

**CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICE OF BELLEVILLE DIOCESE**  
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**BELLEVILLE, ILLINOIS 62223**  
**2011 ANNUAL PLAN**  
**FOSTER PARENT LAW**

The following is the 2011 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) Supervisors encourage case management and office personnel to treat foster parents with dignity and respect by modeling appropriate behavior and utilizing positive reinforcement. This is monitored through supervision and team meetings.
- b) Where policy allows, foster parents are involved in integrated assessments, administrative case reviews (ACR's), and family meetings.
- c) *An Agreement of Understanding between Catholic Social Service (CSS) and Foster Parents* explains foster parent rights and responsibilities. It is distributed at the time of licensure and is signed by both the licensing representative and the foster parent.
- d) Foster parents are told at the time of licensure that their licensing representative is their advocate. This is demonstrated by promptly responding to the needs of foster parents by phone, holding team meetings, and/or by visiting them in their home.
- e) Foster parents are provided a folder at the time of licensure that includes a list of agency contact information for office personnel.
- f) At the time of licensure, re-licensure, and/or 6 month monitoring, foster parents are given a copy of the current agency *Grievance Policy* which outlines how to initiate a complaint. Supervisors make themselves available to foster parents for mediating conflicts according to the *Grievance Policy*.
- g) The *Grievance Policy* and *Grievance Form* are to be kept in the *Foster Parent Folder* and can also be located on the agency website.
- h) All foster parents are informed that if they are not satisfied with the agency's mediation of a grievance, they can contact the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Advocacy Office at 800-232-3798 or 217-524-2029, for assistance.

**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) Both prospective foster parents and foster parents in the renewal process are notified by a standardized letter of the licensing requirements.

- b) It is a requirement that all prospective foster parents receive and complete 27 hours of Foster/Adopt PRIDE training. Additionally, 6 hours of Educational Advocacy training is required for re-licensure. Relative only licensure requires 6 hours of Foster/Adopt PRIDE. This is a training provided through the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and is taught by utilizing a co-training approach with a professional staff member and foster parent.
- c) Once licensed, all foster parents are reminded by their licensing representative that it is a requirement to receive 16 hours every 4 years for a license renewal. All CSS specialized/treatment foster parents are required to receive 16 hours of training per year. CSS offers CPR and First Aid on site in order for foster parents to meet certain training requirements
- d) DCFS, CSS, and other agencies offer training. Training schedules are available through various newsletters, the lending library, the internet, and the CSS licensing representative. Case management and licensing staff assist foster parents in locating a specific training commensurate with the type of care they are providing to a child in their home.
- e) A survey is sent to foster parents by CSS on a monthly and/or yearly basis to assess if their needs are being met by current training curriculums.

**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) At the time of initial foster parent PRIDE training, foster parents are given a *DCFS Foster Family Handbook* that includes phone numbers of various agencies and support services.
- b) Foster parents are provided a folder at the time of licensure that includes a list of CSS contact information for office personnel.
- c) CSS phone numbers, including after-hours emergency numbers are given to foster parents by case managers at the time a child is placed in their home.
- d) CSS case managers carry a cell phone in order to be able to respond to foster parents during after hour emergencies.
- e) During business hours, CSS case managers and/or their supervisors are available to respond to the needs of foster parents.

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

- a) Foster care board checks are issued to foster parents by CSS on or as close as possible to the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month. The board check includes payment to the foster parent for the days of care provided to children in the previous month.

- b) At the time of licensure, foster parents are notified of the expenses that foster parents and/or the agency are responsible for paying. When possible, CSS assists foster parents in arranging for respite and camp payments.
- c) If there is a special service fee, the fee is paid to the foster parent in the regular foster care board check of the following month in which CSS receives the money.
- d) CSS adheres to the policy regarding foster parent disputed payments.
- e) CSS strives to ensure that foster parent concerns and/or questions are answered either by foster care staff and/or bookkeeping staff.
- e) 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.

**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 parent 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 the child's portion of a service plan to each foster parent within 60 days of the initial placement and then every six months. Foster parents who attend the ACR are asked to sign the plan. Recommendations are also summarized at this time. If the foster parents are not able to attend the ACR, they are asked to sign the service plan at their next monthly visit with the case manager.
- c) 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 Individualized Education Plan (IEP), ACR, 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 PERSON 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) New case managers receive new employee training on agency policies and procedures including confidentiality and information disclosure.
- b) New case managers are required to complete the initial DCFS Child Welfare Licensure training and obtain 20 hours of Child Welfare training each year.
- c) 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 that foster parents have the right to, "receive additional or necessary information that is relevant to the care of the foster children."
- d) Where policy allows, agency staff provides foster parents all known information regarding the child. Information that is pertinent to the care and needs of the child is given in a timely and consistent manner.
- e) 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.
- f) For children placed in their home, foster parents may request a review of the child specific section of the child's file.
- g) When foster parents attend court hearings they may receive a copy of the court order.

**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 and when possible, case managers provide foster parents with a written summary of information about the child to be placed in the foster home on the CFS 600-4, *Sharing Information with the Caregiver*. The only information given is what 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 (GAL).
- 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 (CQI) 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) At the time of licensure, re-licensure, or 6 month monitoring foster parents receive a *Foster Parent Folder* with a form named *Knowing What To Do*. This tells them what they can expect when they get the first call and what will happen after placement.
- b) Foster parents are encouraged to participate in meetings pertaining to the child that include but are not limited to IEP's, ACR's, counseling, Child Family Team Meetings, and staffings for higher levels care (CAYIT), etc.
- c) CSS has an educational advocate that is available to assist foster parents in managing the educational needs of the foster child.
- d) 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, and/or counselors. Foster parent input is given full consideration by case managers. This is verified through regular supervision between case managers and supervisors.

- e) The primary case manager will inform the foster parents of decisions made by CSS and the courts concerning the foster child within one working week.
- f) 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 foster parent within two working days of receiving the notifications.

**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 so they will know what information is appropriate to release 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 the placement decision has been made and the reasons for the change.
- b) When removing a child from a foster home, the case manager notifies the foster parent by giving 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*. If the foster parent disagrees with the decision being made, the notification outlines the appeal process.
- c) A transition plan is created for the child who is returning home to ease the transition for everyone involved.

**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**

**INTERVENE 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 the Judge and GAL prior to any and all hearings.
- b) Foster Parents have the right to contact the GAL with any questions, concerns, and/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) Placement consideration is given to the availability of the previous 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 in the previous foster home for the child. The case manager, supervisor, and licensing representative are involved in a staffing regarding the placement decision.
- b) If the child is old enough to be part of the placement decision making 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 DCFS 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 assists foster parents with the appeals process as outlined in CFS 1050-32 – *The Service Appeal Process* and/or the *CSS Foster Parent Grievance Procedure*. These are included in the CSS Foster Parent Folders, which they receive at the time of licensure, re-licensure, and/or six month monitoring visits.
- b) CSS strives to reduce adversarial relationships between all members of the foster care team including the foster parents and staff. CSS strives to make quick resolutions to the disputes at hand per the DCFS and CSS grievance policy and procedures.

- c) Mediation is provided if needed in resolving these issues.
- d) When appropriate, CSS advocates for foster parent rights in the case of any disagreement and/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 of and receive written information about the foster parent Advocacy Office. At this training, the foster parents also receive a *Foster Parent Handbook* which includes the Advocacy Office phone number (1-800-232-3798).
- b) CSS and DCFS both educate their foster parents on the purpose of the Advocacy Office through the use of foster parent newsletters, newspapers, training, and/or support groups.
- c) All pertinent brochures, including the CFS 1050-32 – *The Service Appeal Process* and/or the *CSS Foster Parent Grievance Procedure* and the *Office of Inspector General Brochure*, are available at every office and branch office. These are included in the CSS Foster Parent Folders, which they receive at the time of licensure, re-licensure, and/or six month monitoring visits.
- d) CSS licensing and case managers keep their supervisors informed of any concerns expressed by a 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) CSS, DCFS, and The Foster Care Coalition keep foster parents informed regarding upcoming training opportunities through newsletters and/or emails.
- b) Licensing representatives inform foster parents during initial licensure and 6-month monitoring of the number of required training hours needed to maintain a foster parent license.
- c) Through PRIDE, foster parents are trained on the importance of open communication and a team approach to foster care with regard to the child and/or their needs.
- d) Through the initial DCFS Child Welfare Licensure training, case managers learn the importance of including foster parents as members of the child welfare team. Through family meetings, team meetings, and supervision, supervisors ensure this practice is being met.

**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/Adopt PRIDE classes train foster parents on the importance of confidentiality.
- b) At the time of licensure, foster parents are required to sign a *Confidentiality of Private Information* form which also outlines the importance and expectation of confidentiality.
- c) Foster parents are given and are required to sign an *Agreement of Understanding* form which outlines the importance and expectation of confidentiality.
- d) Foster parents may also receive information regarding confidentiality through on going training and/or home visits from licensing staff and/or case managers.

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

- a) Foster parents are encouraged to participate as a Child Welfare Team member and advocate for the child in CAYIT staffings, ACR's, Family Meetings, court hearings, school activities, doctor appointments, and psychiatric and mental health meetings.
- b) Foster parents are reminded during each ACR of the Service Appeal Process in case they have any issues regarding the services being provided to the child in their care. At this time, they are also given a *Service Appeal Pamphlet*.
- c) Foster parents are required to receive additional training hours each year and will have access to training on appropriate intervention strategies, their rights in court, and legal representation.
- d) 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 as a member of the Child Welfare Team.
- e) CSS has an educational liaison who is available to consult with foster parents at all times regarding the needs and/or rights of the child placed in their home, while in the school setting.

**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 by 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* which outlines the expectation to treat children and their biological parents with dignity and respect.
- e) Foster parent interactions are observed during regular supervision, case monitoring, and visits. Case managers meet separately with the foster children and foster parents to address their individual concerns. During this time, case managers also provide foster parents with ongoing training and/or support to enhance their ability to treat children and their biological parents with dignity and respect.

**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 and areas of growth.
- b) CSS will respond to foster parents in a timely manner when they request assistance in managing the needs of a child in their care.
- c) CSS encourages the matching of new foster parents with experienced foster parents for the purpose of mentoring and providing support.
- d) CSS in conjunction with DCFS realizes that respite care is important and will therefore encourage it to be utilized by foster parents.
- 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 training.
- e.) CSS will complete a *Foster Home Utilization Assessment* form with the foster parent at each semi-annual monitoring visit. The form helps foster parents recognize their strengths as well as areas of growth.

**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) Through newsletters and mailings, the agency notifies and encourages foster parents to attend interagency support groups and meetings.
- b) Each foster parent is encouraged to share their experiences and participate in the open forum format. Foster parents are encouraged to mentor and provide support to one another.

- 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 a child 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 and sixteen hours total are required for the renewal of their license.
- b) Unlicensed relative homes are strongly encouraged to attend training and become licensed.
- c) Licensing and case managers work together to strengthen foster parent areas of weakness voiced and/or witnessed during home visits.
- d) Training needs of the foster parents are also assessed at licensing monitoring visits and via telephone contacts.
- e) Case managers and licensing staff locate options for foster parents who may need training in a specific area.
- f) CSS and DCFS both offer free training to foster parents.
- g) CSS provides information about training modules and support groups focusing on various issues regarding foster children in care through a regular newsletter and/or direct invitation.
- h) CSS notifies all foster parents of upcoming scheduled trainings and will often seek feedback through the mail regarding what topics the foster parents may be interested in attending if it isn't currently being offered.
- i) Foster parents also have the opportunity to give feedback regarding training through the substitute care giver survey sent monthly by the Director of Foster Care.
- j) The CSS newsletter provides foster parents a web address and phone number so they may provide feedback.

**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) 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.

- b) 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.
- c) CSS informs each foster parent of any known issues the child may have before placement or soon after, so they can be better prepared to care for and manage his/her needs.
- d) Case managers present foster parents with a child's placement history and reasons for any placement disruptions.
- e) 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.
- f) Foster parents are offered resources for the child as well as themselves, in order to prevent a placement disruption. *Foster Parent Folders* include respite guidelines and other available resources.
- g) CSS case managers utilize Systems of Care (SOC) to stabilize traditional and relative foster care placements.
- h) To prevent placement disruption, CSS provides support services for emergencies through 24-hour crisis management. CSS case managers carry cell phones 24 hours a day. Foster parents are given cell phone numbers to use in an after hours emergency.
- i) CSS requires a 14-day written notice from foster parents to remove a traditional foster care child from their home. CSS requires a 30 day notice for the removal of specialized foster care children. This gives foster parents time to think through their decision and gives the agency time to search for an appropriate placement for the child.

**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 while fostering.
- 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 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.
- d) CSS offers and encourages respite care for foster parents.
- e) Counseling services are available and offered when necessary.

- f) Foster parents may request to be put on voluntary hold to prevent burnout or placement disruption. Foster parents are reminded of this option and the process is explained in the *Foster Parent Newsletter*.

**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 newsletters and updates to foster parents featuring articles of interest, special recognitions, and training opportunities.
- b) CSS provides opportunities for foster parents to feel appreciated and be seen in a positive light through regular contact, appreciation dinners and/or activities, and awards and/or recognitions.
- c) Through support groups and trainings, foster parents are encouraged to share experiences with one another about fostering.
- d) Foster parents are encouraged to mentor one another and offer support to new foster parents or those experiencing difficult times.
- e) CSS is diligent about assisting each foster parent frame their fostering experience in a positive manner.
- f) As a member of the Child Welfare Team, foster parents are encouraged to advocate for the child in their home when interacting with other professionals in the community.

**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 complete PRIDE (a co-training approach) training which covers topics related to their roles, rights, and responsibilities as well as those of other professionals, the child and his/her family. At PRIDE training, foster parents receive a *Foster Family Handbook* which provides additional information regarding roles, rights, and responsibilities.
- b) 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 the role, rights, and responsibilities of being a member of the Child Welfare Team.
- c) Foster parents are provided *Foster Parent Job Descriptions*, *Placement Agreements*, and the agency *Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan*. These documents outline their rights, responsibilities, and role as a member of the Child Welfare Team.
- d) During ACR's and family meetings, the Child Welfare Team discusses roles, rights, and responsibilities. Showing respect to one another is an expectation.

- e) Foster parents who attend ACR's receive surveys allowing them to provide feedback and express their satisfaction with agency services. Their feedback is given great consideration because they play such an important role in a child's life and are valuable members of the professional team.
- f) CSS provides information to foster parents about on-going training modules and support groups. As required, case managers will attend trainings with foster parents.
- g) Foster parents have access to case managers and management staff by phone, voicemail, e-mail, and 24-hour emergency numbers.

**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. Foster parents are aware that if they are suspected of committing abuse or neglect, the Child Abuse Hotline will be notified and an investigation may be initiated by the agency and/or the Department of Children and Family Services.
- b) All foster parents are trained during Foster/Adopt PRIDE class on what to do if they have been reported to the Child Abuse Hotline as well as the emotional impact they and their family may experience.
- c) Foster parents are informed of their role and the importance of being a mandated reporter during Foster/Adopt PRIDE class, initial and re-licensure.
- d) Foster parents are given initial and ongoing training information about managing children with sexually problematic behaviors. Plans to keep these and other children safe are developed and 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) PRIDE training is required for foster parents as it explains client service planning, the process of court, and what happens at an ACR. The training also emphasizes the role foster parents play in these events and why it is so important for them to participate.
- b) During home visits with foster parents, case managers explain client service planning, the process of court, and what happens at an ACR.

- c) When developing the child's portion of the service plan, case managers strongly encourage foster parents to provide suggestions and feedback as it is a document used to achieve permanency for the child.
- d) Case managers keep the court informed of where a child is placed so the foster parent can get notification of and the opportunity to attend court.

**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) During PRIDE training and at the time of licensure, re-licensure, and/or 6 month monitoring, the foster parents receive a *Foster Parent Folder* which contains the process for service appeals.
- b) When foster parents attend an ACR, they receive a *Service Appeal Pamphlet*.
- c) Licensing and case management inform foster parents of their right to file a grievance and the process should they have a disagreement with the agency.
- d) At the time of initial licensure, licensing staff give foster parents a *Foster Parent Folder* that contains the filing process of an agency grievance and the most recent copy of the agency *Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan*.
- e) At monitoring visits, during re-licensure, training, and through newsletters, the agency and staff encourage foster parents to review and provide feedback on the agency *Grievance Policy* and the *Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan*.
- f) Foster parents are reminded by licensing staff during monitoring visits that the agency *Grievance Policy* and the *Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan* can be viewed on the agency website and comments can be forwarded to a special email address.

**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) When a child is placed in a foster home, the case manager completes a *Placement Agreement* with the foster parent which outlines their responsibilities.
- b) Licensing and case management explain to foster parents during home visits the importance of child LIFE books and are encouraged to keep them up to date. Foster parents are trained and reminded that it is highly important to create and preserve memories for each child in care.
- c) Foster parents receive initial and on-going training that focuses on the importance of paperwork and keeping a child's records accurate and up to date.

- d) Every child has a *Child Folder* which contains their important documents, i.e. medical and dental records. At home visits, case managers remind foster parents of the importance of paperwork and check to ensure the child's records are accurate and up to date.
- e) At the time of initial licensure, licensing staff give foster parents a *Foster Parent Folder* that contains the filing process of an agency grievance and the most recent copy of the agency *Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan* as well as other information pertinent to being a foster parent.

**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) CSS encourages foster parents to prepare and assist children with any moves that may take place and provide any and all records of the child to new foster parents.
- b) When placing children in foster homes, licensing and case management emphasize and model a team approach for foster parents which helps facilitate a smooth transition for everyone involved.
- c) Foster parents are encouraged by licensing and case management to communicate with one another during a child's transition into a new placement. It is emphasized that this can ease tension for both foster parents and the child.
- d) Training is available for foster parents through DCFS and a form is completed by foster parents as to their comfort level of working with biological parents.

**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.
- b) All foster parents receive information about and are encouraged to attend trainings that focus on cultural issues. Foster Parents can request books or videos from the *Lending Library Catalog for Illinois Foster and Adoptive Parents* or participate in *Virtual Online Training*.
- c) CSS instructs, promotes, and models cultural sensitivity for workers and foster parents. It is important to ensure unity among workers, foster parents, and children to promote positive relationships.
- d) CSS instructs, promotes, and models open communication skills with workers and foster parents in hopes of assisting all parties to feel at ease with one another and free to ask questions on care-related cultural issues.

- e) When a child is placed in a foster home that is of a different culture, licensing and case management help educate foster parents so they can better care for the needs of the child.
- f) Foster parents are encouraged to communicate with biological parents about cultural issues so together they can help ease the child with any difficulties they may experience transitioning to an unfamiliar home.