

May 14, 2021

DC CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY

FOSTERING CONNECTIONS

A monthly newsletter for CFSA's resource
parents in the District of Columbia



GOVERNMENT OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR



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Feature Stories

With Sincere Gratitude to Our Resource Parents

Today, Mayor Muriel Bowser announced my retirement as Director of the DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) at the end of June. I wanted to take this time to thank you for all you do for our children and for what you have taught me over the years.

Twenty years ago, I joined this agency with a passion for helping kids and families—but with little knowledge of how the District's child welfare system could accomplish that. One of the first things I learned was that CFSA is the child welfare *agency*, not the child welfare *system*. Another was that our resource parents are among the most important partners in the system. It may not always feel like it, but over the last two decades, your contributions have driven many changes at CFSA.

For those of you who were here in 2001, you may recall the very spirited evening meetings on the 5th floor at 400 6th Street SW where we would discuss the fundamental concerns of resource parents—trust, respect, and communication. Those discussions drove the establishment of the agency Ombudsman, led to resource parents serving on



numerous work groups that develop new programs and update policies, and initiated a FAPAC contract to convene meetings and conduct outreach to improve communication. Our town hall gatherings and meetings with resource parents who sit on the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) have been instrumental in many important policy and practice changes, including revising the youth allowance policy, improving the placement passport, on-demand daycare, and crisis support services. Those outcomes and many others demonstrate that the voices of our resource parents have been heard in multiple ways.

Many of these improvements took way too long and some are still a work in progress, but the point is that these changes were driven by you, our resource parents, and they have helped to make our system better for children and families.

It is with humility and appreciation that I say farewell to you all as I end my final chapter at CFSA. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Brenda Donald

National Foster Care Month

This month we thank you—CFSA's unwavering resource parents—for helping provide DC families for DC kids. This year, you stood by the children in your care, kept them safe and healthy, honored their humanity, and supported reunification or permanency. We know it's been challenging, and we are grateful beyond words for your partnership. **Check out our National Foster Care Month (NFCM) festivities in the Upcoming Events section.** We hope you can join us!

Congratulations to the **2021 DC Foster Parent of the Year, Valencia Harvey!** Ms. Harvey went above and beyond to maintain her young person's sense of community despite the pandemic, leading to increased family stabilization. Please click the image below to watch her story.



Mental Health Resources for Children in Care

The Office of Well Being has launched CFSA's in-house mental health clinic to meet the needs of children and families in care. Services include initial screenings, evaluations, individual and family therapy, and crisis support.

The clinic serves children ages 5 and up, new entries, reentries, children currently in care, and biological parents. Clients who are receiving mental health services in the community will continue to do so; while new and reentry clients are facilitated directly through the mental health clinic.

Resource parents can request therapy services for children in their care by submitting the [CFSA Mental Health Services Referral form](#) to CFSA.Therapy@dc.gov and informing their social worker of the request. For more information, email Tiffany Williams, Clinical Supervisor, at Tiffany.Williams4@dc.gov or call 202-415-4631.

Mental Health Month Resources



National Nurses Week

Throughout the global health pandemic, healthcare professionals around the world have demonstrated leadership and courage while supporting and caring for their communities. This past week, CFSA recognized National Nurses Week (May 6 – 12), and we want to extend that gratitude to all resource parents who work in nursing.

Providing a safe, temporary home for children in care takes hard work and dedication. We are especially thankful for the resource parents who maintained that commitment while also providing critical medical services through their job.

**Thank you,
nurses!**



News You Can Use

Last Day to Register for the DPR Summer Hiring Fair

The DC Department of Parks and Recreation is hosting a Summer Hiring Fair on Wednesday, May 19, with positions available for older youth. Encourage any young people in your household to register by today. To learn more about the event and available openings visit dpr.dc.gov/page/dpr-summer-employment. Register at dpr.events.

Tax Tips: File by May 17

The IRS has extended the deadline for individual filing and payment to May 17, 2021. Payments from CFSA are excluded from income and should not be reported on a tax return. Resource parents may claim a foster child if they pass certain eligibility tests. Additionally, parents may deduct expenses that are unreimbursed, out-of-pocket costs to care for the foster child. Review this [FAQ Sheet](#) for more information.

Celebrate the Class of 2021 Safely and in Style

Explore these [35 graduation ideas for the class of 2021](#)! Put out a yard sign, make a commemorative video, build a photo wreath, or collect words of wisdom—the possibilities are endless. Remember to keep any in-person gatherings safe and in accordance with [DC Health guidance](#).

Walk-Up COVID Vaccine Sites

On May 1, the District transitioned to the use of 11 high-capacity, walk-up, no-appointment-needed vaccination sites. (Walk-up sites are for first doses. When you receive your first dose, you will still make an appointment to get your second dose.) To learn more, visit coronavirus.dc.gov/vaccinatedc or email VaccinateDC@dc.gov.

Bread for the City is also hosting walk-up COVID vaccinations in Northwest and Southeast DC for District residents beginning May 17. [Click here](#) for more information.

Free Books for Children Ages 0 - 5

The Books from Birth program is open to all children under the age of five who live in Washington, D.C. Program participants receive a free book each month from birth until they turn five. Registering your child is easy: [click here](#) to get started. If you have any questions or any technical issues filling out the application, contact BooksFromBirth@dc.gov.

DC Public Library and DPR Learning Hubs

To support continued learning during the public health emergency, Mayor Muriel Bowser has launched Learning Hubs for DC students with support from DPR and DCPL. Kids can enjoy safe, structured learning environments at select DPR locations. Registration is free and includes access to the internet and devices. Learning Hubs serve Kindergarten through 5th graders, ages 6 to 12. For more information visit dpr.dc.gov/page/dpr-learning-hubs.

Activities for All Ages

- [Smithsonian Museum Re-openings](#) | ongoing | multiple locations | free
- [The DMV Teen Trail — Opportunities for 'Tweens & Teens](#) | multiple activities
- [Pick Your Own Produce at Local Farms](#) | multiple activities
- [Jurassic Encounter](#) | May 14 – 31 | Centreville, VA | \$49 per car
- [Day Out with Thomas the Tank Engine](#) | May 14 – 16, 2 – 23 | \$26
- [Movie at the Drive-In](#) | multiple dates | Alexandria, VA | \$40 per car

Seeking My Forever Family

Meet Anthony

Anthony is an energetic and inquisitive 10-year-old who enjoys football, wrestling, basketball, and video games. Anthony is a healthy child with a creative imagination and a funny sense of humor.

Anthony likes having contact with his two brothers, although he is “legally free” and does not have any viable family members to care for him. Anthony would thrive in a home where he is the youngest or only child.

If you can see welcoming Anthony into your forever family, email Social Worker Brian.Carr@dc.gov.



Here to Help

REACH Support Hotline for After-Hours Help

Don't forget about the REACH Support Line! Should a challenging situation occur after regular business hours, please call 833-443-3775 for assistance. View the [REACH Support Line flyer](#) for more information.

REACH Support Line (RSL)

(833) 443-3775

theSource Newsletter

In case you missed it, check out [theSource](#), the Child Welfare Training Academy's newsletter for resource parents. Each issue provides class updates, special offerings, and information you need to get the most out of CWTA's training opportunities. Email CWTA.Training@dc.gov with ideas for training or topics.



Weekly DBH Parent Support Group

The DC Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) [Wellness Wednesday parent support group](#) provides DC parents, including CFSA resource parents, with a space to connect, care for themselves, and help foster resiliency in the children in their care. Join via [Webex](#) Wednesdays from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. and use password WW20.



How to Find CFSA Policy Information

CFSA POLICY PRESS

Resource parents can visit the [CFSA Online Policy Manual](#) to access official policies, administrative issuances, and business processes. If you're unable to find the information you need, conduct an internet search using a search engine platform like Google; always include "CFSA" before your key search words. Contact CFSA.Policies@dc.gov for additional support.

Upcoming Events

Event	Date	Time	Location	Description
Fireside Chat at the Rainbow Families Annual Conference	Sat, 5/22	11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Virtual, RSVP required (link below)	Know an LGBTQ-identifying family interested in fostering? Invite them to this informal opportunity to hear about becoming a resource parent in the District of Columbia. This presentation will be hosted as part of the Rainbow Families Annual Conference for LGBTQ families and parents. Registration required.
NFCM: Family Game Night	Wed, 5/26	5:30 – 7:30 p.m.	Virtual, RSVP required (link below)	Join for games, fun, and good cheer! Don't miss this opportunity to meet fellow resource families from CFSA and the National Center for Children and Families. This is a family affair, so grab the kids and put on your game faces. Registration required.
Resource Parent Information Session	Thu, 5/27	6 – 7 p.m.	Virtual, RSVP required (link below)	Know someone interested in becoming a resource parent? Invite them to an upcoming information session. Attendees will get an overview of the process, hear licensing qualifications, and engage with a youth in care or resource parent. Registration required.
NFCM: Virtual Socially DistANCING Party	Thu, 6/3	6 – 7:30 p.m.	Virtual, RSVP required (link below)	Grab your family, join the party via your computer, phone, or smart TV, and dance like it's 1999. Bust a move and enjoy the musical talents of DJ Proof. See you on the dance floor! Registration required.
Fellowship & Feedback	Thu, 6/3	7:30 – 8:30 p.m.	Webex (link below), or Dial in: 202-860-2110 (access code: 160 294 1648)	Gather in community with other resource parents and hear from CFSA leadership. This month we'll highlight services for older youth. Have a question you would like to discuss? Submit questions ahead of time to ReachCFSA@dc.gov .

Upcoming Event Links

- Fireside Chat at the Rainbow Families Annual Conference: [Registration link](#)
- Family Game Night: [Registration link](#)
- Resource Parent Information Sessions: [Registration link](#)
- Virtual Socially DistANCING Party: [Registration link](#)
- Fellowship & Feedback: [Webex access link](#), (password: children1234)

Have feedback, a tip, or a story?

We want to hear from you! Please send all inquiries, suggestions, or story ideas to

cfsa.opi@dc.gov.

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