



Care for Caseworkers

October 12-16 2026

*Please participate anytime in the month of October what works for DFCS and your church

Engagement Guide

A Fresh Invitation for Returning Church Partners

Care for Caseworkers is more than a week of appreciation—it is a door-opener for trusted, local relationships. For churches that are already connected with their county DFCS office, this initiative can deepen trust, create new points of contact, and help staff feel consistently seen. For churches just beginning, it offers a simple, meaningful first step toward long-term partnership.

1. **Begin with relationship, not just delivery:** Reach out to the local DFCS office before planning details. Ask what would feel helpful, what timing works best, and who should be included. This posture communicates respect and helps build trust from the start.
2. **Plan touchpoints that create conversation:** Instead of only dropping off items, consider moments that allow church volunteers and DFCS staff to meet face-to-face, learn names, and express genuine gratitude.
3. **Elevate the mission publicly:** Use a Sunday highlight, prayer moment, or ministry spotlight to help the congregation understand the work of child welfare professionals and why local partnership matters.
4. **Build beyond the week:** Before the weekends, ask one simple follow-up question: “What would be helpful next?” This can lead to quarterly encouragement, staff care, rhythms, training opportunities, or other approved ways to support the office throughout the year.

Helping New Church Partners Take a First Relational Step

1. **Start small and personal:** A simple card delivery, prayer focus, or snack drop-off can be the beginning of a trusted connection when it is done with humility, consistency, and follow-through.
2. **Ask before assuming:** Every DFCS office has different rhythms, needs, and guidelines. We encourage you to ask what would be most meaningful and what boundaries should be honored.

3. **Use a mentor church when possible:** WinShape Homes is happy to pair new churches with experienced partners who can share what worked, what they learned, and how ongoing trust developed over time.
4. **Choose a level of engagement that fits:** Churches can participate in a light, moderate, or deeper way based on capacity. The goal is not size—it is sincerity, reliability, and relationship.

Care for Caseworkers Week: Relationship-Building Themes

Monday – “We See You”

Theme: *Begin with recognition*

Ideas:

- Deliver handwritten notes that use specific language such as “Your work matters to our community.”
- Create a “We See You” board with encouragement from church members, students, and small groups.
- Ask permission to include the names of teams or units so appreciation feels personal and intentional.
- Include a brief introduction card from the church with one point of contact for future communication.

Tuesday – “Connection Tuesday”

Theme: *Make space to meet*

Ideas:

- Host a simple coffee, cocoa, boba, or lemonade bar where volunteers can greet staff and learn names.
- Offer a short “come-and-go” snack table during a time the office recommends.
- Bring conversation cards with prompts like “What is one thing you wish the community understood about your work?”

Wednesday – “Refresh & Restore”

Theme: *Support the people who carry heavy work*

Ideas:

- Provide refresh kits with practical items like lip balm, lotion, tea, mints, hand sanitizer, and an encouraging note.
- Offer a “pause station” with drinks, snacks, and a simple sign that says, “Take a minute—you matter.”
- Ask the office contact whether staff have a shared break area that could be refreshed with approved supplies.

- Include a follow-up card letting staff know the church would welcome future ways to encourage them (Trust us, they will come with future asks! 😊).

Thursday – “Trusted Partners”

Theme: *Move from appreciation to partnership*

Ideas:

- Invite the DFCS contact to share one or two approved ways churches can be good community partners.
- Create a “We’re Here to Support You” card that includes the church contact name, email, and preferred follow-up rhythm.
- Ask about appropriate opportunities for future encouragement, such as quarterly notes, staff appreciation, or supply needs.
- Set aside time for church leaders to pray for staff by role or team, honoring any confidentiality boundaries.

Friday – “Faithful Follow-Through”

Theme: *End the week by opening the door for what comes next*

Ideas:

- Provide breakfast, lunch, or grab-and-go snacks paired with a handwritten thank-you from church leaders.
- Send a simple follow-up email thanking the office and asking one thoughtful question: “What would be helpful for us to remember or consider next time?”
- Create “on-the-go care bags” for staff who spend time traveling between visits, meetings, or court-related responsibilities.
- Invite the church team to choose one realistic next step, such as checking in quarterly or returning with another approved encouragement project.



Relationship-First Pro Tips

- Contact the DFCS office early and ask what would be welcome, helpful, and allowable.
- Honor confidentiality, office policies, gift limits, and staff schedules.
- Use one consistent church contact so communication feels simple and dependable.
- Follow up after the week with gratitude and one next-step question.
- Share photos or stories only with permission and with language that protects dignity and privacy.



Before You Begin: A Simple Relationship Checklist

- Identify the right DFCS contact and ask how they prefer to communicate.

- Ask what staff would find encouraging this year, instead of repeating last year by default.
- Clarify guidelines around food, gifts, photos, volunteers, and office access.
- Choose one manageable act of care and one realistic follow-up step.
- Close the loop with a thank-you message after the initiative and ask how the church can continue being a good community partner.

Flexible Participation Options Based on Relationship and Capacity

Tier 1: First Step Connection

Goal: Build awareness, introduce the church, and open the door to trust.

- **Introduction Card Campaign:** Invite church members, kids' ministries, or small groups to write thank-you cards and include a simple note introducing the church contact.
- **Prayer and Awareness Moment:** Dedicate a Sunday service or small group time to pray for local child welfare staff and explain why DFCS partnership matters.
- **Encouragement Drop-Off:** Provide one approved delivery such as snacks, coffee cards, or notes, scheduled at a time the office recommends.
- **Respectful Public Appreciation:** Share a general appreciation post or church announcement that honors DFCS staff without naming individuals or sharing details unless permission has been given.

✓ Great for churches that are new to Care for Caseworkers or still building confidence with local DFCS relationships.

🕒 **Time needed:** Minimal

👥 **Volunteers needed:** 1–3 people

💡 **Relationship impact:** A warm first impression and a clear point of contact.

Tier 2: Growing Connection

Goal: Create face-to-face touchpoints and learn what ongoing support could look like.

- **Connection Table:** Set up a simple snack or drink table with volunteers present to greet staff, learn names, and thank them in person.
- **Office Encouragement Display:** Deliver a signed banner, poster, or encouragement board from the church that can remain in a shared space.
- **Approved Support Drop:** Ask what small supplies or shared-space items would be useful, then deliver them with a note of appreciation.
- **Listening Conversation:** Schedule a brief check-in with the office contact to ask what has been helpful and what the church should know moving forward.

✓ Best for churches ready to do more than deliver items and begin learning the rhythms of the local office.

 **Time needed:** 2–4 hours

 **Volunteers needed:** Small group or ministry team

 **Relationship impact:** Builds trust through presence, listening, and consistency.

Tier 3: Trusted Partnership

Goal: Strengthen an existing relationship or create a clear pathway for ongoing partnership beyond the week.

- **Hosted Appreciation Moment:** Provide a meal, coffee bar, or come-and-go gathering that allows staff and church leaders to connect personally.
- **Approved Service Project:** Offer practical help in non-confidential areas, such as refreshing a break room or restocking shared supplies, with clear office approval.
- **Ongoing Encouragement Rhythm:** Commit to a realistic follow-up plan, such as quarterly notes, seasonal snacks, or periodic check-ins with the office contact.
- **Community Partnership Conversation:** Invite approved DFCS representatives to share with church leaders how the faith community can support children, families, and staff in appropriate ways.

☒ Designed for churches with capacity to coordinate closely, follow through, and nurture trust over time.

 **Time needed:** One-time event plus intentional follow-up

 **Volunteers needed:** Ministry team, small group, or church leadership team

 **Relationship impact:** Deepens trust and creates a pathway for continued local partnership.

After the Week: Choose One Next-Step Commitment

Care for Caseworkers can be the beginning of something lasting. Before the week ends, choose one simple, realistic commitment that keeps the relationship with the local DFCS office moving forward.

- **Check in quarterly** with the office contact to ask what would be encouraging or helpful.
- **Send seasonal encouragement** through cards, snacks, or approved staff appreciation moments.
- **Keep one consistent point of contact** so communication stays clear, simple, and dependable.
- **Invite learning** by asking DFCS leaders what churches should understand about serving children, families, and staff well.
- **Plan one future touchpoint** before the year ends, such as a follow-up note campaign, approved supply drop, or appreciation delivery.

Simply ask: “What is one faithful next step we can take to become a more trusted local partner?”