

Social Service Information System, Fall, 2013
Relative search letter sample

Date

To: Name: _____
Address: _____

From: Name: _____
Agency: _____
Address: _____

RE: Child: _____ Child's date of birth: _____
Parent: _____
Parent: _____

Dear _____:

You have been identified as a relative or kin of the child named above. This letter is to inform you that this child is in need of foster care.

This agency is currently planning for the child and needs help from extended family members and others who know the child. Minnesota law requires this agency to identify and notify maternal and paternal relatives before foster care placement, or within 30 days after the child's placement. This agency is required to first consider relatives for foster care placement, and help relatives participate in care and planning for the child. You can help your relative child and their parents by:

- Sharing information about the child's family, such as names of other relatives or significant people in the child's life
- Sharing family history, including medical history
- Asking the agency about helping the child during foster care placement
- Considering whether you are willing to become the child's foster parent, and if so, asking agency staff to consider placing the child in your home.

To help the child and their parents, please contact this agency as soon as possible. When you call the agency, staff will explore foster care placement and other options to participate in the care and planning for the child. If you want to respond in writing, a form for that purpose is enclosed.

Foster care placement

All foster parents, including relatives, must be licensed. To be a foster parent for the child, you must apply for a foster care license. You can ask agency staff for help with the licensing process. The agency may vary some licensing requirements for relatives. If a specific licensing requirement cannot be met in your home, and it does not pose a safety risk or affect the child's

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health, you may ask the licensing agency for a variance. All foster parents receive the same supports, including foster care payments and other services to help keep children in their care.

Court reviews and permanency planning

Foster care is temporary. State and federal laws limit the time a child can remain in foster care and requires the court to routinely review child foster care placements. A decision to not be a placement resource now shall not affect later consideration.

As the child's relative, you have the right to ask to be notified of court hearings regarding the child. Relatives may attend hearings and have the opportunity to be heard by the court. If the child cannot be safely returned to the care of their parent(s), this agency must seek a permanent home for the child. Future notices of court hearings and the need for a permanent home will be sent to relatives who respond to this notice, unless the court relieves the agency of the permanency notice requirements. To receive future notices about court hearings, contact the court administrator at (phone number). Include the court number for the child (MNCIS number) to ensure the court sends the correct notice to you. If your mailing address changes, let the agency and the court know as soon as possible. Without a current address, future notices may not be delivered.

More information

More information is available on the Minnesota Department of Human Services' website about foster care for relatives. The ways relatives may participate in the care and planning for a child, and foster care licensing standards, are included in the "Family Matters" brochure, available at <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-4672-ENG>. If you do not have access to a computer, contact the agency and it will provide a copy of "Family Matters."

If you can help this child in any way, please contact me at phone number and email address.
If you prefer to respond in writing, return the enclosed form to me. The agency address is: _____

Sincerely,

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Kinship Reply: Child's name _____ Child's date of birth: _____

Name _____

Current address: _____

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

Relationship to child: _____

I received your letter and am available to care for this child at this time: Yes No

I am interested in receiving a notice if a permanent home is needed in the future: Yes No

I am not able to care for the child at this time because _____.

I would like to participate in planning for the child: Yes No

I am willing to stay involved in the child's life, including one or more of the activities listed below: (Please circle)

- Provide respite
- Provide child care
- Take the child to family reunions and celebrations
- Attend school activities
- Transport the child to appointments (this may require special training)
- Invite the child to cultural or spiritual events
- Invite the child to a movie or other activity
- Help the youth find a job, or other activities that develop independent living skills
- Share family history with the child
- Other _____.

Information about other relatives:

| Relative's name | Relationship | Address | Phone |
|-----------------|--------------|---------|-------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Signature of relative _____ Date _____