

Who should I expect to hear from?

In the center of the graphic we have the family unit – both the Resource Family and child and his/her birth family. In the circles around the center are the various systems that you will be involved with as a Resource Parent.

7. Community Resources:

The final circle is community resources, which refers to all those activities in the community that the child will encounter independent of system involvement such as a faith community, cultural events, clubs, sports, arts, scouts, etc.

1. DCS/DDD: The first circle involves the Department of Child Safety (DCS) and Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). DCS is the agency that is responsible for managing investigations and the ongoing support work to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child. DCS is the child's legal guardian. DDD works with families and children who have or are at risk for developmental or cognitive impairments by coordinating support services for this population of children as well as managing applications for Social Security and Arizona Long Term Care Services (ALTCS).

2. Legal System: The second circle is the Legal System. This includes court hearings presided by a judge or commissioner, lawyers for birth parents and lawyers for children who advocate the wishes of their clients. Some children are assigned a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) who is to advocate for the child's best interests. Some children are also appointed a Court Appointed Special Advocate, or CASA. A CASA is a volunteer independent of the state system that advocates and speaks up for the best interests of the child in court. The Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) meets every 6 months to review a case. The board members are volunteers and report directly to the court.

6. Behavioral Health System: The next circle is the Behavioral Health System, which covers counseling or therapeutic needs your child may have. It includes counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, therapeutic facilities, psychotropic medications, and additional support services used to address behavioral and mental health concerns. Each district in the state has a Regional Behavioral Health Authority (RBHA) that oversees services in that area. The RBHA then contracts services out with various agencies. You can contact DCS to determine the RBHA in your area. Child and Family Teams (CFTs) are also a part of this system. A CFT meeting is a child and family centered meeting of all significant parties involved in a child's case to discuss the progress and therapeutic needs of the child.

3. Licensing Agency: The third circle is your licensing agency. A licensing agency is the organization responsible for your initial home study assessment and training and for providing that information to the state. The licensing agency is also responsible for seeing that you and your home follow licensing rules and court adoption requirements, as well as supporting you as a resource family and advocating on your behalf.

5. Education System: The fifth circle is the education system which involves the child's school, teachers, transportation to and from school, and any resources needed by the child such as special education, Individualized Education Plan (IEP), tutors, etc.

4. Medical System: The fourth circle is the medical system. This includes the medical insurance for children in foster care such as the Comprehensive Medical and Dental Plan (CMDP) or the previously mentioned ALTCS, as well as the child's physicians and dentists. For adoptive parents this also may include Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) and adoption subsidy.

