

# FAX

TO: Nikki Haley FROM: Mr. and Mrs. Bearden  
FAX: (803) 734-5167 FAX: NA  
PHONE: (866) 300-9333 PHONE: (864) 318-4848  
SUBJECT: Urgent Foster Care Matter DATE: June 29, 2016

COMMENTS: We ask that you please read the following as soon as possible. We have been trying to get this little girl back in our home where she was happy and had a special bond with our family and pet. DSS will not share anything other than they placed her back in a situation where they did an emergency removal from in a foster home. PLEASE HELP!!!

*We have written documentation that can prove how sick she was when they brought her to us!*

June 28, 2016

Dear Ms. Alford,

My husband and I are writing to you in regards to a foster child named Ciara. Ciara was placed in our foster home on May 4, 2016. Ciara came with no foster contract. We were finally able to get the contract on May 13, 2016 along with her information. As the weeks passed, we were contacted and visited by her Guardian Ad Litem, case worker and an adoption worker. When the adoption worker came out (around June 8<sup>th</sup>), we were asked that if Ciara came available for adoption, would we want to adopt her. We stated that we would love to as we have been approved through DSS for over a year and that Ciara had made tremendous progress while being in our home and had become bonded with our family and friends. On June 22, 2016, Ciara's case worker came to do a home visit and stated that they were preparing to move Ciara back to the previous foster home where they had done an emergency removal from on May 4, 2016. In accordance to the Foster parent contract for Anderson County, my husband and I would like to apply to adopt Ciara as we feel it's in the best interest of her. According to the Pickens County Foster contract, Foster parents may exercise the right to appeal the removal of the child from their home. As we have had concerns from the day that Ciara was placed with us until now, we would ask that we be considered and be allowed to apply for the Adoption of Ciara. It is our understanding that Ciara has been assigned a court date very soon.

On June 28, 2016, Senator Martin's office informed us that Pam Bryant from DSS had notified their office that they would no longer discuss matters concerning Ciara. Senator Martin's office was not pleased with this communication and the reasoning behind placing Ciara back in the previous home.

My husband and I were devastated when the decision was made to place her back in the home where she came from. We were shocked that DSS would place a child back in a situation that she just came from a few weeks earlier needing medical attention upon placement. Now that we have gotten her medical attention and future appointments, all that is in vain.

Should you need to contact Kevin and I, our phone number is 864.318.4848, or our email address is [beardenchristi@gmail.com](mailto:beardenchristi@gmail.com)

respectfully,

Kevin and Christi Bearden

cc: Nikki Haley Governor  
Larry Martin Senator for Pickens County  
Mike Gambrell Senator for Anderson County

enclosure (placement timeline)

5-4-16 Ciara was dropped off by transport around 5:30 pm with NO paperwork. She was brought from Anderson County. The transport person did not verify who she was leaving Ciara with. Ciara came a handful of filthy clothing and a few diapers.

Ciara was a sick child and needed medical attention.

Ciara had severe night terrors which she seemed to be coming out of by the time they removed her.

Ciara was not talkative, social, or interactive

5-5-16 I started calling trying to find paperwork for Ciara so that I could get her to a doctor.

5-7-16 I was able to get an appointment at the children's hospital in Anderson WITHOUT her paperwork on Saturday. We were informed by a worker that the last foster parents were aware of her sickness but told the worker that it was just allergies. The doctor schedule a follow up.

5-13-16 We took Ciara back to the doctor for her follow up visit – they refused to see her because we still did not have her paperwork, this was a Friday – week later. I got on the phone and started calling trying to find paperwork, I was told to call Pickens County DSS. I did, they told me to call Anderson, I made the decision to go and sit in the DSS office in Anderson until someone gave me paperwork for this sick child. Upon arriving at the dss office, I explained to the lady at the counter the situation. This lady come up from the back office and said "Hi Ciara, I haven't saw you in over a month, you seem happy, which is a big change". She proceeded to tell us that she was Ciara's old case worker. In further discussion of Ciara's situation, this worker said more than likely she would not go back to the previous foster home but possibly could if the situation was resolved. I told her that I needed paperwork for Ciara because she was sick and no doctor would see her. The lady that looked up the information in the system said that she didn't currently have a case worker except for a guy named William in Columbia. Finally, Ciara's old case worker gave us the paperwork and we headed out to make appointment for Ciara only to find out that the paperwork had a previous foster family name on it. We went back up to the office and waited on the new paperwork after have driven from Pickens County to Anderson county only to have to wait nearly 2 hours on paperwork. I finally was able to call and schedule Ciara an appointment with a new doctor.

5-17-16 Ciara was seen by new doctor who was in Pickens County. He diagnosed her with Sinusitis and prescribed an anitbotic.

5-27-16 Clara's Guardian ad litem came out to visit. She stated that she was amazed at her progress since she last saw her. She said that she seemed so much happier in our home. She stated that she didn't even know that they had moved Ciara to our home until that day.

6-1-16 Ciara was seen for her 18 month well-child visit. At this visit the doctor was concerned about her left eye as it was drooping. He was also concerned about her bow leg. The transport person told me that her eye was swollen because of allergies. The doctor referred us to an eye specialist in Greenville in which that appointment is in July. The guardian has said that she has asked about Ciara's eye on several occasions and the previous foster family kept telling her that

there is nothing wrong with it. The doctor told me that eventually it could affect vision in that eye. She had gained some weight. As far as her leg, he said we would keep an eye on it and if it had not started straightening by the time she was 2, he would send her to orthopedic doctor to make sure it was not bone structure keeping it from straightening.

6-8-16 Approx date – We were surprised that an adoption worker scheduled a visit to come out and discuss an adoption plan for Ciara if they knew that she was placed in our home temporarily. The adoption worker asked if we would be interested in adopting Ciara and if we had been approved for adoption. We were approved over a year ago. She stated that they were moving forward with TPR and waiting on a court date. She proceeded to tell us the procedures and timeline of how the process would go if the Judge TPRd. This gave us hope and encouragement that Ciara would remain in our home and that we could adopt her.

6-16-16 Ciara's case worker text me and said that she was sending paperwork that needed to be completed asap. The paperwork was her health and education passport. I found out a couple days later, that the normal procedure is for the case worker to complete the forms. We feel that our responsibility is to take care of Ciara not the paperwork.

6-20-16 Received phone call they were considering moving Ciara...Called the Adoption Worker and the Guardian and asked about some concerns that we had. The guardian an adoption worker did not seem to know anything information on what we were asking.

6-22-16 The case worker came out to visit Ciara, informed us that they had already made the decision to move Ciara before hearing our concerns. This was the first time talking to her case worker and meeting her. During the visit, we shared our concerns but it seemed as if it was cut and dry and any of our concerns were not taken into consideration. We shared several letters from Friends, pastors and family regarding Ciara's health, social and developmental skills from the time she was placed until now. The case worker was also shown photos of Ciara interacting socially. We also discussed her night terrors, medical concerns, and her appearance when she was dropped off at our home. It was obvious that nothing we said seemed to matter.

6-23-16 I spoke with the adoption worker, and asked if she had been told why they were moving Ciara, she was told on Monday that they made the decision because "Ciara had a bond with that family". She has a bond with us also but that doesn't seem to be a consideration.

Pickens county DSS called and informed us that Anderson County was closing Ciara's case and that she was going to be moved soon, and asked if we could take two brothers. I asked when Ciara was going to be moved and they said shortly as soon as the supervisor closes the case. Within 20 minutes, Anderson called and said we are on our way to move Ciara. This took us by surprise, how did Pickens know so fast that Ciara's case was being closed? No more than Ciara was picked up, Pickens called and said Ciara's case is closed, will you take these boys. Having the hearts that we do and based on what we were told, we decided to accept the boys for the night. At least this time, we had a Foster parent contract in case there was a medical necessity unlike Ciara's placement with no paperwork from May 04, 2016 to May 13, 2016.