Children’s Home Association of Illinois (CHAIL)

Section 1-15, Foster Parent Rights. A foster parent’s rights which include, but are not limited to, the following:

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

We believe all efforts and activities related to the foster care/child welfare delivery system must reflect a mutual respect and consideration for all members of the child and family team and acknowledge the dignity of all the participants, which includes foster parents. As professional team members, Children’s Home foster parents are treated with dignity and respect. Their input is important in developing short and long term goals for the foster children placed in their home. They have an essential role in meeting the needs of our children. Furthermore, Children’s Home encourages it’s foster parents to take active roles as professional team members in various different aspects of the child’s life, i.e. taking a role in developing goals in the foster child’s service plan, advocating for the child in his/her educational setting, participating in all child and family team meetings, participating in pre-placement staffings and placement review meetings. The schedule of the foster parent is taken into account when arranging meetings in the office or visits in the home with the children and the foster parents. The contact in the home between the foster parents and the Children’s Home staff is arranged in advance when possible, ensuring the foster parent is available to provide input. When a foster parent leaves a voice mail message, calls are returned in a timely manner – within two business days. If the foster parent needs immediate assistance, case worker voice mail messages instruct them to call the Administrative Assistant, who will ensure follow-up with an appropriate staff person.

Children’s Home believes that foster parents are essential to the success of service delivery to the foster child and family. Therefore, foster parents have access to their resource specialist (Licensing Representative) and clinical coordinator of resources (Licensing Supervisor), the caseworker, the casework supervisor, the clinician, the clinical coordinator of clinical services, the Director, the Vice President and the CEO in their efforts to resolve any problems or disputes. Staff contact information is provided to foster parents at the time of child placement and at any other time they may request it. Children’s Home also distributes a current organizational chart, at least annually, to all foster parents. This chart can be used as a tool to assists foster parents in identifying members of the foster care team and the agency’s chain of command.

Additional Program Initiatives:

- Children’s Home circulates an annual foster parent survey to each foster parent during each fiscal year to solicit feedback regarding program services. The feedback from the foster parent survey is reviewed by management staff in order to

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ensure that foster parent rights are being upheld and implemented in the services provided to the foster homes.

- Our foster parents are encouraged to participate in the numerous committees/groups designed to coordinate and plan program services. These groups/committees include the Foster Parent Support Group “It takes a Village” and the Foster Parent Law and Implementation Committee.

In addition, foster parents have a voice in the management of the agency. For example, foster parent input is being solicited during the assessment stage of an agency development campaign. Additionally, management staff are accessible to the foster parents, and that makes a difference. The foster care coordinators and resources coordinator is routinely contacted by foster parents if they want an issue reviewed or their staff is not available and they have a pressing concern. The Vice-President and the CEO are both available to foster parents and are able to assist with issue resolution. This is possible because the VP and the CEO are out-and-about and available to our foster parents. They both are routinely invited to, and attend, foster parent events and open houses.

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.

Training is provided by DCFS, foster care program staff, and resources staff. Management, clinical, casework, nursing and foster home licensing staff (resources staff) all contribute to the trainings that are offered. Training is also provided by licensed foster parents. The DCFS PRIDE curriculum is used to train prospective foster parents wherein each prospective foster parent receives 27 hours of pre-service training. The formal opportunity for resources to discuss training needs with foster parents, and for foster parents to discuss their needs, is provided when the resource specialist completes a monitoring visit every 6 months. The foster parent training record is reviewed to ensure foster parents are current on required certifications such as CPR and First Aid, and the foster parent’s current placements are discussed in terms of challenges the foster parents face and the additional support/information they may need. In addition, training needs are discussed during the support group meetings or once a month when they pick up the reimbursement checks. A calendar of foster parent training opportunities has been developed by the resource department. The calendar is provided every month to all the foster parents and includes in-house trainings and any training that is available in the community at no cost to the families. Information is also mailed out to the foster parents regarding upcoming training opportunities not included on the calendar. Updated training information is also included in the monthly newsletter which is distributed to all agency foster parents. Within the next year CHAIL will provide access to the monthly newsletter on the CHAIL website.

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All licensed foster homes are required to complete the hours of continuing education needed each year to maintain their license. These hours may be obtained by attending trainings and workshops sponsored by the Illinois Foster Parent Association, the Foster Family-Based Treatment Association, or other workshops/in-services approved by a resources specialist, as well as books, videos, and DVD trainings that are available through a resource specialist. Training for foster parents is also provided by CHAIL resource specialists and CHAIL therapists.

Foster homes that accept specialized level foster children are required to complete additional training hours based on the specific identified needs of the child placed in their home. The child specific training needs are identified with weekly contact by the caseworker and/or therapist and through additional contact with resource staff. These child specific trainings are conducted one-on-one with the foster parents by the child’s therapist, Children’s Home consulting psychiatrist, resource staff, and caseworkers. Trainings for foster parents are identified to assist with the child placed in their home before placement disruptions occur. Therefore, before placing a child in a foster home, a pre-placement checklist is completed to identify needs specific to the child. This assists in CHAIL in knowing what trainings the foster parent could benefit from that are specific to the needs of the child.

The CPR/First Aid sessions have been one of the successful trainings during this year. Most of the foster family households have one or more adults CPR and First Aid certificated. The agency now trains all foster parents on the impact of trauma on children in foster care and in de-escalation techniques to help foster parents identify volatile situations and respond in such a way that the situations do not become explosive.

CHAIL utilizes the co-training approach in that three of our resource staff who provide training are also licensed foster parents with the State. They are all active foster parents with placements so they can provide additional insight for our CHAIL foster parents. CHAIL has also developed a foster parent core training, which is provided to all newly licensed foster parents by resource staff. This training includes a reiteration of important information that is covered in PRIDE training such as Mandated Reporter Status. Foster parent core training also provides agency specific information such as foster parent reimbursement, on call services, and an overview of the organization and programs available within the agency.

This year CHAIL has introduced two new programs to assist in supporting the foster parents with foster child placements. The first is the piloting of a Placement Stabilization program. This program can be utilized for both traditional and specialized level foster children. The placement stabilization worker will work closely in the foster home with both the foster parent(s) and the child to identify and provide training to meet the specific needs of the child parent and/or child. The placement stabilization worker is part of the treatment team and works to collaborate with the caseworker, supervisors, resources, and a therapist, if one is involved. CHAIL has also started a foster parent mentoring program. Experienced CHAIL foster parents have been identified and have agreed to provide a support for newly licensed CHAIL foster homes. When a home is licensed, they are
assigned a foster parent mentor that can be utilized as another person that can be contacted when support is needed. Resources is training the mentors one on one to provide information on expectations and boundaries within the role of being a mentor. CHAIL then brings the mentors and the new foster parents together in a group setting to provide all of the foster parents with the opportunity to meet and network with one another.

3) The right to be informed as to how to contact the appropriate child placement agency in order to receive information and assistance to access supportive services for children in the foster parent’s care.

All foster parents are given Contact Telephone Number Cards by the Resource Specialist or Caseworker at the time of a child’s placement in their home and whenever there are any team member changes. The Contact Telephone Number Card includes the names and phone numbers of all members of the foster care team. This card also contains the 24 hour/7 day a week on-call emergency service numbers that the agency maintains. Periodically the list of workers and supervisors with their extensions is published in the foster parent newsletter. The emergency after hour on call phone numbers can also be accessed through our public website. An agency issued cell phone is carried by the foster care on call worker and he/she is expected to respond within 20 minutes when a call is received. This on-call worker is available to provide emergency support, including accessing support services such as SASS and Emergency Response Services. The foster care on-call worker also has access to the Resources on-call worker to facilitate emergency respite or emergency replacement if the situation is required. The foster care on-call worker and the resource on-call worker will attempt to engage the foster parent in a discussion about the situation to better determine what action will be of the greatest therapeutic value for the child, and then each worker does their part to achieve this end.

Case workers all have direct phone numbers and voice mail. Voice mail greetings instruct callers to contact the program administrative assistant in the event of an emergency if the worker is not available. The administrative staff will then identify a member of the management team to talk to the person that is seeking assistance.

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

Traditional and Specialized regular board payment, vacation, respite, and the client’s personal and clothing allowances are issued on the 10th business day of the month. All newly licensed CHAIL foster homes are provided training on foster parent reimbursement, respite payments, and additional supplementary payments through CHAIL foster parent core training.
Foster parents are offered an opportunity to pick up their checks and are provided a card stating the check dates for each month throughout the year. Those checks not picked by 1:00 PM are mailed to the foster parents on the same business day. Foster parents caring for specialized program clients are also offered paid respite (or “vacation days”), per policy as one day per month per household, and is monitored by the Resources Operations Manager. If the foster parent caring for a specialized child chooses not to use the one respite day, it is paid out to them through their monthly reimbursement. The agency will also assist foster parents caring for traditional children in the identification of other licensed CHAIL foster homes to provide respite care. However, the foster parent pays for the respite, which is tracked through the Resources Operations Manager. Payment problems are first addressed with the Resources Operations Manager. Foster parents, respite foster parents, resource staff, caseworkers, and/or treatment team members can be involved to assist in resolving any disputes in payment. Resolution of errors has priority status. There has not been an instance in which the Resources Operations Manager was unable to resolve a payment issue.

Supplementary checks for camp, mileage and other reimbursable expenses are also issued on a prompt three to five day turnaround basis. Prior approval from the Foster Care Program Director is needed for other reimbursable expenses. Computer generated reports detailing regular board payments, vacation and respite payments are available for the use of foster parents and/or staff.

Foster parent reimbursement levels are determined by the care level of the child, and the age of the child for traditional level of care. Children stepping down from Residential are designated at the Specialized level, and foster parents are informed of the reimbursement rate and service level at the time of pre-placement review. Children identified as Specialized are referred through the Specialized “Stream” and from other agencies as well, and the same information is provided to the potential foster parent. On occasion, a child is placed at the traditional level and as we come to know them and their needs better, we conclude they would be better served in the Specialized program. In those instances the foster care program refers the child to the DCFS CIPP process to be assessed for the higher level of care. If the child is designated Specialized, CHAIL completes the paperwork to authorize the higher level of compensation to the foster parent upon written notice of the approval.

5) The right to be provided a clear, written understanding of a placement agency’s plan concerning the placement of a child in the foster parent’s home. Inherent in this right is the foster parent’s responsibility to support activities that will promote the child’s right to relationships with his or her own family and cultural heritage.

At the time of placement, the resources specialist (licensing worker) reviews with foster parents The Agreement to Accept A Foster Child. The agreement clearly outlines that the foster parents will be provided all information pertinent to the child (including case reviews, school reviews, court orders, and the service plan). Children’s Home foster
parents are required to attend our agency foster parent core training. Core training relays
the expectation that they will support the goals outlined by the court, The Department of
Children and Family Services, and the Children’s Home Association of Illinois as it
relates to the child’s relationship with his or her family i.e. by maintaining a positive
attitude about the child’s family, supporting family visits, when appropriate inform
family of the child’s medical appointments, school functions and maintain an overall
positive attitude regarding the child’s return home goal.

Foster parents participate in the assessment of children as well as service plan
development, and provide input into visitation and communication plans. The caseworker
and therapist review the 497 Service Plan Outcomes, the Permanency Goal and the
Projected Achievement Date with the foster parent. Foster parents are notified within 5
business days, by phone or in person, of any changes in case plans or permanency goal.
A copy of an amended 497 service plan is also provided, when necessary. Children’s
Home values the input of foster parents in the development and fulfillment of the service
plan. Foster parent participation is a primary part of the service plan. During family
meetings and counseling sessions, the caseworker and therapist seek input and feedback
as to the child’s progress in the home, community and school. Foster parent feedback and
input are sought whenever changes are needed to the 497 Service Plan. They are
informed of those changes during family meetings and provided copies of noted changes
as it relates to them and the foster child.

The resources department makes every effort to place children in foster homes that are
culturally comparable in regards to race and religion. When that is not possible, the
agency promotes cultural awareness in our foster parents through ongoing group training
and one-on-one training to better ensure the cultural needs of children are met when
placements are outside their heritage. The resources team, as well as the case
management teams, are involved in the education of the foster parents to be culturally
aware of the needs of all children. The cultural trainings include information on how to
care for the skin and hair of the children in their homes who are culturally different. The
agency believes that respecting the diversity of others is an important part of how we
serve our clients. Encouraging the foster parent to attend events specific to the culture
of the children in their homes has become one of the priorities of the staff. Children’s
Home staff inform foster parents of trainings within the agency and the community that
provide support and education to foster parents who may not be familiar with the child’s
culture. We want the foster parents to integrate the child into the child’s heritage through
community cultural events and activities that allow the child to learn about their culture
and to experience expressions of that culture.

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

Investigations resulting from alleged violations of licensing standards are addressed by the resource specialist within two business days unless immediate action is required. At the time of the investigation, resource staff give the foster parents a brochure which explains their rights, the investigative process, and their right to appeal. Within 30 days or less, after all information has been gathered, a determination is made as to the appropriate action needed: monitoring record, corrective action plan, or further investigation. If it appears that the investigation cannot be completed within the 30 days allotted, the Resources Specialist can obtain a 14 day extension from the Resources Supervisor. The foster parent must be informed in writing of the extension.

Foster parents are told they may have a representative present during the investigative interview. Such representation should be scheduled so as to not unreasonably delay the investigation or compromise the integrity of the interview. Foster parents shall be given up to 4 hours to have a foster parent advocate representative present or a person of the foster parent’s choosing during all aspects of the investigation and up to 24 hours for an attorney. The foster care program ensures that licensing staff are informed of the above rights, and adhere to them. The foster parent, caseworker, and resource staff discuss the alleged violation and action required for correction, if necessary. Any violations being investigated will be given to the foster parent in writing, with specific mention of the exact standard alleged to have been violated, and its section number. When a finding is indicated, foster parents will be given information as to the procedure for a supervisory review with the agency’s licensing supervisor. If the licensee disagrees with the results of the findings of the supervisory review, he or she is informed of his or her right for review with the DCFS Regional Administrator.

Children’s Home acknowledges that as an agency we have a dual role with the foster parent, that of serving as the licensing agent and participating with foster parents as a team serving the children and families. Children’s Home explains the investigative process thoroughly and conducts all activities in a professional manner.

In cases of a concurrent investigation with the Department of Child Protection (DCP) prompted by a report to the “hotline” on the foster parent, the DCFS concurrent protocol is followed by Children’s Home.
7) The right, at any time during which a child is placed with the foster parent, to receive additional or necessary information that is relevant to the care of the child.

In an effort to provide our foster parents with necessary information, the foster care staff have made it a priority to provide all information received or knowledge obtained regarding the child(ren), to the foster parent.

Core training is required of all staff and is the means used to assure that caseworkers are well trained in their responsibility to disclose all information known about a client to the foster parent. The training session that particularly addresses this is entitled “Licensing Overview”.

Caseworkers are held accountable for informing foster parents of all information that is relevant to the care of the child: court hearings, Child and Family Team Meetings, parent-child visits, sibling visits, treatment team meeting, as well as other staffings and meetings that may develop. Accountability is monitored by the supervisor through supervision on a monthly basis, depending upon the experience of the caseworker.

The CHAIL resource worker assigned to the foster home also informs the foster parents of their right to receive necessary information that is pertinent to the child placed in their home. The resource worker gives the foster parent a copy of CFS 600-4 Sharing Information with Caregiver. During the licensing process, the resource worker reviews the form with the foster parent so that the foster parent is aware of all of the information that they are entitled to receive about any foster child placed into their home. The foster parents retain the form as a reference for future placements and then sign an acknowledgement that they have reviewed the form which then is placed into their licensing file.

8) The right to be given information concerning a child from the Department as required under Section 5 (u) of the Children and Family Services Act and from a child welfare agency as required under Section 7, 4 (c-5) of the Child Care Act of 1969. (20 ILCS 520/1-15.

At the time of placement, or if possible, prior to, the worker shall provide to the foster parent, in writing, all available information (except as provisioned in subsection (a) (8) (B)) necessary for the proper care of the child. The information to be provided to the caregiver shall include:

1) The medical history of the child including known medical problems or communicable diseases, information concerning the immunization status of the child, and insurance and medical card information;
II) The educational history of the child, including any special educational needs and details of the child’s Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) when the child is receiving special education services or 504 Educational Special Needs Plan, if applicable;

III) A copy of the child’s portion of the client service plan including any visitation arrangements and all amendments or revisions; case history of the child including how the child came into care; the child’s legal status; the permanency goal for the child; a history of the child’s previous placements; and reasons for placement changes, excluding information that identifies or reveals the location of any previous foster or relative home caregiver; and

IV) Other relevant background information of the child, including any prior criminal history; information about any behavior problems including fire setting, perpetration of sexual abuse, destructive behavior and substance abuse habits; and likes and dislikes, etc.

In the case of an emergency placement, when all of the information referenced in subsection (a) (8) (A) is not available, the worker shall provide known information verbally as it becomes available and subsequently provide this information in writing. If there is a disruption of placement, CHAIL will meet with the new foster parents as a team including the caseworker, resources worker, therapist, and supervisor of the case. The team will meet in a timely manner with the foster parents to ensure that all information about the child placed in their home was received by the foster parents and also to answer any questions that the foster parent may have about the foster child.

In advance of placement, the caseworker may provide the foster parent or adoptive parent with a written summary of the information listed in subsection (a) (8) (A).

A protocol for disclosure of information was created upon notification from the Department that this was required. The pre-placement staffing for Specialized children was modified to present written information to foster parents to comply with the disclosure protocol. At the pre-placement staffing, if the foster parents are present, the foster parents sign the staffing form to document their receipt of this information. At times, the foster parent may not be able to attend the pre-placement staffing. If the foster parent is not able to attend the child’s CHAIL team; caseworker, supervisor, resource specialist, and therapist will have a team meeting within the foster home after placement to ensure that the foster parent has all of the required information regarding the child. The CHAIL team can also answer any questions or concerns that the foster parent may have. Traditional foster parents are provided any written information received at the time of the referral. In addition, all caseworkers now have caregivers sign CFS 600-4 “Sharing Information with the Caregiver” as required by policy/procedure.

The Protocol for Disclosure of Information was provided to all supervisors, who subsequently trained their staff on the requirements. The disclosure information as well
as the CFS 600-4 form was added to our admission checklist. This checklist is utilized by staff to ensure that all requirements are completed upon admission of a child, and by supervisors as an accountability tool for staff compliance.

Each child's placement is initially a consideration of the Resources/Licensing team. If this is a child referred from Centralized Matching, the Resources team will staff the new placement consideration with the Foster Care program before accepting the case. If the new referral comes to the agency via the CAPU Rotation, the resources team will identify a home and inform the Foster Care program. This flow of information continues as new details become known about the foster child. A CHAIL resource specialist will meet the DCFS worker and foster family at time of placement. This worker has the responsibility of making sure the child’s transition into the home of the foster parent goes smoothly. At this point, the resource specialist has the foster parent sign the “Agreement to Accept a Foster Child”. This form is then forwarded to Foster Care to be placed in the file of the foster child.

The performance of foster care staff in complying with these requirements is monitored by their supervisor in their regularly scheduled supervision, and failure to share this information could result in disciplinary action. In order to ensure that all CHAIL caseworkers are aware of the information that can be disclosed to foster parents there will be initial training and ongoing training. This training will focus on the CFS 600-4 which consists of all information that can be shared with a foster parent. All newly hired CHAIL employees will complete CHAIL foster parent core training. Caseworkers will be trained on all information that can be shared with a foster parent and also on how to complete the 600-4. Ongoing training will be provided annually to all foster care caseworkers by the resources Supervisor. This training will focus on the importance of sharing information about a foster child to the foster parents, and specifically what information can be shared. The caseworker and the foster parent will both maintain copies of the CFS 600-4. As a means of checks and balances, the resources specialist will also go over this form with the foster parents during semi-annual and annual monitoring visits to ensure that the foster parent has received all of the information about the child placed in their home. If the foster parent has not received the necessary information that is to be disclosed to them, this can be relayed to the CHAIL management team in order to rectify the situation and to ensure that the foster parent receives all necessary information.

9) The right to be notified of scheduled meetings and staffings concerning the foster child in order to actively participate in the case planning and decision-making process regarding the child, including individual service planning meetings, administrative case reviews, interdisciplinary staffings, and individual educational planning meetings; the right to be informed of decisions made by the courts or the child welfare agency concerning the child; the right to provide input concerning the plan of services for the child and to have that input given

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Foster parents are an integral part of their child’s professional team and are encouraged to be an active participant in all meetings and staffings related to the case planning and decision-making process and to communicate with each team member assigned to their foster child. Their thoughts and opinions are given full consideration in making case planning decisions about their foster child. Written notification of Administrative Case Reviews (ACR) is routinely provided by DCFS review staff. School district personnel provide written notification of school reviews. Foster care staff initiate contact with foster parents to ensure they receive notification of all reviews and to encourage their participation. Other direct notification is provided during routine family meetings with the child’s team members or through regular phone contact. During the course of family meetings, activities such as modification of case plans, review of court decisions, review of changes in agency policy, and any other decision to be considered in the child’s interest are discussed with the foster parents by the child’s team.

Foster parents are required to sign a Children’s Home document entitled Traditional/Specialized Foster Care Monthly Family Meeting when they meet with the caseworker for the child. This is the agency’s way of documenting that there was contact and the issues related to the child’s care and service needs have been addressed. With the signature of the foster parent, they are stating that they understand the information discussed during the meeting. Documentation verifying foster parent’s presence at Administrative Case Reviews and Individual Educational Plan school reviews are recorded on a sign-in sheet provided by both DCFS and the school the child attends. Foster parents’ access to their child’s case information is parallel to other team members.

10) The right to be given, in a timely and consistent manner, any information a caseworker has regarding the child and the child’s family which is pertinent to the care and needs of the child and to the making of a permanency plan for the child. Disclosure of information concerning the child’s family shall be limited to the information that is essential for understanding the needs of and providing care to the child in order to protect the rights of the child’s family. When a positive relationship exists between the foster parent and the child’s family, the child’s family may consent to disclosure of additional information.

Foster parents have access to confidential information regarding their foster child (ren) as outlined in Rule 402: Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes and the Program Confidentiality Policy. When a foster parent agrees to accept a child into their home, the Resources Specialist will discuss the history of the child and family with that foster
parent. Foster parents are also given the opportunity to read their foster child’s main file at any time a child is placed with them and have questions answered by program staff. However, disclosure of the child’s family information is limited to information pertinent to the well-being of the child.

Access to information about the child and his/her family does not end there. During the time a child is in placement, the foster parents will learn about confidential information pertinent to the health and wellbeing of the child at Administrative Case Reviews, court hearings, psychiatric evaluations, and as their child’s educational advocate, at multidisciplinary school conferences when appropriate. Foster parents are informed and included in the process of establishing a permanency plan for their foster children. The treatment team for the foster child meets on a monthly basis, which includes the foster parents and caseworker. It may also include a therapist, family support worker, or a Resources Specialist (licensing worker). This meeting is used to relay information in a collaborative setting. Our foster parents are also given a copy of their child’s current service plan prior to the ACR.

With Residential Step-Downs and CAYIT referrals, a pre-placement staffing is held with prospective foster parents, Resources, and other assigned staff to review the child’s file and to discuss and clarify the child’s treatment needs. To ensure that all relevant information is shared with the foster parent, a resources specialist follows Foster Care Intake Policy and Procedure and uses the following forms that were developed by the agency staff; the Pre-placement Staffing Checklist, and the Agreement to Accept a Foster Child. The signatures of the foster parent and agency staff are required on these documents. This activity will be logged in a case note and all corresponding documents will be placed in the client’s file.

Traditional and Home of Relative referrals often come with limited information. The information available is shared with the foster parents.

11) The right to be given reasonable written notice of (i) any change 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.

A Notice of Change of Placement (CFS 151-B) is mailed or hand-delivered to the foster parent in the event of a placement change. The Notice of Change of Placement describes in detail the reason why the placement with the foster family has been/will be terminated and what steps can be taken to appeal a change in placement. The Notice of Change of Placement specifically sites the DCFS policy that supports the placement move of the foster child. Absent imminent risk, foster parents are given 14-day notice of plans to move a child from their care. The Notice of Change of Placement includes information on how a foster parent can request a Clinical Placement Review with DCFS if they...
disagree with the decision to move a child. A foster parent may request a Clinical Placement Review if they feel that the move is not in the best interest of the child. For example, a child may have been placed in a licensed home for a year when a relative steps forward requesting placement of the child. The notice provides a phone number and fax number available to request a decision review.

In order to prevent as many unnecessary moves as possible, we have created an internal Placement Review Committee whose sole task is to convene and brainstorm solutions in the early stages of at-risk foster placements. If at all possible, the decision to make a placement change is made by the entire treatment team, including foster parents, foster care staff, the biological parents, if legally permitted to be involved in the case, and the youth, if appropriate. Justification for the move must be entered into the case record and must attest that the change is clearly in the youth’s best interest. Children will be moved in a manner that is the least disruptive to their physical, emotional, academic, and therapeutic well-being. If at all possible, moves will be made during normal waking hours, during school breaks, within the same school district, and to a home that is no further from the child’s city of origin. Every opportunity to provide closure with the foster parents from whose home the youth is moving from, to better ensure a smooth transition into the new foster home, is provided.

12) The right to be notified in a timely and complete manner of all court hearings, including notice of the date and time of the court hearing, the name of the judge or hearing officer hearing the case, the location of the hearing, and the court docket number of the case; and the right to intervene in court proceedings or to seek mandamus under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987.

Children’s Home caseworkers are expected to inform and remind foster parents of upcoming court activity when the worker attends the monthly home visits, during the quarterly Child and Family Team meetings or through telephone communication. They are to encourage all foster parents to attend the court hearing of the children in their homes, inform that they can make recommendations and have input where applicable and allowable under the law. Foster parents are informed by the child’s caseworker that they are given an opportunity to speak in court when they attend. If the foster parents are not able to attend the hearing, the foster care program contacts the foster parents within 5 business days by, phone, mail or in person to provide any updates.

Caseworkers are held accountable for notifying foster parents of court hearings in the same manner as all other job performance expectations. Their performance is monitored by their supervisor in their regularly scheduled supervision, and failure to keep foster parents informed of court activity could result in disciplinary action.

CHAIL staff conducts an internal quarterly review staffing on every child. This staffing consists of all members of the CHAIL team for each specific case. CHAIL will develop
a child specific informational sheet including the dates, times and locations of upcoming court and ACR information. The caseworker can then utilize this form as a mechanism for ensuring that all information is relayed to the foster parents.

Foster parents are encouraged to speak to the casework supervisor in the event that there is a continued issue or concern. Foster parents are invited to provide information and/or recommendations that pertain to the foster child for the Permanency Review Court Report prepared by the case worker and to review the portion of the court report that is relevant to the child. Foster parents receive satisfaction surveys once a year and have the opportunity to note any communication failures regarding the court process. CHAIL will add additional questions on the surveys that are specific to the notification process. For example, “Were you as a foster parent notified about the day and time of court?”.

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.

Each child’s placement history is taken into consideration by the licensing department, casework staff, and therapeutic staff when looking to secure placement for children that have previously been in care, or have siblings that are currently in care or have previously been in care. When a child re-enters the foster care system, we generally are informed by CAPU that this is a child who had previously been in a particular foster home. If determined to be an appropriate placement, the former foster parent is contacted. The agency data maintenance system, Tier, maintains information on foster care placements for the previous 10 years.

The professional team at Children’s Home utilizes “Placement Decision” staffing’s that include Resources, foster care caseworkers, clinical staff and the foster parents, when possible, to consider a child’s best interest when making complex placement decisions. Our current placement practice gives priority to former foster parents when that placement is consistent with the best interest of the child and the other children in the foster parent’s home, and when it is in compliance with licensing capacity requirements as defined by Rule 402. We strongly support the effort to keep siblings together and we strongly encourage permanency through adoption when return home is not an option.

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.

The Children’s Home grievance/appeals policy for foster/adoptive parents’ states that foster or adoptive parents have the right to have their concerns regarding specific staff members (the caseworker, the clinician, the family service workers and the resources
specialist/licensing representative) respectfully addressed. If the foster parent is comfortable having a discussion with the staff member they are having the conflict with, they are free to attempt to resolve the issue. The foster parent can always contact their licensing representative for assistance. If the issue is with the resources specialist (licensing representative), the foster parent can contact the resources supervisor.

If the foster parent’s concern has not been successfully addressed with the staff member, a meeting should be arranged with the supervisor of the staff member and should include the resources specialist (licensing representative). If a resolution has not been agreed upon by the parties during the meeting with the supervisor, a formal grievance can be filed in writing and submitted to the director of the program. In all cases, the director will respond in writing to a formal grievance within two (2) business days. Another meeting will be convened by the director with all interested parties involved to resolve the grievance. The director will also notify the program Vice President of all formal grievance/appeals filed. If the foster/adoptive parent is not satisfied with the decision of the Director, the program Vice President will review the situation. A decision on each grievance/appeal shall be made no later than 30 calendar days after the grievance was filed.

The resources specialist (licensing worker) reviews the agency grievance/appeal policy with potential foster parents during the initial licensing process, during foster parent core training, and annually thereafter at a monitoring visit. This review includes a description of the process as well as the grievance/appeal form on which complaints are documented. Each foster parent is then asked to sign the grievance/appeal policy document, indicating they understand the process and have received the materials. The foster parent and licensing agency each retain a copy for their individual records.

The resources specialist (licensing worker) also reviews with the foster family the handout from the Advocacy Office for Children and Families, which explains their services and how they can be contacted by foster parents. Foster parents have the right to also appeal to the Department when they do not feel that they are being heard by the agency. Foster parents receive a copy of the Department’s grievance policy regarding issues related to the placement.

In the event an appeal is filed, Children’s Home does have in place practices that would help ensure that no retaliation takes place, such as no longer placing children in the foster home. Management supports use of the grievance process by foster parents and helps staff to understand and support the process. Supervisory staff periodically review the placement history of foster homes with the licensing and placement staff and discuss the reasons a home does not have placements currently to ensure that homes are not being “black listed.” Any employee of the agency determined to be engaged in harassment or retaliation against a foster/adoptive parent who has filed a grievance/appeal would be subject to the appropriate disciplinary action.

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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.

Foster parents are informed of the Advocacy Office for Children and Families during their licensing process and through the foster parent newsletter. This information is also reviewed with foster parents during any investigation, the appeals process, and any placement moves. Information on the Foster Parent Hotline/Office of Inspector General is also given to foster parents in their initial licensing packets, and can also be obtained from the DCFS Foster Care Offices. CHAIL foster parents are also trained on their status as a State Mandated Reporter. This training is provided through the DCFS PRIDE training. This is also reviewed and acknowledged with a resources specialist during the licensing process and it is also reviewed with a newly licensed home through CHAIL foster parent core training.

As a part of our orientation and training process, foster parents are provided with, and acknowledge the receipt of, a list of their rights as foster parents.

Section 1-17. Foster parent responsibilities. A foster parent’s responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

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

This responsibility is clearly stated in orientation and training and restated throughout our evolving, mutual working relationship. Foster parents are members of the child’s team. As members of the child’s team, the foster parents are included in planning and implementing various strategies for the child. Communication between foster parents and Children’s Home staff is ensured by their inclusion as members of the decision-making process. This incorporation also extends to regular family meetings that are held in the foster home that include staff, foster parents, and the child. Communication between foster parents and staff is also ensured by our on-call system, which offers 24-hour access to staff in case of emergencies.
2) The responsibility to respect the confidentiality of information concerning foster children and their families and act appropriately within applicable confidentiality laws and regulations.

Respecting confidentiality is addressed in DCFS Pride Training, at the time of orientation and continues to be addressed on a periodic basis by all agency staff. To ensure each foster parent understands that respecting confidentiality is not just a responsibility but has legal connotations as well, they are required to sign off on the Foster Parent Declaration at the time of licensure. The declaration states that the foster parent has access to confidential information regarding the foster child. It also states that the foster parent is bound to confidentiality of that information. During training and before licensure, all foster parents are given a copy of Rule 402: Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes in which responsibility of maintaining confidentiality is clearly stated. Foster parents are also reminded of this responsibility by resources staff during regular monitoring visits of the home, which occur at least every six months.

3) The responsibility to advocate for children in the foster parent’s care.

Our training requirements include completion of Educational Advocacy training before licensure. Basic training and quarterly trainings also include an overview of the court system, ACRs, case conferences, and educational advocacy in the community. These trainings reinforce the responsibility of the foster parent as an advocate for their foster child in the community as a whole. Foster parents as advocates are encouraged to attend school staffings along with ACRs, case conferences, and court hearings which enable them to advocate for the child(ren) placed in their home.

It is the responsibility of the foster parent to provide input to the foster care staff regarding the plan of services for the child and to actively participate in the case planning and decision-making process concerning the child. This includes advocating for the physical, mental, and emotional health of the foster child. If a foster parent is struggling to meet these expectations, resources staff are to be notified by the caseworker and resources will problem solve the issue with the foster parent. Service Appeal brochures are made available to foster parents at the semi-annual Administrative Case Review. In addition, training and individual assistance is provided to the foster parent on the Appeal/Grievance process if needed or requested. Included in the Appeal/Grievance policy that the foster parent signs during the time of licensure, there is an attachment that includes information on the Advocacy Office. The attachment includes the phone number of the Advocacy Office, the hours of operation, the mission of the office, and information on when the Advocacy Office should be utilized.

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4) The responsibility to treat children in the foster parent’s care and the children’s families with dignity, respect, and consideration.

Rule 402 - Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes, which outlines foster parent’s responsibility to treat foster children and their families with dignity, respect, and consideration is reviewed during orientation. In addition, during the initial licensing process the resources staff reviews with foster parents the “Responsibilities of Foster Parents” form which clearly outlines the expectation that the foster parent will treat the foster child and his or her family with dignity, respect, and consideration. This form is then signed by the resource worker and foster parent and placed in the foster parent’s file. Additional trainings are offered throughout the year to further reiterate this expectation. These trainings include a foster care overview and foster parent rights and responsibilities.

During regular family meetings held in the foster home, treatment team members monitor and assess that the rights of the foster child and their birth family are adhered to, and that they are treated with dignity and respect. Staff members are encouraged to bring their concerns to the attention of the resources staff if they believe a child or their family is not being treated with dignity, respect and consideration, and a follow-up plan is developed to address the concerns. We have found that some situations are the result of a misunderstanding by staff or foster parents, and other situations are an expression of the stress level in the foster home or of some crisis with which they are dealing. In these cases, intervention by the resources staff has provided the child with stability by allowing them to ultimately remain in a home that can provide the dignity and respect due to all children.

Resources staff monitor the foster home twice yearly to insure that the 402 Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes, the Child Care Act, and the Children’s Rights policy are adhered to by the foster family.

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.

Recognition is given that this responsibility is unending and always evolving. The child’s team shares this responsibility with the foster parents. Every effort is made to make placements based on the foster parent strengths and training. The CFS 2017, “Child/Caregiver Matching Tool” and CFS 2018, “Assessment Form” is used to assist in the process of making placements based on strengths of the foster parents. During the process of initial licensure, the resource specialist assesses the foster parents strengths and limitations to assist with placement of a child into the foster parent’s home. The resource specialist then utilizes the CFS 604-1 Foster Home Utilization Assessment every
six months during semi-annual and annual home visits as a form of ongoing assessment of the foster parents. In discussing current placements, previous placements, and/or respite, the resource specialist is able to continue to assess the foster parent’s strengths. This information can then be used to best match a foster child with the foster home. Also, after initial licensure, the resource specialist staffs the new foster home with the resource team so that all members of the team have the knowledge of the strengths of the foster parents for purpose of placement. This staffing occurs during the weekly resources team meeting.

CHAIL is currently updating the agency’s web based data system. This update will roll out throughout the next year and will include a “matching” piece for foster homes and foster children. The resource team will be able to enter information about the foster parents that are specific to the strengths and limitations of each foster parent and home. Information entered will also include preferences of the foster parents, in regards to information such as age range, gender, and medical diagnosis. When a new foster child enters care, the resource staff will be able to enter information about the foster child and the data base will then populate a match based on the strengths of the foster parents.

Respite care is available for all the foster parents to support them in their role. Foster parents caring for specialized program clients are also offered paid respite (or “vacation days”), per policy as one day per month per household, and is monitored by the Resources Operations Manager. If the foster parent caring for a specialized child chooses not to use the one respite day, it is paid out to them through their monthly reimbursement. Foster parents are also encouraged to have at least one alternative care provider to provide relief in stressful times. Foster parents receive support from resources, caseworkers, clinicians and family service workers. Support groups have also been formed to give additional support and training. Other support is available through special services such as the System of Care program for children in traditional care.

As foster parents are required to obtain ongoing training hours, they are encouraged to identify training topics related to the diagnosis/behaviors of the child(ren) placed in their home. The “Child/Caregiver Matching Tool” is also used to assess training needs. These child specific trainings are facilitated, one-on-one with the foster parents, by the child’s therapist or Children’s Home consulting psychiatrist. Additional ways foster parents can obtain credit hours are through video libraries, videos provided by the agency, outside accredited training, attending committee meetings for foster care, and book reports on subjects relating to the diagnosis or behaviors of their foster child(ren). Foster parents are also encouraged to attend training opportunities sponsored by DCFS. This year, along with the one–on-one training from the clinical staff, the majority of the training foster parents have received has been within the community or through other programs within the agency.

Traditional and Licensed Relative foster parents are also expected to have ongoing training hours each year. The CPR/First Aid sessions have been one of the successful trainings during this year. Most of the foster family households now have one or more adults CPR and First Aid certified. The agency has been training foster parents on the
impact of trauma on foster children and how to de-escalate situations with the children in their homes. This training will continue to help foster parents to identify volatile situations and respond in such a way that the original issue does not become explosive.

All foster families are informed of the services the SOC (System Of Care) program provides to help stabilize children in traditional and relative placements. If there is a request for a specialized child to have the services, approval has to be given by the program’s DCFS monitor. SOC is generally a 4 month program, but the monitor can approve an extension if needed. This program works with the child and the foster parents in their community and at the child’s school. Children’s Home casework staff are very aware of SOC services, as the agency has an SOC contract. CHAIL is also implementing a placement stabilization program which can be utilized by foster parents caring for any level of child, including specialized foster children.

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.

Children’s Home foster parents are all encouraged to attend and participate regularly in the Children’s Home Foster Parent Support Group. This organization met on a quarterly basis throughout this past year. The resources program has a position dedicated to the recruitment, training and support of foster parents along with placement responsibilities. This resource specialist works with the foster families to facilitate the support group and has established a regular meeting schedule. The foster parents share concerns, successes, ideas, and ask questions as well as benefits from training. The group will also provide peer-to-peer support. Networking among the foster parents is still encouraged for providing respite, alternative care, and support. This past year CHAIL has also implemented a foster parent mentoring program. When a new foster home is licensed they are matched with one of the more experienced foster parents. This program provides added support to newly licensed homes. This also provides the more experienced foster home to be involved with improving the quality of care to CHAIL foster children.

While the agency continues to provide the opportunity of a formal support group for the foster parents, attendance is low. Some of the families who have been foster parents at the agency for an extended period of time will attend the meetings, but the newer families do not seem to have an interest in meeting formally. There are times, however, when the social gatherings held by the agency act as a support group for the veteran and the newer foster families. The challenge has been to provide support for the families in the way that they will accept. CHAIL resource clinical coordinator is a member of the Peoria Area Cooperative Training. This is a group that meets once a month and is comprised of staff from all Peoria area child welfare agencies to focus on foster parent training. This cooperative identifies trainings for foster parents throughout the Peoria area and provides information on foster parent support groups through other child welfare agencies. This year the cooperative developed a Foster Parent Café which allows foster parents from all

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agencies to talk about their experiences and to support one another through the fostering experience. All area trainings and the Café’ are posted in the CHAIL monthly newsletter which every CHAIL foster parent receives.

Foster parents are encouraged to attend the DCFS/IFPA statewide foster care conferences, which are held at various times of the year. Children’s Home also hosts various foster parent appreciation events to promote interaction between foster parents.

7) The responsibility to assess the foster parent’s ongoing individual training needs and take action to meet those needs.

Foster parents assume responsibility for participating in the training program and remaining aware of their ongoing training needs through regular interaction with program staff. The foster care department, which includes caseworkers, resources, therapists, and foster care management meet twice a month. At one of the monthly team meetings, the resources supervisor will discuss with the foster care department foster parent training needs. Once the needs have been identified, the resource team will work on identifying a training specific to that need. The training can be within the agency, the community, or one-on-one. We have implemented a one-on-one training opportunity, provided by agency staff, in the home of the foster parent. These trainings are based on the specific identified needs of the child placed in the foster home. Foster parents are apprised regularly in the agency foster care newsletter and through individual mailings of training opportunities. Relevant training provided through outside sources may also be submitted for training credit. Training needs are a standing topic for the semi-annual and annual monitoring visits which are completed by the resource specialist.

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.

Foster parents are educated on various strategies to prevent placement disruptions, including behavior management techniques and the use of respite. CHAIL also offers trainings such as Trauma Training and TCI (Therapeutic Crisis Intervention) to provide foster parents with strategies and the knowledge that will assist them with managing behaviors that may cause placement disruptions. Regular contact allows staff the opportunity to provide ongoing support to foster parents. During these contacts, information is shared so that members of the child’s team have a sense of when a child may be at risk of disrupting. At the point of placement instability, the child’s team convenes the program’s Placement Review committee to problem-solve the various issues in order to stabilize the placement. This committee is comprised of the
caseworker, supervisor, clinical team members, resource team members, the foster parent, and when appropriate, the child. When the child’s team has determined that significant issues are still present that could lead to a placement disruption, other avenues are explored, such as a referral for SOC services, or a referral for a clinical staffing through the DCFS Clinical Practice and Field Support Office, or to submit a request to the CIPP (Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation) where DCFS, foster parents, other team members and the child/youth meet to discuss ways to provide placement stability and level of care. The agency has also implemented a placement stabilization program which works closely with the foster parents and the foster child to assist in preventing placement disruption. The placement stabilization worker provides additional support to the foster parent and assists in identifying any training needs specific to the foster child in the home.

“Separations and moves…are considered highly undesirable and occur only when the child’s team has determined that such a move is in the youth’s best interest…” The clinician or caseworker will work to provide opportunities for closure with the foster parents from whose home the youth is moving to promote a smooth transition into the new foster home. Supportive services are provided throughout this process by resources, casework, and clinical staff in recognition of the trauma that is felt by both the child and the foster parents when this occurs. Reducing disruptions continues to be one of the primary objectives of all staff.

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.

Initial Pride training includes a module on “Managing the Foster Experience”. Furthermore, assessing stress levels is an ongoing function of the child’s team, which includes the foster parent. Family meetings are held to discuss problems or issues in the home. If needed, the agency will provide foster parents with information on where they can receive counseling services, some of which are based on the level of income of the foster parent. Foster parents are strongly encouraged to attend the foster parents support group which promotes camaraderie among foster parents. Accessing alternative care providers and other forms of respite are commonly used strategies by foster parents when stress levels are high, but respite is also encouraged by the agency to prevent stress from escalating. A significant service of the resource team is to make respite arrangements for foster parents and to manage respite payments.

When the treatment team (caseworker, therapist, resource specialist) becomes aware that the foster parent may be experiencing stress, their resource specialist is informed and variety of resources are made available to the foster parent. This includes but is not limited to the use of respite time, additional support to manage the child’s issues and/or behavioral needs, foster parent support group, foster parent mentor program, placement stabilization services. The agency also provides foster parents with 24 hour support and

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counsel, through our on-call system. Through the agencies on-call system, the foster parent can receive support to navigate emergency situations.

As a last resort, foster parents are informed that they can place their foster care license on “voluntary hold”. During this time, foster children will not be placed in the home and it allows the foster parent and agency to continue to assess and implement services to relieve stressors that may or may not be related to the fostering experience.

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.

The responsibility to know the rewards and benefits to children, parents, families and society is inherent within the foster parent training offered and the on-going interactions between foster parents and treatment team members. Reinforcement of the “fostering values” is stated in the Foster Parent Declaration, through family meetings with other treatment team members, and is stated in the brochure “Building Loving Families”. Foster parents are informed in a variety of ways of events and activities that promote the foster parenting experience in a positive manner - the monthly foster parent newsletter, treatment team meetings, individual mailings and foster parent support meetings.

CHAIL hosts a semi-annual Foster Parent Informational Meeting that is open to individuals in the community who have some interest in working with the agency to promote the foster parent experience in a positive way by either becoming licensed foster parents or volunteers in some capacity. Furthermore, the agency is part of the Peoria Area Cooperative Training committee which seeks to promote and support the foster parenting experience in a positive way throughout the community.

In recognition of the critical role that licensed foster parents play in the recruitment of foster parents, the agency provides a $100.00 “finders bonus” to foster parents at the time of licensure. Then the agency provides an additional $100.00 to the foster parent or staff member, at the time a child is placed into the home of a new family, whom they had referred to the agency for licensure. Casework and clinical staff are also reminded at their staff meetings that our best recruitment tool is satisfied foster parents; casework and clinical staff remain an integral part of our recruitment program providing timely and effective services.

CHAIL sponsors several events for foster parents and their families throughout the year. This includes an event in May for Foster Parent Appreciation Month and a back to school event in August. In December, resources and foster care hosts a holiday party for the foster parents, their birth children, and the foster children placed in their home.

Our ambassador to Voices for Illinois Children and Family Support continues to network with community agencies and support the recruitment campaign, and the CEO of the agency is on the state steering committee of this group. The theme of “Don’t Write Me
Off: Foster Kids Are Our Kids” continues to be promoted via posters, radio, and television commercials.

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.

Pride training begins the process of orientation to the child welfare system with its various roles. PRIDE training includes educating the foster parents on the rights and responsibilities of foster parents. During the initial licensing process, the licensing worker reviews with foster parents the “Responsibilities of Foster Parents” form. This form is signed and dated by the foster parents and the licensing worker once it is reviewed, and a copy of the form is mailed to the foster parents. In addition, “Foster Parent’s Roles, Rights, and Responsibilities” training is provided as part of the curriculum of foster parent core training for all newly licensed CHAIL foster homes. CHAIL will also make this information available on the agency’s website.

On a periodic basis, a listing of all the staff in the foster care and resources programs, along with their extensions, is included in the newsletter. This listing includes supervisors and directors. This information is in addition to the Contact Telephone Number Cards provided to foster parents with the specific number of the caseworker, supervisor, resource specialist, resource supervisor, therapist, associate foster care director, and the director of foster care for the child in their home. The cards also provides all pertinent on call numbers for assistance after business hours. Foster parents are encouraged to contact supervisors and directors when they have a question or concern that cannot wait for the caseworker, or the foster parents believe the situation requires management involvement.

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.

Foster parents are taught that they are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act as part of the licensing process. Foster parents sign an “Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status” form prior to becoming licensed. Foster parents are trained on their status as a state mandated reporter through the DCFS PRIDE training and through CHAIL foster parent core training. CHAIL will also include the DCFS Manual for Mandated Reporters on the agency website as an additional informational resource for foster parents. All agency staff are
also trained on mandated reporting through the agency when first employed. Therefore, any agency staff can assist in informing and/or training a foster parent in their role as a mandated reporter.

Foster parents are also informed that they may be subject to allegations of abuse or neglect while having children in their care. When allegations are made against foster parents, DCFS will conduct an investigation by the Division of Child Protection. Foster parents are informed that children may be removed from their home if the DCFS investigator or Children’s Home believes that children are at risk-of-harm. Foster parents are informed that as a child welfare agency, we must comply with DCFS rules and procedures specific to the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act and the investigations associated with such. If DCFS determines the allegations do not constitute abuse or neglect, the allegations are then referred to resources for an internal investigation following the protocol in Procedures 383, Licensing Enforcement.

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 those proceedings.

Foster parents are given an extensive overview of these processes with strong emphasis on the importance of their involvement and their legal right to be part of the court hearings and ACRs. Ongoing training regarding the ACR and court processes is available to the foster parents, and these opportunities are shared with the foster parents by the resource staff as they become available. The foster parents also receive this training when newly licensed go through CHAIL foster parent core training.

Each month a family team meeting is held in the foster home. During these family meetings, feedback from the foster parent is sought and strongly encouraged by staff. The family meeting is documented on a monthly contact sheet, which also has the dates of the next ACR and court hearing on the form. All of the participants at the family meeting sign the monthly contact form and upon request, are given copies. Foster parents are notified of upcoming ACRs through DCFS notices sent to the home. Casework staff are responsible for notifying foster parents of upcoming court hearings at family team meetings and encouraging the foster parents to attend. The foster parents are given the opportunity to speak during court regarding any concerns that they have regarding permanency or other relevant issues.

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14) The responsibility to know the child welfare agency’s appeal procedure for foster parents and the rights of foster parents under the procedure.

Instruction regarding CHAIL appeal procedures is provided to all foster parents during the process of licensure. An “Explanation of Grievance/Appeal Process” form is also provided to foster parents during their orientation. The resource specialist explains the procedure to the foster parent, including the hierarchy of appeals. The foster parent signs the form acknowledging that they received information regarding the grievance process and understand the process and their rights as foster parents in the process. A copy of the signed form is provided to the foster parents, who are encouraged to maintain a reference file of all signed documentation. Additionally, all newly licensed agency foster homes are also trained on appeals and their right through foster parent core training. All agency foster care staff members are trained on the agency’s appeal process. Therefore, all staff are responsible for assisting a foster parent in completing the appeal process.

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.

The necessity of accurate record keeping is covered in the Pride training, with emphasis on the importance of maintaining complete records. This requirement is supported and reinforced by caseworkers, supervisors, clinicians, resources, and foster care nursing staff. CHAIL will be implementing an internal committee to develop a child specific informational binder. The purpose of this binder is to have a list of all documentation that is needed for a child placed into the foster home. It will also provide the foster parents a consistent place to put all child specific information that they receive while having placement of the foster child in their home. It will assist the foster parents in tracking any required appointments for the child and it will also be a reference for procedures that should be followed for specific situations, such as runaway or hospitalization. This binder will also provide a consistent way in which CHAIL can pass along all necessary and pertinent information regarding the child if a placement move is made. Upon placement of a child, foster parents will be provided a binder, which is used to store any records received or maintained regarding their foster child. The binders are then reviewed for completeness by casework staff during their regular visits to the foster home. An example of the type of records that foster parents must maintain, and the agency’s support for the process, is ”medication logs.” Foster parents whose foster children take medication are sent “medication logs” each month, which they are to complete in order to allow monitoring of each medication the child is prescribed. Once completed, these logs are sent back to the foster care nurse in order to be reviewed and logged. The foster parents send the “medication logs” back to the nurse in envelopes already stamped and addressed. Once received, the information is shared with treatment...
team members for any needed follow-up. The original completed form is placed in the foster child’s file, with a copy provided to the foster parent.

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**

Foster parents are expected to provide all pertinent information to the child welfare team. This responsibility is relayed to all foster parents during initial and ongoing training. Foster parents are invited to attend a formal Placement Review Committee meeting when a placement move is being considered. Information regarding the current placement can be shared with the child welfare team to be forwarded to the subsequent caregiver. The caseworker will provide any and all information to the new caregiver that has been received from the previous foster parent. In addition, the child’s case file is available for the prospective or new foster parent to review with the team. CFS 600-4 “Sharing Information with the Caregiver” is completed by the caseworker and signed by the subsequent caregiver, as well. During the licensing process the foster parents are given a copy of the CFS 600-4 by the resource specialist. The foster parents are encouraged to track a foster child’s information provided to them by a caseworker once a child is placed into their home.

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.**

Ongoing training through the support groups, agency trainings or one-on-one is provided to foster parents regarding issues of diversity and cultural sensitivity. This includes addressing appropriate hygiene care needs, dietary restrictions or needs, and/or religious/spiritual affiliation or practices with respect to the child’s cultural identity. Hands-on training will be provided to address specific cultural or ethnic aspects of each placement. Foster parents will be made aware of additional training options regarding cultural sensitivity and diversity as they become available.

Our training directives include “…maintaining a positive attitude toward the biological parent…” Prior to placement, careful attention is paid to the DCFS “Child/Caregiver Matching Tool”, CFS 2017. If race, culture, or national origin has been raised as an issue, the procedures are followed to complete the “Inter Ethnic Act Assessment” Form,

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CFS 2018. At the time of any cross racial placement, we include discussion and support of special care and services which may require some foster parent education. Additionally, cross-racial placements include team interaction on a case-by-case basis with the focus on the individual child’s adjustment needs.

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