



Our Kids: A Mobile App for Washington's Caregivers

How long have caregivers been wanting a way to access more information about the children in their care? Beginning this month, an exciting new mobile application will be available for foster parents and relative caregivers who are taking care of children in state custody. It will give caregivers what they have long sought, more information more quickly delivered about the children in their care.

Called "OurKids," this mobile app will start to bring the work of child welfare out of the "paper-driven" world where it has existed for decades, said Michael Smith, division director of Children's Administration Technology Services (CATS).

"It's a revolution," Smith said of the move toward greater use of technology.

The world has rapidly shifted to use of new technological tools to perform all kinds of tasks. As younger people come into the world of child welfare as the foster parents or the social workers of the future, "we've got to go where they are," Smith says. Year by year, generation by generation, where they are is on their mobile devices, he says.

With the goal of providing information in a way that is both familiar to those receiving it and can be delivered in a more efficient and timely way, Smith and his team at CATS began working on a new mobile system.

It will be ready this month!

Once you have downloaded the app, current foster parents will have valuable, detailed, child-specific information about children in your care, right at your fingertips, Smith says.

You will be able to access educational, medical and behavioral information and issues. Contact information will be provided for your social worker and the worker's supervisor. You can also learn the status of the case for each of the kids in your care, any scheduled court dates, and information about your license, among many other important pieces of information available.

Information will be a screen-touch away on such things as allergies, medications and dosages, specialized education plans the child may have.

Below is a list provided by CATS of exactly what will be initially available through the app, some of which is pulled from FamLink, the Children's Administration computer system.

Placement Participant Details

- Child's name and FamLink ID.
- Date of birth.
- Social Security Number (masked, showing only the last four digits if in FamLink).
- Gender.
- Medical information (allergies, medications, medical conditions, medical providers).
- Education (current school, grade, specialized plans).
- Social worker's and supervisor's contact information.
- Child's upcoming court information (placement date, next court hearing, legal status).

Licensing Details

- Home capacity (total placements, gender, age).
- License expiration date.
- Licensor's contact information.

Services

- Any service currently authorized to the provider.
- Any service paid to the provider in the last 30 days.

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PREVENTION HOTLINE**

1-800-273-TALK

To sign up for suicide prevention training, go to:
[allianceforchildwelfare.org/
node/9351/course-signup](http://allianceforchildwelfare.org/node/9351/course-signup)

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Information is powerful, and it is necessary for caregivers to know about the kids in their care and how best to support them and meet their needs.

"They need to know what they need to know," Smith said. As the system continues to grow, more information and details will be added, he says.

Those working to build the system very much want to hear from you about your experiences – what you like, what could be improved and what other information you would like to have available.

"We want to get feedback from foster parents," said Kevin Kukas, part of the team building the system. "We want them to tell us what they need and what they want."

For foster parents with kids in their homes now, information will be available "in real time" once the system is up and running, Smith says. For new placements, information may initially take three or four days, he said. But the team hopes to make real-time information available to all caregivers of all kids as soon as possible. A completely new technological payment system is being discussed to replace the 42-year old Social Service Payment System that now handles foster care payments and reimbursements.

Smith is a man on a mission. "We cannot do what we do without foster parents," he said "We have to give them this...or we'll lose them. I look forward to getting this in everyone's hands. I want to make this the best system in the country." A key part of that is making it easy for caregivers, he says. "We don't want to make it a cumbersome process for foster parents or relative caregivers to get this information."

Smith said this new system is not just about using a cool new tool because it is new and cool. "This can help us build a comprehensive total child welfare system" he said. "But it's really about changing outcomes for these kids."

A future addition may include a process for potential foster parents to express their interest in becoming foster parents electronically.

Smith says he knows his goals are challenging and ambitious. But if a marriage of passion, knowledge and teamwork can make it happen, those goals will be reached. "I want to change the world!" he said

Through the OurKids app, caregivers can access the information about children in their care through a two-step process. Here's how to do it:

- **FIRST**, you will need to register at OurKids Connection. This can be done through this web link: fortress.wa.gov/dshs/caportal/ourkidsportal
- **SECOND**, you will need three pieces of information to complete the sign-up process: Your Provider ID number (the number Children's Administration – CA – gave you when you became licensed), the e-mail address you have on file with CA and your zip code.

Once you have submitted that information, you will receive an e-mail with a link to set your password, confirm your registration and complete the registration process.

Within about 30 minutes, you will receive another e-mail with a link that allows you to download MaaS360 – the company working with CA to manage the system – and the OurKids mobile app. (You should get used to seeing e-mail from MaaS360.)

There are resources on the OurKids Connection to help you with this process.

To ensure you can access the new OurKids app, CA must have your correct e-mail address.

The Division of Licensed Resources has liaisons for you to call to make sure Children's Administration has your current correct e-mail.

The liaisons are:

REGION 1N THE EASTERN HALF OF EASTERN WASHINGTON

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REGION 1S CENTRAL AND WESTERN PORTIONS OF EASTERN WASHINGTON

Maria Garcia 509-225-6570 garcims@dshs.wa.gov

REGION 2N SNOHOMISH, SKAGIT, ISLAND, SAN JUAN AND WHATCOM COUNTIES

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REGION 3 NORTH – PIERCE AND KITSAP COUNTIES

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