

**CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICE OF BELLEVILLE DIOCESE  
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BELLEVILLE, ILLINOIS 62223  
2010 ANNUAL PLAN  
FOSTER PARENT LAW**

**The following is the 2009 annual plan addressing the agency's efforts to embrace and assist in involving foster parents through the Foster Parent Law (Public Act 89.19). The following are the efforts by Catholic Social Service to abide by the foster parent law:**

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

- a) Staff, management, and office personnel ensure the foster parent's right to be treated with dignity, respect, and as a member of the Child Welfare Team. This is achieved through one on one supervision, staff team meetings and positive reinforcement.
- b) Management ensures that all service providers in the agency treat all foster parents with respect as a child welfare member. Where policy allows, foster parents are involved in Family Meetings, Administrative Case Reviews, and Integrated Assessments.
- c) Foster Parents have access to supervisors at CSS who mediate conflicts according to the grievance policy. Foster parents receive a Foster Parent Folder with the grievance procedure at the time of licensure, re-licensure, or 6 month monitoring. The foster parent folder includes a list of Catholic Social Services' office personnel contact information.
- d) All foster parents are informed that if they are not satisfied with CSS mediation of a grievance, they can contact DCFS Advocacy Office at 800-232-3798 or 217-524-2029, for assistance with mediation.
- e) Foster Parents are given an Agreement of Understanding between Catholic Social Services and Foster Parents form that explains their rights and responsibilities as a foster parent. The foster parent and the licensing worker review the form and sign it. Foster Parents are told at the time of licensure that the licensing staff is their advocate. Licensing responds promptly to the Foster Parents issue by talking with them on the phone, holding staff meetings, or by visiting with them in their home.

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

- a) A standardized letter is sent as part of any information and/or application packet to prospective and licensed foster parents. This letter includes all requirements for licensure and/or renewal.
- b) All prospective foster parents must receive and complete 27 hours of Foster/Adopt PRIDE training. Additionally, 6 hours of Educational Advocacy training is required for re-licensure. Licensure for related only care are required to complete 6 hours of Foster/Adopt PRIDE. This training is provided through the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

- c) All foster parents are required to and reminded that they must receive 16 hours every 4 years for renewal. All CSS specialized/treatment foster parents are required to receive 30 hours of training per year. DCFS, CSS, and other agencies, offer training. Training schedules are available through various newsletters, the lending library, internet, and the CSS Licensing Specialist.
- d) CSS sends out a survey yearly and monthly to assess if foster parent training offered are meeting their needs.

**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 CARE.**

- a) All foster parents are provided with a copy of the DCFS Foster Family Handbook at PRIDE training that includes phone numbers of various agencies and support services. When a foster child is placed, the CSS case manager gives the foster parent CSS phone numbers, including after-hours emergency numbers. Foster parents receive a Foster Parent Folder with a list of phone numbers in the folder at the time of licensure, re-licensure, or 6 month monitoring.
- b) CSS case managers carry a cell phone and the foster parents with foster children are required to use the number should they need help in case of an emergency. Foster parents may utilize the emergency phone after hours. During business hours, foster parents are instructed to call the CSS office and speak to their caseworker or the supervisor on the case.
- c) All foster parents have an after hours number. The case manager has been informed of after hour's phone numbers and resources in case of an emergency.

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

- a) CSS issues monthly foster care boards checks foster parents for the days of care provided in the previous month on or as close as possible to the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.
- b) If there is a special service fee, the fee is paid to the foster parent in the regular foster care payment check of the following month in which CSS receives the money. Each foster parent is notified of the expenses that are their responsibility and what are the agency responsibilities. CSS arranges payment for respite and camp.
- c) As specified by Policy Guide 2002, Specialized Foster Care, all children have a CFS 418-J, Checklist for Children at Initial Placement. When there are instances in which the child's special needs were not known and/or documented at the time of initial assignment within the first ten days after assignment, the child's case is referred to the DCFS Specialized Gatekeeper for expedited review in accordance with the process in Section IV B. Children identified more than ten days after assignment will be referred to CAYIT to access and support the child in placement. After these children are identified and approved, a 906 is done to ensure foster parents are paid at the approved rate.
- d) CSS adheres to the policy regarding foster parent disputed payments.

- e) CSS strives to ensure that foster parents' concerns and/or questions are answered either by foster care staff or bookkeeping staff.

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

- a) Within the first forty-five days of placement the foster parent and case manager meet to construct a service plan. The case manager considers the foster parent's observations when creating the child's portion of the service plan. Foster parents input regarding progress towards the service plan goal is highly encouraged. Foster parents receive a copy of the child's portion of the service plan.
- b) CSS provides a service plan to each foster parent at the time of each administrative case review (every six months) or within 60 days of the initial placement. Foster parents who attend the ACR are asked to sign at that time. Recommendations are also summarized at this time. If the foster parents are unable to attend the ACR, they are asked to sign the service plan at their next monthly visit with the case manager.
- c) The foster parent is provided with the child's portion of the plan. Through visits and phone calls, case managers notify foster parents of changes in the service plan and permanency goals of the children in their care. If amendments are made to the service plan, they are notified and mailed a revised copy.
- d) Information in the service plan includes information about the child, communicates all special needs, and addresses all the services needed.
- e) The foster parent and case manager meet regularly to discuss progress and/or concerns regarding the child's portion of the service plan.
- f) Where policy allows, the case manager strongly encourages participation by the foster parent in a child's IEP's, ACR's, and counseling, etc.
- g) Foster parents are encouraged to participate in visitation to mentor the biological parent(s) in areas of parenting, etc. Foster Parents are required to complete the CFS 250-A, "Caregiver Self-Assessment as Reunification Prepared" to determine their readiness to participate in reunification support services. Specialized foster parents have signed the Specialized Foster Parent Placement Agreement requiring them to supervise family visits.
- h) The foster parent is encouraged to communicate with the case manager regarding the child's behavior and/or emotions before, during, and after family visitation.
- i) Foster parents are encouraged to provide ongoing support during family visitation to assist in making family visits a positive experience for everyone involved.

**6) THE RIGHT TO BE PROVIDED A FAIR, TIMELY AND IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION OF LICENSING COMPLAINT ISSUES AND BE PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE A PER-**

**SON OF THEIR CHOOSING PRESENT DURING THE INVESTIGATION AND DUE PROCESS; THE RIGHT TO BE PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO REQUEST AND RECEIVE MEDIATION AND/OR ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OF DECISIONS WHICH AFFECT LICENSING PARAMETERS; AND THE RIGHT TO HAVE DECISIONS CONCERNING A LICENSING CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN SPECIFICALLY EXPLAINED AND TIED TO THE LICENSING STANDARDS VIOLATED.**

- a) An investigation is initiated following the receipt of the CANTS 21A and investigative packet from Regional Licensing Administrator, or when a complaint is received from any other source. The investigation is initiated within 2 business days following the receipt of the complaint by interviewing the reporter, victim (foster child) and witnesses.
- b) When DCFS/CSS interviews the foster parent, he/she explains the nature of the allegations(s) and the procedures taken, and that the foster parent will be notified of the findings of the investigation, by certified letter, within 5 days following the determination. The letter informs the foster parent of the rules violated and the corrective action prescribed. If needed, CSS licensing staff works with the foster parents on a corrective plan.
- c) DCFS investigators/CSS allow anyone of the foster parents choosing to be present during the investigative interviews.
- d) In addition to the time frames stated above, the investigation is completed within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the complaint. If additional time is necessary, the foster parent is notified of the time extension.
- e) When the foster parent is notified in writing of the findings of the investigation, the corrective action is explained in the letter and the foster parent is told to contact the licensing representative or licensing supervisor (phone numbers are given) if he/she has any questions or concerns. The foster parents are also told in the letter of their right to request, in writing, an informal hearing of the findings, the request to be made to the licensing supervisor postmarked within 10 days of their notification. The right to appeal the decisions and the mediation process is fully explained and discussed with the foster parent.
- f) Licensing staff receives all updated training on procedures concerning investigation and licensing violation and educates the case management team as to these procedures. All workers are informed of the foster parents' rights, and shall adhere to them.

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

- a) All new employees receive new employee training on agency policies and procedures including confidentiality and information disclosure. The foster parent receives an "Agreement of Understanding Between CSS and Foster Parents," at the time of licensure, re-licensure, or 6 month monitoring. The agreement states –Foster Parents have the right to, "Receive additional or necessary information that is relevant to the care of the foster children."

- b) Where policy allows, foster parents are given all known information regarding the child, by agency staff. Information that is pertinent to the care and needs of the child is given in a timely and consistent manner.
- c) When foster parents attend court hearings, they may receive a copy of the court order.
- d) New case managers are required to complete the DCFS Child Welfare Licensure training.
- e) All case managers are required to complete 20 hours of Child Welfare training each year.
- f) Case managers share relevant information concerning the care and welfare of the child/children with foster parents through phone calls, initial and on-going in person contacts and written information such as service plans, medical records and letters. Documentation of the sharing of information is written in a case note for supervisory review. Case Managers are also held accountable for providing this information through obtaining the foster parents signature on service plans and participating in supervision with their supervisor.

**8) THE RIGHT TO RECEIVE INFORMATION ABOUT A CHILD TO BE PLACED IN THE HOME OF THE FOSTER PARENT, OR IMMEDIATELY AFTER WHEN THE INFORMATION IS NOT READILY AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF PLACEMENT.**

- a) Before placement, when possible, case managers provide foster parents with a written summary of information, (CFS 600-4, Sharing Information with the Caregiver) about the child to be placed in the foster home. The information given is necessary for the proper care of the child.
- b) In the case of an emergency placement, or when information is not readily available, the case manager verbally provides known information about the child to the foster parent as it becomes available.
- c) Within 10 working days of the placement, the case manager obtains written verification (CFS 600-4) from the foster parent that information pertaining to the child placed has been received. This helps to ensure case managers are held accountable to share information regarding the child.
- d) Information received by a foster parent regarding a child is approved for release by the case manager's supervisor. The information is also forwarded to the child's guardian ad litem.
- e) At a minimum, the foster parent will receive the child's medical history, educational history, the child's portion of the service plan, and any other background information necessary for the care of the child, i.e. criminal behavior, sexually problematic behaviors, behavioral problems, etc.
- f) Accountability of case managers to share relevant information is monitored through the Continuous Quality Improvement process at the agency.
- g) All new employees receive new employee training on agency policies and procedures including confidentiality and information disclosure.

**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 IN THEIR CARE, INCLUDING**

**INDIVIDUAL SERVICE PLANNING MEETINGS, ADMINISTRATIVE CASE REVIEWS, INTER-DISCIPLINARY STAFFINGS, AND INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLANNING MEETINGS; THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED OF DECISIONS MADE BY THE COURTS OR THE AGENCY CONCERNING THE CHILD; THE RIGHT TO HAVE THEIR INPUT ON THE PLAN OF SERVICES FOR A CHILD GIVEN FULL CONSIDERATION IN THE SAME MANNER AS THE 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.**

- a) DCFS or the case manager shall verbally advise or send notification of the scheduling, modification, and/or cancellation of all court hearings, ACR's, etc. to the respective foster parent within two working days of receiving the notifications.
- b) Foster parents are encouraged to participate in meetings pertaining to the child, but are not limited to; IEP's, ACR's, counseling, CAYIT, Child Family Team Meetings, etc. Foster parents receive a Foster Parent Folder with a form named "Knowing What To Do", which includes; "What to expect when you get the first call and after placement," at the time of licensure, re-licensure, or 6 month monitoring.
- c) Foster parents are encouraged to give input regarding the child's progress and/or concerns especially to the other members of the child's team, i.e. case managers, teachers, counselors.
- d) Case managers request foster parent's input and give it full consideration when it is regarding the children placed in their home.
- e) Furthermore the Primary case manager will inform the foster parents of decisions made by the courts and CSS concerning the foster child within one working week. The Educational Advocate at CSS is working closely with the foster parents and educational staff to meet the educational needs of the foster child.

**10) THE RIGHT TO BE PROVIDED IN A TIMELY AND CONSISTENT MANNER, WITH 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 WHICH 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 PARENTS AND THE CHILD'S FAMILY, THE CHILD'S FAMILY MAY CONSENT TO DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION.**

- a) CSS ensures that all case managers and foster parents receive training in confidentiality and appropriate information that may be released, and with whom that information may be shared.
- b) All information deemed appropriate to share is communicated at least every 6 months, at the time of the ACR, and more often should the situation exist.
- c) Case managers are required to visit the foster home within 3 days of receiving a new client.

- d) Case managers review the child's information with the foster parent during the first visit to the foster home.

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

- a) The case managers inform the foster parent immediately if a change in placement decision has been made and the reasons for the change.
- b) When removing a child from a foster home, the case manager gives a written 14-day notice except when the child is in imminent risk or it is court ordered. Notification is given utilizing CFS 151-A, Notification of Change of Placement.
- c) A transition plan is created for the child who is returning home, to ease the transition for everyone involved.
- d) Case managers notify foster parents in writing of the appeal process when they disagree with the decision to remove foster children from their home.

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

- a) Each foster parent is notified by the child's case manager at the in home monthly visit of all court dates, times, locations, and names of judges/G.A.L. prior to any and all hearings.
- b) Foster Parents have the right to contact the G.A.L. with any questions, concerns, or progress of the child placed in their home.
- c) All court proceedings are discussed with the foster parent before and after the date to explain the process and the results of the court date.
- d) Foster parents have access to training on appropriate intervention strategies, their rights in court, and any court related issues and legal representation. Foster Parents receive a foster family handbook at Foster/Adopt PRIDE training that includes the Juvenile Court overview.
- e) Accountability for disclosing court information to foster parents is monitored through case managers documenting the information in contact notes which are reviewed by supervisors.

**13) THE RIGHT TO BE CONSIDERED AS A PLACEMENT OPTION WHEN A FOSTER CHILD WHO WAS FORMERLY PLACED WITH THE FOSTER PARENTS IS TO BE REENTERED INTO**

**FOSTER CARE WHEN SUCH PLACEMENT WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD AND OTHER CHILDREN IN THE HOME.**

- a) Consideration is given to the availability of the foster parent, best interest of the child, and the allotted involvement at the time of the child re-entering care. Consideration is documented in a case note as to why or why not a placement is made. Case manager, supervisor, and licensing will be involved in the staffing regarding the placement decision.
- b) If the child is old enough to be part of the consideration of placement process, the child's opinion will be taken into serious consideration.
- c) A child's placement history can be accessed by the case manager, from the Department, if it is not in the child's file when considering placement possibilities.

**14) THE RIGHT TO HAVE TIMELY ACCESS TO THE EXISTING APPEALS PROCESS WITH THE CHILD'S PLACEMENT AGENCY. THE ASSERTION OF THE RIGHT TO APPEAL WILL BE FREE FROM ACTS OF HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION.**

- a) CSS continues to provide a timely system of the appeals process to the foster parents as outlined in CFS 1050-32 – The Service Appeal Process.
- b) CSS strives to reduce adversarial relationships between all members of the foster care team including the foster parents and staff. The resolutions are quick and related to the disputes at hand per DCFS and CSS Grievance Policy and Procedures.
- c) Mediation is provided if needed in resolving these issues.
- d) When appropriate, CSS advocates for foster parents' rights and concerns in the case of any disagreement or dispute with DCFS.

**15) THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED OF THE FOSTER PARENT HOTLINE ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS ACT AND ALL OF THE RIGHTS ACCORDED TO FOSTER PARENTS CONCERNING REPORTS OF MISCONDUCT BY DEPARTMENTAL EMPLOYEES, SERVICE PROVIDERS, OR CONTRACTORS, CONFIDENTIAL HANDLING OF THOSE REPORTS AND INVESTIGATION BY THE INSPECTOR GENERAL.**

- a) All prospective CSS foster parents are required to take PRIDE training. In this training they are advised and receive written information about the foster parent Advocacy Office. Foster parents receive a Foster Parent Handbook with the Advocacy phone number.
- b) CSS/DCFS educates their foster parents on the purpose of the Advocacy Office and the contact number (1-800-232-3798) through the use of the foster parent newsletters/newspapers, training, and/or support groups.
- c) All pertinent brochures, including the Office of Inspector General brochure, are available at every office and branch office.

- d) CSS case managers/licensing keep foster parents informed & informs their supervisor of any concerns relayed by the foster parent.

**The following are the efforts of Catholic Social Service to assist Foster Parents with their responsibilities as members of our child welfare team:**

**16) (1) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO OPENLY COMMUNICATE AND SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHILD WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE CHILD WELFARE TEAM.**

- a) Foster parents are provided information about periodic trainings at local Foster Parent Association meetings and through agency newsletters.
- b) Foster parents are required to attend training in order to maintain their foster parent license.
- c) Foster parents and case managers are trained in and practice a team approach to foster care. Open communication among all parties is stressed during training.

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

- a) Foster parents are given an “An Agreement of Understanding” form and are required to sign this form that addresses confidentiality.
- b) Foster parents are required to sign a “Confidentiality of Private Information” form at the time of licensure.
- c) Foster Parents receive initial training on confidentiality at Foster/Adopt PRIDE classes. Ongoing training about confidentiality is provided to foster parents through close collaboration with their case manager/licensing staff during trainings and/or home visits.

**18) (3) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER PARENT’S CARE.**

- a) Each foster parent is encouraged by the case manager to advocate for the rights of the child and to attend, when appropriate, ACRs, CAYIT meetings, family meetings, case conferences and court hearings, thereby protecting that child.
- b) Each case manager assists the foster parent in this advocacy role.
- c) One foster parent in each licensed home is required to attend EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY training which includes, but is not limited to, training in education, counseling services, and the right to be heard.
- d) Foster parents are required to receive additional training hours each year.
- e) The CSS educational liaison educates the foster parent in becoming an advocate for the child.

- f) Case managers are encouraged to participate as a Child Welfare Team member in ACR's, Family Meetings, court hearings and encouraged to participate in school activities, doctor appointments, and psychiatric and mental health meetings.
- g) CSS has an educational liaison to assist foster parents with the educational advocacy for the child.
- h) Foster parents will have access to training on the appropriate intervention strategies, their rights in court, any court related issues and legal representation.
- i) Foster parents are reminded during each ACR of the Service Appeal Process. They are also given a Service Appeal pamphlet at that time.
- j) Foster parents are encouraged to participate and are supported as a member of the Child Welfare Team during all meetings related to the child in their care.

**19) (4) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO TREAT CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER PARENT'S CARE AND THE CHILDREN'S FAMILIES WITH DIGNITY, RESPECT, AND CONSIDERATION.**

- a) Initially, all foster parents are required to complete Foster/Adopt PRIDE training which addresses the rights of children and their families and how to treat them with dignity, respect and consideration.
- b) CSS case managers and administration model dignity, respect, and consideration so that all Child Welfare Team members see appropriate interaction between staff.
- c) Supervisors, licensing staff, and case managers conduct regular team meetings to ensure foster parents, children and biological parents are treated with dignity, respect, and consideration.
- d) Foster parents are given an "Agreement of Understanding between Catholic Social Services and Foster Parents" form that describes respect and dignity of the biological parent and the foster children.
- e) Foster parent interactions are observed during regular supervision, case monitoring, and visits. Case managers meet separately with the foster children and foster parent to address their individual concerns. During this time, case managers also provide ongoing training to foster parents as to how they can enhance their ability to demonstrate dignity, respect, and consideration for children in their care.

**20) (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.**

- a) Each foster family will have semi-annual visits from the licensing staff and at least monthly visits from the case manager to assist the foster parent in assessing their own strengths in areas which guidance can be offered.

- b) CSS will work in a timely manner to provide assistance to a foster parent requesting help with their foster children in all areas. Experienced foster parents are matched with new foster parents for the purpose of mentoring and providing support.
- c) CSS in conjunction with DCFS, realizes that foster parents need respite care and therefore will work with foster parents to provide this care.
- d) A Matching Tool is completed by the case manager with the prospective foster parent to assess the appropriateness of the placement. If it is identified that the foster parent needs assistance in an area to adequately parent the child, the case managers provide or arrange for provision of training.
- e.) CSS will complete a “Foster Home Utilization Assessment” form with the foster parent at semi-annual monitoring visits that address the foster parents strengths and limitations.

**21) (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.**

- a) Each foster parent is informed, through newsletters/mailings, and encouraged to attend interagency support groups and foster parent meetings.
- b) Each foster parent is encouraged to participate in the open forum format. Experienced foster parents are matched with new foster parents for the purpose of mentoring and providing support.
- c) Foster parents are invited to give feedback and suggestions to the agency and programs through questionnaires and evaluations sent out monthly by the Director of Foster Care.
- d) CSS will make every effort to make placement based on the foster parent’s strengths.

**22) (7) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ASSESS THE FOSTER PARENT’S ONGOING INDIVIDUAL TRAINING NEEDS AND TAKE ACTION TO MEET THOSE NEEDS.**

- a) Each licensed foster parent is required to adhere to the policies for continued training mandated for foster parents. Four hours of training per year, sixteen hours total, are required for the renewal of their license. Unlicensed foster parents are contacted and encouraged to attend training and become licensed.
- b) Agency staff notifies foster parents of upcoming trainings they feel would benefit them.
- c) DCFS offers free training to foster parents and notifies them of dates by mail.
- d) CSS provides information about training modules and support groups focusing on various issues regarding foster children in care through a regular newsletter.
- e) The regular newsletter provides foster parents a web address/phone numbers so they may provide feedback.

- f) Case managers and foster parents work to strengthen areas of weakness voiced by the foster parent or witnessed by the case manager during home visits.
- g) Foster parents have the opportunity to give feedback regarding training, through the substitute care giver survey sent monthly by the Director of Foster Care.
- h) Foster parents' training needs are assessed at licensing monitoring visits and via telephone contacts.

**23) (8) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO DEVELOP AND ASSIST IN IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES TO PREVENT PLACEMENT DISRUPTIONS, RECOGNIZING THE TRAUMATIC IMPACT OF PLACEMENT DISRUPTIONS ON A FOSTER CHILD AND ALL MEMBERS OF THE FOSTER FAMILY; AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE FOSTER CHILDREN AND MEMBERS OF THE FOSTER FAMILY IF PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES FAIL AND PLACEMENT DISRUPTIONS OCCUR.**

- a) CSS continues to educate foster parents and case managers on the importance of stability in the foster child's life and the trauma the child experiences when placements are disrupted.
- b) CSS informs each foster parent of any known issues the child may have so the parent can be more prepared.
- c) CSS requires a 14-day written notice for removal for Traditional and 30 day notice for Specialized children. This gives foster parents time to think about the situation and offers assistance in attempts to prevent the placement disruption. This also allows the case manager time to locate appropriate placement for the child that has disrupted the placement.
- d) CSS provides support services to keep the child in his/her original placement through 24-hour crisis management for emergencies to avoid a disrupted placement. CSS case managers carry cell phones 24 hours a day. Foster parents are given cell phone numbers to use in an after hours emergency.
- e) Case managers present foster parents with a child's placement history and reasons for any placement disruptions.
- f) Foster parents are offered resources for the child and family to prevent disruption. Foster Parent folders include respite guidelines and other available resources.
- g) A Matching Tool is completed by the case manager with the foster parent and approved by the supervisor. This tool is used to assess the appropriateness of the placement and whether or not the foster parents exhibit the strengths necessary to care for the child.
- h) Foster parents are provided notification of trainings and encouraged to attend those that assist them in parenting the child placed in their home as well as enhancing their skills to parent a particular type of child in the future.
- i) CSS case managers utilize Systems of Care (SOC) Providers to stabilize traditional and relative foster care placements.

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

- a) CSS advocates for open communication and educates foster parents about the stress families experience in foster parenting.
- b) CSS strives to assist and support foster parents during times of high stress. Foster Parents are informed that Licensing Representatives are their advocates.
- c) CSS offers respite care for foster parents.
- d) Foster parents may request to be put on voluntary hold to prevent burnout or placement disruption.
- e) Counseling services are available and offered when necessary.
- f) CSS offers foster parent information regarding support groups, ongoing training and attempts to match experienced foster parents with new foster parents to help ease the stress of foster parenting.

**25) (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.**

- a) CSS sends out Quarterly newsletters and updates to their foster parents featuring items/articles of interest.
- b) CSS assists each foster parent in framing their experience in a positive manner.
- c) CSS provides opportunities for foster parents to be seen in a positive light through a foster parent appreciation dinner/activity and awards and/or regular contact.
- d) Through support groups and trainings, foster parents are encouraged to share experiences with one another about foster parenting.
- e) Foster parents are encouraged to mentor one another and offer support to new foster parents or those experiencing difficult times.

**26) (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.**

- a) Foster parents are required to sign an "Agreement of Understanding between Catholic Social Services and Foster Parents" at the time of licensure; this document clearly spells out roles, rights and responsibilities of the members of the Child Welfare Team.

- b) Foster parents are required to complete PRIDE training in which the issues of roles, rights, and responsibilities of foster parents and other professionals is covered. Foster Parents receive a Foster Family Handbook at PRIDE training which provides them additional information on their roles, rights, and responsibilities.
- c) Foster parents are provided job descriptions, placement agreements, and the foster parent law. These documents describe their rights roles and/or responsibilities
- d) The Child Welfare Team meets at ACR's and family meetings to discuss roles, rights, and responsibilities. Each person is required to respect one another.
- e) CSS provides information about training modules and support groups to foster parents.
- f) Case managers attend trainings with foster parents as required.
- g) Foster parents have access to case manager and management staff by phone, voicemail, e-mail and 24-hour emergency numbers.
- h) Surveys are sent to foster parents, who have ACR's, and their feedback is given great consideration because the foster parents play such an important role in a child's life and are valuable members of the professional team.

**27) (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.**

- a) Each foster parent is provided a summary of their responsibility as a mandated reporter and signs this form stating that they have read and understand their obligation as a foster parent. If the foster parent is suspected of committing abuse or neglect they are informed that the Child Abuse Hotline will be notified and that an investigation could be initiated by this agency or the Department of Children and Family Services.
- b) Through Foster/Adopt PRIDE classes and with the licensing staff at initial licensure and re-licensure, foster parents are explained their role and importance in being mandated reporters.
- c) All foster parents are trained through Foster/Adopt PRIDE classes on what to do if they have been reported to the Child Abuse Hotline as well as the emotional impact it has on the foster parent and family.
- d) Foster parents are given initial and ongoing training information about managing children with sexually problematic behaviors. Plans are developed & reviewed regularly by the child welfare team.

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

- a) Case managers explain case reviews, client service plans, and the court process at home visits.
- b) The foster parents are required to attend and complete PRIDE training in which all of the above is explained in detail.
- c) The ACR process and service planning are explained to each foster parent.
- d) Foster parents are encouraged to share their feelings and thoughts about what tasks should be done, especially for the child.
- e) Foster parents are instructed in the importance of the service plan and that it is a document used to achieve permanency for the child.
- f) CSS explains the court process and informs the court as required of the foster parent's address so they can be notified.
- g) Participation in all of these activities is strongly encouraged.

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

- a) Foster parents receive a Foster Parent Folder which contains the process for appeals, at the time of licensure, re-licensure, or 6 month monitoring. Each foster parent is provided with the appeals procedure during the licensing process in the PRIDE Training class.
- b) CSS informs foster parents of their rights should a situation arise where a foster parent may not agree with CSS.
- c) Foster parents are given a Service Appeal pamphlet at each ACR.
- d) Foster parents are given access of the current copies of the Foster Parent Law document and each foster parent is requested to provide feedback. The foster parents receive a Foster Parent Folder in which the Foster Parent Law is included at the time of licensure, re-licensure, or 6 month monitoring.

**30) (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.**

- a) Children are given LIFE Books. Foster parents are encouraged and explained the importance of keeping these books up to date. Foster parents are trained on the importance to the child of creating memories and preserving the past for each child in care.
- b) Foster parents are trained continuously on the importance of paperwork and need for continuously updating a child's records.
- c) Case managers check the foster child's records at home visits, and encourage foster parents to keep records up-to-date and accurate.
- d) Foster parents are prompted by case managers at each home visit to provide current and complete health/dental records for the child in their care.
- e) Upon placement of a child in the foster parent's care, case managers complete a Placement Agreement outlining foster parent responsibilities.
- f) CSS provides a folder to keep all documents pertaining to the child organized. This folder follows the foster child to each placement.

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

- a) When a child is being moved to another placement, CSS encourages foster parents to have open communication with current caregivers. This helps make the transition smoother for both child and foster parents.
- b) CSS encourages foster parent to assist and prepare children for any moves that may take place and provide any and all records of the child to new foster parents.
- c) CSS promotes a team approach, which helps facilitate a smooth transition for everyone.

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

- a) Initially, foster parents receive training regarding cultural sensitivity at Foster/Adopt PRIDE classes. All foster parents receive a schedule of ongoing trainings offered on cultural issues and all foster parents are encouraged to attend. Foster Parents can request books or videos from the Lending Libraries Catalog for Illinois Foster and Adoptive Parents or participate in Virtual Online Training.
- b) CSS promotes and instructs foster parents and workers on cultural sensitivity. Trainings occur frequently to aid in making employees and foster parents aware of the different cultures and the

different expectations. It is important to ensure unity among workers, foster parents, and children to promote positive relationships.

- c) CSS has open communication with foster parents, which encourages foster parents feel at ease to ask questions on care-related to cultural issues.
- d) When a child is of a different cultural background, CSS workers work with foster parents to educate them on different cultures and ways that the foster parent can help the child understand his/her cultural identity.
- e) Foster parents are encouraged to communicate with biological parents to help ease the separation.