



Trauma Informed Care & Why it Matters

**Medically
Specialized**
Children in Foster Care
Need You





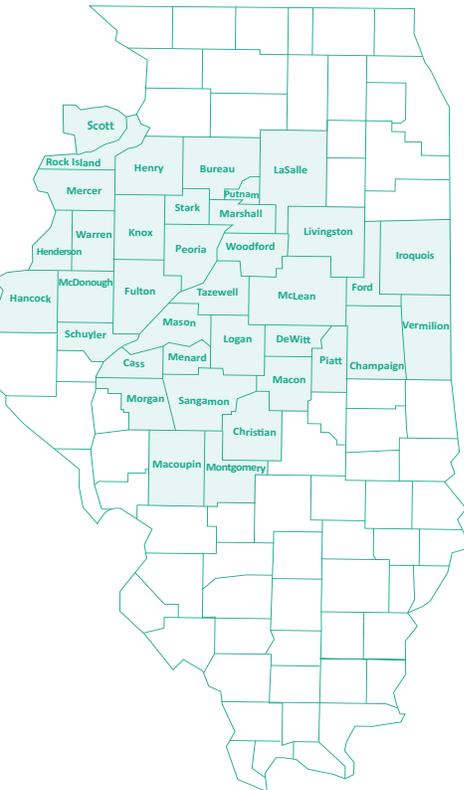
**THE CENTER FOR
YOUTH & FAMILY
SOLUTIONS**
cysolutions.org

Our Mission:

The Center for Youth and Family Solutions engages and serves children and families in need with dignity, compassion, and respect by building upon individual and community strengths to resolve life challenges together.

Our Values:

- Collaboration and partnership
- Excellence
- Dedication to achieving solutions
- Treating everybody with dignity and respect



Agency Happenings.....

CYFS Adoption Leadership Leading the Way in Streamlining State Processes for Adoption Finalization

Congratulations to our Adoption Program Leaders, Mary Kay Collins and Allison Sparrow, who were asked to participate in a statewide joint LEAN Management Team last year. This group made important recommendations for changes to Illinois' procedures and practice that will significantly shorten the length of time in foster care for children waiting for adoption finalization. The Director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services praised the work of this team and implemented statewide reform on May 1, 2018. When these changes were piloted, they effectively reduced the amount of time a child waited for a forever home by 73 percent. That's 408 fewer days to become part of a forever family! Congratulations to the entire LEAN Management Team for coming up with solutions that bring joy to children and youth so much faster!

Youth Services Program Brings New Service Delivery Approach with ARC Framework

Over the last year our Youth Services staff received training on an exciting trauma-focused intervention model known as the Attachment, Regulation, and Competency (ARC) framework. Many of the youth we work with have experienced varying levels of trauma, and research shows that trauma changes a person's reaction to the world around them. Helping caregivers to view a child's behavior through the lens of trauma can help them understand and assist with creative ways of managing the behaviors that present in traumatized children. The hope is to equip each member of the household with the skills necessary to process - in a way that will encourage a harmonious home environment. Staff are already receiving favorable response from both youth and caregivers alike.



Meet Simon, CYFS First Pet Therapy Dog (in Training)

We are excited to announce that one of our behavioral counseling supervisors in our Quad Cities office, Christian Myers, LCPC, NCC, will soon be enrolling this little guy in training to become a pet therapy dog! Research consistently shows us that animal-assisted therapy, as directed by a health professional can help people improve their physical, social, emotional, or cognitive function.

Follow us as we document Simon and Christian's journey in AKC obedience class, preparing for the AKC Good Canine Citizens test and of course then off to pet therapy training for both Christian as well as Simon through our Facebook page.

Thank You Tracy Family Foundation!

CYFS would like to offer many thanks to the Tracy Family Foundation for a significant grant that helps support and strengthen our dedicated workforce. The grant will help fund advanced training on trauma-informed intervention as well as new employee recruitment with a particular focus on diversity. Both initiatives will help us continue to serve children and families in need with dignity, compassion and respect as they respond to and cope with traumatic experiences.



“I truly enjoy spending time with Elliot, and I feel lucky that I was chosen to be his mentor. He is a very special boy, and seeing the world through his perspective is both interesting and rewarding.”

-Ms. Dee

CYFS Mentor/Volunteer

Consider sharing your gifts as a CYFS volunteer.

www.cyfsolutions.org/services/volunteer/

NEW ENGLAND



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Children In Medically Complex Foster Care Need Your HELD



“She has the most beautiful spirit; it is a true privilege to care for her,” says foster parent Dawn Mossman of her foster child, “Jordyn.” Jordyn has been with the Mossmans since just 38 days old. Born with a large portion of her brain missing, Jordyn’s brain has filled with pockets of fluid as it grew. Additionally, she is completely blind in her left eye and has limited eye sight in her right. Jordyn is one of the forty-eight children, ranging from newborns to teenagers, supported by our Medically Complex Foster Care program. Children in this program have been diagnosed with a medical condition that requires intensive, ongoing medical assistance. Our foster caregivers receive individualized and specific training for each child placed in their care and have access to support from our lead nurse, Jennifer Cunningham, who ensures the children are receiving the best medical care possible.

“These children struggle with conditions like cancer, brain malformations or injuries and genetic anomalies, which may be the result of birth complications, genetic dispositions, or physical abuse (for example, ‘shaken baby’), neglect, or poor living conditions,” stated Cunningham. She adds that not every child has extreme disabilities, and some have average or high intelligence but suffer from muscle failures or other physical ailments.

Our Care is a Team Approach.

Our foster parents who care for children with special medical needs receive not only support from our full time nurse, but also receive guidance from their family workers who help keep track of doctor visits, insurance, and public aid funding; help navigate complicated systems, and advocate as needed for the specific medical equipment each child needs to thrive.

The Need Is Great.

An estimated 426,000 children are in foster care in the United States; half of those children experience chronic medical problems and unmet health care needs. American Academy of Pediatrics

Many of the children in the medically complex foster care program require specific equipment and supplies, such as specialized car seats, bed lifts, or wheelchairs. And while these can be provided through a child’s medical card, there is often a lengthy wait initially and it is difficult to get equipment replaced. It is heartbreaking to see a child or foster parent struggle for any length of time without the equipment they need.



Nurse Jen



Dawn & Jordyn



Tiffany Beschorner



Jordyn's Braces



CYFS Medical Supplies Wish List for Care & Share

- Spare replacement g-tubes
- Washable g-tube dressings
- G-tube backpacks
- Incontinence pads
- Waterproof mattress covers
- Tumble form seat- small, medium, large each with floor sitter wedge
- Squiggles positioning system
- Pediatric sling for hooyer lift
- Wheelchair ramps
- Threshold ramps
- Medical strollers
- Bath chairs
- Specialized Car Seats -that can be reclined in forward facing position

That is why our Medically Complex Foster Care Coordinator, Tiffany Beschorner, started Care&Share, an equipment exchange program where foster families have immediate access to medical supplies and equipment while they are waiting for approval from the state. “These kids deserve their prescribed equipment immediately and we don’t want to see our families have to wait”, says Beschorner.

Medically Complex Foster Parents are the True Wellness Champions.

Dawn and her husband take Jordyn’s care extremely seriously. Whether that means working slowly everyday on muscle development, using small lights to train her eyes, or listening to Jordyn’s favorite music - Johnny Cash and MC Hammer. Dawn takes everyday as a blessing. Jordyn is now twenty months old and currently uses small braces called ankle foot orthotics, or AFO’s. They are meant to hold her ankle in a flexed position to stretch her heel so one day she may be able to walk flat footed. She’s likely to need a wheelchair when she gets a little older and additionally a custom car seat, a ramp, and a patient lift. But for Dawn, Jordyn’s personality and contagious smile make it worth it. “We consider her a miracle...and I would absolutely take another child who requires medical specialized care. They’re so receptive and they have such beautiful souls. She’s a part of our family.”

If you are interested in becoming a foster parent for a child with medically complex needs or a Wellness Champion by donating to our Care&Share program, or if you would just like more information , please contact our Program Coordinator, Tiffany Beschorner at tbeschorner@cyfsolutions.org or Jen Cunningham at jcunningham@cyfsolutions.org.



Enhances Trauma INFORMED Training

We often hear the phrase, “Children are resilient; they won’t even remember what happened.” A more realistic statement comes from childhood trauma expert and psychiatrist Dr. Bruce Perry who argues, “Children are not resilient. Children are malleable.” Dr. Perry continues by explaining that, “it is an ultimate irony that at the time when the human is most vulnerable to the effects of trauma- during infancy and childhood- that we generally presume the most resilience.” At CYFS, we understand how traumatic events can leave lasting effects. That is why we have for many years taken a trauma-informed approach in our service delivery. In recent months, we have extended our training to all staff including those that do not work directly with clients.



occurrence, like the death of a child, or as an ongoing situation such as years of sexual abuse.” While trauma and de-escalation training have been a part of CYFS for quite some time, this past spring Brown and Hirschman did some training specifically for our front desk and clerical support team, who are often the first voice and person our clients encounter. One of the key points of the training is the evidence of the profound impact trauma has, which includes comparison of brain scans of a healthy brain and a traumatized brain.

“When you understand who we serve, you serve better.”

-Sue Hirschman

Child Welfare Training Specialist Lori Brown and Volunteer and Intern Coordinator Sue Hirschman led the CYFS conversation and training. Says Lori Brown, “our goal is that every staff person, regardless of their role at the agency, has a solid foundational understanding of what trauma is, how it impacts others, and what our response should be.” Brown continues by saying, “When you think about trauma, it can come in words, actions, or past events and can happen in a onetime



By recognizing the realness of the effects of trauma, we can better develop a common language that helps us interact with those we serve through a trauma informed lens. “When you understand who we serve, you serve better,” says Hirschman. Brown adds, “And there are specific techniques in how we listen and respond that are proven to be calming and more effective.”

Hirschman summarizes, “It’s important at CYFS that all employees are trained in using a trauma informed approach, because our mission is the same, and we want each and every encounter for all we serve to be done with the utmost dignity, compassion, and respect.”

This past April, our fifth annual Blues for a Cause benefit concert yet again did not disappoint! For those that joined us, we want to express our heartfelt thanks for supporting our agency! We couldn't put on such an incredible show without the generous support of our sponsors!

A big thank you to the following:

Lenny The Lawyer • Digital Copy Systems • John Graham & Associates,
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Thank you to everyone who donated to our Just Like Me project-which helps kids who have experienced trauma be able to enjoy their childhood and just be kids! With your support, we have been able to provide the following special opportunities to kids this summer:

**Bicycles | Swim Passes | Dance Class | Guitar Lessons
Little League | Karate | Six Flags**

Didn't get a chance to donate to this cause? There still is time!

To make a contribution to our Just Like Me project visit:
<https://www.cyfsolutions.org/services/donation/>



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**Be the person
she comes
home to.**

CYFS has immediate needs for foster parents of older teens who often have emotional challenges due to past experiences of abuse or neglect. More than anything, these teens simply want a place to call home and they desperately need the love, safety and support that you could provide.

Join us in being part of the solution.

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