

**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF  
CHILDREN AND FAMILY  
SERVICES  
NORTHERN REGION**

**2020**

**Illinois Foster Parent Law  
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**\*\*** Prepared in accordance with the Illinois Foster Parent Law (Public Act 89.19 section 1-25)

The bold print highlights the leading paragraphs, which are the exact words, used for each section in the Foster Parent Law, Public Act 89.19.

**Revised 11-2019**

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## **Section 1-15 FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS**

A Foster Parent's rights include, but are not limited to, the following:

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### **DIGNITY, RESPECT AND CONSIDERATION**

#### **1) THE RIGHT TO BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY, RESPECT AND CONSIDERATION AS A PROFESSIONAL MEMBER OF THE CHILD WELFARE TEAM.**

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The DCFS Northern Region, both at a field office and regional level, shall continue to ensure that Foster Parents are treated with dignity, respect, and consideration as professional members of the child welfare team in the following areas:

#### **FOSTER PARENT ACTIVITIES**

a) Opportunities will continue to be provided in each field office area, which promote mutual respect and strengthen individual relationships within the child welfare team. Such opportunities have included and will continue to include the regional foster parent advisory council, various quality improvement activities and trainings, team building activities, office open houses, and other office activities. Foster Parent Cafes are happening throughout the region as an added avenue of support. Northern Region foster parents, independent from DCFS, initiated a Foster Parent page to facilitate the sharing of non-confidential information and networking opportunities. The Northern Region has 4 active foster parent support groups for foster parents to attend. These support groups meet monthly and offer the foster parents an opportunity to meet other people in their role.

#### **COMMUNICATION WITH FOSTER PARENTS**

b) Supervisors are expected to monitor ongoing staff and foster parent communications to ensure timely and quality professional interaction. Workers in the Northern Region will return all phone calls in a timely manner. In the case of an emergency, call the main number of the office, and ask to be transferred to your caseworker's supervisor. If it is information only, please leave a message for your worker and they will do their best to return your call upon return to the office. Caseworkers will insure foster parents are given their supervisor's contact information at their first in home visit. If contacted by an investigator for a possible placement and the foster parents agreed to take the placement, the foster parents will be called back to inform them if a decision to place the child elsewhere has been made. Foster Parents will be notified of any changes in meetings, court, or Administrative Case Reviews (ACR) within 24 hours after the worker becomes aware.

## FOSTER PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- c) Efforts will continue to recognize the importance of the Foster Parent as a professional member of the child welfare team. This includes the active involvement of Foster Parents in the family meetings, service planning, and delivery of services.

## ENGAGING FOSTER PARENTS AS TEAM MEMBERS

- d) All divisional DCFS staff will continue to engage and involve Foster Parents as general members of the child welfare team through the regional foster care advisory council, quality improvement activities, field office and other regional and local work groups and planning committees. Special training activities continue to be provided to staff and Foster Parents where there is evidence of failure to convey dignity and respect to fellow child welfare team members.

## FOSTER PARENT INPUT

- e) Efforts will continue throughout the region using Foster Parent Support Specialists, neighborhood group meetings, consumer satisfaction committees, random surveys, and other creative avenues to solicit input and to hear and acknowledge the perspective of Foster Parents and the valuable insight they provide to enhance the overall delivery of child welfare services and services to specific children in their care. In addition, the Foster Parent Advisory Council meets monthly as a forum for foster parents to provide input, suggestions and to enhance training opportunities.

## FOSTER PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- f) Foster parents are acknowledged in each local field office through events and trainings.

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## TRAINING

### **2) THE RIGHT TO BE GIVEN STANDARDIZED PRE-SERVICE TRAINING AND APPROPRIATE ONGOING TRAINING TO MEET MUTUALLY ASSESSED NEEDS AND IMPROVE THE FOSTER PARENT SKILLS.**

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#### PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

a) All non-relative Foster Parents, per foster care standards Rule 402, must complete the 27-hour PRIDE pre-service training and additional 12 hours of supplemental trainings. These trainings cover the following topics: social media, trauma, normalcy, attachment, discipline, abuse and neglect, and other relevant information on policy and procedure. Relative caregivers must complete 6 hours to become licensed.

#### LOCAL FIELD OFFICE TRAINING

b) PRIDE modules, community trainings, online trainings, and other trainings will be routinely publicized and offered through the local offices throughout the region. Relative foster parents are encouraged to participate in the entire PRIDE training which will provide them with additional support of the department's foster care team. Service delivery trainings that are offered in the local field offices or region will also be afforded to all foster parents.

#### TRAINING TAPES AND BOOKS

c) Caregivers are encouraged to visit their local library and borrow materials that enhance the skills needed to care for the children in their care.

#### FOSTER PARENT TRAINING PLANS

b) Foster Home Licensing Staff will consult with Foster Parents on bi-annual basis to discuss the caregiver's training needs necessary to parent the type of child usually accepted by that home. The foster care licensing staff will assist in locating trainings to ensure these training needs are met. Licensing Representatives may assist in assessing training needs during home visits. The Northern Region will utilize the co-training model whenever possible. The co-trainer model consists of a child welfare professional and an experienced foster parent trained by the DCFS training unit to facilitate classes. Foster Parents are encouraged to use the DCFS newsletter, Families Now and Forever, as a tool to locate modules and other classes being offered. Foster Parents may also utilize the DCFS the Virtual Training Center ([dcfstraining.org](http://dcfstraining.org)) to view upcoming trainings in their area. The Northern Region Foster Parent Advisory Council holds trainings at each of their monthly meetings. Additionally, the DCFS Training Unit rolled out the online version of the PRIDE in-service training modules. These can be accessed by using the Virtual Training Center ([dcfstraining.org](http://dcfstraining.org)).



## ADDITIONAL TRAINING HOURS

e) Per foster care standards Rule 402.12(n), foster homes with expanded capacities must have nine additional training hours per year. Foster Home Licensing Staff are responsible for ensuring this requirement is met and working with the training coordinators and foster families when needed to identify training opportunities.

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### SUPPORT SERVICES

**3) THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED AS TO HOW TO CONTACT THE APPROPRIATE CHILD PLACEMENT AGENCY TO RECEIVE INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE TO ACCESS SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER PARENT'S CARE.**

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### LIST OF RESOURCES

Every foster home shall receive a list of resources for support, information and emergency numbers (with after-hours accessibility). This list is to be maintained and distributed to the DCFS Foster Parents at least once a year. It shall be updated as needed, annually at a minimum. This list shall include name, title, address, phone number and fax.

a) Statewide numbers include:

- 1) Inspector General
- 2) Advocacy Office
- 3) Hotline (24-hour availability)
- 4) Medical consent
- 5) Foster Parent hotline

b) Region wide numbers include:

- 1) Name, title and telephone for principle DCFS staff
- 2) Sexual Child Behavior Specialist
- 3) Prairie State Legal Service
- 4) Education Advisor and Educational Advocacy Office
- 5) Post-Adoption Services

c) Field office numbers:

- 1) Supervisors
- 2) Foster Care Licensing Unit Staff
- 3) Foster Parent Support Specialists
- 4) CARES Line (mental health crisis intervention)
- 5) Hotline (24-hour availability)

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## FINANCIAL REIMBURSEMENT

### 4) THE RIGHT TO RECEIVE TIMELY FINANCIAL REIMBURSEMENT COMMENSURATE WITH THE CARE NEEDS OF THE CHILD AS SPECIFIED IN THE SERVICE PLAN.

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#### MONTHLY BOARD CHECKS

a) Foster Parents with children in care receive monthly board checks. A pay schedule is sent annually to Foster Parents from Springfield. Other child-related non-recurring expenses, once approved, are submitted to the caseworker each month (examples include respite, camp, music lessons, Y memberships, tutoring). Payment for these non-recurring expenses are not guaranteed without prior approval.

#### SPECIALIZED CARE

b) Supervisors will ensure the continued assessment of foster children regarding the need for specialized care. For children in care, this may be identified within supervision, ACRs, Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) meetings, Intensive Placement Services (IPS), etc. As part of the team, Foster Parents will keep the workers apprised of pertinent information concerning the special needs of foster children. When it is determined that specialized care should be considered, staff will submit materials for approval consideration in a timely manner.

#### AID FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS

c) Adoptive parents with reimbursable expenses are aided by Post Adoption Caseworkers. The post adoption service number, 888-962-3678, is provided to all adoptive parents.

#### METHOD FOR RESOLVING PAYMENT PROBLEMS

d) If there is a problem with a board check, Foster Parents should contact the 906 Hotline at 1-800-525-0499, which is available during regular business hours. If there is a problem with other payments, contact your caseworker to resolve the issue. If you need further assistance, the caseworker's supervisor should be contacted without hesitation. Licensing representatives can also aid.

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## PLACEMENT INFORMATION

**5) THE RIGHT TO BE PROVIDED A CLEAR, WRITTEN UNDERSTANDING OF A PLACEMENT AGENCY'S PLAN CONCERNING THE PLACEMENT OF A CHILD IN THE FOSTER PARENT'S HOME. INHERENT IN THIS RIGHT IS THE FOSTER PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO SUPPORT ACTIVITIES THAT WILL PROMOTE THE CHILD'S RIGHT TO RELATIONSHIPS WITH HIS OR HER OWN FAMILY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE.**

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## FOSTER PARENT PARTICIPATION IN CLIENT SERVICE PLANS

a) The DCFS field office staff continues to work closely with the foster family in the development of the child's portion of the Client Service Plan at monthly home visits. Any revisions or updated information are shared with the Foster Parent as soon as possible. With a new placement, the worker verbally notifies the Foster Parent of the date and time for the first ACR. Afterwards, the ACR notifications will be automatically generated through the ACR system. Following supervisory approval of the Client Service Plan, the Foster Parent will be given a copy of the child's portion. The Foster Parents are to be involved in the development of family and sibling visiting plans. This may include preparing children for the visit, transporting to or supervising the visit. The Caseworker and / or Foster Parent Support Specialist will ensure each family is made aware of the availability of the department's reunification service fund and sibling visit reimbursement fund and how to access necessary forms. The Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) will continue to work with each foster family on the benefits and challenges visits present. The FPSS will also counsel each foster family on the importance of the department's shared parenting initiative.

## NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES IN CASE PLAN

b) Foster Parents should be consulted in the consideration of changes in the child's portion of the service plan. This will include potential or planned changes in the permanency goal. These discussions happen at the monthly in-home meetings. Following supervisory approval, the caseworker will notify Foster Parents of any changes in the child's portion of the case plan.

## 14-DAY NOTICE OF PLACEMENT CHANGES

c) Any contemplated placement changes for a child not precipitated by court order, will be conveyed to the Foster Parents and the appropriate written 14-day notice will be issued. Additionally, if the foster parent requests removal of a child from the home, a written 14-day notice will be submitted to the caseworker. Upon agreement of all parties, the 14-day notice may be waived. Appeal rights are discussed with the Foster Parents who may disagree with the decision to move the child. The worker will provide the Foster Parents with an appeal brochure, CFS151 (notice of decision to move).

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## FAIR, TIMELY AND IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATIONS

6) THE RIGHT TO BE PROVIDED A FAIR, TIMELY, AND IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS CONCERNING THE FOSTER PARENT'S LICENSURE, TO BE PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE A PERSON OF THE FOSTER PARENT'S CHOOSING PRESENT DURING THE INVESTIGATION AND TO BE PROVIDED DUE PROCESS DURING THE INVESTIGATION; THE RIGHT TO BE PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO REQUEST AND RECEIVE MEDIATION OR AN ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OF DECISIONS THAT AFFECT LICENSING PARAMETERS; OR BOTH MEDIATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW; AND THE RIGHT TO HAVE DECISIONS CONCERNING A LICENSING CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN SPECIFICALLY EXPLAINED AND TIED TO THE LICENSING STANDARDS VIOLATED .

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## LICENSING INVESTIGATIONS

1. Foster Home Licensing Supervisory Staff will ensure that their staff are properly trained in conducting licensing investigations in line with Department Rule 383. Licensing investigations are discussed with foster parents during pre-service training. In addition, the foster parent handbook is available for ongoing reference.

Rule 383 Timeframes for Licensing Investigations

After receiving a licensing complaint, the licensing representative shall initiate the licensing complaint within 2 b u s i n e s s days. ***Whenever a licensing complaint is opened the licensing representative shall complete a CFS2011 "Placement Hold Request," and forward the completed form to their immediate supervisor for review and signature. Once completed, the CFS2011 will be forwarded to the Placement Clearance Desk and the foster home will be placed on involuntary placement hold. The licensing representative shall notify the foster home that they have been placed on involuntary placement hold and the reason as to why their foster home has been placed into this status. If the licensing complaint is unfounded, the placement hold will be lifted, and the foster parents will be notified. the licensing complaint is substantiated, the involuntary placement hold may remain in effect until successful completion of the corrective action plan.*** The licensing representative shall complete the licensing complaint within 30 days from the time the complaint was received in the licensing unit. If the complaint investigation cannot be completed within the 30 day timeframe, the licensing representative can request a 30 day extension through their immediate supervisor. If approved, the licensing representative shall notify the foster parent no later than 25th day after the complaint was assigned. When a 30 day extension is approved, the licensing representative shall notify the foster parent no later than 3 days by regular mail. Once the licensing complaint file has been submitted to the licensing supervisor, the

supervisor has 7 days to review the complaint file to determine the approval of the licensing representative's findings. The licensing representative has 5 days to inform the foster parent of the licensing complaint finding. The complete text of Rule 383 is available from licensing staff and can be found on the DCFS website. Foster Parents are informed of their right to have an advocate present for the interview portion of the licensing complaint investigation, with a sign off sheet stating they have been apprised of this right and their choice to exercise this right or to waive it. The foster parent has 4 hours to find an advocate to be present at the interview. This advocate can be anyone of the Foster Parents' choosing.

### CORRECTIVE ACTION PLANS

2. Corrective action plans will reflect the portion of the 402 licensing standards found to be in violation. Corrective action plans are given to the foster parent in writing and when the foster parent has completed the corrective action plan, their licensing representative will contact them in writing as well.

### APPEALING LICENSING COMPLAINT DECISIONS

3. All licensing complaint decisions are open to be appealed. The appeal process would begin with the licensing representatives' supervisor and move to the Downstate Manager of Foster Care Licensing.

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## **INFORMATION ON THE CARE OF A CHILD**

**7) THE RIGHT, AT ANY TIME DURING WHICH A CHILD IS PLACED WITH THE FOSTER PARENT, TO RECEIVE ADDITIONAL OR NECESSARY INFORMATION THAT IS RELEVANT TO THE CARE OF THE CHILD.**

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### **ACCURATE AND TIMELY SHARING OF INFORMATION**

Continued emphasis is placed on the importance of the Northern Region staff providing accurate and timely exchange of information regarding the health, safety and placement related information. This information will include, but should not be limited to, high risk factors, contagious or urgent medical needs, and/or mental/emotional conditions that might place the child or members of the household at risk. Placement caseworkers inform foster parents immediately of any new information required. Communication with foster parents is encouraged and emphasized through presentations to supervisors at the Northern Region supervisors' meetings and to staff at individual team meetings. It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that accurate information is shared in a timely manner with foster parents. If it comes to a supervisor's attention that there is an issue, the supervisor will address the concern with the worker. Supervisors are responsible for monitoring this accountability and taking action if necessary.



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## SHARING OF INFORMATION

**8) THE NORTHERN REGION BELIEVES BEING UPFRONT WITH RELEVANT INFORMATION PRIOR TO AND AT THE TIME OF PLACEMENT ALLOWS THE FOSTER PARENT TO MAKE AN EDUCATED DECISION ON CHILDREN PLACED IN THEIR HOME. WHEN ACCURATE INFORMATION IS GIVEN, THE FOSTER PARENT CAN THEN ASSESS THEIR SKILL LEVEL AND ABILITY TO CARE FOR SUCH CHILDREN**

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a) According to Policy Guide 2007.14, the following information is to be given, when available, in advance of the placement or at the time of placement in either a foster or adoptive home:

1. Medical history including medical problems, communicable diseases, immunization status, insurance, and medical card information.
2. Educational history including Special Education needs, details of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), details of the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), or details of an Education Special Needs Plan (504).
3. Child's portion of case plan including visitation arrangements, how the child came into care, and child's previous placements without revealing any identifying information regarding any prior foster caregiver or relative caregiver, the reason for change in placement, and the permanency goal.
4. Other relevant background information including prior criminal history, behavior problems such as fire setting, perpetrator of sexual abuse, and destructive behaviors, substance abuse habits, and likes and dislikes.

b) In accordance to Policy Guide 2007.14,

- In cases of an emergency placement when all the above referenced information may not be available, the worker shall provide all known information verbally as it becomes available and subsequently provide this information in writing.
- Within ten working days after the placement, the worker shall have provided all the above information in writing and a copy of this disclosure is forwarded to the child's Guardian Ad Litem (GAL).
- Supervisory review and approval is required prior to providing any information to the prospective adoptive family or to the foster family. This is notated in the case file and discussed at supervision meetings between the worker and their supervisor.

## TRAINING

a) Northern Region staff charged with placing children in alternative living arrangements are trained on the information to be disclosed according to this policy guide and present the information on CFS 600-4 to the caregiver. Ongoing discussions happen during supervision, team meetings and all-staff meetings.

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### NOTIFICATION OF SCHEDULED MEETINGS

9) THE RIGHT TO BE NOTIFIED OF SCHEDULED MEETINGS AND STAFFINGS CONCERNING THE FOSTER CHILD IN ORDER TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE CASE PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING PROCESS REGARDING THE CHILD, INCLUDING INDIVIDUAL SERVICE PLANNING MEETINGS, ADMINISTRATIVE CASE REVIEWS, INTERDISCIPLINARY STAFFINGS, AND INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLANNING MEETINGS; THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED OF DECISIONS MADE BY THE COURTS OR THE CHILD WELFARE AGENCY CONCERNING THE CHILD; THE RIGHT TO PROVIDE INPUT CONCERNING THE PLAN OF SERVICES FOR A CHILD AND TO HAVE THAT INPUT GIVEN FULL CONSIDERATION IN THE SAME MANNER AS INFORMATION PRESENTED BY ANY OTHER PROFESSIONAL ON THE TEAM; AND THE RIGHT TO COMMUNICATE WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS WHO WORK WITH THE FOSTER CHILD WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE TEAM, INCLUDING THERAPISTS, PHYSICIANS, AND TEACHERS.

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### FOSTER PARENT NOTIFICATION

a) Foster Parents and staff will work together to develop a notification system to meet the needs of both the Foster Parent and the caseworker at the first home visit. The worker informs the Foster Parent in writing of any major decisions made by the agency or court orders that affect the children in their care. Caseworkers will ensure that foster parents are notified of the scheduling, modification, and/or cancellation of all court hearings, ACRs, and staffings to the respective Foster Parents. This notification is done verbally at monthly home visits and documented in the case file. Supervisors look to these notes as verification that notification is occurring. Notice of Decision forms (CFS 151) will be used to inform the caregivers of changes in the visiting plans, placement decisions and reunification plans.

### FOSTER PARENT COMMUNICATION

The Foster Parent and the caseworker collaborate regarding case planning during monthly meetings or as necessary. The Northern Region encourages Foster Parents to give input into case planning by communicating with child and family team members during meetings, phone contacts, monthly caseworker visits, and at any time as needed. Foster Parents are encouraged to attend all court hearings, ACRs, and staffings as it relates to the foster children in their care. Foster Parents are encouraged to contact the caseworker/supervisor to address barriers to their attendance. Any information at these meetings offered by the foster parent is given full consideration, and foster parents are encouraged to use these times as additional venues to advocate for any needs the child may have.

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## DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

10) THE RIGHT TO BE GIVEN IN A TIMELY AND CONSISTENT MANNER ANY INFORMATION A CASEWORKER HAS REGARDING THE CHILD AND THE CHILD'S FAMILY WHICH IS PERTINENT TO THE CARE AND NEEDS OF THE CHILD AND TO THE MAKING OF A PERMANENCY PLAN FOR THE CHILD. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING A CHILD'S FAMILY SHALL BE LIMITED TO THE INFORMATION THAT IS ESSENTIAL FOR UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF AND PROVIDING CARE TO THE CHILD TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD'S FAMILY. WHEN A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP EXISTS BETWEEN THE FOSTER PARENT AND THE CHILD'S FAMILY, THE CHILD'S FAMILY MAY CONSENT TO DISCLOSURE OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

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## ENCOURAGING WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

a) The DCFS Northern Region in all aspects encourages Foster Parents, Parents, and Staff to work closely together. Foster Parents are also encouraged to participate in the child and family team process that will better develop their understanding of their foster child's relationship with their parents. Through the local field office consumer satisfaction committee and Field Office Quality Insurance (FOQI), the Northern Region continue to work on efforts to improve communications and relationships between foster parents and staff, as well as, co-train with Foster and Adoptive Parents whenever possible.

## TIMEFRAMES FOR SHARING INFORMATION

b) Workers are trained and held accountable by their immediate supervisors regarding the timely sharing of information. Utilizing the child/caregiver-matching tool (CFS 2017), information available is shared at the initial visit including, but not limited to, likes, dislikes, medical needs, and food allergies. A listing of information Foster Parents are entitled to is found in DCFS Rule 301.120. Ongoing information will be shared at monthly home visits.

Utilizing the team approach, Foster Parents will ensure that information relating to the wellbeing of the child in care will be shared with the worker/supervisor in a timely manner. Foster Parents are encouraged to seek out clarity from the worker/supervisor concerning information that relates to the health, wellbeing, and placement stability of the child.

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### WRITTEN NOTICE OF ANY PLACEMENT CHANGES

11) THE RIGHT TO BE GIVEN REASONABLE WRITTEN NOTICE OF (1) ANY CHANGE IN A CHILD'S CASE PLAN, (2) PLANS TO TERMINATE THE PLACEMENT OF THE CHILD WITH THE FOSTER PARENT, AND (3) THE REASONS FOR THE CHANGE OR TERMINATION IN PLACEMENT. THE NOTICE SHALL BE WAIVED ONLY IN CASES OF A COURT ORDER OR WHEN THE CHILD IS DETERMINED TO BE AT IMMINENT RISK OF HARM.

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### CHANGES IN THE SERVICE PLAN

a) DCFS Northern Region continues to pursue full utilization of the Council of Accreditation Standards. Through the application of these standards, it is anticipated Foster Parents are fully informed in advance of any contemplated changes in the child's service plan, particularly any changes that might affect the placement of the child with the foster family. Recognizing that Foster Parents are team members, there is full disclosure regarding changes in placement to facilitate a smooth, positive process and transition.

### CRITICAL DECISION FORM

b) The decision to move a child in placement from any foster home requires prior supervisory approval using the "Decision to Move" form and method. This insures that any removal has been reviewed and alternate options discussed with supervisors.

### CHILD ENDANGERMENT RISK ASSESSMENT

c) In the event of abuse or neglect allegations and/or serious licensing violations, the child may be removed immediately. The Foster Parent would be informed of their right to appeal and the steps that can be taken for an emergency review. The Child Protection Worker provides the Foster Parent with an Appeals Brochure.

### REPLACEMENT OF FOSTER CHILD

d) Any contemplated replacement of the child not precipitated by court order is conveyed to the Foster Parents, and the appropriate written 14-day notice is issued. Staff has been instructed to use the DCFS Form "Decision to Move" which refers the Foster Parents to the appeal process if they disagree with the decision. Upon agreement of all parties, the 14-day notice may be waived. This is noted in the case files. Appeal rights are discussed with Foster Parents who may disagree with the decision to move the child.

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**TIMELY NOTIFICATION OF COURT HEARINGS  
WRIT OF MANDAMUS**

**12) THE RIGHT TO BE NOTIFIED IN A TIMELY AND COMPLETE MANNER OF ALL COURT HEARINGS, INCLUDING NOTICE OF THE DATE AND TIME OF THE COURT HEARING, THE NAME OF THE JUDGE OR HEARING OFFICER HEARING THE CASE, THE LOCATION OF THE HEARING, AND THE COURT DOCKET NUMBER OF THE CASE; AND THE RIGHT TO INTERVENE IN COURT PROCEEDINGS OR TO SEEK MANDAMUS UNDER THE JUVENILE COURT ACT OF 1987.**

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**NOTIFICATION OF COURT HEARINGS**

a) It is the responsibility of the DCFS caseworker to notify the Foster Parents of the time and location of any upcoming court hearings. It is the policy of the Northern Region that the supervisors monitor notifications through documentation in case notes and supervision. However, in addition to basic notification, it is expected that the caseworker will have discussed with the Foster Parent and sought their input regarding the pending recommendations, plans, and/or court reports as it relates to the child. As a team approach, Foster Parents are encouraged to attend court hearings and relay pertinent information.

**COURT RECOGNITION OF FOSTER PARENTS**

b) Ongoing efforts through DCFS legal counsel will be made to highlight the importance of Foster Parents' participation in the court process and acknowledge that Foster Parents have a right to be heard in court. In those courts where Foster Parents are not recognized as part of the professional team, or where they are not given adequate notice, meetings have been scheduled with the judges, state's attorneys, and circuit clerks to strengthen the recognition of the importance of Foster Parents to remedy any inadequacies.

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## PLACEMENT OPTION FOR FORMER FOSTER CHILDREN

**13) THE RIGHT TO BE CONSIDERED AS A PLACEMENT OPTION WHEN A FOSTER CHILD WHO WAS FORMERLY PLACED WITH THE FOSTER PARENT IS TO BE REENTERED INTO FOSTER CARE, IF THAT PLACEMENT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD AND OTHER CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER PARENT'S HOME.**

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### PREVIOUS PLACEMENT SEARCH

a) To minimize stress and trauma to the child and to ensure as much continuity in the child's life as possible, it is expected that the caseworkers and investigators first explore the child's case file to identify any previous placement that may serve the child's best interests if the child returns to custody of DCFS. To ensure compliance with this portion of the statute, DCFS workers in the Northern Region are to document their efforts in the case notes. Such documentation should include reference to searching the placement history of the child. This will be done by utilizing the computer system or the placement history of each 906 in the case file. In addition, they must reference examination of these prior placements in relation to the current best interest of the child and in keeping with IEPA (InterEthnic Placement Act.)

### FOSTER CHILD INPUT

b) If a child is verbal, the caseworker assesses the child's attachment to the prior placement, always considering what is in the best interest of the child.

### FOSTER PARENT PARTICIPATION

c) In the event a child is returning to a foster home placement from an institution or group home, the caseworker identifies previous placements prior to discharge. The anticipated foster home would then participate in discharge planning, staffings and child and family team meetings. In addition, efforts are made to conduct placement visitation meetings before final discharge.

### MONITORING COMPLIANCE

d) Compliance with this portion will be monitored through supervisory review of files as well as peer reviews of case files.

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## APPEALS PROCESS

**14) THE RIGHT TO HAVE TIMELY ACCESS TO THE CHILD PLACEMENT AGENCY EXISTS APPEALS PROCESS AND THE RIGHT TO BE FREE FROM ACTS OF HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION BY ANY OTHER PARTY WHEN EXERCISING THE RIGHT TO APPEAL.**

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### STAFF TRAINING REGARDING CONFLICT RESOLUTION

a) To minimize the need for the use of the formal appeals system, all DCFS field offices in the Northern Region continue to provide conflict resolution training to their staff. This will emphasize the benefits of timely problem resolution, de-escalation of conflicts, and recognize the value and importance of Foster Parents as members of the professional child welfare team.

### CHAIN OF COMMAND

b) At the time of placement, staff share information with Foster Parents regarding the supervisor's name and the appropriate chain of command. Foster Parents also have access to brochures and information regarding the formal appeals system.

### SERVICE APPEAL BROCHURES

c) It is required that the Administrative Case Reviewer distributes copies of the Service Appeal brochure at each case review. The local field office is responsible for making sure that the Service Appeal brochures are publicly displayed and available at each DCFS field office within the seventeen county coverage area. These brochures are also available in Spanish.

### TRAINING ON FOSTER PARENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

d) The Northern Region offers opportunities for Foster Parents and staff to be trained on Foster Parents rights and responsibilities as well as how the Northern Region of DCFS will be implementing these rights into their daily practice. Most importantly, this training will provide tools to minimize the need for external Service Appeals or mediation intervention. This training also includes information and brochures regarding the role and function of the Office of Inspector General, the Advocacy Office and the grievance process.

### FREEDOM FROM HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION

e) Harassment and retaliation is not permitted and will be dealt with through disciplinary measures and through the grievance process. Foster Parents forward all complaints, verbally and in writing, to the caseworker's immediate supervisor. Supervisors should respond verbally and in writing within 72 hours of receiving the written notification.

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**HOTLINE INFORMATION**

**15) THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED OF THE FOSTER PARENT HOTLINE ESTABLISHED UNDER SECTION 35.6 OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT AND ALL THE RIGHTS ACCORDED TO FOSTER PARENTS CONCERNING REPORTS OF MISCONDUCT BY DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES, SERVICE PROVIDERS, OR CONTRACTORS, CONFIDENTIAL HANDLING OF THOSE REPORTS AND INVESTIGATION BY THE INSPECTOR GENERAL APPOINTED UNDER SECTION 35.5 OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT.**

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**OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL BROCHURE AVAILABILITY**

a) The local Consumer Satisfaction Committee will ensure that the brochure for the Inspector General's Office is available (including the Spanish version) in each of the field office waiting rooms.

**FOSTER PARENT HOTLINE**

b) The Hotline phone number is 800-722-9124 and is staffed during regular business hours.

## **Section 1-20 FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

A Foster Parent's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

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### **COMMUNICATE WITH CHILD'S TEAM**

**16) (1) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO OPENLY COMMUNICATE AND SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHILD WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CHILD WELFARE TEAM.**

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### **TRAINING**

a) Through PRIDE and other ongoing training, Foster Parents learn what to communicate to caseworkers. The PRIDE co-training model, which includes a Foster Parent and a child welfare professional, encourages open dialogue with all members of the Child Welfare Team.

### **COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS**

b) Upon initial assignment to a case, a caseworker and Foster Parent discuss what their individual expectations are regarding communication issues.

### **906 AGREEMENT TO SHARE INFORMATION**

c) By signing the 906 placement agreement, the Foster Parent agrees to "share with the worker their experiences with the child". Open communication is essential to the service delivery to the child in care. During home visits, Foster Parents are expected to share with the caseworker any experience (positive or negative) that will assist in obtaining the appropriate services for the child.

### **30 DAY HOME VISITS**

d) As per COA and Best Practice, workers make regular monthly visits that are to be scheduled at times convenient to both the Foster Parent and the caseworker. It is the expectation that caseworkers conduct their first visit with the child within 72 hours of placement. The caseworkers are encouraged to visit more frequently if the concerns and needs of the foster home or child dictate said visits.

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## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

**17) (2) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO RESPECT THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION CONCERNING FOSTER CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES AND ACT APPROPRIATELY WITHIN APPLICABLE CONFIDENTIALITY LAWS AND REGULATIONS.**

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### **CONFIDENTIALITY TRAINING**

Foster Parents are trained on the importance of confidentiality during the PRIDE training and through ongoing dialogue with the caseworker and licensing representative. Caseworkers are encouraged to discuss the matter of confidentiality during monthly home visits. Foster Parents are encouraged to seek out guidance from the caseworker, foster parent support specialist, or supervisor to cover "gray" areas such as talking to teachers, CASA, doctors, day care providers and respite workers. Foster Parents act as professional members of the child welfare team and refrain from posting case information on any form of social media or other public forums.

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## **ADVOCATE**

**18) (3) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER PARENT'S CARE.**

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### **TEAMWORK AND FOSTER PARENT PARTICIPATION**

a) As valued team members, Foster Parents, as well as caseworkers, are encouraged to advocate in favor of the wellbeing of a child in foster care. It is the responsibility of both the caseworker and the Foster Parent to ensure that the child in care receives all needed services and that there are no violations of a child's rights. Because Foster Parents have an unique perspective and invaluable insight, Foster Parents are encouraged to participate in all staffings including Administrative Case Reviews (ACR), Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) meetings, Integrated Assessment (IA) activities, case conferences, and court hearings. The input of the Foster Parent in these meetings is important and invaluable to the team.

### **TRAINING**

b) Various trainings are available throughout the region to help a Foster Parent learn to effectively advocate for the needs of their foster child. During the Northern Region Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings, topics such as the Court System and Service Appeal Process are covered.

## AVAILABILITY OF EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY/ LEGAL SERVICE

c) During the year, DCFS offers many opportunities for Foster Parents to enroll in the Educational Advocacy Training. A Foster Parent can access the training schedule online or by calling the DCFS Training Registration Unit. When Foster Parents believe that the rights of a child in care are being violated by the school system, they are encouraged to first contact the caseworker/supervisor. Regional Educational Advocates should be contacted if additional supports are needed. If there is no resolution to this problem, Foster Parents are provided the number to Prairie State Legal Services, which advocates for the educational rights of children. This information is made available to the Foster Parents through the assistance of the Regional Educational Advocates and the Foster Parent Support Specialist.

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### **TREATMENT AND CARE OF CHILDREN AND BIRTH FAMILIES**

#### **19) (4) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO TREAT CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER PARENT'S CARE AND THE CHILDREN'S FAMILIES WITH DIGNITY, RESPECT AND CONSIDERATION.**

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#### TREATING TEAM WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT

a) Caregivers are instructed in PRIDE to treat all members of the child welfare team with dignity, respect, and consideration, especially the child and their families.

#### TREATING PARENTS WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT

b) Recognizing that the child's parents play an integral role in the life and development of a child, the Foster Parent, by their signature on the 906 Placement Agreement, agrees to treat the parents with dignity, respect and courtesy. Foster Parents need to recognize the impact of both the verbal and non-verbal messages given about the children's family. DCFS can facilitate opportunities to interact with the family. These activities are encouraged throughout the child's placement.

#### MONITORING COMPLIANCE

c) Staff monitors compliance through monthly in-person contacts and document compliance in case records. Supervisors monitor this through regular supervision. This is also monitored through various administrative and Quality Improvement activities, such as surveys to parents and children that are age appropriate, and peer review.

## SUPPORTING SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS

d) With respect to sibling relationships, Foster Parents are entitled to the sibling contact information and are a vital component in developing and implementing of parent-child and sibling visiting plans. Caseworkers are expected to have ongoing communication with the Foster Parents concerning the importance of sibling visitation and the role that the Foster Parent plays in this process. Foster Parents are encouraged to facilitate the visits between siblings. Foster Parents are reimbursed for hosting visits after turning in proper documentation (CFS 502 & CFS 319.)

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## RECOGNIZE STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

**20) (5) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO RECOGNIZE THE FOSTER PARENT'S OWN INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILIAL STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS WHEN DECIDING WHETHER TO ACCEPT A CHILD INTO CARE; AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO RECOGNIZE THE FOSTER PARENT'S OWN SUPPORT NEEDS, AND UTILIZE APPROPRIATE SUPPORTS IN PROVIDING CARE FOR FOSTER CHILDREN.**

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## MUTUAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

a) Self-awareness is an ongoing dynamic process that must be developed, maintained, and reassessed by each Foster Parent. The licensing representative works with the newly licensed family and PRIDE trainer to assess the best age, sex, and type of special needs that can be handled by the family. As families care for children, the licensing worker, with input from the family, and casework staff regularly reassess the type of children for whom placement in the home is appropriate. This occurs within annual licensing monitoring and re-licensing visits and/or when other circumstances dictate. Supports and services (IPS, training, increased frequency of caseworker visits, special service fees, respite, etc.) are identified in the Client Service Plan and reviewed within Administrative Case Reviews. The Foster Parent Regional Training Managers often assist when training needs are identified around a specific placement.

## AWARENESS OF STRESS LEVELS

b) The licensing representative and caseworker both need to be aware of stress levels of Foster Parents as related to the overall balance of the household. The caseworker and licensing representative are expected to provide the Foster Parent with information concerning community services, training and support groups. Foster Parents should feel comfortable discussing any identified stressors in their life with their licensing worker and caseworker.

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## SUPPORT GROUPS

**21) (6) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BE AWARE OF THE BENEFITS OF RELYING ON AND AFFILIATING WITH OTHER FOSTER PARENTS AND FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATIONS IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CARE AND SERVICE TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.**

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### INFORMING FOSTER PARENTS OF SUPPORT SYSTEMS

a) Foster Parents are provided information concerning support systems via administrative and caseworker contacts. Local, regional, and state mailings promoting affiliation with other Foster Parents and providing opportunities to give input on the region's foster care program will also be provided. Foster Parent input is welcome and encouraged at each field office Quality Council and at the Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings.

### PUBLISHING SUPPORT GROUP LOCATIONS

b) The regional insert of the "Illinois Families Now and Forever" publication will list groups, meetings, and contact numbers for local groups as well as positively promoting their activities. Every attempt is made to schedule events at times and places that will be convenient for foster parents. Use of DCFS offices and other support services are provided to these groups. There are now 4 active support groups throughout the region. Please contact Solange Morrissette - Lead Foster Parent Support Specialist for an updated list @ Solange.Morrissette@Illinois.gov.

### FOSTER PARENT SUPPORT SPECIALIST ASSISTANCE

c) Foster Parent Support Specialists will provide support to those Foster Parents who are caring for children and are unable to join in on group activities due to transportation, childcare or other reasons. The Foster Parent Support Specialist is to be the liaison between the Foster Parent and the caseworker. Foster Parent Support Specialists visit and listen to the concerns of the Foster Parent as they relate to the wellbeing of the child and can help the foster parent articulate those concerns and issues to the caseworker / supervisor.

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## TRAINING NEEDS

### 22) (7) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ASSESS THEIR ONGOING INDIVIDUAL TRAINING NEEDS AND TAKE ACTION TO MEET THOSE NEEDS.

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#### FOSTER PARENT ASSESSMENT

a) Foster Parents must reassess their abilities and skills and seek to address needs through trainings. This is part of being a professional member of the child welfare team. Licensing staff will discuss training needs during monitoring visits.

#### PUBLICIZED TRAINING EVENTS

b) DCFS encourages Foster Parent participation in training, including the PRIDE modules, by publicizing these events in newsletters. Details are also available on the DCFS Virtual Training Center ([dcfstraining.org](http://dcfstraining.org)). Training credits are also provided for participation in the Regional Foster Parent Advisory Board when trainings are part of the meetings.

#### COMMUNICATIONS WITH SYSTEM OF CARE PROVIDERS

c) For foster homes receiving Intensive Placement Services, Foster Parents are responsible for communication with the IPS provider. This program provides training to Foster Parents around the individual needs of a child.

#### IDENTIFYING FOSTER PARENT TRAINING NEEDS

d) Licensing representatives, during their bi-annual visits, will engage in a discussion regarding the training needs of the Foster Parent and help them locate an appropriate training avenue. Caseworkers are encouraged to help Foster Parents identify trainings that would enhance their abilities to care for the child in their home. Foster Parent Support Specialists will also assess the training needs of the home during monthly contact and by utilization of the Foster Family Development Plan.

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## STRATEGIES TO AVOID PLACEMENT DISRUPTIONS

**23) (8) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO DEVELOP AND ASSIST IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES TO PREVENT DISRUPTIONS RECOGNIZING THE TRAUMATIC IMPACT OF PLACEMENT DISRUPTIONS ON A FOSTER CHILD AND ALL MEMBERS OF THE FOSTER FAMILY AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE FOSTER CHILDREN AND MEMBERS OF THE FOSTER FAMILY IF PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES FAIL AND PLACEMENT DISRUPTIONS OCCUR.**

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### IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN AT RISK OF PLACEMENT DISRUPTION

a) It is the responsibility of supervisory and casework staff to constantly assess placements and identify those placements which may be at risk. This assessment occurs within supervision, contact with foster parents, case reviews, integrated assessments, and reports from service providers, etc. When a placement is viewed to be at risk, it is the responsibility of the supervisor and caseworker to ensure services are in place that may prevent this disruption. Foster Parent Support Specialists can be brought in to assist with placement stabilization. In those situations where it is not possible to prevent a placement disruption, they will ensure services are in place within the new placement to avoid another disruption and that there is appropriate utilization of the matching tool to assist in this new placement decision. In addition, to minimize placement disruptions, Foster Parents are encouraged to participate in the CIPP and other clinical staffings to identify any additional supports that may preserve the placement.

### INTENSIVE PLACEMENT SERVICES INFORMATION

b) PRIDE and other ongoing trainings, as well as articles in the "Illinois Families Now and Forever" newsletter, will continue to inform Foster Parents of the purpose and scope of Intensive Placement Services. Caseworkers and supervisors continue to provide Foster Parents with information concerning the system of care process. Foster Parents are provided updated information through newsletters, Foster Parent Advisory Meetings, monthly visits by the caseworker, and trainings.

### ACCESSING CRISIS INTERVENTION SERVICES

c) Crisis intervention services are accessed through the caseworker during regular working hours. Caregivers can call the hotline (800-25- ABUSE) after hours in case of an emergency.

### CRISIS PREVENTION

d) At the initiation of placement, caseworkers will discuss with Foster Parents the utilization of Crisis Intervention Services. Foster Parents are encouraged to utilize these services particularly with children that have a history of multiple placements.

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## MINIMIZE STRESS

**24) (9) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE IMPACT FOSTER PARENTING HAS ON INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND ENDEAVOR TO MINIMIZE, AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, ANY STRESS THAT RESULTS FROM FOSTER PARENTING.**

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## ONGOING SELF-ASSESSMENT

a) During PRIDE training, information is provided as to issues which can cause stress for foster families and resources that are at their disposal in dealing with stress as it occurs. Licensing staff is responsible for explaining to Foster Parents the "hold" process, both voluntary and involuntary. Ongoing self-assessment allows the Foster Parent to realize when it is time to seek assistance through training, short term respite, counseling, voluntary hold and changing licensing parameters. Within conferences, there are usually workshops on stress and this subject often comes up within all types of training. Ongoing available respite and how to access it is provided to foster parents and staff.

## COUNSELING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

b) If counseling is a recognized need, Licensing staff and caseworkers will assist the Foster Parents in locating resources, along with helping them to recognize the impact of fostering on their biological children, spouses and extended family to avert potential problems.

## IDENTIFYING AND ASSISTANCE FOR STRESS

c) Foster Parents, as team members, are encouraged to communicate stressors to the caseworker and licensing representative as well as propose solutions and needed services that impact their fostering ability.

## VOLUNTARY HOLD

d) Just as deciding to foster is a personal, complex family decision, the decision to take time off fostering or to stop fostering altogether is a personal, complex decision. These decisions should be discussed with the licensing representative to share concerns and feelings. Foster Parents who have made the difficult decision to no longer care for children in their home are surveyed and interviewed by their licensing representative.

The Foster Parent may be able to continue to contribute to foster care retaining their license to provide respite care only, thereby reducing the stress caused by fostering, but continuing to contribute a very valuable and needed service.

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## PROMOTE FOSTER CARE POSITIVELY

**25) (10) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE REWARDS AND BENEFITS TO CHILDREN, PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND SOCIETY THAT COME FROM FOSTER PARENTING AND TO PROMOTE THE FOSTER PARENTING EXPERIENCE IN A POSITIVE WAY.**

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### REGIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR POSITIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS

a) The Region continues to work to promote the positive aspects of the foster care experience through media coverage, community resource fairs, and special events in conjunction with corporations, churches, and community organizations. The Northern Region recognizes that our best forms of recruitment are the Foster Parents themselves.

### REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

b) The Region and local offices continue to promote the positives of Foster Parenting through various recruitment activities including but not limited to: public awareness, activities, press/media conferences, newsletters, Senate Child Care Fairs and other special events. Northern Region is hosting ongoing foster parent cafes to encourage networking of foster parents.

### ONGOING POSITIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS

c) While prevented from publicizing individual successes on a case-by-case basis, systemic successes, offices that achieve accreditation status, increased Foster Parent adoptions, and new legislation for permanency, have all generated positive press for child welfare and Foster Parenting. The Northern Region recognizes that positive relationships between the departmental staff and Foster Parents are the best form of public relations that can be obtained. Public Relations is often a topic at the Northern Region Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings.

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## **UNDERSTANDING THE CHILD WELFARE TEAM**

### **26) (11) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE ROLE, RIGHTS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FOSTER PARENTS, OTHER PROFESSIONALS IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM, THE FOSTER CHILD, AND THE FOSTER CHILD'S OWN FAMILY.**

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#### **DEFINING ROLES**

a) The roles of all members in the child welfare system need to be consistently defined and not left open to interpretation. This includes the different types of foster homes and the various members of the child welfare team. This information is initially presented during PRIDE training and reinforced through publications and ongoing training. Foster Parents are encouraged to contact the caseworker/supervisor if there is a need for clarification of roles within the region.

#### **TRAINING ON ROLES, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

b) The Northern Region works with Best Practice and training coordinators to develop training on the roles, rights and responsibilities of the child welfare team which are co-trained by staff and Foster Parents. One of the five competencies of PRIDE training cover roles, rights and responsibilities of working as part of a professional team. As new positions are created which have a role in foster care, information on these roles will be provided through training and/or mailings.

#### **CO-TRAINING (FOSTER PARENTS/WORKERS)**

c) Training and co-training regarding the varying roles of the rights and responsibilities of the child welfare team is essential. It continues to be the vision of the Northern Region to strengthen the team to promote cooperation.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE AVAILABILITY TO FOSTER PARENTS**

d) The Regional Administrator and other management staff for the Northern Region make themselves available to Foster Parents on a regular basis through the Northern Region Foster Parent Advisory Council, Foster Parent Associations, support groups, local Field Quality Council (FQC) meetings, and other special events. Staff, Foster Parents, and POS agency representatives are encouraged to attend the Regional Quality Council (RQC) meetings. The Northern Region has two representatives on the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council. If you are interested in becoming involved in the Field Quality Council (FQC), please contact your local field office. Although Foster Parents are encouraged to use the DCFS chain of command when dealing with unresolved conflicts, the Northern Region Administration is available to any Foster Parent if it becomes necessary.

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## **YOUR ROLE AS A MANDATED REPORTER**

### **KNOW THE INVESTIGATION PROCESS**

**27) (12) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW AND, AS NECESSARY, TO FULFILL THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO SERVE AS MANDATED REPORTER OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT UNDER THE ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILD REPORTING ACT; AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE CHILD WELFARE AGENCY'S POLICY REGARDING ALLEGATIONS THAT FOSTER PARENTS HAVE COMMITTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT AND APPLICABLE ADMINISTRATIVE RULES AND PROCEDURES GOVERNING INVESTIGATIONS OF SUCH ALLEGATIONS.**

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## **TRAINING**

a) The PRIDE training panel initially covers the topic of mandated reporting and the responsibility of being a reporter. The Northern Region provides training to Foster Parents through the DCFS Training Unit. To access online training, please refer to the DCFS Virtual Training Center ([dcfstraining.org](http://dcfstraining.org)). The Foster Parent Handbook contains information on both Child Abuse and Licensing Investigations, including the right to have a support person of their choosing available during the licensing investigative process.

## **SIGNED MANDATED REPORTER AGREEMENT**

b) Foster Parents acknowledge the responsibility of being a mandated reporter by signing an acknowledgement of this status at the time of licensure. This remains in the Foster Parent licensing file. It is the responsibility of the licensing worker to ensure that: 1) the Foster Parent understands the scope of being a mandated reporter, and 2) the acknowledgement is understood, signed, and filed. Mandated Reporter training is available on the VTC to assist the foster parent in understanding their role.

## **OTHER RESOURCES**

c) The DCFS Website is an excellent information resource on the responsibility of being a mandated reporter. Foster Parents are encouraged to communicate with the caseworker and licensing worker when circumstances arise that are unclear as to their role as a mandated reporter.

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## **PARTICIPATE IN TRAINING**

**28) (13) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW AND RECEIVE TRAINING REGARDING THE PURPOSE OF ADMINISTRATIVE CASE REVIEWS, CLIENT SERVICE PLANS, AND COURT PROCESSES, AS WELL AS ANY FILING OR TIME REQUIREMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THESE PROCEEDINGS, AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE FOSTER PARENT'S DESIGNATED ROLE IN THESE PROCEEDINGS.**

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### TRAINING

a) The client service plan, with the associated administrative case review, is a vital process in child welfare that is presented in PRIDE and other ongoing training. Trainings are scheduled throughout the region and published in local and regional newsletters.

### FOSTER PARENT PARTICIPATION

b) Participation in the creation of the child's portion of the client service plan is imperative to identifying needs and service delivery. It is the responsibility of the worker assigned to the case to solicit input from the Foster Parent during the monthly meeting, and it is the responsibility of the Foster Parent to openly communicate not only the needs of the child, but what they, as caregivers, need to care for the child. Every caseworker will encourage Foster Parents in the participation and completion of this task.

### AVAILABLE ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT FOSTER PARENT PARTICIPATION

c) Foster Parents are encouraged to attend ACRs (Administrative Case Review) and court hearings. If attendance is not possible at an ACR, Foster Parents may be included via teleconference. Foster Parents are encouraged to contact the caseworker/supervisor, in a timely manner, if not able to attend scheduled meetings, ACRs, court, etc.,

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## KNOWING APPEAL PROCESS

### 29) (14) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE CHILD WELFARE AGENCY'S APPEAL PROCEDURE FOR FOSTER PARENTS AND THE RIGHTS OF FOSTER PARENTS UNDER THE PROCEDURE.

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#### OBTAINING APPEAL INFORMATION

a) The Northern Region makes information available so that the Foster Parents can be responsible for obtaining information about the various appeals processes through their Foster Parent manuals, implementation plans, Foster Parent Support Specialists, chain of command and the Advocacy Office. Brochures are available at each field office and the ACRs. Within the course of their ongoing work, all investigative, casework and licensing staff are expected to share information about the various appeal and grievance systems applicable to the issue at hand. Initial information on the various appeal systems are introduced in the PRIDE Training and the Foster Parent Handbook.

#### BROCHURE AVAILABILITY

b) It will be the responsibility of the field office to make sure that brochures are available. The administrative case reviewer will also insure that brochures are distributed at every case review.

#### INTERNAL GRIEVANCES

c) Information on filing a grievance pertaining to violations of Foster Parents' rights is handled through a grievance procedure. Information on this grievance process and instructions on how to file this type of grievance is attached to this document. (See appendix) Training for Foster Parents and staff is included at the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan training to be offered at various locations throughout the region.

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### MAINTAIN ACCURATE RECORDS

**30) (15) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING ACCURATE AND RELEVANT RECORDS REGARDING THE CHILD'S HISTORY AND PROGRESS AND THE RESPONSIBILITY BE AWARE OF AND TO FOLLOW THE PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS OF THE CHILD WELFARE AGENCY WITH WHICH THE FOSTER PARENT IS LICENSED OR AFFILIATED.**

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### MAINTAINING FOSTER CHILD'S RECORDS

a) It is the Foster Parents' responsibility to design a manner of keeping records for each child and ensure that the records are up to date. A brown folder is available to each foster parent upon placement. It is the caseworker's responsibility to review this folder on an on-going basis, and it is the licensing representative's responsibility to ensure the records are kept in a secure manner. Expectations as to record keeping are covered in the licensing standards 402.26. This will be monitored through the Northern Region panel review process and peer review.

### RECORDS TO BE MAINTAINED

Records to be maintained by the foster family shall include:

- 1) The name and date of birth of the child, the legal guardian of the child, religion of the child, and arrangements for education of the child.
- 2) A record of immunizations the child has received; any physical problems, limitations, or allergies the child has; any current recommendations for special medical care.
- 3) The name, address, and telephone number of the child's physician, guardian, and supervising agency.
- 4) A log of medication prescribed and given.
- 5) The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of persons to contact in case of emergency.
- 6) The names of persons to whom the child may be released.
- 7) A record of waivers for immunizations, medical examinations, and treatment.
- 8) A record and/or receipts for distribution of allowance and clothing funds.
- 9) A record of the emergency evacuation plan and quarterly rehearsals.
- 10) A record of the childcare supervision plan, when required under Section 402.11(c).
- 11) A copy of the CFS 592 Overnight Visit Arrangements
- 12) A copy of any CFS 432, Guardian's Consent for Out of State Travel or Extended Trips

## HEALTHWORKS PASSPORT

b) The e-Healthworks Passport is issued for every child at the time of the initial health screening and is kept current by the caseworker and health care provider. Foster parents are provided information obtained from health care providers.

## RECORDS TO FOLLOW THE CHILD

c) In line with the team approach, the Foster Parent ensures that the caseworker is provided with the Foster Parent's records on the child if it becomes necessary to move the child into another foster home. The caseworker ensures that the receiving foster parent is provided with the kept record at the time of placement. Foster parents are encouraged to use a record keeping system of their choice to maintain these important documents.

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### SHARE INFORMATION

**31) (16) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO SHARE INFORMATION THROUGH THE CHILD WELFARE TEAM, WITH SUBSEQUENT CAREGIVER (WHETHER THE CHILD'S PARENT OR ANOTHER SUBSTITUTE CAREGIVER) REGARDING THE CHILD'S ADJUSTMENT IN THE FOSTER PARENT'S HOME.**

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### TRANSFERRING CHILD'S RECORD TO SUBSEQUENT CAREGIVER

Important information is passed on to the subsequent caregiver through the Foster Parent's records on a child. Communication between prior and new caretakers is encouraged and is a vital component of a child's adjustment in a new setting.

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### **RESPECT AND MAINTAIN CHILD'S CULTURE**

**32) (17) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE CARE AND SERVICES THAT ARE RESPECTFUL OF AND RESPONSIVE TO THE CHILD'S CULTURAL NEEDS AND THAT ARE SUPPORTIVE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHILD AND HIS/HER OWN FAMILY; THE RESPONSIBILITY TO RECOGNIZE THE INCREASED IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING A CHILD'S CULTURAL IDENTITY WHEN THE RACE OR CULTURE OF THE FOSTER FAMILY DIFFERS FROM THAT OF THE FOSTER CHILD AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO TAKE ACTION TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES.**

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### **FOSTER PARENT SUPPORT**

a) Foster Parents are encouraged to network with other Foster Parents and/or those who have fostered children of a similar race/culture. Foster Parents are encouraged to make every effort to participate in cross-cultural activities that will expose a child of a different nationality to his/her culture, i.e. museums, community activities, churches, etc. A relationship with the family of the child is encouraged and a good means to provide direct information of their culture.

### **UTILIZING PUBLIC LIBRARIES / INTERNET**

b) Books, articles, and training materials dealing with trans-cultural placements and adoptions are available in the public libraries. Foster parents are encouraged to utilize the Internet in providing information concerning different cultures.

### **TRAINING ON TRANS-CULTURAL PLACEMENT CHALLENGES**

c) Training activities at local and state levels often address trans-cultural placement challenges. The Northern Region in collaboration with the DCFS Training Unit will assure that Module 5 (Supporting Relationships between Children and Their Families) and Module 7 (Promoting Children's Personal and Cultural Identity) will be provided on an ongoing basis. The foster care training coordinators are available to develop/arrange training for Foster Parents surrounding the developmental needs of specific children. The region also makes every effort to ensure placements are Burgos compliant.

# ***APPENDIX***

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## DCFS NORTHERN REGION FOSTER PARENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS

According to Section 340.70, each DCFS region shall have a procedure for addressing Foster Parent grievances on violations of the Foster Parent Law. "This 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 or appeal process. E.g., it cannot be used to address issues that are covered by the service appeal process, the appeal process for indicated cases of child abuse/neglect, the process for appealing licensing investigating findings or license revocations, etc."

If your Foster Parent's right(s) have been violated by a member of the Northern Region DCFS staff as per the Foster Parent Law, you have a right to file a timely grievance and a right to a response and an initial resolution on the grievance no later than thirty (30) calendar days after the grievance is filed.

The Foster Parent should adhere to the following steps:

1. Contact the DCFS staff member who allegedly violated one or more of your Foster Parent rights. Try to resolve the issue with the staff member directly.
2. If no resolution is found, contact that staff member's direct supervisor. Discuss with the supervisor the violation and search out a resolution.

If no resolution can be agreed upon, contact the Foster Parent Law Liaison, Debbie Freke 630-842-4851

3. If the Foster Parent Law Liaison cannot remedy the violation, ask for the formal filing papers for the Grievance Procedure. They are also located in the appendix of your Northern Region Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. If you need a new plan, ask your licensing representative for a copy. The Foster Parent Law Liaison will keep an accurate record of the grievance, timeframes adhered to, and the final resolution.
4. Send all Northern Region Foster Parent Law Grievances to:  
  
Debbie Freke  
Foster Parent Law Liaison  
800 W Roosevelt Rd  
Building D  
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
5. Within five (5) calendar days of receiving the formal written grievance, the Regional Administrator will contact the grieving Foster Parent to acknowledge receipt of the grievance and obtain additional information. At this point, the Regional Administrator will also notify the acting chair people of the Northern Region Foster Parent Advisory Council and without disclosing any confidential information inform them a grievance has been filed and which right was violated. This is for tracking purposes and for greater accountability in the procedure.
6. Within fourteen (14) calendar days following the acknowledgement of the receipt of the grievance, the Regional Administrator or her designee will identify and assemble a panel from another area in the region. On this panel will be: a placement caseworker and supervisor (not from same supervision line), a licensing worker (not the foster parent's representative or a representative from the same team), a current and active foster parent (with no prior knowledge of the incident) and the alleged violator of the Foster Parent's rights. The grieving Foster Parent may also bring a support person of their choosing. This panel will meet in person unless it is more convenient for the grieving Foster Parent to conduct the panel by teleconference. During the panel, the panel will gather information from both the grievant and the alleged violator.

## DCFS NORTHERN REGION FOSTER PARENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS- CON'T.

7. Within three (3) business days of the panel convening, the Foster Parent grievant will be notified by

letter as to the resolution agreed upon by the panel. The Regional Administrator will review all resolutions before they are sent to the grieving Foster Parent. If the Foster Parent is satisfied with the resolution, the Regional Administrator will notify the acting chair people of the Northern Region Foster Parent Advisory Council of the resolution.

8. If the Foster Parent does not feel the grievance has been resolved, they must contact the Regional Administrator in writing asking for additional consideration within five (5) business days of resolution notification.
9. The Regional Administrator has four (4) calendar days to gather further information and reconsider the resolution. The Regional Administrator will notify the acting chair people of the Northern Region Foster Parent Advisory Council of the final resolution. The Regional Administrator has the final determination of the grievance.
10. The Regional Administrator has the final determination of the grievance.



# ORGANIZATIONAL PHONE NUMBERS

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## STATE HOTLINE NUMBERS

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Inspector General (FP Hotline)	1-800-722-9124
Advocacy Office	1-800-232-3798
Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-25-ABUSE
	1-800-252-2873
DCFS Information	1-312-793-2100
DCFS Emergency	1-800-252-2873
Payment Hotline	1-800-525-0499
Medical Consent	1-800-228-6533
Medical Info	1-217-782-6533
Reimbursements	1-312-814-5509
Appeals Unit	1-312-814-5540
Intensive Placement Services	1-800-345-9049
CASA Info	1-312-773-4009
Public Aid Ombuds	1-800-525-0499
Help-Me-Grow	1-800-323-4769
Illinois IFAPA	1-847-949-8009
Severe Disability SSI Info	1-800-841-2812

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## REGIONAL ASSISTANCE

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Aurora Regional Office	1-630-801-3400
Regional Administrator	1-630-801-3400
Glen Ellyn Licensing Supervisor	1-630-790-6800
Rockford Licensing Supervisor	1-815-967-3731
Regional ACR Manager	1-630-801-3400
Prairie Legal Services	1-630-232-9415
Education Advisor	1-815-967-3731
Regional Agency Performance Team	1-630-801-3400
Sexual Child Behavior Specialist	1-815-730-4000
Post Adoption Services	1-888-962-3678

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## LOCAL FIELD OFFICES

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DeKalb Field Office	1-815-787-5300
Elgin Field Office	1-847-888-7620
Freeport Field Office	1-815-235-7878
Glen Ellyn Field Office	1-630-790-6800
Joliet Field Office	1-815-730-4000
Kankakee Field Office	1-815-939-8140
Sterling Field Office	1-815-625-7594
Waukegan Field Office	1-847-249-7800
Woodstock Field Office	1-815-338-1068

**\*\*\*\*\* FOR AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCIES, CALL the HOTLINE  
1-800-25-ABUSE \*\*\*\*\***

