

EL PASO COUNTY

Foster, Kin
& Kin-Like
Providers

RESOURCE GUIDE
2020



Department of Human Services

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 children in placement need to be approved by the caseworker.

EL PASO



COUNTY

COMMISSIONERS
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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
JULIE KROW
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 1, 2020

I want to extend a deep appreciation for foster and kinship families and the community who support them and the children they serve in many ways. Children deserve and benefit from enduring, positive relationships with caring adults. Children placed out of their homes 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 with the goal of reducing group-home and facility placements. The County wants to encourage more families to become treatment foster care providers to provide even more options for children. In addition, we want to ensure all foster and kinship homes have the supports they need to help children thrive.

The El Paso County Provider Resource Guide has been developed to empower foster and kinship providers 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 mental health needs are addressed. Go to 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 and kinship provider 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 (BID) - 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 when placement occurs.

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 Engagement Meeting (FEM) - 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 and possible placement/placement changes.

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.

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.

Regional Accountable Entity (RAE) - They coordinate care for Health First Colorado Members (Colorado’s Medicaid program), ensuring they are connecting with primary and behavioral health care, and developing regional strategies.

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

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

Shelter Hearings (formerly a Permanency Planning Hearing) - When the judge or magistrate decides where the child(ren) will permanently live.

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 youth involved in a conflict which results in the high likelihood of suffering substantial harm and/or injury to the child/youth, family and/or community.

GENERAL

CarePortal

careportal.org

dhscareportal@elpasoco.com

Connects the needs of children and families to community members to fulfill. No limit per family or amount. Allow 7-10 days, some requests may be filled sooner. Please e-mail requests.

Closet Cooperative

www.facebook.com/ClosetCooperative

closetcooperative@gmail.com

Gently used clothing and baby items. Diapers and wipes available at times.

Colorado State Foster Parent Association - YMCA Benefit

www.csfpa.org/ymca_benefit

The YMCAs of Colorado offer CSFPA's members 50% off discounts for Y membership, sports/recs programs, and day camps. See website for full details.

Colorado Springs Conservatory

Emily Nelson

719-577-4556

coloradospringsconservatory.org

enelson@csconservatory.org

Award winning music and arts programming for ages birth through 18. Instrumental, Recording Arts, Vocal studies along with a complete theater program are just a sample of the offerings. Custom programming, scholarships or discounted tuition available on an individual basis. Preliminary tour and interview required to best serve children and families.

Court Care for the Pikes Peak Region

www.courtcare.org

(719) 452-5499

Free child care for court related business. Open 7:45a.m. – 12:15p.m. and 1:15p.m. – 5:00p.m. Serve children ages 6 weeks to 14 years old. Reservations 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

Foster Family Assist

fosterfamilyassist.com

khfosterfamilyassist@gmail.com

Supports providers in an area of need, i.e. house cleaning, babysitting, meals & coaching.

Fostering Hope

www.fosteringhopefoundation.org

(719) 634-8588

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

Foster Source

fostersource.org

info@fostersource.org

Provides training for providers in a wide array of topics. Able to help with some material needs. Partnership with Mattress Firm to purchase mattresses at cost.

Foster Swell Fund

swellforever.com/pages/foster-swell-foster-care-grants

Our goal is to help make an experience possible and fulfill needs for children placed out of home. Grants are \$100 or less depending on funds and prioritized by need expressed.

Foster Together

www.fostertogether.co

connect@fostertogether.co

Connects providers to foster “neighbors” who offer meals and neighborly support.

Meghan’s Wish

www.meghanswish.org

meghans_wish@yahoo.com

Supplies each child (ages 0-18) with a twenty-four hour emergency tote bag of gently used clothing, toiletries, toys, books, and a card of encouragement.

One Simple Wish

www.onesimplewish.org

Offers grants up to \$500 for anyone who has experienced foster care.

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

Jill Cheetham, Milton Foster Children’s Fund Manager

(719) 447-9898 x1026

www.casappr.org/programs/milton-foster-childrens-fund

Provides children placed in El Paso and Teller Counties with opportunities not funded through existing agencies or programs, allowing them to be nurtured, educated and enriched. MFCCF also has funding for summer camp opportunities.

The Adoption Exchange

Darby Baldwin, Southern Region

303-755-4756 x 213

www.adoptex.org

We provide expertise and support before, during, and after the adoption process.

Specialized Trainings: Statewide web-based and classroom instruction on specialized topics related to permanency, trauma, behavioral challenges, attachment, and more.

TBRI® Training: Trust Based Relational Intervention® is an evidence-based parenting and intervention model. Training focuses on understanding the meaning of child behaviors, the brain chemistry and how to help these children (and your family) heal and connect.

In-Home Coaching & Professional Consultation: After having completed TBRI®, we can offer in-home coaching and professional consultation.

Sensory Lending Library: supports parents by giving time-limited access to sensory items for their children to try the tools, prior to financially investing in the item at home.

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.

AGES 6 & YOUNGER

Colorado Shines

www.coloradoshines.com

(844) 447-4441

Colorado Department of Human Services program to connect families with quality child care.

Community Partnership for Child Development

www.cpcdheadstart.org

(719) 635-1536

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, parents/caregivers. Children in placement are moved further up on the waitlist and there are supports for special needs. Availability varies. Enrollment is year round.

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, kin or kin-like parents so proper consent can be obtained. *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. Children with Medicaid under age 5 are eligible.

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

One-on-one mentoring for youth between ages of 6 and 12 who receive free/reduced lunch at school, are living with a single parent or in a foster, kin or kin-like 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, kin or kin-like 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.

POST-PERMANENCY

Flying Horse Foundation

Rachel Britton, LMFT, Equine Assisted Learning Manager
www.flyinghorsefoundation.org

(303) 660-3583

Provides equine assisted learning. Our mission is to help young people heal in a safe and nurturing environment, provide them the life skills (e.g. building relationships, emotional regulation, communication skills, etc) to build healthy, lasting relationships and break the cycle of abuse. Services are no cost to the client. Located north of Monument/Black Forest.

The Adoption Exchange

Darby Baldwin, Southern Region
www.adoptex.org

303-755-4756 x 213

Post-Permanency Services and Support: Families being served through this program include biological families who have reunified with their children and no longer have an open case with the Department of Human Services, kinship families who have guardianship of the children in their care and finalized adoptive families.

Our services include providing

- TBRI® training
- Personalized coaching
- Implementation and connection groups: child care and dinner provided
- TBRI®- trained respite care for families in specified counties
- Specialized trainings (classroom and webinar formats)
- Resource coordination
- A searchable, statewide resource database

For more post-adoption resources, you can also contact the adoption unit at EPCDHS by contacting:

Annjosiah Mace
(719) 444-5979
adoption@elpasoco.com

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

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.

Inside/Out Youth Services

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

(719) 667-3700

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

Reach Pikes Peak

www.reachpikespeak.org/

(719) 358-8396

Transitions to Independence (TIP) is a goal setting program utilizing intensive one-on-one case management to assist people to attain higher education and job skills: education assistance, job coaching, transportation, uniform assistance, testing costs, and many other services that remove the barriers that participants face as they work to increase their education level and job skills.

The Individual Development Account (IDA) is a matched saving program for low income people who are employed and have a household income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. Participants who save up to \$1,000 will be matched with \$4,000, for a total of \$5,000. They can use these funds for post-secondary education, to start or expand a small business, or to purchase a first home.

Teens with Promise

Robin Coen, Executive Director
www.teenswithpromise.org

(719) 266-0106

Dedicated to providing teens with clothing, school supplies, sports equipment, medical/dental care & holiday gifts. Application & appointment are required - foster, kin and kin-like parents complete professionals application online. For immediate needs, please call.

The Hanger, CASA of the Pikes Peak Region

418 S Weber - open every Saturday 1-4 PM
www.casappr.org/news/hanger/

(719) 447-9898

Teens in placement can shop for donated clothes & accessories for free. Teens also have the opportunity to help operate the store, providing them with valuable work experience.

TwoCor

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
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.

TEEN PREGNANCY/PARENTING

Catholic Charities Life Connections & Life Support

(719) 866-6535

www.ccharitiescc.org/what-we-do/life-connections/

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 able to listen, 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>

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 father-oriented way to deal with conflict. "Fathers as Providers" is a job readiness class with a fathering perspective.

Colorado Springs Pregnancy Center

(719) 591-2724

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.

First Visitor

(719) 344-6639

www.peakvista.org/services/additional/first-visitor

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

Nurse Family Partnership

(719) 578-3268

www.elpasocountyhealth.org/service/nurse-family-partnership

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.

YoungLives

(303) 875-5351

www.younglife.org/ForEveryKid/YoungLives/Pages/default.aspx

YoungLives exists to bring hope to teen moms and pregnant teens! YoungLives Club once a month provides dinner, childcare, games, prizes and lots of support and encouragement! Opportunities for teen moms to attend a Young Life camp with their children in the summer. Camp provides the opportunity and environment for these young women to open up and share their struggles, fears and thoughts about God.

HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

Pell Grant

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. Parent/guardian income information not required for youth placed in the foster care after age 13 years old nor for youth currently in court-ordered legal guardianship.

Education Training Voucher (ETV)

www.fc2sprograms.org/colorado/

Students may receive up to \$5,000 a year for 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

Foster Care to Success Scholarships

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.*

Fostering Great Ideas, College Fellows Program

fji4kids.org/referrals

Assist current and former foster youth with finding necessary financial support to attend college.

Helen M. McLoraine Scholarship for Foster Care & Emancipating Youth

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

<https://www.danielsfund.org/scholarships/boundless/overview>

Awards range from \$500 to \$5,000. One or more of the following required: GED recipient, former foster care youth, and/or former juvenile justice youth.

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 or kinship worker if you have questions.

CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE

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.

FAMILY SERVICES

The Department wants to support the wellbeing of the families who care for children throughout their system involvement. You 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 or kinship worker if your family is in need of services to maintain the stability of a child placement or to assist your family in recovering from the grief and loss of a child placement.

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. Additionally, El Paso County directly licenses specialized homes for adolescents. If you are interested in becoming a foster parent in El Paso County, please contact us or one agencies listed on our website:

www.elpasoco.com/fostercare

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, ATV riding 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

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.

Walk In *My Shoes*

**FOSTER PARENTS
KINSHIP PROVIDERS
CASEWORKERS**

El Paso County DHS hosts quarterly events where caseworkers, foster, kin and kin-like parents can come together for relationship building and collaboration. A different topic is presented at each event and training hours are provided.

2018-2019 teaching topics:

- CASA
- Community Resources
- Differential Response
- Every Student Succeeds Act
- The Family First Prevention Services Act
- Family Visitation

2010 teaching topics:

- Provider Services
- Services for Foster Children/Youth
- Future topics TBD

Events held at Rocky Mountain Calvary Chapel.
Child care and dinner for kids is available upon request.

**For more information or if you have a topic
you would like covered, please contact:**

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
(719) 444-8137
jillcalvert@elpasoco.com

CYFS Practice Administrator

Catania Jones
(719) 444-5655
cataniajones@elpasoco.com

Children, Youth and Family Services Program Managers

Intake - April Jenkins
(719) 444-5796
apriljenkins@elpasoco.com

Ongoing - Jill Bradley
(719) 444-5770
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Intake - Christi Newbill
(719) 444-5692
christinanebill@elpasoco.com

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

Assistant Manager - Jenni Swogger
Kinship and Foster Care Programs
(719) 444-5515
jenniswogger@elpasoco.com

Youth and Family Services

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

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

Initial Contact and Support Services

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

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

Initial Contact Manager
Brooke Bjorneberg
(719) 444-5601
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