are essential for providing children with the nurturing foundations they need. In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, going to concerts, traveling, trying new restaurants, gardening, and spending time kayaking in northern Minnesota.



Continued on page 2

Welcome New Providers!

January 2023

- **Daniel & Holly Schafer**
Cottage Grove (Kin)
- **Michael & Nancy Schauer**
Lake Elmo (Kin)
- **Diane Taylor**
Stillwater (Kin)

February 2023

- **Munira Ali & Abraham Abdulaziz**
Woodbury (Kin)
- **Jessalana Griffin**
Stillwater (Kin)

March 2023

- **Sheryl Zuravin**
Stillwater (Kin)

April 2023

- **Dean & Susan Anker**
Pine Springs (Kin)
- **Agnes & Ronald Dudrey**
St. Paul Park (Kin)
- **Katie Scholz**
Woodbury (Non-Kin)

May 2023

- **Hannah Weierke**
Cottage Grove (Kin)

Continued on page 3

New Contact Information

Please keep us informed of any changes to your email address and home/cell phone numbers. Contact your licenser directly with updates.

Continued from Meet the Washington County Child Foster Care Licensing Team on page 1



Office specialist, Tyshia Gaines.

Hello, my name is **Tyshia Gaines**. I have been the Children's Licensing Unit office specialist since the beginning of March. Prior to this position, I worked for a little under two years with the Washington County Community Services front desk. This unit holds a special place in my heart as I had the privilege of being a kinship foster parent for two years. With those experiences in mind, I know for a fact I am right where I am supposed to be. I was born and raised in northern Minnesota and am currently studying for a degree in social work with an emphasis on children's psychology. I am a mother to three amazing children (four if you include our fur baby). As a family, we love to play and explore around the metro area. I look forward to all the ways I will be able to support not only my team here at Washington County but also each of the families we serve.

When Placement is Needed

When the Foster Care unit is notified that placement of a child/youth is needed, the case aide starts to look at licensed foster care providers who could possibly be a good match for the youth needing placement. Our social workers for the children send a request to the Foster Care team through Binti — the same system you use for initial licensing and your annual visits. The case aide reads the placement request then sends an initial email/text and makes follow-up calls to the providers we have listed as being a match for the child's needs and strengths.

In order for the case aide to have an accurate list of potential foster care homes, it is essential that the information in our system is current for each foster care provider. It is important that we know how many kids you could take, what behaviors and symptoms you could provide care for, the age and/or gender of the children you serve, and who is currently placed in your home. If you have a child that left your care and licensing is not notified, we may not call you for a new placement.

Often when placement is needed for children, it is needed very quickly. It is important that we know the best way to contact you and for you to respond to phone calls, texts, or emails. Even if you are not available for a placement at the time of the call, please respond to the case aide so we know not to call you again for this youth. The case aide will also call each of our foster homes on a regular basis to make sure the information we have is correct. *Please return these requests so we have your accurate information.*

Continued on page 3

Continued from When Placement is Needed on page 2

How You Can Help

- Respond to all calls, texts, or emails asking:
 - You to update information about your foster care program; or
 - If you would be open to a placement of a particular child.
- Contact your licensing worker or the [child foster care licensing email account](#):
 - If a child was placed or left your home; or
 - If you have any demographic changes.

Utilizing and Providing Respite Care

Do you need a break? Are you willing to give a break?

- Respite care provides periodic or short-term, overnight care in a licensed home with the intention of the child returning to the care of their birth parent/guardian or the foster provider.
- Respite is a voluntary service used by foster parents and birth families who have children with mental health diagnoses or intellectual disabilities.
- Washington County licensed providers will be compensated the child's daily rate of pay to provide respite foster care. The payment should cover the child's expenses.

Reasons to Utilize Respite Care

- Allows time to take a break while knowing the children are under the care of someone safe and capable;
- Avoid burnout;
- Self-care; and
- Reduce stress.

Request Respite Care

- Notify the child's worker in advance of the dates respite care is needed.
- The Licensing Unit will contact licensed foster care providers to secure a respite placement.
- The Licensing Unit will communicate the agreed placement with the child's social worker, the requesting provider, and the provider willing to provide respite.

Remember

- All respite stays must be arranged and approved through the child's social worker and the foster parent's licensing worker. Both workers need to know the whereabouts of the child and capacity of each home.
- To communicate important information to the respite provider (dates; drop off/pick up times and locations; diet; information about the child; the child's schedule, hobbies, likes, and dislikes; who the child can be in contact with; behavioral and emotional needs; etc.)

Reasons to Provide Respite Care

- Gives families a break;
- Gives youth a break; and
- Short-term breaks for birth parents/guardians of children with mental health or other disabilities reduces out-of-home placements.

Continued on page 4

Continued from Welcome New Providers on page 2

- **Stacy Vang & Sengsy Thao**
Woodbury (Kin)

June 2023

- **Amanda & Matthew McReynolds**
Cottage Grove (Kin)
- **Tiffany Brendle & Tyron Humphrey**
Oakdale (Kin)

July 2023

- **Alisha & Geoffrey Youngdahl**
St. Paul Park (Kin)
- **Hani Geele**
Woodbury (Kin)

Recognition Event Survey

A short survey will be sent out to foster care providers soon. This survey will be used to gauge interest in returning to a foster care recognition event. Previous recognition events were held annually before the COVID-19 pandemic as a time to acknowledge the important work our providers do every day.

Once you receive the survey email, we ask that you complete it so we can use your feedback to decide the best way to celebrate providers, whether that is an event or another form of recognition.

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:
Thursday, September 7 6-8 p.m.
 Online with Teams
 For more information, call 651-430-8307.

Continued from Utilizing and Providing Respite Care on page 3

Tips When Providing Respite Care

- **Be prepared.** Get information about the child. Be prepared with things to make them comfortable.
- **Have a positive perspective.** Respite foster care is not "babysitting." You're caring for a vulnerable child and have the opportunity to help in their healing.
- **Have fun.** Make a plan that considers the child's needs and includes activities and outings.

Remember

- The number of children you care for cannot exceed the maximum capacity stated on your foster care license.
- If the child in placement is under age six, SUID/AHT training must be completed in the last five years.
- If the child is under eight years of age, CARS training must be completed.
- To get information about the child: child's schedule, hobbies, likes and dislikes; diet; who the child can be in contact with; behavioral and emotional needs; etc.

Washington County's Respite Payment Policy

- Foster parents will give the daily rate of pay to the foster parent providing respite care at the time of drop off.
- Pay is always according to the number of overnight stays.
- The requesting foster parents will be notified of the dollar amount to give the respite provider.
- The respite foster parents will be notified of the dollar amount to receive at drop off.
- If the respite request is from Canvas Health for a birth parent/guardian, a billing request form must be submitted to the county for payment. The foster parent providing respite care will be notified of this by the Licensing unit at the time of the arrangement.

Did You Know?

Families can provide respite care only! If you know of a family that would like to be a respite provider for Washington County's families, please refer them to Licensing. See the article on page seven about incentives for referrals.

Source: Parts of this article are from the [What to Know About Respite Foster Care article on the Grow by WedMD website](#).

Child Foster Care Complaints

Investigation Process and What to Expect

The process begins when Washington County receives a complaint alleging a violation of the child foster care rules/statutes or allegations of maltreatment. Complaints are typically received by phone or in writing. *Minnesota Statutes do not permit the disclosure of the party who made the complaint and information is restricted while the investigation is pending.*

A child foster care licensor will be assigned to investigate the matter. This person may be different than the primary licensor for the child foster care provider. *The licensor*

Continued on page 5

Continued from Child Foster Care Complaints - Investigation Process and What to Expect on page 4

investigating the complaint may make an unannounced visit to your program.

You can expect the following to occur during the visit from the licensor:

- Explaining the reasoning of their visit and informing you about the nature of the complaint;
- Asking you questions in efforts to make a determination about the complaint;
- Inspecting your home;
- Gathering collateral information from anyone who may have knowledge of the incident;
- Reviewing licensing rules/statutes and your signed Program Policies;
- Conducting additional home visits or phone calls, as needed, to gather additional information; and
- Depending on the nature of the complaint, law enforcement, child protection, and/or other professionals may be involved in the investigation process or home visit; *such individuals may visit your program with or without a licensor.* Each party will conduct their own investigative processes and determinations.

Outcomes of the Complaint Investigation

The licensor will consult with the Child Foster Care team or the Department of Human Services (DHS) to assess findings and information received. Once the investigation is complete, the licensing team will make one of three determinations. *You will be notified on the outcome of the complaint investigation and informed of next steps, if necessary.*

- **OCCURRED:** By a preponderance of evidence (it is more likely than not), a violation of the Child Foster Care rule or human services licensing statutes has

occurred and one of the following corrective actions may be taken:

- Correction order; or
- Recommendation to DHS for one of these licensing actions:
 - Conditional License;
 - Fine;
 - Suspension;
 - Temporary Immediate Suspension; or
 - Revocation.
- **DID NOT OCCUR:** No violation occurred and no further action by the licensor.
- **UNABLE TO DETERMINE:** Unable to determine, by a preponderance of evidence, whether a violation occurred and no further action by the licensor.

Reconsideration

You have the right to request reconsideration if a correction order is issued by the licensor. You have the right to appeal or request reconsideration after any licensing action is ordered by DHS. The public may be informed of the nature of the complaint and the findings if they contact the Child Foster Care Licensing Division.

The request for reconsideration must be made in writing and be postmarked/sent to DHS within 20 calendar days after receipt of the correction order by the applicant or license holder.

The request must include:

- Identification of the parts of the correction order that are alleged to be in error;
- An explanation of why they are in error; and
- Documentation to support the allegation of the error.

How to Bond with a Child in Foster Care or Adoption

Whether a child is in care for a short time or whether they need an adoptive family, it is critical for their foster or adoptive parents to be able to form a bond with them. After all, it is hard to provide love and care if there is no bond between adult and child. However, forming a meaningful relationship with a child who has experienced abuse and neglect can sometimes be challenging.

The young person may be untrusting toward adults due to their past experiences.

So, how can foster or adoptive parents form a true bond with a child? Here are some professional tips to help you build rapport and a meaningful relationship with youth in your care.

Continued on page 6

Continued from How to Bond with a Child in Foster Care or Adoption on page 5

Be Honest

Kids—especially older youth and teenagers—often know when they are being lied to. Fibbing or avoiding the whole truth can sometimes seem convenient or safer in the moment, but remaining truthful and having an honest and age-appropriate conversation will have a greater impact and can support trust in the long-term. It's impossible to truly form a bond without basic trust. This need for trust and honesty is especially key in adoption situations.

As you move toward and through the adoption process, many feelings can arise for children. Be honest and open with them, and tell them what is and might be happening—be transparent and as communicative as possible before and after any major steps in the process.

Use High-Interest Events and Activities

For many kids, it can be hard to open up and be themselves in new and unfamiliar situations. As a parent, it's your job to find out what they like doing and provide them with the opportunities to explore those interests. Once engaged in an activity or event they're interested in, youth may feel relaxed and be more apt to be open and honest with you. It also shows that you care about them and are willing to do things they choose, which again helps to develop trust and understanding. If you're having a hard time learning their interests, create a list of possible activities (attending a sporting event or concert, participating in sports, taking a class, or even just getting together with a friend) and make suggestions. If you don't get an answer, give different things a try and see what gets them excited.

Maintain Connections to Birth Family

Studies have shown that having a connection with birth family members can be an important part of the healing process for youth in foster care. Whenever possible, provide opportunities for the child to stay in contact and maintain meaningful relationships with their birth family members. This way, the child knows that you care about their family and want to keep those bonds alive. Especially for youth that feel as though they have been taken away from the lives and people they have always known, keeping connections open with birth family members is a great way to develop trust with them.

Ask Thoughtful Questions and Value Answers

When people's thoughts and feelings are seriously considered and valued, they will likely increase their level of participation and commitment. The same holds true

with youth in care. By asking questions in ways that show you care about and value their thoughts, opinions, and contributions, you can help establish trust and increase their participation in the family. In particular, ask open-ended questions and help them draw parallels to other moments in their life. This way, they can begin to more effectively process their current situation and see you as a trusted ally. Along the way, highlight their growth and accomplishments. One effective strategy to engage in deeper conversations with youth who have difficulty engaging is to talk while driving in a car, taking a hike, or cooking together—any activity that is done without demanding eye contact.

Practice Positive Parenting Strategies

Parenting presents challenges at every stage.

It's important to learn proven and effective techniques that will help you address the mental, emotional, and behavioral needs of the kids or teens in your care. Learning and applying parenting techniques by reading books, taking online courses, or participating in workshops in your community will help you have the confidence to create a safe environment, use effective discipline, establish goals and boundaries, and ultimately strengthen your family unit. Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) and the Incredible Years are two examples of parent education. [Child Information Gateway](#) also provides a comprehensive list of parent education programs, including courses for families involved in the child welfare system.

Provide Structure and be Open-Minded

Youth who have been in foster care often come from unstable environments. Many may feel as though they can't trust adults because those who have been in their lives may have been unpredictable and unreliable. As a defense mechanism, youth may try to avoid establishing feelings for the new people in their lives because they've come to expect disappointment.

By providing kids and teens with an accepting and structured home, you can go a long way toward helping kids feel comfortable and safe, and ultimately help them trust again. Helping with homework, having set evening and bedtime routines, and scheduling a weekly movie night are a few examples of how you can help provide stability in the home.

Continued on page 9

Incentive for Referrals from Licensed Providers

There is a growing need for foster families in Minnesota. We're looking for help from our licensed child foster care providers.

Referral Incentive

For 2023, all currently licensed foster homes can refer another family to be licensed for Child Foster Care in Washington County.

- \$100 will be given when the referral family gets licensed
- *Limit: for the first 10 families referred and licensed only.*
- The family being referred needs to let us know who referred them.

Foster families can be:

- married or single
- a homeowner or renter
- with or without children
- in a traditional or non-traditional setting

Foster family qualities:

- willingness to learn
- flexibility

Call 651-430-8307 or
email ComSvsCFCLicensing@co.washington.mn.us

For more information on child foster care, visit:
www.co.washington.mn.us/childfostercarelicensing



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

CARS (Children and Restraint Systems) Training

A three hour face-to-face car seat safety training is required if caring for children under the age of eight.

This class is offered by Washington County throughout the year, but you may choose to take a class offered in another county; see our [Initial Training web page](#) for more information. *This class must be retaken every five years.* If you are a relative/kinship provider, contact your licensor for more information about a variance option. *Please register early, as class sizes are limited.*

Date/Time: **Tuesday, August 22 • 6-9 p.m.**

**Please arrive on time or you will be turned away.*

Fee/Credit: Foster care applicants are exempt from the \$30 fee unless your licensor is not from Washington County.

Location: Stillwater Government Center

Registration: [Email child care licensing](#)

FosterParentCollege (FPC) Recorded Trainings

FPC provides innovative, research-based, interactive, online courses for foster, adoptive, and kinship parents. The self-paced training is accessible 24/7. You will receive a completion certificate. Examples of training topics are:

- Autism: A Strength-Based Approach
- Escalating Behavior Unwrapped
- Trauma Informed Parenting
- Understanding Sex Trafficking

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

Location: Online, recorded webinar.

Cost: Typically \$10-40 each

Registration: [FosterParentCollege website](#)

Mandated Reporter Online Training

A self-paced learning module designed for professionals identified by law who must make a report if suspected or known child maltreatment has occurred.

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

Fee/Credit: Free

Location: Online, recorded webinar.

Registration: [MN Child Welfare Training Academy website](#)

North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) Recorded Trainings

NACAC offers recorded options for foster and adoptive parent trainings. Examples of training topics are:

- Family Matters! Maintaining Children's Connections Webinar
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders from a Trauma Lens
- Healing from Food Insecurity: Beyond the Stash
- Helping Children Heal from Trauma: What Parents and Caregivers Need to Know
- Improving Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being for LGBTQ Youth
- The Teen Years: Brain Development, Impact of Trauma on Growth and Parenting Strategies

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

Location: Online, recorded webinar.

Cost: Typically \$15 members/\$20 non-members

Registration: [NACAC Record Trainings website](#)

Understanding How the ACE's (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Impact the ABC's

Back to School Tips for Parents of Children with Trauma Histories. We have lived through unprecedented times as the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic, racial turmoil, political upheaval, and even weather crises spread across our communities. These circumstances resulted in heightened stress, anxiety, social isolation, fear, and trauma for our children resulting in higher ACES scores. What do parents and those who support them need to know about trauma and ACES and how can you provide the supports children need to thrive in the school year?

Date/Time: **Wednesday, August 23**

Location: Online webinar; *will not be recorded.*

Cost: Free

Registration: [Foster Adopt Minnesota's website](#)

Continued from How to Bond with a Child in Foster Care or Adoption on page 6

Tailor Your Actions Based on the Child in Front of You

No two children are the same, so no one path is going to lead total strangers into forming a lasting bond. Everyone has different needs, worries, joys, anxieties, histories, etc., and this needs to be taken into account by foster and adoptive parents.

And, of course, it is critical to take a child's age—and developmental age—into account. While some strategies are ideal for teenagers, they are less likely to benefit toddlers and vice versa. Consider the child's emotional, intellectual, and developmental capabilities before determining the best ways to care for them.

Have Realistic Expectations for Yourself

You are not superhuman. Everyone is human, including foster and adoptive parents. Consider your needs and how you can meet them. Self-care is critical, as it is hard to care for a child if you're not in an ideal state.

Source: Adoptalk 2019, Issue 4; Adoptalk is a benefit of [North American Council on Adoptable Children \(NACAC\) membership](#).

Written by: Matthew Kaplan.

Matthew Kaplan is the content marketing strategist at Alternative Family Services. Since 1978, the mission of AFS has been—and continues to be—to support vulnerable children and families in need of stability, safety, and well-being in communities through foster care, adoption, and mental health services. Learn more on the [Alternative Family Services website](#).

Complaint and Grievance Policy

The Minnesota Administrative Rule 2960.3080 Sub 10 and Minnesota Statute 245A.04 Sub 1(d) mandates that licensed foster homes must have a program grievance procedure that permits persons served by the program and their authorized representatives to bring a grievance. In plain language, as a foster parent, you need to have a process for the children living with you or their guardians to submit a complaint to you. The rule mandates that you tell the child and the child's parent or legal representative what the process is. *You are required to have the complaint policy available to the child or parent and provide any forms needed to make the complaint.* If a written complaint comes to you from the child or parent, you must notify your licensing worker of the complaint and your response to the complaint.

When you are licensed initially and annually, you fill out and sign the Complaint and Grievance Procedures for Foster Children policy and it should be reviewed by you yearly. The form includes the statutory requirements and allows space for you to add additional information and initial your agreement to the contents. View what the Department of Human Services (DHS) [Complaint and Grievance Procedures for Foster Care Children form](#) looks like.

The policy document also comes with a blank form that can be given to the foster child or parent to fill out and return to you. It is best practice that when a foster youth enters your home for the first time, they know about this policy. If you serve children who are unrelated to you, the complaint policy should be explained at each new placement. You will have access to this document in your Binti documents. If you need assistance getting this form, please reach out to your licensor.

County Child Foster Care Licensing Staff

Michelle McIntosh

Senior Licensor
651-430-6577
[Email Michelle](#)

Emanuelle Xiong

Licensor
651-430-4167
[Email Emanuelle](#)

Sarah Yang

Licensor
651-430-6563
[Email Sarah Y.](#)

Sarahjo Sannerud

Licensor
651-275-7768
[Email Sarahjo S.](#)

Rebecca Kimbell

Case Aide
651-430-8307
[Email Rebecca](#)

Becky Motzko

Supervisor
651-430-6476
[Email Becky](#)

Child Foster Care Licensing Email:

[Email Child Foster Care Licensing](#)

Visit our website:

[Child Foster Care Licensing website](#)