



Eric J. Holcomb, Governor  
Eric Miller, Director

*"Children will live in safe, healthy and supportive families and communities."*

If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, call the Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline at 800-800-5556.

## **DCS, community partners support families and children in care during the holidays**

**INDIANAPOLIS (Dec. 18, 2024)** – Local DCS offices and organizations from across the state have partnered to make the holiday season brighter for children in foster care this year, ensuring that thousands of children receive at least one gift from DCS and its community partners. Click [here](#) to view all event pictures.

"Children in care need love and support year-round, but especially during the holidays," said DCS Director Eric Miller, MPA, MBA. "Ensuring children feel safe and loved makes all the difference, and our partners and staff go out of their way to help families during this time."

Every December, the Indianapolis Colts and [Hands of Hope](#) team up to ensure children in Marion County foster care receive gifts. Gifts are donated by the families of Colts players and staff and members of participating churches. This year, more than 850 Hoosier children will benefit from the effort.

"The holiday season can be challenging for many people, but especially for families who have opened their homes to kids in foster care," said Kristin Ballard, an advocate for children in foster care and wife of Colts general manager Chris Ballard. "That's why we're so humbled and honored to work with Hands of Hope, the State of Indiana and other amazing community partners to help bring holiday hope, cheer and joy to these wonderful kids and their foster families."

Suzy Roth, executive director of Hands of Hope, said she is grateful for the Colts and their partnership with Hope Gifts, which has benefited children for seven years.

"It's a blessing knowing together we can come alongside foster and kinship families, bringing a smile to kids' faces this holiday season," she said.

Children in other counties are benefiting from similar generosity. In Monroe County, Bloomington Transit and other community partners hosted their annual

[Stuff-A-Bus event](#), where a large city bus travels to local stores to pick up toys, clothes and other gifts for Monroe County children with DCS cases. More than 250 Monroe County children will receive multiple gifts from the event.

The Lake County DCS office makes the holidays special by partnering with the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Geminus, Girl Coalition and many other local partners to provide multiple events for families and children. Many other DCS offices, including those in Clay, Decatur, Delaware, Madison, Parke, Sullivan, Tippecanoe, Vanderburgh and Vigo counties, will hold similar events for children in care.

“We are incredibly grateful to our partners and the community members who help make the holidays brighter for children who might be struggling because they can’t be with their biological families,” Miller said. “The holidays can be a hard time and bring up complex feelings for children in care or those who have been adopted, and it’s important to acknowledge those emotions and help caregivers navigate them.”

Here are some helpful resources for caregivers with foster and adoptive children:

- [Holidays and Starting New Traditions with your Foster Child](#)
- [Unwrapping Opportunities for Adoptive Families During the Holidays](#)
- [Adoption and the Holidays](#)
- [The Holidays in Foster Care: Why Things Might Get Rough](#)

DCS is always looking for families who are willing to open their hearts and homes to children in foster care. For more information about becoming a foster parent, click [here](#). For information about adoption, visit the [Indiana Adoption Program website](#).

Fostering and adopting are the greatest gifts you can give a child, but you can also help bring joy to children in care through [One Simple Wish](#).

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Indiana Department of Child Services | 302 W Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204 | 317-234-KIDS  
www.in.gov/DCS | Child Support Bureau Kidsline: (800) 840-8757 | Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline: (800) 800-5556

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