



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES**

900 East College Way, Suite 200 • Mount Vernon, WA • 98273

Fax: (360) 429-2988

Dear Relative,

I work for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) in Washington State. We are required by law to find and contact relatives when a child has been removed from the custody of their parents or legal guardian.

The parents of the child(ren) listed above are:

To protect the child, we ask that you keep all the information in this letter private.

DCYF recognizes the importance of relationships between children and their family. We want to involve relatives when looking at the needs of children in our care. We ask family members to participate in the planning and care of a child whenever possible. Some of the options you have under state law include:

- Helping to determine where and who the child lives with
- Sharing family history and identifying other relatives
- Celebrating holidays and other special events
- Keeping in touch through calls, cards, or visits

You do not have to participate in the case, but if you are interested, we have attached information about relative placement and other ways of offering support. There is also a form for you to share information about yourself or other relatives who want to be involved. Please note that you may lose the right to help plan and find a home for the child if you do not respond promptly.

Sincerely,  
Relative Search Specialist  
Department of Children, Youth, and Families



## Questions You May Have

Q1: How did you get my information and how do I know this letter is real?

A1: A Relative Search Specialist can give you more details. Please reach out to the Relative Search Specialist listed in your letter or visit our website at: <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/foster-parenting/kinship-caregivers/relative-search>

Q2: I don't know if I'm related to this child who needs foster care. What should I do?

A2: Washington State contacts all relatives within three degrees of relationship. This means siblings, aunts, uncles, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cousins, grandparents, great aunts and uncles, great grandparents, and great-great grandparents. This may be why you don't recognize the names on the letter. Please call the Relative Search Specialist. They can help you figure out how you are related.

Q3: I want to help determine where the child will live and who will care for them. What do I need to do?

A3: These are the requirements to ensure that the child is in a safe home:

- Everyone living in the home, aged 16 and older, must pass a national background check.
- A caseworker will visit the home to make sure it is safe and will be a healthy place for the child to live.
- A Home Study will be completed to check each caregiver's ability to meet the needs of the child.

Q4: Someone in my home has a criminal record. Can I still help?

A4: We look at things like how long ago the arrest happened and what the person's life is like now. We also look at other factors that could impact the child's safety.

Q5: I live in another state. Can I still provide a home for the child?

A5: Yes! There is a process to check if you can be a caregiver. The child's assigned case worker can explain the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, which addresses this.

Q6: What help is available if I take in the child to live with me?

A6: Support is available for relatives who are approved to have a child in their care. More details are at: <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/foster-parenting/kinship-caregivers>

- Relatives can become licensed foster parents, but this is not required. Licensed foster parents receive foster care reimbursement, which can be more than other financial aid available if you don't have a license.
- Relatives who choose not to become licensed foster parents can apply for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) to access financial support and benefits.
- A licensed relative who later becomes permanent placement through a guardianship may be eligible for a subsidy through WA's Relative Guardianship Assistance Program (R-GAP).

Q8: Is immigration or citizenship status shared with federal agencies?

A8: DCYF's Relative Search Unit does not collect, retain or provide citizenship and immigration status information to federal agencies.

Q9: Can you help me if I don't speak or write English?

A9: Yes! DCYF staff have access to interpreters and translation services. You can call or email us in your preferred language or submit a response form in your preferred language by going here: <https://dcyf.wa.gov/services/foster-parenting/kinship-caregivers/relative-search>