

# El Paso County **FOSTER PARENT** Resource Guide

2019





Natasha Jegede

*Recipient of Educating Children of Color Scholarship "We Can't Wait Award"*

January 2017

There is a call that needs to be answered  
Adoptive and Foster families needed  
Children and youth are helplessly left behind  
Tragically left without a childhood  
We can give them a future  
If not, the streets will be their home  
Drugs their escape  
We cannot wait to set them free  
With a new home and family  
Bring the children in  
Give them love and understanding  
We cannot wait to open our hearts and homes  
We can take them off the streets  
Comfort and love them  
Keep them from prison and poverty  
We cannot wait to support them into adulthood  
We cannot wait to bring them home



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Please keep in mind that all services for foster children need to be approved by the caseworker.



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
JULIE KROW  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 2019

I want to extend a deep appreciation for foster families and the community who support our foster families and children in many different ways. Children deserve and benefit from enduring, positive relationships with caring adults. Children in foster care require secure, stable places to call home until they can either safely reunite with their parents or establish other lifelong family relationships.

El Paso County is committed to providing family homes for children while working towards permanency with the goal of reducing group-home and facility placements. With the implementation of the Federal Families First Prevention Services Act, we have recognized a shortage of over one hundred foster homes in El Paso County. We ask that you help us recruit other foster homes that are dedicated to serving children in need. The County plans to expand treatment foster care to provide even more options for children. In addition, we want to ensure all foster homes have the supports they need to help children thrive.

The El Paso County resource guide has been developed to empower foster parents with a better understanding of our community supports.

Please remember Health First Colorado (Medicaid) is an important benefit for the foster children in your care. Like health insurance, it can be used to ensure medical and behavioral health needs are addressed. Go to [www.cchacares.com/for-members/find-a-provider](http://www.cchacares.com/for-members/find-a-provider) if you want a list of Medicaid approved providers.

An El Paso County committee continues to meet to gain new insights into programming which will enhance foster parent success in helping children on their healing journeys. We look forward to continually improving the work we do for the families we serve.

Thank you again for your hard, valuable work.

Sincerely,



Julie Krow, MA, LPC  
DHS Executive Director

## ACRONYMS & WORDS TO KNOW

**Adjudicatory hearing** - At this hearing the court, decides if the child is dependent, or neglected. The Court adjudicates the status of the child as dependent or neglected if one or more definitions of dependency or neglect apply to them.

**Best interest determination** - refers to the outcome of a process facilitated by the County Department of Human Services (DHS) to determine whether it is in a child or youth's best interest to remain in the school of origin or, alternatively, transfer to a new school.

**CASA or Court Appointed Special Advocate** - A person appointed by the judge or magistrate to help decide what is the child(ren)'s best interests. A CASA is not an attorney, but a trained volunteer who becomes knowledgeable about the needs of the child(ren). The CASA does not represent/advocate for the parent-only the child(ren). The judge makes the final decision on whether a CASA advocate is needed on a case.

**Child Placement Agency (CPA)** - a private agency that licenses foster homes for the placement of foster children and provides ongoing support and training to their licensed homes.

**County attorney** - This is the lawyer for DHS. This person prepares and files the paperwork with the court and represents DHS in court.

**Court hearing or trial** - This is when the judge or magistrate listens to the people and attorneys in a case so a decision can be made about what should happen in the case. Trials are generally about adjudication, contested custody hearings, or termination of parental rights motions.

**Diligent search** - The court and DHS has a legal obligation to search for and try to locate missing parents or family members who may be a resource to the child(ren) and family.

**Dispositional hearing** - When the judge or magistrate decides what needs to be done for the child(ren) to return home. At this hearing, a treatment plan is adopted. The goal of the treatment plan should be to keep the family together or reunite the child(ren) if they were placed out of the home.

**Family Care Meeting (FCM)** - A facilitated meeting to bring everyone together in the case to talk openly and honestly about family safety, risk and permanency planning. This includes the family's ideas for family services/treatment plan.

**GAL or Guardian Ad Litem** - The judge or magistrate assigns a lawyer called a Guardian Ad Litem to represent the best interests of all child(ren) involved in your case. Sometimes a GAL may also be appointed to represent a parent.



**Interested Party** – Any other party subject to the court’s jurisdiction for a specific reason.

**Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)** - a Federal law that governs jurisdiction over the removal of Native American (Indian) children from their families.

**Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC)** - is a contract among all 50 U.S. states providing for protection and support services for children moved between U.S. states for birth parent unification or reunification or placement with a family when the court has jurisdiction over the child.

**Permanency** – The law requires that every child have a permanent home. This law states that there is a specific amount of time in which DHS must establish a permanent home. The child may return home to the birth family. Or, a judge/ magistrate may decide that the child live with relatives or with adoptive parents. In addition, some courts have special time requirements for cases involving children under the age of six; this is called an “expedited permanency planning” (EPP) case.

**Permanency Planning Hearing** - When the judge or magistrate decides where the child(ren) will permanently live.

**Preliminary Protective Proceedings (PPP)** - At this hearing, the judge or magistrate must decide if the child should be temporarily removed from the home because the home is unsafe. The magistrate or judge can also order the child to remain home subject to emergency protection orders. This hearing must take place within 72 business hours after placement or emergency protection orders.

**Review hearing** - A hearing to check the progress of the case.

**Team Decision Making Meeting (TDM)** – a Team Decision Making Meeting (TDM) brings together the family and others who are connected with the family when there are serious safety risks to a child that could result in an out-of-home placement. A TDM is a collaborative process to develop a plan that best meets the needs of a child.

**School of origin** - the school in which a student was enrolled at the time of placement into foster care or change in placement.

**Termination of parental rights (TPR)** - This is a legally binding court decision as to whether the parent(s) will lose legal rights as a parent to the child(ren) who were named in the case. If this happens, the child(ren) can be adopted. There will be a hearing where this decision is made. Parents have the right to appeal the decision. If the parent(s) voluntarily give up their legal rights, that can result in a relinquishment order.

**Youth in Conflict** – a child between the ages of 12-18 years who runs away from home or is beyond the control of the parents in other ways.

# GENERAL

## **Be The Village**

[www.facebook.com/bethevillagecs](http://www.facebook.com/bethevillagecs)

Be The Village CS is about a community coming together to ensure that foster children and their families have the things they need including clothes, toys, baby items, etc. Join the group on Facebook to make requests.

## **Colorado State Foster Parent Association – YMCA Benefit**

[www.csfpa.org/ymca\\_benefit](http://www.csfpa.org/ymca_benefit)

CSFPA and the YMCAs of Colorado have joined to offer this exciting benefit for foster children in placement with CSFPA's members: 50% off discounts for Y membership, sports/recs programs, and day camps. See website for full details.

## **Court Care for the Pikes Peak Region**

[www.courtcare.org](http://www.courtcare.org)

(719) 452-5499

Court Care provides free child care for children whose parents or guardians have court related business. The Center is open 7:45a.m. – 12:15p.m. and 1:15p.m. – 5:00p.m. and serves children ages 6 weeks to 14 years old. Reservations are only required for services over the lunch hour. Court Care upholds strict confidentiality and the Judicial Complex is secure.

## **Colorado Judicial Branch Docket Search**

[www.courts.state.co.us/Courts/County/Choose.cfm](http://www.courts.state.co.us/Courts/County/Choose.cfm)

## **Fostering Hope**

[www.fosteringhopefoundation.org](http://www.fosteringhopefoundation.org)

(719) 634-8588

Fostering Hope's Volunteer Teams serve as an extended family for our foster families. Their friendship and assistance provides a crucial missing link - the stability, enrichment and connections that are necessary for every child to succeed. It all comes down to what children need: Stability. Enrichment. Community.

## **Life Long Links, CASA of the Pikes Peak Region**

Jillian Wiker, Dependency & Neglect Case Supervisor  
[www.casappr.org/programs/life-long-links/](http://www.casappr.org/programs/life-long-links/)

(719) 447-9898 x1053

Every time a child relocates they lose an average of 10 relationships. The Life Long Links Program conducts searches for, and interviews of, family members and other important people to ensure that foster children have continuity in relationships, information about their families, and long-term connections for the future. This is available to Dependency and Neglect cases with an assigned CASA.

**The Milton Foster Children’s Fund, CASA of the Pikes Peak Region**

Jill Cheetham, Milton Foster Children’s Fund Manager  
www.casappr.org/programs/milton-foster-childrens-fund

(719) 447-9898 x1026

The Milton Foster Children’s Fund (MFCF) provides foster children in El Paso and Teller Counties with opportunities not funded through existing agencies or programs, allowing them to be nurtured, educated and enriched just like other children, and grow into healthy, contributing adults. MFCF also has funding for summer camp opportunities for kids.

**The Resource Exchange (TRE)**

www.tre.org

(719) 380-1100

TRE is proud to offer a wide variety of supports and services for people of all ages who have intellectual or developmental disabilities.

**THERAPEUTIC SERVICES**

**AspenPointe ICARE Team**

Becky Bianco, Program Manager  
Renaë Mallett, Clinical Program Supervisor

(719) 572-6339

(719) 314-4225

ICARE is a trauma informed team of professionals created to meet the therapeutic needs of clients served by the El Paso County DHS. ICARE clinicians can serve multiple roles for the client and/or family “across the lifespan” to include mental health therapist, in-home therapist, care coordinator, and point of contact for adjunct services through AspenPointe.

**Flying Horse Ranch**

Sara Mellado, Program Director

(214) 235-4362

Mustard Seed Ranch is a charitable nonprofit organization that provides equine assisted therapy and life-experience programs to abused and neglected youth. Our mission is to help young people heal in a safe and nurturing environment, provide them the life skills to build healthy, lasting relationships and break the cycle of abuse. Services are no cost to the client.

**AGES 6 & YOUNGER**

**Community Partnership for Child Development**

www.cpcdheadstart.org

(719) 635-1536

CPCD has three core programs: Early Head Start, Head Start, and Colorado Preschool Program. CPCD offers free pre-school for ages birth to 5 years of age and comprehensive supports to children and parents/caregivers. Foster children are moved further up on the waitlist and there are supports for special needs. Availability varies from classroom to classroom and family to family. Enrollment is year round.

## AGES 6 & YOUNGER, CONTINUED

**Dolly Parton Imagination Library**  
imaginationlibrary.com

Register to receive a free monthly book for children under 5!

**KPC Respite Center**  
www.lfsc.org/prevention-services/kpc-respite-center

(719) 634-5439

KPC Respite Center offers FREE temporary crisis and planned childcare for infants and young children up to age 6 and their siblings up to age 12. There are some restrictions regarding difficult behaviors. Advanced notice is required for foster parents so proper consent can be obtained. *This service is available 24 hours a day in the event of a crisis.*

**Women, Infants & Children (WIC)**  
www.elpasocountyhealth.org/service/wic

(719) 578-3225

We provide qualifying women and children with supplemental food, education on nutrition and referrals to community programs. Those eligible include foster children under age 5.

## AGES 6-12

**Royal Family Kids Camp**  
coloradosprings.royalfamilykids.org

melissa.tenpas@dreamcenterscos.org

RFKC is a week-long camp for foster/adopted/kin-placement children ages 6-12 in El Paso County. The ratio of adults to kids is one-to-one. We spend the week encouraging, affirming, speaking identity, and giving kids a new hope for the future and a Godly plan to follow. There is a \$25 application fee; all other costs are covered. RFK also has clubs and mentors who can continue to foster trust and commitment with kids after they have attended camp.

**Big Brothers Big Sisters**  
www.biglittlecolorado.org

(719) 633-2443

We match youth between ages of 6 and 12 for one on one mentoring who receive free/reduced lunch at school, are living with a single parent or in a kinship/foster care home. Enrolled youth can stay involved with their mentor until age 18 - and longer hopefully! Programs are designed to serve youth by providing them with safe, quality mentoring relationships that help them reach their full potential. Foster/Kinship caregivers must have an established relationship with the youth and have cared for them at least 6 months before applying. Children with special needs are taken on a case by case basis.

# TEENS

## **Chafee Foster Care Independence Program**

Courtney Daugherty, Supervisor

(719) 444-5864

It's not easy living on your own for the first time. Chafee provides support to foster teens ages 14-21 and to assist them in a successful transition to independent living. Services consist of providing assistance with problem solving, support and an essential connection with another person until they can develop a support system within their community. A referral to this program must be made by the caseworker.

## **Dream Makers Project**

[dreammakersproject.org](http://dreammakersproject.org)

We make dreams happen for youth aging out of foster care. Applications are considered for help with education, career goals, independent living, talents or hobbies.

## **Foster Swell Fund**

[swellforever.com/pages/foster-swell-foster-care-grants](http://swellforever.com/pages/foster-swell-foster-care-grants)

Our goal is to help make an experience possible for a child who otherwise would not have such an opportunity. Grants are \$100 or less depending on available funds and prioritized by need expressed.

## **Inside/Out Youth Services**

[www.insideoutys.org](http://www.insideoutys.org)

(719) 328-1056

Inside/Out Youth Services is the only non-profit organization that serves lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning youth in El Paso County. We serve youth ages 13 to 22 with programs including support and discussion groups, supervised drop-in recreation center, community outings, leadership development opportunities, sexual health education, suicide prevention education, career and financial skills building, counseling referrals, and a food pantry and clothing closet.

## **Pikes Peak Workforce Center – Young Adult Services**

[www.ppwfc.org/Services/350](http://www.ppwfc.org/Services/350)

(719) 667-3700

Assists young adults with financial literacy, leadership development, post-secondary preparation, internships and job search assistance. See website for eligibility requirements.

## **Teens with Promise**

Robin Coen, Executive Director

(719) 266-0106

[www.teenswithpromise.org](http://www.teenswithpromise.org)

This shop is dedicated to providing teens with clothing, school supplies, sports equipment, medical/dental care & holiday gifts. Application & appointment are required - foster parents complete professionals application online. For immediately clothing needs, please call.

## TEENS, CONTINUED

**The Hanger**, CASA of the Pikes Peak Region  
418 S Weber - open every Saturday 1-4 PM  
[www.casappr.org/news/hanger/](http://www.casappr.org/news/hanger/)

(719) 447-9898

Foster teens are able to shop for donated clothes and accessories for free. Teens also have the opportunity to help operate the store, providing them with valuable work experience.

### **TwoCor**

[www.twocor.org/](http://www.twocor.org/)

(719) 471-6916

TwoCor is a vocational training program for youth ages 15-19. This is a comprehensive intervention that integrates direction from neuroscience research and trauma-informed therapeutic practices with hands-on vocational training and paid internships.

### **Youth Advocate Program (YAP)**

[www.yapinc.org/colorado](http://www.yapinc.org/colorado)  
Raymond Elliot, Director

(719) 394-4516

YAP provides youth ages 13 and older and their families with intensive support in their homes, school and community through our wraparound-advocacy model. Staff meet with youth and families multiple times a week. Individualized service plans and activities with each youth and family vary, but are goal driven and typically include case management, 24/7 crisis intervention services, skill development, educational and vocational work.

### **Youth Leadership & Advisory Council (YLAC)**

[anjuli@fosteringhopefoundation.org](mailto:anjuli@fosteringhopefoundation.org)

[www.fosteringhopefoundation.org/our-program/youth-leadership-advisory-board-ylac](http://www.fosteringhopefoundation.org/our-program/youth-leadership-advisory-board-ylac)

YLAC seeks to improve the well-being of all youth in foster care in El Paso County. The board is for youth ages 15–21 with previous or current experience living in the foster care system. They partner with area agencies to improve child welfare and youth corrections system; host social events for the wider youth community; give back to the community by engaging in service projects; plan and implement practice workshops for youth participation; create a supportive environment where youth can share their stories.

## TEEN PREGNANCY/PARENTING

### **Nurse Family Partnership**

[www.elpasocountyhealth.org/service/nurse-family-partnership](http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/service/nurse-family-partnership)

(719) 578-3268

Public Health nurses provide home visits that improve the health, well-being and self-sufficiency of low-income, first-time parents and their children in El Paso and Teller Counties. Home visits begin with women during pregnancy and continue until their child is 2 years old.

**First Visitor**

(719) 344-6639

[www.peakvista.org/services/additional/first-visitor](http://www.peakvista.org/services/additional/first-visitor)

First Visitor provides free, one-on-one support for moms and dads in the comfort of their own home from birth to age 3. They provide emotional support, connect parents and caregivers with free community resources and share information on health, nutrition, safety and important developmental milestones.

**Catholic Charities Life Connections & Life Support**

(719) 866-6535

[www.ccharitiescc.org/what-we-do/life-connections/](http://www.ccharitiescc.org/what-we-do/life-connections/)

We offer services to help expectant parents take a realistic look at the responsibilities of parenthood, provide information about child development and infant care, and offer a prenatal parenting education program. We can also provide a mentor who is a caring individual or couple able to listen to you and offer guidance, support and encouragement aimed at bringing out the strengths of a new parent.

**Center on Fathering**

(719) 634-7797

<http://dhs.elpasoco.com/Pages/default.aspx>

The center provides workshops and seminars on the responsibilities and challenges of being a father. “Fathering Class” teaches dads to be more actively and positively involved in their child’s development. “Conflict-Resolution for Dads” gives dads a unique, father-oriented way to deal with conflict in their lives. “Fathers as Providers” is a job readiness class with a fathering perspective.

**Colorado Springs Pregnancy Center**

(719) 591-2724

[www.csregnancycenter.com](http://www.csregnancycenter.com)

From the moment you discover you are pregnant until your child’s toddler years, the LifeSteps program offers the support and resources you need for a healthy pregnancy and confident parenting. Men and women who participate in the LifeSteps program earn free cribs, car seats, diapers, clothing and other baby necessities. The unique role of fathers are addressed specifically through our men’s services department where male staff and trained coaches meet one-on-one with fathers who are participating.

**YoungLives**

(303) 875-5351

[www.younglife.org/ForEveryKid/YoungLives/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.younglife.org/ForEveryKid/YoungLives/Pages/default.aspx)

YoungLives exists to bring hope to teen moms and pregnant teens! YoungLives Club for teen moms every 2nd Tuesday of each month for dinner, childcare, games, prizes and lots of support and encouragement! YoungLives opens the door for teen moms to attend a Young Life camp with their children in the summer. Set in beautiful surroundings and packed with adventure, young moms are given the opportunity to experience all the fun their peers do. Camp provides the opportunity and environment for these young women to open up and share their struggles, fears and thoughts about God.

## ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Adult Protective Services focuses on at-risk adults who are elderly or disabled and in danger of abuse, neglect or financial exploitation. Professional staff assesses the need for protection and directly intervene if necessary. Assistance is available in obtaining medical care, community resources, mental health referrals or living arrangements. If you suspect an adult is being abused, exploited or neglected, and you are a mandated reporter call Law Enforcement. Non-mandated reports, information and resource inquiries can be made to Adult Protective Services.

Colorado Springs Police Department  
Non-emergency Dispatch: 719-444-7000

Adult Protective Services: 719-444-5755  
E-Mail: DHS-APS@elpasoco.com  
www.coloradoaps.com

El Paso Sheriff Office  
Non-emergency Dispatch: 719-390-5555

## CLAIMING CHILDREN ON TAXES

It has been the Department's practice not to release social security numbers of foster children to foster parents. The County Attorney has advised us not to give out the social security numbers per federal social security law.

The basis for this protocol is 42 U.S.C. § 405(c) (2) (C) (viii) (I) which states:

(I) Social security account numbers and related records that are obtained or maintained by authorized persons pursuant to any provision of law enacted on or after October 1, 1990, shall be confidential, and no authorized person shall disclose any such social security account number or related record.

Foster parents may want to claim foster children in their care on their taxes and ask the caseworker for the social security number. The caseworker or foster parent may request the social security number from the biological parent to release to you. If that is not possible or the biological parent denies the request, then you or we may take the information to the court at the next hearing and request the court allow us to provide the information to the foster parent while informing the parent as well. Department staff is not allowed to release this confidential information without court approval. A guardian ad litem may also motion the court for release of this information to a foster parent.

Please contact your home supervisor if you have questions.



# CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE

El Paso County: 719-444-5700

1-844-CO-4-KIDS (1-844-264-5437)

Foster parents, among others, are required to report child abuse or neglect. All calls are confidential and will be routed to the county where a child resides. The hotline phone is staffed 24/7.

**If it is an emergency or you are witnessing a child in a life-threatening situation, call 911 immediately.**

In order to document that you have fulfilled your responsibility as a mandatory reporter, you must give your name or keep a record of your referral number. Reporting parties will receive a Trails referral number at the end of the call. 48 hours after making the report, reporting parties can call back to ask if the report has been assigned or not for investigation.

## **When should I call the Child Abuse Hotline?**

Mandatory reporters are legally required to immediately report any suspected child abuse and/or neglect to child protective services.

## **What information should I include in my report?**

The Hotline screening staff who answer your call will ask you for as much information as you can provide about the suspected abuse or maltreatment and the family about which you are calling. Even if you have very little information available, please report it. Please include as much information as possible:

- Child's name, current home address, age or date of birth and school they attend
- Name and address of the parent or person legally responsible who caused the injury or created the risk of harm to the child
- Nature of the abuse or neglectful environment
- Location of the abuse or neglect
- How long has this been occurring? Have things stayed about the same, become worse, or improved?
- Concerns regarding the interactions between the caretakers

## EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

A US law passed in December 2015 that governs the United States K-12 public educational policy. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires thoughtful decisions around education and promotes educational stability for each school age child/youth in out of home placement. Caseworkers are required to discuss whether it is in a child or youth's best interest to remain in the school of origin (where the child was enrolled at the time of placement or placement change) or transfer to a new school. The school district will provide information to the discussion: attendance record, IEP or behavioral plan, school concerns, history of school changes, etc.

The best interest determination must be made prior to school change. Transportation obligations begin on the day a student is placed out-of-home. It is presumed to be in a student's best interest to remain in the school of origin. Caseworkers will facilitate arranging transportation.

Short term transportation resources:

1. Caregiver (mileage reimbursement)
2. Third-Party Private Provider (i.e. zTrip: door to door service and consistent driver approved to transport children)
3. Human Services or School District Staff

Ongoing transportation resources:

1. School district Route
2. Drop-off to meet school district route
3. Caregiver (mileage reimbursement)
4. Third-Party Private Provider (zTrip or city bus)
5. Human Services or School District Staff

Please be in communication with your caseworker on your specific case and needs.

## FOSTER FAMILY SERVICES

The Department wants to support the wellbeing of our foster families throughout the process of fostering. Foster families are doing incredibly hard, good work. You give your hearts and lives to children who have been through trauma and you are entering into that trauma with them in order to build relationships and nurture healing.

Please reach out to your home supervisor if your family is in need of services to maintain the stability of a foster child placement or to assist your family in recovering from the grief and loss of a foster child.

# HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

## **Pell Grant**

[studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/grants-scholarships/pell](http://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/grants-scholarships/pell)

Federal Pell Grants are awarded through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The maximum Pell Grant for 2018-2019 is \$6,095 but can change based on funding. Youth who have been in the foster care system after age 13 years old do not have to put guardian/parent income information.

## **Education Training Voucher (ETV)**

[www.fc2sprograms.org/colorado/](http://www.fc2sprograms.org/colorado/)

Students may receive up to \$5,000 a year for qualified school related expenses. Funding is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis to eligible foster/former foster students:

- Currently in out-of-home care, 15 up to 18 years of age, and who have been in out-of-home care a minimum of six months; OR
  - Age 16 to 21 who meets requirements for Adoption Assistance and entered Adoption Assistance on or after age 16; OR
  - Age 18 to 21 who was in out-of-home care on your 18th birthday
- See website for full eligibility requirements*

## **Foster Care to Success Scholarships**

[www.fc2success.org/our-programs/information-for-students/](http://www.fc2success.org/our-programs/information-for-students/)

Students may receive \$2,500-\$5,000 based on a combination of need and merit. Eligibility Requirements: Have been in foster care for the 12 consecutive months leading up to and including their 18th birthday; OR have been adopted or placed into legal guardianship after their 16th birthday; OR have been orphaned for at least one year at the time of their 18th birthday and not subsequently adopted. *See website for full eligibility requirements.*

## **Helen M. McLoraine Scholarship for Foster Care & Emancipating Youth**

[denverfoundation.academicworks.com/opportunities/262](http://denverfoundation.academicworks.com/opportunities/262)

Scholarships for individuals who have been in the Colorado foster care system for a minimum of 24 months between the ages of 13 and 18 who are planning to attend or are attending a career or technical school, community college, or four-year institution. This program is for youth in the Colorado foster care system or youth that have emancipated. Scholars may receive funding for up to four years.

## **BOUNDLESS OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP**

[www.danielsfund.org/Scholarships/Opportunity/Index.asp](http://www.danielsfund.org/Scholarships/Opportunity/Index.asp)

Individual annual scholarship awards range from \$500 to \$5,000.

# PRUDENT PARENTING

## Federal Law

In September 2014, Congress passed the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act. Among many other things, the Act aims to increase the opportunities for children placed outside their homes to participate in age and developmentally appropriate

- extracurricular activities,
- enrichment activities,
- cultural, and
- social activities

by implementing a REASONABLE AND PRUDENT PARENT STANDARD for decisions made by caregivers as to these activities.

The REASONABLE AND PRUDENT PARENT STANDARD is the careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the child's emotional and developmental growth that caregivers must use when determining whether to allow a child in their care to participate in age and developmentally appropriate

- extracurricular activities,
- enrichment activities,
- cultural, and
- social activities.

The federal law defines AGE OR DEVELOPMENTALLY- APPROPRIATE as:

- activities generally accepted as suitable for children of the same age or maturity level that are developmentally appropriate for a child, based on the cognitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral capacities typical for an age or group, and
- in the case of a specific child, activities suitable for him/her based on his/her developmental stages with respect to his/her cognitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral capacities.

## Colorado Department of Human Services Regulations

In 2016, the Colorado Department of Human Services passed a number of regulations regarding the reasonable and prudent parent standards. One regulation explains that activities must:

- maintain the health, safety, and best interests of the child;
- encourage the child's emotional growth;
- be age or developmentally appropriate; and
- be appropriate for the caretaker to approve.

# PRUDENT PARENTING FAQ

## **1. What is the Prudent Parenting Standard?**

The ability for the caregiver to consent to activities that will allow the child or youth to have experiences that positively impact their social, cognitive and emotional development. The counties must allow for the caregiver to make decisions for children/youth that give them the ability to participate in the life of the community including cultural, social, enrichment and extra-curricular activities.

## **2. What is the consent form?**

Parents are given a form to sign where they must specify any activities that they will not agree to allow the child to undertake.

## **3. What are the activities to which I might consent on my own?**

Any activity, not excluded by the parent on the consent form. Activities that are not inherently risky.

## **4. What are examples of inherently risky activities?**

Skydiving, water sports, hunting, rock climbing, use of a bow and arrow or any activity that is illegal such as the personal use of fireworks, including sparklers. Any other activity that could be construed to be risky.

## **5. What else do I need to do to meet the prudent parenting standard requirements?**

Take the web based training offered by the Colorado Child Welfare Training System.

## **6. How do I access the Colorado Child Welfare web based training?**

The website is: [www.coloradocwts.com](http://www.coloradocwts.com)

## **7. What else do I need to know before making decisions regarding a child/youth's activities?**

You must take reasonable steps to obtain or determine adequate information about the child or youth, including the youth's particular religious, cultural, social, or behavioral attributes and preferences. The behavioral and or/mental health stability of the child or youth; the age or developmental appropriateness of the activity and whether the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm involved in the activity is at an acceptable level.

## RECRUITING FOSTER FAMILIES

**Current foster parents are the most effective recruiters of new foster families.**

Fostering can be the most rewarding and most challenging work someone will ever do. Current foster parents can speak honestly about their own experiences and the realities of foster parenting.

Colorado is looking to recruit more than 1,000 new foster families to make up for a statewide shortage. Kids are incredibly resilient. Even when they've experienced toxic stress, like child abuse or neglect, they can overcome and reach their full potential with help from the community.

El Paso County Department of Human Services contracts with several Child Placement Agencies that provide placement for foster care, group home care, treatment or adoption for county children. If you are interested in becoming a foster parent in El Paso County, please contact one agencies listed on our website:

**<http://dhs.elpasoco.com/Pages/default.aspx>  
Click on Foster Care**

## WALK IN MY SHOES EVENTS

El Paso County DHS is hosting quarterly events where caseworkers and foster parents can come together for relationship building and foster collaboration. A different topic is presented at each event and training hours are provided. Child care is available upon request.

**Please contact Jenni Swogger for information on the next event:**

JenniSwogger@elpasoco.com  
719-444-5515

# QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

Step 1. Any time you need information, have a question, or have a problem, please talk with **your home supervisor, caseworker and/or their supervisor.** They will help you find the answers.

Step 2. If you have talked with a caseworker and a supervisor and you want more attention given to a difficult problem or concern, there are other people at DHS who can work to assist you. Follow the chain of management by contacting the appropriate program manager and then director/deputy. The **Children, Youth and Family Services Management** personnel listed are below.

## **Child Welfare Director**

Jill Calvert, MA  
(719) 444-8137  
jillcalvert@elpasoco.com

## **Children, Youth and Family Services Program Managers**

Intake - Krystal Grint, MSW  
(719) 444-5760  
krystalgrint@elpasoco.com

Ongoing - Jill Bradley, LCSW  
(719) 444-5770  
jillbradley@elpasoco.com

Intake - Patsy Hoover, MSW  
(719) 444-5749  
patsyhoover@elpasoco.com

Ongoing - Lorrie Montoya, BSW  
(719) 444-5602  
lorriemontoya@elpasoco.com

## **Youth and Family Services**

Adolescent Services Manager - Shelly Serna, BSW  
(719) 444-5703  
shellyserna@elpasoco.com

Assistant Manager - Steffani Baker, BS  
(719) 444-5900  
steffanibaker@elpasoco.com

## **Initial Contact and Support Services**

Support and Services Administrator  
Dr. Matthew P. Caywood, LPC  
(719) 444-5485  
matthewcaywood@elpasoco.com

Data and Finance Program Manager  
Erik Weitzel, MBA  
(719) 444-5481  
erikweitzel@elpasoco.com

Children, Youth and Family Services Manager  
Amber Biss, BSW  
(719) 444-5414  
amberbiss@elpasoco.com

Initial Contact Manager  
Brooke Bjorneberg, MA  
(719) 444-5601  
brookebjorneberg@elpasoco.com

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*Note: This resource guide was put together for foster children living in foster homes.  
Additional community resources can be found by calling 2-1-1 or visit  
[www.ppunitedway.org/211.html](http://www.ppunitedway.org/211.html)*