

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 the child's 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 custodial parent(s) — at this time. If that's not possible, the judge will consider granting temporary custody to someone else. This could include:

- ▶ A non-custodial parent
- ▶ A relative
- ▶ Another person known to the child

There are two ways you could care for the child:

1. The judge grants you temporary custody of the child.
2. The judge continues custody with DCF and you become licensed to foster the child. *Getting a foster care license does not, however, guarantee that the child will be placed 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.

2. Cooperate with DCF.

Our Family Services Division will assess your ability to safely care for the child and then provide this information to the court.

We will look at:

- ▶ Your relationship with the child
- ▶ Your relationship with the parents
- ▶ Your ability to work towards reunification if that's the plan
- ▶ Your ability to keep the child safe
- ▶ Whether you're 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 (called a *homestudy*). This takes at least 60 days.

3. Complete the attached form.

Section A of the form gives DCF permission to conduct background checks on all household members 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
- ▶ Vermont Crime Information Center to see if anyone has a criminal record (in any state)

Making the Decision

You are being asked to make a decision quickly. Be sure to consider:

- ▶ Your relationship with the child
- ▶ Your finances, health and stamina
- ▶ Any safety concerns
- ▶ How this decision could impact your future plans

If you can't be a placement option, ask about other ways you could help.

Vermont Kin as Parents can help!

Call (802) 871-5104 or go to <http://vermontkinasparents.org> and complete their online form.

If the court grants you custody:

You don't need a foster care license.

You control most of the 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 plan for reunification. A 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).

The child may be eligible for a Child-Only Reach Up Grant, which would also make the child eligible for Medicaid. *Any public benefits you get for yourself may be affected.*

You may get child support; however, if the child is on public assistance, most or all support paid will go to the State.

If the judge awards you permanent guardianship or you adopt the child, you may be eligible for ongoing financial support (e.g., Reach Up or Adoption Assistance) through DCF.

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

If DCF places the child with you:

You do need a foster care license.

DCF controls many of the decisions made.

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

A DCF social worker will 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'll get a foster care payment for each child placed with you and each child is eligible for Medicaid. *Any public benefits you get for yourself may be affected.*

Any child support paid will go to the State 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 (e.g., Guardianship Assistance or Adoption Assistance) through DCF.

The child will stay in their current school unless it is not in their best interest. DCF is responsible for transportation costs if the child attends school in another town.



A Child You Care About Is In DCF Custody

Information for Relatives & Friends



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

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.*

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
Child Protection Registry			
DCF Records			
VCIC			
Other			