

REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

2011 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF THE FOSTER PARENT LAW (Public Act 89.18)

PERSPECTIVE

The Cook South Region endorses The Enactment of The Foster Parent Law of 1995 by The Legislature of The State of Illinois. Under the direction and commitment of Director, Erwin McEwen, we continue to empower Foster Parents and Providers of Services to participate in performance evaluations and problem resolutions at the local level. The challenge of this concept, (that of making room at the decision-making table for every member of the team), is about why, where, and how to make the necessary breakthroughs. To this end, Cook South Regional Advisory Council's goals are to:

Establish an accountability system, the basis of which is
Periodic feedback from the community of Foster Parents
contracted by both DCFS and The Private Sector.

Create and maintain a heightened awareness and sensitivity
to Cook South Region's culturally diverse Foster Families
and Communities in both The Public and The Private Sector.

Develop partnerships with corporations, local businesses, government
entities and the professional community to provide the maximum
opportunity to implement The Advisory Council's objectives.

These goals address the ever-changing needs of foster care. Issues of concern vary in intensity, from Region to Region. As the largest Region for Wards of the State of Illinois, Cook South Region is committed to a deep understanding of the complexities within the Region, which contributed to the enactment of The Foster Parent Law. The Council, as the Region's Agent, has an agenda to focus on the issues of the law and to pursue solutions to the deficiencies presented.

SECTION I

RIGHTS

This section is a statement of The Rights of Foster Parents as found in The Foster Parent Law, which first quotes each right in its entirety, and then gives The Cook South Region and The Cook South Regional Advisory Council's strategy for its implementation. The strategy format consists of two parts.

1. **ACTIONS** the Region and Council intend to undertake immediately.

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2. **RECOMMENDATIONS** The Region and Council have made for future action.

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

ACTION:

- The ongoing development of a follow up system to document that issues are being addressed so that follow through on commitments is checked and balanced. The placement supervisors will have the responsibility to develop an action plan for their team and present it at a Regional Advisory Council meeting for approval.
- DCFS Foster Parents are empowered to have a voice in the region. Their professional input is valued. They are active participants in the Regional Quality Council (RQC) and Supervisory Leadership Meetings. Foster Parents are encouraged to attend meetings by both written and verbal notices. LAN and other significant meetings where foster parents voices should be heard are also announced at monthly Regional Foster Parents Support Groups, Regional Foster Parent Advocacy and Foster Parents Association meetings.
- Foster Parent Support Groups have been developed to provide Foster Parents an opportunity to express their concerns, frustrations and challenges as caretakers. Also these groups are geared towards improving communications with DCFS staff and increasing Foster Parents' awareness of community support services. The group consists of foster/adoptive parents and DCFS staff. Support groups are designed to treat foster parents as profession members of the team. Training topics and presentations are foster parent centered to accommodate needs that are defined by the participants. The support group sessions are held monthly. (See Attachment #1A,B, C, D)
- Regional management will be present at all Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings and regional staff presentation will attend all region supported Foster Parent Support groups.
- Cook South Region requires Case Managers to return phone calls to Foster Parents within a 24-hour period. Case managers are also required to leave their supervisor's information (name and phone number) on their voice mail to address any immediate concerns
- A phone line (773 371-6113) has been designated as a Foster Parent Support and information line. The phone line is dedicated to timely response to Foster Parent inquiries and concerns. ***All inquiries are taken from both DCFS and Private agencies. Foster Parent support includes appropriate referral to Case Managers and other resources.***
- Incorporated in the grievance process is the foster parents access to and support from the Cook South Region Management Team. The Regional Administrator is involved upfront and reviews and approves all final decisions made by direct management staff who are also involved from the onset of the grievance. Timeframes are set for responses and decisions in order that the region responds to foster parent issues as quickly as possible, or as the situation warrants. Once a grievance has been submitted, staff is required to be flexible in setting appointment dates and times that consider the needs of the foster parent. A statement on the front page of the Foster Parent Law Grievance Packet clarifies its use and the difference from the Service appeal process (attachment).

- Cook South Region requires case managers to treat foster parents with dignity and respect in responding to foster parent needs and concerns which the foster parent or other members of the professional team may identify. Staff is required to be flexible in setting appointment dates and times that consider the needs of the foster parent.
 - The Region has declared October as Implementation planning month. The focus is Disbursement of the current plan, grievance packet, and training that includes staff. Participation in the planning process by staff is encouraged and some staff are assigned by the Region to participate on the planning committee.
 - Case Managers are required to provide a valid explanation when responses to Foster Parent requests are negative. They are required to provide the foster parents with the information on the policies and procedures that effect their decisions.
 - ~~Treating Foster Parents with dignity and respect is required and encouraged at all times of social service delivery.~~ Cultural, religious and individual personal practice/beliefs inside of the foster home is regarded with dignity and respect while considering the needs of the child in placement as well as the foster parent. Supervision is required if disrespect of foster parents is encountered or identified by any member of the professional team
- 2. The right to be given standardized pre-service training and appropriate ongoing training to meet mutually assessed needs and improves the Foster Parent's skills.**

ACTION:

- Currently foster parents can call Springfield for training and register for classes (877-800-3393) or go on-line at dcfstraining.org. This information is distributed through the various foster parent forums in the region.
- ~~Cook South Region continues to provide ongoing pre-service, and in-service training to Foster Parents and Child Welfare Staff to address the Foster Parent Law. Individual roles, rights and responsibilities, to comply with The Foster Parent Bill of Rights.~~
- Cook South Regional Advisory Council's regularly scheduled meetings serve as an ongoing forum for Foster Parents and Child Welfare Staff to present questions and comments regarding standardization of training and other issues relevant to foster care.
- The Region requires Foster Pride Training as a part of the licensing process. The Foster Pride/Adopt Pride Pre-Service Training schedule for Cook-South Region is sent from the training institute to Family Development Specialists, Foster Parent Support Specialists and Child Welfare Specialists every quarter. Cook-South Region offers a specific training curriculum for Foster Parents caring for children identified through the System of Care (SOC) process as having special needs. The training curriculum has ten modules designed to meet the needs of Foster Parents.
- During the ninth session of Foster Pride/Adopt Pride pre-service training, a panel consisting of DCFS Staff and Foster Parent Support Specialists to discuss their roles and responsibilities provides co-training. Time is also allowed for questions and answers.

- *Mutual assessment occurs in several circumstances; The Family Development Specialist and Foster Parent are required to work together to assess and meet training needs. The Foster Parent Support Specialist and Case Managers provide assessment for training needs during group and Council meetings. Foster Parent Support Specialist provide co-training and assessment for support and referral for identified training needs*
- Cook South Region encourages Foster Parents to access training materials through their Foster Parent Support Specialists or Family Development Specialists. Resource libraries are also accessible to Foster Parents, and are housed at 6201 S. Emerald and Harvey Offices (15115 South Dixie Highway). The Child Welfare Training Institute approves all training materials and audiovisual equipment. Library materials are to be reviewed and updated annually by the Foster Parent Advisory Council Training Sub-Committee.
- Cook South Region encourages both Staff and Foster Parents to utilize available community resources. Cook-South LAN Liaisons, who represent DCFS and collaborate with the community and community initiatives on a regular basis, can assist in identifying these resources.

RECOMMENDATION

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.**

ACTION:

The Region Provides:

- The Region developed a database system that lists the team, caseworker and supervisor who are assigned to each child's case. This information is available through the Case Tracking (773)989-3476.
- All Foster Parent Support Specialists for Cook South Region are on call 24 hours.
- The Placement Manager's name, phone number and work location can be obtained from the Permanency Worker for the child placed in the home.
- Cook South Region Foster Parent Support and Information Line (1-773-371-6113)
- Advocacy Office phone number. (1-800-232-3798)
- Board of Education phone number. (1-773-553-1000)
- An organizational chart has been put together on how to access resources or services after hours.
- The Placement Stabilization Hotline Number. (1-800-345-9049)
- Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline Number. (1-800-25-ABUSE)

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4. The right to receive timely financial reimbursement commensurate with the care needs of the child as specified in the service plan.**

ACTION:

- DCFS Staff are required to have the CFS 906 Payment Authorization Form entered within one (1) business day of a new or changed placement. If there are any problems, the Foster Parents can call the Payment Information Hotline @ 1-800-525-0499. If the Hotline is not effective Cook-South Region encourages Foster Parents to contact their Foster Parent Support Specialists for resolution.
- Upon initial placement, the regular board rate is applied. Case Managers are required to gather medical and other significant information that will be used to assess the child's placement category. This information must include input from the foster parent on the child's behavior and adjustment in that home. Foster Parents are directed to contact the case manager's direct supervisor concerning payment issues.
- If a child has been appropriately identified as Special Needs, case managers are required to gather all supporting documentation and submit to the Central Office Specialized Unit for evaluation and approval. With approval from this unit a specialized rate is then determined and applied.
- Foster Parents are paid a regular board payment monthly according to the rate schedule.
- The Permanency Worker and Foster Parent Support Specialist are also available to assist in the Appeal Protocol and Small Claims Court Forms with Foster Parents, when needed.
- DCFS Staff and Foster Parent Support Specialists are knowledgeable about all reimbursement items (such as camp and music lessons) as defined in Department Procedure 359. This procedure is reviewed at the Cook South Regional Advisory Council Meetings twice a year.
- A Resource Specialist is assigned by the Resource Development Manager to log and monitor respite services. Monitoring includes sign-off, the number of hours approved, type of payment (requiring reimbursement to the foster parent or payment to the provider), gathering all appropriate paper work needed to assure timely financial reimbursement.
- The implementation of CAYIT (Child and Youth Investment Team) and Integrated Assessment supports the early identification of special needs assessment and appropriate payments upon initial placement.

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.**

ACTION:

- Permanency Workers will continue to monitor and facilitate through discussion and monthly visits the on-going development of the service plan with the Foster Parent and the child. This will occur upon placement of existing cases and within 1 week and no more than 60 days for new cases. The Permanency Worker is also required to inform foster Parents of their right to appeal the service plan relative to their tasks.
- The Administrative Case Review provides a clearly defined and written service plan that directly relates to a child's placement. ACR provides written notification of review dates at least 30 days prior to the case review. Permanency Workers are required to notify Foster Parents of unexpected changes in the date, time, and/or location of the ACR. A copy of the service plan should be provided to the Foster Parent immediately following the ACR meeting.
- Permanency workers are encouraged to request a foster parent signatures on client service plans to indicate their input and agreement.
- In the case that the Foster Parent is unable to attend the ACR, the Permanency Worker is required to solicit the professional input of the Foster Parent prior to the date of the ACR and/or share any changes or decisions made on that date. A copy of the newly reviewed and approved Service Plan relevant to the Foster Parent and child will be mailed or given to the Foster Parents within 2 days following the ACR.
- Cook-South Region requires = a Child and Family team meeting be held prior to the placement or removal of a child. This will ensure the professional input of Foster Parents is included in critical decisions that are made in the best interest, safety, and well-being of that child. Permanency Supervisors should facilitate these team meetings.
- Foster and Birth Parents are invited to the Child and Family Team meetings. Plans for visitation and communication with birth parents are discussed at that time. When developing a visitation/communication plan with a birth family, consideration is given to the Foster Parent role and the impact on that placement. Treating Foster and birth parent with dignity and respect by each member of the professional team is a required and encouraged during this very delicate planning process. Supervisors are required to facilitate this process.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Cook South Region will continue to provide training on the removal and placement of children under the new permanency initiative.

6. **The right to be provided a fair, timely, and impartial investigation of complaints concerning the foster parent’s licensure, to be provided the opportunity to have a person of the foster parent’s choosing present during the investigation, and to be provided due process during the investigation; the right to be provided the opportunity to request and receive mediation or an administrative review of decisions that affect licensing parameters, or both mediation and an administrative review; and the right to have decision concerning a licensing corrective action plan specifically explained and tied to the licensing standards violated.**

ACTION:

- The Foster Parents have a right to be represented by an advocate of their own choice in any investigation of license violations.
- Cook South Region continues to work with training Staff to establish an ongoing curriculum that addresses the licensee’s rights during an investigation. A Licensing Right/Appeals bulletin is given to Foster Parents at the time of an investigation.
- Cook South Family Development Specialists initiate their investigation within two working days of the receipt of the complaint. The completed investigation must be done within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the complaint. Family Development Specialists immediately inform the licensee of the results of the investigation. An extension of 30 calendar days may be requested if necessary. The violation being reported must have occurred within the past 60 days.
- Within this time frame, the Foster Parent Support Specialist, of the Foster Parent’s choosing, is to work with the Foster Parent in the area of due process (A legal term that means a course of action designed to protect One’s legal rights). The Foster Parent Support Specialist is to inform the Foster Parent of the appeal process and their rights under due process:
 1. The right to be informed of the hearing date.
 2. The right to have timely notice of the charges.
 3. The right to question witnesses.
 4. The right to be heard in arguments.
- During the “Informal Review Process”, the Foster Parent or Pre-Adoptive Parent may bring an attorney or representative to the informal review, which is held at the request of the licensee. At the “Informal Review Process”, the Foster Parent Support Specialist is to insure that the Foster Parent receives a copy of the Right to Appeal Brochure and all due process procedures.
- At the initial stage of investigating a complaint, the Family Development Specialist reviews compliance of 402 Rules with the Foster Parent. The Family Development Specialist also reviews 402 Rules with their immediate supervisor. A letter is mailed to the licensee informing him or her of the specific Rules that are not in compliance. Time frames are established for corrective action. The licensee is also informed of their right to an appeal.

7. **The right, at any time during which a child is placed with a foster parent, to receive additional or necessary information that is relative to the care of the child.**

ACTION:

- Permanency Workers are instructed in Core, Clinical Practice and Specialized Trainings on what information can be shared with Foster Parents. Departmental policy regarding full disclosure is incorporated into training for staff and foster parent.
 - Permanency Workers provide on going information to Foster Parents about the child placed in their care, by telephone calls, by in-person visits, and/or by written correspondence. Also information is shared through staffings, child and family team meetings, ACR's and court hearings.
 - Prior to making a critical decision (any major decision that would effect the life of a child), the Permanency Worker must discuss with his or her supervisor what information can be shared with the Foster Parent. The Permanency Worker must complete a Case Entry Note the next day detailing what was discussed with the Foster Parent. The Supervisor must sign off on this Case Entry Note prior to placing it in the case file.
 - Information is shared with Foster Parents at the time of the Administrative Case Review and during Child and Family Team meetings. DCFS staff is responsible for insuring that all significant individuals are involved in developing a plan of care.
 - Cook-South Region continues to use the Child Record Folder that follows the child to subsequent placements.
 - Permanency Workers are responsible for ensuring that during the initial placement a clothing inventory, 906 Form, medical card and initial health screening and any other pertinent information regarding the child's well-being is given to the Foster Parent. The Foster Parent must sign off on the 906 form and keep a copy in his/her files.
 - During supervision, Permanency Workers are instructed to give Foster Parents updated information relative to the care of the child. Confidentiality is discussed and reviewed with the Foster Parents on a regular basis.
8. **The right to be given information concerning a child (i) from the department as required under subsection (u) of Section 5 of the Children and Family Services Act and (ii) from a child welfare as required under subsection (c-%) of Section 7.4 of the child Care Act of 1969.**
- Prior to placement, the Permanency Worker and/or the Public Service Administrator (PSA) will review case information. Supervisors are required to approve all information prior to being shared with the foster parent. Permanency Workers will then have a verbal conversation with the prospective Foster Parent and provide the prospective Foster Parent with approved information relating to the child and family of origin, relative to the placement needs of the child (i.e. medical information, family history and school information etc). a written summary may also be provided.

- Upon placement in an adoptive or foster home the following information is required to be given to the caregiver: medical history to include current information of concern, immunization status, medical insurance and/or card; educational history to include current Individual Educational Plans (IEP's), Individual Family Service Plans (IFSP), Educational Special needs plan, if applicable; a copy of the child's portion of the service plan to include visitation arrangements, legal status, permanency goal placement history, reasons for placement changes excluding confidential names, addresses and information (if completed and available) Other relevant information regarding the child's behavior and/or personal habits that will assist the foster parent and the child in adjusting to the placement is also shared.
 - In the case of an emergency placement when the above- stated information is not available Permanency Workers are required to provide information verbally to the Foster Parent as soon as it become available to be followed by a written report.
 - Permanency workers are required within 10 working days after a placement to obtain signature verification of the receipt of the information (described above) and forward a copy of the information and verification of receipt to the child's guardian ad litem
 - Permanency Workers are required to submit written reports and verbal informational updates on all matters pertaining to or affecting children in placement. Permanency Workers are also are required to share this information with Foster Parents. They are held accountable in monthly caseload reviews with Supervisors. Supervisors are required to review and approve all information prior to being shared with Foster/Adoptive parents
- 9. The right to be notified of scheduled meetings and staffings concerning the foster child in order to actively participate in the case planning and decision-making process regarding the child, including individual service planning meetings, administrative case reviews, interdisciplinary staffings, and individual educational planning meetings; the right to be informed of decisions made by the courts or the child welfare agency concerning the child; the right to provide input concerning the plan of services for 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.**

ACTION:

- Permanency Workers are required to notify Foster Parents of any clinical staffing, court activities, Administrative Case Reviews, Child and Family Team Meetings, and any educational staffings. These notifications are done by phone ten business days prior to the scheduled event. A reminder is made two days before the scheduled event via telephone. Insistence on timely scheduling of meetings is reinforced by regional management and reviewed periodically through the Customer Satisfaction Surveys, reports from the Foster Parent Lead Specialist and acknowledged feedback at all regional foster parent forums.

- In the event the Foster Parent is unable to attend a staffing, ACR, court ,etc., Permanency Workers are required to solicit their input prior to the event, and/or share any decisions resulting from the meeting. Because Foster Parents are considered a, valued member of the professional team, their input is considered.
- Customer Satisfaction Surveys are provided to the Foster Parents as an accountability tool to assess the Foster Parent's perception of their involvement on the professional team. Their input is given full consideration in plans for future training.
- The Foster Parents are encouraged to share the day-to-day interactions of children in their care with the Permanency Worker and other members of the professional team (i.e. therapist, school personnel, GAL, and psychiatrist). The Permanency Worker is required to follow up by providing support services to address issues identified by the Foster Parents.
- The Permanency Workers are required to schedule a team staffing when decisions must be made for the foster child. The Permanency Workers are responsible for notifying the Foster Parent and other team members of the date and time of the staffing.
- ~~The SACWIC computer monitoring systems requires case notes concerning all meetings, hearings, etc. Supervisors are required to monitor all case notes and assure compliance when foster parents notification is required~~

RECOMMENDATION

- *The Cook-South Region utilizes a yearly Foster Parent Law Survey Tools that captures the participation of Foster Parents as a member of the professional team.*

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

ACTION:

- Prior to placement, the Permanency Worker and/or the Supervisor will have a verbal conversation with the perspective Foster Parent and provide the perspective Foster Parent with information relating to the child and family of origin, relative to the placement needs of the child (i.e. medical information, family history and school information etc).
- At the point of an initial placement, the Permanency Worker provides the foster family with medical and written information, including a temporary medical card and Health Passport, a copy of the 906 (Payment Authorization Document), Life Book, Service Plan (if completed), school information, clothing voucher, and any other helpful documentation relevant information regarding the child's behavior/lifestyle.

- Upon placement in an adoptive or foster home the following information is required to be given to the caregiver; medical history (to include current information of concern and immunization and status). Medical insurance and/or card, educational history (to include current Individual Educational Plans-IEP's, Individual Family Service Plans-IFSP, Educational Special needs plan, if applicable; a copy of the child's portion of the service plan (to include visitation arrangements, legal status, permanency goal placement history, reasons for placement changes excluding confidential names, addresses and information. Other relevant information. regarding the child's behavior and/or personal habits that will assist the foster parent and the child in adjusting to the placement is also shared.
- In case of an emergency when the initial placement information is not available, Permanency Workers are required to provide information written and verbally to the Foster Parent as soon as it become available to be followed by a written report
- Permanency Workers are required to submit written reports and verbal informational updates on all matters pertaining to or affecting children in placement. Permanency Workers are required to share this information with Foster Parents. They are held accountable in monthly caseload reviews with Supervisors. Supervisors are required to review and approve all information that is shared with Foster/Adoptive parents
- The Permanency Workers required to provide all ongoing information as it becomes available or necessary to the Foster Parent.
- The Permanency Workers are required to encourage positive communication between the foster family and the birth parents.
- Cook-South Region Administrative Case Review Staff encourage the foster families and birth families to participate in Case Review Planning.
- The use of Integrated Assessment for new incoming cases and CAYIT (Child and Youth Investment team) for the more difficult cases adds a dimension of information sharing that is inclusive of Foster Parents. Required time frames for both of these processes assure the timely and consistent delivery of needed information to Foster Parents.
- Relationship building is encouraged when birth families and foster families attend court hearings and during family visitation.
- "Memory Books" are supplied at the Foster/Adopt Pride Pre-Service Training. Foster Parent Support Specialists maintain a supply of "Memory Books" to distribute to their assigned foster families when needed.
- Foster Parent Support Specialists will encourage Foster Families to continue to update the Memory Book on an on-going basis. Foster Parents are encouraged to be creative in helping their children with memory keepsakes (i.e. photo albums, year books, journals, etc.)

11. The right to be given reasonable written notice of (i) any changes in a child's case plan, (ii) plans to terminate the placement of the child with the foster parent, and (iii) the reasons for the change or termination in placement. The notice shall be waived only in cases of a court order or when a child is determined to be at I imminent risk of harm.

ACTION:

- Foster Parents have the right to give a written 14-day notice when the removal of a child is inevitable. *Permanency Workers are also required to give a 14-day notice of removal unless a child is in immanent danger.*
 - Cook-South Region encourages Permanency Workers and Foster Parents to work as a team when the removal of a child is imminent and ensure that it is done in a manner that is least disruptive to their physical, mental and emotional well-being.
 - Family Development Specialists, Permanency Workers and Foster Parent Support Specialists are encouraged to provide written information and explain the appeal and emergency appeal procedures. Copies of the service appeal process brochures are made available at Foster Parent Support Group and Advisory Council meetings. **(See Attachment)**
 - The CAYIT (Child and Youth Investment Team) and Integrated Assessment support can require/recommend foster parent involvement in the early identification of special needs and all other issues that might impact child movement-replacement.
 - Case Review is inclusive of Foster Parents and at the request of the Case Reviewer or Case Manager Notification of the Case Review is computer generated and sent by DCFS/Springfield to the Foster Parent and other required participants when termination of placement is inevitable or under consideration.
- 12. The right to be notified in a timely and complete manner of all court hearings, including notice of the date and time of the court hearing, the name of the judge or hearing officer hearing the case, the location of the hearing, and the court docket number of the case; and the right to intervene in court proceedings or to seek mandamus under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987.**

ACTION:

- A computerized list of court dates are obtained by the Supervisor and reviewed with the Permanency Worker. Permanency Workers notify the Foster Parents of the court dates and document the notification in the case Entry Notes, which are also reviewed by the Supervisor.
- The Guardian Ad Litem informs the Foster Parent thirty days in advance of the court hearing. Notification to the Foster Parent is done in writing or by telephone.
- Permanency Workers transport children to court if the Foster Parents encounter an emergency and cannot attend the hearing (when the children are required to be in court).

- Permanency Workers communicate what transpired during the court hearing, if the Foster Parent cannot attend the hearing. This is done via telephone or during a visit to the home.
- Permanency Workers advise the Foster Parent of court activity that affects the child/family status prior to making placement recommendations to the court.
- The Foster Family Handbook (sec.2 pg.2) advises Foster Parents of their rights, roles, and responsibilities concerning court attendance as addressed in the Foster Parent Bill of Rights.
- During monthly supervision, the supervisor is required to discuss with the Permanency Worker all activities and critical decisions made on their caseloads. This also includes documenting that workers have discussed with Foster Parents all outcomes of court hearings, Administrative Case Reviews, and meetings that Foster Parents are invited to attend.

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.

ACTION:

- When it is necessary for a child to re-enter the system, the Permanency Worker or Child Protection Worker reviews the former case record and the DCFS database to identify any previous placements that might serve the child's best interest. The child's input is solicited if the child is capable of expressing an opinion regarding placement.
- The Supervisor and Permanency Worker routinely discuss best interest decisions before they are finalized.
- The Clinical Team is consulted when needed in making best interest decisions for children.

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

ACTION:

- Cook-South Region's grievance process is designated to address any particular issue thought to be unfair, offensive or in violation of Foster Parent's rights and responsibilities. Foster Parents have the right to file a grievance at any time without fear of retaliation.
 1. This reduces adversarial relationships between Staff and Foster Parents.
 2. This provides a quick, timely resolution to disputes.

- Cook-South Region’s external grievance process allows Foster Parents to appeal any decision or action made by DCFS or any of the Private Agencies. Foster Parents can file an appeal through the DCFS Service Appeal Process.
- At all levels of the mediation and appeal process, an official interpretation of policy may be requested from the Office of Child and Family Policy. (217-524-1983).
- The Case Review Administrator will continue to distribute copies of the Service Appeal Brochure at each Case Review. The Family Development Specialist and Foster Parent Support Specialist will also make them available to Foster Parents.
- If a Foster Parent needs to file an appeal, there is a Foster Parent Support Specialist assigned to work with the Foster Parent to help develop the appeal and to insure that it is done correctly and in a timely manner.

15. The right to be informed of the Foster Parent Hotline established under Section 35.6 of the Children and Family Services Act and all of the rights accorded to Foster Parents concerning reports of misconduct by department employees, service providers, or contractors, confidential handling of those reports, and investigation by the Inspector General appointed under Section 35.5. of the Children and Family Services Act.

ACTION:

- The Permanency Worker and Child Protection Worker, at the time of the initial placement and all subsequent placements, will provide the Foster Parent with brochures regarding Office of Inspector General, and the DCFS Child Abuse Hotline.
- The Foster Parents are also provided with a Foster Parent Handbook, newsletter, a schedule of training events and information regarding support groups.

SECTION II	<u>RESPONSIBILITIES</u>
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This section is a statement of The Responsibilities of Foster Parents as found in The Foster Parent Law, which first quotes each responsibility in its entirety, and then gives the Cook South Region and the Cook South Regional Advisory Council’s strategy for its implementation. The strategy format consists of two parts.

1. **ACTIONS** The Region and Council intend to undertake immediately.
2. **RECOMMENDATIONS** The Region and Council have made for future action.

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

ACTION:

- Foster Parents, through Foster Pride/Adopt Pride Training, are made aware of their responsibility to share information with other members of professional team, to best serve the children placed in their home. Any information obtained by caring for children in the home must be shared.
- Foster Parents share written and verbal information with Permanency Workers and Foster Parent Support Specialists immediately after all critical situations. Additional information is shared on an ongoing basis through child and family team meetings, regular monthly visits, ACR and, written correspondence.
- The Family Development Specialists, during monitoring visits, review Foster Parents' compliance with child record keeping requirements as stated in the Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes Rule 402.26.

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

ACTION:

- The Region encourages Family Development Specialists to advise Foster Parent about protecting the confidentiality of children.
- Permanency worker receive ongoing training on confidentiality and are encouraged to share this information at placement.
- Cook-South Region encourages Foster Parents to share information as a professional member of the Child Welfare team. To ensure appropriate information sharing, the Region provides written guidelines on confidentiality. (See Attachment 14)
- The Cook-South Region Foster Parent Support Group provides training and on-going support regarding issues of confidentiality.
- Foster Parent are encouraged by the Region to attend on-going Foster Pride In-Service training modules 1, 2, 5, 6, and 8, which address confidentiality.

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

ACTION:

- Permanency workers are encouraged to work closely with foster parents and other professionals who are responsible for child advocacy.
- Training on the grievance process is provided annually at the Regional Foster Parent Support Group Meeting. Foster Parent Support Specialists are also available to provide one on one training and assistance during the grievance process. Support and training on the court /legal is included on the annual support group agenda.
- A mandatory 6-hour training in Educational Advocacy is provided by DCFS Training Division Educational Advocates are available on-site and provide support and assistance as needed. This course empowers Foster Parents to advocate for children in the school system.
- The Foster Parent Handbook, (Sec. 2. page 1-22), explains in detail the court system and the service appeal process. A Service Appeal Brochure is available in the field offices and distributed by the Foster Parent Support Specialists, Family Development Specialists and Administrative Case Review Staff.
- Foster Parents and staff are encouraged to participate in any Staffing, Administrative Case Review, and court hearing that concern their foster children.
- Regional Foster Parent Support Groups schedule trainings through the Training Division and Community collaborations. The training offered through the group are geared toward empowering Foster Parents to advocate for children placed in their homes. All Foster Parents are invited to the support groups to receive In-Service training credits for attending. Speakers are invited to address specific topics on how to advocate for children placed in foster homes, attending schools, at Administrative Case Reviews, court hearings, and in the community.
- Illinois Families Now and Forever Publication is mailed out to Foster Parents bi- monthly. The primary focus of the newsletter is to share knowledge that is aimed at protecting children and strengthening family life.

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

ACTION:

- Cook-South Region recognizes that to be treated with dignity, respect, and consideration is a reciprocal responsibility. We expect all Staff, Foster Parents, Birth Parents and children to work together in achieving this very important common goal.
- Permanency workers model, encourage, and support positive relationships between Foster Parents, children and their birth families. During mandatory monthly home visits Permanency

Workers are required to interview children individually regarding their relationships in the foster home.

- Ongoing trainings on treating children in care and their families with dignity and respect have been implemented through the Family Reunification Initiative. This initiative focuses on the involvement and collaboration of both the birth and foster families.
- Respect, dignity, confidentiality, and consideration should be enhanced and supported at court hearings (i.e. private settings for visitation), quarterly consultation with schools and school staff and during regular foster home visitation.
- The treatment of children with dignity and respect is supported by the Foster Pride/Adopt Pride training, which addresses the five competencies:
 1. Protecting and Nurturing
 2. Meeting developmental needs and addressing developmental delays
 3. Support relationships between children and families
 4. Connecting children to safe nurturing relationships intended to last a life time
 5. Working as a member of the professional team
- Cook-South Region encourages Staff and Foster Parents to attend D.C.F.S. sponsored conferences as another avenue for strengthening the Foster Parent's skills as it relates to treating children and their birth families with dignity, respect, and consideration.
- The Region will continue to encourage Foster Parents and Staff to treat foster children and their families with dignity and respect by maintaining an attitude toward the child and his family that shows:
 1. Respect for each person and their feelings
 2. Understanding
 3. Respect for culture
 4. Non judgmental support
 5. Genuine interest in developing children's self esteem
- The Training Institute offers Adoption Conversion, Trauma and Psychological First Aid Training. This training was developed for parents who have adopted are currently fostering or considering adopting children of a different race, culture or ethnicity.
- **The Team Decision-Making model is designed to work with birth families prior to court involvement. It provides birth families an opportunity to work with community resources and any birth supports the family chooses to include to resolving their own issues and stabilizing their home with limited DCFS involvement.**
- Respect, dignity confidentiality and consideration of foster parents and other members of the professional team is required and should be enhanced and supported when at court hearings, visitation, consultations with schools and foster home visits. Staff are reminded and monitored through monthly supervision, team and management meetings.

- The establishment of the Birth Parent Council (BPC) gives parents the opportunity to be more aware of the child welfare system and its operations. The BPC encourages and supports birth parents to openly engage with foster parents when their children are in care.
- ~~The Alcohol and other drug abuse unit through a partnership with DASA promotes recovery and networking with recover support organizations on behalf of both birth and foster families. Regional DCFS/DASA Partnership Meeting are bi-monthly informational meetings open to everyone include child welfare staff, foster and birth parents.~~

5. The responsibility to recognize the foster parent’s own individual and family 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.

ACTION:

- Foster Pride/Adopt Pride Training provides the “Pride Connections” forum as a tool to assist Foster Parents with identifying their own strengths and weakness. This is also shared with the Family Development Specialists to assist in identifying the type of child best suited for a likely successful placement with that family.
- The Foster Parent and the Family Development Specialist complete the Foster Parent Preference form during the initial licensing process. This mutual assessment is used as a reference for future dialogue regarding appropriate matches for placement. Because Foster Parent Preferences are known to change with experience, Family Development Specialists are required to dialogue with foster parents on an ongoing basis regarding the foster parent’s recognition and acknowledgement of their own strengths and weaknesses. Recommendations and referrals for training(s) are given as needed.
- Foster Parent Support Specialists are required to provide additional encouragement of self-assessment and ongoing reassessment. All of the Cook-South Region Foster Parent Support group meetings and participants learn to provide an atmosphere for self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses with the encouragement and support of peers and staff.
- The Cook-South Region Foster Parent: “Our Greatest Resource” Support group has added “The Roundtable” which allows Foster Parents to stay after the meeting to have a small group discussion to assist foster parents in identifying resources and/or working through current existing issues which may be effecting the foster home stability. A Foster Parent Support Specialist and Staff are included in these special meetings, or any other support participant at the request of the Foster Parent. The “Roundtable” is designed to support foster parents in identifying and addressing their own strengths and weaknesses.
- Foster Pride/Adopt Pride Training provides the tools for Foster Parents to assess their strengths and weaknesses. The Foster Parents complete the Pride Connections, which are sent to the Family Development Specialist. The Family Development Specialist reviews the Pride Connections with perspective families to encourage discussion of strengths and

weaknesses as a part of the ongoing family assessment process. The Family Development Specialist and the Prospective Foster Parent identify children best suited for the family and complete the Foster Parent Preference Checklist, an extensive list that identifies the types of children we service according to need (i.e. drug exposed infants, children with Down Syndrome etc).

- Foster Pride In-Service Training classes provide on-going training modules that are prepared to increase skill levels and enhance abilities to provide good care for children.
 - Permanency Worker, Foster Parent Support and Foster Parent Support Specialist encourages foster parents to utilize available support services provided through DCFS contracts (i.e.. counseling, stress management) when disruptions occur with children and/or birth families in the home.
 - Non- traditional creative types of services can be accessed through the LAN (Local Area Network). The Child and Family meeting process allows the foster parent to identify additional support needed to stabilize placements and prevent placement disruptions. Foster Parents are invited to attend SOC (System of Care) briefings so that they will know how to best utilize available services.
 - Illinois Families Now and Forever is distributed bi-monthly to Foster Parents with additional information about various services and how to access the services.
 - A Customer Satisfaction Survey Form is distributed quarterly to Cook-South Region Foster Parents requesting that they rate the quality of the services received. This allows the region to evaluate its performance.
 - The Foster Parent Support Specialist advocates for Foster Parents and serves as a conduit between the Foster Parents and DCFS. This insures that the lines of communication are kept open between the Foster Parents and Permanency Workers and the Department.
- 6. The responsibility to be aware of the benefits of relying on and affiliating with other foster parents and foster parent associations in improving the quality of care and service to children and families.**

ACTION:

- The Foster Parent Support Specialist notifies new and experienced Foster Parents of Foster Parent Association Meetings by telephone calls, in-person visits, newsletters, and written correspondence.
- The North-East Foster Parent Association provides a forum for foster parents to discuss issues of interest to them. This group also provides additional support to all foster families and ongoing training opportunities, e.g., First Aid, Adult Guardianship and information through the Education Advisors.
- A welcome letter is given to Prospective Foster Parents attending Foster Pride/Adopt Pride Training. Foster Parents are informed of additional training opportunities, local Foster Parent Associations, support groups and special events. Foster Parents are informed of respite

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services and various community services. Cook-South Region allows Foster Parent groups to post notification of events at all of its Field Offices.

- Foster Parents are encouraged to attend Cook-South Regional Advisory Council Meetings, which are held the third Wednesday of each month. During Council meetings, foster parents Learn how to responsibly advocate for the children in their care and how to organize so they would have a voice and impact on issues of concerns to them.

7. The responsibility to assess the Foster Parent's ongoing individual training needs and take action to meet those needs.

- The Family Development Specialist monitors the ongoing needs of training for our licensed foster homes.
- The Cook-South Regional Advisory Council monthly meeting invites special speakers to address issues of interest to the Foster Parents. The speakers include but are not limited to Educational Consultants, Healthworks Representatives, or Clinical Division Representatives.
- The Lead Foster Parent Support Specialist is assigned to attend monthly Regional Quality Council (RQC) meetings to submit a written and verbal monthly report to the RQC regarding foster parent needs and concerns as identified by the Advisory Council. The Regional Training Coordinator is a standing member of the RQC and is available to develop trainings to meet identified needs.
- Foster Parents that are interested in providing care for children with severe illnesses are referred to various hospitals for specialized training.
- Family Development Specialists are required during monitoring visits *to* discuss issues and concerns regarding the children and the impact on the family. Training referrals are made to address specific issues encountered by the Foster Parents to support their commitment to provide appropriate care for children. Issues that are identified as needing additional support and training are referred to DCFS Training Division for consideration.
- Family Development Specialists and Foster Parent Support Specialists contact Permanency Workers when there are problems in the foster home. Contacts are made with Permanency Workers to provide support for Foster Parents and to assist in obtaining services for children to prevent disruptions. If necessary the Supervisors and the Field Service Managers are informed of the problems so that the problems can be addressed expeditiously.

8. **The responsibility to develop and assist in implementing strategies to prevent placement disruptions, recognizing the traumatic impact of placement disruptions on a foster child and all members of the foster family, and the responsibility to provide emotional support for the foster children and members of the foster family if preventive strategies fail and placement disruptions occur.**

ACTION:

- Cook-South Region Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) are seasoned Foster Parents with an average of 15 and up to 30 years of experience. FPSS are trained to provide support to Foster Parents when impending disruptions occur. At the first sign of disruptive behavior Foster Parents are encouraged to contact their assigned FPSS and assigned worker immediately.
- When Foster Parents are dealing with stressors in their home, Foster Parent Support Specialist are available 24hrs./7days a week to provide immediate support and support information. If the stressor involves a child in placement, Permanency Worker are required to make a System of Care (SOC) referral as an immediate effort to stabilize the disruption.
- Monthly Local Area Network Meetings are informational in nature. Community Service Providers attend the meetings to discuss services they provide to the community. The services that are provided by community-based agencies are geared toward helping the Foster Parent deal with impending placement disruptions. There are also community services available to the Foster Parents to address the emotional duress that they experience during or after a crisis. Foster Parents are invited to attend these LAN meetings.
- Respite care is available to provide support and assistance to Foster Parents in stabilizing and maintaining foster placements.
- Cook-South Region Resource Workers have a unique and ongoing relationship with Foster Parents. When a placement disruption occurs with children and/or birth families, Foster Parents are encouraged by our Resource Specialist to utilize available support services provided through DCFS contracts (i.e. counseling, stress management).
- Supervisory staff, who have the authority to make decisions, are available 24 hours by pager to address emergency occurrences. They can be accessed through the Foster Parent Support Specialist, who are also available 24-hours a day. The Foster Parent Support Specialist have cell phone access to the Regional Administrator who will in turn engage the chain of command.
- Cook-South Region Advisory Council meets monthly. Guest speakers for the meetings may address various issues that pertain to placement stabilization and the emotional duress experienced by Foster Parents.
- Cook-South Region Foster Parent Support Group provides on-going trainings as needed to address the support needs of our Foster Parents. Matters of placement disruptions, separation and loss, and emotional fall-out of the Foster Parent have been prioritized and *are* included in our support group agenda.

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- Supervisors are required to monitor permanency workers with cases that might have the potential to disrupt based on case history and information, and to make recommendations for respite and other services that might assist in avoiding placement disruptions.
- 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.**

ACTIONS:

- Cook-South Region recognizes the responsibility and impact that foster parenting has on individual and family relationships. The responsibility and change is often very stressful for Foster Parents. Foster Parents are provided the option of placing their home on voluntary hold if at some point they become overwhelmed with the responsibilities and challenges of foster parenting or when personal stressors exist within their own families.
- The Foster Parent Support Specialist also provides additional advocacy services to help minimize stress experienced by Foster Parents, foster children, their children and families. The Foster Parent Support Specialist or the assigned Family Development Specialist can be notified of any issue that will require additional support for the family.
- Psychological First Aid and Trauma training provision
- Reunification Training provision
- “Respite Care” is available to offer Foster Parents, and the child (ren) in their care, healthy time apart from one another. Foster Parents can access Respite Care by contacting the Permanency Worker or Foster Parent Support Specialist.
- Cook-South Staff and Foster Parents maintain a team approach in addressing the needs of children.
- The Region provides ongoing trainings available to all Foster Parents that address placement stabilization and team building. The focus of the training is to provide Foster Parents with the tools needed to cope with stressful encounters and with children placed in their homes. Foster Parent Support Specialist are trained and available to help and empower the foster parents to identify and acknowledge stress while focusing on intervention strategies.
- Cook-South Region Foster Parent Support Group devotes at least two sessions to stress management.
- Permanency Workers are trained to provide support and directions that minimize the potential for stress related situations. They are also required to provide information on available support services.

- Counseling support is available for Foster Parents through the Local Area Network and Resource Division. Foster Parents can access these services by contacting the Foster Parent Support Specialist or their permanency worker.
- 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.**

ACTION:

- Foster parents are empowered to promote the rewards and benefits of fostering by staff, foster parents and other members of the professional team. Staff is involved yearly in the planning and development of Foster Parent events. Information involving foster parents is shared at team meetings and with management. All staff is encouraged to participate and support foster parent events/meetings, support groups, advisory council, community foster parent organizations whenever they are available or *is* appropriate.
- *Case Managers and staff are encouraged* to identify success opportunities for youth and their families.
- Testimonials are shared and encouraged regarding success stories and how children become productive and honest citizens. Discussions are shared regarding those youth who return to demonstrate gratitude.
- Foster Parents recognize that they are role models in the community. They are encouraged to share their experiences with families that might be interested in becoming Foster Parents.
- Public Relations issues that may involve public access (i.e. media) or confidentiality issues are currently referred to the Regional Administrator for recommendation. Availability of training for foster parents regarding public relations continues to be investigated for the development and implementation of near future trainings in this area.
- Positive promotion of fostering is ongoing at all Cook-South Region Foster Parent Support groups and Foster Parent Association that continue to work with businesses and the community for greater public support and recognition.
- Foster Parent participate in the Local Area Network's and with the support of assigned Lan Liaisons are always in collaboration with community resources that can positively meet the needs of our foster families. . LAN Liaisons serve as an information pipeline for the positive imaging of Fostering within the agency and in the community. The rewards and benefits of fostering are also supported through initiatives introduced by the Director and various Divisions of DCFS.

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.

ACTION:

- The Administrative Case Review Process includes the Foster Parents in the planning process for all the children in their care. The Foster Parents are informed of the roles, rights and responsibilities of the Permanency Worker, Foster Parent, Foster Child and Parents.
- The DCFS Division of Training and Development offers ongoing training for Permanency Workers, Family Development Specialists, Licensed and Prospective Foster Parents.
- The Advisory Council provides a forum for the exchange of current information regarding roles, rights and responsibilities of members of the professional team. In addition, the Advisory Council emphasizes and reinforces the importance of the Foster Parents role in the child welfare process. They also provide information on how to access DCFS and community-based resources for children and families.
- Staff attends Cook-South Region Foster Parent Support Groups from as many divisions as possible. This function of the support group meeting is intended to reinforce and encourage the rights, *roles* and responsibilities of Foster Parents and other professional staff.
- The Council is the recognized voice of all Foster Parents. The Regional Administrator attends as many Council meeting as possible to assure that other members of the management team hear the voice of the Foster Parent. Assigned staff is available to support the technical needs of Foster Parents in effective communication with the Region.
- The Permanency Workers are required to provide Foster Parents with written/verbal notification of outcomes of court hearings, Administrative Cases Reviews, and any other staffing when the foster parents are unable to attend.

12. **The 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 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 rules and procedures governing investigations of those allegations.**

ACTION:

- Foster Pride/Adopt Pride Training reviews the responsibilities of Mandated Reporters. (See Foster Family Handbook section 2, page 15).
- The Foster Parent Handbook explains the responsibility of being a Mandated Reporter, (section 2, page 15). In-Service Training is utilized to further clarify issues relating to Mandated Reporters. Efforts are ongoing to educate Foster Parents about abuse and neglect allegations.
- At both, the initial and renewal phase, of the licensing process, the Family Development Specialist discusses with the Foster Parents the role and responsibility of being a Mandated Reporter.
- The Family Development Specialist provides Foster Parents with The 402 Licensing Standards, Mandated Reporter Compliance Form, which requires their signatures. This provides up front accountability as it relates to what is expected of Foster Parents. (See Attachment #23)
- Pre-Service Training addresses steps in the investigation/complaint process as it relates to Foster Parent 402 Licensing Standards non-compliance when there are allegations of abuse/neglect.
- The Foster Parent Handbook (section 8, page 57) is reviewed in training. These sections address the investigation process for Foster Parents. All Foster Parents are provided with the Foster Parent Handbook during Foster/Adopt Pride Training.
- In cases where Foster Parents are the subjects of an abuse and neglect investigation they have the right to have the Foster Parent Support Specialist represent them at hearings. The Foster Parent Handbook (section 8, pages 55-60) provides detailed instructions on how Foster Parents conduct themselves in an investigation.
- The Foster Parent Support Specialist documents the alleged incidents. However, Foster Parents are responsible for notifying the Permanency Worker about the alleged incidents of abuse or neglect. Foster Parent Support Specialist reports the alleged incident to the Family Development Specialist. Training is offered to address incidents that may have occurred in the foster home (i.e. medical, mental health, *CSPB*, substance abuse, etc).

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.**

ACTION:

- Module training is required and ongoing for all caregivers. It continuously promotes and encourages foster parent involvement and informs foster parents of the vital role that they play as a member of the professional team.
- Foster parents are informed that children served by DCFS are declared by the court to be abused, neglected or dependent and as a result, are put under the custody of DCFS
- All licensed foster parents are *made* aware that court proceedings, client service plans and administrative case review require their ongoing involvement.
- During Pre-Service Session 9, Foster Parents are allowed to dialogue with a panel of professional team members (Permanency Workers, DCP Workers, Birth Parents, Foster Parent Support Specialists, LAN Liaisons, Resource Workers, Adoption Workers, Healthworks, etc.). This allows for questions, answers and clarification of roles.

14. **The responsibility to know the child welfare agency's appeal procedure for Foster Parents and the rights of Foster Parents under the procedure.**

ACTION:

- During Pre-Service, In-Service, and Module Training, Foster Parents receive instruction concerning the appeal procedures of DCFS.
- The Service Appeal Brochure is distributed to The Foster Parents during Foster Pride/Adopt Pride Training, and during Administrative Case Reviews.
- The Service Appeal Brochures are posted in the lobby at the field offices. It is also available in Spanish and English.
- Various members of the professional team (i.e. Family Development Specialist, Foster Parent Support Specialist, Child Protection Investigator, Permanency Worker, etc) discuss the Service Appeal process with Foster Parents. They also distribute the Service Appeal Brochure. (See Attachment #9)

- 15. The responsibility to know and understand the importance of maintaining accurate and relevant records regarding the child's history and progress; and the responsibility to be aware of and follow the procedures and regulations of the child welfare agency with which the foster parent is licensed or affiliated.**

ACTION:

- Foster Parents receive Pre-Service Training on the importance of keeping records on each child placed in their home. The Foster Parent Support Specialist reviews the importance of maintaining accurate and current records with the Foster Parents, as does the Family Development Specialist.
- Cook-South Region provides Foster Parents with *folders* or date planners to keep records on children placed in their homes. The Permanency Worker and the Foster Parent Support Specialists identify methods of maintaining the foster child's record
- According to the 402 Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes, Family Development Specialist are to check the record keeping system at the time of licensure, renewal, and during annual monitoring visits.
- Foster Parents are required to keep behavior log of each foster child. The Permanency Workers share information with the Foster Parents and other providers regarding any known social/behavioral information necessary.
- Foster Parents are required to keep a medical log regarding the dispensing of *all* medications to foster children, according to 402.17 Licensing Standards. Cook Nursing staff provides ongoing training pertinent to medication and behavior monitoring of foster children.
- A "Life Book" is distributed to each Foster Parent during the Pre-Service Training. Foster Parents maintain this book for foster children to organize and preserve important photographs and papers of significant events that occur in their lives. Pre-adoptive have been engaged in Life Book Parties.

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

ACTION:

- Permanency Workers are required to ensure that the records are update and passed on when placement arrangements are changed they provide ongoing directions to foster parents in updating the Life Book.
- In-Service Training addresses the need to share information among the professional team, the need to update the child's record regularly, and the need for the records to follow the child to subsequent placement.

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.**

ACTION:

- Cook-South Region provides Foster Parents with information regarding community resources through the Foster Parent Support Specialist, Newsletters, the Cook-South Regional Advisory Council, ongoing medical and health trainings, and the Inter-Ethnic Placement Act Training addresses culturally sensitive issues relative to placement and services.
- When a child is placed in a home where race or culture is different from their own, the Foster Parent has access to the lending library and other community resources to enhance their knowledge.
- Foster Parents are trained to be sensitive to the child's holiday celebrations, ethnic foods and religious beliefs.
- Permanency Workers and Foster Parent Support Specialists assist in locating resources that address the ethnic needs of children placed in their home.
- Permanency Workers ***are encouraged to*** support the involvement of children with mentors of their own cultural background.