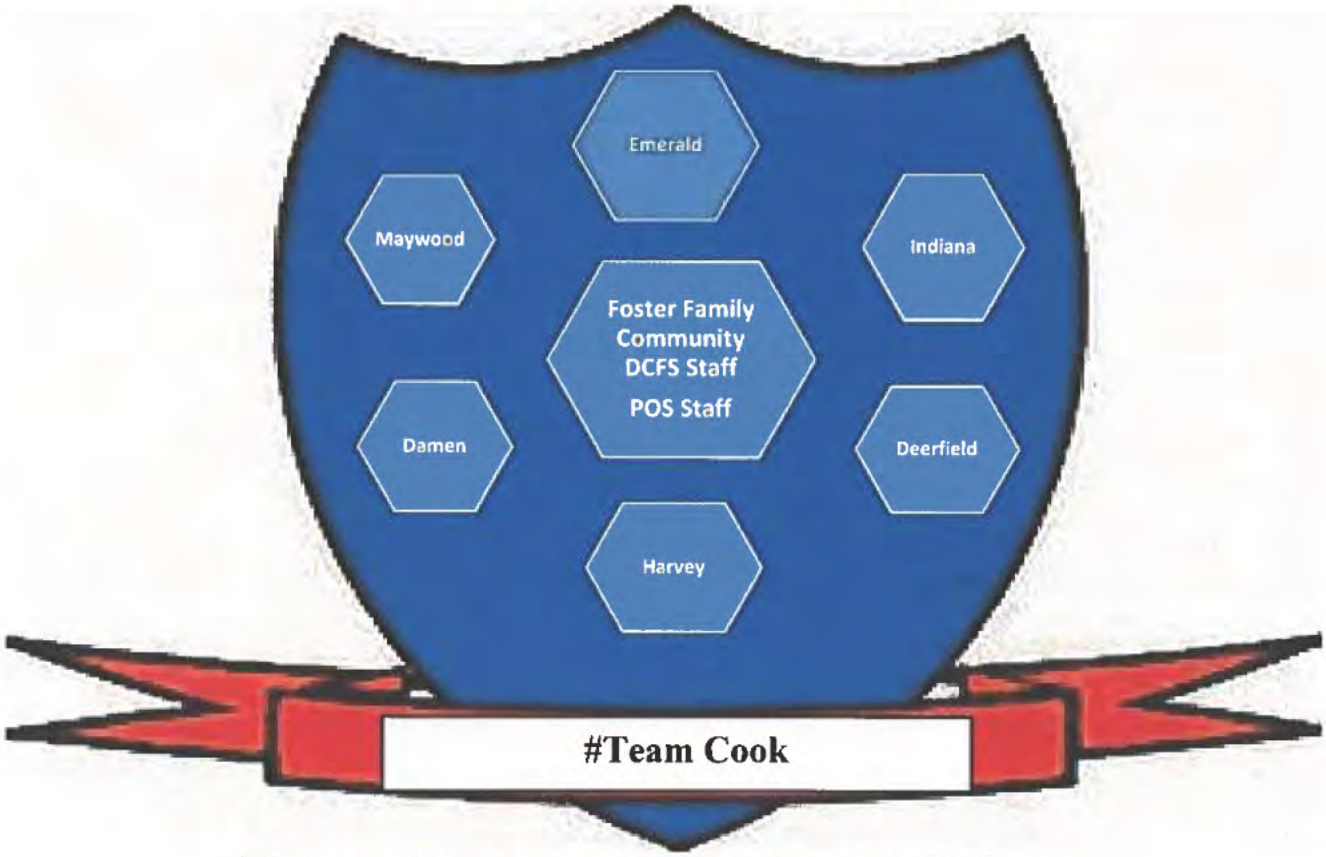
Cook Region



Implementation Plan

For The

Foster Parent Law

2020

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Foster Parent Bill of Rights

Foster parents have the right to:

1. **Dignity, Respect & Consideration**

   Be treated with dignity, respect and consideration.

2. **Training**

   Be provided Pre-Service and on-going training to meet needs and improve skills.

3. **Contact with the Agency for Support**

   Be informed on how to contact the placement agency for assistance to access support services.

4. **Timely Financial Reimbursement**

   Receive timely financial reimbursement for care included in the service plan.

5. **Placement Plan Information**

   Be provided with information about the agency's plan for placement that includes supporting family relationships and cultural heritage.

6. **Investigation of Alleged Licensing Violations**

   Be provided fair, timely and impartial investigations, including mediation and/or administrative review and explanations of decisions concerning licensing.

7. **Additional Information about Children**

Receive additional or necessary information relevant to the child's care.

8. **Information Given About Children at or Prior to Placement**

   Be given information concerning a child.

9. **Notification of Scheduled Meetings**

   Be notified of scheduled meetings concerning the child and decisions made concerning the child. To have input concerning the plan of services for the child and to communicate with other professionals who work with the child.

10. **All Necessary Information on Child/Family**

    Have any information the caseworker has about the child and his family that pertains to the child's needs and care.

11. **Written Notice of any Placement Changes**

    Receive written notice of any plans to end placement, along with the reason, and appeal information.

12. **Notification of Court Hearings**

    Receive timely notification of court hearings.

13. **Placement Option for Children Re-entering Care**

    Be considered as a placement option for foster children formerly in their care.

14. **Timely Access to Service Appeal System**

    Have access to an agency's or DCFS's appeals process without retaliation.

15. **Foster Parent Hotline Information**

Be informed of the Foster Parent Hotline and information on reporting staff misconduct.

BILL OF RIGHTS – PLAN NARRATIVES

1) **Dignity, Respect & Consideration**

Be treated with dignity, respect and consideration as professional child welfare team members.

- Strategies to ensure that foster parents are treated with dignity, respect and consideration as professional child welfare team members

DCFS Foster Parents are empowered to have a voice in the Region. Their professional input is valued. They are active participants in the Regional Quality Council (RQC) and Supervisory Leadership Meetings. Foster Parents are encouraged to attend meetings. They are invited by both written and verbal notices. LAN and other significant meetings, where foster parents voices should be heard, are also announced at monthly Sub Regional Foster Parents Support Groups, Sub Regional Foster Parent Advocacy and Foster Parents Association meetings.

Foster Parents are regarded with dignity and respect as it relates to their individual cultural, religious and personal practice/beliefs, inside of the foster home. This is done in conjunction with considering the needs of the child in placement. Supervision is required if disrespect of foster parents is encountered or identified by any member of the professional team

Cook Region recognizes that foster parents require competencies—specific knowledge and skills—to effectively work with neglected and abused children who have been separated from their parents/families. Foster parents are considered partners with the various child welfare professionals for the benefit of children in care. We take into consideration not only their opinion but their availability to attend meetings, staffings and for in-person visits in their homes.

Cook Regional Casework staff members are expected to return phone calls within 24 business hours. Foster parents are encouraged to contact the caseworker's supervisor when they do not receive a timely response from the caseworker. The support directory, accessible to them, gives them contact information for the Regional Administrator, Area Administrators, Licensing Specialist, Foster Parent Lead Support Specialists and the Payment Unit. The staff is expected to develop a relationship based on mutual respect and open communication. Foster parents are encouraged to call and follow the chain of command as necessary.

Monthly Foster Parent Advisory Council Meetings are held for information sharing, training, networking and support. The meetings are held in monthly in each Cook Sub Region. The reminder letters are mailed to Foster Parents regarding the meeting dates and location with copies of the previous minutes enclosed.

We distribute a support directory of Sub-Regional staff telephone numbers annually along with a copy of the implementation plan. The support directory includes contacts such as: Area Administrators, Educational Advisors, Foster Parent Lead Support Specialists, crisis assistance, payment line and the advocacy office.

2) Training

Be provided pre-service and ongoing training to meet needs and improve skills.

- Minimum Standardized Pre-Service Training per DCFS Rule 402

A variety of Pre-Service training locations are located throughout each Cook sub-region and suburban areas. Weekday and weekend schedules are available year round to complete the 27hour requirement for licensure that is mandated per DCFS Rule 402. The licensing workers provide the schedule to foster parents and submit the enrollment request to the Office of DCFS Training via e-mail. The schedule can also be seen on the Department web site (www.state.il.us/dcfs).

- PRIDE or other DCFS approved training

The 39-hour training for licensure requires attendance to Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE classes. Applicants interested in caring for related children are required to only complete the first 6 hours of the PRIDE classes, though completion of the entire training is recommended. Other DCFS approved training for relative caregivers includes viewing the 6 hours of PRIDE training sessions 1 & 2 on video or DVD. Applicants who complete 6 hours of PRIDE training are eligible to care for related children only. Module 2 regarding discipline is highly recommended for all foster caregivers.

Training required for license renewal—In-Service training modules—are scheduled at the PRIDE training locations and are available on DVD. Additional In-Service training hours can be obtained through DVDs, books and cassettes through the Lending Library catalog. Other DCFS approved training for license renewal includes relevant topics such as CPR and First Aid. Caregivers simply

need to complete a Training Credit Approval Form that can be mailed or faxed to DCFS Training in Springfield.

Additional training may be needed before placement occurs due to the special needs of the child about to be placed. Training can also be identified during the Integrated Assessment process, due not only to the needs of the child placed in the home, but based on identified needs during the assessment process. During on-going in person visitation and communication between foster parent and case manager, additional training needs may be identified that would assist the foster parent in caring for the child. Foster parents, licensing, child welfare specialists and resource staff work together to identify the resources for the training needed.

Licensing workers can provide class schedules, DVDs and the Lending Library catalog to foster parents. Training information is also available on the DCFS website and in the Department newsletters that are mailed to caregivers. DCFS Foster families can register themselves for InService training by contacting the DCFS Training Unit at **877/800-3393** or ask for assistance from their licensing worker or support specialist. Foster Parents can also access the Virtual Training Center at www.dcfstraining.org.

Adoption Conversion Training is also provided to caregivers who are in the process of adopting a child.

Pre-Service and In-Service Classes and materials are available in Spanish. The caseworkers also remind foster parents of the training schedule on their monthly visits.

Lending Library –The Cook Region has a Lending Library, located at 1911 S. Indiana, Chicago, Illinois, that foster parents and staff can access. The access to these Libraries can be secured through the Sub-Regional Foster Parent Specialists. Resources can be accessed by contacting: **Edith Cruz, 1-312-808-5000**. A semi-annual assessment (6 months) of foster parent training needs is conducted to determine their preferred training topic areas. Issues raised in comments on returned foster parent surveys are noted and facilitated by the Regional Quality Council. These items are incorporated into the regional training plan. Staff and foster parents are also encouraged to attend any training of interest throughout the region.

- Sub Region Foster Parent Advisory Council Ongoing Trainings:

Agency staff and foster parents are all eligible for the same Pre-Service and In-Service trainings. Both staff and foster parents attend the monthly Sub-Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council

meeting/trainings. The Sub-Region and the advisory council together develop an annual training calendar for the Advisory Council meetings that is mailed to foster parents and posted in the lobbies of the offices.

- Mutual assessment tool

The Foster Home Utilization Assessment is a form that helps licensing workers and foster parents mutually determine training needs based on the children currently in placement. The Utilization Form is completed by the Sub-Region's licensing workers annually at minimum. The form asks about the individual children in the home, their ages, their adjustment behaviors and the foster parents' overall response to the children. The discussion is supposed to help caregivers identify their own needs and help staff make training recommendations.

- Evidence of training schedule/calendar

An annual training calendar is developed with and for the Advisory Council meeting trainings (attachment). The schedule is mailed to foster parents and posted in the lobbies of offices.

The licensing workers can provide class schedules, DVDs and the Lending Library catalog to foster parents. The information is also available on the DCFS website and in the Department newsletters that are mailed to caregivers. Foster families can register themselves for In-Service training by contacting the DCFS Training Unit at 877/800-3393 or ask for assistance from their licensing worker or support specialist. Foster Parents can also access the Virtual Training Center (VTC) at www.dcfstraining.org. The VTC also offers some online courses. For assistance with registration for any Virtual Training Center class, Cook foster parents should contact the Cook Regional Training Manager, Veronica Sanchez at 773/371-6000.

3. Contact with the Agency for Support

Be informed on how to contact the placement agency for assistance to access support services.

- 24-hour, 7-day availability of emergency support

The Cook Region foster parent support specialists are accessible 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. The Department also has emergency/after-hours telephone numbers: (773) 538-8800 or (866) 503-0184 for 24-hour assistance. Along with the implementation plan, Cook Sub-Regions

annually distribute a telephone directory that includes the telephone numbers for 24-hour support and other emergency contacts (Supports Available to Foster Parents Directory attached).

- Established method for accessing support services (e.g. System of Care, staff phone numbers and on-call schedules)

The Support directory provides easy access to the staff and support services. The telephone log lists various support services such as System of Care provider, education advisors, Sub-Regional nurse, payment line, advocacy office and other emergency contacts (attachment a). An updated phone log is handed out to foster parents annually along with the Implementation Plan. Staff will provide the directory to caregivers.

Licensing workers provide a folder to foster parents at initial licensure with a form for foster parents to write down important telephone numbers such as caseworker, supervisor, licensing worker, foster parent support specialist and the after-hours number.

4. Timely Financial Reimbursement

Receive timely financial reimbursement for care included in the service plan.

- Regular board payment

Board payments are made on a monthly basis to licensed foster parents approved and **Licensed, Non-Specialized Foster Care** supervised by DCFS to provide care for a child for whom the agency has legal **Reimbursement Rate** responsibility. Payments are mailed directly from DCFS according to a set schedule
typically during the third week of each month. Licensed foster parents providing The amount of **licensed monthly reimbursement** payment is based on age of the child and is commonly referred to traditional foster care receive the following board rates:as the "foster care board rate". Any changes to the regular foster care rate must be approved by the Illinois Legislature within DCFS' annual budget.

Child's Age	Total	Board	Clothing	Allowance*
0 thru 11 mo.	$418	$366	$39	$13
1 thru 4 yrs.	$426	$368	$44	$13
5 thru 8 yrs.	$445	$371	$59	$14
9 thru 11 yrs.	$472	$379	$68	$24
12 yrs. & Over	$511	$389	$77	$43

*The personal allowance for children age 4 years and under is to be used by foster parents for incidentals (toys, rattles, etc.), which become the property of the child.

For children for whom the Department is legally responsible who are residing in a home of an unlicensed relative caregiver, the Department will pay only the standard of need established by the Illinois Department of Human Services, currently set at $310 a month in the Cook County SubRegion.

A foster care payment begins the day a child is placed in the foster home. Foster parents will receive a check for the previous month. For example, if a child is placed on October 15, the foster parent will receive the first board payment during the third week of November. The amount will be for days October 15 – 31. A full board payment amount will be received during the third week of December for the month of November.

The Department's Placement Clearance Desk must be called by the caseworker prior to any placement for approval. Once a clearance confirmation number is obtained, it is valid for only 24 hours; the placement must be made within that 24-hour period. The caseworker must complete the Authorization for Payment form to initiate the Board payments. The payment form is then faxed or emailed to the Case Assignment Unit within 2 business days.

The caseworker should leave a copy of the payment form with the foster parent when placing the child as a receipt and to document the child's proof of residence. A copy is also maintained in the file.

- Payment for additional services, such as respite and camp

Children are eligible for payment of additional services that promote social development and cultural enrichment. Specifics of what DCFS will pay for and under what circumstances are detailed in DCFS Rule Part 359 Authorized Child Care Payments available in the Foster Parent Handbook provided at PRIDE training and on the DCFS web site (www.state.il.us/dcfs) or by request.

Cook Sub-Regions also provide reimbursement, according to policy, to eligible foster parents who enroll children in summer day camp at their local park district annually. Foster parents are notified via mail to contact the foster parent support specialist or the local DCFS office to obtain further details.

Respite care is subject to approval, but provides short-term payment to an alternative caregiver when the foster parent needs assistance or is unavailable to care for the children due to an emergency or family crisis. Foster parents should contact the foster parent support specialists for assistance with respite care.

The staff and foster parent support specialists discuss with foster parents the variety of payments that they and a child in their care may be eligible for on an ongoing basis. Such reimbursements can include upfront out-of-pocket expenses for a child. Special Service Fees provide funds to caregivers who host overnight sibling visits or arrange events that promote family reunification.

Training on DCFS Rule Part 359, Authorized Child Care payments, regarding payments, programs and reimbursements is provided annually in the Cook Sub-Region at one of the Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings.

- Timely assessment and payment commensurate with type of care provided

The majority of foster children are considered as traditional foster care cases, cared for by families receiving the licensed reimbursement rates shown above. Some foster children, however, have severe behavioral, emotional or medical problems that require foster parents to have additional training and/or competencies. In those cases, the child's case may be referred to an agency that has a specialized program to meet his or her identified needs. Foster parents of a specialized child receive additional monthly compensation in order to support the foster parent's ability to meet that child's extra needs.

When a child exhibits behaviors that have prompted additional resources to be put in place to help remedy or modify the behaviors, and more intervention is still needed, the child is considered for specialization. The caseworker requests a Clinical Intervention for Placement

Preservation (CIPP) meeting. **A** Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) staffing is scheduled involving the foster parent, child and other child welfare team members to determine how we can help meet the needs of the child. If the Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) meeting team decision supports the request, the child is matched with a specialized agency that will provide the needed services. Once an agreed upon date for case transfer is set, the Department provides the transfer documents to the receiving agency. The receiving agency submits a new payment form that will change the child's service code type, and the monthly board rate for that child is adjusted accordingly.

For those children who have some special needs but who reside in traditional foster care can still qualify for specialized service fees to help support the child and foster family.

- Method of resolving payment problems: contact staff, payment unit or advocacy office. Grievance process is also a method.

If there are payment questions or problems, the foster parent can contact their respective regional staff: caseworker, supervisor, licensing worker or foster parent support specialist for assistance. Foster parents can also contact the Payment Line for staff assistance from 8:30am to 11:00am Monday – Friday or for automated information 24 hours a day by calling 800/525-0499. If these efforts fail, caregivers can contact the Advocacy Office at 800/232-3798 for further assistance. The telephone numbers for the Payment Line and Advocacy Office are also listed in the support directory (attached).

A last resort for unresolved payment issues is to file a grievance. A copy of the grievance brochure is attached to the Implementation Plan when distributed to foster parents each year. Brochures on the grievance process are also available in the regional office lobbies, at foster parent meetings, and by request.

5. Placement Plan Information

Be provided with information about the agency's plan for placement that includes supporting family relationships and cultural heritage.

- Foster parent participation in the development of the child's service plan

Caseworkers are expected to develop the child's portion of the service plan with the foster parent's input. Foster parent input is important because many of the child's service plan tasks are obligations that the foster parent must help fulfill, i.e. medical care, counseling or other

services such as family visitation schedules. Foster parents document their input into the plan by signing the child's portion of the plan.

Foster parents are mailed an Administrative Case Review (ACR) invitation/notification through the Administrative Case Review (ACR) division. Foster parents can participate in the review and approval of the child's service plan when they attend the scheduled Administrative Case Review (ACR). Foster parents sign the service plan and are given a copy of the relevant portion upon completion of the Administrative Case Review (ACR).

- Timely notification of changes in service plan/permanency goal, including method of notification

Amendments to the service plan and permanency goals can be made any time throughout the life of the case. Any changes are disclosed to the involved parties including foster parents. The plan and goal is also reviewed every 6 months at the Administrative Case Review (ACR) and at court during permanency hearings. Foster parents are encouraged to attend Administrative Case Review (ACR)s and permanency hearings.
If foster parents are not present to obtain a copy of the plan and to learn firsthand about changes, caseworkers are obligated to inform the foster parents as soon as possible because a child's goal directly impacts the foster parents' role and obligations. The caseworker provides a copy of the child's plan to the foster parents via mail or in-person so they are aware of the child's visitation plan and specific tasks and obligations scheduled for the next six months. Information can also be given to foster parents via telephone contact.

- Foster parent participation/input into plan for visitation/communication with the child's birth family

Caseworkers are expected to develop the child's visitation schedule portion of the service plan with foster parent's input because many of the child's service plan tasks are obligations that the foster parent must help fulfill. The visitation plan schedule must be done in coordination with the child's availability due to school and service obligations. Foster parents must ensure a child's availability and readiness for scheduled visitation at minimum, but are being encouraged to more actively participate in family visitation and communication with parents.

Licensing workers, together with foster parents, must complete a Caregiver Self-Assessment as Reunification Prepared form at initial licensure and each renewal. The form informs and assesses foster parents' willingness to support family reunification and participate in family visits and activities.

6. Investigation of Alleged Licensing Violations

Be provided fair, timely and impartial investigations, including mediation and/or administrative review and explanations of decisions concerning licensing.

- Policy describing the investigation of alleged violations and demonstration of how the agency disseminates that information to foster parents

The purpose of a licensing complaint investigation in a licensed foster home is to determine if there has been a violation of licensing standards and/or the Child Care Act. A complaint may originate from any source and is routed to the licensing unit responsible for monitoring the home. When the Department is contacted by an individual through the State Central Register or Hotline number, the licensing supervisor is notified by the Central Office of Licensing in Springfield via electronic mail. The supervisor then assigns a licensing worker on her team to investigate the allegations.

In Cook Sub-Regions, the licensing worker assigned to complete the investigation is usually the same licensing worker that has been monitoring the home. The supervisor meets with the worker to discuss the complaint allegations and the plan of action to be taken.

The licensing worker is responsible for conducting and documenting non-accusatory, fact-finding interviews with all persons identified as having information relevant to the allegation(s). The licensing worker allows the licensee an opportunity to discuss the allegations and present his/her side of the story. Complaint investigations are documented on Licensing Complaint Report forms. When completing the investigation, the licensing worker must indicate every section of DCFS licensing rules and/or the Child Care Act alleged to be in violation or to have been violated. Information should be specific and documented on the Complaint forms.

Depending on the nature of the allegations, an investigation can be a stand-alone licensing investigation or a concurrent investigation with the Division of Child Protection (DCP). A standalone investigation is where only violations of licensing rules are alleged. When the allegations are related to abuse or neglect, the licensing unit conducts their complaint investigation concurrently with DCP after the 15th day of the initiated DCP investigation.

Complaint investigations are addressed during the Pre-Service training. The professional panel members that participate in session 9 of the Pre-Service training usually include a licensing

worker and a DCP investigator; first-hand information is given to foster parents at this time and questions answered. Also, licensing workers can answer questions regarding complaint investigations at any time. Additional information on complaint investigations can be found in the Foster Parent Handbook provided at Pre-Service training and available on the DCFS web site (www.state.il.us/dcfs).

Training on complaint investigations is to be conducted during one of the advisory council meetings in 2018-2019.

- Person of foster parent's choosing present during the investigation

When the foster parent is contacted by the licensing worker in relation to the investigation, the foster parent has the right to have a person of his/her choosing during the investigation interviews. The foster parent can delay the investigation interview up to 4 hours to arrange for the presence of a foster parent support specialist, other advocate or friend. The licensing worker and foster parent should agree on a time within the 4 hours when the licensing worker should return to complete the interview. The requested delay is limited to the interview and not the inspection of the home. The licensing worker shall request permission to enter and observe the premises when the complaint alleges children are at risk due to environmental conditions in the home.

Foster parent support specialists have experience with supporting and advising foster parents during complaint investigations and are available upon foster parent request.

- Specified time frames for investigation as required by DCFS rule

The licensing worker shall begin a stand-alone licensing complaint investigation within 2 business days of the Department having received the complaint. The worker shall complete the investigation within 30 days; however, the investigation may be extended for an additional 30 days with supervisory approval.
In the case of a concurrent investigation that involves the Division of Child Protection (DCP), the licensing worker does not initiate a licensing complaint investigation until:

- DCP makes a decision to unfound the allegations if done within 14 days or
- After the DCP investigation becomes formal, meaning 14 days later.

Licensing staff communicate with DCP staff and/or check the status of the investigation on the Department's computer database. Again, the licensing worker shall complete the investigation

within 30 days from when it is initiated; however, the investigation may be extended for an additional 30 days with supervisory approval.

Upon completion of the complaint investigation, the licensing worker makes a finding of substantiated or unsubstantiated in regard to each allegation of the complaint as they relate to licensing standards. All investigation documentation is submitted to the supervisor for review and approval. Within 5 days of supervisory approval of the findings, the licensing worker notifies the licensee in writing of each finding and if any follow-up action is required.

If the case was a concurrent investigation with DCP, licensing sends a *Notice to Guardian Ad Litem of Completed Foster Home Licensing Complaint Investigation* to the assigned Guardian Ad Litem of the involved child or children.

- Procedure for appealing negative results/corrective action plans

If a substantiated finding is made, the letter offers the foster parent the option of a supervisory review in which the licensee can meet with the licensing supervisor and worker to dispute the findings and/or the expectations of a corrective action plan. A corrective action plan lists the actions to be taken by the foster parent to correct the violations and the time frames for correcting them.

A supervisory review should be arranged:

- when the foster parent disputes that the violation(s) occurred;
- when the foster parent disagrees with the application or interpretation of a section of the Child Care Act or a licensing standard;
- When the licensing supervisor believes a review is needed to address ongoing issues.

The time frame for requesting a supervisory review is 10 days. The supervisor's name, telephone number and timeframe for requesting the review are listed in the letter that is mailed or handdelivered to the foster parent. If a review is requested, it will be scheduled within 14 days of the request. The licensing supervisor must review and approve all investigations and related correspondence. In cases involving a DCFS ward where the allegation has not been substantiated, the Guardian Ad Litem, by law, will have 10 days from the date they receive a copy of any investigation in which to ask for further review.

7. Additional Information about Children

Receive additional or necessary information relevant to the child's care.

- Caseworker training in ALL information to be disclosed

Information sharing is vital to ensuring that a child's needs are met and the foster parent has the competencies to meet that child's needs. All DCFS caseworkers are trained in Foundation Training, Clinical Practice, and Specialized trainings on current rules and procedures that dictate required casework practices.

DCFS rules and procedures specify the need to share all appropriate information with the caregiver. Such information includes:

- History of psychiatric hospitalizations and/or serious mental health issues
- Known medical conditions & medications
- Other information necessary for the proper care of the child

Workers are notified of rule and procedure changes through computer announcements and email.

Confidentiality training for staff and foster parents has been completed within the Sub-Region's Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings in 2018-2019 to address the limitations on which information can be shared and with whom.

Foster parents receive additional information about the child during participation in child-related meetings such as Administrative Case Reviews (ACR)s, Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) meetings, Clinical Staffings, Child and Family Team meetings, IEP (Individualized Education Program) meetings, and court hearings.

- Description of how caseworkers are held accountable for sharing the information

Workers are required to document contacts and information sharing in the case record. Supervisory review and approval is routine and also addressed during individual and on-going worker supervision. Peer, Performance, and Federal Reviews monitor worker compliance. Chronic and critical reports from the Administrative Case Review (ACR) inform staff of missing documentation. Various meetings and reviews such as Child and Family Team Meetings, Administrative Case Review (ACR)s, court hearings and Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) meetings are also opportunities for foster parents to share and receive information.

8. Information Given About Children at or Prior to Placement

Be given information concerning a child.

- DCFS has clear rules and procedures as to what information to share and how to share it with foster parents

DCFS rules and procedures specify the need to share all appropriate information with the caregiver and how and when this information is provided. Such information includes:

- case information and history;
- health and medical;
- educational information and history;
- placement history; and
- Behavior/social information.

When all of the information is not available at that time, the worker shall provide the information as it becomes available. As members of the child's team, foster parents will contact the caseworker and supervisor with additional information they have obtained or when required information has not yet been provided to them.

- Staff are trained in all pertinent policies and procedures

DCFS staff training is mandated and continuous. Much training is computer-based, including webinars and self-paced trainings on the virtual training web site. Staff are notified of all new policies and procedures through announcements made on the Department's internal web site and by e-mail. Supervisors ensure caseworker completion of mandated trainings and practice of new or changed procedures that dictate casework responsibilities.

- Description of how caseworkers are held accountable for sharing the information

Workers are required to document contacts and information sharing in the case record. Various meetings and reviews such as Child and Family Team Meetings, Administrative Case Review (ACR)s, court hearings and Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) meetings are also opportunities for foster parents to share and receive information.

9. Notification of Scheduled Meetings

Be notified of scheduled meetings concerning the child and decisions made concerning the child. To have input concerning the plan of services for the child and to communicate with other professionals who work with the child.

- Foster parents are notified and encouraged to participate in all meetings/staffings about children in their care

Foster parents are encouraged to be active participants at court dates, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR)s, Clinical Staffings, Individual Educational Planning (IEP) or other educational meetings, Child and Family Team meetings, Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) meetings and any other consultations that involve children placed in their home.

For any meeting involving DCFS, foster parents are notified in person, via regular or certified mail and/or by telephone, usually by the worker or supervisor. The Administrative Case Review (ACR) division notifies foster parents of all Administrative Case Reviews via mail. Foster parents are notified of the Sub-Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings each month by mail and/or by telephone by the foster parent support specialists. Licensing workers also notify foster parents who are in need of In-Service training hours of the council meetings.

- Foster parents are informed of decisions made by agencies and courts

Foster parents are encouraged to attend all staffings, meetings, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR)s and court hearings. Caseworkers provide this information in person or by telephone. If foster parents are not present to learn firsthand about decisions made at staffings, meetings, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR)s or court, caseworkers and/or supervisors are obligated to inform the foster parents of the results, as soon as possible, to keep them abreast of pertinent information which directly impacts the child's service planning, permanency goal and any tasks which may impact the foster parents' role and obligations.

Caseworkers inform foster parents about the outcome of all court hearings and when the next court date is scheduled. Following an Administrative Case Review (ACR) where the foster parent has been unable to attend, the worker provides a copy of the child's plan to the foster parents via mail or in-person so they are aware of the child's visitation plan and specific tasks and obligations scheduled for the next six months. Information can also be given to foster parents via telephone contact.

If foster parents have any concerns about not receiving adequate information they are encouraged to contact the casework staff and then if not satisfied, follow the agency's or SubRegion's chain of command. For Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) staff (i.e. caseworker, supervisor, Area Administrator, and Regional Administrator).

- Foster parents are encouraged to give input into case planning and input is given full consideration

Foster parent input is located within the child's service plan as a task. Obligations for the foster parent must help fulfill, such as medical care, counseling or other services. The foster parent's input into child and family visitation schedules is crucial to ensure children are consistently visiting and maintaining appropriate relationships with biological family.

Foster parents are notified of the scheduled review by mail directly from the DCFS ADMINISTRATIVE CASE REVIEW (ACR) division. Foster parent presence is vital as a professional child welfare team member as they can provide invaluable insight into the child's day-to-day actions and behaviors.

10. All Necessary Information on Child/Family

Have any information the caseworker has about the child and his family that pertains to the child's needs and care.

- Foster parents are encouraged to communicate with all Child and Family Team members

Foster parent's input is invaluable as they usually have the closest contact with and perspective into a child's behaviors. Foster parents are informed that the primary contacts should be the caseworker and supervisor. Foster parents are also advised to contact their licensing worker or the foster parent support specialists for additional support or advice.

Notification of meetings and foster parent input is vital to ensure that a child's needs are met and the foster parent has the competencies and opportunities to participate with the team to meet that child's needs.

- A description of information is given to foster parents at intake, and a prescribed method of disclosing information is utilized

Information sharing is vital to ensuring that a child's needs are met and the foster parent has the ability to meet that child's needs. Confidentiality always applies. Information relevant to the proper care of the child is to be given to the foster at the time of the placement and should include:

- case information and history;
- health and medical;
- educational information and history;
- placement history; and
- Behavior/social information.
- Other pertinent background information that is essential to understanding the child's needs but that protects the rights of the child's family.

Licensing staff cover confidentiality during each monitoring visit and can answer questions. Respecting confidentiality is a licensing standard listed on the Family Foster Home Licensing Monitoring Record signed by foster parents and the licensing worker. Department staff and support specialists can also provide confidentiality information.

Additional information about confidentiality is found in the Foster Family Handbook and in the Foster Parent Law, both part of the PRIDE training materials and located on the DCFS web site (www.state.il.us/dcfs).

- Ongoing sharing of information that is pertinent to the health and well-being of the child

Caseworkers are accountable for providing necessary information to foster parents for the proper care of the child at the time of placement and thereafter. Caseworkers are to inform foster parents of pertinent information about a child in an ongoing manner. Foster parents should also inform caseworkers or their supervisors of pertinent information regarding the child's health and well-being.

Foster parent participation in staffings, Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP)s, Child and Family Team Meetings, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR)s and court hearings is encouraged because it reinforces foster parent input and ongoing information sharing.

The Foster Parent Visit form is distributed to foster parents with each year's implementation plan and upon request. The form lists various topics of discussion that the foster parent should

inquire about if the subject is not covered by the caseworker during in-home visits or telephone contacts. Examples include:

- Court issues—results of hearings, upcoming hearings, what is next?
- Recreational and social activities—child's hobbies and interests, how to access activities and payment issues.
- Administrative Case Review—foster parent input and participation. Review date, time and location. Permanency goal progress/changes.

As part of the effort to support family reunification, more foster families and parents should strive to develop a positive relationship; when a positive relationship exists between the foster parents and the parents, the child's family may consent to the disclosure of additional information or provide additional information themselves.

11. Written Notice of any Placement Changes

Receive written notice of any plans to end placement, along with the reason, and appeal information.

- 14-day written notice (Not applicable for movements involving imminent risk)

When the Department makes a critical decision to move the child from one out-of-home placement to another, it will inform the foster parent or relative caregiver that the child will be moved to another placement and why. Unless there are concerns for the child's safety, the Department will notify the involved parties at least 14 days prior to the proposed move. The caseworker removing the child will give the caregiver a copy of the *Notice of Change of Placement*. Copies must be sent to the child's family and the child (through the child's representative, the Guardian Ad Litem).

- Appeal information, including emergency review process (e.g. clinical reviews and hearings), is given to foster parents

If the foster parent or relative caregiver disagrees with the decision to change the child's placement, he or she may request a clinical placement review of the decision within three working days of the receipt of the *Notice of Change of Placement*. The clinical placement review can be requested by either phoning 312/633-3754 or faxing the *Notice* to DCFS at 312/633-4091.

This information is included on the *Notice of Change of Placement*. Appeal process brochures explaining clinical placement reviews are available in the office lobbies, by request and on the DCFS web site (www.state.il.us/dcfs) (attachment d). The brochures are also provided to foster parents annually along with the implementation plan.

The purpose of the clinical placement review is to evaluate the current placement, the reason for the disruption or change of placement, the child's needs and the appropriateness and stability of the proposed placement.

When in disagreement with the final clinical placement review decision, the foster parent or relative caregiver may request a fair hearing through the Department's service appeal process as addressed in right #14.

In the event the Department has reason to believe the safety of the child is at imminent risk, the child will be removed immediately. An emergency review allows the Department to make a temporary decision based on a concern that imminent risk of harm may come to a child while your case is proceeding through the appeal process.

12. Notification of Court Hearings

Receive timely notification of court hearings.

- Method for notifying foster parents of hearings and their right to be heard

Caseworkers are the primary providers of information regarding all scheduled court hearings, reasons for the hearing, the outcome and the following court date. Notification can be written or verbal.

Foster parents have a right to be heard. Foster parent input is vital as they are the primary caregiver for the child and have valuable insight. The Cook Sub-Regions have provided annual training on juvenile court and related issues at the advisory council meetings in the past. Juvenile Court training is included in the 2018-2019 advisory council training schedule to assist with foster parent awareness of court and the role that caregivers play in court hearings.

Any foster parent not receiving notice of court hearings can contact the caseworker, the supervisor, Foster Parent Lead Support Specialist. Foster parents can also call the Office of the Public Guardian at 312/433-4300 or DCFS Legal at 312/633-3400. Both of these numbers are included in the support directory (Attached).

- Description of how caseworkers are held accountable for notifying foster parents

Workers are required to document contacts and information sharing in the case record. Supervisory review and approval is routine and also addressed during individual and ongoing worker supervision. Peer, Performance and Federal Reviews monitor worker compliance. Various meetings and reviews such as Child & Family Team Meetings, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR)s, and Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) meetings are also opportunities for foster parents to share and receive information.

13. Placement Option for Children Re-entering Care

Be considered as a placement option for foster children formerly in their care.

- Method for checking past placement records

If a child re-enters the foster care system, the previous foster parents should be considered a placement option. DCFS staff can access the child's entire placement history via the CM-07 screen in the Department's database. Staff can also interview the child about previous foster homes and contact licensing staff or utilize the database for contact information on foster parents. Staff can then contact previous caregivers to determine their availability and willingness to care for the child again.

- Process for determining best interest regarding placement decision

The best interest of a child is a guiding principle in all Department decisions. The assigned caseworker and supervisor assess a child's needs, how well the former foster parents met the child's needs in the past and the foster parents' ability to currently meet the child's needs. Subject to approval by the Department's placement clearance desk, a child can be approved for return to the former placement if deemed to be in the best interest of the child.

14. Timely Access to Service Appeal System

Have access to an agency's or DCFS's appeals process without retaliation.

- Documentation that an internal appeals system has been established and description of how it prohibits retaliation

The Department of Children and Family Services has a service appeal process. Service appeals are addressed in Pre-Service training and in the Foster Parent Handbook. If foster parents do not agree with a decision made or action taken by DCFS, they can challenge the decision or actions by filing an appeal.

Foster Parents or Relative Caregivers may appeal:

- Decisions that directly affect the caregiver, such as payments for the care of the child for whom the department is legally responsible
- Decisions about services for the benefit of the child for whom the department is legally responsible and is in their care, such as day care, medical, education or psychological services
- Failure to provide services as specified in the service plan for the benefit of the child. This does not include services for the biological family such as family therapy or counseling.
- A change in the child's substitute care placement, provided that the child has been placed in the home for at least 60 days. This does not include placements with the biological or adoptive parent(s), or sibling(s), placements for purposes of adoption as ordered by the court, or return to an individual(s) with whom the child resided prior to entering substitute care.

What May Not Be Appealed

Foster Parents may not appeal some decisions or actions by the department through the Service Appeal Process. These are:

- Adjustments made in services by change in state or federal law
- Issues already determined through the department's Service Appeal Process
- When the issue is not defined as a service under specific department rules. (Foster parents may find they can appeal these issues under other appeal processes within the department and the appeal will be routed to the appropriate process.)
- Services offered to department clientele for which the department is not responsible but another state or federal agency is solely responsible for carrying out these services, such as medical assistance
- When a court has made a judicial determination or issued an order on the issue being appealed

How to Request an Appeal through the Service Appeal Process

If foster parents do not agree with a decision made or action taken by DCFS pertaining to services, they may do the following:

Appeal within 10 days from receiving notice and may be able to stop the department from acting on its decision until such time that the case has proceeded through the Service Appeal Process. If they do not agree with the decision made in a clinical placement review regarding the change in placement of a child in your care, request an appeal within 10 days from the clinical placement decision.

Foster Parents should request a service appeal in writing within 45 days from receiving notice of the decision or action intended to be taken by the department. If a foster parent, is unable to submit a written request, contact they should contact their local office and someone from the department will assist in preparing a written request.
The appeal/written request should be submitted to: Administrative Hearings Unit, DCFS, 406 E. Monroe, Station 15, Springfield, IL 62701, 217/782-6655. The request should include the foster parent's name, address, telephone and a brief summary stating their position on the department's decision or action the foster parent is appealing. The foster parent may also include any other information they feel the department should consider when reviewing its decision.

The service appeals brochures are distributed annually to foster parents along with the implementation plan, provided at the conclusion of each Administrative Case Review (ACR), available in the office lobbies, available on the DCFS web site (www.state.il.us/dcfs) and by request. Foster parent support specialists are available to assist foster parents with obtaining and filing service appeals information.

DCFS offers an internal grievance procedure to attempt to resolve problems not covered by the Service Appeal Process such as a lack of communication, lack of services or a violation of foster parents' rights and responsibilities. The foster parent grievance process is handled by a mediation committee, consisting of management and administrative staff.

Brochures on the grievance process are available in the office lobbies, at foster parent advisory meetings, and by request (attached). A copy of the grievance brochure is attached to the Implementation Plan when distributed to foster parents each year. Awareness of the grievance procedure is annually covered in training at the Advisory Council meeting. The grievance process brochure was updated, discussed and accepted by the foster parents.

- Process for accessing the external DCFS appeals system when necessary

The foster parent is to be treated with respect and dignity in all situations. If a foster parent feels they are being retaliated against, they should report this to the caseworker's supervisor or higher up the chain of command. Foster parents can also contact the DCFS Advocacy Office at

800-232-3798 for assistance. The Office of Affirmative Action can be contacted in cases of alleged discrimination.

15. Foster Parent Hotline Information

Be informed of the Foster Parent Hotline and information on reporting staff misconduct.

- Training/brochures available on the Foster Parent Hotline and Office of Inspector General

The support directory that is distributed to foster parents annually includes the telephone number for the Office of Inspector General (OIG) (Attached). The OIG handles reports on staff misconduct that should be investigated. This resource is addressed in the Foster Parent Handbook given to foster parents during Pre-Service training.

The support directory also includes the numbers for the general information Foster Parent Hotline (800/624-KIDS or 800/624-5437). The Advocacy Office assists with a broader range of problems or complaints, and their number is also listed on the telephone log (800/232-3798 or 217/524-2029).

Office of the Inspector General and Advocacy Office brochures are available in the Sub-Region's office lobbies. The brochures, information and telephone numbers are listed in the Foster Parent Handbook, on the DCFS web site (www.state.il.us/dcfs) or by request to Department staff.

Foster Parent Responsibilities

1. **Open Communication**

   Openly communicate and share information about the child with the child welfare team.

2. **Confidentiality**

   Respect the confidentiality of information about foster children and their families.

3. **Advocating for Children in Care** Advocate for children in their care.

4. **Treating Children & Families with Dignity and Respect**

   Treat children in their care and their families with dignity, respect and consideration.

5. **Foster Parent Strengths & Weaknesses**

   Recognize their own strengths, limitations and support needs when considering placement of a child.

6. **Affiliations with Foster Parent Associations**

   Be aware of the benefits of relying on and affiliating with other foster parents and foster parent groups in improving the quality of care.

7. **Foster Parent Training Needs**

   Assess their on-going individual training needs and take action to meet those needs.

8. **Strategize to Prevent Placement Disruption**

   Develop and implement strategies to prevent placement disruptions, and to provide support if preventative strategies fail and disruption occurs.

9. **Acknowledge & Minimize Stress**

   Know the impact that foster parenting has on individuals and the family and minimize the resulting stress as much as possible.

10. **Promote Foster Parenting Positively**

Know the rewards and benefits of foster parenting and promote the experience in a positive way.

11. **Roles, Rights & Responsibilities of Child Welfare Team**

Know the roles, rights and responsibilities of foster parents, other child welfare professionals, the child and the child's family.

12. **Mandated Reporter Responsibility**

Know their role as a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse/neglect. Know the policy regarding allegations against foster parents.

13. **Administrative Case Reviews and Court Hearings**

Understand the purpose of and participate in Administrative Case Reviews, service plans and court processes, according to their designated role.

14. **Appeals Systems**

Know the child welfare agency's appeal procedure for foster parents and their rights.

15. **Maintain Accurate & Complete Records**

Maintain accurate and relevant records regarding the child's progress and history and follow agency procedures and regulations.

16. **Communication with Subsequent Caregiver**

Share information about the child's adjustment with a subsequent caregiver, whether it is the parent or another substitute caregiver.

17. **Cultural Sensitivity**

Respect and maintain a child's cultural needs and support relationships with his own family.

FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES – PLAN NARRATIVES

1. Open Communication

Openly communicate and share information about the child with the child welfare team.

- Training on type of communication and importance

Working as a Member of a Professional Team is addressed in session 1 of the Pre-Service training. *Working as a Professional Team* Member is one of the In-Service training modules offered as a class or on DVD. The training addresses team roles and how to advocate for a child in care.

Foster parents' input is invaluable as they usually have the closest contact with and perspective into a child's behaviors. Open communication is encouraged by the staff. Foster parents are invited to staffings, meetings, reviews, hearings and trainings to solicit their input. The support directory provided to foster parents assist and encourages open communication and access to any of the team members (Attached).

2. Confidentiality

Respect the confidentiality of information about foster children and their families.

- Initial and ongoing training on the importance of confidentiality

Confidentiality is addressed in the initial PRIDE training and by licensing staff during the licensing process and each monitoring visit. Respecting confidentiality is a licensing standard discussed with foster parents during semi-annual monitoring visits.

Additional information about confidentiality is found in the Foster Family Handbook and in the Foster Parent Law, both part of the PRIDE training materials and both located on the DCFS web site (www.state.il.us/dcfs). Department staff and support specialists can also answer questions about confidentiality.

- Laws and regulations available to foster parents

Confidentiality is a licensing standard (section 402.24) that is discussed by the licensing workers during the initial licensing process and again at each monitoring visit. It is one of the standards

listed on the *Foster Home Licensing Monitoring Record* signed by the licensing worker and foster parent at each visit.

Foster parents can access state laws, Department rules and confidentiality information on the DCFS web site (www.state.il.us/dcfs) and in the Foster Family Handbook (provided at PRIDE training and available on the web site). The telephone log (attachment a) also has the numbers for the DCFS legal department and the Advocacy Office if foster parents have questions about confidentiality.

3. Advocating for Children in Care

Advocate for children in their care.

- Educational Advocacy training available

The *Educational Advocacy* training is offered year round in a variety of locations both on the west side of the city and in the nearby western suburbs such as Oak Park and River Forest. Weekday and weekend schedules are available. Foster parents can obtain the schedule from their licensing worker, support specialist, or the DCFS web site (www.state.il.us/dcfs). Foster parents can also contact the DCFS training unit directly at 877/800-3393.

Completing *Educational Advocacy* training is a licensing requirement for license renewal. At least one foster parent in each licensed home is required to complete the *Educational Advocacy* training.

Educational Advisors provide trainings and information on educational issues at some of the advisory council meetings. They also provide monthly educational trainings at the Cook South DCFS office at 6201 S. Emerald. These trainings are open to foster parents, service providers and Department staff. Educational Advisors are listed on the telephone log and can be contacted by foster parents for assistance or to answer questions. For assistance with registration for any Virtual Training Center class, Cook foster parents should contact one of the Cook Regional Training Managers at 773/371-6000.

- Court training available

Juvenile court routinely provides court-related trainings throughout the year. This information is being shared at the Sub-Region's monthly advisory council meetings to encourage foster parent participation.

Juvenile Court Process and Court Personnel training has, in the past, been provided in the SubRegion Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings. Court training will be provided to Cook County Foster Parents in 2019.

- Service appeal brochures and training available

The Department has a service appeal process brochure (attached). The brochure is available in the Sub-Region's office lobbies, given out at the service appeal training, at the conclusion of each Administrative Case Review (ACR), and with the Foster Parent Implementation Plan when distributed to foster parents each year. The brochure is also found on the Department web site (www.state.il.us/dcfs). Foster parents can also request a copy of the brochure from Department staff.

The appeals system is annually covered in training at the Advisory Council meeting.

- Encouragement to participate in all staffings, including Administrative Case Review (ACR)s, Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) meetings, IA activities, case conferences and court hearings

Foster parents are encouraged to be active participants at court hearings, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR)s, clinical staffings, Individual Educational Planning (IEP) or other educational meetings, Child and Family Team meetings, Integrated Assessment (IA) activities, Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) meetings and any other consultations that involve children placed in their home.

The importance of participating in the various scheduled events is reinforced by staff, foster parent support specialists and the advisory council meetings. Foster parents are equipped with relevant Sub-Regional telephone numbers to encourage accessible communication with any child welfare team members.

The following in-service trainings were offered during the past year through the Foster Parent Advisory Council: ***Domestic Violence: Signs, Signals, Prevention and Treatment; Tax assistance, Life Book, Bullying: Cyber-Bullying and School Bullying; Car Seat Training , Foster Parent Implementation Plan, Protective Factors; Shared Parenting; Safety in your Home: Fire Safety and Accident Prevention. Computer Training, Enrichment Programs for Young Adults, Be Strong Families.***

4. Treating Children & Families with Dignity and Respect

Treat children in their care and their families with dignity, respect and consideration.

- Initial and ongoing training on this topic

The need to treat children and their families with dignity, respect and consideration is addressed in the initial PRIDE training and the In-Service training modules 2 and 5:

Using Discipline to Protect, Nurture and Meet Developmental Needs and *Supporting Relationships Between Children and Their Families.*

This need is also addressed by the licensing staff during the initial licensing process and each monitoring visit. Staff can answer foster parents' questions or concerns regarding this topic.

- Monitoring by staff charged with case management

Caseworkers communicate with children in care to determine how they are being treated and to ensure there are no violations of dignity, respect and consideration.

5. Foster Parent Strengths & Weaknesses

Recognize their own strengths, limitations and support needs when considering placement of a child.

- Ongoing mutual assessment method

Together foster parents and the licensing worker review at least annually the license capacity and age range based on the foster parents' preferences, capabilities and utilization. Cook Sub-Region's licensing staff developed a *Foster Home Utilization Assessment* as an ongoing mutual assessment tool to track the types of children that were being placed in the home. Since 2006, that form has been used statewide.

The licensing supervisor requires that the utilization form be completed at the annual monitoring visits and requires supervisory review and signature. The form can also be completed during semi-annual visits if there have been changes in placements. Requests for changes in license age range and capacity can occur at any time. License provisions are guided by licensing standards, but also by foster parent ability and interest.

- Training (offered/recommended) based on assessments

The utilization form addresses the children currently in placement and their adjustment behaviors. Specific training may be requested by the foster parent or recommended by the licensing worker based on a child's adjustment and behaviors in that home. Because renewal training is discussed at each monitoring visit, the utilization assessment can offer ideas on relevant training for the foster parent.

- Placements based on strengths

Placements should be based on the foster parents' strengths—a combination of their capabilities and preferences. During the initial and ongoing licensing process, the foster parent's capabilities, preferences and utilization are addressed. The license capacity and age range are based on the assessment.

We attempt to make good matches between children and foster parents to help ensure stable and long-term placements. This effort is best served when placements are made based on foster parent strengths and foster parent insight into their respective limitations. This information helps guide the foster parent's decision whether to accept a child with a particular set of needs.

- Support needs addressed

Foster parents are continuously informed of the support resources available to them through Sub-Regional staff, foster parent support specialists, trainings, informational mailings, the monthly advisory council meetings, the statewide foster parent newsletter and the DCFS web site (www.state.il.us/dcfs).

The utilization form helps licensing staff and foster parents determine possible support needs based on the adjustment and behaviors of the children in the home. Licensing staff are also required to contact the caseworkers who have a child in the home before each monitoring visit to help ensure the foster parent is meeting the child's needs.

Any licensing or child welfare staff as well as the support specialists can assist foster parents with accessing needed supports.

6. Affiliations with Foster Parent Associations

Be aware of the benefits of relying on and affiliating with other foster parents and foster parent groups in improving the quality of care.

- Internal support groups encouraged and information is provided to foster parents

Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings are held each month except December—all foster parents and staff are encouraged to attend. The meetings serve as a support group where foster parents can raise issues, ask questions and network with other foster parents and staff.

Reminders of the meetings are mailed to all caregivers each month and support specialists regularly call foster parents in need of training hours to encourage their participation.

- Affiliations with foster parent associations are encouraged and facilitated

Foster parents are encouraged to attend caregiver conferences and other child welfare-related conferences and institute days. Registration information is mailed to caregivers and staff. Foster Parent Lead Support Specialists also inform foster parents of the conferences. The Department pays for travel expenses and for lodging expenses if the conference is more than 35 miles away.

7. Foster Parent Training Needs

Assess their on-going individual training needs and take action to meet those needs.

- Method and tool for assessing general training needs of foster parents

Licensing workers discuss the training requirement at each monitoring visit per licensing standard 402.12 as listed on the monitoring form that is initialed and signed by foster parents and the licensing worker. The *Foster Home Utilization Assessment* completed by licensing workers annually at minimum can offer ideas on relevant training needs for the foster parent. Specific training may be requested by the foster parent or recommended by the licensing worker based on a child's adjustment and behaviors in that home.

- Process for providing for identified needs

The licensing workers can provide class schedules, DVDs and the Lending Library catalog to foster parents. The information is also available on the DCFS website (www.state.il.us/dcfs), in the

Department newsletters that are mailed to caregivers and through foster parent support specialists.

Foster families can register themselves for In-Service training by contacting the DCFS Training Unit at 877/800-3393 or ask for assistance from their licensing worker or support specialist.

8. Strategies to Prevent Placement Disruption

Develop and implement strategies to prevent placement disruptions, and to provide support if preventative strategies fail and disruption occurs.

- Method of early identification of children at risk of disrupting or creating disruption in the family

Proactive and consistent communication between the foster parent and staff helps identify behaviors, incidents and issues of concern that may lead to disruption. Foster parents should promptly share information of any significance or unusual incident. Behavior logs, provided by licensing staff and available upon request, help caregivers document behaviors and incidents.

Methods to prevent disruption vary. Assessment of concerns is ongoing by staff during in-home visits and other contacts with children and caregivers. Foster parents should seek advice from staff, including caseworkers, supervisors, foster parent support specialists, licensing workers and other staff such as the educational advisors, nurses, etc. to help stabilize a placement. Foster parent support specialists are available 24-hours a day. Respite care can also be approved to provide the caregiver with a break.

If there are signs that a placement is beginning to disrupt, the caseworker will initiate an immediate referral for System of Care (SOC) services to provide early intervention and stabilization services, i.e. SOC or Supportive Assistance Stabilization Services (SASS). Caregivers who are already receiving SOC services can call the SOC hotline (800/345-9049) for crisis intervention 24 hours a day.

Other intervention efforts include requesting Child and Family Team Meetings, clinical staffings, and/or CLINICAL INTERVENTION FOR PLACEMENT PRESERVATION (CIPP) meetings.

Foster parents are expected to give a 14-day notice in writing to the case management team prior to the removal of a child/youth from their home. The notice allows time for the team to implement preventative strategies and services in an effort to avoid a placement disruption. If

the disruption cannot be remedied, the 14-day period allows time to locate an alternative placement.

- Support for foster children and family members if preventative strategies fail

If preventative strategies fail, the child will be moved to an alternative placement.
The foster parents' licensing capacity, capabilities and preferences are mutually reassessed with the licensing worker in an effort to determine the number, types and ages of children to care for in the future to avoid placement disruptions.

When preventative strategies fail, pertinent information needs to be shared with the new caregiver. Continued contact between the former and current foster parent and the child and previous family members is encouraged when appropriate.

- Training in purpose and availability of stabilization services through SOC

Pre-Service training addresses some of the support services available to children and families and that information can be found in the Foster Parent Handbook provided at Pre-Service training and on the DCFS web site (www.state.il.us/dcfs). In-Service classes and materials provide a variety of trainings on stabilization service resources: *Managing the Fostering Experience* addresses minimizing stresses and what supports are available; and *Working as a Professional Team Member* includes how to advocate for children in your care. Department staff can also be asked about what services are available and how to access them.

9. Acknowledge & Minimize Stress

Know the impact that foster parenting has on individuals and the family and minimize the resulting stress as much as possible.

- Training/methods to recognize and minimize stress factors

Foster parents are encouraged to participate in the monthly Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings for networking, support and to hear and be heard by other caregivers and child welfare staff.

The goal is to develop strategies to increase foster parent attendance to the advisory council meetings. Other efforts include organizing a foster parent roundtable for caregivers to share their experiences.

Pre-Service training attempts to help prepare foster parents for many of the experiences and stresses of foster parenting. Foster parents need to learn to recognize their preferences and abilities to foster specific types, ages and numbers of children. Caseworkers, licensing workers and support specialists communicate with one another to raise issues of concern and to support foster parents. Foster parents should be comfortable in raising issues of concern to staff's attention in order for these concerns to be addressed and support provided.

In-Service classes also encourage discussion and may assist foster parents in learning methods to relieve stress. Module 9 is available in the community or on DVD: *Managing the Fostering Experience* addresses minimizing stresses and what supports are available to foster parents.

- Respite available

Respite care is available and can be requested by contacting the caseworker, licensing worker or support specialist. The support specialists will assist the foster parent in completing the necessary paperwork. This process is simplified if the foster parent has identified caregivers in advance for potential emergency situations. The pool of licensed foster parents can also be used as respite resources.

- "Voluntary hold" methods explained and understood

There are two types of voluntary hold options for foster parents who may want temporary relief from foster parenting. Foster parents can ask their licensing worker to place them on voluntary hold so that they are not contacted for placements until the foster parent wants to be available again. Licensing monitoring visits continue bi-annually.

A foster parent can also ask their licensing worker to put them on voluntary non-active hold status. The home must be in good standing, have no foster children in placement and maintain compliance with licensing standards, but will not receive licensing monitoring visits during the non-active hold. The foster parent can request that their license and availability for placements be reactivated at any time.

- Counseling and other supports available

The support directory lists a variety of supports available to foster parents, i.e. education advisors, nurses, etc. Foster parents should contact staff for assistance. When foster parents have ongoing conversations with workers, support specialists or other staff, appropriate interventions

can be put in place for support. Supports include counseling, respite care, recreational activities and tutoring or educational activities (See Appendixes A and B).

Supportive Assistance Support Services (SASS) can be contacted 24 hours a day for crisis concerns or assessment of a child in care. SASS services often result in counseling. There is also access to the Emergency Resource Center (ERC) 24 hours day (773-538-8800). The Foster Parent Hotline or Advocacy Office is available during business hours to answer questions.

10. Promote Foster Parenting Positively

Know the rewards and benefits of foster parenting and promote the experience in a positive way.

- Foster parents are encouraged to participate in events/activities that acknowledge and support foster parents.

Events that acknowledge and support foster parents include the monthly advisory council meetings, Lifebook Workshops throughout Cook County, annual celebrations of Foster Parent Appreciation month each May, family tickets to the annual state fair, Christmas gift giveaways, invitations to caregiver and other child welfare related conferences and on occasion, tickets to professional baseball games, the zoo, community fairs and other family-oriented events.

The 2019 Foster Parent Appreciation month events included an evening dinner for caregivers, prizes, and gifts of appreciation.

- Training in the public relations aspect of foster parenting is made available

Foster parents represent themselves and their roles daily to their neighbors, community and the broader child welfare community. They are recognized as being the best resource for recruiting additional foster parents by sharing their knowledge and experience as well as through expressing the rewards and benefits of foster parenting.

Current foster parents serve as role models to current and future applicants when they represent themselves in various roles: as PRIDE and In-Service training instructors; as members of the child welfare professionals panel during PRIDE training session 9; as attendees and panel members at the various child welfare conferences; as support specialists; as members of the regional and statewide advisory councils; as co-trainers with department staff and as caregivers to children.

11. Roles, Rights & Responsibilities of Child Welfare Team

Know the roles, rights and responsibilities of foster parents, other child welfare professionals, the child and the child's family.

- Training and co-training with staff is required

The monthly advisory council meetings are attended by foster parents and staff. The meetings serve as a support group where foster parents learn about the roles, rights and responsibilities of foster parents, child welfare professionals and the child and the child's family. Trainings are offered at each meeting that benefits both foster parents and staff. Staff and foster parents are also attendees and panel members at the various child welfare conferences.

- Regular meetings with other team members are held and encouraged

The monthly advisory council meetings are attended by foster parents and staff for information sharing, support and training. Foster parents are notified by mail each month of the standing schedule.

Foster parents are encouraged to be active participants at meetings, staffings and any other consultations with other team members that involve children placed in their home. Foster parents are notified in person, by mail and/or by telephone.

- Foster parents have a recognized voice within the agency's management organization

The foster parents are members of the regional advisory council and two of them serve on the Statewide Foster Parent Advisory Council and actively participate in those meetings and activities. The council is mandated by the Foster Parent Law and provides foster parent input to DCFS. Statewide council members attend the advisory council meetings to report on current issues and obtain feedback.

Foster parents take ownership of the Foster Parent Advisory Council through membership and participation. The Sub-Regional advisory council facilitates communication to the statewide council and statewide members, especially during the monthly meetings.

The Lead Foster Parent Support Specialist is included in supervisory meetings where all levels of Sub-Regional management are in attendance. She reports on matters relevant to the foster parents.

Foster parents are invited and encouraged to participate in the development of the annual implementation plan. All foster parents were invited to the advisory council meetings for their input and review of this year's implementation plan. They were all asked to provide written comments regarding the meeting and plan.

Additionally, foster parents are encouraged to use the telephone directory to contact the management staff as necessary.

12. Mandated Reporter Responsibility

Know their role as a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse/neglect. Know the policy regarding allegations against foster parents.

- Training—initial and ongoing—including mandated reporter responsibilities

Pre-Service PRIDE training addresses mandated reporter responsibility as a legal obligation for all licensed caregivers.

Mandated Reporter training is currently available online training through the DCFS web site (www.state.il.us/dcfs).

- Written foster parent acknowledgement/contract

All foster parents must sign the Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status form for their licensing worker during the initial licensing process and with each license renewal. Licensing workers explain that foster parents are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Foster parents should read and sign the form acknowledging understanding of this requirement.

A signed Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status form is required to be in each licensing file in the Sub-Region for every 4-year licensing period. Completion of the form is reviewed by the supervisor prior to approving licensing recommendations such as initial licensure and renewals and during quarterly peer reviews.

- Training involving allegations against foster parents and the applicable rules and regulations which govern the investigation of the allegations

Pre-Service training informs foster parents of the rules and regulations that govern investigations of alleged child abuse/neglect and alleged violations of rule against foster parents. The professional panel members that participate in session 9 of the Pre-Service training usually include a licensing worker and a DCP investigator; first-hand information is given to foster parents at this time and questions answered.

Also, licensing workers and foster parent support specialists can answer questions regarding complaint investigations at any time. Additional information on complaint investigations can be found in the Foster Parent Handbook.

13. Administrative Case Reviews and Court Hearings

Understand the purpose of and participate in Administrative Case Reviews, service plans and court processes, according to their designated role.

- Training on the importance of participating
- Emphasis on foster parents taking an active role in planning for permanency goal through court hearings, Administrative Case Reviews, Integrated Assessments, etc.

Pre-Service training focuses on foster parents being a member of the professional child welfare team and session two of PRIDE training is *Teamwork Toward Permanence*. Teamwork includes active participation by the foster parents in the service planning, meetings, staffings and court processes for the child. *Working As a Professional Team Member* is one of the In-Service trainings available as a class or on DVD.

Foster Parent Visit form lists various topics of discussion that the foster parent should inquire about if the subject is not covered by the caseworker during in-home visits or telephone contacts. Inquiring about Administrative Case Reviews and court hearings are two of the topics that foster parents should actively pursue.

Caseworker accountability is dictated by policy guides and is reviewed during supervisory review and approval of forms, reports and case notes. Accountability is also demonstrated through preparation, documentation and information sharing during case reviews and court hearings.

14. Appeals Systems

Know the child welfare agency's appeal procedure for foster parents and their rights.

- Awareness of the Department's internal appeals systems and its utilization

Service appeals are addressed in Pre-Service training and in the Foster Parent Handbook. If foster parents do not agree with a decision made or action taken by DCFS, they can challenge the decision or actions by filing an appeal. The most common service appeals in the Sub-Region address removal of a child from a foster parent.

Foster Parents or Relative Caregivers may appeal:

- Decisions that directly affect the caregiver, such as payments for the care of the child for whom the department is legally responsible
- Decisions about services for the benefit of the child for whom the department is legally responsible and is in their care, such as day care, medical, education or psychological services
- Failure to provide services as specified in the service plan for the benefit of the child. This does not include services for the biological family such as family therapy or counseling.
- A change in the child's substitute care placement, provided that the child has been placed in the home for at least 60 days. This does not include placements with the biological or adoptive parent(s), or sibling(s), placements for purposes of adoption as ordered by the court, or return to an individual(s) with whom the child resided prior to entering substitute care.

What May Not Be Appealed

Foster Parents may not appeal some decisions or actions by the department through the Service Appeal Process. These are:

- Adjustments made in services by change in state or federal law
- Issues already determined through the department's Service Appeal Process
- When the issue is not defined as a service under specific department rules. (Foster parents may find they can appeal these issues under other appeal processes within the department and the appeal will be routed to the appropriate process.)
- Services offered to department clientele for which the department is not responsible but another state or federal agency is solely responsible for carrying out these services, such as medical assistance
- When a court has made a judicial determination or issued an order on the issue being appealed

How to Request an Appeal through the Service Appeal Process
If foster parents do not agree with a decision made or action taken by DCFS pertaining to services, they may do the following:

Appeal within 10 days from receiving notice and may be able to stop the department from acting on its decision until such time that the case has proceeded through the Service Appeal Process. If they do not agree with the decision made in a clinical placement review regarding the change in placement of a child in your care, request an appeal within 10 days from the clinical placement decision.

Foster Parents should request a service appeal in writing within 45 days from receiving notice of the decision or action intended to be taken by the department. If a foster parent, is unable to submit a written request, contact they should contact their local office and someone from the department will assist in preparing a written request.

The appeal/written request should be submitted to: Administrative Hearings Unit, DCFS, 406 E. Monroe, Station 15, Springfield, IL 62701, 217/782-6655. The request should include the foster parent's name, address, telephone and a brief summary stating their position on the department's decision or action the foster parent is appealing. The foster parent may also include any other information they feel the department should consider when reviewing its decision.

The appeal should be a written request and submitted to: Administrative Hearings Unit, DCFS, 406 E. Monroe, Station 15, Springfield, IL 62701, 217/782-6655. The request should include the foster parent's name, address, telephone and a brief summary about what is being appealed. If the appeal stems from the receipt of a Notice of Change of Placement the foster parent can call the telephone number on the letter or fax the notice to request a review.

The service appeals brochures are distributed annually to foster parents along with the implementation plan, provided at the conclusion of each Administrative Case Review (ACR), available in the office lobbies, available on the DCFS web site (www.state.il.us/dcfs) and by request. Foster parent support specialists are available to assist foster parents with obtaining and filing service appeals information.

- Rights of foster parents are documented and shared

The rights of foster parents are included in the annual implementation plan. Foster parent rights are discussed at advisory council meetings during the months the plan is being revised. The rights can also be found in the foster parent handbook and on the DCFS web site (www.state.il.us/dcfs) or by request to staff.

15. Maintain Accurate & Complete Records

Maintain accurate and relevant records regarding the child's progress and history and follow agency procedures and regulations.

- Training is provided on the importance of maintaining complete records

The need to maintain complete records as one of the licensing standards and expectations is addressed in Pre-Service training. The licensing workers also regularly address this need as part of the initial licensing process and ongoing at each annual and semi-annual monitoring visit with foster parents.

- Regulations/expectations are available in writing

Maintaining records of each child is a licensing standard (section 402.26) that is required of foster parents and is discussed during the initial licensing process and at each licensing monitoring visit. *Records to be Maintained* is one of the standards listed on the Family Foster Home Licensing Monitoring Record signed by the licensing worker and foster parent at each monitoring visit. Discussion of this topic is confirmed by the foster parent's initials and signature on the monitoring form during monitoring visits. The licensing workers may physically confirm that records are being maintained during visits. Folders to maintain records are distributed to foster parents after the Advisory Council Meetings.

The expectations are detailed in Part 402 Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes that is provided to foster parents with their application for licensure and is part of the Pre-Service training materials. The information can also be found on the DCFS web site (www.state.il.us/dcfs) or by request to Department staff.

- Agency provides folder, notebook or case record for the storage of records

The licensing workers provide an expanding file folder to each foster parent applicant during the licensing process to reinforce the importance of keeping a child's records together and organized. The folder also includes an insert to encourage the foster parent to keep important contact

numbers in the folder such as caseworker, supervisor, foster parent support specialist and licensing worker (Attached).

16. Communication with Subsequent Caregiver

Share information about the child's adjustment, through the child welfare team, with a subsequent caregiver, whether it is the parent or another substitute caregiver.

- Training on this expectation is offered

Information sharing is addressed in the Pre-Service PRIDE training. Foster parents are expected to share information on a child's daily living, behavior, education and other relevant information during contacts with staff and other child welfare team members. Staff is then equipped to share adjustment and needs information with subsequent caregivers based on what has been learned about the child. The support specialists also facilitate information sharing with subsequent caregivers.

The PRIDE training encourages foster parents to help the child create a life book with photos and other items that are reflections of the child's past and present.
Organized record keeping is a licensing standard addressed in training and routinely discussed at licensing monitoring visits.

All relevant documentation about the child, including his life book, should follow him to subsequent placements whether it is another foster family or a return home to the parent.

17. Cultural Sensitivity

Respect and maintain a child's cultural needs and support relationships with his own family.

- Initial and ongoing training is encouraged and made available

Learning how to support a child's cultural identity and connections to family, community and culture are addressed in the Pre-Service PRIDE training as these are foster parent obligations related to licensing standards and vital to a child's well-being.

Two In-Service trainings are regularly offered in the Sub-Region that addresses cultural sensitivity: *Transcultural Parenting* and *Promoting Children's Personal & Cultural Identity*. The

lending library catalog also offers training materials about cultural diversity and supporting relationships.

Foster parents also participate on the Permanency Enhancement Action teams to address cultural sensitivity issues.

- Internal and external resources are made accessible or available

The Pre-Service PRIDE training promotes exposing a child to their culture at every opportunity. A primary factor to this exposure is through supporting family relationships. Much of this is done through active participation in child-family visits and other in-person contacts such as shared parenting activities: attending medical appointments, school conferences and Child & Family Team meetings together. Relationships are also supported when family members and children write letters, receive phone calls and share pictures.

Foster parents can use external methods to develop cultural sensitivity as well. Learn together about the child's culture through books, museums, music, food and community events. Expose the child to members of his community of origin. Opportunities to develop foster parent cultural sensitivity and a child's cultural identity are many.

One of the Regional assets is the bicultural, bilingual staff from different ethnic backgrounds, who are readily available to provide insight from their own cultural background and perspective. This may be offered, not only directly to foster parents but to their co-workers who may be the caseworker for a particular case. Another effective communication tools and supports offered to staff is access to a language translation line which assists all parties with understanding one another. This service is available throughout the life of the case. Effective communication among foster parents, caseworkers, family and other stakeholders directly impacts service delivery to the families served.

The Cook Sub-Regional offices are located in diverse neighborhoods to provide opportunity for increasing partnerships with community agencies offering culturally supportive resources and services that address the needs of families and children as well as foster parent partners caring for children.

SUPPORTS AVAILABLE

TO

FOSTER PARENTS

Appendix A

APPENDIX A

Supports Available to All Foster Children and Families

ADOPTION

Adoption Information Center of Illinois (AICI) **1-800-572-2390/Voicemail**

M-F 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Sat. 9 a.m. – 5 p.m./Sun. Closed

- Information: Adoption process and adoption agencies.
- Adoption Listing Service: Descriptions and photos of waiting children.
- Post Adoption Clearinghouse: Services available for adoptive families.
- Refer prospective adoptive families to AICI, or to your agency.
- Foster families interested in adopting their foster child/ren or another child, should contact their supervising agency.

Cook County ONLY

Expedited Adoption Program (EAP)

Christina Schneider **312-814-7298**

M-Thu 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m./Voicemail

312-633-3451

Fri 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m./Voicemail

Foster parents of children whose cases meet one of these criteria should ask the worker if the case has been referred to EAP, or may call this program directly for information.

Cook County caseworkers may refer children's cases meeting one of these criteria to this project:

- 1 parent deceased/1 parent signed and surrenders or consents
- Both parents signed surrenders or consents
- Both parents deceased
- 1 parent's rights terminated/1 parent signed surrender
- 1 parent unknown/1 parent signed surrender or deceased
- Both parents unknown
- 1 parent signed surrender or deceased/1 parent's whereabouts unknown
- Both parents' whereabouts unknown

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ADVOCACY

DCFS Advocacy Office for Children and Families **800-232-3798**
M-F 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m./Voicemail

Help for foster parents, workers, birth parents, and the public in:

- Understanding/verifying DCFS rule, policy, and procedure.
- Obtaining services for foster children.
- Understanding what can be appealed through the DCFS Service Appeal system or In filing a service appeal with DCFS, including emergency appeals.

Callers should have this information ready: Child's name, birth date, identification number, Caseworker and supervisor's name and phone numbers

AIDS/HIV

DCFS AIDS Project **312-328-2154**
312-328-2158
M-F 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Help for foster parents and HIV/AIDS affected families with relatives in foster care:

- Referral to local and statewide services
- Orientation and training about foster HIV/AIDS children.
- Referral to agency foster parenting programs for HIV/AIDS children.

Resources

Illinois Department of Public Health
HIV/AIDS Section
Phone: 217-524-5983
E-mail: DPH.MAILUS@illinois.gov

CDC-INFO (CDC Information)
Hours: 24 hours/day
Phone: 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636)
TTY: 888-232-6348
E-mail: cdcinfo@cdc.gov
Chat online with an NPIN Information Specialist M-F 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. (ET)
Website: www.cdcnpin.org

Resources (continued)

Illinois HIV/AIDS and STD Hotline
Phone: 800-243-2437
(800-AID-AIDS)
TTY: 800-782-0423

AIDS Treatment Information Services
English and Spanish Speaking
Health Information Specialists
M-F, Noon – 5 p.m.
Phone: 800-448-0440
TTY: 888-480-3739
E-mail: ContactUs@aidsinfo.nih.gov
Live Help: http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/livehelp
Website: www.aidsinfo.nih.gov

APPEALS/MEDIATION

DCFS Appeals Unit **312-814-5540**
217-782-6655
M-F 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

- Information about filing a service appeal or requesting mediation services.
- To file an appeal or request mediation services through DCFS.

ATTORNEY

For foster parents who are sued...as a result of being a foster parent. Contact your lead foster parent support specialist for further details.

BEHAVIOR/MENTAL HEALTH

Behavioral Crisis Help
Placement Stabilization Program (SASS) **800-345-9049**
24 Hours

BOARD PAYMENTS—SEE FOSTER CARE PAYMENTS

BRACES—SEE DENTAL CARE-Referral to an Orthodontist

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(CASA)-SEE COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

DCFS Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline

800-25-ABUSE (800-252-2873)
Illinois Callers Only/24 Hours
Outside Illinois Callers: 217-785-4020

For mandated reporters and the public to report suspected cases of abuse or neglect. Reporters can remain anonymous. Foster parents are mandated to report suspected abuse or neglect of any children, especially foster children placed with them.

CHILDREN

General Resources for ALL Illinois Children
HELP-ME-GROW

800-323-4769
TTY 1-888-261-2713

Referral to ALL Illinois programs which directly impact children, including Early Intervention programs for children 0-3 and programs related to disabilities.

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CLAIMS - Damages to Property or Bodily Injury Caused By A Foster Child

Foster Parent Reimbursement Program

312-814-7294
M- F 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Contact: Pamela Paulson

Call for information about filing a claim for damage to your property or the property of someone else, or for bodily injury to you, a member of your family, or someone else caused by a foster child.

How do foster parents file a claim?

Immediately notify the child's caseworker that a claim needs to be filed. The caseworker will review the damage and request that a claim form be sent directly to the foster parents.

Complete the claim form, have the child's caseworker sign it, and attach all pertinent receipts and other supporting documents, and have the worker make a copy of everything for the foster parent before they mail to:

Foster Child Damage Reimbursement Program
Coordinator: Pamela Paulson
Department of Children & Family Services
100 W. Randolph 6th Floor
Chicago, IL 60601
1-312-814-7294

Note: The *uninsured* foster parent must provide the names, addresses and the policy numbers for any homeowner or health insurance that is currently in force, including employer or school insurance. The *uninsured foster parent* must provide a notarized written statement that there is no primary insurance coverage.

How does DCFS handle the claim?

The DCFS Program Coordinator will review the claim to ensure that all necessary information is present and forward it to the Review Committee.

The Reimbursement Committee meets every month. Once a decision for payment is approved or denied, the foster parent will be contacted by mail. If payment for the claim is approved, the foster parent will receive reimbursement within 8 to 12 weeks.

All payments for claims will be paid to the party which incurred the damage or sustained the injury.

CLAIMS - Continued

When can a foster parent NOT collect?

- If the damages caused by the foster child resulted from inadequate supervision on the part of the foster parent/s OR as a result of the foster parent/s not following the standards and requirements set forth in the DCFS Licensing Standards.
- If the foster parent/s are covered for the full amount of the claim by their own insurance policy.
- Foster parents must, in most cases, file a claim with their own insurance FIRST, before making a claim with DCFS.
- If the claim does not contact proof of payment or the estimated replacement cost of an item, from an established business.
- If an act allegedly occurs, but cannot be proven, such as the foster child denying a theft which cannot be verified.
- If the claim is untrue, false, fraudulent or the actual facts have been tampered with or distorted.
- If damages arose out of business pursuits of a foster parent.

CLOTHING – SEE FOSTER CARE PAYMENTS

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES (CASA)

Cook County Only

312-433-4928
Director: Elizabeth Keith
1100 S. Hamilton, 8-West
Chicago, IL 60612

Outside Cook County

CASA Statewide Office
Peoria Office
7501 N. University, Suite 217 B
Peoria, IL 61614
Phone 309/683-8788
Fax 309/683-8790
staff@illinoiscasa.org
Executive Director
Ruth Lane
ruth@illinoiscasa.org

National CASA Association
100 W. Harrison Street
North Tower, Suite 500
Seattle, Washington 98119
800.628.3233
www.nationalcasa.org

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CRISIS – HELP in an Unexpected Crisis with a Foster Child

DCFS Placement Stabilization Program (SASS) **800-345-9049**
24 Hours

Call if your foster child's unexpected behavior threatens his/her placement with your family.
A crisis worker can come to your home within 60 minutes (city) or 90 minutes (rural) **if you request.**

DAMAGES-SEE CLAIMS

DAYCARE-SEE EMPLOYMENT RELATED DAYCARE

DEAF-SERVICES FOR DEAF OR HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN

DCFS Deaf Services Coordinator **800-526-0857**
DCFS Relay Operator
Ask for 312-814-4117

Call to find services for deaf or hearing impaired children, or to identify your family as a possible foster family for a deaf child. If you or someone in your family knows sign language for the deaf, foster families with this capability are needed.

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DENTAL CARE

DENTAL CHECKUPS: **Dental Quest of Illinois**
888-28-2447

REFERRAL TO AN ORTHODONTIST:
Your child's regular dentist must make a referral to an orthodontist who takes the Medicaid card.

Cook County Only

Severely Disabled Children ONLY: **773-296-7063**
Contact Barbara

This special dental program is open to severely disabled children ONLY. Call for an appointment and identify the child as a foster child.

Payment is made for those Dental Services essential to prevent dental disease and to restore and maintain adequate dental function to assure good bodily health of the patient through Medicaid.

Services not covered by Medicaid require DCFS review and prior approval before the ineligible service can be given to the child. Contact the child's caseworker for specific requests.

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DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (DCFS)

General Information and Referral **800-232-3798**

Offices-Cook County

100 W. Randolph
Chicago, Illinois
60601

1911 S. Indiana
Chicago, Illinois
60616

1701 S. 1st Avenue
Maywood, Illinois
60153

1755 Lake Cook Road
Deerfield, Illinois
60015

1026 S. Damen
Chicago, Illinois
60612

6201 S. Emerald
Chicago, Illinois
60621

15115 S. Dixie Highway
Harvey, Illinois
60426

DCFS CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT HOTLINE: **800-25-ABUSE/800-252-2873**

Foster parents are mandated to report suspected abuse or neglect of children.

ADVOCACY OFFICE: **800-232-3798**

RULES, POLICY AND PROCEDURES-See Website: **www.state.il.us/dcfs**

EMERGENCIES

Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline
800-25-ABUSE/800-252-2873
After Business Hours/24 Hours

Medical or Fire
911
24 Hours

(See EMERGENCY)

DCFS Office of Legal Services

2245 W. Ogden/3rd Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60612
312-633-3400

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EDUCATION

Educational Advocacy

Help in obtaining services for a child. Contact the caseworker, supervisor, and agency.

Cook County Educational Advisors

Donnis Briscoe	**312-328-2607**
Arlecia Brown	**773-371-6479**
Yasmina Sefiane	**773-292-7725**

Special Education Services

Discuss your foster child's needs with the caseworker and the school. If you are still unclear, you may call the Educational Liaison for the private agency or the Educational Advisor for DCFS supervised families.

Services

Assessments and services may be provided through the school district where the child attends school, your agency, or DCFS. Your child's caseworker, the supervisor, and/or the agency is responsible for helping you determine how to meet your child's educational needs or need for special educational services.

Early Intervention Programs

Programs for children 0-3 years of age related to developmental delays and disabilities.
Call Help-Me-Grow **800-323-4769.**

Testing

Ask the caseworker to make the appropriate request of your local school.

Legal Advocacy

Help and advice for foster parents in understanding legal options in advocating for your foster child's rights is available. Contact the child's caseworker or the Educational Liaison/Advisor for further assistance in connecting with the Legal Help needed.

Head Start

DCFS has entered into a cooperative agreement with Illinois Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) Programs in order to improve educational outcomes for children in care. An EHS referral may be made for children to 2 years old by the caseworker. The caseworker may by-pass the EHS referral step when a foster parent is in need of eligible child care related services for the child. However efforts will be made to ensure the EHS provider is aware of the child's history and will alert the caseworker with any concerns they observe while caring for the child.

Enrollment in HS/EHS programs may be initiated by the caseworker or the caregiver.

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EMERGENCY

In any emergency with a foster child, do what is necessary first, and then contact the child's caseworker and the agency. Private agency foster parents should have an emergency after-hours number to contact their agency in case of emergency. DCFS foster parents should obtain emergency numbers from their Foster Parent Support Specialists or DCFS region.

Abuse/Neglect

Report suspected abuse/neglect of a child to the DCFS Hotline **800-25-ABUSE**

Behavioral Crisis

Call Placement Stabilization **800-345-9049**
24 Hours

Life-Threatening Behavior

Call the police. Contact your agency. **911**

Medical Emergency

Call 911 or go to your local hospital emergency room.
Contact your supervising agency or DCFS region. **911**

Fire Emergency

Call 911 and contact your supervising agency or DCFS region **911**

Poison Hotline

800-222-1222
24 Hours
www.Illinoispoisoncenter.org

To obtain immediate instructions for saving the life of an adult or child who has taken poison. Have the product container handy, if possible, to read specific contents to the specialist answering the hotline.

Recalled Children's Products

U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission **(CPSC)**

800-638-2772
www.cpsc.gov
www.saferproducts.gov

Runaway

If your foster child runs away, make a police report. Contact your agency. **866-503-0184**

Death of a Child

Immediately contact your supervising agency or DCFS region.

Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline
800-25-ABUSE/800-252-2873
After Business Hours/24 Hours

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EMPLOYMENT RELATED DAY CARE

Eligibility

DCFS will pay for child care for two-parent foster homes, where both parents are working, or single foster parent homes where the single foster parent works, or is in job training or educational programs which will lead to employment. DCFS may also pay for child care for other documented reasons, such as: disability of a foster parent, a disabling condition of a child or when day care is court-ordered.

In homes where there are two foster parents, both foster parents must be working, or at least one has to be working if the other is disabled. If a foster parent is disabled, a doctor's statement will be required. The statement must explain the extent of the disabling condition(s), including the duration, prognosis and how the disability impairs the person's ability to care for the child/ren in that home.

You are not eligible, if for any reason, you are not actually reporting to work, such as in the cases of seasonal/temporary employment, leave of absence, lay-off, etc. For example, a teacher would not be eligible for day care payment during the summer, if he or she were employed but did not actually go to work during the summer. You also are not eligible if you are looking for work or to attend foster parent training. Foster parents who enroll a child in day care and are not eligible are subject to paying for the day care. If you are in doubt about your eligibility, prior to enrolling a child, contact the regional DCFS Office Day Care Service Unit or the Office of Child Development (for Cook County) at 312-808-5060.

Day Care Rates

The amount DCFS will pay for day care depends on: type of day care chosen (day care center, licensed family day care home, babysitter, relative, etc.) and your location within Illinois.

There are maximum day care rates which can be paid for each type of care. Most day care centers and homes accept the state rate. If you want to choose one not accepting the state rate, you must pay the additional amount. Check with your caseworker, or DCFS regional office (outside Cook County), or the DCFS Office of Child Development (Cook County ONLY).

Finding a Day Care Provider

Call the Child Care Resource and Referral (DCR&R) in your area. See page 15.

Identify yourself as a foster parent! The service will be FREE because you are inquiring on behalf of a foster child. The general public pays a modest fee for this service based on family size and income.

A CCR&R child care specialist will consult with you by phone and provide a list of local day care providers that meet your child's needs from a computerized database of child care information. Have this information handy: ZIP code; number of children needing day care and their ages; hours you will need day care; any special needs.

Tip: The caseworker must approve your selection of any day care provider. DCFS strongly encourages the use of licensed family day care homes. Ask the CCR&R child care specialist to discuss the advantages of licensed day care with you. Selecting a licensed day care provider makes the caseworker's approval decision much easier.

EMPLOYMENT RELATED DAY CARE (Continued)

How to Make A Day Care Request

1) Contact your caseworker with your day care plan as soon as possible.
   The caseworker may have questions and must determine that the day care plan for the children is appropriate.
2) You and your caseworker will:
   - Complete the day care application
   - Obtain the three signatures required: foster parent, caseworker and day care provider.

     Keep copies of the application submitted, and all required documentation of employment or training. In case of loss or future questions, you will have what you need at your fingertips.
3) Submit the completed application and all documentation to your regional DCFS Office Day Care Service Unit; or the Office of Child Development (for Cook County cases) at 312-808-5060.

Ways to Eliminate Payment Delays and Non-Payment

Completed applications with all signatures and documentation must be submitted no later than 30 days after the start of day care services to ensure timely payment. Submissions of day care applications after this time may result in payment delays to the day care provider and possible nonpayment.

Non-Employment Related Day Care and Day Care for Children of Foster Teens

Contact your regional DCFS Office Day Care Service Unit; or Office of Child Development (Cook County) to obtain the correct application form and procedures about how to apply.

Day Care Payment Approval Notification

After day care applications are approved by the regional DCFS Office Day Care Service Unit or Office of Child Development, both the foster parent and the day care provider will receive a computer –generated approval letter. Keep the approval letter in file for future reference.

Day Care Provider Billing

Shortly after the day care provider receives the approval letter, and at the end of each month of service, DCFS mails a computer-generated billing form to the day care provider. The billing form should be completed, signed and returned without delay. Payments will normally be received within 2-3 weeks after bills are submitted.

EMPLOYMENT RELATED DAY CARE (Continued)

Questions After Day Care Approval

Call your regional DCFS Day Care Service staff.

Be ready to give the staff the following information when you call:

- Your 5-digit Family I.D. number shown on the approval letter.
- The name of the day care provider.
- The 6-digit day care provider number shown on the approval letter.
- Specific month/s of payment that are in question.

Re-Determining Eligibility for Day Care

After you begin receiving day care, you must notify DCFS if

- Either foster parent stops working or attending school for any reason, including a leave of absence or disability.
- The child no longer needs day care.
- You change day care providers (this will require a new application).
- The day care provider's address changes.
- You adopt or become a subsidized guardian to the child/ren.
- The child no longer resides in your home. Note: Day care approval does not transfer to a child's new foster parent or to the birth parent when the child returns home. This will require a new application by the current caretaker.

Eligibility for day care services must be re-determined every six months or as deemed necessary by the regional DCFS Day Care Service Unit or the Cook County Office of Child Development. Completion of the re-determination, including the submission of any required documentation for employment, training or disability will be required for the continuation of day care service payment. You may contact the regional DCFS Office Day Care Service Unit or the Office of Child Development (for Cook County) at 312-808-5060 if you have questions or need assistance with the re-determination.

Call Your DCFS Office for Day Care Applications/Rates/Questions

Cook County	DCFS Office of Child Development 1921 S. Indiana Ave. Chicago, IL 60616	312-808-5060 312-808-5131 fax

APPENDIX A

Supports Available to All Foster Children and Families

FOSTER CARE PAYMENTS

Foster Children's Personal and Physical Maintenance

Most foster parents are volunteers and do not get paid for their services. The State of Illinois through the Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS), however, *reimburses* Illinois foster parents monthly for each foster child's"

"Board" (food, housing, utilities, etc.)

- Clothes
- Child's personal allowance

Monthly reimbursement payments are not income for foster parents and should not be reported as income for federal or state income tax purposes.

Licensed, Non-Specialized Foster Care
Reimbursement Rate
Effective July 1st, 2013

The amount of **licensed monthly reimbursement** payment is based on age of the child and is commonly referred to as the "foster care board rate". Any changes to the regular foster care rate must be approved by the Illinois Legislature within DCFS' annual budget.

Child's Age	Total	Board	Clothing	Allowance*
0 thru 11 mo.	$401	$352	$37	$12
1 thru 4 yrs.	$409	$354	$42	$13
5 thru 8 yrs.	$427	$357	$56	$14
9 thru 11 yrs.	$453	$364	$65	$24
12 yrs. & Over	$491	$374	$74	$43

*The personal allowance for children age 4 years and under is to be used by foster parents for incidentals (toys, rattles, etc.), which become the property of the child.

The majority of Illinois foster children are cared for by families receiving the licensed foster care reimbursement rates shown. Some foster children, however, have severe behavioral, emotional or medical problems that require foster parents with training and/or competencies beyond those of the regular foster parent. In those instances, the child's case may be referred to an agency that has a specialized program to meet his or her identified needs. If you are interested in finding out more about fostering children with severe behavioral, emotional, or medical problems, ask your agency if their contract with DCFS includes children which match your special skills or interests.

FOSTER CARE PAYMENTS (Continued)

Standard-of-Need
Reimbursement Rate
Unlicensed Foster Parents

The standard-of-need rates for all *unlicensed* relative foster parents are as follows depending on the county of residence and the number of children in the home. These rates do change so unlicensed relative foster parents should always check with the Central Payment Unit (800-525-0499) for the most current rate.

Group 1 Only

Number of DCFS Children In the Home	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Payment Amount per Caregiver	$310	$612	$756	$972	$1155	$1236	$1330	$1424	$1530	$1540

Group 1 Includes counties: Boone, Champaign, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, Ogle, Whiteside, Winnebago, and Woodford.

Monthly Foster Care Check Distribution

DCFS supervised licensed foster families and caregivers who receive the Standard of Need reimbursement rate receive a monthly reimbursement check mailed directly from DCFS. Private Agency supervised licensed foster families receive a monthly check from their private agency, which has received the funds from DCFS.

How Monthly Payments Work

- A foster care payment begins on the day a child is placed in the foster home and ends on the day before the child leaves.
- Foster parents receive a reimbursement check for the previous month. *Example: If the child is placed on October 18th, the foster family will receive payment for October 18-31 (14 days) on or about November 20. In December, the foster family will receive payment for the entire month of November, if the child was in their home for the entire month.*
- When a child moves into a higher age category, the licensed foster care rate is increased automatically. *Children move into higher categories on their 1st, 5th, 9th and 12th birthdays.*
- *Private Agencies determine monthly payment times for licensed foster parents under their supervision, but payments must be made monthly.*

FOSTER CARE PAYMENTS (Continued)

If You Do Not Receive Your Monthly Foster Care Check

- ***Licensed Private Agency Foster Parents*** contact your agency. Your agency is responsible for getting your monthly payment to you. Make sure that your agency has your correct address.
- ***Licensed DCFS Foster Parents*** who have questions or believe there is a problem, contact the caseworker, your Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS), or the local DCFS office for assistance. Make sure that DCFS has your correct address. For an automated 24-hour message about when the last check was sent, or when to expect your next check, call the DCFS Payment Line at **800-525-0499.**
- ***Unlicensed Caregivers Receiving the Standard of Need Rate*** who have questions or believe there is a problem should call the automated 24-hour DCFS Payment Line at **800-525-0499.** Staff may be able to assist you with questions or problems during business hours.
- ***Pattern of Problems or Mishandled Financial Matters*** or circumstances which might warrant investigation may be reported to the Office of the Inspector General at: 312-433-3000.

Who Pays For What?

If you have policy questions about who should pay for what, you should ask your agency. DCFS Procedure 359 explains exactly what DCFS is authorized to pay for in DCFS supervised foster homes, private agency supervised foster homes, group homes and residential care. Questions about DCFS policy may be answered through the DCFS Advocacy Office for Children and Families at **800-232-3798.**

DCFS has a bottom-line responsibility for providing for a foster child's needs. If you believe your foster child needs something, ask the caseworker and the agency.

- DCFS or the private agency will consider the appropriateness of the request based on the individual circumstances and needs of the child, the child's family, the case, or the foster family.
- DCFS' contractual agreements with the private agency, if applicable.
- Other more appropriate sources of funding or accessible services, such as from a school district or another government agency.
- DCFS policy and procedure.
- If the agency agrees, they will determine how to fulfill the request. *Some requests may be granted on a "one-time only" basis.*
- If a private agency has difficulty determining how to get something for a child, it their responsibility request assistance from DCFS.
- If a request is denied and the foster family and agency do not agree that the child needs the requested goods or service, the foster parent has the right to file a Service Appeal.

Clothing

The monthly licensed foster care payment includes funds to pay for a child's clothing according to age, *including school clothes and school uniforms and new clothing needed due to changes in the season and normal growth.* The caseworker/agency may request additional funds from DCFS for clothing under the following circumstances.

FOSTER CARE PAYMENTS (Continued)

Clothing (Continued)

Initial Placement: Clothing/Personal Hygiene Expenses

When a child is placed, foster parents should review the child's current clothing situation with the placing worker. Sometimes, when a child is removed from his/her home quickly, the worker will bring his/her clothes later. If the child has been in another foster home, all clothes, toys, personal hygiene items and belongings should be sent to the new foster home. If the child's clothing appears inadequate, the caseworker may request an "initial clothing voucher" for a child in his/her first placement outside the home. *The initial clothing voucher may be requested at the time the case is opened or within 6 months of case opening.*

The child's current wardrobe will be taken into account. If several placements are, or have been involved, using several purchase orders, the total expenditure *must not exceed the maximum amount allowable.* That means that if a child comes to your family within the six month time frame, after having been with another foster family the total or partial amount of the initial clothing voucher may have been already used by the previous foster family. Ask the child's caseworker.

Initial Personal Hygiene Items

Personal hygiene items may also be requested by the caseworker for a child in his/her first placement outside the home when the case is opened. Examples of necessary items are: *toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush/comb/pick, deodorant, feminine hygiene items, baby bottles, diapers, baby powder, baby oil, and other essential items.* Not allowed: *make-up, perfume, jewelry, hairdryers etc.* The intention is to take care of the child's immediate, basic needs.

Replacement Clothing

Foster parents are expected to replace a child's clothing using the monthly foster care payment.

The caseworker/agency may request additional funds from DCFS for replacement clothing under these circumstances:

- A child whose clothes are unsuitable due to health or medical reasons, such as extraordinary weight gains or losses, excessive growth, or damage done to clothing to accommodate casts or braces.
- Destruction of clothing by fire, flood, or the child's willful destruction.
- Pregnant teens needing maternity clothes.
- Foster children who had been in a Department of Corrections (DOC) facility and are now returning to foster care.
- Foster children who returned home for an extended period of time and then returned to foster care.

***(**Notice to Foster Parents of Inadequate Clothing-** If the child's caseworker does not feel the child's wardrobe is adequate at any time during the placement, he/she will inform the foster parent/s in writing. The foster parent/s will be given 30 days to replenish the child's wardrobe. If this does not happen, the caseworker may request that funds be deducted from the monthly payment to the foster parent/s, up to a maximum allowed for replacement clothing.)*

APPENDIX A

Supports Available to All Foster Children and Families

Infant Equipment

Sometimes, not having infant equipment can be a barrier to a foster parent taking the sibling of a child already in their home, or in taking an infant. A caseworker may request purchase authorization for a foster or relative home for infant care *equipment for a specific child age 2 and under.* The foster parent must sign the Infant Care Equipment Grant Application (DCFS Form: CFS 932C) and return a completed Infant Care List (DCFS Form: CFS 932D) for the appropriate items. The foster parent/s *must return the infant equipment to* DCFS if they stop providing infant care within one year of receiving the equipment.

Visitation Fees

Hosting Sibling Visits

DCFS will reimburse foster families for transportation to sibling visits and compensate them for supervising short visits and overnight visits.

Foster parents will receive reimbursement of up to $50 per month for mileage for Sibling visits (currently 56.5 cents per mile), public transportation, bus or taxi. The special service fee must be requested by the worker and be approved according to the visitation plan developed for the child.

Foster parents who support sibling visitation by supervising visits may also request reimbursement through their worker at a rate of $25/hr (excluding travel time) for a maximum of four hours ($100) each month. If the visit is overnight or longer, the foster parents may be reimbursed $100 for the entire visit.

Tips About Payments From
Experienced Foster Parents

- *Know your agency's unique policies about payments or other types of supports. If you don't have the agency policy in writing, ask!*
- *Document your child's need for services in writing, or obtain written documentation from teachers, schools, therapists, etc. This will lend weight to your request with the caseworker. Also, documentation is required when making any request to DCFS. If you already have it, the caseworker can more easily and quickly make the request within the agency and from DCFS.*
- *Think ahead. Don't wait until the last minute to make a request. Your caseworker may have to talk to the teacher, doctor, or others and will need to submit the request within the agency for approval before it goes to DCFS. All of these steps take time.*
- *If you question an answer given to you by the caseworker or agency about DCFS policy or procedure, call the DCFS Advocacy Office for Children and families at 800-232-3798. To verify your agency's policy, call the supervisor or agency administration.*

Unusual Transportation

Foster Parents can receive a Special Service Fee for up to $100 maximum for **UNUSUAL** transportation for the child. The special service fee must be requested by the worker and be approved according to Procedure 359 and the special needs of the child.

APPENDIX A

Supports Available to All Foster Children and Families

FOOD/NUTRITION

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

800-545-2200/Voicemail
M-F 8 a.m. – 9 p.m.

WIC is a food assistance program for Women, Infants, and Children. It helps pregnant women, new mothers and young children eat well and stay healthy.

WIC provides services to Women and their children who are:

- Pregnant, breastfeeding or just had a baby
- Infants and Children under 5 years old (including foster children)

WIC can provide:

- Special checks to buy healthy foods - like milk, juice, eggs, cheese, cereal, dry beans or peas, and peanut butter. Baby formula and age-appropriate food for Infants and Children under 5 years old (including foster children) who are at nutritional risk
- Information about nutrition and health to help you and your family eat well and be healthy
- Help in finding health care and other services in your area

Make an appointment and find out what papers or documents you need to bring with you. At your appointment, WIC staff will check to see if you and your family qualify. Call your local WIC program to determine eligibility and how to apply. If you need assistance, contact the State WIC Office at 217-782-2166.

Food Pantry Information-See Appendix B

FOSTER CARE

Recruitment of Prospective Foster Parents

800-624-KIDS
or your agency

DCFS maintains a statewide number for families who are interested in becoming foster parents. Refer prospective foster families to your agency's foster care program or to this statewide inquiry line.

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FOSTER PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

The foster parent organizations in Illinois, the U.S., and internationally listed below do not have permanent headquarters and are staffed by volunteers. All information given here is accurate at publication.

Foster Parent Support/Networking Groups

Three sources of information:

- The Illinois Foster Parent Association (IFPA) can refer you to your local IFPA-affiliated group.
- Local DCFS offices (See Section 1, pages 7-8) will be able to connect foster parents with independent foster parent groups located within the region, which include both DCFS and private agency foster parents.
- Private agency foster parents should contact their agency about support groups.

Illinois Foster Parent Association — 773-720-0669

Gladys Boyd

Illinois affiliate of the National Foster Parent Association (NFPA). Call for information on: membership, scholarship for your children or foster children, IFPA training conferences held in Illinois, or your local IFPA-affiliated foster parent support group.

National Foster Parent Association (NFPA) — 800-557-5238

The only national organization of primarily foster parent members. Call the Information Service office shown for information on: membership, scholarships for your children or foster children, or the NFPA annual training conference held in various locations in the U.S.

International Foster Care Organization (IFCO) — 608-274-9111

Cora White

Information about membership and the annual training conference held in various countries can also be obtained by calling Kara White, Administrative Secretary.

Mailing address: 2706 Badger Lane, Madison, WI 53713

FOSTER PARENT REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM – See Claims

APPENDIX A

Supports Available to All Foster Children and Families

IMMIGRATION SERVICES – DCFS OFFICE OF

Immigration Services Coordinator **Lisa Robinson-Assistant Guardian**
312-814-8600

Foster parents of foreign-born foster children with questions about the child's legal resident status should discuss the issue with the child's case manager. Case managers are responsible for verifying the foster child's citizenship or legal residency and then contacting the Office of Immigration Services for assistance when needed.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Your child's Health Works primary care physician will immunize your foster children.

INSPECTOR GENERAL

800-722-9124
M-F 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m./Voicemail

Call to report misconduct, illegal, or unethical acts or behavior by DCFS or private agency staff or others providing services to foster children and/or foster families.

LOCAL AREA NETWORK (LAN)

To Find Your LAN

Identify your LAN, the Foster Parent Liaison in your area, and how to participate in LAN meetings. Your child's caseworker and your agency should also be able to put you in touch with your LAN.

Services Available for Foster Children

You and your child's caseworker must TOGETHER request services from your LAN.

MEDIA – TV/Radio/Newspaper/Other

Permission for Publicity, Interviews, or Photos of a Foster Child

DCFS Communications **312-814-6847**
M-F 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

APPENDIX A

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MEDICAL CARD

If you do not receive a medical card or you have questions, please contact your caseworker for assistance.

MEDICAL CARE

For referral to a Health Works primary health care physician.

Cook County	**800-KID-4345**
	Margaret Carter-Supervisor
Outside Cook County	**Call your local Health Works agency**

NEWSLETTER – Foster Parent

Illinois Families Now and Forever is the DCFS-sponsored newsletter written for all foster parents and all relatives raising children in DCFS care. Six issues are direct mailed annually. **Illinois Families Now and Forever** is provided to all DCFS staff, private agency staff as requested by the agency, and prospective foster parents who have applications pending one year or less.

Address changes: Foster parents must notify their agency or DCFS region and the agency or region must submit an address change to DCFS Central Office. Each issue contains information about how to contact the Editor.

PAYMENTS

Payment Line (DCFS) **800-525-0499/24 Hours**

DCFS foster parents: Pre-recorded information about foster care payment check mailing schedule.
Private agency foster parents: Because your agency sends your foster care payment check, contact your agency about distribution schedule.
Payment problems?
DCFS supervised families should contact their caseworker or Foster Parent Support Specialist first and then the payment line.
Private agency supervised families should contact their respective agency caseworker or other designated staff.

PUBLIC GUARDIAN

For foster children: Guardian ad litem (GAL)

Cook County ONLY:	**312-433-4300**
Outside Cook County:	**Call the Juvenile Court**

APPENDIX A

Supports Available to All Foster Children and Families

SCHOLARSHIPS

DCFS-sponsored: Youth in Scholarship Program

Eligibility Requirements:

- Open to DCFS youth as well as youth who were formerly in the care of DCFS who are at least 16 years old, but not yet 21 on the scholarship application deadline date of March 31 of the current year
- The Department must have court-ordered legal guardianship for the applicant or the Department must have had legal guardianship for the applicant prior to the adoption being finalized, or the applicant must be in the Subsidized Guardianship Program
- Successfully compete for a full-term DCFS college scholarship
- Maintain at least a "C" average each semester
- Maintain full-time status (12 hours Fall & Spring, 6 hours or an approved internship in Summer).
- Enrollment will be verified through the National Student Clearinghouse.
- Submit your class schedule at the start of each semester and your grades at the end of the semester (no schedule and grades, no payment!)
- Report change of address promptly to Business Office

Benefits:

- An award in the amount of $471 provided each month for up to four (4) years. Direct deposit is strongly recommended.
- Medical card provided to Illinois students until the earlier of four years or age 23
- Tuition waiver available to any Illinois state funded community college or university
- Reimbursement of the cost of books not covered by financial aid
- Education advisors and OETS staff will render assistance as needed
- Benefits available for four (4) years, or the date on which the participant receives a bachelor's degree

Important Plans To Consider:

- Arranging transportation to the school location
- Planning for housing when school is closed for breaks and holidays
- Seeking tutorial assistance through the school, and meeting with your Education Advisor and OETS staff if your grades are low, if you are having problems in a particular course, or if you must withdraw from any classes
- Youth who withdraw from classes must notify the OETS business office
- Apply for financial aid annually.

What the Youth In Scholarship Program DOES NOT Cover:

- Orientation fees
- Computers or Internet services
- Room/board costs
- Repayment of student loans
- Phone bills
- Dorm room damages
- Tuition to private, out-of-state or vocational training programs
- Laboratory fees
- Transportation to and from school
- Study enhancement programs
- Supplies
- Study abroad
- Library fines

APPENDIX A

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SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) BENEFITS

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a Federal Government Program that provides cash assistance to persons age 65 or older and to blind or disabled persons of any age, that have limited income and assets. Children, including foster children, adopted children and children in guardianships may qualify for SSI if they have a severe physical or mental impairment, or a combination of impairments, that significantly limit the child's ability to function in an age-appropriate manner. Even though a child meets the disability requirements, other factors may prevent entitlement to SSI.

For example:

- If a foster child is receiving assistance from another Federal Program (Title IV-E) he or she will not be eligible for SSI.
- Part of the income and assets of the adoptive parents count when determining the income and assets of an adopted child until he or she reaches 18. This may make their child ineligible for SSI.
- If a subsidy is paid to a guardian who has accepted responsibility for a child with disabilities that was formerly in foster care, the amount of the subsidy may count as income to the child. Counting the subsidy may reduce or eliminate the SSI payment.

Foster children eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) will have managed by the Department of Children and Family Services.

TAX COUNSELING/PREPARATION

The Center for Law & Human Services 888-827-8511

- Tax Handbooks are mailed to foster parents annually in early winter with tax guidelines related to foster parenting.
- Free tax counseling and tax return preparation for foster families meeting annual low-income levels are available at sites around the state. The tax handbook lists tax preparation sites and hours of operation.
- Speakers are available for foster parent groups interested in tax implications of foster parenting.

APPENDIX A

Supports Available to All Foster Children and Families

TRAINING

DCFS Foster and Adoptive Parent Training Programs
Cook Training DCFS 877-800-3393

Only DCFS licensed foster or adoptive parents may call directly to register for FosterPRIDE, Trans-racial Parenting or Educational Advocacy Training.

Adoptive Parent Training

Adoption Conversion

Licensed foster parents who are adopting a foster child already placed with them can take a nine-hour training to answer questions and concerns during the transition to adoption. Participants have to be referred to this training by either their licensing or adoption worker.

Adopt Only

Families that do not foster and are only interested in adopting a legally free DCFS ward can take a nine-hour classroom training. These families also complete an individualized training program based on their strengths and challenges, and those of the child/ren they are adopting.

Foster Parent Training

Prospective foster parent training

Prospective foster parents may attend training after being referred by the agency to DCFS licensing worker. Families interested in being foster parents to children in the child welfare system can attend six-hour pre-licensing classroom training as part of the licensing process.

After licensing, families that are interested in being foster parents to non-related children in the DCFS child welfare system can take the additional 21 classroom hours of pre-placement training classes. Also, at least one parent in the foster family is required to take the six-hour Education Advocacy training on how to support children's educational needs.

In-Service training for licensed foster and adoptive parents

Foster and adoptive parents can self-enroll for any of the Foster Pride classes listed on the following page by calling the local training programs.

APPENDIX A

Supports Available to All Foster Children and Families

PRIDE Modules

1. **Foundation for Meeting the Developmental Needs of Children at Risk (12 hours)**
2. **Using the Discipline to Protect, Nurture and Meet Developmental Needs (9 hours)**
3. **Addressing Developmental Issues Related to Sexuality (3 hours)**
4. **Responding to the Signs and Symptoms of Sexual Abuse (6 hours)**
5. **Supporting Relationships Between Children and Their Families (9 hours)**
6. **Worker As A Professional Team Member (9 hours)**
7. **Promoting Children's Personal and Cultural Identity (6 hours)**
8. **Promoting Permanency Outcomes (9 hours)**
9. **Managing the Impact of Placement on Your Family (6 hours)**
10. **Understanding the Effects of Chemical Dependency on Children and Families (15 hours)**

(All above modules are available for in-service training in digital modules.)

Effective Black Parenting Training

This 45 hour course was developed for Licensed Foster Parents who are considering fostering or adopting a child of another race, culture or ethnicity. Those interested in this training should contact their respective Foster Parent Support Specialist or their Licensing Representative to access additional information on how to register for the training.

Educational Advocacy Training

It is mandatory for one foster parent in each family to attend this training in order to be licensed or re-licensed. This six-hour training covers information and adoptive parents need to know so that they can advocate for their foster or adopted children's educational rights and needs.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Lending Libraries

One of the ways foster parents may obtain training credit is by utilizing the resources in the Foster and Adoptive Parent Lending Libraries Catalog. This catalog lists over 100 books, videos and cassette tapes on at least 17 different topics from which foster parents may select. Foster parents may borrow these training topic items for two weeks. After completion of use, the resource should be returned and the foster parent should complete the CFS 574 Foster Care Training Credit Approval Form and submit it to their respective Foster Parent Support Specialist or their licensing representative. Foster Parent Support Specialist and Licensing Representatives can assist foster parents in accessing additional information on the training.

Funds for Training

Early Childhood Intervention Clearinghouse **800-852-4302**

Foster parents, birth parents, siblings, spouses, and close family members of persons with a disability may be eligible for Illinois funding to attend training related to a person's disability. Only individuals, not agencies or organizations, may apply. Amount of funds available and eligibility guidelines may change from fiscal year to fiscal year. Call for the latest guidelines and an application.

Requirements – Training required for foster parent license renewal

COOK REGIONAL

TRAINING CALENDAR

Appendix B

Cook- South Training Calendar

February 19, 2019 - PRIDE Trainer (connect with siblings) – Arelda Johnson

March 19, 2019 – Youth in College – John Kasper

April 16, 2019 – Wrap Services – Dr. A Rowe

June 18, 2019 – Lifebook Party – Audrey Carter, Dana Drummer

August 13, 2019– Education Cook Liaison – Arleica Brown

September 17, 2019– Cook – Updating Foster Parent Implementation Plan – Angela Barber, Mercedes Ball

October 15, 2019 – Cook- South Licensing worker (New 402 Standards) – Rod Mulford, Yanira Sanchez

November 12, 2019 - Cook – Review and approval of the Foster Parent Implementation Plan - Angela Barber, Mercedes Ball

COOK REGION GRIEVANCE

Appendix C

Foster Parent Grievances

There were no known Foster Parent grievances noted by the Regional Administrator for this reporting period.

Cook Region Mission Statement

Cook Region is committed to enhancing the lives of children and families.

We believe children and families must be treated with dignity and respect.

We believe children and families have the right to receive community-based services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

We believe it is in the best interest of children and families to strive to create and advance an atmosphere of teamwork that is invested in achieving permanency, safety and well being.

We believe in keeping the focus on protecting children by strengthening and supporting families.

GRIEVANCES

This grievance process is to be used by foster parents only for grieving alleged violations of the Foster Parent Law that are not covered by an already existing grievance process.

* * * * * * * * * * *

El proceso de agravio es para ser utilizado por padres de crianza siempre y cuando tengan quejas acerca de violaciones a la Ley de Padres de Crianza y que no sean amparadas por ningún otro proceso de lidiar con agravios que ya estén vigentes.

Form should be forwarded to the Cook Regional Administrator

Esta forma debe ser enviada al Administrador de Cook

Marnita Martin-Harris
C/o DCFS
1911 S. Indiana
Chicago, IL 60616
(312) 808-5000

DCFS

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

Foster Parent Grievance Process

Proceso de Agravio

Foster Parent Grievance Process

Proceso de Agravios para Padres de Crianza

Foster Parent(s) Name(s):

Nombre del Padre/Madre de Crianza:

_____

Case Name / Nombre del caso:

_____

Provider ID/Phone #:

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Grievance / Agravio:

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If more space is needed, please use additional sheets. Si necesita mas espacio por favor incluya otra hoja de papel.

FILING A GRIEVANCE

- A grievance is an informal, written concern about any particular issue thought to be unfair, offensive or in violation of Foster Parent Rights and Responsibilities in the Cook Foster Parent Implementation Plan.
- Complete this form, include details and supportive information
- Forward your request to the Cook Regional Administrator.
- Open to all licensed or unlicensed caretakers caring for children in the Cook Central Region.

¿QUE HACER PARA QUEJARME?

- Una queja debe ser sometida por escrito, estipulando claramente la injusticia o violación de la Ley de Padres de Crianza y al Plan de Implementación de Padres de Crianza de Cook.
- Complete esta forma, incluya información detallada y provea documentación.
- Envíe esta forma al Administrador de Cook.
- Estos derechos están disponibles a todo padre de crianza o pariente con o sin licencia el cual cuida niños n la región de Cook.

HOW DO I RESOLVE MY GRIEVANCE?

- Within five working days of receiving your request:
  - Meeting scheduled with the caseworker and supervisor.
  - If not resolved, within five days, meet with Area Administrator
  - If not resolved, Area Administrator refers it to the Cook Mediation Committee
  - If not resolved, refers to Regional Administrator
- Expectation of a timely, fair and collaborative resolution should be the outcome. Final resolution should be reached within 20 working days from the original filing date.
- Foster Parents have the right to file a grievance requesting mediation at any time without the fear of retaliation.

¿COMO RESUELVO MI AGRAVIO?

- En cinco días de haberse recibido su queja:
  - Tendrá una reunión con el trabajador y supervisor del caso
  - Si no se resuelve, cita con el Administrador de Operaciones dentro de otros cinco días,
  - Si no se resuelve el Administrador de Operaciones referirá el caso al Comité de Mediación de la región
  - Si no es resuelto, el caso será referido al Administrador Regional
- La resolución de su agravio es la meta. Se espera resolución en un tiempo razonable. La resolución debe ser hecha dentro de 20 días laborales y de la fecha en la cual la queja fue sometida.
- Los padres de crianza tienen el derecho de quejarse y pedir mediación en cualquier momento sin miedo a consecuencias negativas.

For More Information

Para Mas Información

Cook Region

"KEEP THE FOCUS ON PROTECTING CHILDREN BY STRENGTHENING AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES"

"MANTENGA SU ENFOQUE EN PROTEJER A LOS NIÑOS BRINDÁNDOLE AYUDA Y APOYO A SUS FAMILIAS"