

DCFS Northern DCFS Region
Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan

Annual Report

The Northern Region is pleased to submit the 2011 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan for the SWFCAC's review. We are asking that our plan be scored in its entirety. This year identified staff and foster parents were sent the plan and met by email/ teleconference to update portions of the plan that were found deficient. The grievance procedure was designed years back by both foster parents and DCFS staff. The grievance procedure has worked well throughout the year and was left procedurally unchanged. The grievance procedure is made available with every Implementation Plan and then by request. The region has had a change in the Foster Parent Law Liaison position and Yolanda Jordan has been assigned this task.

The following is a list of deficiencies and how the committee chose to remedy them:

- **Please proofread edits. Narrative #1 reads, “will to include to include...”** The implementation plan was proof read and spell checked for accuracy.
- **Please remove blank pages found throughout the plan.** Blank pages were removed for ascetic purposes.
- **#4 “359” is confusing as is the “906” hotline. Do foster parents know these terms? May want to consider including clear information regarding payments for respite, camp, etc.** This narrative has been revised to provide clarity for the intended readers.
- **#8 – Don’t refer to document CFS 600-4; describe how caseworkers are held accountable.** Although we still refer to the document because we feel it is important, we have also added how caseworkers are held accountable for sharing this important information.
- **Please specifically address components in Rule 340 Appendix B. Clearly address court training, service appeal training, training in the public relations aspects of foster parenting, etc.** We document what is the actual practice in the Northern Region. While we are continually striving to add these trainings for foster parents and staff, we currently do not offer them. We understand our score will reflect this and would rather our plan be an honest depiction of our practices.
- **We did not find clear foster parent plan endorsement statement and signatures.** We have added a page to address this.

- **Secure more foster parent participation. (Only one foster parent was identified.)** When scoring the plan, you will find we added more participation.

This year we enjoyed many successes in implementing the foster parent law. We are continually making great strides in bridging the gap between foster parents and staff in the Northern Region. Team Building activities have risen and foster parent dignity and respect remains the utmost of importance.

Of our challenges, the fiscal difficulty the State of Illinois has been experiencing affects portions of our plan. We would like to be able to hold more trainings, more foster parent supportive functions and employ more Foster Parent Support Specialists.

We do not have any portion of our plan that is not being implemented.


The Foster Parents and staff are trained each year on our Foster Parent Law. This happens for the foster parents at Advisory Council meetings, and for the staff at Supervisor & Manager meetings. The information is then taken to the teams by their supervisor.

The Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan is the back bone of the daily practice in the Northern Region. It permeates our attitudes and our daily tasks. The Northern Region Foster Parent Implementation Plan is made available to all staff first. This way the staff when asked question can refer the foster parent to the document and assist them in getting one. It is posted on the DCFS website this year which will facilitate easier distribution. In the Northern News portion of the Families Now and Forever magazine, we are planning an article directing foster parents to the website for retrieval. The article will also give instructions for foster families without internet access to a method of gaining this document.

The Northern Region is pleased to announce there were not any formal grievances filed against our plan. Marjorie Morris- Veal, the Region's former Foster parent law Liaison did receive several contacts but was able to mediate these challenges before becoming a formal grievance. This is how the Region's procedure is set up and speaks to the functionality of it.

We thank you for review the plan and look forward to receiving feedback this year from your members.

Respectfully Submitted,


Deborah Palmer Thomas
Regional Administrator
DCFS Northern Region

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

2011

**Illinois Foster Parent Law
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

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

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

Revised 11-30-10

Section 1-15 FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS

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

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

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

FOSTER PARENT ACTIVITIES

a) Opportunities will continue to be provided in each field office area, which promote mutual respect and strengthen individual relationships within the child welfare team. Such opportunities have included and will continue to include the regional foster parent advisory council, various quality improvement activities, team building activities, neighborhood support groups, office open houses, and other office activities.

COMMUNICATION WITH FOSTER PARENTS

b) Supervisors are expected to monitor ongoing staff and foster parent communications to ensure timely and quality professional interaction. Workers in the Northern Region will return all phone calls. If the worker is not available, the supervisor or designated team member will be accessible to Foster Parents to assist with communication and resolving difficulties. Foster Parents will be made aware of any changes in meetings, court, or Administrative Case Reviews (ACR) within 24 hours after the worker becomes aware.

FOSTER PARENT INVOLVEMENT

c) Efforts will continue to strengthen the recognition of the importance of the Foster Parent as a professional team member in service planning and delivery of services for the specific children in their care and in the achievement of the permanency goal. This includes the active involvement of Foster Parents in the family meetings, service planning, and delivery of services.

ENGAGING FOSTER PARENTS AS TEAM MEMBERS

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

FOSTER PARENT INPUT

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

FOSTER PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

f) Foster parents are acknowledged in each local field office through events and trainings. Many Northern Region Field offices have Foster Parents that serve on their Field Quality Councils. Foster Parents should contact their local DCFS field office for a schedule of Field Quality Council meetings.

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

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

a) All Foster Parents, per foster care standards Rule 402, must complete the 27-hour PRIDE pre-service training.

LOCAL FIELD OFFICE TRAINING

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

TRAINING TAPES AND BOOKS

c) In accordance with foster care standards Rule 402, training tapes and books for Foster Parents and staff are located in each local field office library. In addition, training materials are also available through the DCFS Office of Training & Development Services through the Lending Library.

FOSTER PARENT TRAINING PLANS

d) Foster Home Licensing Staff will consult with Foster Parents on bi-annual basis to develop a training plan that will enhance the Foster Parents' skills as well as address the needs necessary to parent the type of child usually accepted by that home. In addition, training plans are frequently developed surrounding the individualized needs of a child. Using the Matching Tool, the caseworker will identify training needs. The foster care licensing staff and the regional training coordinators will assist in developing and implementing a plan to ensure these training needs are met. Licensing Representatives may assist in assessing training needs during home visits. The Northern Region will use the co-training model whenever possible. Foster Parents are encouraged to use the DCFS newsletter, Families Now and Forever, as a tool to locate modules and other classes being offered. Foster Parents may also utilize the DCFS website (<http://www.state.il.us/DCFS/library/com.communications.train.shtml>) to view upcoming trainings in their area.

ADDITIONAL TRAINING HOURS

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

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 PARENTS CARE.

LIST OF RESOURCES

Every foster home shall receive a list of resources for support, information and emergency numbers (with after-hours accessibility). This list is to be maintained and disseminated to the DCFS Foster Parents at least once a year. The utilization of licensing representatives and/or placing worker will be a method in which new foster parents will receive this information. It shall be updated as needed, annually at minimum. This list shall include name, title, address, voice, fax and, where applicable, pager numbers.

a) Statewide numbers include:

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

b) Region wide numbers include:

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

c) Field office numbers

- 1) Supervisors
- 2) Resource Unit Staff: licensing workers, LAN Liaison
- 3) Foster Parent Support Specialists
- 4) Crisis Intervention Services
- 5) For after-hours emergencies, use the field office phone number to be connected with the answering service.

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

MONTHLY BOARD CHECKS

a) Foster Parents with children in care receive monthly board checks. A pay schedule is sent annually to Foster Parents from Springfield. Checks for DCFS placements usually arrive within the third week of each month. Other child-related non-recurring expenses once approved, are submitted to the caseworker each month (such as respite, camp, music lessons, Y memberships, tutoring). Foster Parents should use the 30 day caseworker visit to discuss the developmental and recreational needs of the child in their care.

SPECIALIZED CARE

b) Supervisors will ensure the continued assessment of foster children as to the need for specialized care. For children in care, this may be identified within supervision, ACRs, Child & Youth Investment Team (CAYIT) meetings, System of Care, etc. As part of the team, Foster Parents will keep the workers apprised of pertinent information concerning the special needs of foster children. When it is determined that specialized care should be considered, staff will submit materials for approval consideration on a timely basis.

AID FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS

c) Adoptive parents with reimbursable expenses are aided by Post Adoption Caseworkers, but also Post-Adoption Support Specialists. The names of Post Adoption caseworkers and supervisors, field offices, and numbers will be included in the resource book. The post adoption service number, (800) 572-2390, will be provided to all adoptive parents.

METHOD FOR RESOLVING PAYMENT PROBLEMS

d) If there is a problem with a board check, Foster Parents should inquire about the status of your payment. DCFS has a special hotline designed for board payment issues. The number for this hotline at 1-800-525-0499. If there is a problem with payments other than your board payment, contact your caseworker to resolve the issue. If you need further assistance, the caseworker's supervisor should be contacted without hesitation. Licensing representatives can also offer assistance.

PLACEMENT INFORMATION

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

FOSTER PARENT PARTICIPATION IN CLIENT SERVICE PLANS

a) The DCFS field office staff continues to work closely with the foster family in the development of the child's portion of the Client Service Plan at monthly home visits. Any revisions or updated information are shared with the Foster Parent as soon as possible. With a new placement, the worker verbally notifies the Foster Parent of the date and time for the first ACR. Afterwards, the ACR notifications will be automatically generated through the ACR system. Following supervisory approval of the Client Service Plan, the Foster Parent will be given a copy of the child's portion. The Foster Parents are involved in the development of family and sibling visiting plans.

14-DAY NOTICE OF REPLACEMENT

b) Any contemplated replacement of the child not precipitated by court order, will be conveyed to the Foster Parents and the appropriate written 14-day notice will be issued. Upon mutual agreement of all parties, the 14-day notice may be waived. This is noted in the case files. Appeal rights are discussed with the Foster Parents who may disagree with the decision to move the child. The worker will provide the Foster Parents with an appeal brochure, CFS151 (notice of decision to move).

NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES IN CASE PLAN

c) Foster Parents should be consulted in the consideration of changes in the child's portion of the service plan. Following supervisory approval, the caseworker will notify Foster Parents of any changes in the child's portion of the case plan.

FAIR, TIMELY AND IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATIONS

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

LICENSING INVESTIGATIONS

a) Foster Home Licensing Supervisory Staff will ensure that their staff are properly trained in conducting licensing investigations in line with Department Rule 383., Licensing investigations are introduced to foster parents within pre-service training; in addition, the foster parent handbook is available for ongoing reference.

Rule 383 Timeframes for Licensing Investigations

b) After receiving a licensing complaint, the licensing representative shall initiate the licensing complaint within 2 business days. The licensing rep shall complete the licensing complaint within 30 days from the time the complaint was received in the Licensing unit. If the complaint investigation can not be completed within the 30 day timeframe, the licensing representative can request a 30 day extension through their immediate supervisor. If approved, the licensing representative shall notify the foster parent licensee no later than 25th day after the complaint was assigned. When a 30 day extension is approved, the licensing representative shall notify the licensee no later than 3 days by regular mail. Once the licensing complaint file has been submitted to the Licensing supervisor, the supervisor has 7 days to review the complaint file to determine the approval of the licensing representative's findings. The licensing rep has 5 days to inform the foster parent licensee of the licensing complaint finding. The complete text of Rule 383 is available from licensing staff and can be found on the DCFS website. Foster Parents *are* informed of their right to have an advocate present for the interview portion of the licensing complaint investigation, with a sign off sheet stating they have been apprised of this right and their choice to exercise this right or to waive it. The foster parent has 4 hours to find an advocate to be present at the interview. This advocate can be anyone of the Foster Parents' choosing.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLANS

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

APPEALING LICENSING COMPLAINT DECISIONS

d) All licensing complaint decisions are appeal- able. The appeal process would begin at the licensing representatives supervisor and moves to the Downstate Manager of Foster Care Licensing.

INFORMATION ON THE CARE OF A CHILD

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

ACCURATE AND TIMELY SHARING OF INFORMATION

Continued emphasis is placed on the importance of the Northern Region staff providing accurate and timely exchange of information regarding the health, safety, and placement related information. This information will include, but should not be limited to, high risk factors, contagious or urgent medical needs, and/or mental/emotional conditions that might place the child or members of the household at risk. Placement caseworkers inform Foster Parents immediately of any new information required. Timely sharing of information and what needs to be shared is continually being stressed through supervision, team meetings, all-staff meetings, and panel reviews.

SHARING OF INFORMATION

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

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

1. Medical history including medical problems, communicable diseases, immunization status, insurance, and medical card information.
2. Educational history including Special Education needs, details of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), details of the Individual Family

Service Plan (IFSP), or details of an Education Special Needs Plan (504).

3. Child's portion of case plan including visitation arrangements, how the child came into care, child's previous placements without revealing any identifying information in regards to any prior foster caregiver or relative caregiver, the reason for change in placement, and the permanency goal.
4. Other relevant background information including prior criminal history, behavior problems such as fire setting, perpetrator of sexual abuse, and destructive behaviors, substance abuse habits, and likes and dislikes.

b) In accordance to Policy Guide 2007.14,

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

TRAINING

c) Northern Region staff charged with placing children in alternative living arrangements will be trained on the information to be disclosed according to this policy guide. On-going discussions happen during supervision, team meetings, all-staff meetings, and panel reviews.

d) Caseworkers and Investigators are held accountable for sharing this information with perspective foster parents at the time of placement or the foster parents the child is placed with as this information becomes available. This is a topic of discussion during each supervision time with their supervisor.

NOTIFICATION OF SCHEDULED MEETINGS

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

FOSTER PARENT NOTIFICATION

a) Foster Parents and staff are encouraged to work together to develop a notification system to meet the needs of both the Foster Parent and the caseworker. The worker informs the Foster Parent in writing of any major decisions made by the agency or court orders that affect the children in their care. Supervisory staff hold caseworkers accountable for ensuring notification of the scheduling, modification, and/or cancellation of all court hearings, ACRs, and staffings to the respective Foster Parents.

FOSTER PARENT COMMUNICATION

b) The Foster Parent and the caseworker collaborate regarding case planning during monthly meetings or as necessary. The Northern Region encourages Foster Parents to give input into case planning by communicating with child and family team members during meetings, phone contacts, monthly caseworker visits, and at any time as needed. Foster Parents are expected to attend all court hearings, ACRs, and staffings as it relates to the foster children in their care. Foster Parents are encouraged to contact the caseworker/supervisor of their inability to attend.

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

10) THE RIGHT TO BE GIVEN IN A TIMELY AND CONSISTENT MANNER ANY INFORMATION A CASEWORKER HAS REGARDING THE CHILD AND THE CHILD'S FAMILY WHICH IS PERTINENT TO THE CARE AND NEEDS OF THE CHILD AND TO THE MAKING OF A PERMANENCY PLAN FOR THE CHILD. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING A CHILD'S FAMILY SHALL BE LIMITED TO THE INFORMATION THAT IS ESSENTIAL FOR UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF AND PROVIDING CARE TO THE CHILD 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.

ENCOURAGING WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

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

TIMEFRAMES FOR SHARING INFORMATION

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

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

WRITTEN NOTICE OF ANY PLACEMENT CHANGES

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

CHANGES IN THE SERVICE PLAN

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

CRITICAL DECISION FORM

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

CHILD ENDANGERMENT RISK ASSESSMENT

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

REPLACEMENT OF FOSTER CHILD

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

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

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

NOTIFICATION OF COURT HEARINGS

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

COURT RECOGNITION OF FOSTER PARENTS

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

PLACEMENT OPTION FOR FORMER FOSTER CHILDREN

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

PREVIOUS PLACEMENT SEARCH

a) If a new placement occurs, in an effort to minimize stress and trauma to the child and to ensure as much continuity in the child's life as possible, it is expected that the caseworkers and investigators first explore the child's case file to identify any previous placement that may serve the child's best interests. In an effort to ensure compliance with this portion of the statute, DCFS workers in the Northern Region are to document their efforts to comply with this in their case notes. That documentation should include reference to their searching the placement history of the child utilizing the computer system or the placement history with the 906's in the case file. In addition, they must reference in what way they have examined these prior placements in relationship to the current best interest of the child and in keeping with IEPA.

FOSTER CHILD INPUT

b) If a child is old enough to be verbal, the caseworker obtains some assessment of the child's attachment or feeling about the prior placement always keeping in forefront what is in the best interest of the child.

FOSTER PARENT PARTICPATION

c) In the event a child is returning to foster home placement from an institution or group home, the worker checks with previous placements prior to discharge. An agreeable foster home would then have the ability to participate in discharge, staffings, and child and family team meetings. In addition, efforts are made to conduct placement visitation meetings before final discharge.

MONITORING COMPLIANCE

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

APPEALS PROCESS

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.

STAFF TRAINING ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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

CHAIN OF COMMAND

b) At the time of placement, staff share information with Foster Parents in regard to their supervisor's name and the chain of command that oversees their work. They also have access to brochures and information regarding the formal appeals system.

SERVICE APPEAL BROCHURES

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

TRAINING ON FOSTER PARENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

FREEDOM FROM HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION

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

HOTLINE INFORMATION

15) THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED OF THE FOSTER PARENT HOTLINE ESTABLISHED UNDER SECTION 35.6 OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT AND ALL 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.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL BROCHURE AVAILABILITY

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

FOSTER PARENT HOTLINE TRAINING

b) The Hotline phone number is 800-722-9124. Foster Parents are told this information during their licensing visits.

Section 1-20 FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

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

COMMUNICATE WITH CHILD'S TEAM

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

TRAINING

a) Through PRIDE and other ongoing training, Foster Parents learn, generally, what to communicate to caseworkers. The co-trainer model, Foster Parent and staff person as shared trainers, is used in the PRIDE training and is very useful in the open dialogue with all members of the Child Welfare Team.

COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS

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

906 AGREEMENT TO SHARE INFORMATION

c) The Foster Parent is held responsible for open communication by their signature on the 906 placement form which states, in part, the Foster Parent agrees to "share with the worker their experiences with the child" as well as other references in this contract regarding notifications. Open communication is essential to the service delivery to the child in care. During home visits, Foster Parents are expected to share with the caseworker any experience (positive or negative) that will assist in the appropriate delivery of services for the child.

30 DAY HOME VISITS

d) As per COA and Best Practice, workers make regular monthly visits that are to be scheduled at times convenient to both the Foster Parent and the caseworker. It is the expectation that caseworkers conduct their first visit with the child within 72 hours of placement. Caseworkers are expected to make bi-weekly visits with the child in the home of the Foster Parent during the first month of placement. If the child has special needs, the caseworkers are encouraged to visit bi-weekly until the concerns and needs expressed by the Foster Parents are heard and needed services are put into place.

CONFIDENTIALITY

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

CONFIDENTIALITY TRAINING

Foster Parents are trained on the importance of confidentiality during the PRIDE training and through ongoing dialogue with the caseworker and licensing representative. Caseworkers are encouraged to discuss the matter of confidentiality during monthly home visits. Foster Parents are encouraged to seek out guidance from the caseworker, support specialist, or supervisor to cover "gray" areas, i.e. talking to teachers, CASA, doctors, day care providers and respite workers.

ADVOCATE

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

TEAMWORK AND FOSTER PARENT PARTICIPATION

a) As valued team members, Foster Parents, as well as caseworkers, are encouraged to advocate and argue in favor of the well being of a child in foster care. It is the responsibility of both the caseworker and the Foster Parent to ensure that the child in care receives all needed services and that there are no violations of a child's rights. Foster Parents are encouraged to participate in all staffings including Administrative Case Reviews (ACR), Child and Youth Investment Team (CAYIT) meetings, Integrated Assessment (IA) activities, case conferences, and court hearings. The input of the Foster Parent in these meetings is important and invaluable to the team.

TRAINING

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

AVAILABILITY OF EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY/ LEGAL SERVICE

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

TREATMENT AND CARE OF CHILDREN AND BIRTH FAMILIES
4) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO TREAT CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER PARENT'S CARE AND THE CHILDREN'S FAMILIES WITH DIGNITY, RESPECT, AND CONSIDERATION.

TREATING TEAM WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT

a) Through PRIDE training and caseworker example, Foster Parents are instructed that all efforts and activities related to the foster care/child welfare delivery system must treat all members of the team, especially the child and the family, with dignity, respect, and consideration.

TREATING PARENTS WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT

b) Recognizing that biological parents play an integral role in the life and development of a child, the Foster Parent, by their signature on the 906 Placement Agreement, takes on the responsibility to treat the parents with dignity, respect, and courtesy. In addition, the Foster Parent will refrain from criticizing them in the child's presence.

MONITORING COMPLIANCE

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

SUPPORTING SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS

d) With respect to sibling relationships, Foster Parents are expected to participate in the development and implementation of parent-child and sibling visiting plans. Caseworkers are expected to have on-going communication with the Foster Parents concerning the importance of sibling visitation and the role that the Foster Parent plays in this process. Foster Parents are encouraged to facilitate the visits between siblings and are paid for said visit in a timely manner after turning in proper documentation.

RECOGNIZE STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

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.

MUTUAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

a) Self-awareness is an ongoing dynamic process that must be developed, maintained, and reassessed by each Foster Parent. The licensing representative works with the newly licensed family and PRIDE Trainer to assess the best age, sex, and type of special needs that can be handled by the family. As families care for children, the licensing worker, with input from the family, and casework staff regularly reassess the type of children for whom placement in the home is appropriate. This occurs within annual licensing monitoring and re-licensing visits and/or when other circumstances dictate. This assessment is documented in the licensing narrative summary and the foster parent portion of the CHILD/CAREGIVER MATCHING TOOL (CFS 2017). Using the matching tool at the initiation of a placement, strengths and limitations are identified; if limitations are identified, needed supports and services are developed. These supports and services (SOC, training, increased frequency of caseworker visits, special service fees, respite, etc.) are identified in the Client Service Plan and reviewed within Administrative Case Reviews. The Foster Parent Training Coordinators often assist when training needs are identified around a specific placement.

AWARENESS OF STRESS LEVELS

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

SUPPORT GROUPS

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.

INFORMING FOSTER PARENTS OF SUPPORT SYSTEMS

a) Foster Parents are provided information concerning support systems via administrative and caseworker contacts, local, regional, and state mailings in order to promote their affiliation with other Foster Parents and provide them opportunities to give input on the region's foster care program. Foster Parent input is welcome at each field office Quality Council and at the monthly Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council meetings.

PUBLISHING SUPPORT GROUP LOCATIONS

b) The regional insert of the "Illinois Families Now and Forever" publication will list groups, meetings, and contact numbers for local groups as well as positively promoting their activities. All Foster Parents will receive an annual schedule for the Regional Foster Care Advisory Committee. Every attempt is made to schedule events at times and places that will be convenient for foster parents. Use of DCFS offices and other support services are provided to these groups.

FOSTER PARENT SUPPORT SPECIALIST ASSISTANCE

c) Where available, Foster Parent Support Specialists will make special efforts to network with those Foster Parents who are caring for children and are unable to join in on group activities due to transportation, childcare, or other reasons. The Foster Parent Support Specialist is to be seen as the liaison between the Foster Parent and the caseworker. Foster Parent Support Specialists are expected to visit and listen to the concerns of the Foster Parent as they relate to the well being of the child and articulate those concerns and issues to the caseworker/supervisor.

TRAINING NEEDS

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

FOSTER PARENT ASSESSMENT

a) Foster Parents must constantly reassess their abilities and skills and seek to address needs through trainings. This is part of being a professional member of the child welfare team.

PUBLICIZED TRAINING EVENTS

b) DCFS encourages Foster Parent participation in training, including the PRIDE modules, by publicizing these events in newsletters and mailers from the DCFS Training Unit. Details are also available on the DCFS website. Training credits are also provided for participation in the Regional Foster Parent Advisory Board when trainings are part of the meetings. Regional nurses often arrange or provide training around health care issues.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH SYSTEM OF CARE PROVIDERS

c) For traditional Foster Homes receiving Systems of Care services, Foster Parents are responsible for communicating with the SOC provider. This program provides training to Foster Parents around the individual needs of a child.

IDENTIFYING FOSTER PARENT TRAINING NEEDS

d) The Northern Region, through the Quality Council Program Evaluation Committee, Consumer Satisfaction Committee, and Regional Training Committee, identifies Foster Parent training needs. Foster Parent licensing workers, during their bi-annual visits, will engage in a discussion regarding the training needs of the Foster Parent and help them locate an appropriate training avenue. Caseworkers are encouraged to help Foster Parents identify particular trainings that would enhance their abilities to care for the child in their home.

STRATEGIES TO AVOID PLACEMENT DISRUPTIONS

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

IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN AT RISK OF PLACEMENT DISRUPTION

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

SYSTEMS OF CARE INFORMATION

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

ACCESSING CRISIS INTERVENTION SERVICES

c) Crisis Intervention services are accessed through the caseworker during regular working hours, and the after hours/weekend number is given to the Foster Parent with the comprehensive phone list given all Foster Parents so that Foster Parents have additional support and assistance in maintaining placements and avoiding placement disruption. The regional answering service available through the main field office phone numbers can provide Foster Parents with after hours phone numbers to crisis intervention services such as Systems of Care (see appendix for number), on-call caseworkers, on-call supervisors, and managers.

CRISIS PREVENTION

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

MINIMIZE STRESS

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

ONGOING SELF-ASSESSMENT

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

COUNSELING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

b) All parties involved will respect confidentiality when counseling or other supports are put in place for Foster Parents. If counseling is a recognized need, the Foster Parent are encouraged to utilize counseling sessions available to them and resources given to them by the staff. Licensing staff and caseworkers assist the Foster Parents in recognizing the impact of fostering on their biological children, spouses, and extended family to avert potential problems.

IDENTIFYING AND ASSISTANCE FOR STRESS

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

VOLUNTARY HOLD

d) Just as deciding to foster is a personal, complex family decision, the decision to take time off fostering or to stop fostering altogether is a personal, complex decision. These decisions should be discussed in depth with the licensing representative to share concerns and feelings. Foster Parents who have made the difficult decision to no longer care for children in their home are surveyed and interviewed by their licensing representative. These surveys and interviews enable the region and staff to provide information to develop a more comprehensive support program for Foster Parents during times of stress. The Foster Parent may be able to continue to contribute to foster care by being a licensed home for respite only, thereby reducing the stress caused by fostering, but still continuing to contribute a very valuable and needed service.

PROMOTE FOSTER CARE POSITIVELY

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.

REGIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR POSITIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS

a) The Region continues to work with the Foster Care Alliance/LANS System (where available) to promote the positive aspects of the foster care experience through media coverage, community resource fairs, and special events in conjunction with corporations, churches, and community organizations. Positive outcome stories will be featured in local newsletters that will be mailed to Foster Parents. The Northern Region recognizes that our best forms of advertisement are the Foster Parents themselves.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

b) The Region and local offices continue to extol the positives of Foster Parenting through various recruitment activities including but not limited to: public awareness walk-a-thon activities, press/media conferences, newsletters, Senate Child Care Fairs, and other special events.

ONGOING POSITIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS

c) While prevented from publicizing individual successes on a case-by-case basis, systemic successes, offices that achieve accreditation status, increased Foster Parent adoptions, and new legislation for permanency, have all generated positive press for child welfare and Foster Parenting. The Northern Region recognizes that positive relationships between the departmental staff and Foster Parents are the best form of public relations that can be obtained. We have seen evidence of the relationship between staff and Foster Parents improving in the reduction of complaints and 14 day notices on placements.

KNOW CHILD WELFARE TEAM

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

DEFINING ROLES

a) The roles of all members in the child welfare system need to be consistently defined and not left open to varying interpretation. This includes that of the different types of foster homes, different levels of caseworkers, and commensurate levels of responsibilities for each. This information is initially broached during PRIDE training and reinforced through publications and on-going training. Yearly updating and publication of the Northern Region organizational chart will be included in the appendix of the Foster Parent Implementation Plan. Foster Parents are encouraged to contact the caseworker/supervisor if there is a need for clarification of roles within the region. Active participation in teamwork further defines for members their respective roles.

TRAINING ON ROLES, RIGHTS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

b) The Northern Region work with Best Practice and training coordinators to develop training on the roles, rights, and responsibilities of the child welfare team which are co-trained by staff and Foster Parents. One of the five competencies of PRIDE training is on roles, rights, and responsibilities in regards to working as part of a professional team. This is trained through a "panel" involving various staff members. As new positions are created which have a role in foster care, information on these roles will be provided through training and/or mailings. It is expected that administrators, supervisors, and caseworkers will routinely cover roles and responsibilities within staffings as they occur.

CO-TRAINING (FOSTER PARENTS/WORKERS)

c) Whenever possible, training and co-training about the varying roles of the rights and responsibilities of the child welfare team is essential. It continues to be the vision of the Northern Region to strengthen the team through such concepts as LANS and Child and Family Teams CAYIT meetings to promote cooperation.

ADMINISTRATIVE AVAILABILITY TO FOSTER PARENTS

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

BE A MANDATED REPORTER KNOW INVESTIGATION PROCESS

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

TRAINING

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

SIGNED MANDATED REPORTER AGREEMENT

b) Foster Parents acknowledge the responsibility of being a mandated reporter by signing an acknowledgement of this status at the time of licensure. This remains in the Foster Parent licensing file. It is the responsibility of the licensing worker to insure that: 1) the Foster Parent understands the scope of being a mandated reporter, and 2) the acknowledgement is understood, signed, and filed.

OTHER RESOURCES

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

PARTICIPATE IN TRAINING

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

TRAINING

a) The client service plan with the associated administrative case review is a vital process in child welfare that is stressed in PRIDE and other on-going training. Trainings are scheduled throughout the region and published in local and regional newsletters and mailings through the DCFS Training Unit. A comprehensive regional training calendar is being developed. Foster parents will be provided copies of training calendars through the local FQC, RQC, Foster Parent Advisory meetings, and "Illinois Families Now and Forever" newsletter.

FOSTER PARENT PARTICIPATION

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

AVAILABLE ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT FOSTER PARENT PARTICIPATION

c) Foster Parents are encouraged to attend ACRs and court with assistance for transportation and daycare if necessary. If attendance is not possible, Foster Parents may be included via teleconference. Foster Parents are encouraged to contact the caseworker/supervisor if not able to attend scheduled meetings, ACRs, court, etc, in a timely manner.

KNOW APPEAL PROCESS

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

OBTAINING APPEAL INFORMATION

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

BROCHURE AVAILABILITY

b) It will be the responsibility of the local Consumer Satisfaction Committee to make sure that brochures are available in every field office, and the administrative case reviewer will insure that brochures are distributed at every case review.

INTERNAL GRIEVANCES

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

MAINTAIN ACCURATE RECORDS

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

MAINTAINING FOSTER CHILD'S RECORDS

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

RECORDS TO BE MAINTAINED

Records to be maintained by the foster family shall include:

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

HEALTHWORKS PASSPORT

b) The Healthworks Passport is issued for every child at the time of the initial comprehensive Health screening and should be kept current by the Foster Parents and health care provider. Foster parents provide information obtained from health care providers to the worker, ACR reviewer, and court.

RECORDS TO FOLLOW THE CHILD

c) In line with the team approach, the Foster Parent ensure that the caseworker is provided with the Foster Parent's records on the child if it becomes necessary to move the child into another foster home. The caseworker ensure that the receiving foster parent is provided with the kept record at the time of placement.

SHARE INFORMATION

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

TRANSFERRING CHILD'S RECORD TO SUBSEQUENT CAREGIVER

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

RESPECT AND MAINTAIN CHILD'S CULTURE

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

FOSTER PARENT SUPPORT

a) As the field offices compile materials for their lending library, materials dealing with various cultures can be accessed through the caseworkers. Training materials are also available through the department's foster care lending library. Foster Parents are also encouraged to network with other Foster Parents and/or those who have fostered children of a similar race/culture. Foster Parents are encouraged to make every effort to participate in cross-cultural activities that will expose a child of a different nationality to his/her culture, i.e. museums, community activities, churches, etc.

UTILIZING PUBLIC LIBRARIES/INTERNET

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

TRAINING ON TRANS-CULTURAL PLACEMENT CHALLENGES

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

APPENDIX

DCFS NORTHERN REGION FOSTER PARENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS

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

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

The Foster Parent should adhere to the following steps:

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

If no resolution can be agreed upon, contact the Foster Parent Law Liaison, Yolanda Jordan at (630) 801-3400.

3. If the Foster Parent Law Liaison cannot remedy the violation, ask her for the formal filing papers for the Grievance Procedure. They are also located in the appendix of your Northern Region Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. If you need a new plan, ask your licensing representative for a copy. The Foster Parent Law Liaison will keep an accurate record of the grievance, timeframes adhered to, and the final resolution.
4. Send all Northern Region Foster Parent Law Grievances to:

Debra Palmer Thomas
DCFS Northern Region Regional Administrator
8 E. Galena Blvd, Suite 300
Aurora, IL 60506

5. Within five (5) calendar days of receiving the formal written grievance, the Regional Administrator will contact the grieving Foster Parent to acknowledge receipt of the grievance and obtain additional information. At this point, the Regional Administrator will also notify the acting chair people of the Northern Region Foster Parent Advisory Council and without disclosing any confidential information inform them a grievance has been filed and which right was violated. This is for tracking purposes and for greater accountability in the procedure.
6. Within fourteen (14) calendar days following the acknowledgement of the receipt of the grievance, the Regional Administrator or her designee will identify and assemble a panel from another area in the region. On this panel will be: a placement caseworker and supervisor (not from same supervision line), a licensing worker (not the foster parent's representative or a representative from the same team), a current and active foster parent (with no prior knowledge of the incident) and the alleged violator of the Foster Parent's rights. The grieving Foster Parent may also bring a support person of their choosing. This panel will meet in person unless it is more convenient for the grieving Foster Parent to conduct the panel by teleconference. During the panel, the panel will gather information from both the grievant and the alleged violator.

**DCFS NORTHERN REGION
FOSTER PARENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS – CON'T.**

7. Within three (3) business days of the panel convening, the Foster Parent grievant will be notified by letter as to the resolution agreed upon by the panel. The Regional Administrator will review all resolutions before they are sent to the grieving Foster Parent. If the Foster Parent is satisfied with the resolution, the Regional Administrator will notify the acting chair people of the Northern Region Foster Parent Advisory Council of the resolution.
8. If the Foster Parent does not feel the grievance has been resolved, they must contact the Regional Administrator in writing asking for additional consideration within five (5) business days of resolution notification.
9. The Regional Administrator has four (4) calendar days to gather further information and reconsider the resolution. The Regional Administrator will notify the acting chair people of the Northern Region Foster Parent Advisory Council of the final resolution.
10. The Regional Administrator has the final determination of the grievance.

**DCFS NORTHERN REGION
FOSTER PARENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: Day: _____ Evening: _____

Name of field office: _____

Address of field office: _____

Field office phone number: _____

Name of worker in violation (if applicable): _____

Name of worker's supervisor: _____

Have you addressed your concerns with the worker or supervisor prior to filing grievance: YES NO

Have you addressed your concerns with other staff supports or personnel prior to filing grievance: YES NO
If so, with whom:

List the violation: (separate attachments can be included if needed):

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Foster Parent Provider I.D. Number: _____

ORGANIZATIONAL PHONE NUMBERS

STATE HOTLINE NUMBERS

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

REGIONAL ASSISTANCE

Aurora Regional Office	1-630-801-3400
Rockford Satellite Office	1-815-967-3731
Regional Administrator	1-630-801-3400
Regional Program Manager	1-815-967-3731
Glen Ellyn Licensing Supervisor	1-630-790-6800
Rockford Licensing Supervisor	1-815-967-3731
Aurora DCFS Nurse	1-630-801-3400
Rockford DCFS Nurse	1-815-967-3731
Regional ACR Manager	1-630-801-3400
Prairie Legal Services	1-630-232-9415
Education Advisor	1-815-967-3731
Regional Agency Performance Team	1-630-801-3400
Sexual Child Behavior Specialist	1-815-730-4000
Post Adoption Services	1-800-572-2390

LOCAL FIELD OFFICES

Aurora Field Office	1-630-801-3400
DeKalb Field Office	1-815-787-5300
Elgin Field Office	1-847-888-7620
Freeport Field Office	1-815-235-7878
Glen Ellyn Field Office	1-630-790-6800
Joliet Field Office	1-815-730-4000
Kankakee Field Office	1-815-939-8140
Rockford Field Office	1-815-967-3731
Sterling Field Office	1-815-625-7594
Waukegan Field Office	1-847-249-7800
Woodstock Field Office	1-815-338-1068

******* FOR AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCIES,
ALL DCFS OFFICES CAN BE REACHED THROUGH THE CHILD ABUSE
HOTLINE NUMBER (800-25 ABUSE)**

Imp Plan 2011

From: **Harvey, Robyn** (HarveyRobyn@co.kane.il.us)

Sent: Tue 11/30/10 12:07 PM

To: Contact Robyn E. Harvey (melbaharvey@hotmail.com)

I have participated in the review of the DCFS Northern Region 2011 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. Furthermore, I endorse the plan's submission to the SWFCAC.

**Robyn Ericson Harvey
Foster Parent**

IMP PLAN

From: **Robyn Harvey** (melbaharvey@hotmail.com)
Sent: Tue 11/30/10 2:39 PM
To: R.e. Harvey (melbaharvey@hotmail.com)

Date: Tue, 30 Nov 2010 11:21:59 -0800
From: ihm4babies@yahoo.com
Subject: Re: IMP PLAN
To: melbaharvey@hotmail.com

To Whom It May Concern:

I have participated in the review of the DCFS Northern Region 2011 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. Furthermore, I endorse the plan's submission to the SWFCAC.

Sincerely,
Patricia Ihm
Foster Parent

Robyn Harvey

There are costs and risks to a program of action, but they are far less than the long range risks and costs of comfortable inaction. - John F. Kennedy

IMP plan

From: **Crystal** (cryst112@aol.com)
Sent: Tue 11/30/10 1:04 PM
To: melbaharvey@hotmail.com

I have participated in the review of the DCFS Northern Region 2011 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. Furthermore, I endorse the plan's submission to the SWFCAC.

**Crystal Steffa
Foster Parent**

imp plan

From: **amygarcia@comcast.net**
Sent: Tue 11/30/10 9:53 AM
To: melbaharvey@hotmail.com

Robyn,

The changes look great, wish they all read this well.

I have participated in the review of the DCFS Northern Region 2011 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. Furthermore, I endorse the plan's submission to the SWFCAC.

Amy Hartigan Garcia

Foster Parent Northern Region

Northern Region Implementation Plan

From: **Palmer-Thomas, Deborah** (Deborah.Palmer-Thomas@illinois.gov)

Sent: Tue 11/30/10 9:17 AM

To: Robyn Harvey (melbaharvey@hotmail.com)

I have participated in the review of the DCFS Northern Region 2011 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. Furthermore, I endorse the plan's submission to the SWFCAC.

Debbie Palmer Thomas

Regional Administrator

Northern Region

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(No Subject)

From: **Pruitt, Essie** (Essie.Pruitt@illinois.gov)

Sent: Mon 11/29/10 10:22 AM

To: Robyn Harvey (melbaharvey@hotmail.com)

Cc: Palmer-Thomas, Deborah (Deborah.Palmer-Thomas@illinois.gov)

I have participated in the review of the DCFS Northern Region 2011 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. Furthermore, I endorse the plan's submission to the SWFCAC.

Essie Pruitt, M.S.W., Child Welfare Advanced Specialist

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(No Subject)

From: **Jordan, Yolanda** (Yolanda.Jordan@illinois.gov)
Sent: Wed 11/24/10 9:00 AM
To: Robyn Harvey (melbaharvey@hotmail.com)

I have participated in the review of the DCFS Northern Region 2011 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. Furthermore, I endorse the plan's submission to the SWFCAC.

**Yolanda Jordan, LCSW
DCFS Placement Manager
Northern Regional Office
8 E. Galena Blvd.
Aurora, IL 60506
(630) 801-3573**

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