

HOW CAN I CARE FOR MY RELATIVE WHILE HE OR SHE IS IN FOSTER CARE?

Caring for children in foster care can be done in one of two main ways - on a temporary basis and via a permanent home.

TEMPORARY

If relatives are found either through the notification process or through another way, they may be able to care for the child or at least stay involved in the child's life.

Relatives who should receive notice letters (i.e. grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings ages 21 and over) can possibly care for the child. And other relatives like first cousins, nephews and nieces, great-grandparents, and great-great aunts and uncles may also be able to stay involved with the child.

If DCFS or the judge determines it is in the best interest of the child to live with the relative, then DCFS will discuss with the relative the options of becoming a provisional foster home or gaining temporary custody.

PERMANENT

Every child needs a permanent home. If it is not safe to return the child home to his or her parents, then there are several ways you may be able to provide a permanent home for your relative.

If the judge determines living with a relative is in the child's best interest, and parents' rights have been terminated, then you can pursue adoption.

The judge also could grant legal guardianship. This is a legal and permanent connection for the child, though not as permanent as adoption. DCFS will conduct an annual review of the family's and child's circumstances and an annual report to the court must be filed.

If the judge grants an adoption, no further services or periodic reviews are required. The case will be closed.