**Section 302.20 Definitions**

"Adoption assistance" or "adoption subsidy" means financial assistance from the Department that is provided to the adoptive parents after the finalization of an adoption.

"Adoption placement" means a living arrangement with a family that is directed toward establishing that family as the child's new legal parents. To be considered an adoptive placement the child must be placed in a licensed foster family home or a license-exempt relative home and either:

be legally free (parental rights have been terminated or both parents have surrendered their parental rights); or

be placed in a legal risk adoptive placement that has passed legal screening as described in 89 Ill. Adm. Code 309 (Adoption Services for Children for Whom the Department of Children and Family Services is Legally Responsible).

"Biological father" means a man who was not married to the mother when the child was born and who has acknowledged his paternity in open court, or who has signed a statement acknowledging paternity, or who is legally presumed to be the father because he married the child's mother after the child's birth and his name appears on the child's official record of birth, or whose paternity is adjudicated in court. When paternity has been established in the above manner, the relatives of the biological father as well as those of the mother may be considered for the placement of the related children.

"Children for whom the Department is legally responsible" means children for whom the Department has temporary protective custody, custody or guardianship via court order, or children whose parents have signed an adoptive surrender or voluntary placement agreement with the Department.

*"Child welfare services" means public social services* that *are directed toward the accomplishment of the following purposes:*

*protecting and promoting the* *health, safety and* *welfare of* all *children, including* *homeless, dependent, or neglected children;*

preventing, *remedying, or assisting in the solution of problems* that *may result in, the neglect, abuse, exploitation, or delinquency of children;*

*preventing the unnecessary separation of children from their families by identifying family problems, assisting families in resolving their problems, and preventing breakup of the family where the prevention of child removal is desirable and possible* *when the child can be cared for at home without endangering the child's health and safety*;

*restoring to their families children who have been removed, by the provision of services to the child and the families* *when the child can be cared for at home without endangering the child's health and safety*;

*placing children in suitable adoptive homes, in cases where restoration to the biological family is not* *safe,* *possible or appropriate;*

*assuring* *safe and* *adequate care of children away from their homes, in cases where the child cannot be returned home or cannot be placed for adoption*. *At the time of placement, the Department shall consider concurrent planning so that permanency may occur at the earliest opportunity. Consideration should be given so that if reunification fails or is delayed, the placement made is the best available placement to provide permanency for the child*;

providing supportive services and living maintenance that contributes to the physical, emotional and social well-being of children for whom the Department is legally responsible who are pregnant and unmarried;

providing shelter and independent living services for homeless youth; and

*placing and maintaining children in facilities that provide separate living quarters for children under the age of 18 and for children 18 years of age and older, unless a child 18 years of age is in the last year of high school education or vocational training, in an approved individual or group treatment program, in a licensed shelter facility, or* in a *secure child care facility. The Department is not required to place or maintain children:*

*who are in a foster home; or*

*who are persons with a developmental disability, as defined in the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code* [405 ILCS 5]; *or*

*who are female children who are pregnant, pregnant and parenting or parenting; or*

*who are siblings*;

*in facilities that provide separate living quarters for children 18 years of age and older and for children under 18 years of age.* [20 ILCS 505/5]

These services include but are not limited to: counseling, advocacy, protective and family maintenance day care, homemaker, emergency caretaker, family planning, adoption, placement, child protection, and information and referral.

"Custodial Caregiver" means an individual with whom a child resides who is directly responsible for the day-to-day care of the child ensuring the child's safety and well-being.

"Department" means the Department of Children and Family Services.

"Family" means one or more adults and children, related by blood, marriage, civil union, or adoption and residing in the same household.

*"Fictive kin" means any individual, unrelated by birth or marriage, who:*

*is shown to have significant and close personal or emotional ties with the child or the child's family prior to the child's placement with the individual; or*

*is the current foster parent of a child in the custody or guardianship of the Department pursuant to the Child and Family Services Act and the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, if the child has been placed in the home for at least one year and has established a significant and family-like relationship with the foster parent, and the foster parent has been identified by the Department as the child's permanent connection.* [20 ILCS 505/7(b)]

"Godparent" is a person who sponsors a child at baptism or one in whom the parents have entrusted a special duty that includes assisting in raising the child if the parent cannot raise the child. If the person is considered to be the child's godparent, in order for placement to occur, the same placement selection criteria as contained in 89 Ill. Adm. Code 301.60 (Placement Selection Criteria) must be met. If the godparent is not a licensed foster parent, all the conditions currently in effect for placement with relatives in 89 Ill. Adm. Code 301.80 (Relative Home Placement) must be met.

"Level of care" means one of the following types of substitute care that would be appropriate for the child, if placed in foster care: regular foster care, intensive foster care, or specialized foster care.

"Minimum parenting standards" means that a parent or other person responsible for the child's welfare sees that the child is adequately fed, clothed appropriately for the weather conditions, provided with adequate shelter, protected from physical, mental and emotional harm, and provided with necessary medical care and education as required by law.

"Parents" means the child's legal parents whose rights have not been terminated. Biological fathers are considered legal parents when paternity has been established as required by the definition in this Section.

"Permanency goal" means the desired outcome of intervention and service that is determined to be consistent with the health, safety, well-being, and best interests of the child. A permanent legal status is usually a component of the permanency goal.

"Permanent connection" means a family-like relationship, consistent with a child's best interests, health, safety and well-being, that provides:

safe, stable and committed parenting;

unconditional love and lifelong support; and

a permanent legal status between child and family.

For a child for whom the Department is legally responsible, a permanent connection may be the child's parents or another caregiver in the child's home of origin. When the child cannot be safely returned home, a permanent connection may be the current or former foster parent or relative caregiver, an individual identified as an adoptive or legal guardianship placement resource, or another individual from among the child's or family's lifelong connections with whom a child has developed a familial relationship.

"Permanent legal status" means a legally binding relationship between a child and a family as established by birth or a court of law.

"Pre-existing condition" means, for purposes of adoption assistance and subsidized guardianship, a disabling physical, emotional or mental health condition that the child had prior to the finalization of the adoption or transfer of guardianship. Such condition must be documented by a duly licensed or credentialed professional.

"Private guardianship" means an individual person appointed by the court to assume the responsibilities of the guardianship of the person as defined in Section 1-3 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 [705 ILCS 405/1-3] or Article XI of the Probate Act of 1975 [755 ILCS 5].

*"Relative",* for purposes of placement of children for whom the Department is legally responsible, *means any person, 21 years of age or over, other than the parent, who:*

*is currently related to the child in any of the following ways by blood or adoption: grandparent, sibling, great-grandparent, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, first cousin,* first cousin once removed (children of one's first cousin to oneself), *second cousin* (children of first cousins are second cousins to each other), *godparent* (as defined in this Section), *great-uncle, or great-aunt*; *or*

*is the spouse,* or party to a civil union, *of such relative; or*

*is the child's step-father, step-mother, step-grandfather, step-grandmother or adult step-brother or step-sister*;or

is the partner, or adult child of a partner, in a civil union with the child's mother or father; or

is a fictive kin as defined in this Section.

*Relative also includes a person related in any of the foregoing ways to a sibling of a child, even though the person is not related to the child,* when *the child and its sibling are placed together with that person. For children who have been in the guardianship of the Department, have been adopted, and are subsequently returned to the temporary custody or guardianship of the Department, a "relative" may also include any person who would have qualified as a relative under this definition prior to the adoption, but only if the Department determines that it would be in the best interests of the child to consider this person a relative.*  [20 ILCS 505/7(b)]

"Service constellation" means a variety of services provided to a child and his/her family.

"Service plan" means a written plan on a form prescribed by the Department in the plan toward the permanency goal for the children.

"Siblings" means children who have at least one parent in common. Children continue to be considered siblings after parental rights are terminated or after one or more of the children are adopted or placed in private guardianship, if they were in the custody or guardianship of the Department pursuant to Article II of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 immediately prior to the private adoption or guardianship. Step-siblings may be considered "siblings" when the children enter into substitute care together, have a positive relationship and share at least one parent in common.

"Subsidized Guardianship Program" means a program of the Department that offers a financial subsidy to relative care or licensed foster home caregivers who are willing to assume private guardianship of children who are eligible for the program. The Subsidized Guardianship Program is further defined in Section 302.405 (Subsidized Guardianship) and Section 302.410 (Subsidized Guardianship (KinGap)).

"Voluntary placement agreement" means a time-limited written request and consent from a parent, guardian or legal custodian of a child for placement of the child out of the home. When signed by designated Department staff, the Department agrees to provide child welfare services that include placement.

(Source: Amended at 42 Ill. Reg. 2169, effective January 17, 2018)