THE SOUTHERN REGION 2020 FOSTER PARENT LAW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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History of the Foster Parent Law

In the late 80's as Chair of the Child Welfare Subcommittee, Representative Tom Dart traveled around the state listening to child welfare issues. Foster parents who were already involved in the Illinois Foster Parent Association attended those town meetings and began voicing their concerns. As a result, a select few were invited to testify in political forums. The result of Representative Dart's findings led to a legislative report of recommendations for improving the child welfare system. Included in those recommendations was a Foster Parent Bill of Rights.

Representative Dart introduced the Foster Parent Bill of Rights to the Illinois General Assembly, but because of its lack of legal language and corresponding responsibility section the Bill was referred back for negotiations. A Governor's Task Force was formed to create a "responsibility" section and to write the entire recommendation in a legal format. A few legislators, selected DCFS staff, and some of the original group of foster parents were assigned to this taskforce.

On June 3rd, 1995, Governor Edgar signed Public Policy 89.19 into law. The original Foster Parent Bill of Rights, now incorporated in The Foster Parent Law, became a reality on its third trip before the legislature. Its title is misleading because it is actually good child welfare practice that is not intended to be a solution but a step toward better teamwork between DCFS and foster parents. Indeed, it is the foundation for all foster parent trainings, conferences, and work groups. It is also a part of new worker training and will be included in Best Practice.

The fifteen Rights and seventeen Responsibilities listed in the Foster Parent Law provide a job description for foster parents. The Foster Parent Law is also a part of DCFS policy (P.T. 2000.14) and rule (Foster Parent Code 340). "The Department and purchase of service agencies are responsible for developing annual plans for implementation of the law to ensure that foster parents are provided with the information and support to fulfill their responsibility to fully participate as a member of the child welfare team," [Foster Parent Code – Section 340.30]. Annual plans must be submitted to the Illinois Statewide Foster Parent Advisory Council for review and approval. The implementation plan must state how each DCFS region or private agency will implement the law for their licensed foster parents. These plans are graded and must achieve a passing rate or they are returned to the agency for resubmission. A monitoring process is being developed that will hold regions and agencies accountable for their plans.

I. 2020 Annual Implementation Plan Report

The Southern Region is proud to present the following annual report.

The Statewide Foster Parent Advisory Council evaluated and reviewed the Southern Region's Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan for 2020 and rated it *Acceptable*.

Foster parent input into review and revision of this year's plan was solicited in several ways. First, all foster parents received invitation to the Review and Revision meeting via the Foster Parent Advisory Call October 22,2019. The foster parent law plan revision meeting was held on October 24, 2018 in the Mt. Vernon Field Office. Foster parents were sent the prior and updated plans in the Southern Region requesting their input. A letter also advised them on how to obtain a copy of the plan if they do not have one and how to make comments and suggestions.

The Southern Region Foster Parent Law Training was held in Southern Region in multiple locations in the Marion Area and East St. Louis Area. The trainings are conducted by Southern Region staff. The trainings were attended by both staff and foster parents throughout the region. Foster parents and staff were notified of the trainings by social media, phone calls, direct mail or email listing locations, dates, and times. As a result of these trainings, staff and foster parents gained a greater knowledge about the Foster Parent Law and what their responsibilities are in implementation, and what responsibilities foster parents and staff share. An interactive format allowed for staff and foster parents to discuss current practice and ideas as they relate to the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. The open discussion to facilitate focusing on personal experiences emphasize, the Law's connection to direct services and real-life application.

The Southern Region Foster Parent Advisory Council retained the quarterly meeting format in order to maximize foster parent representation. Four meetings were held using the teleconference format connecting four (4) geographically separate sites. Foster parents who were unable to attend physically at one of the sites were offered the teleconference number to call in to the meeting, as well. This arrangement minimizes travel for foster parents and increases their opportunity to participate. Private agency partners (staff and foster parents) are also being invited to participate in meetings. The meetings were held in the evening from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Southern Region Advisory Council meetings are preceded by an informal "pre-meeting" at each site where foster parents are encouraged to present any concerns, issues, problems, and suggestions. If issues discussed in the pre-meeting relate to the Foster Parent Law Rights and Responsibilities, then the site host will present these during the formal Advisory Council meeting. This has proven successful in helping to resolve issues informally at a local level. The intention is to strengthen this forum by continued distribution of the information about these meetings and encouragement locally by staff and other foster parents to increase in person participation.

The revised Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan is accessible at all DCFS field offices during the first week of November. Foster parents are made aware of this through social media, mail and email. DCFS staff also received a similar notification via the Outlook email system.

Approval and sign-off procedures remained the same. All staff and foster parents are given the opportunity to register their approval of the plan. In addition, foster parents or staff who requested the plan were provided with an "approval form" along with a stamped self-addressed envelope to return the signed form. A copy of the plan was placed in each field office with a notification to foster parents that they could review the plan in the office and sign a document registering their approval.

After approval, a letter is sent to all Southern Region foster parents letting them know that the approved plan is available to them in a hard copy or via email attachment.

Deficiencies/suggestions for improvement of the 2020 DCFS Southern Region Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan were discussed and addressed, as follows:

Right#1: Omitted: "the Resource Unit" does not send letters to foster parents to make them aware of the implementation plan.

Omitted: "coffee cafes" are not being held

Added: access to the Regional Educational Liaison occurs "via referral by the child welfare specialist."

Right #2: Omitted: "Modules" are no longer available for in service training and PRIDE training.

Right #3: Omitted: "New foster parents are instructed on how to seek assistance after hours during Pre-Service PRIDE training."

Right #5: Omitted: "If a foster parent needs further information or training in regards to a reunification goal a three hour training is offered twice yearly or more often, as needed, through the Department's Training Unit."

Right #7: Added: "When invited by birth parent" to Quarterly Child and Family Team meetings.
Deleted: "New caseworkers are given an overview of PRIDE which explains the expectations of foster parents on confidentiality."

Right #9: Added: Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) may accompany foster parents to "educational meetings".

Right #10: Omitted: "along with a Child's Folder, which contains a face sheet with descriptive information about the child" from information provided to foster parents at initial intake.

Right #14: Omitted: "Service appeal brochures may be distributed to foster parents as supplementary information during Foster PRIDE Training."

Responsibility #3: Added: "via referral from the child welfare specialist" for obtaining an educational advisor.

Omitted: "During the 9th Session of PRIDE the trainers, caseworkers, investigators, licensing staff, regional nurse, adoption workers, etc. reinforce the importance of foster parent participation in staffings, ACR's, CIPP, IA's, case conferences and court hearings.

Responsibility #4: Omitted "ongoing training is provided through Module 5, SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES. This 9-hour module is offered Throughout the Region on a regular basis and is also offered online as a digital in-service training.

Responsibility #5: Omitted "enroll in PRIDE In-Service (modules) or to". Modules are no longer available.

Responsibility #6: Omitted "and periodic Foster Parent Cafes" which are no longer offered.

Added: "Licensing representatives" to providing prospective foster parents supplementary information .
Omitted: "and cafes" as a means of disseminating information to prospective foster parents

Added: "and Regional" to Foster Care Advisory Council meeting as a way to stay updated...

Responsibility #7: Omitted: Identified training needs are proided through the 9 PRIDE in-service modules, which are offered in person (held throughout the region during the year) or on line DVD. These modules provide a broad base of learning for foster parents.

Added: "Licensing representatives address the training needs of foster parents at semi-annual monitoring visits. Foster parents are encouraged to seek training through the VTC, foster parent law, community organizations which include WIC, applicable job training, local foster parent support groups, and other DCFS organized trainings."

Responsibility #8: Added: When the child's caseworker is unable to resolve a crisis, the caseworker and foster parent can access the IPS provider "through a referral."

Added: foster parent can access "SASS services CARES line at 1-800-345-9049. The "CARES Line" is available 24-hours, 7 days a week.

Omitted: "Trainers in the Southern Region are providing new foster parents handouts about how to access IPS services."

Responsibility #10: omitted "such as Christmas/Thanksgiving potlucks" from special events.

Responsibility #12: Omitted: "Module 9 – Managing the Fostering Experience is an in-service training available on line and can be accessed through the VTC. Foster parents are provided training in pre-service on their responsibility to report unusual incidents that would include sexually abusive behaviors of children and youth."

Added: "During semi-annual monitoring visits, foster parents are provided behavior logs and encouraged to use them to record behavior and provide to caseworkers."

Responsibility #17: Omitted: "The Southern Region has ongoing internal and external training available through Module 7 that is "Promoting Children's Personal and Cultural Identity.". This is a 6-hour internal training and is offered throughout the Southern Region. The training schedule is provided upon request or online via the Virtual Training Center. Foster families who care for children of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds are encouraged to enroll in Module 7. Sexual Health Training addressed issues of parenting lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered and questioning youth. Effective Black Parenting Training for families that foster children of an African-American background is available."

Added: "Working with LGBTQI Youth in Care is a webinar offered on the VTC on demand training. Foster parents may also revisit the PRIDE pre-service supplemental "Keeping Children Connected."

FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS

(HOW THE AGENCY IS ADDRESSING EACH FOSTER PARENT RIGHT IN THE FOSTER PARENT LAW)

FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS	CRITERIA FOR ENSURING EACH FOSTER PARENT'S RIGHTS	THE SOUTHERN REGION'S CURRENT OR PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION METHODS TO ENSURE CRITERIA FOR FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS
1) The right to be treated with dignity, respect, and consideration as a professional member of the child welfare team.	• The agency or region has and implements strategies to ensure that its foster parents are treated with dignity and respect.	**The Southern Region has the following strategies in place to ensure that foster parents are treated with dignity and respect:** The Foster Parent Law is defined in the Southern Region Implementation Plan. Foster parents are made aware of the Plan via the Our Kids section of Illinois Families Now and Forever newsletter, support groups, staff members, Foster Parent Support Specialist, their Leads, and it is discussed at Foster Parent Law training region wide. Foster parents are encouraged to submit their suggestions and comments either in person at the Advisory Council meetings, by mail, e-mail, phone calls, or at local support groups. Foster parents are very important members of the child welfare team. Mutual respect and confidence is built on positive experiences and open communication between the foster parent and the Department. Foster parents are given recognition for years of service and their crucial role as part of the team. This recognition is acknowledged through annual appreciation events and fairs, attended by agency staff and foster parents. The success of the team approach to case planning is measured through foster parent satisfaction surveys. **The foster parents are further treated with dignity, respect and consideration by the following methods and procedures:** Direct line staff learn techniques to engage and empower all members involved in the child welfare system, which includes treating foster parents with dignity and respect, during their initial training. This continues by offering Trauma Focused training. • Foster parents are encouraged to attend and provide input at Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's) • Foster parents have the opportunity to work with birth parents through mentoring and reunification activities • Foster parents serve as educational advocates for Foster Children, and have access to the Regional Educational Liaison via referral by the child welfare specialist • Foster parents are offered access to resources on LANs (Local Area Networks) through wrap around services and encouraged to become active participants in the community services for their youth in care

FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS	CRITERIA FOR ENSURING EACH FOSTER PARENT'S RIGHTS	THE SOUTHERN REGION'S CURRENT OR PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION METHODS TO ENSURE CRITERIA FOR FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS
Right 1 (con't)		• Foster Parent Satisfaction Surveys are utilized and the data gathered will shape future services. Information gathered is aggregated quarterly and provided to the appropriate Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) staff. • As caregivers Foster parents are encouraged by caseworkers to participate in any meetings related to the best interest in permanency and placement of the child, including family meetings, Administrative Case Reviews, Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP), Child and Family Team meetings or other collaborative staffing. • Caregivers are provided notice of court activities as well as the reason for those activities. • Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS) act as a liaison between the foster parent and the Department to ensure foster parents rights are respected and needs are being met.

2) The right to be given standardized pre-service training and appropriate ongoing training to meet mutually assessed needs and improves the foster parent's skills.	• Minimum standardized pre-service training • PRIDE training • Co-Training approach (foster parent/staff) • Regular utilization of mutual assessment tool for training needs • Training commensurate with levels of care provided • Evidence of ongoing training schedule or calendar	The Southern Region ensures foster parents' rights to training through on-going collaboration with Division of Training and Development Services. The following types of training are made available to foster parents on a continuing basis: • **Standardized Pre-Service** schedules are currently in place for the Southern Region. The PRIDE training is being revised and will continue to be offered in person and on line. (See attached schedules in the Attachments Section). Relative Only caregivers have the option of receiving necessary training via DVD. • **In-service training** including educational advocacy, and adoption conversion for licensed foster parents occurs on a regular basis. In-service Training is offered at a variety of sites. • **Foster parent co-training** with staff occurs during PRIDE In-Service training. There is also Foster Parent Law co-training held at a variety of sites in the Region annually. • **Mutual assessment** for training needs occur at semi-annual monitoring visits, during corrective action planning, at re-licensing or when changes occur in families that threaten to disrupt placement. • **Training commensurate with the levels of care provided** based on the mutual assessment listed above. Foster parents are encouraged to take advantage of available training, conferences, seminars, Foster Parent Support Specialist Training and other community linkages. • **Evidence of ongoing training** schedules or calendars can be found in the Attachment Section. The Division of Training and Development Services makes this information available on the DCFS web site, www.dcfstraining.org. For a copy of the current schedule, or to obtain a Virtual Training Center (VTC) identification number contact the Training Unit at 877-800-3393. At DCFS sponsored training, foster parents are given a form with information on how to set up a VTC account. (See Training Attachment section) The current schedules are also available in the *IL Families Now and Forever* newsletter.

3) The right to be informed as to how to contact the appropriate child care agency in order to receive information and assistance to access supportive services for children in the foster parent care.	• 24 hour/7 day availability of emergency support • Established method for accessing support services (e.g., SASS, placement stabilization and staff phone numbers and on-call schedules)	**The Southern Region utilizes the following methods to ensure that foster parents have access to the Department's emergency services on a 24-hour 7 day a week basis:** The Southern Region maintains a comprehensive support system to ensure the accessibility of staff and other service providers to assist foster parents and foster children 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. An after-hours, emergency response can be accessed through the statewide Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-25-ABUSE). Hotline staff contact local Department staff who are "on call" to respond to reports of child abuse and neglect as well as crises experienced by foster parents. Many workers and supervisors share their home phone numbers with foster parents, particularly during times of crisis. If a foster parent and their worker (or on-call worker) are unable to resolve a crisis with a child themselves, the foster parent and worker can obtain crisis response services through their local Intensive Placement Stabilization provider. Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS) staff are also available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and can be contacted through the statewide Crisis and Referral Line/CARES 1-800-345-9049; TTY 1-800-905-9645; www.hfs.illinois.gov. If a foster parent is confronted with behaviors by a foster child that the foster parent believes may create an immediate risk of harm to the child or others, the foster parent is encouraged to access SASS services to assess the child for psychiatric hospitalization. SASS agencies are also contacted through the Statewide Crisis and Referral Line/CARES. Licensed foster parents are given information about after-hours support on an individual basis by their youth in care's worker. Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS) are a valuable support to foster parents available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, and are experts on resources available in their counties. New foster parents are given the contact information of the FPSS serving their area. The Foster Family Handbook is another valuable resource tool, and section nine of the Handbook provides information about supportive services in detail. FFoster parent support groups are available to foster parents throughout the Southern Region. Healthworks is available to foster parents to provide assistance in locating local physicians, dentists, optometrists, Women Infant Child (WIC) providers and other specialty providers.

4) The right to receive timely financial reimbursement commensurate with the care needs of the child as specified in the service plan	• Regular board payment (attached rate schedule) • Payment for additional services, such as respite care and camp • Timely assessment and payment commensurate with levels of care provided • Method of resolving payment problems	The Southern Region recognizes that the prompt processing of 906 Placement forms is vital to ensure that foster parents receive a timely reimbursement. Effective July 1, 2006 the Case Assignment Payment Unit (CAPU) began data entering all Southern Region placements. Workers will submit the CAPU packets in a timely manner to ensure the foster parent provider receives their payment via the earliest board run. The Region expectation is that the 906 on all subsequent placement information be emailed in immediately following placements during regular business hours or the morning of the next business day for placements that occur after hours or weekends. Regular board payment rate schedule attached. Under the guideline of Department Rule/Procedure 359, the Southern Region ensures foster parent's rights to payment for additional services such as respite and camp on a child-by-child basis. The youth in care's permanency worker, in conjunction with foster parent's input, initiates this request for extra support services. This may require the completion of one of the following forms: Special Service Fee or Exception to Payment Request. Supporting documentation will need to be provided by the foster parent, for instance, camp brochures, billing summary, flyers with specific dates and information, a cancelled check or the payee's name and address. Once all documentation has been gathered and the worker completes the necessary form, the immediate supervisor signs off. At that time the paperwork is submitted to the Area Administrator, who approves the request, which is subsequently forwarded to the Regional Office for processing. Foster parent daycare payment is secured by the worker completing a CFS 2000 Part 1 Day Care Services Application with the foster parent. Foster parents must also submit proof of current employment hours or school schedule requiring the child care. Specific requirements are detailed on the form. The CFS 2000 Part 1 requires the signatures of the worker, supervisor, and foster parents. The CFS Part 2 Day Care Services Eligibility Agreement & Rate Certification must be completed and signed by the day care provider. All of the above documentation must be submitted to the daycare unit within 30 days of daycare service start date. Timely assessment and payment commensurate with levels of care provided is assured by: All children who enter substitute care must be screened for special mental or medical health needs by the placing worker through the use of the "CFS 418-J; Checklist for Children at Initial Placement." When special needs are identified, the worker is to email this CFS 418-J checklist and supporting documentation to the Specialized Gatekeeping and CAPU to consider for placement of the child in specialized foster care. If approved by the Specialized Gatekeeper, the child is referred to an agency that contracts with the Department to provide this, and the child is placed in a foster home that receives an intensive level of services from the agency along with a specialized foster care board payment.

Right 4 (con't)		Often, a child in care's mental health or behavioral concerns are not readily apparent at initial placement. The Integrated Assessment (IA), which is completed in the first 45 days (at the present time only new traditional cases), is designed to identify any needs a child coming into care may have. However, when foster parents confront difficult behaviors from the child following placement, foster parents are afforded in-home crisis intervention, placement stabilization and other therapeutic services through local community resources and Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS). IPS providers assess the strengths and needs of the child and foster family and identify the necessary supports to preserve the child's placement. In the event that the IPS provider assesses that the child requires a higher level of foster care with more intensive services, the IPS provider will make this recommendation through a referral by the child's worker to the Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP). If the child is approved for specialized foster care, the child is referred to one of the contract agencies that provide this level of care. When it is in the child's best interest to remain with their current foster parent, the supervision of the child's placement in that foster home is provided by the contracted agency, and the foster parent receives a specialized foster care board rate. Method of resolving payment problems: Foster parents who disagree with the determination on the child's eligibility for specialized foster care may file an appeal through the Administrative Hearings Unit. Any payment problems involving a DCFS foster parent caring for a child supervised by a private agency is directed to the regional Agency Performance Team (APT). Other payment issues are addressed in the Foster Family Handbook in Section 9. The Southern Region Department staff offer foster parents help in addressing these issues. Foster Parents are offered financial assistance for mentoring biological parents, participating in co-parenting activities, transporting children to medical and counseling appointments, and supervising siblings visitation. Limited funds are available to reimburse foster families for extracurricular activities.

AUTHORIZED CHILD CARE PAYMENTS
December 11, 2015 – P.T. 2015.27

b) Licensed Foster Family and Relative Home Care
(Effective July 1, 2014)

Licensed Department and Private Agency Maintenance Rates

Licensed Homes (Relative & Traditional Home Care)		Service Codes: 2907, 2940, 4102, 4140, 9101, 9102, 9106, 9140		
Age of Child	**Board**	**Clothing**	**Allowance**	**Total Rate/month**
0 – 11 mo.	$ 366.00	$ 39.00	$ 13.00*	$ 418.00
1 – 4 years	$ 368.00	$ 44.00	$ 14.00*	$ 426.00
5 – 8 years	$ 371.00	$ 59.00	$ 15.00	$ 445.00
9 – 11 years	$ 379.00	$ 68.00	$ 25.00	$ 472.00
12 and over	$ 389.00	$ 77.00	$ 45.00	$ 511.00

* 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.

Licensed caregivers with Purchase of Service Agencies (POS) are paid by the POS agency.

*Foster Parents who are interested in Direct Deposit for their Foster Parent checks can call the **Direct Deposit Unit at the Comptroller's Office at 217-557-0930**. They will mail the Foster Parents the necessary paperwork then the Foster Parent will complete it and mail it back to begin the process.

*To get information about the status of checks, Foster Parents can call the **Foster Parent Payment Hotline at 1-800-525-0499**.

5) The right to be provided a clear, written understanding of a placement agency's plan concerning the placement of a child in 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.	Foster parent participation in development of the case plan • Timely notification of changes in case plan/ permanency goal, including method of notification • Foster parent participation/ input into visitation/ communication plan	Foster parent participation in the development of the case plan is assured through open communication between caseworkers and foster parents at home visits, phone calls, Family Meetings, Child and Family Teams, at Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), etc. Foster parent's ideas and suggestions are considered as the service plan is developed. Foster parents' rights to timely notification concerning changes in their foster child's case plan are being ensured by: • Established written notifications that provide foster parents the opportunity to attend each child in care's ACR and share in case plan changes. Notification of the review date is mailed to the foster parent approximately 14 days prior to review in order to make alterations in date of the review and to gather information. • Foster parents are given a copy of the child's portion of the Service Plan and if they are unable to attend it is mailed to them. • Often phone calls are utilized for timely notification of changes. • As stated in the permanency initiative Policy Guide 98.1 the Southern Region ensures that caseworkers provide the primary foster parents a monthly face-to-face consultation. • Participation/input into visitation/communication plan is ensured and encouraged by use of the Behavior Log, and Medication Log. These are forms submitted in writing by the foster parent and given to workers during monthly in-home visits. • Other means of gathering information for input into the plan is phone calls to and visits with the foster parents. • The foster parent will notify the worker on the amount of communication and interaction with the birth family that is comfortable for them. Foster parents can stipulate if they want flexible telephone conversations with the birth family and their willingness to sponsor visits in their home. They will also discuss their ability to transport the child to family visits in order to build on the importance of family preservation. • The CFS 250-A Caregiver's Self Assessment of Reunification Preparedness is utilized by foster parents in conjunction with licensing staff at initial licensure and at least annually to assist foster parents in determining their willingness and ability to participate in a reunification goal for a child in their care.

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 an administrative review; and the	• Policy describing the agency's investigation of alleged violations and demonstration of how the agency disseminates that information to foster parents • Person of foster parent's choosing present during the investigation • Specified time frames for investigation • Procedure for appealing negative results/ corrective action plans (NOTE: Merely stating that DCFS procedure is followed is not sufficient.)	• Policy describing the agency's investigation of alleged violations is made available via the DCFS training website, www.dcfstraining.org. • During the initiation of licensing complaints, foster parents are granted a grace period of 4 hours to obtain an advocate. When initiating a licensing complaint, the assigned Foster Home Licensing Representative (FHLR) worker is required to verbally inform the foster parent that they may have an advocate of their choice present during the course of their interview. • There are specified time frames for investigation of complaints. FHLR worker must give foster parents 4 hours' notice. Additionally, the FHLR is required to explain to the foster parent under investigation of a complaint that within thirty (30) days of their interview they will receive written correspondence concerning their complaint. If an extension is necessary, the foster parent is informed in writing with the reason documented in the notice. • The procedure for appealing negative results/corrective action plans is explained in a written action plan stating the licensing violation, corrections need, and time frame for completion. The Foster Parent may request an informal review either verbally or in writing by contacting the FHLR supervisor. If agreement is not reached, the Foster Care Licensing Manager, upon request from the foster parent and prior to an Administrative Hearing will conduct an Informal Hearing. If an Administrative Hearing is requested, a meeting with the Foster Care Licensing Manager is scheduled within 10 business days In addition, this Region follows the Statewide policy of concurrent investigations for Division of Child Protection (DCP) reports. When a DCP report is received, the FHLR is notified and a concurrent investigation is completed. Foster parents are given a written notification of rights regarding child abuse/neglect investigations per CFS 1050-54, *What You Need to Know About a Child Abuse or Neglect Investigation.* The Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) and the Foster Family Handbook are two excellent sources for foster parents to review this process, have questions answered and get additional information. The Advocacy Office (1-800-232-3798) is also available to assist foster parents and depending on the circumstances may refer foster parents to the following Department offices for additional help:

Right 6 (con't) right to have decisions concerning a licensing corrective action plan specifically explained and tied to the licensing standards which were violated.		• Inspector General (1-800-722-9124) • Administrative Case Review (ACR) • African-American Services • Child Protection • Clinical Services • Communications • Foster Care and Permanency Services • Guardianship Administrator • Health Policy • Latino Services • Legal Services • Operations and Community Services • Agency Performance Team (APT) Monitoring • Quality Enhancement • Office of Child and Family Policy • Support Services

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 child's care.	• Caseworker training in all information to be disclosed • Description of how caseworkers are held accountable for sharing the information	Caseworkers are trained in Foundation training as to what information can or cannot be disclosed. Clinical Supervision is an avenue that deals with how caseworkers are held accountable for sharing information and deals with confidentiality and information to be disclosed. Additionally, the Southern Region has legal counsel available to provide consultation to field staff and supervisors regarding issues of confidentiality. Policy 315 specifically addresses casework activities, including increased foster parent involvement on the child welfare team through increased child and family team meetings and shared parenting activities. The Southern Region currently utilizes a good practice policy that encourages its caseworkers to maintain a line of open communication with foster parents. It is the expectation that caseworkers share relevant information with foster parents concerning youth in their care on an on-going basis. Caseworkers may share ongoing relevant information with foster parents about the child via: * Documented phone conversations with foster parents. * Documented monthly face to face home visits with foster parents * Regular scheduled Administrative Case Review (ACR) meetings * Documented case staffing concerning a youth in care * Quarterly Child and Family Team meetings (when invited by birth parent) * Utilization of Inter-Ethnic Placement Act (IEPA) Matching Tool- is no longer a requirement in the immersion site. Supervisory conferences with caseworkers are one way that caseworkers are held accountable for sharing information with the foster parents. Caseworkers are also accountable to ensure each child's folder follows the child throughout his/her placement history.
8) The right at the time of placement with the foster parent to receive in writing the medical history	• The agency or DCFS region has clear rules and procedures as to what information to share and how to share it with foster parents.	The Regional Administrator or designee has provided this information to all staff, as outlined in Public Act 94-1010, Rule and Procedure 301. Staff **are** trained during staffings, team meetings, regional meetings, supervisory conferences and through the DCFS training unit as to all pertinent policies and procedures regarding sharing information. *CFS 600-4, Sharing Information with the Caregiver*, is used to ensure this right is being met. Foster parents are provided with a copy of this form at the time of the child's placement. The supervisor

of the child, educational history, a copy of the child's portion of the service plan, and other relevant background information.	• Staff are trained in all pertinent policies and procedures. • There is a description of how caseworkers are held accountable for sharing the information.	ensures that policy is followed by the caseworker through monthly staffings and/or responding to foster parent concerns. Foster parents may receive additional information through the Administrative Case Reviews, juvenile court hearings and Child and Family Team meetings when invited by birth parents.

9.)The right to be notified of scheduled meetings and staffing 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 staffing, and individual educational planning; 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	• Foster parents notified and encouraged to participate in all meetings and staffings about foster children in their care • Foster parents informed of decisions made by agencies and courts • Foster parents encouraged to give input into case planning and input is given full consideration • Foster parents encouraged to communicate with all child team members	Foster Parents are notified and encouraged to participate in all meetings and staffings about foster children in their care by: • Staffings, Integrated Assessments (IA), Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) meetings, Administrative Case Reviews and Child and Family Team Meetings—the Southern Region holds permanency workers to the Best Practice expectation of notifying and including foster parents in Case Staffings and when included by birth parents to attend Child and Family Team Meetings concerning theirchild in care. All team members involved in the foster child's case have a right to share information relevant to the care of the foster child on a need to know basis. Caseworkers are also expected to engage foster parents in an on-going mutual exchange when scheduling such activities as face-to-face foster home and sibling visits. • Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) may accompany foster parents to Case Staffings and, licensing visits, educational meetings, and court if the foster parent chooses to invite them. On a child only case, other individuals are considered on a case by case basis. Foster parents are informed of decisions made by agencies and courts through a variety of measures: • Administrative Case Review (ACR)---the assigned case worker and the regional ACR unit collaborate to assure that a child's foster parents receive written notification, via US Mail, three to four weeks prior to ACR activities concerning theiryouth in care. • Court proceedings---the assigned caseworker is responsible for notifying foster parents about court activities concerning their specific youth in care and for documenting that notification in a case note. • If foster parents are unavailable to attend a court hearing or staffing the caseworker will inform the foster parents of decisions made by the agency and Court. All information shared regarding the agency and court decisions are documented in the child's record by the placement worker. • Foster parents can request that they appear in court on behalf of the child's best interest. Foster parents request through the child's worker or Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) to be heard in court. If the foster parents are denied the right to be heard in court, the foster parent can file a "writ of mandamus" so they can have a voice in court. Foster parents are encouraged to give input into case planning by the following:

Right 9 (con't) for the child and to have that input given full consideration in the same manner as information presented by any other professional on the team, including therapists, physicians, and teachers.		• Foster parents in the Southern Region are strongly urged to be active participants in all meetings relating to the child in their care. If foster parents cannot feasibly be present for the reviews, the worker and the reviewer facilitate a conference call so the family has crucial input. Foster parents are given the opportunity to talk about the children in their care including their adjustment to the home, health concerns, behaviors, and education. Foster parents are encouraged to communicate with all child team members. The Southern Region believes that foster parents are critical members of the Child Welfare Team. They encourage on-going open communication between staff and the foster parent. Workers meet with the foster families in their home at least once a month and encourage telephone contact when information is needed or to be shared by any team member. Foster parents are encouraged to participate in school staffings and to transport and participate in any counseling that involves the child. Foster parents are also encouraged to be an active participant in the Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) and Integrated Assessment (IA) process. During a CIPP, foster parents are crucial, as they have the most specific information regarding the stability issues a child is experiencing in their placement. Foster parents are asked to provide descriptions of a child's behaviors to guide in supporting a placement or identifying a new placement level of care.

10) The right to be given, in a timely and consistent manner, any info. a caseworker has regarding the child and the child's family, which is pertinent to the care and needs of the child and the making of a permanency plan for the child. Disclosure of info. concerning the child's family shall be limited to the information that is essential for understanding the needs of and providing care to the child in order 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 info.	• A description is given to foster parents at intake, and a prescribed method of disclosing information is utilized • Ongoing sharing of information that is pertinent to the well-being and health of the child	A description of the child is given to the foster parents at the initial intake by giving the foster parents verbal information that is pertinent to the care and needs of the child, the 906, health passport, reason for child placement, medical card, and the results of the initial medical screening. The prescribed method for disclosing this information is: placing workers will explain documents, answer questions, give whatever information the worker may have at their disposal regarding the child, as well as, relevant information about the child's family. See also RIGHT 8. The Southern Region has an expectation that requires its caseworkers to provide foster parents access to information relevant to the care of theiryouth in care. The sharing of pertinent information with foster parents is considered an ongoing mutual process throughout the foster child's placement. The quality of this information sharing process is monitored on a formal level during caseworkers and supervisor conferences. Caseworkers document their efforts to share pertinent information via the child's case record. This information is summarized on the CFS 600-4 form; Sharing Information with the Caregiver. In the Southern Region foster parents expect open and honest communication regarding a description of the youth in care at intake with the placement worker. Information that is pertinent to the wellbeing of the child's placement needs shall be disclosed at the time of placement. The worker shares all on-going information related to the wellbeing and health of the child with the foster parent so that they can continue to meet the child's needs. Workers actively encourage positive relationships between foster parents and the child's bio family by the use of Child and Family Teams to allow for improvement in the quality and quantity of information shared. Because permanency and best interest is the goal of the Department, open communication is practiced. Foster families are encouraged to transport and participate in the child's medical and clinical appointments. The information and the Healthworks documents will be transferred to the worker to be part of the permanent record for DCFS.

11) The right to be given reasonable written notice of (i) any changes in a child's case plan, (ii) plans to terminate the placement of the child with the foster parent, and (iii) 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.	• 14 day notice (not applicable for movements involving imminent risk) • Notice in writing • Appeal, including emergency review process, is given to foster parent	Foster parents receive from the placement worker a 14-day notice if the Department plans on moving a child. This letter must contain the date of the anticipated removal and the reasons why the decision to move the child has been made. The exception to this notice is if the child is in imminent risk or the court has decided that the child must move. Caseworkers can only take actions or make decisions for removal of a child after they have consulted with and received approval from their immediate supervisor. The 14-day notice (CFS 151, Notice of Decision Form) is sent to the foster parent in writing. When the 14-day notification letter is mailed to the foster family, it must also contain a notice of Right to Appeal brochure (which includes the clinical placement review process). Foster parents may request a clinical review to determine the best interest of the child. All critical decisions such as those mentioned above must be documented in the case file to ensure that parties being affected have been properly notified and included in the process. Foster parents receive information about this process during Foster PRIDE training.

12) The right to be notified in a timely and complete manner of all court hearings, including the 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 1969.	• Method for notifying foster parents of hearings and their right to be heard • Description of how caseworkers are held accountable for notifying foster parents	The Southern Region ensures foster parents rights to timely notification of court hearings concerning their foster children through communication between the assigned permanency worker and foster parent, which is monitored through staff supervision and case record reviews. Foster parents receive notification of upcoming court dates. This information is given to the foster family prior to the scheduled court date. Foster parents are apprised of their right to be heard during court proceedings by the Foster Family Handbook (section 2), Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS), caseworkers, etc. In those instances where the foster parent is not present at court, caseworkers will document notification of all court hearings to foster parents in the child's service file. Caseworkers are held accountable through job performance and periodic reviews with their supervisor.

13) The right to be considered as a placement option when a youth in care who was formerly placed with the foster parent is to be re-entered into foster care, if that placement is consistent with the best interest of the child and other children in the foster parent's home.	• Method for checking past placement records, when possible • Process for determining best interest regarding placement decision	The Southern Region utilizes the following methods for checking past placement records to ensure foster parents are considered as a placement option for youth in care re-entering foster care who were formerly placed in their care: • When youth in care re-enter the system the assigned placing worker ensures that a search is conducted on the Department's CM-07 screen and/or search of written records. The CM-07 screen and the Case Assignment Payment Unit (CAPU) provide data relevant to a child in care's previous placement history. • The assigned placement worker or placing worker consults with those persons having past knowledge of the child's previous placements. • Investigators and Placement workers discuss previous placement history with children who are verbal and explore the relationship with each of the previous foster families and document how a family selected is in the child's best interest. • Previous Investigators and Placement workers may also be consulted for additional information about a child's previous placements. In addition, the Permanency Achievement Specialist Team can assist in the process of identifying past placements. Southern Region's process for determining best interest regarding placement decisions includes use of Inter-Ethic Placement Act (IEPA) Matching Tool. This tool determines whether or not a foster parent is willing and capable of accommodating the child or sibling group and whether or not they are to be considered for permanency. In the counties identified as an "Immersion site" are no longer doing the Matching tool but noting if the Fostering Family can meet the needs of the child being placed as well as training or cultural concerns that might need to be addressed in a Staffing note. Supervisors of placement workers are enforcing the "Best Practice" policy to make sure that former foster parents are to be considered for children previously in care. Former placements are documented in the child's case file. If the former placement was a positive experience, effort is put in force to replace the child in that home, if at all possible. When a child is returned home from a private agency foster home placement, and replacement occurs, the former home will be considered so the child will suffer less trauma.

14) The right to have timely access to the child placement agency's existing appeals process and the right to be free from acts of harassment and retaliation by any other party when exercising the right to appeal	• Documentation that an internal appeals system has been established and description of how it prohibits retaliation • Process for accessing the external DCFS appeals system, when necessary	The Southern Region has adopted a grievance process as its internal appeals system for foster parents to contest agency decisions considered violations of the Foster Parent Law. Foster parents are given a brochure that explains the Southern Region grievance process. This process begins with an informal discussion of the issue between the foster parent and caseworker, with the assistance of the Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) and the caseworker's supervisor, if necessary. If the parties cannot reach an agreement informally, the foster parent has the right to file a formal grievance, using the Formal Grievance Form (See Attachment Section). This form provides a method for the foster parent to communicate the alleged violation of the Foster Parent Law as well as their desired resolution to the problem. Foster parents must submit this form to the caseworker's supervisor within 45 days of the incident that prompted the grievance. The foster parent's grievance is first heard at the supervisor's level, with grievances not resolved advancing to the next level of management, from supervisor to Area Administrators, to the Regional Administrator (RA). The matter may be resolved at any of these levels, with the resolution documented on a Resolution Form. The RA is the final authority in the grievance process. Decisions on the grievance must be reached within 30 days of the arrival of the grievance at the applicable DCFS office. Retaliation is prohibited, and diminished by the above multi-layered process. In the event of a perceived retaliation to a grievance, the foster parent will contact the FPSS Lead who will staff the situation with the Licensing Supervisor and Foster Care Licensing Manager. The Southern Region ensures foster parent's rights to be informed about the external DCFS appeal process by taking the following measures: • Local field offices stock and maintain adequate supplies of the brochures entitled "The Services Appeal Process Form CFS-1050-32." Field offices are also encouraged to display the service appeal brochures in manners that are readily accessible to foster parents and the consumers they served. The service appeal process is a two-step process. The first step in the process is mediation, which is a meeting open to all parties affected by the decision being appealed, to attempt to reach agreement on the issue in dispute with a mediator who assists the parties in resolving issues and drawing up an agreement. If the issue is not resolved through mediation, the next step is the fair hearing. At a fair hearing the Administrative Law Judge conducts a hearing in which the Department and all parties may present evidence supporting their position. The Administrative Law Judge then makes a recommendation to the Director of the Department based on the evidence presented at the hearing. The burden of proof shall be on the Department to show by a preponderance of the evidence that the

		decision made was in the best interest of the child, in accordance with professional social work standards and Department administrative rules. • This information is also in the Foster Family Handbook (Section 8), which is given to all foster parents, and is available to all foster parents on the DCFS website; www.state.il.us/dcfs . • The Council supports the Southern Region's method of informing foster parents with respect to their appeal rights through use of PRIDE training. In addition, the Council recommends distribution of the *Conflict Resolution Between Foster Parents and Caseworker* (see Attachment Section). This document addresses internal appeals as well as external appeals and is distributed by FPSS's, licensing workers and supervisors.

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 of 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.	• Training/ brochure is available on the Foster Parent Hotline and the Office of the Inspector General (OIG)	The Southern Region utilizes the CFS-1050-32, *Service Appeal Brochure,* as one means of educating foster parents so they may make an informed decision about the appeal process. In addition to containing detailed information on the service appeal process, this brochure also provides foster parents additional contact information. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigates allegations of misconduct and violations of rules, policies and procedures by employees, foster parents or contractors. The Office also investigates the death of a child when abuse or neglect is the suspected cause. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) toll-free hotline number and information is distributed to foster parents during PRIDE Training in the form of supplementary information. This information is contained in the Foster Family Handbook, which is available to all foster parents online. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) addresses and phone numbers are listed below: 2240 W. Ogden Avenue, 1st Floor Chicago, IL 60612 (Toll Free) 800-722-9124 (Phone) 312-433-3000 (Fax) 312-433-3032 4 W. Old State Capitol Plaza Springfield, IL 62701 (Toll Free) 800-722-9124 (Phone) 217-524-0074 (Fax) 217-557-8843

FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

(HOW THE AGENCY IS ADDRESSING EACH FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITY IN THE FOSTER PARENT LAW)

FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES	CRITERIA FOR ENSURING EACH FOSTER PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES	THE SOUTHERN REGION'S CURRENT OR PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION METHODS TO ENSURE CRITERIA FOR FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES
1) The responsibility to openly communicate and share information about the child with other members of the child welfare team.	• Training on type and importance	The Southern Region assists foster parents with their responsibilities to openly share information about their youth in care with team members by providing them FOSTER/ADOPT PRIDE pre-service and PRIDE in-service training. Foster Parent Law Training is offered annually to workers and foster parents. This co-training covers Rights and Responsibilities and highlights child specific communication expectations. Service Planning, Integrated Assessment (IA), Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) and Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's) all serve as opportunities for workers/supervisors to share specific communication expectations.

2) The responsibility to respect the confidentiality of information concerning foster children and their families and act appropriately within applicable confidentiality laws and regulations.	• Initial and ongoing training on importance of confidentiality • Laws and regulations available to foster parents	The Southern Region collaborates with Division of Training and Development Services to assist and support foster parents regarding their responsibilities as licensed providers. The Southern Region offers foster parents a variety of initial and ongoing trainings to help them understand their roles in safeguarding the importance of confidential information concerning foster children and their bio-families. The concept of confidentiality for new foster parents is being re-enforced through pre-service PRIDE training. Confidentiality is an important part of the foster parent's responsibility and is part of the Licensing Standards Section 402.24. This is reviewed on an ongoing basis at each foster home licensing visit. Social Media has presented a new challenge with confidentiality. In April 2014, Administrative Procedure 28 was released which outlines how social media and mobile safety should be handled by foster parents, staff and youth in care. This procedure gives clear guidelines to use when confronted with issues surrounding social media and mobile technology. In conjunction with this procedure a new form was released, CFS 2034 Social Media/Mobile Safety Agreement. This form is a tool to be utilized by foster parents and caseworkers to establish agreed upon, clear rules regarding the use of digital devices and social media by DCFS youth in care. The current policy on laws and regulations regarding confidentiality is available and circulated by the Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS), through PRIDE training, the Foster Family Handbook, the DCFS web site; www.state.il.us/dcfs, and other trainings.

3) The responsibility to advocate for children in the foster parent's care.	• Educational advocacy training available • Court training available • Service appeal brochures and training available • Encouragement to participate in staffings, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP), Integrated Assessment (IA), case conferences and court hearings	The Southern Region actively encourages, assists and supports foster parents to advocate for children in their care by taking the following measures: The Educational Advocacy Training is mandatory for all licensed foster parents. Training is made available in conjunction with the completion of the Foster/Adopt PRIDE Training. An Educational Advisor is available for the Southern Region. The advisor services are available to workers and foster parents who are advocating for educational services via referral from the child welfare specialist. Information regarding access to the Educational Advisors is placed in the OUR KIDS section of *Families Now and Forever* newsletter on an annual basis. Court training is addressed in the pre-service training. The Foster Family Handbook also addresses the Court system. This information is found in Section 2 of the Handbook. The Service Appeal Process is discussed in the Foster/Adopt PRIDE Training and is also addressed in the Foster Family Handbook under Section 8 pages 49-51. Service Appeal brochures are available via caseworkers, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), and in each field office. Participation in Staffings, ACR's, Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP), Integrated Assessment (IA), case conferences and court hearings is encouraged by: • Notification of ACR's by the ACR Unit. • Notification of court hearings by the caseworker as discussed in Right #12. • Notification of CIPP by caseworker as discussed in Right #1. • Notification of IA by the Intake Coordinator. • Monthly support from the Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS). • Routine communication with Placement Worker (in-person, phone, letter, etc.) • As stated in the Permanency Initiative, Policy Guide 98.1, the Southern Region ensures that caseworkers provide the foster parents a monthly face-to-face consultation.

4) The responsibility to treat children in the foster parent's care and the children's families with dignity, respect, and consideration.	• Initial and ongoing training on this topic • Monitoring by staff charged with case management	The Southern Region utilizes initial training on the significance of the birth family in Foster/Adopt Pre-Service. Foster parents are trained to realize that birth families are significant players on the Child Welfare Team. Because children have a biological connection, acceptance of the family is important to the child to be able to build high self-esteem for the child needing placement. Foster parents are given the opportunity to participate in Life Book Training and activities, as well, which supports the telling of a child's story, including information about their birth families. Caseworkers, per Department Policy, are required to monitor youth in care. The foster parent must be visited face-to-face one time a month for the purpose of gathering information and at these visits caseworkers interview children privately to ensure they are being treated with dignity, respect and consideration by the foster parent. Caseworkers meet with the birth family and the foster family to enhance a working relationship that reflects dignity, respect and consideration for all team members. Foster Families are encouraged to work with the biological family and participate in Child and Family Team Meetings when appropriate. Through Support/Training Groups and individual meetings, Foster Parent Support Specialists work with foster parents to create positive attitudes towards co-parenting and reunification.

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 children in care.	• Ongoing mutual assessment method • Training based on assessments • Placements based on strengths • Support needs addressed	During the initial licensing assessment foster families assist the Foster Home Licensing Representative (FHLR) in determining the age range and capacity that best suits their family. This information is then utilized to mutually assess what types of children will best fit into the home and what type of training may be needed, based on the foster families perceived and identified strengths and needs. During the foster home licensing visits this information is reviewed again to ensure accuracy. Foster parents are encouraged to attend trainings, conferences, classes, etc., that address the areas the foster parents have identified through the assessment process as areas of need. Based on the assessment, workers encourage foster parents to enroll in outside classes to become more competent in areas of need. Through the continuing Quality Improvement (QI) activities of the Foster Care Licensing Unit current foster parents and foster parents leaving service are mailed satisfaction surveys requesting input regarding the usefulness of training provided and/or additional needs. The Southern Region works to create an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect to express their right to say "no" to a placement during stressful times. The foster home is offered the opportunity to be placed on Voluntary Hold. The foster parents impose limitations (based on strengths) for themselves on the acceptance of a new placement. Foster parents are an essential team player when placements occur, and through open communication with their worker, they are open and assertive in obtaining services and skills necessary to be competent foster parents. Workers also utilize Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS), SASS, Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS), and many other available supports to enhance the foster parent's skills and competence. Foster parents are encouraged to be open to utilizing services offered to secure a placement. With the revised customer satisfaction survey for renewing caregivers, the Southern Region gathers information from a sample of families annually related to the availability and comfort level in requesting identified support services. Action plans are developed when appropriate.

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.	• Affiliations with foster parent associations are encouraged and facilitated • Internal support groups encouraged, and information provided to foster parents	Foster parents are encouraged to engage themselves in Foster Parent support meetings in their geographic area. DCFS and private agencies to support and assess the needs of foster parents. Local offices are encouraged to facilitate support groups. Currently both sub-regions have foster parent support meetingsand Life Book events. Licensing representatives and Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS's) provide prospective foster parents supplementary information regarding foster parent support groups and upcoming trainings. Both DCFS Foster Families as well as private agency foster parents can attend. The Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS's) have developed and maintain a site on social media to keep local foster families aware of resources and training opportunities. Foster Home Licensing Representatives (FHLR's) and FPSS's advise foster parents of any organizations in their areas. Foster Parents are invited to Statewide and Regional Foster Care Advisory Council meetings as a way to stay updated on Policy and Procedure changes and to participate in the discussion of new developments. Foster Parents are encouraged to attend internal support groups such as special events, foster parent appreciation dinners, the State Fair, and volunteer recognition dinners; information regarding these events is provided through various avenues. Contact information for support groups is published in the Our Kids section of the *Families Now and Forever* newsletter.

7) The responsibility to assess the foster parent's on-going individual training needs and take actions to meet those needs.	• Method and tool for assessing general training needs of foster parents • Process for providing for identified needs	The Southern Region's method and tools for assessing general training needs of foster parents is accomplished in several ways: 1) Mutual assessment between foster parents and Foster Home Licensing Representatives (FHLR's), 2) Needs assessments (via Foster Parent Survey) mailed out to foster parents asking for in-put on training needs, 3) Needs assessments (Staff Survey) to field staff asking for in-put on training needs for foster parents, 4) Quality Improvement (QI) subcommittee on Training (which includes foster parents representatives) to help develop needed and desired training for foster parents on a regional basis, and 5) Virtual Training Center (VTC). Licensing representatives address the training needs of foster parents at semi-annual monitoring visits. Foster parents are encouraged to seek training through the VTC, foster parent law, community organizations such as WIC, applicable job training, local foster parent support groups, and other DCFS organized trainings. (Trainings Listed in Attachment Section) The Southern Region Training Coordinator and the Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council play important roles in the coordination and implementation of new training.

8) The responsibility to develop and assist in implementing strategies to prevent placement 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 youth in care and members of the foster family if preventive strategies fail and placement disruption occur.	• Method of early identification of children at risk of disrupting or creating disruption in the family • Training in purpose and availability of stabilization services • Support for foster children and family members if preventive strategies fail	Methods of early identification of children at risk: Assigned placement workers are required, per Procedure 315.130, to recognize, assess and address any issues in the foster family home and to discuss with foster parents their comfort and capability levels with a child's behavior to ensure the placement is stable and to reduce the risk of possible disruption. FPSS's, caseworkers and FHLR's are there to provide ongoing support to the foster family. Training needs are assessed and training opportunities are explored with foster families at all licensing monitoring visits. Foster parents are advised in Foster/Adopt PRIDE training of the stresses that being a foster family will present. Foster parents are trained through PRIDE to recognize early symptoms, what behaviors and red flags that may indicate possible disruption prior to acting out behavior and signs of placement disruption to foster family placements. Foster Families are encouraged to take advantage of services to assist in placement stabilization to include, but not limited to, IPS services, and respite services which can be accessed outside of the IPS system. Foster parents are instructed through the Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) or caseworker that they have the ability to access IPS Services when they feel behaviors are escalating and they need help in preventing a disruption from the foster placement. When the child's caseworker is unable to resolve a crisis, the caseworker and foster parent can access the IPS provider through a referral. If a youth in care is out of control, a danger to himself/herself, or other members of the family, or in distress beyond capacity to manage, foster parent can access SASS servicesthe 24-hour CARES Line at 1-800-345-9049. There is no limitation to how often you can request his help. The CARES Line is available 24-hours, 7 days a week to help any foster parent in a crisis situation. Prospective foster parent applicants are educated about the traumatic effects of placement disruptions through a combination of Foster PRIDE Training and consultation visits by their designated Foster Home Licensing Representative (FHLR). The Foster Family Handbook Section 5 (Health Services) identifies crisis numbers and information on how to access services.

		Foster families have Foster Family Handbooks available to them at all times online, and when they are unable to access their handbook, the FPSS or caseworker will assist them with numbers and protocol for receiving crisis services. If preventive strategies fail, FPSS's, FHLR's, and caseworkers are available to offer support to the foster family in order to preserve the foster care resource. Foster families can receive family counseling services after a disruption, if desired. The Southern Region holds its caseworkers to good practice expectations that make it a prerequisite that caseworkers recognize and assist foster parents in accessing IPS services. Workers are particularly required to assist foster parents in those instances where youth in care are presenting behavioral issues that might lead to the disruption of their foster placement.

9) The responsibility to know the impact foster parenting has on individuals and family relationships; and the responsibility to endeavor to minimize, as much as possible, any stress resulting from foster parenting.	• Training/methods to recognize and minimize stress factors • Respite available • "Voluntary hold" methods explained and understood • Counseling and other supports available	To recognize and minimize stress factors, the Southern Region provides training on stress through various trainers and caseworkers. Foster parents are also encouraged to attend local community Health Fairs, foster parent support groups, and community resources to learn more about stress. As foster parents and caseworkers recognize stress levels accelerating in the home, it is their responsibility to access Respite Care Services to preserve the placement. Respite Care Services are available to all foster parents. "Voluntary hold" methods are explained during initial and ongoing training. Foster parents are encouraged to recognize their limitations and to realize their stress and the need to stabilize their family before taking on any new responsibilities. When the family decides to go on voluntary hold they are expected to call their licensing worker and request to go on or come off of the hold list. Caseworkers may also counsel a family about utilizing voluntary hold, respite or other support services as the need arises. Counseling and other support services are available to youth in care, as well as foster families, at no expense to the foster family. Foster families, youth in care or caseworkers may request to utilize these supports. Supports available include, but are not limited to, the Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS), SASS, Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS), Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP), camps, respite, etc.

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.	• Foster parents informed of events/activities that acknowledge and support foster parents and participation is encouraged • Training in the public relations aspect of fostering parenting is made available	Various units send notification of special events to foster parents in the Southern Region and encourage their attendance in these events. Individual offices hold periodic eventsand foster parent appreciation activities. Foster parent support groups throughout the region support this effort also. There is an annual foster/adoptive parent picnic held at the Du Quoin State Fair where resources are made available to foster parents regarding Early Education Head Start programs, drug awareness programs, and information regarding the Southern Region Foster Care Advisory Council meetings. Various recognitions and awards are given at this event. The Southern Region recognizes and values foster parents as very important role models in promoting foster parenting in a positive light. Staff development personnel are utilized in the Southern Region to train foster parents in the public relations aspect of foster parenting including media strategies for positive public relations. Foster parents receive information through PRIDE, at initial licensing and renewals on what information the foster parent may release and what to defer to caseworkers for publication. This information is also available in the Foster Family Handbook. Foster parents receive recognition through the *Families Now and Forever* newsletter and also through the media of the surrounding cities.

11) The responsibility to know the roles, rights, and responsibilities of foster parents, other professionals in the child welfare system, the youth in care, and the birth family.	• Training and co-training with staff is required • Regular meetings with other team members are held and encouraged • Foster parents have a recognized voice within the agency's management organization	The Southern Region assists prospective foster parents and licensed foster parents to understand their roles and responsibilities through the following training methods: • Foster PRIDE Training • In-service training • Co-training for PRIDE is delivered with agency personnel and a foster parent Regular participation is encouraged in the following ways and foster parents have a recognized voice within the agency's management by: • Foster parents are equal members on the Regional and Statewide Foster Parent Advisory Council.

12) The responsibility to know and, as necessary, fulfill the foster parent's responsibility to serve as a 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 those allegations.	• Training, initial and ongoing, including Sexually Abusive Children and Youth reporting responsibility • Written foster parent acknowledgment / contract • Training involving allegations against foster parents and the applicable rules and regulations that govern the investigation of the allegations	Initial and ongoing training and reporting responsibility to also include Children with Sexual Behavior Problems (CSBP) is addressed with the Southern Region foster parents. • Through an overview of the investigative process during Session 8 of the Foster-Adopt PRIDE training. • In addition to on-going PRIDE training, the Southern Region utilizes assigned Foster Home Licensing Representative (FHLR) workers to assist foster parents in understanding their mandated reporting status. • During semi-annual monitoring visits, foster parents are provided behavior logs are encouraged to use them to record behaviors and provide to caseworkers Written foster parent acknowledgment: FHLR's are initially required to review with each foster parent an Acknowledgment of Mandated Reporter Status, (also known as a CANTS 22B). Assigned FHLR also reviews the CANTS 22B with foster parents during their annual and renewal visits. Foster parents must sign the CANTS 22B in order to maintain their foster home license. The form is then maintained in each foster family's individual licensing file. Foster parents all have access to Foster Family Handbooks online and Mandated Reporting is further discussed in the handbook. Training involving allegations against foster parents: Investigations of foster parents must be treated the same as anyone else. Every attempt is made to expedite the investigation (DCFS Procedure, 300.70). Foster parents have the right to know the exact allegation made, the circumstances surrounding the allegation and the right to offer names of people who will substantiate the foster parent's story. Foster parents also have the right and responsibility to seek advice prior to questioning or to have an attorney or representative present during questioning. The Foster Family Handbook, section 8, also discusses Abuse and Neglect investigations.

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 those proceedings; and the responsibility to actively participate in the foster parents' designated role in these proceedings.	• Training on the importance of participating • Emphasis on foster parents taking an active role in planning for the permanency goal through court hearings, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), etc.	Southern Region foster parents receive training on the importance of participating in Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), court proceedings, and client service plans. Through pre-service, , Foster Family Handbook and contact with Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) and other team members. The Southern Region puts an emphasis on foster parents taking an active role in planning for the permanency goal. Foster parents in the Southern Region are part of the Child and Family Teams when invited by birth families. They are extremely important in advocating for the youth in care's needs. Teamwork is enforced throughout the PRIDE pre-service training and is enhanced by communication between the worker and the foster family. Foster parents provide workers with the documentation needed to attend ACR's through open-communication during home visits, telephone contacts, and attendance at the case reviews. Foster parents provide valuable information to advocate for the needs of the youth in careBy attending ACR's and court hearings, foster parents are knowledgeable of the progress of the family and also the permanency plans for the child toward reunification.

14) The responsibility to know the child welfare agency's appeal procedure for foster parents and the rights of foster parents under the procedure.	• Awareness of agency's internal systems and utilization • Rights of foster parents spelled out	The Southern Region promotes the foster parent responsibility to be aware of agency's internal appeals and grievance system and how to utilize them by distribution of appeals brochures through pre-service, Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS), and Foster Home Licensing Representative (FHLR). The Rights of Foster Parents are spelled out in the Implementation Plan that is distributed and available on the DCFS website at www.state.il.us/dcfs . A letter was sent to every foster parent informing them of who to contact for a complete copy of the Implementation Plan, which includes the Grievance Process (refer back to Right 14).

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 to be aware of and follow the procedures and regulations of the child welfare agency with which the foster parent is licensed or affiliated.	• Training provided on importance of complete records • Regulations/ expectations are available in writing • Agency provides folder, notebook, or case record for the storage and/or transportation of foster parent records	Training is provided about the importance of maintaining complete records. As new children are placed the Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) has contact with the family and clarifies the information. A written guideline is given that explains information to be contained in the sections for education, medical, personal/physical maintenance, and service planning/visitation. In addition, foster parents are encouraged to maintain updated photographs, fingerprints and Lifebooks. The Foster Home Licensing Representative (FHLR) explains the importance of documentation and verifies that the documentation is current at monitoring visits. A licensing worker discusses the importance of maintaining complete records

16) The responsibility to share information, through the child welfare team, with the subsequent care giver (whether the child's parents or another substitute care giver) regarding the child's adjustment in the foster parent's home.	• Training on this expectation is offered	Foster parents receive training regarding the sharing of relevant information through Foster/Adopt PRIDE. Foster Home Licensing Representative (FHLR) reinforces the importance of sharing relevant information during their annual and renewal visits. Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) consistently reminds foster parents to share information with the child's worker. The Behavioral Log and Medication Log is to be completed by the foster parent for each child and shared with professionals during foster home visits.

17) The responsibility to provide care and services that are respective of and responsive to the child's cultural needs and supportive of the relationship between the child and his or 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.	• Training encouraged and made available, both initial and ongoing • Internal and external resources made accessible or available	Training is encouraged and made available both initially and ongoing regarding cultural identity and cultural awareness is emphasized during PRIDE pre-service. In the Southern Region PRIDE trainers inform participants of the need for children in care to be knowledgeable of their cultural background and heritage "Working with LGBTQ Youth in Care" is a webinar offered on the VTC on demand training. Foster parents may also revisit the PRIDE pre-service supplemental "Keeping Children Connected."

Step 3: If an **agreement** is reached the meeting facilitator will complete, copy and distribute the **Resolution Form** to the attendees. Otherwise go to next step.

Step 4: If agreement is NOT reached, the supervisor will forward the grievance to the Area Administrator. The Area Administrator will facilitate resolving the issue. If agreement is reached go to Step 3, otherwise go to Step 5.

Step 5: If agreement is NOT reached, the RA will facilitate resolving the issue. RA will have the FINAL say.

A decision on the formal grievance shall be made no later than 30 calendar days after the grievance is filed. (A formal grievance shall be considered filed once it reaches a DCFS Field Office Supervisor.)

DCFS Staff are responsible for forwarding all completed grievances to the Executive Secretary for the Southern Region in East St. Louis.

THE FOSTER PARENT FILING THE GRIEVANCE MUST SEND THE ORIGINAL TO THE CHILD'S CASEWORKER'S SUPERVISOR AND A COPY TO THE ADDRESS IN STEP 2.

SOUTHERN REGION

GRIEVANCE PROCESS

FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services is committed to offering the best possible services to children and families in Illinois who need them. These services are aimed at protecting children and strengthening family life.

While working with local office staff, there may come a time when you feel one or more of your foster parent rights or responsibilities have been violated. If this happens you have the right to voice your opinion and work out your differences through this Grievance Process

Effective July 2001
Revised by Southern Region Advisory Council September 2012
Approved by the Review and Revision Sub-Committee September 2013

PURPOSE: The purpose of this brochure is to explain the process and three methods of grieving alleged violations of the Foster Parent Law. This puts Southern Region in compliance with Foster Parent Code 340.70.

"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 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 investigation findings or license revocations, etc."

***** This process excludes children whose cases are managed by private agencies.***

Foster parents may ask any person of their choosing to accompany them (i.e. Foster Parent Support Specialist, Leads, licensing rep., member of the Foster Parent Advisory Council, etc.) through this process. Since this is not a formal legal process, legal representation is not required.

HOW TO RESOLVE A GRIEVANCE:

1. DISCUSSION:

Before a grievance process is initiated, it is an expectation that issues and concerns will be resolved through verbal communication, if possible, between you and the worker or other involved party.

A grievance can be handled either informally or formally.

In order for the grievance procedure to function efficiently and effectively, all grievances should be resolved at the lowest possible level of administration.

2. INFORMAL GRIEVANCE:

Try to resolve the disagreement through an informal process. Contact the caseworker, supervisor, Foster Parent Support Specialist, or Lead Foster Parent Support Specialist at the local field office level and request a staffing. Be prepared to calmly state your concern or issues and know how you would like to see this resolved.

At the conclusion of the meeting, IF everyone is in agreement, a case note will be written by the meeting facilitator, stating the facts of the complaint and how it was resolved. Those attending the meeting will be asked to sign showing agreement. The facilitator will make copies for those who attended. (The facilitator can be anyone the group chooses, but usually the worker.)

IF agreement is not reached, move to the FORMAL process:

3. FORMAL GRIEVANCE:

A grievance may begin at this formal level, but it is expected that lower levels be utilized if at all possible.

Step 1: Foster Parent completes the attached Grievance Form. Include all details and supportive information. Additional paper can be used if necessary.

Step 2: Forward the grievance to the Field Office Supervisor (of the **foster child** named in the grievance)

AND to: **DCFS – Roslyn Bond**
10 Collinsville Avenue
East St. Louis, IL 62201

Supervisor will facilitate resolving the issue.

SOUTHERN REGION FOSTER PARENT FORMAL GRIEVANCE FORM

(Foster parent completes)

1. Foster Parent Name: _____ ID#: _____
2. Foster Child's Name: _____
3. Worker's Name: _____ Field Office: _____
4. Have you discussed this concern/grievance with the child's worker or supervisor? YES NO (Please attach any documentation of the informal process or prior discussions with the caseworker.)
5. Specify the Right and/or Responsibility of the Foster Parent Law being grieved (see the yellow Foster Parent Handbook section 8 pages 5 –8):
   _____
   _____
6. Reason for Grievance:
   _____
   _____
7. Date of Incident:
   _____
   (This must be completed within 45 days of the incident.)
8. How would you like to see this resolved?
   _____
   _____
   _____

_____ _____
Foster Parent Signature Date Submitted

_____ _____
Foster Parent Signature Date Submitted

KEEP A COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS

The right to be free from acts of harassment and retaliation shall be strictly enforced and any such act should be reported immediately.

RESOLUTION FORM

(Facilitator completes)

There are four possible levels of formal grievance. Check and date the appropriate level and indicate results.

(Initials)			Date Received	Disposition Date
____	Informal	WORKER	_____	_____
____	Level 1	SUPERVISOR	_____	_____
____	Level 2	Area Administrator	_____	_____
____	Level 3	RA	_____	_____

(Final resolution MUST be within 30 days of date received.)

FINAL RESOLUTION: _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Please sign and date below to acknowledge agreement.

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

COPIES MUST BE MADE FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

Effective July 2001
Revised by Southern Region Advisory Council September 2012
Approved by the Review and Revision Sub-Committee September 2013

Conflict Resolution Between Foster Parents and Caseworker

The following lists the avenues currently available within DCFS to assist foster parents in resolving DCFS related issues or problems they may be experiencing:

I. INFORMAL APPEAL – TEAM APPROACH

A. Child/Case Specific:

1. Case Worker and Chain-of-Command

Each child in a foster home is assigned a case worker, who is available to the foster parent by telephone, during the normal work week, and during the case worker's regularly scheduled in-home visit. The in-home meeting between foster parent and case worker is to occur on a monthly-to-quarterly basis and is the least intrusive/most informal forum to discuss the child's care, case goal and progress, and foster care related issues/questions raised by the foster parent or worker. It should support and strengthen the partnership between the case manager and caregiver and mutually involve both team members in the decision-making process on behalf of the child.

As case issues or problems arise that cannot/are not resolved by the case worker, the foster parent may/is encouraged to contact the case worker's supervisor and seek their input and assistance. If the foster parent, the child's case worker, and the case worker's supervisor cannot reach a satisfactory solution, the foster parent may seek the involvement of the Area Administrator or the foster parent may request a Service Appeal to formally appeal the Department's case-related decision.

2. ACR – Decision Review

Foster parents are invited to participate in the child's portion of the Administrative Case Review (ACR) to give information regarding the child's care and progress and to give their input as to the child's needs and strengths. Foster parents may request a Decision Review Conference to discuss disagreements they may have with service plans that have been reviewed and finalized in an ACR.

The Decision Review Conference is an informal meeting conducted by a person who was not involved in the ACR. The participants in the decision review will include the administrative case reviewer, the child's worker and/or supervisor, and the person requesting the review. The request for a decision review should be sent within 5 working days of the decision/ACR to:

Administrator of Administrative Hearings Unit
DCFS
160 North LaSalle Street, 6th Floor
Chicago, IL 60601

B. General/Non-Case Specific:

1. Fiscal Unit, Contracts, Family Development Unit

Foster parents should direct questions concerning board payment, respite or day care reimbursement, contractual requirements etc. to the fiscal or contract units located in the Marion Area Office (618-993-7100) and the E. St. Louis Regional Office (618-583-2600). Issues concerning licensing should be directed to the Foster Care Licensing Units, located in the Mt. Vernon Field Office (618-244-8400) and in the Belleville Field Office (618-257-7500).

If foster parents are not able to obtain the information, answers or assistance they require, the foster parent should contact the case worker/caseworker supervisor to request their intervention/assistance. If the foster parent requires further assistance in resolving the problem, they should then contact the DCFS Area Administrator.

2. **Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS)**
   DCFS field offices have a FPSS, who acts as a liaison between the DCFS placement staff and the foster parents and keeps both apprised of concerns, problems or changes that may affect our foster care program. The FPSS visits foster parents to offer them support, information, answer questions or direct them to the appropriate source.
3. **Foster Parent Association**
   Some DCFS catchments have a Foster Parent Association, which also offers support and information to foster parents. Field office supervisors may attend Foster Parent Association meetings to answer questions, hear general concerns (not related to specific child/case) and provide a communication link to foster parents.
4. **Advocacy Office**
   The Department has an Advocacy Office that assists any individual seeking information about any of its services or functions. Foster parents may call the toll-free number for information not available at the field office or regional level (1-800-232-3798).
5. **Regional and State Foster Care Advisory Council**
   Each DCFS region has created Regional Foster Care Advisory Councils to assist in resolving foster care related issues on a regional and a statewide level. Foster care concerns (no-case specific) that are not resolvable at the field or regional level should be directed to the Regional Foster Care Advisory Council for their attention and communication to the State-Wide Foster Care Advisory Council. Foster parents can access the regional Advisory Council through their caseworker, caseworker supervisor, FPSS or their local Foster Care Association.

II. FORMAL APPEAL

A. Child/Case Specific:

1. **Service Appeal Process**
   The Service Appeal Process is a two-step formal review of the action or decision of the Department or provider agency to determine whether such action or decision was in compliance with applicable laws and rules and in the best interests of the child.

   The first step in the process is mediation, which is a meeting open to all parties affected by the decision being appealed to attempt agreement on the issue(s) in dispute with a mediator, who assists the parties in resolving issues and drawing up an agreement. If the issue is not resolved through mediation, the next step is the fair hearing.

   At a fair hearing, the administrative law judge conducts a hearing in which the Department and all parties may present evidence supporting their position. The administrative law judge then makes a recommendation to the Director of the Department based on the evidence presented at the hearing. The burden of proof shall be on the Department to show by a preponderance of the evidence that the decision made was in the best interests of the child, in accordance with professional social work standards and Department administrative rules.

   Foster parent may appeal the following issues:

   A. Decisions made by the Department or its provider agency, which directly affects the foster parent, such as payment, issues, as defined in Rule/Procedure 359, Authorized Child Care Payments. (Most of these payments require prior approval on a regional level.)
   B. Decisions made by the department or provider agency regarding services provided for the benefit of foster children in their care, such as day care, medical, educational, and psychological services.

   C. Failure to provide services specified in the service plan for the benefit of the foster child in their care.

D. A change in the child's substitute care placement (does not include placement with the biological parent(s), relative, or sibling, placement for purpose of adoption as ordered by court, or return to an unrelated individual with whom the child lived with prior to entering substitute care.

Requests for a Service Appeal should be sent within 30 days of notice of a decision to:

Bureau of Quality Assurance
DCFS
100 West Randolph, Suite 6-200
Chicago, IL 60601

2. Appeal of an Indicated Report of Child Abuse and Neglect

The appeal Process of an indicated report of child abuse and neglect is a formal two level process. The first level review is the Child Protection Internal Review, consisting of two or three participants, who read all of the material provided (including the investigative file and the appeal form completed by the appellant. This internal review team may determine to uphold, overturn or amend the indicated finding.

The second level of this appeal process is the Administrative Hearing, which is convened by an Administrative law judge. Administrative law judge weights all evidence presented both by the Department and by the appellant to determine if the Department showed in the investigation that credible evidence existed to support the indicated finding, according to Department Rules.

The Director of the Department shall receive the recommended decision from the administrative law judge and shall agree, disagree, or modify the recommended decision based on credible evidence standard.

3. Judicial Review

Appellants may seek a judicial review of the department's decisions if it is unfavorable to them, under the provisions of the Administrative Review Law (735 ILCS 5/Art. III).

4. Applicant Appeal of Denial of a License (or Renewal)

A foster parent may request a review/hearing on the department's intent to revoke, refuse to issue or renew their foster care license. A hearing officer designated by the Director directs the hearing. The burden of proof in the proceeding is on the department, petitioner or applicant initiating the action. The hearing officer will file with the Department originals of finding of fact, conclusions of law, and a recommendation to the Director, together with the entire record of the proceeding. The Director issues a final administrative decision, which is judicially reviewed pursuant to the provisions of the Administrative Review Act.

5. Discrimination

The Office of Affirmative Action within the Department will convene an investigation of complaints of discrimination by the Department or any of its staff on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, inability to speak or comprehend the English language, or physical or mental handicap. Concerns regarding discrimination should be made within 30 days from the date of alleged discrimination to:

Office of Affirmative Action
DCFS
100 West Randolph, Suite 6-200
Chicago, IL 60601