

If the court grants you custody:

You don't need a foster care license.

You control most decisions made about the child (except those ordered by the court).

If you can no longer care for the child, you must ask the court to change the order.

You are responsible for carrying out any reunification plan. A DCF social worker may be involved.

You are responsible for carrying out the plan for contact between the child and his or her parents (e.g., transporting the child to visits and getting needed supports such as child care).

You may be eligible for child-only public assistance (*Reach Up* in Vermont). If the child is on *Reach Up*, he or she is eligible for Medicaid. Any public benefits you receive for yourself (e.g., *ReachUp*, *3SquaresVT*, Fuel Assistance), may be affected.

You may receive child support. However, if the child is on public assistance, most or all of the child support you get will go to the State.

If the judge awards you permanent guardianship or you adopt the child, you will not be eligible for ongoing financial support through DCF and the child may no longer be eligible for public assistance.

The child can stay in his or her current school until the disposition hearing. If you live in another town, you will be responsible for transportation and the child will likely have to change schools.

If DCF places the child with you:

You need a foster care license.

DCF controls many of the decisions.

DCF may remove the child from your care if there are concerns about the child's well-being.

A DCF social worker is assigned to help you and the child's parents carry out the plan for the child.

DCF will help you carry out the plan for family contact (e.g., reimbursing your mileage costs, helping you get needed supports, and paying for services such as child care).

You will receive a foster care payment for each child placed with you, and each child is eligible for Medicaid. Any public benefits you receive for yourself (e.g., *ReachUp*, *3SquaresVT*, Fuel Assistance), may be affected.

Any child support you get will go to DCF to offset the cost of the child's care.

If the judge awards you permanent guardianship or you adopt the child, you may be eligible for ongoing financial support through DCF, including Medicaid for the child.

The child can stay in his/her current school if it is in the child's best interest. DCF is responsible for transportation costs if the child attends school in a town other than where you live.



A Child You Care About is in DCF Custody

Information for Relatives & Friends



Family Services Division

Please let us know if you need an accommodation because of a disability or an interpreter because of limited English.

A Family Court judge has placed a child you know in the temporary custody of the Department for Children and Families (DCF) because of concerns about his or her safety and well-being. The judge will soon be making other decisions about the child's future, including whether he or she can safely return home to the parent(s) — at this time.

If that's not possible, the judge will consider granting temporary custody to someone else—in the following order:

1. A non-custodial parent;
2. A close relative;
3. Another relative or person known to the child (e.g., friend, teacher).

There are two possible ways to care for a child you know:

1. The judge may grant you temporary custody of the child; or
2. The judge may continue custody with DCF and you can apply to become a licensed foster parent.

Being issued a foster care license for a specific child does not automatically ensure the placement of that child with you.

If you want to be considered for temporary custody:

1. Act quickly.

Let the court and DCF know that you want to be considered for temporary custody. After the parents, relatives are the preferred choice for custody, but only during the first 90 days. *We need to hear from you within a few days!*

2. Cooperate with DCF.

The Family Services Division of DCF will assess your ability to safely care for the child and provide information to the court about:

- Your relationship with the child.
- Your relationship with the parents, including your ability to work towards reunifying the child with the parents (if that's the plan).
- How safe and secure the child will be in your care and whether you can keep the child safe from the parents if necessary.
- Whether you are willing to provide a permanent home for the child if it becomes necessary.

If you don't live in Vermont, DCF will ask an agency in your state to evaluate your home (a *homestudy*). This takes at least 60 days.

3. Complete the attached form.

Section A of the attached form gives DCF permission to conduct background checks on all members of your household age 16 and older. This includes checking:

- The Vermont Child Protection Registry to see if anyone has been substantiated for abusing or neglecting a child.
- The Vermont Crime Information Center to see if anyone has a criminal record, in Vermont or another state.

SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE

You are being asked to make a life-changing decision, quickly. You need to consider several factors, including your relationship with the child, safety concerns, your financial situation, your health and stamina, and the impact on your future plans.

Vermont Kin as Parents (VKAP) can help! Call (802) 338-4725, email kinlmg@comcast.net, or ask the child's worker to have VKAP contact you.

OTHER WAYS TO HELP

If you cannot be a placement option for the child, ask us about other ways you can help.

Form for Relatives and Friends:

Information about a Child in Temporary DCF Custody

Child's Name: _____

Your Name & Relation to Child: _____

Your Mailing Address: _____

Your Home Phone Number: _____

A. Authorization To Conduct Background Checks.

If you want to be considered for temporary custody of the child, please provide information for all household members age 16 and older. Print clearly. Use an extra sheet of paper if necessary.

By signing below, you are authorizing DCF to conduct background checks including, but not limited to, the Vermont Child Protection Registry, the Vermont Crime Information Center, and DCF records.

Information About You

Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial	Date Of Birth	Place Of Birth
Any Maiden & Previous Names	Social Security Number	Signature
Towns & States Where You Previously Lived Or Worked		

Information About Other Household Members

Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial	Date Of Birth	Place Of Birth
Any Maiden & Previous Names	Social Security Number	Signature
Towns & States Where Previously Lived Or Worked		

Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial	Date Of Birth	Place Of Birth
Any Maiden & Previous Names	Social Security Number	Signature
Towns & States Where Previously Lived Or Worked		

Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial	Date Of Birth	Place Of Birth
Any Maiden & Previous Names	Social Security Number	Signature
Towns & States Where Previously Lived Or Worked		

IMPORTANT: Be sure to complete the other side of this form.

B. Others Who May Be Able To Temporarily Care For The Child.

If you are unable to temporarily care for the child, please provide information about any relatives or family friends who may be able to do so. Use extra paper if necessary.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____
Relationship to child: _____
How well known to child: _____

Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____
Relationship to child: _____
How well known to child: _____

Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____
Relationship to child: _____
How well known to child: _____

Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____
Relationship to child: _____
How well known to child: _____

For DCF Use Only:

Type Of Check	Date Checked	Initials	Result
VCIC			
Child Protection Registry			
DCF Records			
Other			