

Our General Procedures

- In adoption cases and high conflict cases, where parents are unable to reach agreement after mediation and other efforts have been exhausted, DAFSS is court appointed to complete a home-based social investigation.
- The court order is submitted to DAFSS by the courts and DAFSS schedules appointments within two (2) weeks of receiving the court order.
- DAFSS social investigations include a walk-through of the home, observations of parent-child interactions, and interviews with all residents, including children, as appropriate. In adoption cases, a telephone intake and additional home visits may be required.
- DAFSS caseworkers may request information concerning counseling, psychiatric, medical, school and police reports, court orders, petitions, orders of protection or other considerations.
- DAFSS social investigations may also include background checks of all household residents, if ordered by the courts.
- DAFSS submits a written report to the court that includes recommendations for advancing the best interests of the child.
- Although DAFSS caseworkers are mandated reporters, DAFSS does not physically remove children from homes, nor does it investigate allegations of abuse or neglect.

Other Resources

Online Case Search (*information*)
<http://www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org/CourtCaseSearch/>

Illinois Legal Aid Online (*information*)
<https://www.illinoislegalaid.org/>

Cook County Children's Advocacy Rooms (*childcare*)
<http://www.cookcountycourt.org/HOME/ChildCareintheCourthouse.aspx>

Cook County Department of Animal and Rabies Control
(*low cost pet vaccination*)
<https://www.cookcountyil.gov/agency/animal-and-rabies-control-0>

Illinois Department of Children & Family Services
(*child protection*)
<https://www2.illinois.gov/dcfs/safekids/reporting/pages/index.aspx>



Department of Adoption and Family Supportive Services

Serving Cook County Families Since 1912

If you suspect that a child has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed by abuse or neglect, call the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline:

(800) 25-ABUSE
(800) 252-2873 or TTY (800) 358-5117



Contact us!

(312) 603-0551

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday
(except holidays)

www.cookcountyil.gov/FamilyServices

**If you believe a child is in immediate
danger of harm, call 911.**

Mission Statement

The Department of Adoption and Family Supportive Services (DAFSS) is court appointed to provide professional home-based social investigations that courts rely on in making critical decisions affecting the safety and well-being of children involved in adoption, probate, dissolution of marriage and parentage proceedings.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are social investigations ordered?

- To address questions about household residents and the appropriateness of the home.
- To give parties experiencing high parental conflict the chance to identify co-parenting challenges and express their plan for resolution; and,
- To aid judges with decision-making and recommend support services as needed.

How will I be notified of the social investigation?

DAFSS will contact you upon receiving the Court Order.

When will the social investigation take place?

DAFSS social investigations are generally conducted during regular business hours on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

How long does the social investigation last?

DAFSS social investigations usually last one (1) hour, but may take longer.

What if I don't want to participate?

When a party fails to comply, the Judge is notified. It is helpful to share any extenuating circumstances.

Does my child have to participate in the social investigation?

Yes, the child must be present, unless you inform us that there is a current order of protection, or the child has not seen the parent for more than three (3) months preceding the date of the court order appointing DAFSS to conduct a social investigation.

Who is responsible for transporting my child between the homes during the social investigation?

Parties are responsible for working out a transportation plan.

Will I receive a copy of the report of investigation?

If a party is represented by counsel, a copy of the report will be sent to the attorney. A copy may also be sent to parties, upon request.

Are DAFSS services available in other languages?

Yes, we currently provide services in English, Spanish and Polish. If you require other language assistance, please let us know!

In adoption cases, will DAFSS interview the birth parents?

DAFSS may interview the birth parents as well as the prospective adoptive parents, to obtain background information in support of adoptions, when possible.

Will DAFSS disclose information about my adoption?

DAFSS will respond to individual requests for information, to the extent allowed by law.

Does DAFSS charge for its services?

Charges may be assessed, depending on ability to pay. DAFSS accepts payments online at <https://paymentsolutions.lexisnexis.com/pc/il/co/cook/revenue/familyservices>

Does DAFSS have a limited service area?

DAFSS serves families located within the geographic boundaries of Cook County, including the City of Chicago.

Applicable Law

Under Illinois law, every child has a right to physical, mental, emotional, and financial support from their parents; and, the parent-child relationship, including support obligations, extends equally to every child and every parent.

- *Illinois Marriage and Dissolution of Marriage Act, 750 ILCS 5/101, et seq.*
- *Illinois Parentage Act, 750 ILCS 46/101, et seq.*
- *Illinois Adoption Act, 750 ILCS 50/0.01, et seq.*
- *Illinois Probate Act 755 ILCS 5/11-1 et seq.*

