

Foster Parent Law

“2011” Implementation Plan

DCFS Central Region



TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Annual Report

II. Plan narratives for Rights 1-15, followed by narratives for Responsibilities 1-17

III. Plan Narratives for Responsibilities 1-17

IV. Descriptions, if not included in the Annual Report

V. *Attachments

- a) Training calendar – DCFS ongoing Training**
- b) Foster Parent & Staff Receipt/Input/Development of Plan Signatures**
- c) Summary of Foster Parent comments**
- d) Summary of Agency response to Foster Parent comments**
- e) Summary of agency response to public comments**
- f) Statement of plan endorsement & Foster Parent & Staff Final Approval Signatures**
- g) Central Region Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure**
- h) Regional Administrator Letter re: Foster Parent Participation**
- i) Central Region Administration Contacts and Telephone Numbers**
- j) Regional Foster Parent Executive Advisory Council Schedule 2010-2011**
- k) Statewide Foster Care Advisory & Illinois Adoption Advisory Council Schedules**
- l) Central Region “Important Numbers to Know”**
- m) Authorized Child Care Payments (Board Rates)**
- n) Central Region Respite Guidelines**
- o) Educational Adviser Contact Information**
- p) Central Region sample “Supplement” document**

***Please note these items should be included as attachments even if they have been addressed within the narratives.**



Give this page to your licensing representative after deciding how you want to receive the 2011 plan. See choices below. You can also CALL the Foster Parent Help Line **866/368-5204** to state your preference. This page serves as acknowledgement of receipt & will be placed in your licensing file.

DCFS CENTRAL REGION

**2011 FOSTER PARENT LAW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
AFFIDAVIT OF DELIVERY**

**A COPY OF THE CENTRAL REGION FOSTER PARENT LAW
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN WAS GIVEN TO:**

DCFS FOSTER PARENT

BY

DCFS CASEWORKER, LICENSING REPRESENTATIVE AND/OR STAFF

Date _____

****Please sign, remove & return this page to your licensing representative. If you have any questions, contact your licensing representative.****

**HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE THE 2011 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
(English or Spanish)?**

- Mailed to me
- Hand Delivered by Licensing Staff
- Will pick up at local DCFS Office
- Prefer Spanish version
- Access the DCFS Website via Internet (www.state.il.us/dcfs)
- Other: Call 800 Help Line 866/368-5204

Introduction

The Central Region 2010 Foster Parent Law Implementation Planning Committee sought information and feedback regarding implementation of the plan by several methods. Each office completed a supplemental page (See Appendix P) with comments by foster caregivers, DCFS staff and contracted foster parent support specialists. The supplemental pages were reviewed to gather information on activities, training opportunities and plans for the coming year. Comments were also made on the needs of caregivers and suggestions for improvements. A regional committee meets a number of times to review the 2010 plan and improve the 2011 plan. The committee was chaired by a foster parent. The committee consists of foster parents, foster parent support specialists, licensing staff, an office coordinator who responds to the Regional Help line for foster parents and a regional administration.

2011 Annual Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan Evaluation

Deficiencies noted from 2010 Plan

The Central Region Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan Committee reviewed the letter from Shaun Lane, Deputy Director, who summarized the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council's review of the plan. The plan was rated as "acceptable" and the reviewer's comments were reviewed and taken into consideration for the 2011 plan.

One area of suggested improvement was making sure that all records were checked regarding a child coming into placement who had a previous foster care placement.

OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE PLAN

General comments were reviewed and as a result the foster parent grievance policy was reviewed and revised by a committee of foster parents, Right #13 CAPU was rewritten, the consideration to downsize the plan taken from last years comments was adhered to and even adding more foster parents to the planning committee was accomplished..

A review of the local foster parent group's reports indicated a desire to increase attendance at sponsored training events for foster parents by the local committees. Foster parent attendance will also be a challenge and groups have adjusted times of events to be more accommodating for foster parents who are employed out of the home.

There is an increase in foster parents participating in training offered in communities and with foster parents from DCFS private agency partners. Most of the foster parent planning groups meet on a regular basis with community partners. The foster parent support specialists are instrumental in planning training in areas where the positions are in place.

The Central Region continues to support an 800 number to answer questions and give referral information. The agency casework staff and management staff continue to be the primary informational source.

The Central Region began foster parent recruitment in a number of communities the end of 2009 and throughout 2010. Committees were developed comprised of LANs staff, licensing

representatives, DCFS staff, management and foster parents. As a result, a variety of activities have taken place and a number of foster parents were recruited and licensed that may not have been without the recruitment efforts.

The Central Region embarked on an initiative to support relative caregivers to become licensed. The initiative is a joint effort of the investigative division and licensing representatives.

The Regional Administrator, Robert T. Blackwell, continues to be committed to reaching out to caregivers throughout the Region. During the 2009/2010 year, there were four community forums for foster parents to meet with the Regional Administrator at local agency offices. In attendance were also licensing staff, adoption representatives and a number of agency management staff. Conference calls were conducted in alternate months and available to all foster parents. This schedule continues for the next year and the schedule is available in the Foster Parent Newsletter and in the Foster Parent Implementation Plan. Local meetings and training, in addition to, appreciation event will continue throughout the Region. Foster parents are informed of trainings and meetings in a variety of ways, i.e., email, post cards, publications and personal phone calls.

Accomplished in 2010

1. The Central Region, with the guidance of the Division of Quality Assurance, set team goals to improve in a number of casework practices. The Intact teams choose timely completion of initial and ongoing client service plans. This project was extremely positive in the response from staff and in outcomes. On a weekly basis, the work was monitored and within a short amount of time, the Region was at a high percentage of compliance. This project not only resulted in better communication but also benefits the agency financially. This interprets into better staffing levels and services to children in care. The Placement Division chose to increase the number of child and family meetings as their goal. Placement staff tracked the number of family meetings on a weekly and monthly basis. Within a few months, teams began reaching and exceeding their goals. In October 2010, the Central Region began new goals. The focus will be continuing to improve in the quality of service plan engagement with clients and case contacts with all clients and caregivers.
2. The Central Region Foster Parent Implementation Plan team takes seriously the task to ensure that every caregiver and agency staff person has access to information in the plan. The plan was printed as in years past but with appropriate approval the plan is available on the DCFS website. In order to ensure that all caregivers were given the most important information, a condensed booklet, the "Quick Reference" guide, was sent to all foster parents with a cover page full of choices on how foster parents wanted to receive a full copy of the Plan. The full plan is available to caregivers and licensing staff were supplied with enough copies for current & newly licensed foster parents in the 2010 year. Copies are also made available at local foster parent implementation plan meetings. Most foster parents received a hand delivered copy from their licensing representative

3. In the last 12 months, the Central Region has done foster parent recruitment meetings and activities. This is an area where Central Region is very proud of its accomplishments and the engagement of many staff and caregivers in the activities. Some of the examples of activities are a community presentation to ministers in the Ottawa area, informational booths in the Peoria and Pekin areas; the venues were varied from community recreational locations, outdoor community fairs at African American churches. There have been media presentations and articles in many areas to inform communities of the need for local foster parents. All the activities were with private agency partners, casework and licensing staff.
4. The Central Region Administrator continued in 2010 to meet with foster parents in several ways. Four town hall format meetings were held with the first meeting in Rock Island, IL. It was well attended by DCFS foster and adoptive parents, private agency foster parents and relative caregivers. This format continued in Springfield and other locations. Mr. Blackwell also had monthly conference calls available to all foster parents. These meetings have been a good opportunity to discuss concerns and provide information on reunification services. In 2010, there were three in-person meetings and teleconference calls in alternate months.

Availability of the Implementation Plan:

The Central Region, 2010 Foster Parent Law Implementation plan was mailed to every licensed foster home March 2010 with additional copies available at local offices. Meetings were equipped with not only the plan but also guidelines on how to submit comments. The plan could be received in English or Spanish in a variety of ways, i.e., hand delivery, US postal service, picked up locally, accessed on DCFS Website www.state.il.us/dcf and clicking on foster care or by calling the Help Line 866/368-5204. The 2010 plan was used to develop the 2011 Plan. Foster Parents, community and staff were invited and given the opportunity to provide input and contribute into the development of the 2011 plan. It was the expectation of the region, and most desirable, to have all parties join together, discuss the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan contents and collectively combine comments & suggestions during the revision period. Additionally, suggested meeting options included hosting Foster Parent Law committee meetings in local field offices or designated locations, inviting foster parents & guests to participate in team meetings when the plan will be discussed, conducting individual one-on-one meetings with licensing or placement staff, and foster parent support specialists and those individuals reviewing the plan on the internet & emailing/faxing responses or by calling the 800 Helpline to submit comment and/or selecting whichever mode was most accommodating to draft the Regional plan. Outreach efforts included field offices gathering as many foster parents together for signatures. The Regional Plan was available for approximately two months (September/October) for comment and/or revisions with a final revision available for review two weeks in November for submission by November 30, 2010.

At the end of the 1st revision period, the foster parent, community & staff signature pages, comments and suggestions collected on the Supplemental pages were forwarded to members of the Regional Foster Parent Law Executive workgroup, Catherine Shaw, QA and Mary Bullock, Assistant Regional Administrator @ Regional Headquarters, DCFS - 5415 N.

University Street, Peoria, IL, 61614. The executive workgroup is chaired by a foster parent and consists of foster parents, Assistant Regional Administrator, an Office Coordinator who responds to the foster parent help line, Quality Assurance staff, Licensing manager & staff, and placement/intact staff charged with compiling documents received and developing to the 2011 plan. Comments/suggestions were received any time during the “revision” period and incorporated into a final draft. Signatures were collected to indicate receipt of the plan and the opportunity to provide input. Foster parents and staff reviewed the 2nd draft and submitted comments a second time for consideration. Signatures were collected to indicate final approval of the plan. The draft of the final version of the plan was “re-sent” to the Central Region planning committee and a volunteer list of thirty-eight (38) foster parents who willingly provided personal email addresses for two additional weeks to get full committee approval prior to submission to the Statewide Advisory Council via the Office of Foster Parent Support located in Springfield. ** It should be noted, the majority of Central Region foster parents were reached at the local level where foster parents participated in drafting each offices individual “supplemental” document (See Appendix P), which was utilized to formulate the Regional Implementation Plan. However, what’s noteworthy is that a suggestion from the 2010 comments to add more foster parents to the regional planning committee was considered and foster parents were approached to join the 2011 committee to help rewrite the Central Region Plan. We are very proud at the number who volunteered.

A “final” copy of the 2011 DCFS Central Region Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan English or Spanish version may be obtained by mail, hand delivery, DCFS website or local field office pick up. Foster Parents may call the 800 Foster Parent Help Line @ 866/368-5204 and/or, the Regional Office @ 309/693-5400 to state their choice on how they would like to receive a bound printed copy. A final copy of the 2010 plan will be available to every foster home as well as the Quick Reference Guide. And keeping with the “going green effort”, Central Region’s plan is available to foster parents via the internet. There will also be a notice posted on the VTC home page where to locate the plan on the DCFS website.

FOSTER PARENT LAW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Rights

1. **The right to be treated with dignity, respect and consideration as a professional member of the child welfare team.**

Achievements

- A. Each area has social functions to encourage respect and teamwork between foster parents and staff. All areas hold foster parent appreciation events or activities. Other functions include Halloween parties, Christmas parties, coffees, roundtable discussions and picnics, etc.
- B. **Regional Administration supports and directs all staff the importance of adhering to the Foster Parent Law.** Surveys are sent out regionally by the QI/QA Customer Satisfaction sub-committee to survey foster parents about their satisfaction with services they receive and whether services are being delivered to foster parents and foster children per policy and procedure. The results of these surveys are utilized to determine areas where improvements are needed. The Central Region Advisory conference call has started the process of getting the survey results to share with all individuals on the December conference call. In addition, the region retains one 800# for the sub-regions. This line is used as a Foster Parent Customer Satisfaction Help Line and also help to reduce long distance charges foster parents when calling the Regional office and, in some cases, local offices. The line was approved and became operational February 15, 2003. The number is listed below.

Springfield-Champaign-Peoria Sub-region Number: 1/866/368-5204

- The Foster Care team also sends surveys to foster parents after licensing actions such as annuals and renewals. The questions on these surveys specifically ask foster parents about their experience with licensing and support staff and their satisfaction with the services of the Foster Care unit whereas the surveys sent by the Regional QI/QA committee pertain more to Casework and Child Protection services.
- C. Illinois Families Now and Forever is used as a positive communication tool for foster parents and staff. This newsletter has been especially helpful in keeping foster parents informed of upcoming events and to communicate any policy changes to foster parents in a timely manner. The 1-800 numbers are listed in Illinois Families Now and Forever and are handed out and explained during foster parent meetings. In addition, the contact numbers for Foster Parent Support Specialists and staff are listed as well.
 - D. Foster parents are encouraged to attend and be active in Local and Regional Implementation Plan Meetings. Foster Parent Support Specialists, if attending and staff are available for foster parents to ride along with them to meetings if transportation is an issue.

- E. Foster parents are encouraged to attend Child and Family Team meetings regarding the foster children in their home and to offer their input. The Child and Family Team concept use truly demonstrates a belief in the teamwork approach within Central Region.
- F. The Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council continues to encourage greater attendance and participation of foster parents at Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings. Both staff and Foster Parent Support Specialists are encouraged to drive a foster parent to the meetings. (See Appendix I - Memorandum dated 9/12 to Licensed Foster Parents from Robert Blackwell, Regional Administrator.) Central Region has designated a foster parent to sit on the Regional Quality Council meetings.
- G. Central Region has two sites that have continued the Family-to-Family Project through the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Each site has working sub-committees that meet regularly. Private agency and DCFS foster parents from both sites remain actively involved in these meetings from the beginning of this project. The foster parents involved in this project remain very positive about the teamwork. Family-to-Family encourages teamwork between foster parents, parents and caseworkers. The Peoria Field Office and the Rock Island Field office work with the other licensed foster care agencies in each of their communities to recruit and support foster parents. The Peoria group is called the Circle of Support where monthly trainings are provided in the community for all foster parents. The Rock Island group is called Resource Development Support (RDS).
- H. The Central Region staff hosts a number of activities throughout the year to show appreciation to foster parents besides the May and June appreciation events. For instance, the Bloomington, Decatur and Urbana field offices hosts an “annual” Halloween party for foster parents and children. In November 2010, the Ottawa, Bloomington, Charleston and Princeton field offices are sending out thank you cards. The Galesburg field office is hosting a Thanksgiving dinner. Additionally, Events were a picnic or dinner event while one celebrated at a minor league baseball game. Monthly foster parent support groups are up and running in Charleston, Bloomington and Urbana. Consistent foster parent law meetings continue in Decatur & Bloomington. The Quincy field office hosts an annual Christmas dinner, summer cook out and swim party for foster families. And, Christmas gifts for foster children are distributed from many offices throughout the region.
- I. Current Regional Administrator, Robert Blackwell, has made a commitment to foster parents by attending Regional Foster Parent Advisory meetings as well as attending open forum meetings with foster parents. (See Appendix It continues to be Regional Administration’s goal to encourage teamwork among staff and foster parents. Managers continue presenting and reinforcing these rights during team meetings as well as utilizing their Quality process to develop a plan to address any areas where improvements might be needed. For example, one suggestion was improving compliance with notifying foster parents about upcoming court hearings. The resolution to this in the Decatur office was to have clerical staff mail court notices to foster parents as soon as the notices were received from the court – this continues to occur. Each office’s individual project was drafted as a Quality Improvement Project and submitted back to the Regional Quality Council when it was completed. Current

Regional Administrator, Robert Blackwell, continues to be supportive of teamwork with staff and foster parents.

- J. Central Region DCFS management supports the use of the Foster Parent Grievance Procedure and will continue to convey this through Illinois Families Now and Forever, during foster parent meetings and during general conversations with foster parents. And, additionally, through the 800 Help Line. Foster Parent Support Specialists also are very knowledgeable about the process and have the forms available upon foster parent request. This process was revised in September 2010 to newly reflect a “team” of foster parents and staff for coordinating the process. This information was presented to the 2011 Planning committee, Regional Administrator & Central Region Foster Care Executive Council for approval prior to implementing. This information is included in the Foster Parent Implementation Plan.

Central Region’s Foster Parent Grievance Procedure has been rewritten by a committee of foster parents & staff September 2010. What’s new is submitting the grievance directly to the Regional Administrator who sends a copy to the Regional Advisory Council who will call the grieving foster parent within 7 business days and schedule a meeting to resolve issues. The meeting must take place within 30 days. If not resolved at the supervisor level, a panel will ultimately decide with the Regional Administrator’s approval. If the grieving foster parent still does not agree with the panel decision, the Regional Administrator may be asked to reconsider. The Grievance procedure was reviewed for comment & acceptance. (See Appendix G for copy of the Grievance Procedure).

- L. Information and important telephone numbers that foster parents need to know is given to them by the Foster Parent Support Specialist and/or Licensing staff, as well as, the 800 Foster Parent Help Line and Illinois Families Now & Forever. Some Central Region field office staff, i.e., caseworkers, support specialists and clerical made refrigerator magnets with important & local numbers for foster homes

2. The right to be given standardized pre-service training and appropriate on-going training to meet mutually assessed needs and improves the foster parent’s skills.

Achievements

- A. There are scheduled Pre-Service PRIDE trainings that foster parents are required to take prior to becoming licensed. DCFS or POS staff attends the 9th session panel to answer questions potential new foster parents may have. Module In-Service training is offered on an ongoing basis and foster parents are notified by various means, i.e., D-Net, licensing representatives, staff development personnel mailing post cards, the DCFS website, Illinois Families Now & Forever, local field office staff, etc. of upcoming trainings. Licensing representatives, Training Institute and/or local field office staff mail training calendars to foster parents. The “new” PRIDE in-service training continues to be offered. Foster Parents can earn or be awarded 6 credit hours covering the topic of “The Teen in Foster Care; Supporting Attachment.”
- B. Fostering Illinois Now & Forever provide information regarding classes that are scheduled. The DCFS Training Institute will send out lending library catalogs of

books and tapes available to foster parents for training purposes. Lending catalogs are also given out during PRIDE Pre-Service trainings. A list of material available through the lending libraries is available on the DCFS web site.

- C. Each local field office is expected to utilize a co-training approach in which local field office staff and foster parents representatives participate as both co-facilitators and trainers. Co-facilitators are responsible for assessing training needs, accessing training materials and resources, and presenting information. Joint facilitation also occurs through local Foster Parent Law meetings with DCFS and POS agencies (See Appendix A for a sample of locally sponsored trainings held throughout the region).
- D. Annual questionnaires, Foster Parent Support Specialists, QA/QI process, and Foster Care Licensing workers assessments are all regularly utilized as mutual assessment tools to identify training needs of foster parents.
- E. During Regional Foster Parent Advisory meetings, local field office trainings and training in the community, foster parents were given training on new policy, procedures and initiatives. Some examples of this were, training on recent policy interpretations issued by the Office of Child and Family Policy, Integrated Assessment, Reunification, Mental Health, Sex Abuse, Emotional Behaviors, Central Region Foster Parent Grievance Procedure, Understanding the Court Process/Juvenile Court system and Foster Parent Rights, Systems of Care, Asthma, Educational Rights, DCP Reports and Licensing Complaint investigations in Licensed Foster Homes and a litany of topics and issues pertaining to foster children. The new Circle of Support group in the Peoria area, similar to the Resource Development Support in the Rock Island area has brought quality training to foster parents at a local level while providing on-going support to foster parents.
- F. The Central Connections section of Illinois Families Now and Forever lists foster parent trainings scheduled and arranged by the Training Institute in this region. Staff Development Coordinators and Foster Care Licensing staff assists foster parents in locating and registering for classes. The Staff Development Coordinators are also assisting by making calls to foster parents prior to their renewal if they are lacking the needed training hours.

3. The right to be informed as to how to contact the appropriate child placement agency in order to receive information and assistance to access supportive services for children in the foster parent's care.

Achievements

- A. DCFS Central Region has Foster Parent Support Specialists. Their telephone numbers is given out in and through communication with the foster parents. Foster Parent Support Specialists are available 24 hours a day 7 days a week to assist foster parents. (Note: FPSS contractual hours have been significantly reduced which impacts this section) New monies for contracts, though minimal, have been established. Additional positions were filled in 2009 but there was no increase in hours. In areas without FPSS, licensing staff have stepped up to the role of support.

- B. Foster parents are advised to contact their assigned caseworker during business hours and to follow the chain of command by contacting the supervisor and then manager if a crisis occurs and the caseworker is not available. Foster parents are still advised that they can call the Help line if they have an emergency after hours. Foster parents are informed by casework staff, Licensing staff, Foster Parent Support Specialists and via newsletter that crisis services such as the CARE Line (formerly SASS), and the local mental health emergency lines are available to them in an emergency.
 - C. Organizational Charts are provided to foster parents through Illinois Families Now and Forever, caseworkers, front desk reception centers and Foster Parent Support Specialists. Updates regarding regional organizational changes and staff vacancies are routinely given at the Regional and local Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings. Central Region believes it is important that a “chain of command” for any division, unit, worker, etc. be available and provided as well as how to access the information to prevent retaliation. Chain of Command for Local Office can be accessed by calling the local office and the receptionist can tell foster parents the chain and how to access each person. In some areas where there are foster parent support specialists, they make sure the foster home knows the chain of command.
 - D. Foster parents are also advised they can access the DCFS on-call worker for a specific area via the hotline in emergency situations after hours and on weekends and holidays.
 - E. Since February 15, 2003, DCFS Central Region has had toll-free Customer Satisfaction Lines in place for each Sub-Region. April 2005, based on utilization, one line sufficiently meets this need. Currently, this is another avenue for foster parents to have their non-emergency concerns addressed within the region. Foster parents are advised of these lines via Fostering Illinois Now & Forever, handouts at Regional Foster Care Executive Council Meetings, Caregiver Conferences, and Licensing representatives and via their Foster Parent Support Specialists.
 - F. System of Care Training has been offered throughout Central Region at Regional foster parent meetings.
 - G. The Foster parent Reimbursement Program is a kind of insurance DCFS has for foster parents. To start the process, ask your caseworker for a Foster Parent Reimbursement Program Claim Form, or call: Bruce Hirsch at DCFS in Chicago at 312/793-8896. He will send everything you need directly to you in the mail. His address is IDCFS, 7th Floor, 17 North State Street, Chicago, IL 60602 or <http://www.state.il.us/dcf/library/commdcfs.shtml>; go to forms; then to CFS851 & CFS851R and print as many as you need! *Always remember to keep a copy of all documentation you submit for yourself. FPSS, where available, can also help foster homes gain access to the reimbursement program.
4. **The right to receive timely financial reimbursement commensurate with the care needs of the child as specified in the service plan.**

Achievements

- A. The foster parent payment number is 1-800-525-0499. Payment statements to foster parents list this telephone number. This number is also listed in newsletters. Regular board payments reimbursement rates are placed in the child's folder that is given to the foster parent at the time of placement. Illinois Families Now & Forever will publish payment breakdowns at least annually. DCFS mails a payment schedule annually with board payments, and this schedule is also published in Illinois Families Now & Forever.
- B. Caseworkers help foster parents with the forms to get payments for respite, camp, etc. In Central Region, the Regional Business Office has made itself available for training and to answer any questions workers or foster parents have regarding respite payments. It continues as part of the Regional 2010-11 training plan to have training on respite, exceptions, payments for camp, as well as, the Foster Parent Insurance Program. The Regional office personnel have worked to help foster parents receive services/supplies in a timelier manner by accepting faxed and emailed copies of documents from the worker until the original can be received via mail. Faxed or emailed copies are hand delivered same day to payment unit who data enters same day on the system. Tracking system continues to track the date of respite vs. date respite arrives in Peoria. The Regional Protocol is sent to staff including foster parents so each know how to submit paperwork. (See Appendix N)
- C. Upon referral the local SOC (System of Care) provider will assess children placed in traditional self-selected and Home of Relative homes. If it is determined that the child needs more services beyond what DCFS is providing or can provide, the SOC will assist in locating or purchasing the additional services for the child. If the child requires a more intensive placement such as specialized care or residential, the SOC can recommend this and caseworkers refer the child to the Child and Adolescent Youth Investment Team (CAYIT). CAYIT continue to review multi placements, issues dealing with specialized care, transitional and independent living issues, as well as, the possible need for residential placement.
- D. The Central Region continues to support quick reimbursement and research all payment problems. Information was provided to foster parents at Regional Foster Advisory Council meeting on how to arrange for their board payments to be direct deposited, thus avoiding mail delays. Foster parents are encouraged to start with their local office and utilize the chain of command to resolve payment issues. Foster parents can also utilize for customer satisfaction the 800 Foster Parent Help Line if they have been unable to resolve a billing issue (other than board payments) at the local level. For detailed explanation re: direct deposits contact @ 217/557-0930.
- E. The Business Unit in Central Region recognized that the process for submitting bills for payment for sibling visitations must have been confusing as some of the billing forms were being completed incorrectly resulting in the foster parent not being reimbursed the correct amount. The billing unit quickly put together sample forms and written explanations to guide in completion of these billing forms. This information was presented to Foster Care Supervisors who in turn relayed this information to Support Specialists so that foster parents could be knowledgeable about the different payment options. This information has also been included in some local Foster Parent Newsletters. An article was published in Central Connections

stressing the importance of sibling visitation and listing payment guidelines. Options had been made available for direct deposit to expedite payment. Respite payment issues are being addressed and regional action plan is in place regarding this issue. Respite forms can be faxed and/or emailed from the worker to Mary Bullock, Assistant Regional Administrator, until the original can be received via mail. Faxed or emailed copies are hand delivered same day to payment unit who data enters same day on the system. Tracking system will be implemented to track the date of respite vs. date respite arrives in Peoria. The Regional Protocol will be sent to staff including foster parents so each know how to submit paperwork. Workers will ensure addresses are regularly updated and in the system. Currently, there is ongoing training with staff and foster parent regarding respite care. (See Appendix N)

- F. In Central Region, the Business Unit sends a cover sheet out with all initial clothing vouchers as well as with infant care grant vouchers. This cover sheet is designed to ensure foster parents know the purchase guidelines so they do not have difficulty and delays at stores when they try to purchase items. The cover sheet also lists helpful instructions for the store on where to sign the form and where to send it. A self addressed stamped envelope is enclosed to simplify the process. Clothing Vouchers are now automatically generated with the initial data entry of the 906. Durable medical supplies not covered can be obtained through a request by the caseworker with an exception to payment voucher. Replacement clothing vouchers can also be used for circumstantial changes, i.e., excessive weights gain or loss, etc. DCFS can prepare and distribute initial clothing voucher requests at the local field office. Contact the local office re: initial personal items vouchers.

5. The right to be provided a clear, written understanding of a placement agency's plan concerning the placement of a child in the foster parent's home. Inherent in this right is the foster parent's responsibility to support activities that will promote the child's right to relationships with his or her own family and cultural heritage.

Achievements

- A. Foster parents are engaged in the development of the case plan by the caseworker prior to completion of the initial service plan, then prior to the subsequent Administrative Case Reviews. Workers contact foster parents by phone, in-person and/or by written documentation. The visitation plan is developed within seven (7) days of initial placement. The caseworker then works with the foster parent and parent to negotiate times and days that work best. The 30 day family meeting includes participation by the caseworker, supervisor, foster parent and parent. During this meeting the initial service plan is presented. The foster parent is actively involved in the completion of the child's section of the service plan. The Department continues to strive for foster parent involvement consistency throughout the region.
- B. The Caseworker provides timely notification of changes in the case plan and the permanency goal to the foster parent by phone, in-person, and/or written documentation and a follow up copy of the written revised plan is sent to the foster parent. When changes are made in the child's service plan, foster parents are informed of the right to appeal and are provided with a copy of the Appeal brochure.

- C. Foster Parent Support Specialists and licensing staff support, encourage, and remind foster parents to maintain open communication with casework staff and to participate in all events, staffings and conferences concerning the child. This includes Integrated Assessments, CAYITS, Child & Family Team meetings, court hearings, school staffings, as well as, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's). Foster parents are advised of their right to attend all court hearings and Administrative Case Reviews during Foster Care Executive Council Meetings. During these meetings foster parents are encouraged by management staff to attend court, Administrative Reviews and educational staffings and encouraged to share concerns if they feel they have not been given notice or have been discouraged from attending by specific staff. During the actual Administrative Case Reviews, reviewers ask foster parents if they were given the child's part of the 497 to review prior to the Administrative Case Review and whether the worker went over the plan with them.
- D. Notices for Administrative Case Reviews are mailed directly to the foster parent by the Case Review staff.
6. **The right to be provided a fair, timely, and impartial investigation of complaints concerning the foster parent's licensure, to be provided the opportunity to have a person of the foster parent's choosing present during the investigation and to be provided due process during the investigation; the right to be provided the opportunity to request and receive mediation or an administrative review of decisions that affect licensing parameters or both mediation and administrative review; and the right to have decisions concerning a licensing corrective action plan specifically explained and tied to the licensing standards violated.**

Achievements

- A. Rule 383 – Licensing Enforcement outlines the procedures to be followed in the investigation of Licensing Complaints in Foster Family Homes. Rule 383 is followed in Central Region. Licensing complaints are initiated within 2 business days of the receipt of the complaint. Licensing Complaint investigations are completed within 30 calendar days unless a thirty-day extension is granted. Foster parents are advised by their Foster Care Licensing worker of their right to have a person of their choosing present during the licensing complaint investigation. See Form 596-29 “Right to Have Advocate Present.” Foster Care Licensing workers advise the foster parents of this right prior to conducting the investigation and also advise foster parents that they can have up to four hours to arrange for this person to be present if they are not already. Foster Care Licensing workers work with the foster parents to develop corrective action plans that address areas of non-compliance with the licensing standards. Foster parents are notified verbally during the licensing complaint investigation of any non-compliance areas that need to be corrected and the process for monitoring for corrections. Foster parents also receive written notification of the outcome of the licensing complaint investigation. This correspondence cites the specific licensing standards violated, notes a timeline for correction and notifies the licensee of their right to appeal the findings of the licensing complaint investigation. Information regarding the Licensing Complaint Investigation process has been published in Illinois Families Now & Forever, which are sent to foster parents. The Foster Family Handbook (pages 62 and 63) is given to all foster parents at PRIDE training explains

the licensing complaint investigation process and the associated appeal process. Training regarding complaints and DCP investigations has been offered at local offices for foster parents.

- B. Central Region DCFS foster parents who have been notified of a substantiated licensing complaint have the right to request a Supervisory Review of the findings. They are notified of this right in the letter they receive notifying them of the substantiated finding. They must request the Supervisory Review in writing within 10 days of the receipt of the letter notifying them of the substantiated complaint. These reviews may result in no changes being made regarding the status of a substantiated licensing complaint or revisions may be made to one or more licensing violations as well as to the corrective action plan during this meeting. The review could also result in the supervisor revising the substantiated finding due to additional or new information being available. In addition, if the violations are of a very serious or of a reoccurring nature, the supervisor could recommend that this be automatically referred on for an Informal Review during which the issue of recommending to Central Office that the license be revoked will be one of the possible outcomes.
 - C. If foster parents are not satisfied with the outcome of the Supervisory Review they are notified that they have the right to an Informal Review with the Foster Care Manager. Foster parents are notified of this right during the Supervisory Review and by letter after the Supervisory Review. Foster parents must request the informal review in writing within 10 days of receiving the letter notifying them of the outcome of the Supervisory Review.
 - ~~D.~~ If the result of the Informal Review is a recommendation to pursue revocation of the license and Central Office of Licensing accepts this recommendation, foster parents are notified by letter from the Central Office of Licensing of their right to an Administrative Hearing on this matter.
 - E. The Statewide Quality Council continues to track and review the number of licensing complaints received by each team. This committee also reviews how many extensions of the time frame for completion has been given, as well as, whether complaints without extensions are completed within the 30-day time frame. The Regional Resource Council also continues to ensure the process for requesting and approving extensions was consistent throughout the region, as well as, ensuring that foster parents were notified by letter of any extension and the reason for the extension.
- 7. The right, at any time during which a child is placed with the foster parent, to receive additional or necessary information that is relevant to the care of the child.**

Achievements

- A. Caseworkers are trained in all information that is to be disclosed to the foster parents continually. Confidentiality training is offered periodically during Foster Parent Advisory Council Meetings throughout the region.
- B. At the time a child is placed in a foster home, the foster parents are advised of all relevant information concerning the child consistent with the rules of confidentiality. See CFS600-4. Foster parents are reminded via newsletters and during Foster Care

Executive Council meetings to ask specific questions before accepting a child for placement. A list of questions to ask has been distributed during PRIDE and this list is also in the Foster Parent Handbook and is periodically published in local Foster Parent Newsletters.

- C. Workers communicate and share any additional information with the foster parent during monthly home visits and phone contacts. This sharing of information is documented on case notes as a way to ensure the information is shared.
- D. When any new programs are offered that would benefit children, foster parents are informed of these through mailings, telephone calls, newsletters, Foster Parent Advisory meetings and Illinois Families Now and Forever.
- E. Foster parents are included in Child and Family Teams Meetings and receive and share information first hand through the meetings.
- H. The Integrated Assessment process has been implemented statewide. During the assessment process, the caseworker and clinical screener interview foster parents for their perspective regarding child behavior and to address any special needs of their child. This provides a framework for the creation of the service plan.
- I. All foster parents are surveyed at least yearly regarding casework services. In addition, Foster Care Licensing surveys are sent regarding, annual/renewal contact and closing contact. The aggregated information from surveys is shared with the Statewide Licensing Manager/supervisors, licensing staff at the Statewide Licensing quarterly meeting and results shared with the foster parents through the Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council. This information provides guidance for corrective action planning, as well as, informs foster parents their comments were heard to improve service delivery and overall satisfaction.

8. The right to be given information concerning a child from the Department as required under Section 5 (u) of the Children and Family Services Act and from a child welfare agency as required under Section 7.4 (c-5) of the Child Care Act of 1969. [20 ILCS 520/1-15].

A) At the time the caseworker places a child with a foster parent or prospective adoptive parent, or prior to placement of the child, whenever possible, the worker shall provide available information in writing (except as provided in subsection (a)(8)(B) about the child necessary for the proper care of the child to the foster parent or prospective adoptive parent. The information to be provided to the caregiver shall include:

- i) The medical history of the child including known medical problems or communicable diseases, information concerning the immunization status of the child, and insurance and medical card information;
- ii) The educational history of the child, including any special educational needs and details of the child's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), Individual Family

Service Plan (IFSP) when the child is receiving special education services or 504 Educational Special Needs Plan, if applicable;

iii) A copy of the child's portion of the client service plan including any visitation arrangements and all amendments or revisions; case history of the child, including how the child came into care; the child's legal status; the permanency goal for the child; a history of the child's previous placements; and reasons for placement changes, excluding information that identifies or reveals the location of any previous foster or relative home caregiver; and

iv) Other relevant background information of the child, including any prior criminal history; information about any behavior problems including fire setting, perpetration of sexual abuse, destructive behavior and substance abuse habits; and likes and dislikes, etc.

B) In the case of an emergency placement, when all of the information referenced in subsection (a)(8)(A) is not be available, the worker shall provide known information verbally as it becomes available and subsequently provide this information in writing.

C) In advance of placement, the caseworker may provide the foster parent or adoptive parent with a written summary of the information listed in subsection (a)(8)(A).

D) Within 10 working days after the placement, the worker shall obtain from the prospective adoptive parent, foster parents or other caregiver signed verification of receipt of the information described in subsection (a)(8)(A) and forward a copy of the information to the child's guardian ad litem.

E) Supervisory review and approval is required prior to providing any information to the foster parents or prospective adoptive parents.

Achievements

A. On November 27, 2007, all supervisors/managers were trained on Policy 2007.14 at the Regional Management meeting. All supervisors/managers were instructed to use supervision to document foster parents received relevant information regarding the child placed in the home. In the peer review process, case notes will be checked to verify compliance. On monthly and on-going foster home visits, caseworkers will confirm foster parents received the information initially. This will also be reviewed and discussed in using supervision and peer reviews. Copies of the completed CFS 600-4 shall be mailed to the Guardian-Ad-litem. Again, monitoring will take place in supervision and using the peer review process.

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 meetings; the right to be informed of decisions made by the courts or the child welfare agency concerning the child; the right to provide input concerning the plan of services for the

child and to have that input given full consideration in the same manner as information presented by any other professional on the team; and the right to communicate with other professionals who work with the foster child within the context of the team, including therapists, physicians, and teachers.

Achievements

- A The ACR unit sends written notification to foster parents of all Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's). Caseworkers also notify foster parents of ACR's if the child moves after notices have been sent.

- B Caseworkers inform foster parents during their regular visit with the foster parent and child through telephone calls and through letters about court hearings, ILP's, CAYIT meetings and clinical staffing. Foster parents are notified of all significant service providers and how to contact the providers. They are encouraged by the team to participate in all facets of child service provision. Their input is given full consideration.
 - (i) Caseworkers invite and/or ask foster parents to attend initial and subsequent family meetings for their input in developing the service plan. Foster parents receive their portion of the written service plan at required case milestones. Through the Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement process, the 2005 Peer Review instrument was enhanced to capture compliance with the above issues.
 - (ii) If a foster parent is unable to attend a court hearing or meeting, the caseworker contacts the foster parent immediately regarding any outcome that impacts the child's placement or permanency. Any other pertinent information is shared with the foster parent during the next regular contact unless the foster parent calls the worker prior to the next visit requesting the information.
 - (iii) Educational Advocacy training is offered throughout the Region to foster parents. One foster parent from each home must be certified. While one does not need educational advocacy training prior to becoming licensed, one foster parent from each home must obtain this training prior to renewal of their license. Currently, once educational advocacy training has been completed, it does not have to be repeated or renewed every four years. For Central Illinois, Mary Chepulis, 271/782-4000, and Ann Wells, 217/786-6847, offer Education Trainings for Foster, Adoptive Parents, Case workers etc.
 - (iv) The Integrated Assessment process has been implemented statewide. During the assessment process, the caseworker and clinical screener interview foster parents regarding child behavior and to address any special needs of their child. This provides a framework for the creation of the service plan.
 - (v) All foster parents are surveyed at least yearly regarding casework services. In addition, Foster Care Licensing surveys are sent regarding, annual/renewal contact and closing contact. The aggregated information from surveys is shared with the Statewide Licensing Manager/supervisors, licensing staff at the Statewide Licensing quarterly meeting and results shared with the foster parents through the Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council. This information provides

guidance for corrective action planning, as well as, informs foster parents their comments were heard to improve service delivery and overall satisfaction.

- C The ACR unit sends written notification to foster parents of all Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's). Caseworkers also notify foster parents of ACR's if the child moves after notices have been sent.

10. The right to be given, in a timely and consistent manner, any information a case worker has regarding the child and the child's family which is pertinent to the care and needs of the child and to be making of a permanency plan of the child. Disclosure of information 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 information.

Achievements

- A. The workers provide the foster parents with all known information about the child at the time of the placement (such as health, school, mental health, likes, activities involved in, things the child doesn't like, special needs, etc.) within the parameters of confidentiality. As new information is obtained, the worker passes on that information to the foster parent through home visits, phone calls, and staffings.
- B. Foster parents receive a Health Works for each child in their care. This contains medical and educational information on the child.
- C. The increased use of family meetings when children are in care fosters the sense of teamwork among all parties and improves communication.
- D. Foster parents are advised of questions they should ask a placing worker through PRIDE classes, newsletters and resource staff visits. The list of questions is also published in the Foster Parent Handbook. (Note: the Foster Parent Handbook is available on the DCFS website – www.state.il.us/dcf in English and Spanish.)
- E. When staffing levels allow, Foster Parent Support Specialists go to the foster home within 72 hours (of being notified of the placement) to review information provided to the foster parent by the placement worker, required records forms, answer questions and assist the foster parent in obtaining any needed materials or information.

11. The right to be given reasonable written notice of (I) any change in a child's case plan; (II) the reasons for the change or termination in placement. The notice shall be waived only in case of a court order or when the child is determined to be at imminent risk or harm.

Achievements

- A. In the event that the decision was made to move a child, the foster parent is provided with a 14-day written notification – Notice of Decision – CFS 151. The only exception is pending DCP investigations and court orders. They are told the reason

for the move, notified of their right to appeal and what the appeal process is. They are provided with a copy of the appeal pamphlet CFS 1050-32. If the foster parent is in agreement, the 14-day notification period can be waived. A copy of the CFS 151 and CFS 1050-32 is available for viewing on the DCFS website at www.state.il.us/dcfs.

- B. Staff also gives foster parents the CFS151-B, which provides the caregiver, parent, ward, and Guardian Ad-Litem with clinical review rights. A copy of the CFS 151-B is available for viewing on the DCFS website at www.state.il.us/dcfs under the forms section.
- C. Foster parents can request a clinical review in place of or in addition to an appeal. If a caretaker wishes to challenge the removal of a child they may request a clinical review per Policy Guide 2001.06 or may file a service appeal per Rule 337 or both. If both a clinical review and an appeal are requested, the clinical placement review will be done before the appeal hearing. This information was reviewed and shared during a Regional Foster Care Executive Council meeting. In addition, Foster Parent Support Specialists were directed to share this information with foster parents immediately when this change occurred in May 2001 and they continue to advise foster parents about their right to appeal and to request a clinical review currently.

12. The right to be notified in a timely and complete manner of all court hearings, including notice of date and time of the court hearing, the name of the judge or hearing officer hearing the case, the location of the hearing, and the court docket number of the case, and the right to intervene in court proceedings or to seek mandamus under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987.

Achievements

- A. Caseworkers notify the foster parents verbally in advance of a court hearing of the following; a) court dates, b) time, c) docket number, d) courtroom, f) GAL (Guardian Ad Litem), g) DCFS recommendation(s). Caseworkers document this notification in a case note.
- B. During PRIDE Training the trainers remind foster parents about their right to attend court hearings and the importance of attending these hearings.
- c. Foster Parent Support Specialists also encourage foster parents to attend court hearings and encourage the foster parent to be proactive and call the court or the caseworker if they are unsure of the next court date.
- D. Foster parents are encouraged during Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings to utilize the chain of command to resolve concerns. This would apply if they feel they are not receiving the information they need to fully participate in court hearings regarding the children in their care.
- E. Foster parents are reminded about upcoming court hearings at the Administrative Case Review.
- F. The investigators and caseworkers notify the foster parents of results from a court hearing within 24 hours of a decision if they were not present in court.

- G. The caseworker and investigator notify the court of the foster parents name and address for each ward.
 - H. The investigator and caseworker notify the foster parent of emergency hearings and other unscheduled meetings as soon as possible.
 - I. Foster Care Licensing workers are encouraged to remind foster parents during the annual home visit and other meetings to attend all court proceedings.
 - J. Foster parents are given a flow chart of the court system in PRIDE training and in the Foster Parent Handbook. Foster parents are reminded at Foster Parent meetings that the Foster Parent Handbook is available on the DCFS website at www.state.il.us/dcf in English and Spanish.
 - K. The Field Offices covering McLean, Macon and Champaign counties also have a system to ensure that foster parents are given the opportunity to give input even if they are not able to attend court hearings. Foster parents are given a form (Foster Parents Report on a Foster Child) to complete prior to a court hearing. In Champaign County the Court System implemented this and this form is sent to the court. In Macon County this is also done prior to Administrative Case Reviews and the information is incorporated into the Child's section of the service plan.
 - L. The Regional QI/QA committee continues to use a tool for supervisors use to ensure that they are verifying and reminding staff to ensure that foster parents participate in discussions about changes to the visitation plan, specific sections of the case plan, are notified of upcoming court hearings and that this is documented. Both DCFS and private agency caseworkers continue to use the practice reminders that were developed. It remains beneficial that by adding a section to supervisory notes that prompts the supervisor to discuss this with staff and to remind them to notify foster parents about any upcoming court hearings if they had not already done so.
 - M. Central Region recognizes that ensuring foster parents have proper and timely notice of court hearings is extremely important. Because of this, some offices focused on this as their QI/QA project related to ensuring they were complying with the Foster Parent Law. More offices now have clerical staff mail the court notice directly to the foster parents of record as soon as the notice is received in the mail.
 - N. Review training continues and is provided to staff in the use of the Notice of Decision form and process. This is another requirement of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP).
- 13. The right to be considered as a placement option when a foster child who was formerly placed with the foster parent is to be 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**

Achievements

- A. CAPU - The investigator when taking or considering taking custody of a child will look in IMSA, and SACWIS to make sure that the child has not been in placement before. If the child has been in placement, they need to call the previous foster home

first, unless there is a Relative Foster Home that has become licensed since the child last entered the system, then the Relative Foster Home would take precedence over the previous foster home placement. If the previous home is a private agency they need to contact the private agency so they can have access to contact those homes directly. The Bill of Rights Committee is highly recommending that a one pager be sent to the Regional Quality Council and the Statewide Advisory Council to review the CAPU procedures for replacements of foster children.

In the event that a child comes Central Region staff will utilize the chain command to get the child placed with the previous foster home. The chain of command consists of

1. **Investigator**
2. **Supervisor**
3. **Manager**
4. **Area Regional Administrator**
5. **Regional Administrator**

14. **The right to have timely access to the child placement agency exist appeals process and the right to be free from acts of harassment and retaliation by any other party when exercising the right to appeal.**

Achievements

- A. The Foster Parent Handbook explains the appeal process to the foster parent. The handbook covers how to appeal a licensing complaint investigation, service appeals, and appeals of findings of CA/N (Child Abuse Neglect). Foster parents are reminded in newsletters and local foster parent meetings that the Foster Family Handbook is available on the DCFS website at www.state.il.us/dcf. Brochures are available in reception areas.
- B. In 2009, Illinois Families Now and Forever was sent to foster parents bi-monthly explaining the service appeal system.
- C. The Foster Parent Support Specialist's offer guidance and assistance to foster parents who wish to appeal a decision by offering information regarding appeals and encouraging the foster parent to advocate for themselves and their children by utilizing the DCFS chain of command when a problem arises.
- D. Foster parents seek guidance from Foster Care Licensing workers regarding the appeal process. Foster Care Licensing workers advise foster parents of their appeal rights concerning Licensing Complaint Investigations.
- E. Foster parents are encouraged by Foster Parent Support Specialists to document any violations with specific information pertaining to the incident.
- F. Foster parents are encouraged to contact the License/Resource Supervisor and/or the caseworker's supervisor with specific information pertaining to any incident.
- G. Foster parents are provided a Notice of Decision regarding placement decisions and given the Service Appeal Process brochure.

- H. The Central Region Grievance process was redesigned in September 2010. (See Appendix G).
- I. Foster Parent Support Specialists, supervisors and staff inform foster parents of the Advocacy Office telephone number (1-800-232-3798). The Advocacy Office responds to complaints, concerns, inquiries and suggestions about the Department of Children and Family Services. The Advocacy Office staff provides referrals to appropriate DCFS staff and suggestions to executive staff for improvements and changes. The Advocacy Office brochure is distributed periodically via Foster Parent Newsletters.

15. The right to be informed of the Foster Parent Hot Line 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.

Achievements

- A. This right is explained to foster parents in PRIDE Training. The Foster Parent Hotline number 800-624-kids (Foster Parent Information Service) is also listed on the DCFS website. During sub-regional Foster Parent meetings foster parents are encouraged to use the website as a resource.
- B. The Foster Parent Handbook contains information and phone numbers to access assistance. The Payment Processing Unit (1/800/525-0499), Office of Advocacy for Children and Families (1/800/232-3798) and the Inspector General's Office (1/800/722-9124) telephone numbers are also listed in the handbook. This book is given to foster parents in PRIDE training. During local Foster Parent meetings foster parents have been reminded of the valuable information on the DCFS website www.state.il.us/dcfs. This includes a list of the numbers for the Foster Parent Hotline, the Advocacy Office and the Inspector General's Office. Also available are brochures from the Inspector General's Office and Advocacy Office.
- C. Foster parents are given a list of Important Numbers (See Appendix L) which is included in the Quick Reference Guide.
- D. The foster parents are reminded of this right at yearly meetings with the Foster Care Licensing worker.
- E. The foster parents are reminded of this right by the Foster Parent Support Specialists when an issue is discussed.
- F. Foster parents are reminded of this right at local foster parent association meetings.
- G. "Illinois Families Now and Forever" periodically lists the numbers of the Advocacy Office, Inspector General's Office and the Payment Hotline.
- H. The "800" Foster Parent Help Line is an additional resource for foster parents 866/368-5204.

Responsibilities

1. The responsibility to openly communicate and share information about the child with other members of the child welfare team.

Achievements

- A. The foster parents are taught about open communication through teamwork in the following trainings: 1) PRIDE and 2) the Teamwork Module.
- B. Foster parents are reminded of this responsibility at each PRIDE session.
- C. Caseworkers meet with foster parents in their home to share information about the child on a monthly basis.
- D. The Foster Care Licensing worker and Foster Parent Support Specialists discuss this issue with foster parents at in-person meetings and in telephone conversations.
- E. The foster parent is trained and reminded that they are to keep vital records on the children in the child's folder. This includes: a) the Medication and Behavior log, b) case notes, c) the Health Passport, d). other medical records. Caseworkers pick up copies of the Medication and Behavior logs during visits but Foster Parent Support Specialist's are encouraging foster parents to keep a copy for their records too. This is discussed at Regional Foster Care Executive Council meetings. The Behavior and Medication Log policy is distributed to foster parents by their Foster Parent Support Specialists, Foster Care Licensing worker, caseworkers and Foster parents are provided with new logs by their caseworker and Foster Parent Support Specialists when they accept a new placement.
- F. Confidentiality is discussed at the following meetings with foster parents: a) PRIDE, b) Annuals, c) Foster Parent Support Specialists visits.
- G. The limitations of open communication related to confidentiality are discussed during sub-regional foster parent meetings. Policy Interpretation 2000.15, which was issued on November 22, 2000, is frequently handed out and discussed at sub-regional Foster Parent meetings. This policy guide clarifies that subsequent caregivers cannot talk directly to the prior caregiver about a child.

2. The responsibility to respect the confidentiality of information concerning foster children and their families and act appropriately within applicable confidentiality laws and regulations.

Achievements

- A. Confidentiality laws and regulations are explained in PRIDE Training in the "You Need to Know in Illinois" sections of the training manual.
- B. Confidentiality is explained in the Foster Parent Handbook on pages 49 and 50. The laws and regulations are included in this Handbook. The Handbook is distributed to each foster parent during the PRIDE training. (Note the Foster Parent Handbook is available in English and Spanish on the DCFS website www.state.il.us/dcfs.)

- C. The Foster Parent Support Specialist's remind foster parents of Confidentiality during in-person and telephone contacts.
- D. Confidentiality is discussed through continuing education meetings with foster parents.
- E. Legal staff has provided on-going training on Confidentiality during meetings. Current policy training addresses Confidentiality and changes that effect foster parents are shared.
- G. Periodically Illinois Families Now and Forever will have information addressing confidentiality. This newsletter specifically quotes laws and regulations taken from policy and procedure.

3. The responsibility to advocate for children in the foster parent's care.

Achievements

- A. The foster parents are informed about this responsibility in PRIDE Training and Educational Advocacy Training. Workers encourage and support foster parents in the responsibility to advocate for children in their care.
- B. Foster parents are reminded of the responsibility in the Service Appeal Process (CFS 1050-32). Foster Parent Support Specialists, caseworkers and Administrative Review staff also remind foster parents of the responsibility.
- C. Foster parents are notified that copies of the Regional Foster Parent Law plan and Rights and Responsibilities are available. All licensed homes will receive a copy. Emailed Affidavit signature pages can be returned with DCFS staff, faxed, mailed. A new feature is "on line" access. To see or print a copy, anyone with internet access may go to the DCFS website www.state.il.us/dcf under the Foster Care link. However, you may be contacted by your licensing representative to obtain the Affidavit page with your original signature. Foster parents may also pick up a hard copy at their convenience from the nearest DCFS office. Some areas distribute Foster Parent Law plans to foster parents at committee meetings, scheduled events, etc. but all areas are required to review the Foster Parent Implementation Plan with foster parents and collect comments. Foster Parents are asked to provide written acknowledgement that they have received, reviewed and commented on the plan. (See Appendix B.)
- D. Licensed foster parents are required to attend Educational Advocacy Training prior to first renewal of their license. However, PRIDE Trainers and Foster Parent Support Specialists encourage foster parents to take Educational Advocacy Training prior to licensure or as soon as possible after licensure. Trainers and Foster Parent Support Specialists remind foster parents of how valuable this training is to helping them ensure the child's educational needs are met. Sites throughout the region offer the Educational Advocacy training.
- E. The caseworker, Foster Care Licensing worker and Foster Parent Support Specialists encourage foster parents to attend Child and Family Team meetings, Administrative

Case Reviews, medical appointments, Individual Educational Plans, and routine school staffings as well as court and CAYIT meetings.

- F. The Caseworkers, supervisors and Foster Parent Support Specialists help the foster parents identify resources for their foster children.
- ☞ Central Region has Child Welfare Nurse Specialists who work closely with foster parents, especially those with medically complex and technology dependent children when referral has been completed. They assist in identification of resources for medically complex children or can assist in locating medical training resources for foster parents. Health works in available counties distributes a list of medical and dental resources to foster parents. The DCFS website lists additional resources.
- H. DCFS has educational liaisons that have presented valuable educational information at Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings regarding advocating for foster children's educational needs. These liaisons are available to assist foster parents with problematic educational issues. (See Appendix O)
- I. Periodically, court personnel and DCFS legal staff are asked to train foster parents on the court process. This enhances the foster parent's understanding of the court system and prepares them to advocate for the children in their care.

4. The responsibility to treat children in the foster parent's care and the children's families with dignity, respect, and consideration.

Achievements

- A. This responsibility is explained in PRIDE training by caseworkers and through ongoing in-services.
- B. Central Region Quality Council Training subcommittee began a project of changing policy & procedure to govern the use of life books at the point children enter care. This project of life books is pending with the DCFS Statewide Quality Council committee.
- C. Family workers through home visits monitor this responsibility. Foster Care Licensing staff also monitors and review this area of responsibility during annual and renewal visits and discuss with the foster parent if there is a concern.
- D. Foster parents are encouraged to transport and in some cases supervise visits with parents and siblings. Foster Parents are encouraged to converse with biological parents regarding child specific issues.
- E. This responsibility has been written in the Licensing Standards for Foster Homes. All foster parents sign an agreement at initial licensure and at renewal that states that they acknowledge that use of corporal punishment; threats and derogatory comments cannot be used. Workers encourage foster parents to use positive reinforcement and self esteem building techniques when working with foster children. Also, local sites offer training on non-violent, age-appropriate discipline for children.

- F. Foster parents are reminded of this responsibility by the Caseworker and by the Foster Care Licensing worker at the annual and renewal visits.
- G. If staff or a foster parent identify an issue related to understanding of or the respect of the child and family's religious, ethnic or cultural background, the caseworker and the licensing worker will work together to identify resources to address this concern.

5. The responsibility to recognize the foster parent's own individual and familial strengths and limitations when deciding whether to accept a child into care and the responsibility to recognize the foster parent's own support needs and utilize appropriate supports in providing care for foster children.

Achievements

- A. The Foster Parent Support Specialists discuss training needs with the foster parent and assist by notifying foster parents when training they identify became available or by referring the family to the Staff Development Coordinator to assist in locating a training curriculum to meet their needs.
- B. The Foster Care Licensing Worker review Foster Parent Training Logs during annual and renewal visits. However, it should be noted both the Licensing worker and foster parent themselves can now view the training transcripts on the Virtual Training Center provided the foster parent has registered with VTC.
- C. The Training Institute arranges Pre-Service and in-service trainings for foster parents in Central Region. Child Welfare Staff Development Coordinators are also available to provide Individualized Training in the event that foster parent's have conflicts with scheduled training.
- D. The Training Institute can provide foster parents with a catalog of available books and tapes they could use to obtain in-service credits or to research issues related to fostering. The list of available materials is also available on the DCFS website.
- E. A list of placement questions was provided for foster parents to use when they were called about placements. Foster parents are encouraged by Foster Care Licensing workers and Foster Parent Support Specialists to think about how a child will fit into their home and family prior to accepting a child.
- F. Foster Care Licensing workers and Foster Parent Support Specialists encourage foster parents to use the Voluntary Hold process when they are experiencing family stress.
- G. Foster Parents with areas needing improvement or areas they wish to strengthen or gain more knowledge that are identified through the mutual assessment process are referred for specific trainings.
- H. Licensing staff completes the Foster Parent Preference Checklist with foster parents when they first become licensed. This helps the foster parents identify behaviors/issues/special needs children have that they feel comfortable working with or behaviors/issues/special needs they do not feel comfortable working with. Completing this checklist also spurs a conversation about issues/behaviors that the foster parent would like to work with if they had training or were more

knowledgeable or with which they feel comfortable working with. By their signature on the 906 Placement Agreements, the foster parents acknowledge this responsibility “to treat the parents courteously and refrain from criticizing them in the child’s presence.”

- I. During times of family stress, licensing staff, casework staff and Foster Parent Support Specialists encourage foster parents to utilize respite and, if appropriate, offer a referral for short-term counseling.
- J. Foster parents are encouraged to join local Foster Parent Associations and Statewide Associations so that they can experience support from others who truly understand the demands and stress of fostering.

6. The responsibility to be aware of the benefits of trying on and affiliating with other foster parents and foster parent associations in improving the quality of care and service to children and families.

Achievements

- A. Through team efforts and Foster Parent Law activities, foster parents are able to meet and network with other foster parents. Illinois Families Now and Forever Newsletters publish information about Foster Parents Associations and support groups. Foster Parents Support Specialists provide support and information to foster parents. The Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council Co-chairs, Elizabeth Richmond, Karen Blum and Joyce Loy are very active participants on statewide committees regarding issues that affect foster parents. They are able to share information about upcoming meetings or policy issues that foster parents should submit comments on. Because they are co-chairs they are very visible to other foster parents and encourage other foster parents to get involved. Central Region DCFS currently has active Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council members. They are Leanne Montgomery – Peoria sub-region, Bill Moorehead – Springfield Sub-region and Pamela Seals – Champaign sub-region. Statewide Representatives provide valuable updates from Statewide Foster Parent Advisory meetings, as well as, offering updates on upcoming meetings. They also convey issues from the Regional executive counsel to the Statewide Council when warranted.
- B. Foster Parent Support Specialists provide information regarding local, state and national foster parents associations. Sub regional Foster Parent conferences are available for foster parents. Many offices encourage and support associations by providing technical support and access to local office foster parent newsletters.
- C. The DCFS website (www.state.il.us/dcf) publishes the minutes from the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council and Adoption Advisory Council. The website also lists the meeting schedules for these groups as well as contact information. (See Appendix K) There is also a link on the DCFS website to the Illinois Foster/Adoptive Parent Association. During regional foster parent meetings, foster parents are encouraged to attend statewide meetings and to join local and statewide foster parent associations.

7. The responsibility to assess the foster parent’s on-going individual training needs and takes action to meet those needs.

Achievements

- A. Surveys are sent out annually to foster homes to assess training needs. Foster parents are encouraged to participate in facilitating training and to make suggestions for potential trainers or topics.
 - B. Evaluations from previous training events will be used to assess needs for future trainings. Through monthly visits with caseworkers, licensing, or Support Specialists some of the concerns may be discussed and possible trainings identified.
 - C. The Training Institute periodically assesses foster parent training needs. The DCFS Staff Development Coordinators have advocated for specific training for foster parents in their areas when they recognize a need or foster parents have expressed a desire for a particular training.
 - D. Licensing staff are aware of the types of training foster parents are requesting or needing. They share this information with training personnel at DCFS. Foster parent Support Specialists, where available, are helping foster parents find the training or organizing the training that foster parents request.
 - E. A Foster parent is required to have 16 hours of training prior to their renewal. Licensing staff works with foster parents to identify specific training needs and to help them locate appropriate and beneficial training.
 - F. Training is provided on a regional level to ensure foster parents have the opportunity to access training on any new initiatives, new laws and policies effecting foster parents. This includes training on expanded law regarding child safety seats and Integrated Assessment training.
- 8. The responsibility to develop and assist in implementing strategies to prevent placement disruptions, recognizing traumatic impact of placement disruptions on a foster child and all members of the foster family; and the responsibility to provide emotional support for the foster children and members of the foster family preventive strategies fail and placement disruptions occur.**

Achievements

- A. Foster parents are encouraged to use respite during times of stress. Foster Parent Support Specialists maintain close contact with foster parents to help families identify their needs and prevent disruptions. In some areas, caseworkers have given the foster parents their home telephone numbers, as this direct contact with workers is helpful in preventing placement disruptions.
- B. In Central Region Foster Parent Initiative Funds are available to pay for services for foster parents and their families to help them process issues when preventive strategies fail. In some areas Therapeutic Support Groups have been established to assist foster families deal with stress, loss and grief issues. In the Bloomington Field Office several “going home” parties were hosted by Foster Parent Support Specialists to help families with separation and loss.

- C. In cases where Director's waivers are requested, clinical staffings are frequently held to review and determine whether the child's needs are met without disrupting other children already placed in the home. Prior to a waiver being requested all casework staff that have a child placed in the home, as well as the licensing worker, must agree that this is in the children's best interests. There will also be a determination of whether the foster parents have the skills and supports to make the placement successful.
- D. The System of Care provides more intensive services, interventions and supports to children and foster parents to prevent placement disruptions and to maintain children in the least restrictive environment. Trainings or updates from local System of Care Providers are periodically provided at local Foster Parent Law meetings throughout the region. Casework staff and Foster Parent Support Specialists help foster parents understand what the System of Care can provide. The caseworker or foster parent can make the actual referral by contacting the Crisis and Referral Entry System (CARES) at 800/345-9049.
- E. Foster parents are advised to contact the child's caseworker first if there is an emergency during business hours and if unable to reach the caseworker to proceed up the chain of command. In an emergency situation after hours or on weekends, foster parents can contact the on-call worker by contacting the State Central Registry (SCR) – the Hotline at 1-800/252-2873. Also, foster parents can contact the CARES number at 800/345-9049 if they have an after hours crisis involving the foster child. If there is a need for a home visit to provide placement stabilization services foster parents can expect a worker from the System of Care Provider to be at their home within 60 minutes (urban area) or 90 minutes (rural area).

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 that results from foster parenting.

Achievements

- A. PRIDE training covers recognizing and minimizing stress factors throughout most of the nine sessions. Module 8 covers the impact it has on families.
- B. Respite is available and encouraged in times of stress. Central Region has established guidelines for respite. Foster Parent Support Specialists help facilitate access to respite. If a foster parent experiences a specific stressful event such as a death or significant illness in the family the assigned Foster Parent Support Specialist will contact the foster parent to offer respite rather than waiting for the foster parent to ask. The caseworker will also assist with facilitating respite to ensure the foster parents' needs are met.
- C. The Foster Care Licensing workers and the Foster Parent Support Specialists have informed foster parents of the voluntary hold process. During times of family stress Foster Care Licensing workers and Foster Parent Support Specialists will contact foster parents and suggest that they utilize the voluntary hold process so they do not continue to get placement calls. Foster parents are told that they only need to contact their Foster Care Licensing worker to be put on the voluntary hold list or to be taken

- off the voluntary hold list. Foster Care Licensing workers explain to foster parents that once they are placed on voluntary hold they will not be able to take placements until they contact their licensing worker to request that they be taken off hold. Foster Care Licensing staff periodically contact the foster parent to determine if they want to be taken off hold. Workers are advised of the hold so that foster parents are not contacted. The CFS 2011 form is completed and submitted to Placement Clearance Desk.
- D. DCFS also has funds available when the foster families feel the need for counseling. If there is a family tragedy; Foster Parent Support Specialists, caseworkers and licensing staff will contact the family to offer their support and will advise them of the short term counseling available to address these issues.
 - E. Caseworkers, Licensing staff and Foster Parents Support Specialists are available to help the family in the case of placement disruptions. Foster Parent Support Specialists can help link foster parents who are experiencing disruptions with other foster parents who have had similar experiences. Foster Parent Support Specialists are available 24 hours a day 7 days a week to support foster parents.
 - F. Module nine of the in-service training available to foster parents is “Managing the Impact of Placement on Your Family” and is a 6-hour credit course.
 - G. Caseworkers are encouraged to return foster parent calls in a timely manner so questions are answered expeditiously, thereby reducing foster parent stress.
 - H. Caseworkers communicate with foster parents to allow for an ongoing assessment of stressors in the foster home, and help create a plan to manage these ongoing stressors.
- 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.**

Achievements

- A. Regular foster parents meetings are available on local and state levels to share and promote positive aspects of foster parenting. The Central Region has had annual Foster Parent Appreciation and Recognition Banquets and/or social activities such as parties, picnics. In other areas foster parents were given awards and gift certificates.
 - B. Foster parents are asked to help in the recruitment of new foster parents through their Local Area Networks and on Foster Care Licensing Surveys. Information has been given to foster parents about the media and the need to go through the office of communication. In Module Nine of the Foster Parent Handbook foster parents are encouraged to have their friends and family who are interested in fostering call their local agency to inquire.
- A proposal was sent to the Director regarding recruitment position of foster homes and a position was posted.
- C. Several Central Region foster parents have consented to having their story told in articles that are published in Central Connections, which is a part of Illinois Families

Now and Forever. These articles promote the rewards and positive benefits to children that occur because of their role as foster parents.

- D. The Regional Youth Advisory Board has presented a panel of teenage DCFS foster children to speak to staff and foster parents about their positive and negative experiences with the DCFS system and with foster parents they have lived with. The presentation is done in a way to protect confidentiality but it has a profound impact on the audience. In addition, these teens; some of which are enrolled in college, military or vocational training, really illustrate what success can be possible. This panel has made presentations to the Regional Foster Care Executive Council and at management and supervisor meetings.
 - E. During the roundtable session at PRIDE trainings, former and current wards present information to potential foster parents about the impact foster parents have had on their lives.
 - F. Articles about DCFS wards who have won DCFS scholarships are published in Illinois Families Now and Forever. These stories illustrate the positive impact foster parents have on children.
 - G. Foster parents are utilized in an official and informal capacity as recruiters.
 - H. Caseworkers, licensing staff, and FPSS consistently convey appreciation for foster parents during their contacts year-round. February is designated as “Warm a Foster Parent” month.
- 11. The responsibility to know the roles, rights, and responsibilities of foster parents, other professionals in the child welfare system, the foster child, and the foster child’s own family.**

Achievements

- A. DCFS trainings welcome the participation of foster parents. Foster Parents Rights and Responsibilities are clearly explained in PRIDE training. Foster parents are informed of the Foster Parent Law through the Illinois Families Now and Forever, on D-Net and direct mailings. The Training Institute can provide advanced notifications of upcoming trainings as well as being listed on D-Net. There have been slots specifically reserved for foster parents at Prevent Child Abuse Conferences and foster parents are encouraged to register for this conference.
- B. Foster Parent Law meetings are an example of the co-training methods and are being utilized in each field office. Foster Parent Support Specialists provides additional copies of the Foster Parent Law implementation plan and explain the role of each team member. Local offices have meetings to implement the Foster Parent Law plan in their local area.
- C. The Foster Parent Law meetings are also a way in which foster parents have a recognized voice within the agency. The Foster Parent Advisory Council holds regular meetings throughout the region with management to discuss training issues and concerns.

- D. During Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings Rule 340 – The Foster Parent Code is routinely distributed and foster parents are advised of how this relates to the yearly implementation plan and that the rule explains the scoring process. It is also explained that each Right and Responsibility is listed in the Rule and that these are the issues grieved under the Regions Foster Parent Grievance Process. There has been in depth training on Rule 340 - Foster Parent Law - in several locations during Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings.
- E. Foster parents are encouraged to participate in the Illinois Foster/Adoptive Parent Association to maintain a recognized presence within the agency management organization. Illinois Families Now and Forever list local Foster Parent Associations and their contact numbers as well as Statewide Foster Parent Organizations. The DCFS website has links to Illinois Foster Parent Organizations as well as National Foster Parent Organizations. During Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings, foster parents are encouraged to use the DCFS website as a resource for information on foster parent associations and DCFS rule, policy and policy interpretations.
- F. Some offices have foster parent representation on their Specialty Placement QA/QI committee. This is encouraged throughout the region but it has been difficult in some areas to locate a foster parent who can attend. A foster parent representative joined the Regional Quality Council. This representative shares the foster parent perspective on issues and brings foster parent concerns to the table.
- G. The DCFS Central Region Administrator, as well as, the Assistant Regional Administrators, other DCFS management staff and supervisors regularly attend Regional and Advisory Council meetings and are open to hearing and working to resolve foster parent issues.
- H. DCFS Central Region has a contractual Foster Parent Liaison (Elizabeth Richmond) to ensure that foster parent issues are conveyed directly to Regional Administration. This team member has the Regional Administrator’s pager and home number and has been encouraged to call with any issues. The liaison will represent Central Region foster parents interests on committees or special projects and will assist with advocating for change in policy/procedures that might impede foster parent rights.
- I. Central Region strives to train DCFS staff and foster parents together whenever possible on new initiatives and policies. There has been joint training on SOC, Integrated Assessment, child safety seat laws and equipment demonstrations, meetings, Confidentiality, The Foster Parent Law, purposeful visitations, etc. In addition, whenever possible Central Region tries to utilize foster parents and staff trainers together.
- J. Foster parents are also invited and encouraged to attend Child and Family Team meetings and CAYIT meetings with staff, community agency professionals and parents. This gives foster parents a direct venue to express their concerns or issues.
- K. Foster Parents are invited to attend local office monthly “all staff” meetings to encourage interaction, communication and obtain joint training.

- 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 these allegations.**

Achievements

- A. Foster parents are informed of their mandated reporter status during PRIDE training. They are provided with the hotline number to report abuse or neglect.
- B. Foster parents sign a form acknowledging they are mandated reporters during the licensing process. Foster parents are part of the professional team and are responsible for assuring that children are safe and free from abuse and neglect.
- C. The Foster Parent Handbook given to new foster parents has a section about mandated reporters and a section that explains the investigative process as well as Foster Parent Rights during a Child Abuse and Neglect Investigation. (Note: The Foster Parent Handbook is available on the DCFS website, www.state.il.us/dcf in both English and Spanish)
- D. Foster parents are trained in their responsibility to report sexual activity (Sexual Abuse Program-SAP) to the child’s worker. They received this information through trainings, newsletters, staffings, and Illinois Families Now and Forever.
- E. Mandated Reporter Manuals are periodically passed out to foster parents at a Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council Meeting. Foster Parent Support Specialists are encouraged to have these manuals to distribute to foster parents who did not have a copy.

- 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 parent’s designated role in these proceedings.**

Achievements

- A. PRIDE training emphasizes taking an active role in planning for the child. Foster parents are provided with information about court proceedings, client service plans and Administrative Case Reviews and encouraged to attend and participate. They are advised of what their role is and how important it is to take an active role.
- B. During meetings in the Springfield Sub-Region, there have been training sessions that included a detailed explanation of the court process, legal timeframes and the foster parents’ right to be heard. During this training, DCFS Legal Counsel has encouraged foster parents to call them with any questions about the court process. This training will continue to be offered periodically throughout the region.
- C. There is a chart provided explaining legal time frames that is presented and explained to foster parents during PRIDE Pre-Service training.

- D. Foster Parent Support Specialists regularly stress to foster parents the importance of foster parents participating in service planning for the child, participating in Administrative Case Reviews and court proceedings.
- E. Foster parents provide input to the caseworker and clinical screeners during the creation of the integrated assessment and service plan. This process facilitates a collaborative approach to permanency planning for children and encourages foster parent involvement throughout all legal and administrative activities.

14. The responsibility to know the child welfare agency's appeal procedure for foster parents and the rights of foster parents under the procedure.

Achievements

- A. PRIDE training informs foster parents about appeals and their rights. All foster parents were provided with a brochure "The Service Appeal Process" (CFS 1050-32) and (CFS 1050-55). All new foster parents receive a copy of the Foster Parent Law Rights and Responsibilities and Foster Parent Handbook. During PRIDE training, foster parents have the opportunity to discuss the service appeal process with their trainers and representatives from the field. This allows a more practical understanding of what happens during an appeal and steps taken to preserve foster parent rights.
- B. Foster parents receive information and participate in discussions on this subject at local office Foster Parent meetings and Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings.
- C. Foster parents are informed of their Rights routinely through the Service Appeal Brochure (CFS 1050-32) and by the "What You Need to Know About Child Abuse and Neglect Investigations in Licensed Facilities" brochure (CFS 1050-55). Foster parents who are the subject of a Child Abuse and Neglect Investigation are given a copy of the "What You Need to Know About Child Abuse and Neglect Investigations in Licensed Facilities" brochure CFS1050-55. Both of these brochures are periodically handed out during Sub-Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings throughout the region (See Appendix J). Foster parents are advised by Foster Care Licensing staff and Child Protection staff of their right to have a person of their choosing present during a licensing complaint or child abuse investigation.
- D. Foster parents are advised and trained per Policy Guide 2001.06 when the issues they are appealing involve the move of the child they also have the right to a clinical review.
- E. Foster Parent Support Specialists, Caseworkers and Foster Care Licensing workers are knowledgeable about the Service Appeal Process. They share this information during visits and assist foster parents in utilizing this process if the foster parent requests this.
- F. Foster Parent Support Specialists assist foster parents in understanding their appeal rights and how to prepare and submit an appeal as well as where to go to get any questions answered.

- G. Training on investigations in licensed facilities is done periodically throughout the region and during these trainings the appeal process is also explained.
- H. Foster parents are provided with contact information for staff and management at the local field office. Foster parents can contact staff and management regarding questions, complaints and/or appeals. The local chain of command and the regional chain of command are periodically handed out at local and Regional Foster Parent meetings.
- I. Additionally, Casework, Child Protection and management staff understands the appeal processes and work with foster parents to ensure that their rights are acknowledged and preserved.

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 they foster parent is licensed or affiliated.

Achievements

- A. PRIDE training teaches foster parents what records are to be kept.
- B. When a child is placed in the home the foster parent receives a folder. The folder contains forms for the foster parent to use and example forms are also included. The caseworkers, and Foster Care Licensing worker all review the records with the foster parent during visits and assist them in maintaining accurate and relevant records.
- C. The Foster Parent Support Specialists and/or Foster Care Licensing staff also trains foster parents during visits to keep accurate records in order to ensure they have the necessary documentation to advocate for services to meet a foster child’s special or changing needs. Foster Parent Support Specialists and Foster Care Licensing staff checks these records during visits and offer suggestions if records are lacking.
- D. Foster parents were notified via their Foster Parent Support Specialists, Foster Care Licensing workers, and caseworkers and through newsletters when the new medication and behavior log policy guide was issued. The Behavior and Medication Logs were distributed and discussed during a Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council meeting and were distributed in Illinois Families Now & Forever. There continues to be on-going training during meetings throughout the region by DCFS nurses regarding proper completion of the Behavior and Medication Logs.
- E. During monitoring visits, Foster Care Licensing workers check to ensure that foster parents are keeping required records and remind them this is a violation of Rule 402.26 a 1-12 if they are not maintaining these records.
- F. The section of the Foster Home Licensing Rule (402.26) listing records that foster parents must maintain is periodically published in Illinois Families Now and Forever.
- G. Caseworkers can assist foster parents in the event questions arise regarding form completion.

- 16. The responsibility to share information through the child welfare team, with subsequent caregiver (whether the child's parent or another substitute caregiver) regarding the child's adjustment in the foster parents home.**

Achievements

- A. PRIDE training covers sharing information with subsequent caregivers. Good practice dictates that communication between caretakers would transpire in all circumstances. This expectation is covered in the Foster Parent Handbook, and is facilitated and encouraged by the Resource, Casework, POS staff and foster parents. Policy Interpretation 2000.15 issued November 22, 2000 clarifies the Departments position on how information should be shared with subsequent caretakers. This policy guide outlines that information from one caretaker to another should only be shared through the caseworker. This policy guide has been reviewed and distributed at Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council as well as via Illinois Families Now and Forever. This policy guide has been distributed and discussed during Sub-Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council Meetings throughout the region.
- B. Child and Family Teams meetings are held throughout the life of a case and prior to a child returning home. This affords the foster parent and birth parent an opportunity to share information within the team.

- 17. The responsibility to provide care and services that are respectful of and responsive to the child's cultural needs and are 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.**

Achievements

- A. An entire PRIDE In-Service Module is devoted to this issue. Information is shared during the Foster Parent Association meetings and activities and at the Foster Parent Advisory Council Meeting.
- B. Foster parents have provided training to other foster parents and staff, one-on-one and in small groups on cultural issues including, hair and skin care, foods, traditions, and holidays and religious practices.
- C. Foster parents are encouraged by staff to share their knowledge and experience with other foster parents in need of assistance.
- D. The DCFS Training Institute is offering a Trans-cultural Parenting training, which utilizes a self-awareness model.
- E. The Lending Library materials available to foster parents through the Training Institute offer videos and books with such titles as Struggle for Identity – Issues in Trans-racial Adoption, Developing Cultural Competence, An Insiders Guide to Tran racial Adoption, Different and Wonderful – Raising Black Children in a Race Conscious Society, Effective Black Parenting. This comprehensive catalog was mailed to all foster parents.

- F. A module training that is periodically offered to foster parents is titled “Ouch! Practical Help for Black Hair and Skin.” This class teaches concrete techniques and information.
- G. DCFS supports community involvement and maintaining or placing children in their neighborhood of origin when possible. Also, foster parents and biological parents are encouraged to exchange information relevant to a child’s needs, education, culture, and spirituality.
- H. In 2003, the PRIDE Pre-Service training was revised to provide more content that addressed cultural sensitivity and awareness. The Bloomington Field Office and local LAN have partnered with the Judiciary and Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church to recruit and maintain a diverse foster parent base.
- I. Lifeline of Peoria, Illinois, continues to recruit foster parents of varied ethnic backgrounds and to assist them in the application process.
- J. In 2006, DCFS has also incorporated Family to Family in Peoria and Hispanic Cultural Sensitivity training in September.

Appendix A

Central Region Training Calendar & Summary of Ongoing trainings

Here is a summary of the ongoing training provided in Central Region. All offices notify foster homes of DCFS sponsored trainings including Caregivers Institutes and conferences and/or additional community training opportunity announcements, i.e., day long community event for foster parents including fingerprinting, doctor for physicals and relative/foster parent training as well. Training provided by foster parent panels. Central Region PRIDE class schedules are available on the DCFS website www.state.il.us/dcf and the Virtual Training Center (VTC). Caseworkers and licensing staff share training information through visits, mass mailing and phone contact with foster parents as well as via e-mail. Even private agency training is shared with DCFS foster parents. An on-line resource is also made available to foster parents. Local offices provide some training on site presented by DCFS staff and or local community agencies. Supplemental pages identify local training with foster parents by field offices. The following is a sample of some of the ongoing training:

Foster and Adoptive Caregiver Training

Pre-Service

[Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE Pre-Service \(referral only\)](#)

In-Service

[Foster PRIDE In-Service Training Modules](#)

[Adoption Certification](#)

Child and Family Team Meetings for Foster Caregivers (On-line Course)

[Child Trauma - Informed Practice for Foster Caregivers](#)

[Early Childhood Intervention, Age Birth to Three Years \(On-line Course\)](#)

[Eco-maps and Genograms: Tools for Case Management \(On-line Course\)](#)

[Educational Advocacy for Foster Caregivers](#)

Family Reunification for Foster Caregivers

[Guardianship and Advocacy \(On-line Course\)](#)

Other Training

Health works training

Symptoms of ADHD

Training addressing the needs of African-American children in foster care

Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse Training

Circle of Support Educational Workshop Series Training

Foster Parent Reunification Training

CPR and Car Seat Safety Training

Sexual Assault

Effects of Media Violence on young Children

Education Training Advocacy for Caregivers & Caseworkers

Drugs and Alcohol Training

Cultural Awareness Training

What to Expect in Court

Adoption learning Webinars "Is That My Birth Mom on Face book?"

Appendix B

Foster Parent & Staff Receipt / Input / Development **Signature Page**

Actual signatures were submitted documenting foster parent & staff input into the development of the plan. Additionally, please note local offices throughout Central Region hosted these meetings and submitted signature pages to the Regional 2011 Foster Parent Law Implementation Planning Committee.

Appendix C



2011 Summary of Foster Parent Comments Received

A summary of Central Region 2011 Foster Parent, Staff and community comments/suggestions:

1. The Department needs to provide CPR training for caregivers and staff at no cost.
2. Tell Marsha that booklet is the best thing since "sliced bread!"
3. Foster Parent *Help Line* is useful & calls are always returned promptly. It is a good tool to have especially for the new foster parents that do not know the "ropes" & for those of us who may have forgotten some things.
4. The "Quick Reference Guide" was terrific. It was user friendly. The plan is too bulky and could use some tabs though. It needs to be more concise.
5. I have some concerns & get frustrated when told about appeals; who is it that can appeal?
6. There is significant delay in caseworker assignment for initial placements; new children & foster parent have many needs to be addressed, i.e., school, medical history & care, family visits, etc. Under achievements, part B (pg 26), it should be included that licensing workers & foster parents can now view training transcripts of foster parents on the Virtual Training Center if the foster parent is registered with VTC. Under Responsibilities #8A the foster parent preference checklist and matching tool are used to determine appropriate placements" needs to be deleted.
7. Statewide minutes take months. No one knows what they talked about/decided! How do I find out what went on from statewide representatives before minutes are typed & it's too late to have a say on decisions?
8. Someone needs to clarify about firearms being kept in a locked cabinet if it can't have a glass front.
9. Why does the department set water temperatures lower than the Health Department and sometimes lower than the recommended usage on appliances?
10. I am frustrated with the private agency child placed in my home. Every time I ask for their plan they say it's in the mail or somebody will get back to me. They never do. Does DCFS have a copy?
11. Can I get an electronic version of the Quick Reference Guide and the full blown plan?
12. Consider the best interest of child. Foster parents are the last to know but first to be accused.
13. PRIDE classes should have CPR, 1st Aid, & fingerprinting and need Spanish presenters or trainers!
14. More local training need to be offered for caregivers and supports to enable their attendance.
15. More staff is needed to support caregivers and accomplish tasks for caregivers.
16. Face book taken away from children in my home is not making them normal in my family.
17. Suggestion: Vanessa prints in Illinois the results of Foster Parent complaint surveys of licensing complaints.
18. State workers need to use common sense after placement of a child when they are seeking information about the child and consider giving the foster parent time to get to know the kid in their home!
19. Suggestion: Continue to share the toll free "800" Foster Parent Help Line with staff & foster parents at meetings, conferences, appreciation events and include in any packets of information for newly licensed homes. There also needs to be a person who can speak Spanish if necessary.
20. What to do in an emergency or bad night?

Appendix D

Summary of Agency Responses to Foster Parent Comments

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| 1. The Department continues to research free or reduced cost 1 st Aid and CPR training throughout the communities and makes that information available to foster parents and staff. |
| 2. Yippee! The Quick Reference Guide will continue as long as it is viewed helpful! |
| 3. Yeah! The 800 Foster Parent Help Line will continue as a resource tool for foster parents |
| 4. The 800 Help line always seeks to improve. Ideas will be considered for the 2012 plan. Thanks. |
| 5. The procedure 337.60 on Who May Appeal -- In accordance with Rule Section 337.60, the following persons may appeal decisions made by the department or a provider agency, 1) families & children who receive child welfare services, either directly from the department or through its provider agency, 2) families and children requesting child welfare services from the department, 3) foster parents or relative caregivers who have care and custody of a child for whom the department is legally responsible may appeal a limited number of issues. |
| 6. The Department will research. |
| 7. The Statewide Advisory Council meetings discussion questions can respond to by utilizing sub-regional representatives, Leann Montgomery (Peoria Sub-region), Bill Moorehead (Springfield Sub-region) and Lee Coffman (Champaign Sub-region). Statewide minutes are posted on the website below. Just click or type the link Contact the Office of Foster Parent Support Services; Sub-region members and/or representatives can send out summaries upon your request. http://www.state.il.us/DCFS/library/com_communications_statefpadv.shtml |
| 8. It was recommended that the Statewide Licensing Council research and make a recommendation to clarify the locked cabinet question. See firearm location is 452-2 Paragraph. |
| 9. Currently, Statewide Licensing is researching the water temperature issue. It was recommended the licensing committee discuss the issue. See 452-1 Paragraph "Water Temperature." Rule says 115 degree. Procedure states if there is no thermostat temp showing degrees; set at middle mark. If over 115 degrees, foster parents signs agreement stating can't adjust temp range. It's a form to sign. See licensing worker. |
| 10. Private agency implementation Plans govern placements in DCFS licensed homes. A memorandum was sent from the Office of Foster Care Support to all POS agencies reminding their Implementation Plan must be available to the public/caregivers upon request. DCFS foster parents may ask for a copy of the POS Implementation plan. See Administrative code, Rule 340 Foster Parent Code. A list of POS contacts & numbers is included in the Quick Reference Guide. |
| 11. Central Region plan is on the DCFS Website. Plan & Quick Reference Guide are addressed in the 2010 plan. |
| 12. Comments to the implementation plan can be made throughout the year via the regional foster parent executive council meetings/teleconferences. The Department seeks to capture comments, suggestions and/or ideas via monthly Quality Improvement meetings, Foster Parent Implementation meetings and all staff meetings when foster parent issues are agenda items and/or whenever training is provided. |
| 13. See Training Calendar. Also, new foster parents are mentored by other foster parents. |
| 14. Central Region continues to offer & share information re: community & DCFS training. |
| 15. The Department has hired FPSS to help support in areas needing foster parent support. |
| 16. The Department continues to educate & share informational training like "Is That My Mom on FaceBook?" |
| 17. Many discussions have surfaced around the use of Face Book. The Department is sensitive to the opinions caregivers & staff are currently expressing. Strategies and tips for caregivers and youth are being explored. |
| 18. The Department sympathizes and will consider this suggestion. |
| 19. The Central Region Help Line information is provided continuously; however, Spanish speaking is something to consider. |
| 20. Call emergency 911 if safety concern, Contact FPSS, FP Support groups, Caseworker if available. |

Appendix E


Summary of Agency Responses To Public Comments

Public comments were not received during the 2010 revision period.

Appendix F

Statement of Plan endorsement & Foster Parent & Staff Final Approval Signature Page

Original signatures were collected documenting foster parent & staff input into the development of the plan. Local offices in Central Region hosted these meetings and submitted actual copies of signature pages to the Regional Foster Parent Law Implementation Planning committee for verification.



The Central Region 2011 Foster Parent Law Implementation Planning committee is proud to present a plan where foster parents, staff and community not only collaborated to develop the plan but also developed the “Supplemental” document (See Appendix P) which was utilized to capture areas of the Foster Parent Law unique to local field offices. This committee had the opportunity to develop the plan and review it as many times as necessary to reach an approved plan for submission to the Office of Foster Parent Support. Efforts were made to streamline the number of pages in the 2011 Plan with help and guidance from Central Region foster parents’ who submitted comments.

Central Region makes every effort to comply and implement the Foster Parent Laws.

(At all 2011 regional foster parent law implementation planning meetings sign in sheets were used. However, teleconferences were also scheduled to accommodate foster parents’ schedules and/or due to planned activities in their homes. Roll call was taken on teleconference calls for these calls.

2010 DCFS Central Region Foster Parent Implementation Plan

Local: _____

“Final Approval” - Staff-FP Sign- off

Your signature indicates you have received the final plan and approve for submission to the Office of Foster Parent Support Services.

| Name Title | Office | Job |
|---------------|--------|-----|
|---------------|--------|-----|

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Appendix G

Central Region Grievance Process & Instructions

Central Region Mission Statement:

Central Region is committed to the safety and well being of children. We believe all children and families should be treated with dignity, respect, compassion and cultural competence. In partnership with families, we strive to ensure Children achieve permanency in their best interest as soon as possible.

What is a grievance?

A grievance is a formal, written complaint about any particular issue thought to be unfair, offensive, or in violation of the Foster Parent Rights and Responsibilities in the Central Region Foster Parent Implementation Plan. By filing a grievance, there is an expectation of a timely, fair and collaborative resolution. Foster Parents have the right to file a grievance at any time without fear of retaliation. The process outlined in this pamphlet is open for all licensed foster/adoptive parents or unlicensed relative caretakers caring for Central Region Children.

How Do I Resolve my Grievance?

Complete the form inside making sure to include details and supportive information (use additional paper as necessary). Issues being grieved must have occurred within 90 days of the grievance being filed. Forward grievance to the Regional Administrator

who will also forward it to the Central Region Advisory Council. Within 7 business days of receiving your grievance the assigned staff will contact you to schedule a meeting for the purpose of resolving the grievance. The meeting shall take place within 30 days of being contacted by the assigned staff. If the grievance cannot be resolved satisfactorily at the supervisor level, a panel will then be convened with a case worker and supervisor (Not from the same supervision line), a licensing worker (not the foster parent's representative or a representative from the same team), with two current and active foster parents (with no prior knowledge of the incident) and the alleged violator of the Foster Parent's rights. The grieving Foster Parent may also bring supports of their choosing. This panel will meet in person unless it is more convenient for the grieving Foster Parent to conduct the panel by teleconference.

If no immediate decision can be reached, then a decision will be made by the panel in 3 days. The Regional Administrator will review all resolutions before being sent to the grieving foster parent. If the grieving foster parent does not agree, they may ask the Regional Administration for a meeting to reconsider.



Foster Parents Guide to the Formal Grievance Process

Mr. Robert Blackwell
Central Region Administrator
5400 N. University
Peoria, Illinois 61614
Robert.Blackwell@illinois.gov

Appendix H

DATE September 12, 2010
TO Central Region DCFS Licensed Foster Parents
FROM Robert Blackwell, Regional Administrator
SUBJECT Foster Parent Participation in Regional Meetings

It continues to be my Regional Administration's goal to encourage teamwork among staff and foster parents whenever possible. As an important member of the child welfare team, your participation in our planning and advisory meetings is greatly appreciated. Consequently, I am pleased to announce that greater financial supports will be made available this year in an effort to increase foster parent participation at our regionally sponsored advisory meetings.

These meetings include both the Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council and the Regional Foster Parent Bill of Rights committee. The financial support mentioned involves payment reimbursement for both babysitting and mileage costs related to attending these meetings. Billing forms will be made available at the conclusion of each of these meetings.

Babysitters reimbursed by the Department need to be 18 years of age and older and shall have a CANTS check completed prior to caring for DCFS wards. Mileage reimbursement will be made in accordance with the Governor's Travel Board amount currently at .50 cents per mile. Foster parents are encouraged to car pool whenever feasible. Reimbursement for babysitting is not a per child payment, but will be made at a flat \$5.85 an hour for a maximum of eight hours.

This protocol is in effect from now until June 30, 2011. Any extension will be based on regional affordability. It is my sincere hope that these additional payment supports will result in greater foster parent participation at these important meetings.

If you have any questions in regards to this memo, please feel free to call the Peoria Business Unit, Edie Wood, at (309) 693-5400. Let's keep the focus on protecting children by strengthening and supporting families. Thank you for all you do on behalf of the children we *all* serve.

Appendix I

Regional Administration

Robert T. Blackwell – Regional Administrator – 217/786-6830

Assistant Regional Administrators

Maria Miller – Champaign Sub-Region – 217/278-5500

Mary Bullock – Peoria Sub-Region – 309/693-5400

James Craven – Springfield Sub-Region – 217/786-6830

Other Regional Management Staff

Local Area Network (LAN-Community) Downstate Manager, Judith M. Rehder – 309/937-1071

Statewide Foster Care/Licensing Manager, Vacant – (Steve Minter, Acting - 312/328-2721)

Central Region Clinical Manager, Jill Tichenor – 217/278-5500

Administrative Services (Business Office) Manager, Edie Wood – 309/693-5400

DCFS Foster Parent Liaison, Mary Bullock – Peoria Sub-Region – 309/693-5400

**DCFS Monitor over Private Agency (APT) Downstate Manager, Scott Wiseman – 309/828-0022
(Kenneth Janssen, CR Supervisor – 309/671-7900/Janel Loucks, Spgfld Supervisor – 618/583-2161)**

FP Law Liaison for Private Agencies

| POS Contact | POS Agency | APT/DCFS Monitor |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Doria Schneider 309/797-7700 | Bethany for Children & Families | Mike VanAcker 309/794-3500 |
| Lynda Sharp-Lower 309/636-7913 (Peoria) | Catholic Charities | Betty Hope 309/828-0022 |
| Mary Savage 217/523-9201 (Spgfld) | Catholic Charities | Catherine Haynes 217/557-3086 |
| Deb Roberts 217/222-0034 | Chaddock | Catherine Haynes 217/557-3086 |
| Val Spalding 309/687-7348 | Children's Home | Marilyn Giles 309/671-7934 |
| Tina Frier 309/676-2400 | Counseling & Family | Lynn McCann 309/671-7933 |
| Robin Mathis 217/337-9099 | Cunningham Children's Home | Rachel Bicknell 217/875-6750 |
| Ron Suter 217/528-8406 | Family Service Center | Beverly Rice 217/557-2799 |
| Amanda Blair 217/893-4673 | Generations of Hope | Rachel Bicknell 217/875-6750 |
| Ericka Cooley 217/243-7708 | Hobby Horse House | Beverly Rice 217/557-2799 |
| Janie Lane or Kathy Gomez 618/875-0673 | Hoyleton Youth | Catherine Haynes 217/557-3086 |
| Mel Cloe 217/226-2153 | Kemmerer Village | Catherine Haynes 217/557-3086 |
| Jere Moore 309/ 671-0300 | Lutheran Social Services of IL | Mike VanAcker 309/794-3500 |
| Shanelle Letcher 217/525-7757 | Rutledge Youth | Beverly Rice 217/557-2799 |
| Karen Blum or Cindy Musick 309/454-1770 | The Baby Fold | Ronnie Berry 309/671-7922 |
| Denise Walters 217/423-6961 | Webster-Cantrell Hall | Rachel Bicknell 217/875-6750 |
| Julie DeVault 815/433-3953 | Youth Service Bureau | Ronnie Berry 309/671-7922 |

Appendix J

Central Region Foster Care Council Schedule 2010 - 2011

October 26, 2010 - in person evening meeting - Champaign 6-8pm

October 27, 2010 - - teleconference 10-11:30 am

November 16, 2010 - in person evening meeting - Bloomington 6-8pm

December 16, 2010 - - teleconference 10-11:30 am

February 16, 2011 - - teleconference 10-11:30 am

March 16 2011 - in person evening meeting – Springfield, 6-8pm

April 20, 2011 - - teleconference 10-11:30 am

May 12, 2011 - in person evening meeting – Peoria, 6-8 pm

June 29, 2011 - - teleconference 10-11:30 am

Regional teleconferences: To participate in any or all of the teleconference calls please call the Central Region Foster Care Help Line at 1-866-368-5204. You will be given a Free call in number and pass code. Agendas for these calls will be available shortly before each call. The goal of the calls is to give foster parents an opportunity to hear about DCFS programs, upcoming events and changes in policies and procedures.

In person evening meetings: In person evening meetings will be held around the 50 counties that make up the Central Region. Postcards will be sent out to both DCFS and Private Agency foster parents prior to a meeting in the area where the meetings will be held. The focus of these meetings is to have discussion with local area foster parents; identifying strengths of the foster care system and making suggestions on how to overcome the weaknesses. These meeting are design to discuss issues with in the system as a whole and not to deal with individual case specific problems. Registration information will be available on the postcards.

Questions: As always please use the Central Region Foster care help line if you have any questions 1-866-368-5204

Appendix K

FY11 MEETING SCHEDULES – (9/1/10)

STATEWIDE FOSTER CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL
 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated below
 Chair: Angela Barber

Central Region Representatives:

- Leanne Montgomery (Peoria Sub-region) Email: momathome7@yahoo.com
- Lee Coffman (Champaign Sub-region) Telephone: 217/235-3980
- Bill Mooreland (Springfield Sub-region) Email: billmoorehead@hotmail.com

| DATE | LOCATION | GUEST COUNCIL |
|--|--|---------------|
| Friday, July 16, 2010 | Carbondale -Hampton Inn, 2175 Reed Station Pkwy | Southern |
| Friday, September 17, 2010 4pm – 10pm | East Peoria - Embassy Suites, 100 Conference Center Dr. Joint Meeting with Statewide Youth Advisory Board | Central |
| Friday, October 15, 2010 | Waukegan - Ramada, 200 N. Green Bay Road | Cook North |
| Friday, November 19, 2010 10am-2pm | Springfield - Governor's Mansion, 410 E. Jackson Street - Joint Meeting with Adoption Advisory Council; followed by Adoption Month Celebration at State Library, 300 South 2 nd Street from 3-6pm | Central |
| Friday, January 14, 2011 | Aurora - Comfort Suites, 111 N. Broadway | Northern |
| Friday, February 18, 2011 | West Dundee/Elgin - Courtyard Marriott, 2175 Marriott Dr. | Cook Central |
| Friday, March 18, 2011 | Effingham - Thelma Keller Center, 1202 N. Keller Drive | Southern |
| Friday, April 15, 2011 | Jacksonville – Holiday Inn Express, 2501 Holiday Lane | Central |
| Friday, May 20, 2011 | Oak Brook - Marriott, 1401 West 22nd Street | Cook South |

Joint meeting with Partnering with Parents' Councils

This is not a regular SWFCAC business meeting.

In order to protect the confidentiality of the parents in attendance, this is NOT an open meeting.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Thursday, May 12, 2011 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. | Morton - Best Western Ashland House, 201 E. Ashland Birth Parent Summit | |
|--|--|--|

FY11

ILLINOIS ADOPTION ADVISORY COUNCIL
 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated below
 Co-Chairs: James C. Jones & Elizabeth Richmond

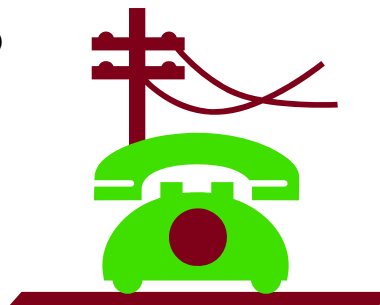
| DATE | LOCATION |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Friday, September 10, 2010 | Bloomington - Holiday Inn, 3202 E. Empire Street |
| Friday, October 1, 2010 | Teleconference |
| Friday, November 19, 2010 10am-5pm | Springfield - Governor's Mansion Adoption Celebration/Joint Meeting with Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council |
| Friday, February 4, 2011 | Bloomington - Holiday Inn, 3202 E. Empire Street |
| Friday, April 8, 2011 | Springfield - Northfield Inn & Suites, 3280 Northfield Drive |
| Friday, June 3, 2011 | Lisle - Hickory Ridge Marriott, 1400 Corporetum Drive |

Appendix L

Important Numbers to Know

1. DCFS Child Abuse /Neglect Hotline – 1-800/252-2873 or 217/785-4020
2. DCFS Advocacy Office – 1- 800/232-3798; TDD 217/524-3715
(Takes calls re: issues w/services, workers, supervisors, etc.)
3. Inspector General’s Office/Foster Parent Hotline – 1-800/722-9124
(Takes calls regarding complaints w/employee misconduct)
4. Crisis/Referral System (CARES) SOC & SASS Services- 1-800/345-9049
(Takes calls regarding mental health issues/services)
5. Adoption Information Center of Illinois 1-800/624-5437
(Takes calls/questions from foster /adoptive families)
6. DCFS Medical Card Hotline 1-800/228-6533
(Takes calls from foster/adoptive families re: lost/stolen/replacement cards)
7. DCFS Payment Processing Unit – 1-800/525-0499
(Takes calls - foster/adoptive homes re: payment mail dates/problem solving)
8. IL Health Benefit & Kid Care/DCFS “Dental” Hotline 1–800/226-0768
(Takes calls from all Medicare recipients)
9. “Dental Quest” Care/Services of Illinois 1/888/286-2447
(Takes calls re: eligibility, authorization/claims & locates dentist/specialists)
10. Tax Counseling Project Information Line – 1/888/827-8511 & website: http://nfpaonline.org/uploads/2009_federal_tax_benefits.pdf
(Takes calls regarding tax questions and offers FREE electronic filing.)
11. **DCFS Website (www.state.il.us/dcfs)**
12. **Central Region Administrator – Robert Blackwell – 217/786-6830**

13. **Peoria Regional Office – 309/693-5400 – Mary Bullock Assistant Regional Administrator**
14. **Champaign Regional Office – 217/278-5500 – Maria Miller, Assistant Regional Administrator**
15. **Springfield Regional Office – 217/786-6830 – Jim Cravens, Assistant Regional Administrator**
16. **Central Region Foster Care Executive Council Co-Chairs, Elizabeth Richmond 309/671-7900 (Peoria), Karen Blum – Babyfold 309/454-1770 (Normal) & Joyce Loy 309/794-3500 (Rock Island)**
17. LANS/Resources - 309/937-1071 - Judith M. Rehder, Downstate Manager (Local Area Network Services)
18. Respite Assistance - 1-309/693-5400, Ext. 5421 (Business Unit – Peoria)
19. Educational Advisors – Ann Wells 217/875-6568, Mary Chepulis 217/782-4000 & Krystal Shelvin 309/693-7919; Spanish Advisors - Carlos Alverio 773/292-7706 or Leticia (Lettie) Nunez 773/292-7735
20. DCFS Foster Parent “Help” Line 866/368-5204 (**Non-Emergency** issues)
21. Adoption Information Help Line - 800/572-2390
22. Day Care Information Line – 877/746-0829
23. **Department of Human Services/Public Aid Help Line - 800/843-6154**
24. **Youth Hotline – 217/524-2029**



Appendix M

Authorized Child Care Payments (Foster Care Board Rates)

AUTHORIZED CHILD CARE PAYMENTS February 20, 2009 – P. T. 2009.02

b). Licensed Foster Family and Relative Home Care (Effective October 1, 2008)

Licensed Department and Private Agency Maintenance Rates

Licensed Homes (Relative & Traditional Home Care) Service Codes: 2902, 2940, 4102, 4140, 9101, 9102, 9106, 9140

| Age of child | Board | Clothing | Allowance | Total Rate/month |
|--------------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------------|
| 0 – 11 mo. | \$ 335.00 | \$ 37.00 | \$ 12.00* | \$ 384.00 |
| 1 – 4 years | \$ 337.00 | \$ 42.00 | \$ 13.00* | \$ 392.00 |
| 5 – 8 years | \$ 339.00 | \$ 56.00 | \$ 14.00 | \$ 409.00 |
| 9 – 11 years | \$ 346.00 | \$ 65.00 | \$ 24.00 | \$ 435.00 |
| 12 and over | \$ 354.00 | \$ 74.00 | \$ 43.00 | \$ 471.00 |

*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.



Appendix N

RESPITE GUIDELINES – CENTRAL REGION

Revised 10/23/09

REASONS FOR RESPITE

Respite care is available to DCFS foster homes and relative caretakers in order to provide support and assistance to foster parents/relative caretakers in stabilizing and maintaining foster placements. Examples of such situations include (but are not limited to):

- A brief rest period from the foster child(ren) in times of stress and/or crisis
- Severe illness/injury/surgery in foster/caretaker's family
- **Payment for respite care not to exceed ten (10) days per fiscal year - must have ARA approval if total exceeds 10 days**
- Medical/educational training for foster parents/relative caretakers to enhance their ability to provide care for the foster children placed in their home

Respite funds are not to be used for pre-placement visits.

RESPITE CARE PROVIDERS

Once respite care has been approved, the care may be provided by any of the following resources:

- DCFS or Private Agency foster parents
- Child care institutions or group homes
- License-exempt relative home (relative of foster child)

Those respite providers who are not currently licensed by DCFS (i.e. license-exempt relative homes) should receive appropriate background checks (CANTS/LEADS) prior to providing care.

It is preferred that the respite care be provided in the home of the foster child(ren) in order to avoid interrupting the foster child's daily routine. However, in situations where it is not possible, care may be provided in the home of the respite provider.

In situations where respite will extend beyond 24 consecutive hours, the DCFS or Private Agency worker must contact the Placement Clearance Desk for approval of the respite placement before the care can be provided.

Effective January 1, 1999, Private Agencies utilizing DCFS foster homes for placement received increases in their contracts for respite services. Therefore, if a Private Agency has a child in placement in a DCFS foster home, the Private Agency is responsible for reimbursing respite services.

RATES OF PAY

Traditional - The pay scale for traditional foster children will be as follows:

- \$3.00 per hour per child with a maximum of 8 paid hours of care in a 24 hour period.
Thus, in cases where care is provided for 24 hours, payment for each child will be \$24.00.

Intensive/Specialized/Therapeutic – The pay scale for intensive/specialized/therapeutic foster children will be as follows:

- \$4.50 per hour per child with a maximum of 8 paid hours of care in a 24 hour period.
Thus, in cases where care is provided for 24 hours, payment for each child will be \$36.00.

If the hourly rate must be exceeded due to extreme difficulties or medical complexities of a foster child, the Public Service Administrator supervising the field office must approve the rate.

For periods of respite that extend beyond 5 consecutive days, an exception to policy (CFS 902) must accompany the request for respite. In addition, pre-approval must be obtained from ARA (via email) and copy of this email must also accompany the respite form.

The following are the appropriate service codes to be used in conjunction with the hourly rates:

- 0133 – should be used when a Private Agency foster parent or relative caregiver provides respite care to a foster child regardless of the child's classification of traditional/specialized/therapeutic, etc.
- 0120 – should be used when another DCFS foster home provides care to a foster child who is classified as traditional
- 0117 – should be used when another DCFS foster home provides care to a foster child who is classified as intensive/specialized/therapeutic

TRAINING

When a foster parent/relative caregiver attends training related to the care of foster children, the method of reimbursement follows the same guidelines as those for non-training related respite. In addition, foster parents/relative caretakers may request reimbursement for mileage to and from the training. The amount payable per mile is .55 cents. Additionally, any registration fees, lodging, and other related expenses may be reimbursed.

The pay code for training reimbursement (including respite care for foster children and natural children and mileage) is 0116. The pay code for payment to hotels, training organizations, speakers/instructors, etc. is 0130.

COUNSELING

Counseling is available to foster parents/relative caretakers and/or their biological/adopted children through respite in situations of crisis that occur due to the behavior or actions of a foster child in placement. The counseling should be arranged with a contracted agency when possible and is limited to 5 sessions of counseling per incident. In situations where more than 5 sessions will be required, an exception to payment policy (CFS 902) must be submitted to extend the services.

The respite request will be completed to indicate that counseling is about to be initiated. The counselor will submit a Billing Summary (CFS 1042) on a monthly basis from which the counseling services will be reimbursed.

The pay code for counseling is 0131.

RECRUITMENT

Tools, supplies, media expenses, recognition items, etc. for the recruitment of foster homes are payable through respite funds. These purchases must be approved by the supervisor prior to placement of any orders and must be allocated in each recruiter's spending plan. A receipt must accompany the approved respite request.

The pay code for recruitment is 0112.



Appendix P

Sample Supplemental Document

The following are areas of the Foster Parent Law that are unique to this field office that are not included in the body of the implementation plan for the region (by section number of the Regional Implementation Plan):

Please list the activities and/or trainings in 2010 that included foster parents:

Discuss how foster parent and staff input was obtained for review of upcoming 2010 plan and input on 2011 plan:

Did any staff attend Regional or Statewide Caregivers institutes?

The following are trainings conducted by the area field office that related to the foster Parent Law (Please make two lists (completed and planned trainings); include date, time, name of the training, the section number from the regional implementation plan (if applicable), name & title of the trainers (staff, foster parent, or co trained) and sign-in sheet with title of participants (staff or foster parents):

Have you had any special events for new foster parents or current foster parents?

Did your office host a Regional Advisory Council Meeting in 2010 or are you scheduled to host in 2011?

How have foster parents been informed of the Foster Parent Law? If you have signature sheet, please forward on to Catherine Shaw, Quality Improvement.

The following are comments for improvements regarding the regional plan:

Does your office have any comments, suggestions, or ideas for 2010/2011?