

THE SOUTHERN REGION  
2011  
FOSTER PARENT LAW  
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

## 2010 Annual Implementation Plan Report

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

The Statewide Foster Parent Advisory Council evaluated and reviewed the Southern Region's Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan for 2010 and rated it *Acceptable*.

Due to uncertainties regarding potential field office closures in 2010, foster parents were not mailed a schedule for the quarterly meetings of the Regional Advisory Council. Instead, families were mailed a reminder of the next meeting approximately three (3) weeks beforehand.

The remote meeting format was retained in order to maximize foster parent representation. Four meetings were held using the teleconference format connecting six (6) geographically separate sites. This minimizes travel for foster parents and increases their opportunity to participate. The meetings were held in the evening from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. **This was one of the most successfully implemented portions of the Plan.** In an effort to further increase foster parent participation, all meetings included an option for foster parents to phone into the meeting from their own homes. Participation remains a **challenge**, because few foster parents took advantage of this option.

Regional Advisory Council meetings are preceded by an informal "pre-meeting" where **foster parents are encouraged to present any concerns, issues, problems, and suggestions** for discussion in the formal Advisory Council meeting. This has **proven successful** in helping to resolve issues informally at a local level.

**Another successfully implemented portion of the plan** was the training on the Foster Parent Law. **The vignette approach**, which emphasizes the Law's connection to direct services, was used again. A total of six (6) trainings were held in the months of September and October (see training announcement flyers in Attachment Section IV-A). The trainings are conducted by DCFS resource staff, licensing staff, direct service staff, and foster parents. Foster parents and staff were **notified of the training by either direct mailing or email listing locations, dates, and times.**

The **challenge** of assisting foster parents in **accessing** on-going training is met by the following: periodic mailings to foster parents informing them of upcoming training opportunities; and, the dissemination of training information by Family Development Specialists during their license monitoring and renewal visits. In addition, the *Our Kids* section of the *Illinois Families Now and Forever* newsletter also contains a listing and description of upcoming training opportunities. Foster parents with internet connections can **access** the Department's VTC (Virtual Training Center) website for a list of trainings and their current training hours.

The **challenge** of engaging approximately 390 foster parents over a 34 county area continues to be of major importance. Staff levels have remained below previous levels and the uncertainties regarding the Illinois state budget have occasionally impacted maintaining professional relationships, resources, and services. The Department's emphasis on licensing relative foster homes has **substantially impacted** the ability to engage traditional foster parents.

We continued to be **unable to implement** all of the activities related to Responsibility 12 **since Statewide training on Children with Sexual Behavior Problems (CSBP) was never offered to foster parents.** Training will be encouraged and offered at the time of its finalization by the DCFS Training Unit.

In September a team of foster parents and staff met to review and revise the current plan. **Suggestions for improvement that were listed in the notification scoring letter were used to guide any changes.** Foster parent comments on the 2010 Implementation Plan were also reviewed and addressed where appropriate. After revisions were made, **all foster parents** in the region were **notified by a direct mailing** in late September informing them that they could request a copy of the plan for **review, comment, and approval.** **Direct service staff** also received a similar notification via the Outlook email system (see letter and copy of e-mail in Attachment Section IV-B).

**Public comment** was encouraged by publication in the official state newspaper, the *Daily Herald* and also in **direct mailings** to all the region's foster families. Foster parents were advised that their comments would be kept on file and considered in development of the final plan.

**Sign-off procedures remained the same.** All staff and foster parents who attended the final Advisory Council meeting of the year on November 9, 2010 registered their approval of the plan (see Attachment Section IV-F). In addition foster parents or staff who requested the plan were provided with an "approval form" along with a stamped self-addressed envelope to return the signed form. **A copy of the plan was placed** in each field office with a notification to foster parents that they could review the plan in the office and sign a document registering their approval.

After the 2011 Plan was approved, a letter was sent to all Southern Region foster parents that the **approved plan was available** in a hard copy or via email attachment.

The **grievance procedure was reviewed in September 2010 by the Southern Region Review and Revision Sub-Committee and remains unchanged.** Foster parents **received a copy of the procedure** via direct mail in late September to reacquaint them with this process (see Attachment Section IV-B). In addition, any Foster Parent who attended the Foster Parent Law trainings received a brief review of the process. A centralized filing system is still in use to maintain copies of all grievances. **There were no formal grievances filed in 2010.**

The 2011 Plan improves **daily service delivery** by providing a framework and structure for all stakeholders. The plan also provides mechanisms and **constructive measures** for positive outcomes by addressing disagreements through **open lines of communication**, conflict resolution, and better teamwork.

## **II. Plan Narratives for Rights 1 – 15 and Responsibilities 1 - 17**

## **FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS**

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



FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS	CRITERIA FOR ENSURING EACH FOSTER PARENT'S RIGHTS	THE SOUTHERN REGION'S CURRENT OR PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION METHODS TO ENSURE CRITERIA FOR FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS
<p>1) The right to be treated with dignity, respect, and consideration as a professional member of the child welfare team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The agency or region has and implements strategies to ensure that its foster parents are treated with dignity and respect.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Southern Region has the following strategies in place to ensure that foster parents are treated with dignity and respect:</b></p> <p>The Foster Parent Law is defined in the Southern Region Implementation Plan. Foster Parents are made aware of the Plan via letter from the Resource Unit, the Our Kids section of <u>Illinois Families Now and Forever</u> newsletter, support groups, staff members, Foster Parent Support Specialist, their Leads, and it is discussed at Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan training region wide. Foster Parents are encouraged to submit their suggestions and comments either in person at the Advisory Council meetings, by mail, e-mail, phone calls, or at local support groups.</p> <p>Foster parents are very important members of the child welfare team. Mutual respect and confidence is built on positive experiences and open communication between the foster parent and the Department. Foster parents are given recognition for years of service and their crucial role as part of the team. This recognition is acknowledged through annual appreciation events, fairs, and coffee breaks hosted and attended by agency staff and foster parents. The success of the team approach to case planning is measured through foster parent satisfaction surveys. Foster parents are part of the Quality Improvement (QI) committees held in the field offices and there is also representation on the Regional Quality Council (RQC).</p> <p><b>The foster parents are further treated with dignity, respect and consideration by the following methods and procedures:</b></p> <p>Direct line staff learn techniques to engage and empower all members involved in the child welfare system, which includes treating foster parents with dignity and respect, during their initial training. This continues by offering monthly Grand Rounds Clinical staff training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) and Lead FPSS's are invited to Quality Improvement (QI) and Team Meetings</li> <li>Foster Parents are invited to Family Meetings</li> <li>Foster Parents are encouraged to attend and provide input at Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's)</li> <li>Foster Parents have the opportunity to work with Birth Parents by Mentoring</li> <li>Foster Parents are encouraged to be educational advocates for Foster Children, and have access to the Regional Educational Liaisons.</li> </ul>

FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS	CRITERIA FOR ENSURING EACH FOSTER PARENT'S RIGHTS	THE SOUTHERN REGION'S CURRENT OR PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION METHODS TO ENSURE CRITERIA FOR FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS
Right 1 (con't)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster Parents are offered training on LANs (Local Area Networks) and encouraged to become active participants in wrap-around teams for their Foster Children.</li> <li>• Foster Parent Satisfaction Surveys are being utilized and the data gathered will shape future services. Information gathered is aggregated quarterly and provided to the appropriate RQC sub-committee and Quality Assurance staff.</li> <li>• The Region has made a commitment to involve foster parents in the site and regional Quality Improvement Councils and foster parents currently participate as QI council members.</li> <li>• As current caregivers Foster Parents are encouraged by caseworkers to participate in all Child and Youth Investment Team (CAYIT) meetings.</li> </ul>

<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum standardized pre-service training</li> <li>• PRIDE training</li> <li>• Co-Training approach (foster parent/staff)</li> <li>• Regular utilization of mutual assessment tool for training needs</li> <li>• Training commensurate with levels of care provided</li> <li>• Evidence of ongoing training schedule or calendar</li> </ul>	<p>The Southern Region ensures foster parents' rights to training through on-going collaboration with Division of Training and Development Services. The following types of training are made available to foster parents on a continuing basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Standardized Pre-Service</b> schedules are currently in place for the Southern Region. (See attached schedules in the Attachments Section). Relative Only caregivers have the option of receiving necessary training via DVD.</li> <li>• <b>In-service training</b> modules, educational advocacy, adopt only and adoption conversion for licensed foster parents occurs on a regular basis. In-service Training is offered at a variety of sites.</li> <li>• <b>Foster parent co-training</b> with staff occurs during PRIDE In-Service training, as well as, PRIDE Module Training. There is also Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan co-training held at a variety of sites in the Region annually. The Region also holds an annual Caregivers Conference for foster parents and staff.</li> <li>• <b>Mutual assessment</b> for training needs occur at annual monitoring visits, during corrective action planning, at re-licensing or when changes occur in families that threaten to disrupt placement.</li> <li>• <b>Training commensurate with the levels of care provided</b> based on the mutual assessment listed above. Foster parents are encouraged to take advantage of through available training, library material, conferences, seminars, and other community linkages.</li> <li>• <b>Evidence of ongoing training</b> (In-service/Modules) schedules or calendars can be found in the Attachment Section. The Division of Training and Development Services makes this information available on the DCFS web site, <a href="http://www.state.il.us/dcf">www.state.il.us/dcf</a>. For a copy of the current schedule, or to obtain a Virtual Training Center (VTC) identification number contact the Training Unit at 877-800-3393. At every DCFS sponsored training, foster parents are given a form with information on how to set up a VTC account. (See Training Attachment section) The current schedules are also available in the <i>IL Families Now and Forever</i> newsletter.</li> </ul> <p>The challenges for the Southern Region continues to be the task of making training reasonably accessible to all foster parents due to the large geographical region, which includes thirty-four counties. In addition, the Lending Library is available in resolving this issue and the Office of Foster Care and Permanency recently approved utilizing <a href="http://www.fosterclub.com">www.fosterclub.com</a> for training hours and for general information on fostering and issues dealing with children.</p>
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<p>3) The right to be informed as to how to contact the appropriate child care agency in order to receive information and assistance to access supportive services for children in the foster parent care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 hour/7 day availability of emergency support</li> <li>• Established method for accessing support services (e.g., SASS, placement stabilization and staff phone numbers and on-call schedules)</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Southern Region utilizes the following methods to ensure that foster parents have access to the Department’s emergency services on a 24-hour 7 day a week basis:</b></p> <p>The Southern Region maintains a comprehensive support system to ensure the accessibility of staff and other service providers to assist foster parents and foster children 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.</p> <p>An after-hours, emergency response can be accessed through the statewide Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-25-ABUSE). Hotline staff contact local Department staff who are "on call" to respond to reports of child abuse and neglect as well as crises experienced by foster parents. Many workers and supervisors share their home phone numbers with foster parents, particularly during times of crisis.</p> <p>If a foster parent and their worker (or on-call worker) are unable to resolve a crisis with a child themselves, the foster parent and worker can obtain crisis response services through their local System of Care provider. System of Care (SOC) staff are also available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and can be contacted through the statewide Crisis and Referral Line/CARES 1-800-345-9049; TTY 1-800-905-9645; <a href="http://www.hfs.illinois.gov/cmh">www.hfs.illinois.gov/cmh</a> . When a foster parent is confronted with behaviors by a foster child that the foster parent believes may create an immediate risk of harm to the child or others, the foster parent is encouraged to access SASS services to assess the child for psychiatric hospitalization. SASS agencies are also contacted through the Statewide Crisis and Referral Line/CARES.</p> <p>New foster parents are instructed on how to seek assistance after hours during Pre-Service PRIDE training. Already licensed foster parents are given information about after-hours support on an individual basis by their foster child's worker. Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS) are a valuable support to foster parents, and are experts on resources available in their counties. New foster parents are given the home phone number of the FPSS serving their area. The Foster Family Handbook is another valuable resource tool, and section nine of the Handbook provides information about supportive services in detail. During PRIDE training, foster parents are also given information about Illinois Foster Parent Association meetings as one way of developing a peer support network. In addition to the Foster Parent Association, foster parent support groups are also available to foster parents throughout the Southern Region.</p>
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<p>4) The right to receive timely financial reimbursement commensurate with the care needs of the child as specified in the service plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular board payment (attached rate schedule)</li> <li>• Payment for additional services, such as respite care and camp</li> <li>• Timely assessment and payment commensurate with levels of care provided</li> <li>• Method of resolving payment problems</li> </ul>	<p>The Southern Region recognizes that the prompt processing of 906 Placement forms is vital to ensure that foster parents receive a timely reimbursement. Effective July 1, 2006 the Case Assignment Payment Unit (CAPU) began data entering all Southern Region placements. Workers will submit the CAPU packets in a timely manner to ensure the foster parent provider receives their payment via the earliest board run. The Region expectation is that the 906 on all subsequent placement information be called in immediately following placements during regular business hours or the morning of the next business day for placements that occur after hours or weekends.</p> <p><b>Regular board payment rate schedule attached.</b></p> <p>Under the guideline of Department Rule/Procedure 359, the Southern Region ensures foster parent's rights to <b>payment for additional services</b> such as respite and camp on a child-by-child basis. The foster child's permanency worker, in conjunction with foster parent's input, initiates this request for extra support services. The immediate supervisor and Placement Manager, approves the request which is subsequently forwarded to the Regional Office for processing within five days.</p> <p><b>Timely assessment and payment commensurate with levels of care provided is assured by:</b> All children who enter substitute care must be screened for special mental or medical health needs by the placing worker through the use of the "CFS 418-J; Checklist for Children at Initial Placement." When special needs are identified, the worker is to fax this CFS 418-J checklist and supporting documentation to the Specialized Gatekeeping and CAPU to consider for placement of the child in specialized foster care. If approved by the Specialized Gatekeeper, the child is referred to an agency that contracts with the Department to provide this, and the child is placed in a foster home that receives an intensive level of services from the agency along with a specialized foster care board payment.</p> <p>Often, a foster child's mental health or behavioral concerns are not readily apparent at initial placement. The Integrated Assessment (IA), which is completed in the first 45 days (at the present time only new traditional cases), is designed to identify any needs a child coming into care may have. However, when foster parents confront difficult behaviors from the child following placement, foster parents are afforded in-home crisis intervention, placement stabilization and other therapeutic services through the Local Area Network (LAN)-based System of Care (SOC). SOC providers assess the strengths and needs of the child and foster family and identify the necessary supports to preserve the child's placement. In the event that the SOC provider assesses that the child requires a higher level of foster care with more intensive services, the SOC provider will make this recommendation through a referral by the child's worker to the Child and Youth Investment Team (CAYIT). If approved by the CAYIT for specialized foster care, the child is referred to one of the contract agencies that provide this level of care. When it is in the child's best interest to remain with their current foster parent, the supervision of the child's placement in that foster home is provided by the contract agency, and the foster parent receives a specialized foster care board rate.</p>
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Right 4 (con't)		<p><b>Method of resolving payment problems:</b></p> <p>Foster parents who disagree with the determination on the child's eligibility for specialized foster care may file an appeal through the Administrative Hearings Unit. Any payment problems involving a DCFS foster parent caring for a child supervised by a private agency is directed to the regional Agency Performance Team (APT). Other payment issues are addressed in the Foster Family Handbook in Section 9, pp 18 – 23. The Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) offers Foster Parents help in addressing these issues.</p>
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## FY 2011 Board Rates

### MONTHLY PAYMENT SCHEDULE

**Effective October 1, 2008**

The following licensed rates apply to traditional and relative Department supervised homes as well as private agency supervised homes under Performance Contracting. The rates also apply to Subsidized Guardianship and Regular Adoption Subsidy payments where the adoption/SG was effective on or after 10/1/08. The specific service codes are as follows:

0101, 9101, 0102, 9102, 4102, 0106, 9106, 0140, 9140, 4140, 2102, 2902, 2140,  
2940, 0317, 0318, 0376, 0377

<u>Child's Age</u>	<u>Board</u>		<u>Clothing</u>		<u>Allowance</u>		<u>Total</u>
0 to 11 months	\$335.00		\$37.00	*	\$12.00		<b>\$ 384.00</b>
1 to 4 years	\$337.00		\$42.00	*	\$13.00		<b>\$ 392.00</b>
5 - 8 years	\$339.00		\$56.00		\$14.00		<b>\$409.00</b>
9 - 11 years	\$346.00		\$65.00		\$24.00		<b>\$435.00</b>
12 and over	\$354.00		\$74.00		\$43.00		<b>\$471.00</b>

\* Personal allowance for children 4 years and under is to be used for incidentals (toys, rattles, etc.), which become the property of the child.

(NOTE: Changes to the Subsidized Guardianship Program are pending; this may affect payment to Subsidized Guardianship parents.)

<p>5) The right to be provided a clear, written understanding of a placement agency's plan concerning the placement of a child in foster parent's home. Inherent in this right is the foster parent's responsibility to support activities that will promote the child's right to relationships with his or her own family and cultural heritage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster parent participation in development of the case plan</li> <li>• Timely notification of changes in case plan/permanency goal, including method of notification</li> <li>• Foster parent participation/ input into visitation/ communication plan</li> </ul>	<p><b>Foster parent participation in the development of the case plan</b> is assured through open communication between caseworkers and foster parents at home visits, phone calls, Family Meetings, Child and Family Teams, at Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), etc. Foster Parent's ideas and suggestions are considered as the service plan is developed. Caseworkers call the Foster Parent to ensure the time of the ACR is acceptable and to see if the Foster Parent will be able to attend and make changes as necessary.</p> <p>Foster parents' <b>rights to timely notification</b> concerning changes in their foster child's case plan are being ensured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established written notifications that provide foster parents the opportunity to attend each foster child's ACR and share in case plan changes. Notification of the review date is mailed to the foster parent approximately 14 days prior to review in order to make alterations in date of the review and to gather information.</li> <li>• Foster Parents are given a copy of the child's portion of the Service Plan and if they are unable to attend it is mailed to them.</li> <li>• Often phone calls are utilized for timely notification of changes.</li> <li>• As stated in the permanency initiative Policy Guide 98.1 the Southern Region ensures that caseworkers provide the primary foster parents a monthly face-to-face consultation.</li> <li>• <b>Participation/input into visitation/communication plan</b> is ensured and encouraged by use of the Behavior Log, and Medication Log. These are forms submitted in writing by the foster parent and given to workers during monthly in-home visits.</li> <li>• Other means of gathering information for input into the plan is phone calls to and visits with the foster parents.</li> <li>• The foster parent will notify the worker on the amount of communication and interaction with the birth family that is comfortable for them. Foster parents can stipulate if they want flexible telephone conversations with the birth family and their willingness to sponsor visits in their home. They will also discuss their ability to transport the child to family visits in order to build on the importance of family preservation.</li> </ul>
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<p>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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy describing the agency's investigation of alleged violations and demonstration of how the agency disseminates that information to foster parents</li> <li>• Person of foster parent's choosing present during the investigation</li> <li>• Specified time frames for investigation</li> <li>• Procedure for appealing negative results/corrective action plans (NOTE: Merely stating that DCFS procedure is followed is not sufficient.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Policy describing the agency's investigation of alleged violations</b> is distributed through the Foster Family Handbook (section 8). This book is <b>disseminated</b> at each new PRIDE session and to all current Foster Parents.</li> <li>• During the initiation of licensing complaint investigations, foster parents are granted a grace period of 4 hours to obtain an advocate. When initiating a licensing complaint, the assigned Family Development Specialist (FDS) worker is required to verbally inform the foster parent that they may have an <b>advocate of their choice present</b> during the course of their interview.</li> <li>• <b>There are specified time frames for investigation.</b> FDS worker must give foster parents 4 hours notice. Additionally, the FDS is required to explain to the foster parent under investigation that within thirty (30) days of their interview they will receive written correspondence concerning their complaint. If an extension is necessary, the foster parent is informed in writing with the reason documented in the notice.</li> <li>• <b>The procedure for appealing negative results/corrective action plans</b> is explained in a written action plan stating the licensing violation, corrections need, and time frame for completion. The Foster Parent may request an informal review either verbally or in writing by contacting the FDS supervisor. If agreement is not reached, the Foster Care Licensing Manager, upon request from the Foster Parent and prior to an Administrative Hearing will conduct an Informal Hearing. If an Administrative Hearing is requested, a meeting with the Foster Care Licensing Manager is scheduled within 10 business days</li> </ul> <p>In addition, this Region follows the Statewide policy of concurrent investigations for Division of Child Protection (DCP) reports. When a DCP report is received, the FDS worker is notified and a concurrent investigation is completed.</p> <p>Foster parents are given a written notification of rights regarding child abuse/neglect investigations per CFS 1050-54, <i>What You Need to Know About a Child Abuse or Neglect Investigation</i>.</p> <p>The Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) and the Foster Family Handbook are two excellent sources for foster parents to review this process, have questions answered and get additional information.</p> <p>The Advocacy Office (1-800-232-3798) is also available to assist foster parents and depending on the circumstances may refer foster parents to the following Department offices for additional help:</p>
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<p>Right 6 (con't)</p> <p>right to have decisions concerning a licensing corrective action plan specifically explained and tied to the licensing standards which were violated.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspector General (1-800-722-9124)</li> <li>• Administrative Case Review (ACR)</li> <li>• African-American Services</li> <li>• Child Protection</li> <li>• Clinical Services</li> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Foster Care and Permanency Services</li> <li>• Guardianship Administrator</li> <li>• Health Policy</li> <li>• Latino Services</li> <li>• Legal Services</li> <li>• Operations and Community Services</li> <li>• Agency Performance Team (APT) Monitoring</li> <li>• Quality Assurance</li> <li>• Office of Child and Family Policy</li> <li>• Support Services</li> </ul>
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<p>7) The right, at any time during which a child is placed with the foster parent, to receive additional or necessary information that is relevant to the child's care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caseworker training in all information to be disclosed</li> <li>• Description of how caseworkers are held accountable for sharing the information</li> </ul>	<p><b>Caseworkers are trained in initial training</b> as to what information can or cannot be disclosed. Grand Rounds staff training is another avenue that deals with how <b>caseworkers are held accountable for sharing information</b> and deals with confidentiality and information to be disclosed. Additionally, the Southern Region has legal counsel available to provide consultation to field staff and supervisors regarding issues of confidentiality.</p> <p>The Southern Region currently utilizes a good practice policy that encourages its caseworkers to maintain a line of open communication with foster parents. It is the expectation that caseworkers share relevant information with foster parents concerning foster children in their care on an on-going basis. Caseworkers may share ongoing relevant information with foster parents about the child via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Documented phone conversations with foster parents.</li> <li>* Documented monthly face to face home visits with foster parents</li> <li>* Regular scheduled Administrative Case Review (ACR) meetings</li> <li>* Documented case staffing concerning a foster child</li> <li>* Quarterly Child and Family Team meetings</li> <li>* Inter-Ethnic Placement Act (IEPA) Matching Tool being utilized</li> </ul> <p>The Southern Region utilizes a placement protocol as one method to ensure foster parent's rights as to what information may and should be shared about a foster child in their care.</p> <p>Supervisory conferences with caseworkers are one way that caseworkers are held accountable for sharing information with the foster parents.</p> <p>Caseworkers are also accountable to ensure each child's folder follows the child throughout his/her placement history.</p> <p>New caseworkers are given an overview of PRIDE, which explains the expectations of foster parents on confidentiality.</p>
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<p>8) The right at the time of placement with the foster parent to receive in writing the medical history of the child, educational history, a copy of the child's portion of the service plan, and other relevant background information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The agency or DCFS region has clear rules and procedures as to what information to share and how to share it with foster parents.</li> <li>• Staff are trained in all pertinent policies and procedures.</li> <li>• There is a description of how caseworkers are held accountable for sharing the information.</li> </ul>	<p>The Regional Administrator or designee <b>has provided</b> this information to all staff, as outlined in Public Act 94-1010.</p> <p>Family Development Specialists (FDS's) will share this information, by <b>providing a copy of the Policy Guide</b>, with foster parents during their licensing monitoring visits.</p> <p>This <b>type of training</b> occurs during staffings, team meetings, regional meetings, supervisory conferences, Regional Quality Council (RQC) meetings, and through the DCFS training unit.</p> <p>CFS 600-4, Sharing Information with the Caregiver, is now used to ensure this right is being met. Foster parents are provided with a copy of this form at the time of the child's placement.</p>
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<p>9) The right to be notified of scheduled meetings and staffing concerning the foster child in order to actively participate in the case planning and decision-making process regarding the child, including individual service planning meetings, administrative case reviews, interdisciplinary staffing, and individual educational planning; the right to be informed of decisions made by the courts or the child welfare agency concerning the child; the right to provide input concerning the plan of services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster parents notified and encouraged to participate in all meetings and staffings about foster children in their care</li> <li>• Foster parents informed of decisions made by agencies and courts</li> <li>• Foster parents encouraged to give input into case planning and input is given full consideration</li> <li>• Foster parents encouraged to communicate with all child team members</li> </ul>	<p><b>Foster Parents are notified and encouraged to participate in all meetings and staffings about foster children in their care by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffings, Integrated Assessments (IA), Child and Youth Investment Team (CAYIT) meetings and Child and Family Team Meetings—the Southern Region holds permanency workers to the Best Practice expectation of notifying and including foster parents in Case Staffings and Child and Family Team Meetings concerning their foster children. The additional expectation is that all team members involved in the foster child’s case have a right to share information relevant to the care of the foster child on a need to know basis. Caseworkers are also expected to engage foster parents in an on-going mutual exchange when scheduling such activities as face-to-face foster home and sibling visits.</li> <li>• Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) may accompany foster parents to Case Staffings and Child and Family Team Meetings, if the foster parent chooses to invite them.</li> </ul> <p><b>Foster Parents are informed of decisions made by agencies and courts</b> through a variety of measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Court proceedings---the assigned caseworker in collaboration with the court-liaison assures that a child’s foster parents’ names are submitted to the juvenile court clerk. (This is documented in case notes.) The Juvenile Court Clerk data enters foster parents’ data that assures that the child’s foster parents are placed on a notification list of parties who have an interest on behalf of the foster child. Foster parents are notified regarding court activities concerning their specific foster child. When the agency or court receives the information the permanency worker contacts the foster parents.</li> <li>• Administrative Case Review (ACR)---the assigned case worker and the regional ACR unit collaborate to assure that a child’s foster parents receive written notification, via US Mail, three to four weeks prior to ACR activities concerning their foster child.</li> <li>• It is the expectation that foster parents receive a courtesy phone call from the caseworker to <b>inform foster parents of decisions made by the agency and Court</b>. All information shared regarding the agency and court decisions are documented in the child’s record by the placement worker.</li> <li>• Foster parents can request that they appear in court on behalf of the child's best interest. Foster parents request through the child's worker or Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) to be heard in court. If the foster parents are denied the right to be heard in court, the foster parent can file a "writ of mandamus" so they can have a voice in court.</li> </ul>
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<p>Right 9 (con't)</p> <p>for the child and to have that input given full consideration in the same manner as information presented by any other professional on the team, including therapists, physicians, and teachers.</p>		<p><b>Foster parents are encourage to give input into case planning</b> by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster parents in the Southern Region are strongly urged to be active participants in all ACR's relating to the child in their care. Workers and Review Administrators schedule the reviews when foster parents can attend and have input in the case planning. If foster parents cannot feasibly be present for the reviews, the worker and the reviewer facilitate a conference call so the family has crucial input.</li> </ul> <p><b>Foster parents are encouraged to communicate with all child team members.</b></p> <p>The Southern Region believes that foster parents are critical members of the Child Welfare Team. They encourage on-going open communication between staff and the foster parent.</p> <p>Workers meet with the foster families in their home at least once a month and encourage telephone contact when information is needed or to be shared by any team member. Foster parents are encouraged to participate in school staffings and to transport and participate in any counseling that involves the child. Foster parents are also encouraged to be an active participant in the CAYIT and IA process.</p>
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<p>10) The right to be given, in a timely and consistent manner, any info. a caseworker has regarding the child and the child's family, which is pertinent to the care and needs of the child and the making of a permanency plan for the child. Disclosure of info. concerning the child's family shall be limited to the information that is essential for understanding the needs of and providing care to the child in order to protect the rights of the child's family. When a positive relationship exists between the foster parent and the child's family, the child's family may consent to disclosure of additional info.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A description is given to foster parents at intake, and a prescribed method of disclosing information is utilized</li> <li>• Ongoing sharing of information that is pertinent to the well-being and health of the child</li> </ul>	<p>A <b>description of the child is given to the foster parents</b> at the initial intake by giving the foster parents verbal information that is pertinent to the care and needs of the child, along with a Child's Folder, which contains a face sheet with descriptive information about the child, the 906, health passport, reason for child placement, medical card, and the results of the initial medical screening. The <b>prescribed method</b> for disclosing this information is: placing workers will explain documents, answer questions, give whatever information the worker may have at their disposal regarding the child, as well as, relevant information about the child's family. <b>See also RIGHT 8</b></p> <p>The Southern Region has a Best Practice expectation that requires its caseworkers to provide foster parents access to information relevant to the care of their foster child. The sharing of pertinent information with foster parents is considered an ongoing mutual process throughout the foster child's placement. The quality of this information sharing process is monitored on a formal level during caseworkers and supervisor conferences. Caseworkers document their efforts to share pertinent information via the child's case record.</p> <p>In the Southern Region foster parents expect open and honest communication regarding a description of the foster child at intake with the placement worker. Information that is pertinent to the well being of the child's placement needs shall be disclosed at the time of placement. <b>The worker shares all on-going information related to the well-being and health of the child</b> to the foster parent so that they can continue to meet the child's needs. Workers actively encourage positive relationships between foster parents and the child's bio family by the use of Child and Family Teams to allow for improvement in the quality and quantity of information shared. Because permanency and best interest is the goal of the Department, open communication is practiced.</p> <p>Foster families are encouraged to transport and participate in the child's medical and clinical appointments. The information and the Healthworks documents will be transferred to the worker to be part of the permanent record for DCFS.</p>
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<p>11) The right to be given reasonable written notice of (i) any changes in a child's case plan, (ii) plans to terminate the placement of the child with the foster parent, and (iii) the reasons for the change or termination in placement. The notice shall be waived only in cases of a court order or when the child is determined to be at imminent risk of harm.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 day notice (not applicable for movements involving imminent risk)</li> <li>• Notice in writing</li> <li>• Appeal, including emergency review process, is given to foster parent</li> </ul>	<p><b>Foster parents receive from the placement worker a 14-day notice</b> if the Department plans on moving a child. This letter must contain the date of the anticipated removal and the reasons why the decision to move the child has been made. The exception to this notice is if the child is in <b>imminent risk</b> or the court has decided that the child must move. Caseworkers can only take actions or make decisions for removal of a child after they have consulted with and received approval from their immediate supervisor.</p> <p>The 14-day <b>notice</b> (CFS 151B, <u>Notice of Decision Form</u>) is sent to the Foster Parent <b>in writing</b>.</p> <p>When the 14-day notification letter is mailed to the foster family, it must also contain a notice of <b>Right to Appeal brochure</b> (which includes the <b>clinical placement review process</b>). In addition, foster parents may request a clinical review to determine the best interest of the child.</p> <p>All critical decisions such as those mentioned above must be documented in the case file to ensure that parties being affected have been properly notified and included in the process. Foster parents receive information about this process during Foster Pride training.</p>
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<p>12) The right to be notified in a timely and complete manner of all court hearings, including the notice of the date and time of the court hearing, the name of the judge or hearing officer hearing the case, the location of the hearing, and the court docket number of the case; and the right to intervene in court proceedings or to seek mandamus under the Juvenile Court Act of 1969.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Method for notifying foster parents of hearings and their right to be heard</li> <li>• Description of how caseworkers are held accountable for notifying foster parents</li> </ul>	<p>As previously referenced in Right 9, the Southern Region ensures foster parents <b>rights to timely notification</b> of court hearings concerning their foster children through communication between the assigned permanency worker and foster parent.</p> <p>Foster parents <b>receive notification of all upcoming court dates</b>. This information is given to the foster family prior to the scheduled court date.</p> <p>Foster Parents are apprised of their <b>right to be heard</b> during court proceedings by the Foster Family Handbook (section 2), Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS), caseworkers, etc.</p> <p>In those instances where the foster parent is not present at court, <b>caseworkers will document notification of all court hearings to foster parents</b> in the child's service file. <b>Caseworkers are held accountable</b> through job performance and periodic reviews with their supervisor.</p>
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<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Method for checking past placement records, when possible</li> <li>• Process for determining best interest regarding placement decision</li> </ul>	<p>The Southern Region utilizes the following <b>methods for checking past placement records</b> to ensure foster parents are considered as a placement option for foster children re-entering the system who were formerly placed in their care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When foster children re-enter the system the assigned placing worker ensures that a <b>search is conducted on the Department's CM07 screen</b>. The CM07 screen and the Case Assignment Payment Unit (CAPU) provide data relevant to a foster child's previous placement history.</li> <li>• The assigned placement worker or placing worker consults with those persons having past knowledge of the child's previous placements (i.e. Family Development Unit, etc.)</li> <li>• <b>Investigators and Placement workers discuss previous placement history with verbal children</b> and explore the relationship with each of the previous foster families and document how a family selected is in the child's best interest.</li> <li>• Previous Investigators and Placement workers may also be consulted for additional information about a child's previous placements.</li> </ul> <p>Southern Region's <b>process for determining best interest regarding placement decisions</b> includes use of Inter-Ethic Placement Act (IEPA) Matching Tool. This tool determines whether or not a foster parent is willing and capable of accommodating the child or sibling group and whether or not they are to be considered for permanency.</p> <p>Supervisors of placement workers are enforcing the "Best Practice" policy to make sure that former foster parents are to be considered for children previously in care. Former placements are documented in the child's case file. If the former placement was a positive experience, effort is put in force to replace the child in that home, if at all possible.</p> <p>When a child is returned home from a private agency foster home placement, and replacement occurs, the former home will be considered so the child will suffer less trauma.</p>
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<p>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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation that an internal appeals system has been established and description of how it prohibits retaliation</li> <li>• Process for accessing the external DCFS appeals system, when necessary</li> </ul>	<p>The Southern Region has adopted a grievance process as its internal appeals system for foster parents to contest agency decisions considered violations of the Foster Parent Law.</p> <p>Foster parents are given a brochure that explains the Southern Region grievance process. This process begins with an informal discussion of the issue between the foster parent and caseworker, with the assistance of the Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) and the caseworker's supervisor if necessary. If the parties cannot reach an agreement informally, the foster parent has the right to file a formal grievance, using the Formal Grievance Form (See Attachment Section). This form provides a method for the foster parent to communicate the alleged violation of the Foster Parent Law as well as their desired resolution to the problem. Foster parents must submit this form to the caseworker's supervisor within 45 days of the incident that prompted the grievance. The foster parent's grievance is first heard at the supervisor's level, with grievances not resolved advancing to the next level of management, from supervisor to Placement Manager, to Assistant Regional Administrator (ARA), to the Regional Administrator (RA). The matter may be resolved at any of these levels, with the resolution documented on a Resolution Form. The RA is the final authority in the grievance process. Decisions on the grievance must be reached within 30 days of the arrival of the grievance at the applicable DCFS office. <b>Retaliation is prohibited, and diminished</b> by the above multi-layered process. In the event of a perceived retaliation to a grievance, the foster parent will contact the FPSS Lead who will staff the situation with the Licensing Supervisor and Foster Care Licensing Manager.</p> <p><b>The Southern Region ensures foster parent's rights to be informed about the external DCFS appeal process</b> by taking the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local field offices stock and maintain adequate supplies of the brochures entitled "<u>The Services Appeal Process Form CFS-1050-32.</u>" Field offices are also encouraged to display the service appeal brochures in manners that are readily accessible to foster parents and the customers they served. Service appeal brochures may be distributed to foster parents as supplementary information during Foster PRIDE Training.</li> </ul> <p>The <b>service appeal process</b> is a two-step process.</p> <p>The first step in the process is mediation, which is a meeting open to all parties affected by the decision being appealed, to attempt to reach agreement on the issue in dispute with a mediator who assists the parties in resolving issues and drawing up an agreement. If the issue is not resolved through mediation, the next step is the fair hearing.</p> <p>At a <b>fair hearing</b> the Administrative Law Judge conducts a hearing in which the Department and all parties may present evidence supporting their position. The Administrative Law Judge then makes a</p>
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Right 14 (con't)		<p>recommendation to the Director of the Department based on the evidence presented at the hearing. The burden of proof shall be on the Department to show by a preponderance of the evidence that the decision made was in the best interest of the child, in accordance with professional social work standards and Department administrative rules.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This information is also in the Foster Family Handbook (Section 8), which is given to all foster parents, and is available to all foster parents on the DCFS website; <a href="http://www.state.il.us/dcfs">www.state.il.us/dcfs</a> .</li> <li>• The Council supports the Southern Region's method of informing foster parents with respect to their appeal rights through use of PRIDE training. In addition the Council recommends dissemination of the <i>Conflict Resolution Between Foster Parents and Caseworker</i> (see Attachment Section). This document addresses internal appeals as well as external appeals and is disseminated by FPSS's, trainers, licensing workers and supervisors.</li> </ul>
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<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training/ brochure is available on the Foster Parent Hotline and the Office of the Inspector General (OIG)</li> </ul>	<p>The Southern Region utilizes the CFS-1050-32, <b>Service Appeal Brochure</b>, as one means of educating foster parents so they may make an informed decision about the appeal process. In addition to containing detailed information on the service appeal process, this brochure also provides foster parents the address and toll free number for the Advocacy Office. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) toll-free hotline number and information is <b>distributed to foster parents during PRIDE Training</b> in the form of supplementary information. This information is contained in the Foster Family Handbook, which has been provided to all current foster parents.</p> <p>The Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigates allegations of misconduct and violations of rules, policies and procedures by employees, foster parents or contractors. The Office also investigates the death of a child when abuse or neglect is the suspected cause.</p> <p>The Office of Inspector General (OIG) addresses and phone numbers are listed below:</p> <table data-bbox="621 597 1482 764"> <tr> <td>2240 W. Ogden Avenue, 1st Floor Chicago, IL 60612 (Toll Free) 800-722-9124 (Phone) 312-433-3000 (Fax) 312-433-3032</td> <td>4 W. Old State Capitol Plaza Springfield, IL 62701 (Toll Free) 800-722-9124 (Phone) 217-524-0074 (Fax) 217-557-8843</td> </tr> </table>	2240 W. Ogden Avenue, 1st Floor Chicago, IL 60612 (Toll Free) 800-722-9124 (Phone) 312-433-3000 (Fax) 312-433-3032	4 W. Old State Capitol Plaza Springfield, IL 62701 (Toll Free) 800-722-9124 (Phone) 217-524-0074 (Fax) 217-557-8843
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## **FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES	CRITERIA FOR ENSURING EACH FOSTER PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES	THE SOUTHERN REGION'S CURRENT OR PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION METHODS TO ENSURE CRITERIA FOR FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES
<p>1) The responsibility to openly communicate and share information about the child with other members of the child welfare team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training on type and importance</li> </ul>	<p>The Southern Region assists foster parents with their responsibilities to openly share information about their foster children with team members by providing them <b>FOSTER/ADOPT PRIDE</b> pre-service and <b>PRIDE</b> in-service training.</p> <p>Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan Training is offered annually to workers and foster parents. This co-training covers Rights and Responsibilities and highlights child specific communication expectations.</p> <p>Service Planning, Integrated Assessment (IA), Child and Youth Investment Team (CAYIT) and Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's) all serve as opportunities for workers/supervisors to share specific communication expectations.</p>

<p>2) The responsibility to respect the confidentiality of information concerning foster children and their families and act appropriately within applicable confidentiality laws and regulations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial and ongoing training on importance of confidentiality</li> <li>• Laws and regulations available to foster parents</li> </ul>	<p>The Southern Region collaborates with Division of Training and Development Services to assist and support foster parents regarding their responsibilities as licensed providers. The Southern Region offers foster parents a variety of <b>initial and ongoing</b> trainings to help them understand their roles in safeguarding the importance of confidential information concerning foster children and their bio-families. The concept of confidentiality for new foster parents is being re-enforced through pre-service PRIDE training.</p> <p>Confidentiality is an important part of the foster parent’s responsibility and is part of the Licensing Standards Section 402.24. This is reviewed on an <b>ongoing basis</b> at each foster home licensing visit.</p> <p>In addition to local <b>trainings</b> through support groups, the Region offers periodic training on confidentiality.</p> <p><b>The current policy on laws and regulations regarding confidentiality is available and disseminated</b> by the Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS), through PRIDE training, the Foster Family Handbook, DCFS web site; <a href="http://www.state.il.us/dcfs">www.state.il.us/dcfs</a>, and other trainings.</p>
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<p>3) The responsibility to advocate for children in the foster parent's care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational advocacy training available</li> <li>• Court training available</li> <li>• Service appeal brochures and training available</li> <li>• Encouragement to participate in staffings, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), Child and Youth Investment Teams (CAYIT's), Integrated Assessment (IA), case conferences and court hearings</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Southern Region actively encourages, assists and supports foster parents to advocate</b> for children in their care by taking the following measures:</p> <p>The <b>Educational Advocacy Training</b> is mandatory for all licensed foster parents. Training is made available in conjunction with the completion of the Foster/Adopt Pride Training.</p> <p>Educational advisors are available throughout the Southern Region. The advisor services are available to workers and parents who are advocating for educational services. Information regarding access to the educational advisors is placed in the OUR KIDS section of <i>Families Now and Forever</i> newsletter on an annual basis.</p> <p><b>Court training</b> is addressed in the pre-service training. The Foster Family Handbook also addresses the Court system. This information is found in Section 2 of the Handbook that is distributed in Pre-service PRIDE session 2.</p> <p>The <b>Service Appeal Process</b> is discussed in the Foster/Adopt Pride <b>Training</b> and is also addressed in the Foster Family Handbook under Section 8 pages 49-51.</p> <p><b>Service Appeal brochures are available</b> as a PRIDE handout, via caseworkers, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), and in each field office.</p> <p><b>Participation in Staffings, ACR's, Child and Youth Investment Team (CAYIT), Integrated Assessment (IA), case conferences and court hearings is encouraged by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notification of ACR's <b>by the ACR Unit.</b></li> <li>• Notification of <b>court hearings</b> by the caseworker as discussed in Right #12.</li> <li>• Notification of <b>CAYIT</b> by caseworker as discussed in Right #1.</li> <li>• Notification of <b>IA</b> by the Intake Coordinator.</li> <li>• Monthly contact with the Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS).</li> <li>• Routine communication with Placement Worker (in-person, phone, letter, etc.)</li> <li>• <b>During the 9<sup>th</sup> Session of PRIDE the trainers, caseworkers, investigators, licensing staff, regional nurse, adoption workers, etc. reinforce the importance of Foster Parent participation in staffings, ACR's, CAYITS, IA's, case conferences and court hearings.</b></li> <li>• As stated in the Permanency Initiative, Policy Guide 98.1, the Southern Region ensures that caseworkers provide the foster parents a monthly face-to-face consultation.</li> </ul>
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<p>4) The responsibility to treat children in the foster parent's care and the children's families with dignity, respect, and consideration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial and ongoing training on this topic</li> <li>• Monitoring by staff charged with case management</li> </ul>	<p>The Southern Region utilizes <b>initial training</b> on the significance of the birth family in Foster/Adopt Pre-Service. Foster parents are trained to realize that birth families are significant players on the Child Welfare Team. Because children have a biological connection, acceptance of the family is important to the child to be able to build high self-esteem for the child needing placement. <b>Ongoing</b> training is provided through Module 5, <i>SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES</i>. This 9-hour module is offered throughout the Region on a regular basis, as budget allows.</p> <p>Caseworkers, per Department Policy, are <b>required to monitor</b> the foster children. The foster parent must be visited face-to-face one time a month for the purpose of gathering information and at these visits caseworkers interview children privately to ensure they are being treated with dignity, respect and consideration by the foster parent.</p> <p>Caseworkers meet with the birth family and the foster family to enhance a working relationship that reflects <b>dignity, respect and consideration</b> for all team members. Foster Families are encouraged to work with the biological family and participate in Child and Family Team Meetings when appropriate.</p>
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<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing mutual assessment method</li> <li>• Training based on assessments</li> <li>• Placements based on strengths</li> <li>• Support needs addressed</li> </ul>	<p>During the initial licensing assessment foster families assist the Family Development Specialist (FDS) in determining the age range and capacity that best suits their family. This information is then utilized to <b>mutually assess</b> what types of children will best fit into the home and what type of training may be needed, based on the foster families perceived and identified strengths and needs. During the foster home licensing visits this information is reviewed again to ensure accuracy.</p> <p>Foster Parents are encouraged to attend <b>trainings</b>, conferences, classes, etc., that address the areas the Foster Parents have identified through the <b>assessment process</b> as areas of need. Based on the assessment, workers encourage foster parents to enroll in PRIDE In-Service (modules) or to enroll in outside classes to become more competent in areas of need.</p> <p>Through the continuing Quality Improvement (QI) activities of the Foster Care Licensing Unit current foster parents and foster parents leaving service are mailed satisfaction surveys requesting input regarding the usefulness of training provided and/or additional needs.</p> <p>The Southern Region works to create an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect to express their right to say “no” to a placement during stressful times.</p> <p>The foster parents impose limitations (<b>based on strengths</b>) for themselves on the acceptance of a new placement. Foster parents are an essential team player when placements occur, and through open communication with their worker, they are open and assertive in obtaining services and skills necessary to be competent foster parents.</p> <p>Workers also utilize Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS), SASS, System of Care (SOC), and many other <b>available supports</b> to enhance the foster parent's skills and competence. Foster parents are encouraged to be open to utilizing services offered to secure a placement. With the revised customer satisfaction survey for renewing caregivers, the Southern Region gathers information from a sample of families annually related to the availability and comfort level in requesting identified support services. Action plans are developed when appropriate.</p>
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<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affiliations with foster parent associations are encouraged and facilitated</li> <li>• Internal support groups encouraged, and information provided to foster parents</li> </ul>	<p>Foster parents <b>are encouraged to engage themselves in Foster Parent Association meetings in their geographic area</b> and also to be involved in the Illinois Foster Parent Association (IFPA). IFPA works collectively with DCFS and private agencies to support and assess the needs of foster parents. Local offices are encouraged to <b>facilitate</b> support groups and Foster Parent Associations.</p> <p>Foster PRIDE trainers and Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS's) provide prospective foster parents supplementary information regarding Foster Parent Associations they may join as a means of on-going support.</p> <p>Family Development Specialists (FDS's) and FPSS's advise foster parents of any organizations in their areas.</p> <p><b>Internal support groups</b> such as coffees, teas, picnics, special events, foster parent appreciation dinners, state fair, and volunteer recognition dinners are encouraged and <b>information is provided</b> through various avenues. Contact information for support groups is published in the Our Kids section of the <i>Families Now and Forever</i> newsletter.</p>
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<p>7) The responsibility to assess the foster parent's on-going individual training needs and take actions to meet those needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Method and tool for assessing general training needs of foster parents</li> <li>• Process for providing for identified needs</li> </ul>	<p>The Southern Region's <b>method and tools for assessing general training needs of foster parents</b> is accomplished in several ways: 1) Mutual assessment between foster parents and Family Development Specialists (FDS's), 2) Needs assessments (via Foster Parent Survey) mailed out to foster parents asking for in-put on training needs, 3) Needs assessments (Staff Survey) to field staff asking for in-put on training needs for foster parents, and 4) Quality Improvement (QI) subcommittee on Training (which includes foster parents representatives) to help develop needed and desired training for foster parents on a regional basis.</p> <p><b>Identified training needs</b> are provided through the 12 PRIDE in-service modules that are held throughout the region during the year. These modules provide a broad base of learning for foster parents. Additional trainings identified by foster parents, field staff and the Division of Training have included CPR and First Aid, Understanding the Foster Parent Law, and Substance Abuse and Families. Other training needs are met through a lending library offering a wide variety of information through books, audios, and videos. The local Foster Care Licensing Units have smaller collections of library materials that the FDS will suggest to particular foster parents for skill building, problem solving, or added knowledge on a particular subject.</p> <p>The Southern Region Training Coordinator, the Regional Quality Council (RQC) and the Regional Foster Parent Advisory Board play important roles in the coordination and implementation of new training. The Southern Region holds meetings with representatives from Central Office Training Division, Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS's), and the Foster Care Licensing Supervisor to assess the effectiveness of current training, identify issues, and make suggestions for training development.</p>
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<p>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 disruption occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Method of early identification of children at risk of disrupting or creating disruption in the family</li> <li>• Training in purpose and availability of stabilization services</li> <li>• Support for foster children and family members if preventive strategies fail</li> </ul>	<p><b>Methods of early identification of children at risk:</b>  Foster parents are advised in Foster/Adopt PRIDE training of the stresses that being a foster family will present. Foster parents are trained through PRIDE to recognize early symptoms, what behaviors and red flags that may indicate possible disruption prior to acting out behavior and signs of placement disruption to foster family placements. Foster Families are encouraged to take advantage of respite and <b>System of Care (SOC)</b> services, when appropriate.</p> <p>The SOC worker should notify the child’s caseworker that respite is needed. Remove the child from the home temporarily for a “cooling off” period if removing the child appears to be the only immediate solution available.</p> <p>Foster parents are <b>instructed</b> through the Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) or caseworker that they have the ability to access <b>SOC Services</b> when they feel behaviors are escalating and they need help in preventing a disruption from the foster placement. When the child’s caseworker is unable to resolve a crisis, the caseworker and foster parent can access the SOC provider, who is required to respond to the foster parent within 60 minutes by phone and 4 hours in person. The SOC Program is available on a 24-hour basis by calling 1-800-345-9049. Phone numbers for each local SOC agency provider are also provided.</p> <p>If a foster child is out of control, a danger to himself/herself, or other members of the family, or in distress beyond capacity to manage, foster parent can access SOC or SASS services through the 24-hour Crisis Line. There is no limitation to how often you can request his help. The DCFS <b>SOC program</b> is available 24-hours, 7 days a week to help any foster parent in a crisis situation.</p> <p>Prospective foster parent applicants are <b>being educated</b> about the traumatic affects of placement disruptions through a combination of Foster PRIDE Training and consultation visits by their designated Family Development Specialist (FDS). <b>Trainers</b> in the Southern Region are providing new foster parents <b>handouts</b> about how to access <b>SOC services</b>.</p> <p>The Foster Family Handbook Section 5 (Health Services) Page 18 identifies crisis numbers and information on how to access services.</p> <p>Foster families have Foster Family Handbooks available to them at all times, and when they are unable to find their handbook, the FPSS or caseworker will assist them</p>
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Resp 8 (con't)		<p>with numbers and protocol for receiving crisis services.</p> <p>Assigned placement workers are required to discuss with foster parents their comfort and capability levels with the child's behavior to ensure the placement is stable and to reduce the risk of possible disruption. FPSS's, caseworkers and FDS's are there to provide ongoing support to the foster family</p> <p><b>If preventive strategies fail</b>, FPSS's, FDS's, and caseworkers are available to offer <b>support to the foster family</b> in order to preserve the foster care resource. Foster families can receive family counseling services after a disruption if desired. The Southern Region holds its caseworkers to good practice expectations that make it a prerequisite that caseworkers recognize and assist foster parents in accessing SOC services. Workers are particularly required to assist foster parents in those instances where foster children are presenting behavioral issues that might lead to the disruption of their foster placement.</p>
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<p>9) The responsibility to know the impact foster parenting has on individuals and family relationships; and the responsibility to endeavor to minimize, as much as possible, any stress resulting from foster parenting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training/methods to recognize and minimize stress factors</li> <li>• Respite available</li> <li>• “Voluntary hold” methods explained and understood</li> <li>• Counseling and other supports available</li> </ul>	<p>To <b>recognize and minimize stress factors</b>, the Southern Region provides training on stress through various trainers and caseworkers. Foster parents are also encouraged to attend local community Health Fairs, Foster Parent support groups, and Local Area Networks (LANs) to learn more about stress.</p> <p>As Foster Parents and caseworkers recognize stress levels accelerating in the home, it is their responsibility to access <b>Respite Care Services</b> to preserve the placement. <b>Respite Care Services are available to all foster parents.</b></p> <p><b>“Voluntary hold” methods are explained during initial and ongoing training.</b> Foster Parents are encouraged to recognize their limitations and to realize their stress and the need to stabilize their family before taking on any new responsibilities. When the family decides to go on voluntary hold they are expected to call their licensing worker and request to go on or come off of the hold list. Caseworkers may also counsel a family about utilizing voluntary hold, respite or other support services as the need arises.</p> <p><b>Counseling and other support services</b> are available to foster children as well as foster families at no expense to the foster family. Foster families, foster children or caseworkers may request to utilize these supports. Supports available include, but are not limited to, the Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS), SASS, System of Care (SOC), camps, respite, wrap-around, etc.</p>
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<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster parents informed of events/activities that acknowledge and support foster parents and participation is encouraged</li> <li>• Training in the public relations aspect of fostering parenting is made available</li> </ul>	<p>The Resource Unit sends <b>notification of special events</b> to all foster parents in the Southern Region and encourages their attendance in these events. Individual offices hold periodic events, such as Christmas/Thanksgiving potlucks and foster parent appreciation activities. Foster parent support groups throughout the region support this effort also. There is an annual foster/adoptive parent picnic held at the Du Quoin State Fair. Various recognitions and awards are given at this event.</p> <p>The Southern Region recognizes and values foster parents as very important role models in promoting foster parenting in a positive light. Staff development personnel are utilized in the Southern Region to <b>train foster parents in the public relations aspect of foster parenting</b> including media strategies for positive public relations.</p> <p>Foster parents receive information through PRIDE, at initial licensing and renewals on what information the foster parent may release and what to defer to caseworkers for publication. This information is also available in the Foster Family Handbook, Section 8.</p> <p>Foster parents receive recognition through the <i>Families Now and Forever</i> newsletter and also through the media of the surrounding cities.</p>
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<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and co-training with staff is required</li> <li>• Regular meetings with other team members are held and encouraged</li> <li>• Foster parents have a recognized voice within the agency's management organization</li> </ul>	<p>The Southern Region assists prospective foster parents and licensed foster parents to understand their roles and responsibilities through the following <b>training methods</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster PRIDE Training</li> <li>• In-service training</li> <li>• <b>Co-training</b> for PRIDE is delivered with agency personnel and a foster parent</li> <li>• The Family Development Specialist's (FDS's) are part of the panel for Session 9 of the Foster/Adopt Pride, which is "Making an Informed Decision".</li> </ul> <p><b>Regular participation is encouraged in the following ways and foster parents have a recognized voice within the agency's management by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster parents participate in the Regional Quality Improvement (QI) process through membership on the Regional Quality Council (RQC) and field office site councils. Foster parents are also a part of the team building task force with the Regional Administrator (RA).</li> <li>• Foster parents are equal members on the Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council.</li> <li>• Foster Parents have a voice in the RQC Foster Care Issues Sub-committee.</li> </ul>
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<p>12) The responsibility to know and, as necessary, fulfill the foster parent's responsibility to serve as a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act; and the responsibility to know the child welfare agency's policy regarding allegations that foster parents have committed child abuse or neglect and applicable administrative rules and procedures governing investigations of those allegations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training, initial and ongoing, including Sexually Abusive Children and Youth reporting responsibility</li> <li>• Written foster parent acknowledgment / contract</li> <li>• Training involving allegations against foster parents and the applicable rules and regulations that govern the investigation of the allegations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Initial and ongoing training and reporting responsibility to also include Children with Sexual Behavior Problems (CSBP)</b> is addressed with the Southern Region foster parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through an overview of the investigative process during Session 8 of the Foster-Adopt Pride training.</li> <li>• DCFS workers are invited to Session 9, the graduation session of Foster-Adopt Pride to relay expertise information to new foster families.</li> <li>• Module 9- Managing the Impact of Placement on Your family is a 6-hour in-service training available in both sections of the Southern Region. <u>The Training Unit</u> provides training information that is available with times, dates and locations of the training.</li> <li>• Foster parents are provided training (in pre-service and at home PRIDE connection material) <b>on their responsibility to report</b> unusual incidents that would include sexually abusive behaviors of children and youth by completing the Behavioral Log, CFS 534-1.</li> <li>• In addition to on-going PRIDE training, the Southern Region utilizes assigned Family Development Specialist (FDS) workers to assist foster parents in understanding their mandated reporting status.</li> </ul> <p><b>Written foster parent acknowledgment:</b>  FDS's are initially required to review with each foster parent an <b>Acknowledgment of Mandated Reporter Status</b>, (also known as a CANTS 22B). Assigned FDS also reviews the CANTS 22B with foster parents during their annual and renewal visits. Foster parents must sign the CANTS 22B in order to maintain their foster home license. The form is then maintained in each foster family's individual licensing file. Foster parents all have Foster Family Handbooks and Mandated Reporting is further discussed in Section 2, page 15.</p> <p><b>Training involving allegations against foster parents:</b> Investigations of foster parents must be treated the same as anyone else. Every attempt is made to expedite the investigation (DCFS Procedure, 300.70) Foster parents have the right to know the exact allegation made, the circumstances surrounding the allegation and the right to offer names of people who will substantiate the foster parent's story. Foster parents also have the right and responsibility to seek advice prior to questioning or to have an attorney or representative present during questioning.</p> <p>In addition, Foster Parents are trained during the 9<sup>th</sup> Session of Foster/Adopt PRIDE regarding allegations and <b>applicable rules and regulations that govern the</b></p>
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Resp 12 (con't)		<b>investigation.</b> This is further discussed in the “You Need to Know In Illinois” section of the PRIDE curriculum as well as in the “Mandated Reporter” booklet that is distributed. The Foster Family Handbook, section 8, also discusses Abuse and Neglect investigations.
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<p>13) The responsibility to know and receive training regarding the purpose of administrative case reviews, client service plans, and court processes, as well as any filing or time requirements associated with those proceedings; and the responsibility to actively participate in the foster parents' designated role in these proceedings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training on the importance of participating</li> <li>• Emphasis on foster parents taking an active role in planning for the permanency goal through court hearings, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Southern Region foster parents receive training on the importance of participating</b> in Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), court proceedings, and client service plans. Through pre-service, PRIDE modules, Foster Family Handbook and contact with Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) and other team members.</p> <p><b>The Southern Region puts an emphasis on foster parents taking an active role in planning for the permanency goal.</b> Foster parents in the Southern Region are part of the Child and Family Teams. They are extremely important in advocating for their children's needs. Teamwork is enforced throughout the PRIDE pre-service training and is enhanced by communication between the worker and the foster family. Foster parents provide workers with the documentation needed to attend ACR's through open-communication during home visits, telephone contacts, and attendance at the case reviews. Foster parents provide valuable information to advocate for the needs of the child in placement. By attending ACR's and court hearings, foster parents are fully knowledgeable of the progress of the family and also the permanency plans for the child toward reunification.</p>
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<p>14) The responsibility to know the child welfare agency's appeal procedure for foster parents and the rights of foster parents under the procedure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of agency's internal systems and utilization</li>   <li>• Rights of foster parents spelled out</li> </ul>	<p>The Southern Region promotes the foster parent responsibility to be <b>aware of agency's internal appeals and grievance system and how to utilize them</b> by distribution of appeals brochures through pre-service, Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS), and Family Development Specialist (FDS).</p> <p>The <b>Rights of Foster Parents are spelled out</b> in the Implementation Plan that is disseminated and available on the DCFS website at <a href="http://www.state.il.us/dcfs">www.state.il.us/dcfs</a> . A letter was sent to every Foster Parent informing them of who to contact for a complete copy of the Implementation Plan, which includes the <b>Grievance Process</b> (refer back to Right 14).</p>
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<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training provided on importance of complete records</li> <li>• Regulations/ expectations are available in writing</li> <li>• Agency provides folder, notebook, or case record for the storage and/or transportation of foster parent records</li> </ul>	<p><b>Training is provided about the importance of maintaining complete records.</b> As new children are placed the Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) meets with the family and clarifies the information required in the <b>child's folder</b> (provided by the agency). A <b>written guideline</b> is given that explains information to be contained in the sections for <b>education, medical, personal/physical maintenance, and service planning/visitation</b>. In addition foster parents are encouraged to maintain updated photographs, fingerprints and lifebooks. The Family Development Specialist (FDS) explains the importance of documentation and verifies that the documentation is current at monitoring visits.</p> <p>PRIDE trainers direct foster parents to read the "You Need to Know in Illinois" in Session 9. A licensing worker discusses the importance of maintaining complete records. A new record keeping guide for the Child Folders was developed by foster parents, licensing and management.</p>
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<p>16) The responsibility to share information, through the child welfare team, with the subsequent care giver (whether the child's parents or another substitute care giver) regarding the child's adjustment in the foster parent's home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training on this expectation is offered</li> </ul>	<p>Foster parents receive <b>training regarding the sharing of relevant information through</b> Foster/Adopt PRIDE. Family Development Specialist (FDS) reinforces the importance of sharing relevant information during their annual and renewal visits. Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) consistently reminds foster parents to share information with the child's worker.</p>
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<p>17) The responsibility to provide care and services that are respectful of and responsive to the child's cultural needs and supportive of the relationship between the child and his or her own family; the responsibility to recognize the increased importance of maintaining a child's cultural identity when the race or culture of the foster family differs from that of the foster child; and the responsibility to take action to address these issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training encouraged and made available, both initial and ongoing</li> <li>• Internal and external resources made accessible or available</li> </ul>	<p><b>Training is encouraged and made available both initially and ongoing</b> regarding cultural identity and cultural awareness is emphasized during Pride pre-service. In the Southern Region Pride trainers inform participants of the need for children in care to be knowledgeable of their cultural background and heritage</p> <p>The Southern Region has ongoing <b>internal and external training</b> available through Module 7 that is "Promoting Children's Personal and Cultural Identity". This is a 6-hour internal training and is offered throughout the Southern Region. The training schedule is provided upon request. Foster families who care for children of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds are encouraged to enroll in Module 7. In addition, they are encouraged to utilize external resources.</p>
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