

SANDUSKY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

FOSTER CARE MANUAL

REVISED 1/29/09

Melanie Dinan

Placement and Program Development Supervisor

Table of Contents

<i>Letter from the Director</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	
<i>Welcome</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Overview of the Handbook</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>WHAT IS A FOSTER PARENT</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>RECRUITMENT POLICY</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>AGENCY ORGANIZATION AND SERVICES</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>NON-DISCRIMINATION REQUIREMENTS</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS OF ALLEGED DISCRIMINATORY ACTS</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>MEPA/TITLE VI STANDARDS OF CONDUCT</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>FOSTER PARENT IDENTIFICATION CARDS</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Application and Licensure</i>	
<i>INQUIRY AND APPLICATION PROCEDURES</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>LICENSURE</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>ENDING LICENSURE</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Teamwork</i>	
<i>WELCOME TO THE TEAM</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>TEAM APPROACH TO FOSTER CARE</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>YOU AND THE CHILD'S OWN PARENTS</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>THE SOCIAL WORKER</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>FOSTER PARENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Legal Status Issues</i>	
<i>FOSTER CARE</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>AGENCY'S LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY</i>	<i>26</i>

LEGAL ISSUES	27
FOSTER CHILDREN AND LEGAL STATUS	29
LEGAL RIGHTS OF BIOLOGICAL PARENTS	31
<i>Agency Policies and Procedures</i>	
AGENCY POLICIES	32
PLACEMENTS AND DISCHARGES	33
CHILDREN'S RIGHTS	35
CONFIDENTIALITY	36
VISITATION	38
PERSONAL APPEARANCE CHANGES	38
SCHOOL, RELIGION/CULTURE/ETHNIC HERITAGE, AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	
PARTICIPATION	39
DRIVING POLICY	40
TRANSPORTATION	40
OUT-OF-COUNTY TRIPS	41
CHILD RESTRAINTS	41
APPROPRIATE CHILD CARE	42
DRUGS/CIGARETTES/ALCOHOL	43
OVERNIGHT PEER/FRIEND VISITATIONS	44
APPROVAL OF A FOSTER HOME FOR ADOPTIVE PLACEMENT	45
HEALTH CARE	46
AIDS GUIDELINES	48
FAMILY NAME	50
INSURANCE AND TAXES	50
COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGES	50
LEGAL REPRESENTATION	50

PRIVILEGES	51
RESPITE CARE	52
FOSTER PARENT PARTICIPATION EXERCISE	53
ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL WORKER	55
VOLUNTEERS/INTERNS	58
SPECIAL FUND	59
WELL WATER SAMPLE TESTS	60
RELATIONSHIPS WITH BIOLOGICAL PARENTS	61
LIFEBOOKS	62
ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE/NEGLECT	64
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE	65
SHARING AND TRANSFERRING	66
RULE VIOLATIONS	68
PROGRESS REPORTS	70
Financial Policies	
FINANCIAL PAYMENT POLICY	72
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES	73
DIFFICULTY OF CARE PAYMENTS	75
SPECIAL NEEDS	76
EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS	77
INTENSIVE NEEDS	79
FOSTER CARE INVOICE	80
INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE FOSTER CARE INVOICE	82
Training Policies	
ORIENTATION AND ONGOING TRAINING	85
"GOOD CAUSE"	87

TRAINING REPORT	89
ONGOING TRAINING REIMBURSEMENT	90
TRAVEL EXPENSES FOR FOSTER PARENTS	91
<i>Behavior/Discipline</i>	
SPECIAL CONCERNS OF FOSTER CHILDREN	94
SOME COMMON BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS OF FOSTER CHILDREN	97
CODE OF CONDUCT FOR FOSTER CHILDREN	100
DISCIPLINE AND CARE POLICY	102
PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY	104
GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCIPLINE	105
SURVIVAL TIPS FOR FOSTER PARENTS	111
WHEN THE CHILD LEAVES	117
ADDENDUM 1 - DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PLAN	118
RULES	119

Letter from the Director

Dear Foster Parents:

Each and every year a number of Sandusky County children need temporary shelter, care and protection from their family problems until those problems can be solved.

They need foster parents like you who are willing and able to give and share their homes, their help, their direction, their understanding and their love when a child needs these things most.

Nearly everyone agrees that the placement of a child in an institution is not the answer to most problems. But having dynamic, effective and caring foster parents can be a temporary answer to helping a family heal. As foster parents you play a significant and vital role in the lives of the children you help. Your willingness to help enables the Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services to work the most effectively to bring about positive change in these families.

We welcome the opportunity to work together with you, and we thank you for your commitment to the children of Sandusky County.

Sincerely,

Cindy Bilby

*Cindy Bilby
Director*

Welcome to the world's most difficult position! It is also the most rewarding! Parenting is not easy and you have chosen to be a professional parent caring for children other than your own. As a professional foster parent, you function as a very valuable extension of the Children Services Unit of the Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services.

Children in foster care today have greater needs than did children in prior years. They come to you, usually after years of abuse or neglect. They come to you angry and frightened. They come to you, oftentimes, ignorant of socially acceptable behaviors.

As a "professional" parent, you will care for children coming to your home - love them, teach and discipline, patch physical and emotional hurts, and most difficult of all, prepare the children to leave your family to return home or to a new permanent home.

As a professional foster parent, you will be required to follow federal, state and agency rules. These requirements will be discussed in various sections of this handbook.

In this handbook, you will find an overview of the agency's foster care requirements, a copy of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' rules, reimbursement schedules, community resources, tips on child care and other items of importance to you as a professional foster parent.

This handbook is to be used only as a guide. If you have specific questions, please contact the agency.

THANKS FOR CARING!

Overview of the Handbook

What are we to use the Handbook for?

The handbook is an easy, day-to-day reference for routine situations and questions. It explains what to do, the agency's and foster parents' responsibilities and how, in general, things work.

Though our orientation to a large extent follows a standard format, so much information is passed out that sometimes we forget something or it is not clean. It would be very unlikely that all the information would be remembered.

Who will have a Handbook?

All foster homes certified by Sandusky County Children Services will have a handbook.

Is this Handbook mine?

Yes and no. The handbook is the property of Sandusky County Children Services, but is made available for the foster parents to use while their home is certified.

The handbook should be returned to the agency when the foster home withdraws its certification.

What if information in the Handbook changes?

It will! That is why we put it together this way. As revisions occur, each person holding a handbook will receive a copy of the corrected or amended page or the new information. If it replaces an old, outdated page, the old page should be thrown away and the new page added.

WHAT IS A FOSTER PARENT?

Foster care for children is generally described as substitute, interim care. Presumably foster parents apply for this job out of their desire to help children in need.

As foster parents, you will be part of a team serving the needs of the child. You will share in challenges, frustrations and satisfactions found in helping and caring for children who require substitute care. In many ways, you are an extension of our staff.

Good teamwork must be based on mutual understanding of, and cooperation with, each other's role.

Yours is the role of the parent - to guide, instruct, love and discipline the foster child. The agency's role is that of legal guardian, with the responsibility of making major decisions regarding the child's future, arranging or providing any specialized program or treatment, and looking after the cost of the care of the child. However, in both roles, close communication with each other is essential to the child's care.

**RECRUITMENT POLICY FOR THE SANDUSKY COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES (eff. 2/1/05, rev. 4/14/06)**

The recruitment policy for SCDJFS is detailed separate from the Foster Care Manual and is available to all approved foster families. The policy is also available to all foster care inquirers and applicants upon request. All recruitment activities and materials used by SCDJFS will be in compliance with MEPA and Title VI, the “Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978”, 25 U.S.C.A. 1901, et seq., as amended, and the “Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.”

AGENCY ORGANIZATION AND SERVICES (eff. 8/6/02)

Foster care is one of many services provided by the Sandusky County Children Services Department. There are four major divisions of Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services: Children Services, Family and Individual Services, the One-Stop Job Store, and the Child Support Enforcement Agency. Children Services includes protective services to families; adults and children. Other services to children include protection from neglect/abuse, adoption and services to unmarried parents. Delivery of services to children is not based on financial eligibility, but on the needs of the child or family. Family and Individual Services involves financial and medical assistance to those who meet eligibility criteria. The One-Stop Job Store is affiliated with the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services and assists those who are out of work in finding employment, training, schooling and testing for job placement. The Child Support Enforcement Agency provides services to people who need to establish paternity and enforces child support orders.

The social worker is our main link with the agency. You may contact your social worker at the office between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. After hours, on weekends and holidays, the agency employs an answering service which will refer emergency and crisis situations to a caseworker on-call. **The telephone number to reach both the agency and the answering service is 334-8708.** Foster parents should notify the agency any time a child requires hospitalization, is absent from their home without permission, if anyone other than agency staff attempts to remove a child from their home, or other emergency situations.

Remember, there are many different types of foster children, each needing a different type of foster family. People with very different parenting styles and ways of doing things can be good foster parents for some children. There are only a few requirements which foster families must meet beyond the licensing and agency regulations.

- A. Foster parents must be willing to recognize the importance of the foster child's biological family to the development of his or her identity and the importance of visitation with the family. This means they must be willing to work with biological families, discuss the biological family with the child, and help the child recognize the good things about the biological family.
- B. Foster families must be tolerant of different values and standards. This does not mean they cannot have their own opinions, but they must recognize their foster children have a right to be different.
- C. Foster families must be flexible in choosing the way to meet the needs of a particular child and recognize that things which work with some children may not work with others.
- D. Foster families must be willing to work with an agency and recognize the limits to their responsibilities and rights regarding a particular child. This often means doing things a biological parent would not have to do, such as reporting to an agency and keeping records.
- E. Foster families must accept the child as a family member temporarily, but help the child prepare to move on to a permanent situation.

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

Non-discrimination Requirements for Foster Care and Adoptive Placements

The Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994, 42 U.S.C. 662(b)(9), 671(d) (hereinafter “MEPA”) and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq as it applies to the foster care and adoption process (hereinafter “Title VI”), are designed to decrease the time children wait for foster care and adoption placement, prevent discrimination in the placement of children, and aid in the identification and recruitment of foster and adoptive families who can meet each child’s needs. It prohibits any agency using federal funds from denying any person the opportunity to become an adoptive parent or foster caregiver on the basis of race, color or national origin of that person, or of the child involved and from delaying or denying the placement of a child for adoption or foster care on the basis of race, color or national origin of the adoptive parent or parents, of the foster caregiver or caregivers, or the child involved.

Under MEPA and Title VI, no agency may routinely consider race, color or national origin as a factor in assessing the needs or best interests of children. In each case, the only consideration shall be the child’s individual needs and the ability of the prospective foster caregiver or adoptive parent to meet those needs. Only the most compelling reasons may serve to justify consideration of race, color or national origin as part of a placement decision. Such reasons emerge only in the unique and individual circumstances of each child and each prospective foster caregiver or adoptive parent. In those exceptional circumstances when race, color or national origin need to be taken into account in a placement decision, such consideration must be narrowly tailored to advance the child’s best interest. Even when the facts of a particular case allow consideration related to race, color or national origin, this consideration shall not be the sole determining factor in the placement decision.

The following actions by a PCS, PCPA, or PNA are permitted under MEPA and Title VI:

- Asking about and honoring any choice made by prospective adoptive parents or prospective foster caregivers regarding what race, color or national origin of child the prospective adoptive parents or prospective foster caregivers will accept.
- Honoring the decision of a child over 12 years of age to not consent to an adoption when that decision has been approved by a court pursuant to section 3107.06 of the Revised Code.
- Providing information and resources about adopting a child of another race, color or national origin to prospective adoptive parents or prospective foster caregivers who request such information and making known to all families that such information and resource are available.
- Considering the request of a birth parent(s) to place the child with a relative or non-relative identified by name.

This form is used in compliance with the Ohio Administrative Code Rules 5101:2-48-05 and 5101:2-5-13

- Considering race, color or national origin as a possible factor in the placement decision when compelling reasons serve to justify that race, color or national origin needs to be a factor in the placement decision. Even when the facts of a particular case allow consideration related to race, color or national origin, this consideration shall not be the sole determining factor in the placement decision.
- Discussing the special cultural and physical needs of children of different races, ethnicities, and national origins as part of the training which is required of all persons who seek to become eligible to be adoptive parents or foster caregivers.
- Documenting verbal comments, verbatim, or documenting in detail any other indication made by a prospective adoptive family member or prospective foster caregiver family member living in the household reflecting a negative perspective regarding the race, color or national origin of a child for whom they have expressed an interest in adopting and indicating whether those comments were made before or after completion of the cultural diversity training which is required for all prospective adoptive or foster care applicants.

The following are examples of actions prohibited under MEPA and Title VI:

- Using the race, color or national origin of a prospective adoptive parent or foster caregiver to differentiate between adoptive placements for a child, unless an individualized assessment has been completed.
- Honoring the request of a birth parent(s) to place a child with a prospective adoptive parent or prospective foster caregiver of a specific race, color or national origin, unless the birth parent(s) identifies a relative or non-relative by name and that person is found to meet all relevant state child welfare protection standards, unless the agency determines that the placement is not in the best interests of the child.
- Requiring a prospective adoptive family or a prospective foster caregiver to prepare or accept a transracial adoption or foster care plan.
- Using “culture” or “ethnicity” as a proxy for race, color or national origin.
- Delaying or denying placement of a child based upon the geographical location of the neighborhood of the prospective adoptive family or a prospective foster caregiver whenever geography is being used as a proxy for racial composition of the neighborhood, the demographics of the neighborhood, the presence or lack of presence of a significant number of persons of a particular race, color, or national origin in the neighborhood or any similar purpose.
- Requiring extra scrutiny, additional training, or greater cultural awareness of individuals who are prospective adoptive parents or foster caregivers of children of a different race, color or national origin than required of other prospective adoptive parents or foster caregivers.
- Relying upon general or stereotypical assumptions about the needs of children of a particular race, color or national origin.

- Relying upon general or stereotypical assumptions about the ability of prospective adoptive parents or prospective foster caregivers of a particular race, color or national origin to care for or nurture the sense of identity of a child of another race, color or national origin.
- “Steering” prospective adoptive parents or foster caregivers away from parenting a child of another race, color, or national origin. “Steering” is any activity that attempts to discourage prospective adoptive parents or protective foster caregivers from parenting a child of a particular race, color or national origin.

Procedure for Complaints of Alleged Discriminatory Acts, Policies or Practices in the Foster Care or Adoption Process That Involve Race, Color or National Origin (Effective 2/1/05, rev. 8/8/07)

1. Each public children services agency (PCSA) is required to provide a written notice of the procedure for any complaints of discrimination in the foster care or adoption process that involve race, color or national origin (RCNO) to all individuals inquiring about or applying to be a foster caregiver or adoptive parent. The notice is required to be provided within seven days of the individual's first contact with the agency.
2. Any individual may file a complaint alleging a discriminatory act, policy or practice involving RCNO in the foster care or adoption process of Sandusky County DJFS (which is a PCSA), any other PCSA, PCPA, PNA, or the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) **Bureau of Civil Rights**.
3. Any person, including but not limited to, an employee or former employee of a PCSA, PCPA, PNA or a member of a family which has sought to become a foster caregiver or adoptive parent, may also file a complaint alleging that he or she was intimidated, threatened, coerced, discriminated against or otherwise retaliated against in some way by a PCSA, PCPA, PNA or by ODJFS because he or she has made a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing in connection with an allegation that a PCSA, PCPA, PNA or ODJFS engaged in discriminatory acts, policies, or practices as it applies in the foster care or adoption process.
4. The individual filing a complaint is required to use the JFS 02333 "Discrimination Complaint Form". This form is available upon request of the interested party.
5. The complaint shall be filed within two years from the date of the occurrence of the alleged discriminatory act; or two years from the date upon which the complainant learned or should have known of a discriminatory act, policy or practice. The complaint may be filed with:
 - (A) Any PCSA, PCPA or PNA; or,
 - (B) The ODJFS.
6. When any complaint alleging discrimination involving RCNO in the foster care or adoption process is received by:
 - (A) A PCSA, PCPA or PNA, the agency shall forward the complaint to ODJFS within three working days of date of receipt of the complaint.
 - (B) ODJFS, the department shall notify the PCSA, PCPA, PNA that is the subject of the complaint within three working days of the receipt of the complaint.
7. ODJFS shall conduct an investigation of the complaint. If Sandusky County DJFS is the subject of the complaint, this agency will not initiate, conduct, or run concurrent investigations surrounding the complaint or take any further action regarding the complainant or the subject of the complaint until the issuance of the final investigation report by ODJFS, unless approved by ODJFS.

8. If Sandusky County DJFS is the subject of the complaint, the agency will cooperate fully with ODJFS during the course of the investigation and will submit any information requested by ODJFS no later than fourteen days from the date of the request, unless otherwise agreed upon.
9. The investigation by ODJFS shall include, but is not limited to:
 - (A) Face-to-face interviews with the complainant, the respondent and all relevant witnesses.
 - (B) Issuance of a final investigation report to the complainant and the PCSA, PCPA or PNA that is the subject of the complaint. The report shall include the allegations, background information, analysis, determination and recommendations and shall be issued within ninety days of the receipt of the initial complaint.
10. If unanticipated circumstances require additional time to complete the investigation or to issue the final report, ODJFS will notify the complainant and the PCSA, PCPA, or PNA that is the subject of the complaint of the need for additional time.
11. Upon completion of the final investigation report, ODJFS shall determine if any action against a PCSA, PCPA or PNA is warranted. For noncompliance by a PCSA, ODJFS may take any action permitted under section 5101.24 of the Revised Code. For noncompliance by a PCPA or PNA, ODJFS may take action concerning the agency's certificate pursuant to Chapter 5101:2-5 of the Administrative Code.
12. No person who has filed a complaint alleging a discriminatory act, policy or practice involving RCNO in the foster care or adoption process of a PCSA, PCPA or PNA or who has testified, assisted or participated in any manner in the investigation of a complaint shall be intimidated, threatened, coerced, or retaliated against by any employee or contractor of the PCSA, PCPA, PNA or ODJFS.
13. Nothing in this rule or in an agency's policy shall prohibit an individual from filing a complaint with the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office for Civil Rights (OCR) alleging discrimination that involves RCNO in the foster care or adoption process of a PCSA, PCPA, PNA or ODJFS.
14. A written notice of the procedures for any complaints of discrimination in the foster care or adoption process that involve RCNO will be provided by 3/1/05 to all foster caregivers certified or in the process of certification and to all individuals who have approved adoptive homestudies or who are participating in the adoptive homestudy process.
15. A copy of these procedures will also be sent to all inquirers for foster care and/or adoption with their initial inquiry packet, to all approved foster and/or adoptive parents, and to all foster and/or adoptive applicants in the process of approval no later than 3/1/05.

MEPA/Title VI Standards of Conduct (eff. 2/1/05, revised 4/18/05)

Per 5101:2-33-11 of the Administrative Code, the employees and contractors of the Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services' Children Services Unit, herein referred to as the agency, shall comply with the MEPA Act of 1994 as amended by Section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C. 622(b)(9), 671(a)(18), 674(d) and 1996(b) (MEPA) and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq, as they apply to the foster care and adoption process (Title VI).

More specifically, SCDJFS, any employees or contractors of the agency shall not:

1. Deny an person the opportunity to become a foster caregiver or an adoptive parent on the basis of race, color or national origin of that person, or of the child involved.
2. Delay or deny any placement of a child in foster care or for adoption on the basis of race, color or national origin of the foster caregiver(s), of the adoptive parent(s), or of the child involved.
3. Require an ongoing, foster care or adoption worker to justify a proposed placement for the reason that the race, color or national origin of the child is different from that of the family whom the worker is proposing as the child's foster caregiver or adoptive parent.

Written standards of conduct shall be provided to each employee or contractor who is engaged in the placement of children into foster care or for adoption, or engaged in the recruitment, assessment, approval, or selection of a foster caregiver(s) or adoptive family within 30 days of the effective date of the rule and within 30 days of any revisions. New employees or contractors shall be provided a copy of the written standards of conduct within 30 days of their hire date or the effective date of their contract.

Should an agency employee engage in discriminatory acts, policies, or practices involving race, color or national origin in the foster care or adoption process as determined by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services upon completion of the investigation conducted pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code, said employee shall be subject to discipline procedures as outlined in the Sandusky County Personnel Manual. The disciplinary action taken may include suspensions and/or removal from employment dependent upon applicable employment laws and the union contract.

Should a contractor engage in discriminatory acts, policies, or practices involving race, color or national origin in the foster care or adoption process as determined by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services upon completion of the investigation pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code, said contractor shall be subject to the penalties and sanctions as determined by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services pursuant to Chapter 5101:2-5 of the Administrative Code (when applicable) and possible termination of the contract with the agency.

Whenever an investigation conducted by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code, results in a finding that an agency employee or contractor engaged in discriminatory acts, policies, or practices, the agency shall submit a corrective action plan to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services within thirty (30) days of the notification of the findings of the investigation. This corrective action plan shall address how the agency will prevent future violations by the employee or contractor.

FOSTER PARENT IDENTIFICATION CARDS (eff. 8/6/02)

Some of the foster parents have mentioned that it would be helpful to have identification as a foster parent. If you feel an identification card would be helpful to you as a foster parent, please contact our department to schedule a time when we can obtain an identification card for you. The card is similar to cards issued to other staff and would contain your name, your title as a foster parent, a sample of your signature, and also your picture. This identification card is optional. If you feel it would be useful to you, you may obtain one; if you don't feel it would be useful to you, please understand we are not requesting you to obtain one.

The identification card is the property of the agency and must be returned at the end of your certification or at the time you withdraw from the program.

FOSTER CARE INQUIRY AND APPLICATION PROCEDURES (eff. 1/1/03, rev. 12/17/07)

The Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services will respond to inquiries concerning foster care within three working days, and will provide the prospective applicant with the following information:

- (1) An initial interest letter which briefly explains both foster care and adoption and availability of the joint homestudy approval process;
- (2) A more detailed information packet specifically about foster care;
- (3) The Procedures for Complaints of alleged discriminatory acts, policies and practices;**
- (4) The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services rules pertaining to foster care licensure;
- (5) The requirement that all applicants and other adult household members provide a set of fingerprint impressions and that a criminal records check be conducted and satisfactorily completed. The required fee(s) for said check(s) will be paid for by the applicant and/or other household adults. The actual cost of these checks may be obtained from the Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services; and
- (6) A JFS 01691, "Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Application for Child Placement."

Upon receipt of a complete and accurate Application for Child Placement (JFS 01691), the Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services will determine whether or not the applicant meets the eligibility requirements as detailed in this policy. If the decision is to begin the homestudy process, the agency will request the applicant provide all additional information necessary to complete the homestudy for foster care, adoption, or both. Incomplete applications will not be processed and will be returned to the applicant for completion. Applications found to contain inaccurate or wrong information shall be denied pursuant to OAC rule 5101:2-5-26.

Applicants can choose to apply solely for foster care, solely for adoption, or for both. If an applicant chooses to apply to be both a foster and adoptive parent, (s)he will also be given detailed information about the agency adoption process. In this situation, applicants will likely meet with two agency workers. The approval processes are similar for foster care and adoption, and the foster care and adoption specialists will share information to expedite the processes, when possible. Individual meetings with both workers may be necessary to fully explain each program to the applicants [5101:2-5-13(4)]. Our agency policy is to incorporate and simultaneously approve a family for foster care and adoptive placement if the family chooses to be approved for both. The licensure process details information necessary for the simultaneous approval for both programs.

LICENSURE (eff. 9/18/08, rev. 1/29/09)

The primary goal in the licensing of foster homes is the protection of children. Ohio law prohibits the use by any agency of any boarding homes which are not licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services or another appropriate state agency. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services is responsible, by law, for the development of rules governing the licensure of foster homes. It spreads a protective shield over foster parents, biological parents and the agency as it defines mutual rights and responsibilities. All of the rules and policies you are expected to follow as foster parents are spelled out in this handbook and in Rules 5101:2-5 and 5101:2-7, which you received at the time of your initial inquiry.

The following is a list of general requirements and activities necessary to be certified as a foster and/or adoptive caregiver upon submission of a completed 01691 "Application for Child Placement". Some of them are specified in 5101:2-7 and others are required by the agency [5101:2-5-13(A)(5)]. The agency will also comply with rules 5101:2-48-09, 5101:2-48-11 and 5101:2-48-12 for the simultaneous approval of an adoption homestudy. These rules are spelled out more clearly in our adoption policy (which is available to all approved adoptive families and also upon request).

- A. Each foster caregiver will be at least twenty-one (21) years of age.
- B. Foster caregivers may be legally married, single, or co-parents. Documentation of marital status will be requested as appropriate.
- C. At least one foster caregiver in the home will be able to read, write and speak English or to be able to effectively communicate with any child placed in the home.
- D. Foster caregivers will have sufficient income to meet the basic needs of the family and to make timely payment of bills. This will be documented on a financial statement form (JFS 01681). Caregivers will be required to submit various additional documents to verify income and timely payment of bills.
- E. All household members must be free from physical, emotional or mental conditions that could negatively affect the care of a foster child. This must be documented on a Medical Statement (JFS 01653) completed by a licensed physician.
- F. Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) clearance from Ohio's SACWIS system or Central Registry will be required for all adults in the home to determine suitability.
- G. Foster caregivers and all adult household members will submit to local police checks, as well as, **BCII and FBI** criminal record checks.
- H. If foster applicants or other adult household members have not been residents of Ohio for the last five years, CAN clearance from states of prior residence will be required.

- I. Foster caregivers may not operate their home as an adult boarding or rooming house. Foster caregivers must notify the agency in writing, within 30 days of becoming a licensed day care provider.
- J. Foster caregivers will not conduct or operate any business, including babysitting, out of their home without first getting written agency approval.
- K. Each foster caregiver will obtain a fire inspection from a certified fire inspector or fire marshal to document that their home is free from conditions that would be hazardous to children. This will be documented on an JFS 01200.
- L. Each foster caregiver will submit to a safety audit completed by an agency representative to document that all site and safety requirements are met. This will be documented on a JFS 01348.
- M. All foster caregivers will complete the required pre-service orientation training as specified in OAC rule 5101:2-5-33 and forty hours of training on relevant topics during each 2 year certification.
- N. Foster caregivers will work cooperatively with agency representatives as members of a treatment team.
- O. Foster caregivers will keep appropriate and requested records on all foster children and will not share information about any foster child or his family with persons not involved in his care or treatment.
- P. Foster caregivers will have appropriate and safe sleeping arrangements for all foster children. This will be documented on the homestudy form (JFS 01673).
- Q. Foster caregivers will feed foster children three nutritious meals per day with the rest of the household members. They will only use pasteurized or certified milk.
- R. Foster caregivers will follow agency instructions for providing health care services to foster children.
- S. Foster caregivers will get prior approval before using any babysitter for a foster child or before leaving any child alone. This will be documented on an agency Alternative Care Arrangement form. Background checks will be required for any caregivers who provide more than 20 hours of care per week for foster children, if that caregiver is not already licensed.
- T. Foster caregivers will treat all children with kindness, consistency and respect and will not use physical discipline of any sort.
- U. Foster caregivers will provide appropriate opportunities for socialization and education, including religious activities as selected by the child or the child's parents.

- V. Foster caregivers will discuss with the Foster Care Specialist what type of physical, emotional or psychological needs they would not feel comfortable handling. This will be documented on the Child Characteristics portion of the homestudy form.
- W. Foster caregivers will help the Foster Care Specialist to get to know them on a personal level. To that end they will be asked to complete the Foster and Adoptive Parent Questionnaire and to supply the names of three unrelated people who can supply personal references about them. These people will then be contacted by the Foster Care Specialist. (If you are also applying to be Adoptive Parents, you will be requested to give four references, three of which must be from persons not related to you.) These references will be verified and must be satisfactory in nature.
- X. Additional references will be required from any prior agency with which the applicant were licensed or provided care/supervision of children.
- Y. The Foster Care Specialist will discuss varied safety issues with the foster caregivers. This will be documented on the agency Safety Assurances form.
- Z. Each applicant must be a legal resident of the US and reside in the state of Ohio.

*The Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services shall complete a written homestudy report, and provide written notification to the applicant of approval or denial within 180 days of the date the application was approved. A signed extension of time, may be required if requirements are unable to be completed within the allotted time period.

*The assessor shall arrive at one of the following conclusions at the completion of the homestudy:

1. Approve the applicants as adoptive parents only;
2. Recommend the certification of the applicants as foster parents only;
3. Approve the applicants as adoptive parents and recommend the certification of the applicants as foster parents simultaneously;
4. Deny the application for adoption;
5. Recommend that the certification for foster care not be approved, or;
6. Deny both the adoption application and recommend that the certification for foster care not be approved.

*If the SCDJFS decides to recommend your home for certification, the written notification of said approval will be sent within 10 days from completion and shall include, but will not be limited to, the following information:

1. Date a recommendation was submitted to the state to issue a certificate.
2. A description of the characteristics of the child or children for who the applicant is being approved.

ENDING LICENSURE (1/1/03, rev. 9/18/08)

Families can have their foster home license end in several ways. A caregiver may sign a voluntary withdrawal form at any time or may withdraw at recertification time by checking the appropriate box on the JFS 01331.

The agency may also deny recertification or revoke a foster home certificate if a foster caregiver fails or refuses to comply with any requirement of 5101:2-7 or for another reason listed in 5101:2-5-28. At the time the agency decides to recommend denial of initial certification, denial of recertification, or revocation of a family foster home, the agency may contact ODJFS Children Services Licensing Enforcement coordinator for consultation regarding required evidence, procedures and advice prior to notifying the applicant or foster caregiver of the agency's intent.

If a caregiver fails to either re-apply or voluntarily terminate prior to the expiration of the certificate, the foster home certificate shall expire. You will then be required to re-apply for Initial Certification.

The Administrative Procedure Act affords applicants or foster parents who have been denied an initial certificate, been refused the renewal of a certificate, or have had their certificate revoked, the right to have written notification by regular and certified mail of the reasons for the action, the law or rule involved, and the method of and time limits for requesting a local agency grievance meeting. The final decision to deny the initial certification or recertification or revoke certification will be made by ODJFS at which time the applicant or foster caregiver will be afforded the opportunity to request a state hearing pursuant to Chapter 119 of the Revised Code.

If a family foster home application or certificate has been denied or revoked pursuant to Chapter 119 of the Revised Code, the applicant or foster caregiver will not be eligible for certification through any PCSA, PCPA, or private non-custodial agency and will not be eligible for any ODJFS license or certification for five years from the date of denial or revocation or the exhaustion of all appeals, whichever is later.

Information regarding a foster caregiver who has had a license revoked will become public record.

WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

A certain kind of teamwork grows between foster parents and social workers during the placement of a child; a teamwork that is built on mutual respect, a genuine shared interest in the progress of the child and recognition of mutual interdependence.

In working together for the common good of a specific child, however, we do encounter many problems; conflicts with biological parents, confidentiality, removal, and permanency planning as well as others. Foster parents need all the warmth and support that their workers can give them. They also need to know that besides the above-named problems, including sharing the child with the biological parents, that sharing a child with the agency is sometimes even more difficult. The foster family may feel that their life with the child would be simpler if there were no social workers involved.

Again for an agency, foster parents, social worker, and child, problems are best approached with a healthy, honest, and open attitude about the best possible plan for a specific child involved. We, as a team, will need to offer the child placed in your home normal, natural experiences that benefit his personality and that provides him with knowledge, hope, and promise of new experiences yet to come. We need to offer:

1. An attitude of intelligent understanding. This involves the ability to look at the child's behavior as a natural result of his makeup and experience rather than as an infraction of moral rules, or a deviation from adult convention. It also requires the creative imagination to understand the way a child feels and motives for his acts.
2. A consistency of viewpoint and discipline. This element of stability in management gives the child the comfortable feeling of knowing where he stands with reference to some standard. The consistency of viewpoint seems more important than the actual discipline itself, since every clinic or child-placing agency can point to successful homes with very diverse views on discipline.
3. An attitude of interested affection. It is the moderate type of affection which seems most helpful, not the glowing enthusiasm of the emotionally starved parent. "Fundamental interest and affection" perhaps is the best descriptive phrase. It is a primary factor in the child's security.
4. Satisfaction in the child's developing abilities. Only if the foster parents find this satisfaction will they wisely reward the youngster for achievement, and permit the child more and more freedom to grow in independence.

Carl R. Rogers, *The Clinical Treatment of the Problem Child* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1939).

TEAM APPROACH TO FOSTER CARE (eff. 8/6/02)

You have the major responsibility for making decisions about your own children. Those decisions, of course, are influenced by things like traditions, community mores, available services and opportunities, laws, biological factors and the specific needs of your particular child.

A team however, has the major responsibility for making decisions about a foster child. This means that there are many more factors which influence the decisions that must be made. In addition to the influences noted above, the courts, agency policy, state and federal regulations, laws specifically pertaining to foster children, the social worker, the biological family and you as the foster parent all influence decisions made about children in foster care. You are a valuable member of the team and we encourage you to voice the opinions, suggestions and concerns you have about matters pertaining to your foster children.

YOU AND THE CHILD'S OWN PARENTS (eff. 8/6/02)

It is important for you as foster parents to understand the circumstances which necessitated the child to be placed in our home. The social worker will share with you as much of the information about each child as is possible.

Often it is difficult for the foster parents and the biological parents to accept the fact that there are others deeply involved in planning for this child's future. The foster parent may know that this foster child is a victim of abuse or neglect, and the thought of ever returning the child to the biological parents is hard for the foster parent to accept. However, they must keep in mind that the agency representative acts in the best interest of the child and his family and in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code, meaning we do all that is possible under the law.

If a child is to return home, it will be important that contact between the parents and the child be continued. During temporary custody, visits will follow the plan worked out between Children Services and the parents and approved by the court. What is in the best interests of reunifying the family and preserving the child's safety will be the first consideration.

Almost always, foster parents are viewed as helpful by biological parents, but on rare occasions a parent may try to take advantage of foster parents. Under no circumstances should someone seeking the child come to the home of the foster family without prior approval. If this should happen, the foster parent should suggest the person leave and make contact with their caseworker. If the person becomes threatening, the foster parent should not argue and immediately call the caseworker and the police.

If you find yourself in a situation in which any person tries to remove, or does remove, a foster child from your home without agency knowledge, you should call the agency immediately.

THE SOCIAL WORKER: THE LINK BETWEEN AGENCY AND FOSTER PARENT (eff. 8/6/02)

The social worker is responsible for the day-to-day management of services to children, foster parents, and biological parents, and will be available Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. (If you have an emergency and you must speak to someone after hours, on weekends or on holidays, you can reach an on-call worker by dialing the regular agency phone number.) The scope of responsibilities may include investigation of problem situations; formulation of plans and goals for children and families; placement and removal of children; provision of assistance to foster parents and biological parents in dealing with children; opening, closing, and evaluating foster homes; knowledge and use of community resources; and case recording and court representation for the agency.

In regard to the foster family, the social worker will:

1. Define the child's needs and be available for consultation when the child's behavior becomes a concern. Good communication in the early stages of a conflict situation will avert later problems requiring removal from the foster home.
2. Provide emotional support to the foster parents, especially during times of stress.
3. Share information about the foster child and his family with the foster parents.
4. Arrange visitation with the biological family for the foster child.
5. Plan for the child's future, taking into consideration feelings, information, and observations supplied by foster parents about the foster child.
6. Be supportive of the foster parents' positive efforts on behalf of the foster child.
7. Help the foster child understand why he cannot live with his parents.
8. Prepare the foster child and the foster parents for the child's return to his biological parent's home when the time arrives.
9. Help the biological parents understand the role of the foster parents and help them handle jealous feelings that might occur.
10. Help the biological parents resolve or learn to cope with their problems so that the child can return home.

In accordance with 5101.2-5-13 (A) (21), the administrator and/or supervisor will be available for accessibility Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. (excluding holidays) to provide assistance to foster parents, agency staff, and ODJFS representatives, if needed. In addition to those hours listed, supervisory staff with executive authority are available after business hours, on weekends and holidays by contacting the on-call worker (as explained above) who will consult with the supervisor. Supervisory staff are also capable of contacting and consulting with the Social Programs Administrator, SCDJFS Assistant Director, or SCDJFS Director, if the circumstances are warranted.

If you feel the need to speak to an Ohio Department of Job and Family Services representative, you may contact either the Toledo Regional Office or Central Office in Columbus.

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY (eff. 8/6/02, rev. 9/18/08)

Because the Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services is ultimately responsible for the well-being of all foster children, the agency attempts to successfully "match" children to particular foster homes. It is our goal that a child will only be placed in a foster home that is in the child's best interests and can meet that child's special, as well as his/her basic needs. The agency will carefully evaluate each foster family's areas of expertise and the child's needs before placing that child in the foster home. Other responsibilities include:

1. Acting as legal guardian.
2. Providing the foster parents with necessary information on child's background.
3. Providing an initial clothing voucher to sufficiently supplement the foster child's own clothing.
4. Covering medical and dental needs.
5. Making arrangements for visits with the child's family.
6. Working with the foster parents on what is best for the child in their home within the agency's rules and policies.
7. Working with those involved in planning for the child's future and keeping foster parents advised of these plans.
8. Being available to answer and help with any problems which arise concerning a foster child.
9. Making periodic visits to the home to talk with the foster child and the foster family.
10. Certifying foster homes and recertifying them every two years and at that time evaluating the foster family and their cooperation with the agency.
11. Offering sufficient, regular, and diverse training at reasonable times and places to allow foster parents to easily meet the requirement of forty (40) hours for recertification.

FOSTER PARENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (rev. 4/28/05)

Foster Parents' Rights:

1. The right to all information necessary to provide the best care for the child.
2. The right to have input in the planning for a foster child.
3. The right to be reimbursed for care given to the child as outlined in this handbook.
4. The right to cooperation and communication from the social worker and agency.
5. The right to be treated with dignity and consideration, as all human beings should be treated.
6. The right to be respected for the very human desire to parent children.
7. The right to decide the form and structure of their family according to their own values.
8. The right to risk parenting children labeled as difficult -- those of different backgrounds, and those with physical, social, emotional, psychological and/or behavioral special needs.
9. The right to be evaluated as individuals in terms of themselves and not in terms of some abstract model of a "perfect family".
10. The right to be given honest information on requirements and homestudy feedback within reasonable periods of time.
11. The right to be given full, accurate information about prospective children and to make their own decision on the basis of this information.
12. The right to expect support and consultation as part of the team relationship, not only in the placement period, but also in the post-placement period.

Foster Parents' Responsibilities (eff. 9/18/08, rev. 1/29/09):

The foster parent provides a service to the agency which cannot be met in any other way. It is important for the foster parent to be aware of the responsibilities involved in fostering and cooperate with the agency at all times. Such responsibilities are:

1. Provide the child with the basic daily needs, including food, shelter, and love.
2. Ensure that a foster child who is not capable of meeting his/her own personal hygiene needs, is clean and groomed daily. Foster parents should ensure that foster children capable of meeting their own personal hygiene needs have adequate personal toiletry supplies appropriate to the child's age, sex, race, and cultural background. Foster parents should provide foster children with instruction on good habits of personal care, hygiene, and grooming appropriate to the child's age, sex, race, and cultural background, and need for such training.

3. Ensure that a foster child's clothing and footwear will be clean, well-fitting, seasonal, and appropriate to the child's age and sex.
4. To keep information about the child confidential. This includes sharing information with relatives, church friends, etc. Wrong information in the wrong hands could seriously harm a foster child or biological parent. Our department, by the Ohio Revised Code and by regulations of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, is bound to confidentiality on all cases.
5. Take the child to medical or psychological appointments with a qualified medical doctor or licensed psychologist, notifying the agency in advance, whenever possible.
6. Provide the child appropriate opportunities for religious, social and educational training.
7. Contact the agency regarding any pertinent changes in child's behavior and health.
8. Share your opinions on child's needs with the social worker.
9. Keep records, written at the end of a month in a monthly report, on child's health, behavior, and daily activities so this information can be shared with the biological parents, adoptive parents, the agency, physician, psychologist, or court personnel. Forms will be provided by agency.
10. Contact the agency immediately if there is any impending or actual change in household occupancy, marital status, employment status or if a serious illness or injury occurs in your home. Any new adult member in the home must have a fingerprint and child abuse/ neglect clearance conducted.
11. Participate in school or community functions that involve or relate to the foster child.
12. Advise the agency four weeks before a planned move or immediately if you change your telephone number.
13. Advise the agency if you are going out of state for longer than overnight or on vacation.
14. To work with the social worker to keep and update lifebooks on each foster child consisting of pictures, accomplishments, etc.
15. To maintain and improve in the practice of fostering, to constantly examine, use and increase their knowledge and to foster with integrity and competence. Related to this, foster parents will be required to complete twenty hours (20) of training each certification year.
16. To not accept gifts (of over \$10) or any money payments from the biological families of their placements. Any gift should be reported to the agency.

17. To verbally notify the agency within 24 hours of any charge of any criminal offense (including delinquency charges for minors) brought against the caregiver or any resident of his/her home (including minors) and notify the agency within 24 hours of the resulting conviction. **Notice of conviction or a plea of guilty must also be given in writing within 24 hours.** Failure to notify the agency in this situation, shall result in ODJFS seeking an order to revoke certification. The agency will begin evaluating whether the foster home should continue to be recommended for certification within 5 days of our knowledge of the conviction and will complete that evaluation within 30 days.

FOSTER CARE (eff. 8/6/02)

Ideally, it should be possible to maintain a variety of foster family homes to meet the needs of individual children. These should include homes which offer to the child not only the normal experiences of living, but also specialized homes to meet the needs of children with special problems.

Foster homes, which receive a regular reimbursement from the agency for the care of a child, are the type of placement used for the majority of children in the agency's custody. Foster families and the agency make a joint decision for which type of child a foster family can best care. The agency is also interested in knowing of those families whose qualifications, personality and/or training meet the needs of children with special physical or emotional problems.

Placement alternatives other than foster homes may include a relative home, family group home or residential treatment facility. State regulations require that children must be placed in the least restrictive setting available that is able to meet their particular needs.

AGENCY'S LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY (eff. 8/6/02)

The Juvenile Court chapter of the Ohio Revised Code is initiated by a provision which explains that the purpose of the chapter is to provide for the care, protection, and mental and physical development of children and to achieve the foregoing purposes, whenever possible, in a family environment, separating the child from the parents only when necessary for his welfare or in the interests of public safety. The statutes and court interpretations of their purpose indicate that the best interest of the child is, in the first instance, in his/her own home. If a problem in the home is detrimental to the child and that problem can be corrected by the help of a community service agency, then the law demands that service be extended.

In accordance with the law, the Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services has the responsibility to extend services to a child and/or family which will help maintain the family unit. If a situation is not able to be corrected by the provision of services, the agency then has the responsibility to advise the court of the situation and seek custody of the child to remove him from his home. Even where the child has been removed, the law requires that the agency make reasonable efforts to aid the parents to understand and meet their responsibilities to the child. If reasonable efforts to rehabilitate have been made without success over a reasonable period of time, the agency then has the responsibility to seek permanent custody of the child. If granted, this results in the termination of the biological parent's rights, so that a more permanent and beneficial environment can be created for him/her.

LEGAL ISSUES (eff. 8/6/02)

Many "legal" issues have arisen regarding the rights and responsibilities foster parents have for foster children. This section will attempt to answer some of the concerns. If you have questions that are not answered here, please contact our agency and we will secure the answer for you. Foster parents are not liable for injury to a foster child in their home unless the child is injured due to neglect of the foster parents. Foster parents might want to inform their insurance agent that they do have foster children in their home and also that they will be riding in their car. Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services will not reimburse the foster parents for the cost of damages done by a foster child to property or belongings of the foster family or others. Foster parents cannot, however, be held liable for theft or property damage done by a foster child to another person's property. Court actions surrounding the child may also involve foster parents as witnesses.

Because you are a foster parent, you may be asked by other service providers to sign many forms that normally signed by biological parents. Some forms you may sign but others you may not. Following is a list of forms which may and may not be signed by you.

Forms related to school:

- | | | |
|------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NO | 1. | Pre-school Registration |
| YES | 2. | Enrollment |
| NO | 3. | Allowing aspirin to be given at school |
| NO | 4. | Special medical examination for sports |
| *YES | 5. | School subject selection |
| NO | 6. | Participation in Special Programs/Subject,
e.g. Sports, Band, Chorus, Driver's Ed |
| *YES | 7. | Health film - sex education permit |
| YES | 8. | Program at night |
| YES | 9. | Field Trips - In School |
| YES | 10. | School Pictures |
| YES | 11. | Grade Cards |
| *YES | 12. | Suspension Notices |
| NO | 13. | Permission for Psychologicals |
| NO | 14. | Scholarship Applications |
| NO | 15. | College and Technical School Applications |
| NO | 16. | Medical Releases - or any release of
responsibility for child's safety |
| NO | 17. | Enrollment in Special Classes (EMR, LD) |
| NO | 18. | Permanent Withdrawal |
| NO | 19. | Transfer of School Records |
| NO | 20. | Release of Information in School Records |
| NO | 21. | Emergency Medical Authorization Card |

MEDICAL:

- YES 1. Routine Medical Exams
- NO 2. Permission for Counseling
- NO 3. Permission for Psychological Examinations or Tests
- NO 4. Releases of Confidential Information about child
- NO 5. Permission for any hospitalization
- NO 6. Permission for extensive dental care
- NO 7. Releases for Scouting
- NO 8. Releases to Mental Health and other clinics

MISCELLANEOUS:

- NO 1. Application for Social Security Card
- NO 2. Part-time Work
- NO 3. Drivers Permit and License
- NO 4. Drivers Education
- NO 5. Permits for Sports
- *YES 6. Transportation to Camp
- NO 7. Credit Cards
- NO 8. Application to join services before age eighteen
- NO 9. Giving permission for photographs to be used for media/publicity
- NO 10. Application for Work Permit

*Discussion with caseworker is advisable.

Overall, the agency is ultimately responsible for foster children in your home. The foster parent acts as an extension of the agency and if anyone would get sued, it would most likely be our agency rather than the foster parents.

FOSTER CHILDREN AND LEGAL STATUS (eff. 12/17/07, rev. 1/29/09)

The children placed in foster homes are usually children of circumstance. They may come from unstable homes, they may be victims of neglect or abuse, they may be teens having a difficulty functioning appropriately in their environment, or they may be infants being placed for adoption by their parent or parents. Whatever the circumstances, Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services will do all that is possible to ensure that the civil rights of all children, including those of teenage mothers, are not violated. **This also includes protection against any unlawful discrimination, as well.**

When Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services places a child in a foster home, the child must be in the agency's custody. There are several types of custody, described below. When a child is in our custody, a case plan will be developed. This is a plan that outlines strengths and weaknesses of the family, services necessary to address the weaknesses and identifies the responsibilities all parties have in helping the family meet the goals. The family, agency caseworker, foster parents, Guardian Ad Litem or CASA volunteer (a person who represents the child's best interests in court), the court and child, when appropriate, have input regarding the case plan.

An **Agreement for Care** is a form signed by the parent for a brief period of time and is seldom used by the agency. For example, this could be used when a parent knows they will be in the hospital and will need their child cared for until they are able to continue with their responsibility. The Agreement for Temporary Custody can be used for up to thirty (30) days, or if agreed upon by the parent, it can be extended for up to sixty (60) days of care.

Emergency Custody, commonly called "Ex-parte", would be obtained when a child is in immediate danger and must be removed from his present living arrangement immediately because of probable harm. Emergency custody is arranged only until a court hearing is held to determine whether the child should be returned to his/her parents' custody, placed with a family member/friend, or whether temporary custody should be given to a child placing agency. At the time of the emergency hearing, the parents are offered free legal help if they are unable to pay. The child is appointed a Guardian Ad Litem (an attorney) or a CASA volunteer (court appointed special advocate) to represent the best interests of the child.

The Emergency Custody hearing is called a **Shelter Care Hearing** and is normally held at 1:00 p.m. on the next business day after custody has been granted. The court would need to make a finding that probable cause existed to remove the child from their home, and whether or not probable cause exists in the home to warrant the child's removal. There have been times when a child is returned to a relative or even home during the Shelter Care Hearing. Further hearings would be set up as to determine whether or not the child should remain in care.

Normally, the next hearing that is set up is called an **Adjudicatory Hearing**. At this hearing, the court would make a determination based on the facts of the case as to whether clear and convincing evidence would show that the child is an abused, neglected, or dependent child. These hearings should be held within 60 days of custody. However, they are often times continued.

When a child is found dependent, it means the child is in need of care through no fault of the parent. A child is considered neglected if the parents failed to provide for the needs of the child. An abused child is a child who is non-accidentally violated sexually, physically, or emotionally by another person. A child may also be placed in custody by the juvenile court due to unruly or delinquent behavior. Unruly behavior is when a child is truant from home, school, or out of the control of a responsible adult. Delinquent behavior is when a child commits an act that would be a crime if committed by an adult.

The next hearing is a **Dispositional Hearing**. This is the hearing that determines whether continued placement in foster care is in the best interests of the child. During this hearing, the court would normally award **Temporary Custody** to the agency. This custody would be authorized until the family has stabilized and it is felt they are capable of again caring for their child in their home. This type of custody is time-limited and generally does not extend beyond twelve months. The court also approves the case plan of the family which outlines the services that would be necessary in order to have the child returned to their home. This hearing should be held within 90 days of custody, but may be continued and held at the same time of the Adjudication.

If/after the court awards temporary custody to continue with the agency, the court would arrange periodic hearings, called **Dispositional Review Hearings**, in order to formally review the progress of the family on the case plan. These can be done no more than every six months, but can be scheduled as soon as 90 days.

Planned Permanent Living Arrangement is a type of custody that may last until a child is eighteen. This type of custody may be sought when the time limits for temporary custody are up, but the child cannot go back home at that time, AND we are hoping to still work toward reunification. This term was formerly known as "Long Term Foster Care".

If such a time should arise where the parents are found unable to ever assume their parental roles, permanent custody of the child would be sought at that time. **Permanent Custody** of a child is held by the agency when all parental rights have been terminated, either voluntarily or by court order, and a child is legally free to be placed for adoption. Due to many new laws pushing for finalizing permanency plans for children within 12 months of foster care, the agency is often times required to file a motion for permanent custody after one year. However, due to many problems with going forward with many of these hearings, Permanent Custody may be delayed for quite some time.

Children may also be placed in the agency's Permanent Custody by Permanent Surrender, whereby a parent voluntarily severs their parental rights to the child.

Placement of a child with a foster parent for adoption must comply with 5101:2-48-16 (P)(1-3) which states the following: Regardless of the geographic location, the following preferential order shall be given when considering families in the matching process:

- (1) All adult relatives of the child; a relative or non-relative that the birth mother has indicated by name as a potential resource to adopt her child. The identified relative or non-relative must have, at a minimum, a signed JFS 01691 "Application for Child Placement" (rev. 12/2006) or other signed adoption application on file with another state, five days prior to the matching conference. The resource must meet all relevant state child protection standards unless the agency determines that the placement is not in the best interest of the child.
- (2) The child's foster caregiver who is approved to adopt or who has completed the JFS 01691 five days prior to the matching conference unless the agency determines that the placement is not in the best interest of the child.
- (3) Other suitable approved adoptive families.

*The agency will notify foster parents who are not licensed by SCDJFS who have a child in the custody of SCDJFS placed in their home that comes available for adoption. This notification about the adoption process and a discussion about possible adoptive placement will be provided to that foster family and their recommending agency within 30 days of Permanent Custody of a child, if not done prior to the PC award. The SCDJFS will assist that foster family in the approval process. The child's time in the foster caregiver's home prior to the adoptive placement will count toward the supervisory time required prior to legalization.

*For more information on approval of a family foster home for adoptive placement, refer to that section.

LEGAL RIGHTS OF BIOLOGICAL PARENTS (eff. 8/6/02)

The rights and responsibilities retained by biological parents depend on the legal process in which they have engaged. Unless an agency has been awarded permanent custody of a child by a court, the natural parents retain certain rights such as the right to make far reaching decisions, the right to have periodic visits and the right to choose the religious affiliation for the child. The child's caseworker will share information with foster parents regarding what rights and responsibilities the biological parents retain for each specific foster child.

AGENCY POLICIES

(last effective date 8/6/02, rev 4/28/05, rev 12/17/07)

Rule 5101:2-5-13 requires that our agency develop policies for a variety of issues that arise for foster parents. In this section you will find not only those policies required by the above rule, but also other agency-specific policies not mentioned in other sections of this manual. **These policies will be explained to potential foster caregivers during initial orientation.**

Please note that there may be exceptions to any of these policies since every case is different. Also, the natural parents' rights may supersede those of a foster parent.

PLACEMENTS AND DISCHARGES [5101:2-5-13(21)] (rev. 4/28/05, rev. 12/17/07)

The agency will try to request your services a day or two in advance if they would like to place a child in your home. However, foster homes are often needed on very short notice or in emergency situations. A social worker will share confidential information with you about the child including his age, sex, personality, reason for placement, special needs, and problems. The social worker will discuss the plan for this child with you including the approximate length of placement, visitation, and special treatment or services the child may require, if known at the time of placement. It will then be up to you to decide if you can care for that particular child.

The foster placement for every child shall meet the child's best interests and special needs.

If you accept the child into your home, the child's social worker will usually accompany the child to your home. You will be given a prior authorization of \$150 for each child placed in your home. Currently, Super K-Mart in Fremont is the only known local store willing to accept this voucher. This will help you begin purchasing clothing toward a minimum wardrobe. By the fourth month, the agency would expect the child's minimal wardrobe be completed or near to completion. A minimal wardrobe is considered to be five full outfits, including undergarments, socks, shoes, and a coat. The initial \$150 voucher cannot be used for personal care items such as shampoo, toothbrush, deodorant, etc. These items are covered by the per diem. You must submit any receipt given to you to the agency at the time the voucher is used.

At the time of placement, you will also be given a blue medical card which will authorize you to obtain medical services for the child. Within the next eight weeks or so, you will receive the child's Medicaid card. You may throw the blue medical card out at that point and use the Medicaid card for every medical provider. The Medicaid card should come in the mail to you in the first seven to ten days of every month the child is in your home.

After placement, the caseworker will make monthly visits (at a minimum) to monitor the child's placement and progress and to discuss problems, questions and emergency situations that may arise. The social worker will arrange and notify all parties about visitations between the child and his biological parents. If an emergency situation arises, foster parents are expected to contact the social worker or agency as soon as possible. A twenty-four hour answering service is available, which the foster parent can use to contact the on-call worker for emergencies only. For non-emergencies, the agency would expect that the foster parents handle the situation as if it were their own child.

Removal Procedures:

Whenever possible, the social worker will notify the foster parents in advance of any decision to remove a child from their home. The social worker will request any final reports on the child's progress, needs, and special problems. Foster parents are encouraged to assist in preparing and transitioning a child into their new placement. The social worker will also request foster parents' assistance in packing a child's belongings or helping a child pack, depending on their age. Placing their belongings in garbage bags is highly discouraged. The agency may be able to supply suitcases or boxes, if necessary.

Conditions for Removal:

There may be emergency situations that warrant the immediate removal of a foster child. Typically, advanced notice can be provided to prepare a child and foster parent for the move. Depending on circumstances which may be out of the control of the agency and/or out of the ordinary, advance notice may not always be possible. Although, even with little to no warning, foster parents are still encouraged to cooperate with any decision to move a child by the agency. Concerns about the move can be discussed later with the caseworker or foster care specialist.

Occasionally, a foster child may be removed from a foster home due to allegations of abuse and neglect until a risk assessment is completed. This is done as a safety measure for the child and foster parents to relieve unnecessary stress during an extremely stressful time. An investigation would be conducted into the allegations by the agency, as well as a third-party investigator (normally the police department). See the section entitled, "Allegations of Abuse/Neglect Against a Foster Parent."

There may be times when foster parents request the removal of a child from their home due to unusual circumstances within their home or unusual problems with the foster child. These circumstances or problems should be shared with the social worker on an ongoing basis, before the problems escalate to the point of removal. A minimum of two weeks notice should be given when requesting a child's removal in order that suitable preparation for the child and alternative plans can be made. The foster parent will be asked to give the two week notice in writing in addition to the verbal notice. The State now requires that a written report be made on disrupted placements. The information from these reports will aid in planning services to the foster parents to avoid future disruptions. Please be sure that you provide complete information to the caseworker regarding the request for removal.

Following a removal of a child from a foster home (planned or unplanned), the caseworker and/or the foster care specialist is available for discussion on the placement experience.

Death of a Foster Child (eff. 12/17/07):

If, in the unfortunate event, a foster child should die while in care, the foster parents must notify the SCDJFS immediately. You will be asked to give a full accounting of the circumstances surrounding the child's death. Further support and assistance will be offered, at once. The main number (419-334-8708) is available to make contact with agency representatives 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays. The SCDJFS will contact the parent/guardian/custodian/other relatives once we are notified. In addition, for a child in Permanent Custody, the agency will determine which, if any, parent/guardian/custodian/ other relatives will be notified. The SCDJFS will also contact the court and law enforcement, as well.

CHILDREN’S RIGHTS 5101: 2-5-35 (A) (1-13) (eff. 7/1/00)

In accordance with the above-listed rule, the following children’s rights apply to foster children placed in homes licensed by SCDJFS. No agency, agency employee, or foster caregiver shall in any way violate any of the following rights of our foster children:

1. **The right to enjoy freedom of thought, conscience and religion.**
2. **The right to reasonable enjoyment of privacy.**
3. **The right to have his or her opinions heard and be included, to the greatest extent possible, when any decisions are being made affecting his/her life.**
4. **The right to receive appropriate and reasonable adult guidance, support, and supervision.**
5. **The right to be free from physical abuse and inhumane treatment.**
6. **The right to be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation.**
7. **The right to receive adequate and appropriate medical care.**
8. **The right to receive adequate and appropriate food, clothing and housing.**
9. **The right to his/her own money and personal property in accordance with the child’s service or case plan.**
10. **The right to live in clean, safe surroundings.**
11. **The right to participate in an appropriate educational program.**
12. **The right to communicate with family, friends and “significant others” from whom he/she is living apart, in accordance with the child’s service or case plan.**
13. **The right to be taught to fulfill appropriate responsibilities to himself/herself and to others.**

CONFIDENTIALITY [5101:2-5-13 (23)] (eff. 4/30/03, rev. 4/28/05, rev. 9/18/08)

There are many areas of confidentiality that are important to the agency, foster parents, foster child, and biological family.

The agency feels it is important for you to know that information on your own family is kept confidential within the agency and will not be shared with other foster parents or biological families. In accordance with the Ohio Revised Code, names, documentation, and other identifying information regarding a foster caregiver or prospective foster caregiver are **NOT** public record.

Information regarding children in foster care and their families is also confidential. Obviously some sharing of information is necessary between the agency and the foster home regarding a child. This sharing is done to help the foster parents decide whether to accept a child into their home, and to help the foster parents understand a child and his behavior so that they can effectively deal with problems as they arise. Any information that is shared is done to help the child, foster family, and biological family. The information that is shared must go no further. As a professional parent, you are bound by confidentiality laws, as are other professionals.

The SCDJFS will follow applicable laws for the dissemination of information to the Child Fatality review board.

No agency employees shall involve foster children in human research projects, fund raising, and publicity activities, **and shall not involve a child in any such activity without the** prior informed, written consent from the parent, guardian, or legal custodian and the child according to the child's age and functioning level. The written consent shall be contained in the child's case record. [5101:2-5-13]

A foster caregiver will not disclose or knowingly allow the disclosure of any information regarding a foster child or the foster child's family to persons not directly involved in the foster child's care and treatment on an official basis. Casual and/or inappropriate disclosure can have long range negative implications for the child and the child's family. If specific information needs to be released to non-professionals who are not involved directly with the child, Releases of Information are to be completed by the child's caseworker. The releases are specific as to the purpose and what information is to be released. [5101:2-5-13 (23)]

It is understood that you will be asked questions regarding your foster child by others. Below are some hints on how to respond:

WHEN A NEIGHBOR, FOSTER PARENT, RELATIVE, OR FRIEND ASKS ABOUT A FOSTER CHILD ...

Don't give out confidential or unproven information. This includes specific behaviors displayed by the child, reason for placement, etc.

Do (1) give general information about foster parenting and foster children, (2) if the person can help, tell him how.

For example, if a relative were to ask you why your foster son was so scared of her husband:

Don't say, "Joey's dad beat him badly. Now he's afraid of all men".

Do say, "I can't really go into detail, but Joey seems scared of me too sometimes. His caseworker explained that foster children often have more fears than other kids. She said we can help by..."

**WHEN ASKING QUESTIONS AT A FOSTER PARENT WORKSHOP OR MEETING
OR WHEN TALKING WITH OTHER FOSTER PARENTS ...**

Don't give specific facts about the child and his family.

Do give general information that will help the person(s) answer your question.

For example, if asking for advice about how to address Joey's fear of men:

Don't say, "Joey's dad is a violent man. He was charged with assault several times and he used to beat Joey. Now Joey is afraid of all men. What should I do?"

Do say, "I have a ten year old foster son who was abused. How can I help him get over his fear of adults?"

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS AT ALL REGARDING CONFIDENTIALITY,
PLEASE ASK THE CASEWORKER!**

VISITATION (eff. 8/6/02)

The purpose of the child visiting with his/her parents is to keep the child in contact with them so that when he/she returns to them, he/she won't be going to yet another unfamiliar place. Another reason for the visits is so the caseworker can observe the relationship between the parent and the child to see if there has been any improvement.

The plan regarding frequency, duration and place of visits varies from child to child, depending on the child's needs, the specific circumstances of the parents, and the ultimate plan for the child; i.e., return to his own family, continuing foster care, or termination of the biological family's relationship.

A child's biological parents are very important to him/her. No matter how bad the situation may be, it is still his/her family. Often he/she may express anger or hate for his/her biological parents, but this may be a defense against further emotional pain. The child may even say he/she does not want to visit with them. Tell the social worker what the child has said, but do not insist that the child should not visit. This type of action from the child may be an attempt to play on your emotions and to manipulate you. In most cases, the child retains a desire to visit with his/her family. Visiting privileges are decided on an individual case basis and approved by the court. Visitation cannot be withheld from the child. The child does not earn visitation privileges, but can earn the place and length of time for the visit.

When a child returns after a visit, he/she may be emotionally upset and crying. This is sometimes difficult to handle and can be upsetting for you. If this occurs, reassure the child that he/she is loved and try to interest him/her in some activity. You must be aware that soothing a troubled child after a visitation is part of your job as foster parents. A child may act out after a visit in a very distasteful way. This is his/her way of coping with his/her frustration. Visitation privileges will not be removed as a punishment for such behavior.

Foster parents should keep a running log of reactions and behaviors after the visits, as well as before them. This can be sent in on your monthly progress report so that it can be put in the child's case.

Things such as food, clothes, or gifts returning with a child from a visit should be agreeable to foster parents, biological parents, and the social worker.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE CHANGES (eff. 8/6/02)

The biological family of any child in placement should be considered before any drastic changes in personal appearance happen. Changes such as drastic haircuts, hair dying, permanents, or ear piercing should be discussed with the social worker who will talk it over with the biological family. The child's desires will also be taken into consideration based on the child's age and emotional needs. The social worker will make the final decision based on everyone's input.

SCHOOL, RELIGION/CULTURE/ETHNIC HERITAGE, AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION (eff 4/28/05, rev 12/17/07)

School: Foster children must attend schools that comply with the minimum standards prescribed by the State Board of Education. We expect that foster parents assume the same responsibilities as they do with their own children and shall ensure that the child attends school in accordance with the child care agreement. This might involve enrollment, parent/teacher conferences, special school programs and functions, etc. Many foster children are unable to succeed in learning, even though they have the necessary intelligence. They will need encouragement and understanding to make the most of their school experience. At times, they may need special help, which can be arranged through the joint efforts of foster parents, school personnel, and the child's social worker. Our agency currently does not permit foster children to be home-schooled.

Religious Participation: In accordance with 5101:2-5-16 (A) (B) (C) (D), every child has the right to enjoy freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. Accordingly, our agency will demonstrate consideration for, and sensitivity to, the **religious background of a child in foster care** and of families receiving services. Each child shall be **provided** the opportunity to practice the chosen religious beliefs and faith of the child **or his /her family unless it is determined and documented in the child's case plan by the custodial agency that practicing the child's or family's chosen religious beliefs and faith is not in the child's best interest.** A foster child shall not be required, nor shall the child be coerced to attend any religious procedure. A foster child shall be permitted to practice **the chosen** religious faith of the foster child or his parents per 5101:2-7-11 (D) **unless it is determined and documented in the child's case plan by the custodial agency that it is not in the child's best interest.**

** The agency will not require a child in a foster home to receive non-emergency medical treatment that conflicts with the religious beliefs of the child or biological parent without the written consent of the parent/ guardian/ custodian. In case of an emergency which requires conflicting medical treatment, the foster parents shall transport the child to the health care facility and contact the agency **or individual who placed the child immediately** (also see the section entitled Health Care).

Consent of the child, according to their age and functioning level, along with consent of the parent and/or the agency, is required prior to the child being baptized or being made to submit to any religious procedures, per OAC 5101:2-7-11(E) unless it is determined and documented in the child's case plan by the custodial agency that it is not in the child's best interest.

Community: **Foster parents should encourage a child** to be involved in community, recreational, cultural heritage and vocational activities in the community. Any cost incurred for these activities should have agency approval prior to the child's involvement. The agency should be billed directly by the sponsor of the activity after its approval. If the foster parent must pay for the activity, a receipt is needed for reimbursement. The agency expects that foster parents will encourage foster children to participate in activities which are appropriate to their age and functioning level and to teach foster children skills required for life in the community. As necessary and reasonable, the foster caregiver shall arrange appropriate transportation for the foster child to such activities. [5101:2-7-11 (C, F)]

**DRIVING POLICY FOR CHILDREN IN THE CUSTODY OF THE
SANDUSKY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES**
(eff. 8/6/02, rev. 4/28/05)

PRIOR TO AGE 18:

1. The child's biological parents must approve and sign any necessary forms for their child to be permitted to obtain a temporary permit. This includes signing a statement verifying that the parent carries appropriate car insurance for the child.
2. Permission for driving will be approved by the agency only for children taking a Driver's Education Course at their high school or other approved location. The child can only drive in the car with their instructor. No other driving will be permitted by the agency under any circumstances; THEREFORE, THE CHILD CANNOT OBTAIN THEIR DRIVER'S LICENSE AS THE STATE REQUIRES A CHILD HAVE 50 HOURS OF DRIVING EXPERIENCE PRIOR TO TAKING THE LICENSING EXAM.

AFTER AGE 18:

- The child can sign the necessary forms to obtain their driver's license.
- No driving is permitted by the agency under any circumstances except when taking the driver's licensing exam.

Foster parents who violate this policy and allow foster children to drive without consent and authorization of the agency, will be found out-of-compliance with agency rules. Refer to the section on Rule Violations for further explanation.

TRANSPORTATION (eff. 8/6/02, rev. 12/17/07)

It is expected that foster parents will transport children to appointments, school and social activities, etc., as they would their own children. Foster parents are reminded that "appointments" include visitations, counseling sessions, etc. **Please refer to the financial policy regarding travel and mileage reimbursement costs.**

Occasionally, there are schedule conflicts or other problems regarding transportation. The caseworker can help, but must have advance notice. Nonetheless, it is your responsibility to ensure reliable transportation is provided. Only a licensed driver with liability insurance is appropriate to transport a foster child. In addition, all vehicles must be in a safe condition and in compliance with all motor vehicle laws.

OUT-OF-COUNTY TRIPS (eff. 8/6/02)

It is expected that foster children will accompany the foster family when traveling on vacations and business. However, there are circumstances at times when this would not be in the best interest of the foster child. Therefore, when traveling out of county overnight, foster parents should notify the agency in advance to get caseworker approval.

If foster parents plan to travel without children, it is expected that the foster child will be included in plans for substitute care for the foster family's own children. Arrangements should be discussed with the caseworker.

NOTE: When leaving the county or state for one or more nights with the foster child, the foster parent will need to get a written consent form for medical emergencies. Also, do not forget to take the child's medical card.

USE OF CHILD RESTRAINTS (5101:2-7-15) (eff. 9/1/02)

A foster caregiver must ensure that a foster child shall be restrained by both a lap belt and a shoulder belt in vehicles that are so equipped. All children under the age of twelve should not ride in the front of a vehicle.

An infant less than one-year of age or twenty pounds in weight shall be restrained in a rear-facing position in the back seat of vehicles that are so equipped. Whenever possible, infants are not permitted to be placed in the front seat of vehicles equipped with passenger air bags.

Toddlers between twenty pounds and forty pounds in weight shall be restrained in a forward facing position. A child less than four years of age and less than forty pounds in weight must be in a car seat by law and placed in the back seat in vehicles that are so equipped. Therefore, the agency expects foster parents licensed for preschool age children to own a car seat.

When the foster child is more than four years old and forty pounds in weight and less than eighty pounds or shorter than four-feet, nine inches in height, the child shall be restrained in a belt-positioning booster seat in a forward-facing position in the back seat of vehicles that are so equipped.

****** If biological parents pick up their child for visitation without proper restraints, please inform the child's caseworker as soon as possible, who will address the problem with the biological parents and take the necessary steps needed to correct the problem.

APPROPRIATE CHILD CARE (eff. 8/6/02)

If occasionally a child needs to be left in the care of persons other than the foster parents, those persons should be mature and capable of handling crisis situations. The sitter should be aware of any particular problems of the foster child and be consistent in handling them. We expect that foster parents will choose alternate caregivers who are capable of meeting the special needs children in foster care often have. If, for example, the children in your care require extensive supervision, or have special medical needs which require attention, your alternate caregiver is responsible for meeting those needs in your absence.

Babysitters used both for social reasons and for employment needs must be approved by the agency prior to being used for the first time. The sitter may then be used at the foster parent's discretion. The agency must approve a foster child being cared for by a sitter for over eight hours at a time. The name, address, and phone number of the sitter and the hours they will be used shall be obtained during the original certification process and at each subsequent recertification. Foster parents may add or delete a sitter at anytime by contacting the Foster Care Specialist.

The agency does have the right to turn down your babysitter at anytime. Due to the nature of the confidentiality laws, the agency may not be able to disclose the reason why we cannot approve your babysitter.

DRUGS/CIGARETTES/ALCOHOL POLICY (rev. 9/18/08)

It is the Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services' policy that the foster parents shall neither allow the use of, nor provide to a foster child, any drug for recreational purposes, including any alcoholic beverage. Foster parents shall monitor any use of medication prescribed to foster children and follow doctor's recommendations for use. Any over-the-counter use of medications shall also be monitored by foster parents to deter any over use or abuse.

Under no circumstances will a foster child be permitted to smoke in or on the premises of the foster home. Foster parents are not permitted to purchase cigarettes for the foster child. A foster parent will work cooperatively with an agency representative to devise a plan to reduce and/or eliminate a smoking habit of a foster child. Any questions or concerns regarding this issue must be addressed with the child's caseworker.

OVERNIGHT PEER/FRIEND VISITATIONS POLICY (eff. 8/6/02)

Based upon the realization that appropriate peer interaction is necessary for the socialization and growth of the foster child, the Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services has adopted the following policy:

If appropriate, foster parent(s) may allow foster children overnight visits with peers and friends. These visits are to be of short duration, two or less consecutive nights, unless prior approval has been obtained from the agency.

This policy does not relieve the foster parent(s) of their responsibilities for the foster child during the child's visit. The foster parents will meet the responsible adult(s) in whose home the foster child will be visiting and will provide them with an address and telephone number where the foster parent(s) can be reached at all times, and the agency telephone number and address. The foster parent(s) will inform the responsible adult(s) of agency policy and state rules affecting the child (e.g. discipline). The foster parent(s) will receive agreement from the responsible adult(s) to follow these rules while the child is in their care. It is the responsibility of the foster family to ensure that these rules are followed. If the foster child will be transported anywhere during the duration of the visitation, the foster parent must ensure that only a licensed driver with liability insurance is transporting the child. This will likely need to be cleared by the child's caseworker.

Prior to any overnight visit between a foster child and a friend, the foster parent must obtain the responsible adult(s) name(s), address, and telephone number and relay this to the caseworker.

APPROVAL OF A FAMILY FOSTER HOME FOR ADOPTIVE PLACEMENT (5101:2-48-11) (eff. 9/9/08, rev. 1/29/09)

When a foster caregiver who has not been previously approved as an adoptive parent through the joint homestudy process expresses an interest in becoming an adoptive parent, Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services will:

- (1) Provide the foster parent with a new JFS 01691, "ODJFS Application for Child Placement" and will assist the foster parent in completing that form if necessary;
- (2) Compile and review the following information to determine the appropriateness of the foster caregiver for an adoptive placement:
 - (a) Medical statement for the foster parent and all household members;
 - (b) JFS 01349 "Family Foster Home Homestudy" or JFS 01673, the JFS 01673A Characteristics Checklist, and the JFS 01530 Large Family Assessment;
 - (c) JFS 01385 "Assessment for Child Placement Update" forms, if applicable;
 - (d) Foster home record;
 - (e) BCII and FBI criminal record check; and
 - (f) Case record information documented by the placement worker regarding visits to the foster home.
- (3) Have an assessor:
 - (a) Review the information contained on the JFS 01691;
 - (b) Conduct a home visit;
 - (c) Observe the interaction between the child, foster parent, and other household members;
 - (d) Discuss how the foster parent has been working with the child on problems which were identified in the case plan and how they will deal with long term issues the child may have;
 - (e) Discuss the availability of adoption assistance and post-finalization services;
 - (f) Complete JFS 01530, Large Family Assessment when a family has a total of 5 or more children residing in the home, or will have a total of 5 or more children upon adoptive placement of the child.
- (4) Based upon a review of the above information the assessor shall complete portions of the JFS 01673 "Assessment for Child Placement" that were not previously completed on the JFS 01349 or prior JFS 01673 and will attach the most recent update to the JFS 01673.
- (5) The agency will also conduct a CAN clearance via SACWIS or Central Registry for any adult household member. Proof of 5 year Ohio residency will also be required.
- (6) If you reside in a county other than Sandusky County, we will also notify your county that we are initiating an adoptive homestudy. No homestudy will be released to any other agency or to probate court if our agency determines that the application or homestudy contains knowingly false information.

The procedures for approving or denying a family foster home as an adoptive placement will be the same as those outlined in the agency's adoption policy. Any currently licensed foster parent who wants to pursue adoption, will subsequently be given the adoption policy to keep and review.

An application for adoption submitted by an approved foster parent will be good for one year. If the adoption homestudy of a previously licensed foster parent is not completed within one year of the application being received, the adoption homestudy process will be terminated. Written notification of the termination shall be sent no less than thirty days prior to the termination date and shall include the reason for termination and the procedures for requesting an agency review. **Upon receipt of a signed consent form, the agency will release a copy of a foster care homestudy to an adoption agency when the foster caregiver is being considered as an adoptive parent.**

**There is a different application for foster parents to complete when they are not already approved as adoptive parents. The new form, JFS 01692, will be completed with you only in these cases and only when the foster parents will be adopting a foster child that has been in their home for twelve (12) months or more. If you have any questions about which process to follow, please call the agency and ask to speak with the Foster Care Specialist or an Adoption Worker.

HEALTH CARE (eff. 8/6/02)

The agency is responsible for the health care of each child accepted for care in a foster home. This will usually include a medical and dental examination soon after a child is accepted for care and may also include immunizations, and a referral for specialized care and treatment in some cases. Health information and directions for carrying out specific medical recommendations will be shared with the foster parents, as well as the name of the child's family physician or dentist. If the child does not have a physician or dentist, foster parents may use the services of their own as long as the medical provider accepts the medical card.

In case of a medical emergency, the agency should be contacted as soon as possible, especially if the emergency requires hospital admission. If this is not possible, the agency respects the foster parents' judgment to handle the situation as if it were their own child. The agency should be notified as soon as possible of any emergency situations (within twenty-four hours). A twenty-four answering service is available for such emergencies.

The agency is responsible for providing comprehensive health care to include routine physical and dental health examinations for all children, and when appropriate, developmental and psychological assessments for each child placed in substitute care.

Within five working days from the date the child was removed from their natural home, a health care screening will be obtained to prevent possible transmission of communicable diseases.

If a child is eligible for Medicaid, the agency is required to obtain a Healthcheck examination within 60 days for that child to include:

1. Comprehensive Physical Exam
2. Health and Developmental Histories
3. Nutrition, Vision, Hearing, Developmental, Psychological, and Dental Assessments
4. Lab Tests
5. Immunization if needed
6. Health Education

**Thereafter, an annual physical re-examination will be obtained from a Medicaid provider no later than thirty days from the anniversary date of the child's last comprehensive exam.

If a child is not eligible for Medicaid, the agency is still required to obtain a physical examination, an initial vision assessment, and an initial hearing assessment within 60 days of custody.

For a child over the age of three, an initial dental assessment must be obtained within one-hundred-eighty days of the child's placement in substitute care (6 months). Thereafter, an annual dental examination will be obtained within thirty days of the anniversary date of the last exam. The agency will secure treatment for any physical, dental, visual, or psychological impairment whenever a condition indicates a need for treatment.

For any infant under the age of two, the agency is required to obtain pediatric care as prescribed by a licensed physician.

The agency will refer children three years of age and under to the county Early Intervention Program when it has been determined the child is, or is at risk of being, developmentally delayed or disabled.

If follow-up care or treatment is recommended as a result of diagnostic findings or for continued treatment, such services will be initiated within sixty days of the examination.

In order to accommodate the foster parents' schedule, it shall be the responsibility of the foster parent to schedule these appointments. If the foster parent is unable to do so, the caseworker must be contacted as soon as possible. The agency will seek assistance for the foster parents to arrange travel. If it is not possible for the agency to secure transportation for the foster child to an appointment, the foster parent will be notified and will be required to reschedule the appointment as soon as possible.

Foster parents must document all medical, dental and psychological appointments a foster child has had during each month on the monthly progress reports they complete. This documentation should include the exact date of the appointment, the name and address of the provider, and the outcome of the appointment. If medication was prescribed the name and dosage should be listed.

** The agency will not require a child in a foster home to receive non-emergency medical treatment that conflicts with the religious beliefs of the child or biological parent without the written consent of the parent. In case of an emergency which requires conflicting medical treatment, the foster parents shall transport the child to the health care facility and contact the agency immediately.

AIDS GUIDELINES FOR CARETAKERS (eff. 8/6/02)

Long term studies of health care workers who care for AIDS patients and of family members who live with AIDS patients have shown that close, non-sexual, shared living arrangements with a person with AIDS does not lead to virus transmission. This has been shown even where no special precautions were taken because it was not known that the person had AIDS. However, health care workers are advised to treat all patients as if they had AIDS by observing the following basic Personal Hygiene Practices:

- Do not share toothbrushes or razor blades.
- Avoid blood to blood contact. If you have a skin rash or an open cut on your hands, wear disposable gloves while cleaning up spills of blood, semen, bloody saliva, urine, feces, or vomit. If you do have skin contact with these substances, wash the affected area with soap and running water for ten seconds.
- Wash hands with soap before and after changing a diaper. Gloves are not needed unless the feces are bloody. The AIDS virus has not been found in feces itself.
- If a child bites you and draws blood, wash the area immediately with soap and water. As you would with any human bite, see a doctor.
- Good hygiene dictates no food sharing (not licking the same ice cream cone, biting the same hot dog, etc.). No other mealtime restrictions are necessary.

Recommended Environmental Hygiene Practices:

- Clean up spills of semen, blood, urine, feces, or vomit on floors, counter tops, etc., with a solution of ten parts water to one part ordinary household bleach. Dispose of the rag in a plastic bag in a trash container.
- Baby bottles should be cleaned and sterilized as usual.
- Dishes do not need to be washed separately. Just wash with hot, sudsy water, either by hand or by dishwasher.
- Clothing may be laundered with other family member's clothing using ordinary laundry detergent unless it has been soiled by blood, semen, urine, feces, or vomit in which case one-half cup of regular or non-chlorine bleach should be added to the wash cycle.
- Disposable diapers should be placed in a plastic bag in the outdoor trash.
- Sharing of toys has not been shown to transmit AIDS.

If you desire additional information, we have video tapes on the subject which can be checked out. The library also has a lot of material which can be checked out free of charge.

** There is also a toll-free AIDS Hotline which can answer any other questions or concerns you may have by calling 1-800-342-2437.

Latex disposable gloves can be bought at any hospital equipment and supply store for under \$10.00.

Testing for HIV:

The agency will only consider testing children for HIV in cases where the child has been sexually abused (or sexually active) and the perpetrator (or partner) is known to be in a high risk category or if the child is in a high risk category. A high risk category is considered to be one who uses intravenous drugs, has unprotected sex with one or more partners, or has had a blood transfusion before 1985, or whose mother has tested positive. We will also consider the child's wishes, depending on age and developmental level.

At any time the agency becomes aware of an HIV/AIDS positive child, the foster parents will be notified immediately.

FAMILY NAME (eff. 8/6/02)

A foster child will continue to use his own name when in a foster home. This aids not only in preserving his individual and legal identity, but also in maintaining an emotional tie with his biological family.

INSURANCE AND TAXES (eff. 7/1/00)

The agency does not carry liability insurance on foster children. We suggest that foster parents check with their insurance broker regarding coverage provided by their own homeowner's policy. This information is normally discussed during pre-service orientation. [5101:2-5-13 (A) (12)]

Any questions regarding income tax policies, exemptions, or deductions regarding a foster child should be directed to the I.R.S.

COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGES (eff. 7/1/00)

The agency does not provide compensation for any damages done to or in the foster parents' home by a foster child. Foster parents may consult with the child's caseworker, probation officer and/or the Prosecutor's Office to determine if the damages warrant charges being pressed. In such an event, the foster child may be responsible for restitution to the foster parent for repairs. This information is normally discussed during pre-service orientation. [5101:2-5-13 (A) (12)]

LEGAL REPRESENTATION (eff. 7/1/00)

The foster parent acts as an extension of the agency and if a lawsuit is filed, it would most likely be our agency named in the lawsuit, rather than the foster parents. However, in the event that a foster parent is named in any lawsuit (civil or criminal) relating to their duties as a foster parent, the agency recommends that the foster parent(s) seek independent legal advice *immediately*. Attorneys employed by the agency will only represent the interests of the agency in any lawsuit in which the Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services is named. The agency will not be able to pay for nor be responsible for a foster parent's legal representation in any civil or criminal lawsuit. This information is normally discussed during pre-service orientation. [5101:2-5-13 (A) (12)]

PRIVILEGES (eff. 8/6/02)

Most privileges are granted to a foster child through your discretion. In accordance with rule 5101:2-7-11 (A), caregivers must allow privileges and assign responsibilities to a child similar to those which would be assigned to a family member of the foster caregiver who is of similar age and functioning level.

Each child is different and has different emotional and intellectual capabilities and needs. Therefore, it is difficult to set policies concerning specific privileges for all foster children. However, there are a few guidelines the agency requests you to follow. If you disagree with one of the following restrictions for a specific foster child, consult the caseworker involved. Also, consult the caseworker if you are unsure of granting any request of a foster child's.

- Babysitting. This is a serious responsibility that all foster children may not be able to handle. Therefore, the decision as to whether or not a specific child can baby-sit will be made on an individual basis between the foster caregiver, caseworker, and the supervisor. A foster child will never be allowed to baby-sit more than eight hours or overnight for children who live in or out of the foster home.
- Extra-curricular Activities, e.g. playing sports, going to camp. Any out-of-school activity in which your foster child wishes to participate that requires a signed permission slip, must be submitted to the foster child's caseworker. The agency will sign the slip after consulting with the child's biological parents.
- In-School Activities, e.g. field trips. Any in-school activity in which your foster child wishes to participate that requires a signed permission slip should be signed by you with "foster parent" written behind your name.
- Savings Accounts. The agency recommends that savings accounts be opened for a foster child when age is appropriate. You, the foster parent, should be co-signers with the child on the account until the child leaves your home. At that time, the account should be closed and the money given to the child's caseworker, who will then give it to the child or next caregiving adult. If that adult is another foster parent, he/she will become the co-signer.

** You are reminded that the money allotted by the agency for a monthly allowance for the child, is the child's money. Allowance may not be completely withheld from the child as a form of discipline. If the child does not deserve it in the form of spending dollars, please deposit the money in their bank account.

RESPIRE CARE (eff. 4/30/03)

The agency recognizes that foster parenting can be very stressful for all family members. Occasionally, foster parents need to "regroup" as a family unit. Respite care can be made available to foster parents if there are other foster homes willing to provide this service to them. Please contact the child's caseworker who will make arrangements with the foster care specialist for respite care. At times foster parents may feel it is easier to make respite arrangements themselves and contact other foster parents directly. This is not allowable. Because the agency has ultimate responsibility for all children in custody, we must know where all of the children are at all times. Additionally, we may have information about children placed in other homes that may make us uncomfortable placing your foster child there.

The agency cannot pay two different homes for the same day and same child. When filling out monthly bills, the agency will pay the foster home which provided the overnight care for the foster child in accordance with the most current per diem rate. Please refer to the Financial Policies for information and assistance on filling out an invoice for the number of days a foster child is in your home. Any care of a foster child that is less than 24 consecutive hours, will be considered babysitting and should be the responsibility of the foster parent to pay the provider.

Remember: The foster parent providing respite care needs to fill out the monthly billing form and send it in to the agency by the second working day of the following month.

The maximum length of respite care is two weeks. The foster parents who need the respite care service should transport the child to the provider's home. Routine medical appointments should not be scheduled during this period, unless the child receives ongoing treatment for such conditions as asthma, allergies, seizures, etc.

The foster parents should explain to the child the need for respite care. If necessary, the caseworker will assist. Ample clothing, favorite toys, blanket, etc., should accompany the child to the respite home to make their stay enjoyable. The foster child should meet the respite parents with their foster parents in advance.

The child's Medicaid card must be sent with the child. A list of rules should also be sent for consistency. All medications, breathing machines, etc., should also be sent with specific instructions.

** As making arrangements for respite care can be time consuming, please make your request at least two weeks in advance.

FOSTER PARENT PARTICIPATION EXERCISE (eff. 8/6/02)

Follow a caseworker for a day! The agency has prepared an exercise to allow you to experience the activities of a Children Services Caseworker. Should you wish to participate in this exercise, please call the Foster Care Specialist.

It is the intent of this exercise to encourage foster parents to obtain a broader understanding of casework and the duties and restrictions of the caseworker. It is hoped that this exercise will facilitate further understanding of time frames and governmental guidelines.

The foster parents will accompany the caseworker to homes, court, agencies, and other pertinent places. When on a home visit, the caseworker will ask permission for the foster parent to observe. If permission is given, the foster parent will be allowed to observe the interaction between the worker and parent(s). If permission is not given, the foster parent will be directed to wait in an appropriate place. It is also hoped that this exercise will promote the feeling that our approach to a child's well-being is that of a team approach.

Guidelines for Participation:

1. Foster parents must follow same rules of confidentiality as caseworkers.
2. Foster parents must understand that they are in an observer position only. No interaction (beyond appropriate greetings, etc.) with clients during visits. Inappropriate verbal or non-verbal expressions will be cause to be asked to leave.
3. Foster parents must sign an agreement of guidelines which will be put in the foster parent's file.

AGREEMENT

I, _____, foster parent, hereby agree to the following:

1. To observe the rules of confidentiality with any cases I observe. For example, I will not disclose to anyone (family, friends, etc.) the names, addresses, or provide any information which would specifically identify any of the parties.
2. I will act as an observer only. I understand that my position is to observe. I will interact appropriately with those I observe, but I will not engage in advice-giving, unless specifically asked by the caseworker.
3. While in the field, I agree to observe the directives of the caseworker.
4. I understand that prior to observation, I will be introduced as a foster parent. Permission will then be asked if I may observe. In the event that permission is not given, I understand that I will be directed to an appropriate place to wait.
5. I agree to share with other foster parents my observations. While I cannot reveal names, I will describe situations from which we foster parents receive children, interactions between caseworkers, agency, and families, and caseworker.

Signed by Foster Parent

I, _____ (Caseworker), on behalf of the agency
agree:

1. To allow the representative to observe situations which will promote a better understanding of caseworker.
2. To discuss with the foster parent the aspects of the observation.

Signed by Caseworker

ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL WORKER (rev. 4/28/05)

After each child leaves your home, you will receive an evaluation. It is to be completed by both you and your spouse concerning the performance of your last foster child's caseworker. It is to be returned to the Ongoing Supervisor who will privately review it and share its pertinent information with the caseworker. This procedure is to provide a vehicle of checks and balances to overall improve the foster care program.

In turn, foster parents are assessed by the caseworker after each completed placement. These evaluations are returned to the Foster Care Specialist who will review the pertinent information with you annually at the time of your recertification.

ASSESSMENT FORM

1. A. Name of Social Worker: _____
B. Name of Child: _____

2. Did the worker meet with you either in the home or in the office an average of:
 once a month more often less often

Explain if more or less than once a month:

3. Do you feel this was often enough? yes no - Why? _____

4. Did the worker set in advance a date and time to meet that was convenient for you?
 all of the time most of the time usually not often never

5. Were you able to discuss the effect of the foster child on your family with the worker?
 all of the time most of the time usually not often never

6. Did the worker give you adequate opportunity to express your ideas and concerns regarding the child? all of the time most of the time usually not often never

7. If a decision for a child was made which you did not agree with, did the caseworker explain the decision to you? all of the time most of the time usually not often
 never n/a

8. Was the child's caseworker helpful to you in dealing with the biological family?
 all of the time most of the time usually not often never

9. Did you have sufficient opportunity to talk about the foster child with the social worker?
 all of the time most of the time usually not often never

10. Did the caseworker follow through on relevant matters discussed?
 all of the time most of the time usually not often never

11. Did the worker meet with the child either in the home or office an average of
 once a month more than once a month less than once a month

Explain if none or less often than once a month: _____

12. Did the child and social worker have a relationship in which the child shares feelings and information with the worker and the worker guides and directs the child? all of the time most of the time usually not often never n/a

13. Did the foster child have sufficient opportunity to talk to the caseworker about concerns, problems, or questions they had? [] all of the time [] most of the time [] usually [] not often [] never [] n/a

14. Did the worker help prepare the child and your family for the removal of the child when he/she left your home. [] yes [] no
Please explain: _____

Independent Living Services:

(Only answer the following questions if a child placed in your home was at least 16 years of age or older.)

15. Did Sandusky County provide Independent Living Services for the foster child who as at least 16 years of age.

yes no

A. Were the Independent Living Services Beneficial in providing the foster child for adulthood.

yes no

B. Please list any strengths or weaknesses in regards to the Independent Living Program/Worker and how the program could be improved.

Signature of Foster Parent

Signature of Foster Parent

Date

Date

POLICY ON USE OF VOLUNTEERS/INTERNS

[5101:2-5-13(27)] (eff. 8/6/02, rev 12/17/07))

At the present time, the Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services does not use volunteers/student interns in our family foster home program. If volunteers/interns are incorporated into the program, a specific policy will be written for the screening, orienting, training, supervising, and assigning of volunteers and college interns, as appropriate to the function to be performed. **Screening guidelines in accordance with 5101:2-5-99 would be incorporated, if at such time there becomes a need to use volunteers/interns in the foster care program.**

However, if/when volunteers or interns are used by the agency in the family foster home program, they would be required to notify the agency within 24 hours of any charge of any criminal offense brought against them. They would also be required to notify the agency of any resulting conviction within 24 hours. Failure to notify the agency in such matters will result in the immediate dismissal from the agency program. Conviction of any crimes listed in Rule 5101:2-5-09 of the Administrative Code while serving as a volunteer/intern, will result in the immediate dismissal from the agency program.

SPECIAL FUND (eff. 8/6/02)

The agency has money which has been donated for foster children to take part in special occasions or functions. This fund is conditional and based on monies available. Special occasions include, but are not limited to: a Cedar Point ticket, summer camp, karate class, piano lessons, YMCA membership, etc.

The foster parent should notify the caseworker should the need arise. You must get prior approval for these activities before enrolling the child. If you enroll a child in a special activity and pay for it without getting prior approval, you will not be reimbursed. The Ongoing Supervisor and Administrator will make the final decision on the use of funds based on the availability of monies and the individual request. Based on this, special fund requests may be approved for enrollment fees for a program one year and not be approved for the program for the following year.

Once approved, the foster parent may pay for the activity/item directly and be reimbursed or have the bill sent directly to the agency. If requesting reimbursement, a receipt is needed and must be marked Special Fund.

WELL WATER SAMPLE TESTS (eff. 8/6/02)

According to the OAC 5101:2-7-12 (J), a family foster home shall have a continuous supply of safe drinking water. Well water used for drinking and cooking must be tested prior to the initial certification and annually (within 365 from the initial test and annually) thereafter. An unsafe result will require correction of the problem and further testing until the water is acceptable for consumption.

Obtaining the test will be the responsibility of the foster family. Costs for the initial test and all retests will be the responsibility of the foster family. Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services will pay for one test per year after the family is initially certified.

The Sandusky County Board of Health will receive names of those foster parents who qualify for the agency paid water tests. This list will be updated periodically. The Sandusky County Board of Health will bill the agency their costs, which at this time is fifteen dollars (\$15.00) per sample. Billing will be done periodically throughout the year.

The Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services retains the right to discontinue this service if it is abused or otherwise becomes counterproductive to agency goals and/or policies.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH BIOLOGICAL PARENTS (eff. 8/6/02)

It is expected whenever possible for foster parents to work with biological parents to reach the agency's goal of reunification. However, this relationship must be strictly professional and follow the guidelines set up by the individual caseworker. If it becomes obvious that the relationship has become more personal in nature and/or guidelines are not being followed, and therefore the well-being of the foster child(ren) is at risk, it may be necessary to remove the foster child(ren) involved from your home. It should also be noted that if the relationship that has developed causes the agency to have concerns about placing other foster children in your home, it may be necessary to take action to terminate your certification.

Questions regarding the type, frequency, and duration of contacts with biological parents should always be addressed with the foster child(ren)'s caseworker prior to the contact occurring.

LIFEBOOKS (eff. 8/6/02)

As a foster parent, you will be asked to keep a book on a child and his/her activities. This book will serve to save memories for the child and will go with the child from placement back into the home.

WHY LIFEBOOKS?

We all have memories of our childhood. Old photographs bring to mind sunny days when that mud puddle seemed so inviting; the feeling of importance when wearing those new shoes and the excitement of being the star pumpkin in the school play. Carefully saved school papers bring forth fond memories of a special teacher. Each of those bits and pieces of our childhood, carefully saved, are very important reminders of all the events that make us special and unique.

That is why lifebooks are so important to children in custody. Precious mementos of their childhood may be scattered among various foster home scrapbooks and agency files, never to be retrieved. An adult who had been in foster care as a child rarely has the luxury of looking through a worn box of collected childhood memories.

Children in substitute care need to know that we care enough about them to cherish their pictures, papers and achievements. They need a sense of belonging. Families of children in care need to feel that times in the children's lives were not "stolen" from them. Adults who have grown up in foster care need the assurance that they do have a past in which they were cherished by many people who cared.

HOW DO I BEGIN?

Involve the children! Rainy "nothing-to-do" days are great times to build some memories together. Give the child old magazines, scissors and glue. Ask them to find pictures of their favorite things and make a collage to include in their books! This can be done with scraps of fabric showing favorite colors or textures.

Keep in mind the age of the child as you decide how to save information. While an infant cannot assist much in creating his or her own book, the foster parent can note special likes and important events. A lock of baby hair or a piece clipped from a favorite blanket are important remembrances of childhood.

Your involvement in the lifebook of an older child may be different from children of other ages. Often older children highly value their privacy. Because they have been in some painful situations, they may not want to let the world know that they are vulnerable and really very sensitive by showing what they really care about. They may be embarrassed (but not admit it) to have you know what they want to include in their book.

If you find that the child feels uncomfortable working on the book with you, simply have them keep their own book while you offer ideas on things to save.

If the child comes home with a good grade on a school paper, suggest that they put it in their book right then. If the family goes on an outing and takes pictures, give the child a picture of two to include in the book. While helping the child with a school sewing project, clip a piece of material to be included in the book. Or give the child a chip of paint to remind him or her of the day that the both of you painted the barn and there ended up being more paint on the both of you than on the barn!

Regardless of the age of the child, it is very important that the book always be accessible to the child. A lifebook wrapped in plastic and placed on a top shelf of a closet will do little to give the child a sense of continuity and belonging. So don't worry about smudges and fingerprints!

Following initial placement, a blank lifebook will be given to the child within two weeks. It will include various sections including birth information, placement information, medical information, and the child's personal information. Based on the child's age, additional sections may be added. At any time you may request additional photo sheets.

If you wish to take pictures for the lifebook, the agency will reimburse for the purchase of the film and film development. This reimbursement is limited to one roll of film and its development quarterly. Please submit your receipts for reimbursement on a monthly invoice.

As the child's caseworker visits, he or she may also take pictures of the child. These pictures, with your permission, may also include you and members of your family.

Periodically, the caseworker is required by State rules to check the lifebook. It is important that the book be available at the caseworker's visit. This should also be understood by the child. In addition to complying with the rule that the lifebook be kept current, the viewing of the lifebook by the caseworker will also give insight into the uniqueness of the child and aid in case planning.

NOW TO START . . .

Suggestions are given, but please don't limit the book to just these. Use your imagination! Sections have been suggested for you, but you don't need to limit yourselves to those, either!

Remember: The development of a lifebook is a continuous process with updates taking place regularly. The caseworker will be required to assure updates are made by checking them approximately three to four times a year.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE/NEGLECT AGAINST FOSTER PARENTS (eff. 7/1/00)

Occasionally, an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against a foster parent. At some time, this may happen to you.

A birth parent may be angry about the way you care for their child, the child may be upset about your house rules and want to go home, or an adult may misunderstand a conversation overheard between children. Any of these, as well as a whole list of other reasons, may lead to someone calling to report an incident. The complaint may be very silly, such as you have not fed the child for a year, or the complaint may be very serious such as the child being physically or sexually abused.

Silly or serious, the agency is required legally to investigate every complaint. As a person who actively displays a concern for children by fostering, you probably feel investigations of child abuse are an important protection for the child. As a foster parent against whom an allegation has been made, you will find the process somewhat uncomfortable. Perhaps, in knowing the process, some of the discomfort will be alleviated.

First of all, a complaint regarding a foster parent is handled differently than usual complaints. Because you are an extension of the agency, a complaint is handled as a "third-party" investigation. This means an independent source - a "third-party" - is asked to complete an assessment of the complaint in addition to the assessment made by the agency. Ohio's rules for foster care require that the "third party" be a law enforcement officer.

Although it may be uncomfortable having law enforcement speak with you and the others in your home, it is also a safeguard for you. It gives the assurance that a party skilled in assessment, having no connection with our agency, has made a determination based upon the facts of the case.

When a complaint against a foster home is received, the supervisors are notified and a Children Services Investigator is assigned to the case. The Foster Care Specialist is also informed of the complaint and will attempt to contact you to inform you that a complaint has been received. He/She cannot give you details about the nature of the complaint, but he/she can talk to you about the process.

An investigator will meet with you and your family to discuss the allegations. A law enforcement officer may be with the investigator at that time or may choose to meet with you later.

Within thirty days, the investigator must meet with each member of your household in order to complete the investigation. An assessment is made of the allegations. You will be informed of the disposition and a report will be sent to the state within forty-five days of receipt of the referral. The results of this investigation will be kept separately from your foster file. These types of investigations are not public record.

The Foster Care Specialist must also complete an investigation to examine whether or not any licensing rules have been violated. She will contact you within three days of the receipt of an alleged rule violation. Her investigation will be concluded in approximately thirty days. The results of this investigation will be kept in the foster family file.

Children Services Staff dislikes doing foster parent investigations as much as you, the foster parent, dislikes having them done. Your cooperation and patience during this time is appreciated. We urge you to express your concerns and ask questions. Your Foster Care Specialist, a Children Services supervisor or administrator will be more than willing to help you understand what is happening.

This topic, along with the many other agency policies will be discussed with prospective foster caregivers during initial pre-service orientation.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR FOSTER PARENTS [5101:2-5-13(A) (8)]

(eff. 4/28/05, rev. 12/17/07)

Staffing Request:

A staffing is a meeting to discuss a decision that was made concerning a foster child and that the foster parents disagree with or do not understand. The procedure is as follows:

1. Talk with the child's caseworker. If you are unsatisfied with the discussion and you wish further clarification ...
2. Telephone that caseworker's supervisor and ask for a staffing to discuss the situation.
3. If satisfaction is not achieved, you may follow the placement review procedure listed below.

Certification, Recertification and Placement Review Procedure:

When a complaint is received from an applicant, a foster parent, guardian, legal parent, adoptive parent or a child concerning the placement, care, or removal of the child(ren) from a foster or adoptive home or a complaint regarding initial certification or recertification:

1. The request for review must be submitted to the Children Services Administrator within fifteen (15) days of the disagreement in the form of a written statement signed by the foster parent. The statement must include the facts relating to the reasons the agency should review the action and any supporting documentation.
2. The Children Services Administrator shall review the complaint and any supporting documentation within 15 days of receipt. If necessary, the Children Services Administrator may contact the foster parent directly.
3. The Children Services Administrator may also consult with staff involved in the incident at any time during the review procedure.
4. Within 30 **calendar** days, a final decision will be made by the Children Services Administrator regarding the grievance and the foster parent will be notified in writing.

The agency will accommodate any person who is visually or hearing impaired or speaks another language by providing the grievance policy to them in a form that they can understand (i.e., policy will be read to a visually impaired person, policy will be translated into another language for a person who does not speak/read English, etc.).

The above process does not prohibit the foster parent from addressing concerns with the caseworker or his/her supervisor directly in order to resolve problems that arise.

****All complaints regarding discriminatory acts, policies, or practices should be addressed by using the procedures regarding discriminatory acts, policies, or practices for these complaints outlined on page 10 of this manual.****

POLICY ON SHARING AND TRANSFERRING

FAMILY FOSTER HOMES (5101:2-5-31) (eff. 7/12/04, rev. 5/1/06, rev. 12/17/07)

SHARING OF FOSTER HOMES

Because of the extreme need we have for foster homes, Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services typically does not share our foster homes with other agencies. However, in some situations we will consider this, if requested to do so by one of our foster families and by another agency.

Before a home will be shared, the agency wishing to utilize a home licensed through Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services (recommending agency) must obtain a written agreement, signed and approved by us, stating how the home is to be used and stating that all parties approve of the terms of the agreement. The recommending agency shall also provide written notification to any other agencies currently using the home. ****We reserve the right to deny a request to share a foster home at any time.****

TRANSFERRING FOSTER HOMES TO ANOTHER AGENCY

We hope that once we license a foster home they will work with our agency for many years. However, there are times when foster families decide they would prefer to work with a different agency. In those cases we will work with the foster family and the new agency to transfer the home as quickly as is appropriate and feasible.

****A foster caregiver shall not initiate more than one transfer request during a certification period and only to one agency at a time.****

Families certified for less than one year are not eligible to transfer to another agency. The only exception to this is if a foster caregiver has relocated and will not be able to be serviced any longer by our county. Upon certification for a minimum of one year with Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services, we must be contacted by both the foster family and the new agency in writing to notify us of the request. Within 15 days of receiving a signed authorization for release signed by the foster parents, our agency will then send a complete copy of the foster caregiver's records to the receiving agency for review (except for personal references and criminal checks). Our records will contain any rule violations and corrective actions plans and may reflect SCDJFS decisions not to place any more children in a foster home, and this information will be submitted to another agency for consideration in the transfer.

While the transfer is pending, SCDJFS will continue to work with the foster caregivers as it does all foster parents in continuing to send any and all notifications and the foster parents will be permitted to attend any agency events. The SCDJFS will continue visits to the home and no child shall be removed solely because of a request to transfer.

The new agency must obtain a written agreement signed by them, us, and the foster parents indicating that all parties agree to the transfer.

When that agreement is signed, the receiving agency will submit an JFS 01334 to recommend transfer of the foster home. **SCDJFS may transfer a currently certified foster home to a PCSA, PNA, or PCPA which is certified by ODJFS to recommend foster homes of the same type. A foster caregiver certified to operate a specialized home may transfer to an agency that does not operate a specialized program, if the caregiver agrees that upon execution of the transfer, the foster home designation will be identified as a family foster home.** As part of this paperwork, we will include an effective date of transfer which would be negotiated between the agencies. The transfer date will occur prior to the expiration of the current certificate. In addition, if the transfer date occurs within 90 days of the expiration date, **SCDJFS** will negotiate with the receiving agency who will complete the recertification assessment before the transfer occurs. If there is no agreement as to whom will conduct the recertification activities, the foster homes' recommending agency will be responsible for conducting the recertification review and recommendations. Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services reserves the right to choose an effective date that enables us to find new, appropriate placements for any foster children currently residing in the home.

Because of the time required to license a foster home, Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services will charge the new agency \$.25 per page copying fee. The records will not be sent until the fee is paid. The records will be sent by certified mail or if hand-delivered, our agency will require a receipt from the receiving agency.

TRANSFERRING FOSTER HOMES TO SCDJFS

Families certified for less than one year are not eligible to transfer to our agency. The only exception to this is if a foster caregiver has relocated and will not be able to be serviced any longer by their agency, or if their agency is no longer certified to license homes by the state. Our agency will obtain a release from the foster family requesting to transfer and will request records from the sending agency. Our agency will only accept the copy of the records from the sending agency and not directly from the caregivers. Any additional information to add to the record will be accepted from the family. Once our agency receives the records, an assessor will be assigned to review the materials. A recommendation as to whether we will or will not accept transfer will be made within 60 days. If additional information is required and the recommendation can not be made in 60 days, this will be documented why and what information will be required to complete the transfer review.

The assessor will make contact with the sending agency staff and the foster caregiver to determine why the transfer is being requested and determine if there are foster children in the home. The assessor will make a visit to the home and conduct a face-to-face interview with each member of the household. Any outstanding corrective action plans may prompt a denial of transfer unless the assessor determines that the safety of children will not be compromised by the transfer. The corrective action plan may also continue to be enforced upon transfer to our agency. A transfer request may only be approved after the following has been completed:

1. Home visit and face-to-face interview with every household member;
2. Review of entire foster care record and provide the sending agency with a receipt of such [Before accepting transfer of a foster home, our agency will contact the sending agency in writing to notify them that a request has been received and will request a complete copy of the caregiver's foster home records (excluding personal references and criminal records checks)];
3. Receipt of 3 new, satisfactory, personal references from non-family members;
4. Receipt of an approved criminal records check for all required members in the home;
5. Approval of a new safety audit of the home;
6. Documentation of the review and reasons to accept the transfer in the foster home record.
7. Verification that the custodial agency of any child placed in the home agrees to the transfer. If the custodial agency does not approve of the transfer, the transfer will not occur until the child is no longer in the home;
8. SCDJFS will obtain a written agreement verifying all records have been sent and received signed by the sending agency, us, and the foster parents indicating that all parties agree to the transfer. When that agreement is signed, SCDJFS will submit an JFS 01334 to recommend transfer of the foster home to our agency, a statement saying that we have received and reviewed the records and recommend transfer.

Upon approval or denial of the transfer request, the agency will send a written notice of our decision within 5 days of the decision being made. All records and information obtained will become a part of the foster care record. Upon acceptance of the transfer, within 30 days of the new effective date, the SCDJFS will require an initial orientation to the agency's programs on our policies and procedures and provide the foster parents with a copy of the foster care manual. In the case of a denial, the recommendation to reject the transfer will be maintained on file by the agency for two years minimum.

GENERAL TRANSFER INFO:

- *Approval or rejection of a transfer rests solely with the receiving agency subject to the approval of ODJFS and creates no rights to appeal by any party to the transfer pursuant to Chapter 119 of the Revised Code.
- *A completed record to be sent or received will include the most recent homestudy and updates, training record, fire inspection, safety audit, medical reports, complaint and rule violations, running records, and any other relevant information. The record excludes references and criminal records checks.
- *All records sent or received by this agency should be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested or hand-delivered by agency staff. If records are hand-delivered, the sending agency will provide a receipt showing the date they were delivered.
- *The transfer and review activities will be documented in the receiving agency's foster home records.
- *An agency is not required to accept a transfer of a foster home from another agency.

RULE VIOLATIONS (revised 7/12/04)

The following is an example of the rule violation form that the agency uses. This form would be filled out and a copy would be given to the foster parents regarding a violation of a rule. The Foster Care Specialist would conduct an investigation into the allegations that a foster family has broken an agency rule. Infractions of the rule could be that a family did not complete the required number of training hours in a year or a foster parent may have used physical discipline on a child. Please read over the agency Foster Care Manual carefully so that you are familiar with the policies and procedures in place.

Once a rule violation is completed on a family, you will receive a copy of the form and be requested to sign the form. The Foster Care Specialist will discuss what needs to happen in order to remedy the situation. There are times that the agency will make recommendations in the Corrective Action Plan to remedy the concern. Those recommendations must be complied with in the time allotted or the agency will complete another rule violation for failure to do so. In extreme cases, the agency could proceed to revoke a foster care certificate or deny recertification based on non-compliance by the foster parents. If you have circumstances which inhibit your ability to comply with any recommendations made by the agency, you must contact the Foster Care Specialist immediately.

FAMILY FOSTER HOME ALLEGED RULE VIOLATION INVESTIGATION SUMMARY

RECOMMENDING AGENCY: Sandusky County Department of Jobs and Family Services
ADDRESS: 2511 Countryside Drive
Fremont, OH 43420

NAME OF FOSTER CAREGIVERS:
ADDRESS:

NAME AND DATE OF BIRTH OR FOSTER CHILDREN INVOLVED:

DATE OF ALLEGED RULE VIOLATION:

DATE OF AGENCY'S RECEIPT OF ALLEGATION OF RULE VIOLATION:

DATE OF AGENCY'S COMMENCEMENT OF INVESTIGATION:

DATE INVESTIGATION COMPLETED:

SPECIFIC RULE ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN VIOLATED:

CIRCUMSTANCES OF ALLEGED VIOLATIONS: (Was a noncompliance found)

RESULTS OF AGENCY'S INVESTIGATION: (WAS A NONCOMPLIANCE FOUND?)

IF NONCOMPLIANCE WAS FOUND, WHAT CORRECTIVE ACTION IS BEING TAKEN: (Specify timeline for completion)

**AGENCY RECOMMENDATION REGARDING STATUS OF FAMILY FOSTER HOME
CERTIFICATE: (Check one)**

- CONTINUE CERTIFICATE
- VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL
- WILL RECERTIFY
- RESOLUTION PENDING
- CERTIFICATE EXPIRED, CAREGIVER DID NOT REAPPLY
- RECOMMENDATION TO REVOKE OR DENY (PLEASE SUBMIT ODHS 1317 WITH ALL SUPPORTING EVIDENCE DIRECTLY TO THE BUREAU OF LICENSING)

PROGRESS REPORTS (eff. 8/6/02)

Progress reports are completed by foster parents on a monthly basis. They should be turned in to the caseworker for the child. These should be turned in no later than the first week of the following month. For example, if you are reporting on the month of September, you should turn your progress report in to the caseworker by October 7. Good documentation should be included in the report to the caseworker. These are useful tools for the caseworker to determine how the child is doing in the home. You may mail these reports in to the agency or bring them in with monthly invoices. If you need some postage paid envelopes for this purpose, please contact the Foster Care Specialist.

PROGRESS REPORT

To: _____ Foster Parent(s) Name: _____
Foster Child: _____ D.O.B.: _____ Date of Placement: _____

Report Completed for the month of: _____ (Include Year)

Please complete the following:

1.) Routines, Work, Bedtime, Hygiene, etc: **Bath or shower schedule (daily/every other day) Does child refuse to brush teeth, wash hair, etc? Status of potty training. Does child get up for school on time? List bedtime and any struggles with getting child to bed.** _____

2.) Peer and Sibling Relationships: **How does foster child get along with other children in the home? Estimated number of arguments and circumstances behind them.** _____

3.) Relationship with Foster Parent(s): **How does the foster child get along with you? Attitudes and Frustrations. Does the child listen? Do you struggle with communication?** _____

4.) Use of Recreation and Time Structuring: **What does the child do in their spare time? List hobbies, sports, favorite toys, vacations, new friends outside the home.** _____

5.) Health - Physical and Emotional (List ALL appointments and reasons): **All appointments and dates must be listed. Include prescribed medication or recommendations. (Attach a copy of a calendar sheet with notes jotted down for each appointment if easier for you)** _____

6.) Relationship with Parents, Letters, Phone Calls, Reactions to Visits: **List contacts with birth family, type of contact (visit, phone call or unexpected sighting at the grocery store) How did the child act before and after the visit? If foster parent is supervising the visit or drop offs, include how things went.** _____

7.) School: **Behaviors or concerns expressed by school personnel. Absences of 2-3 days or more due to illness, etc. Copies or log of grades, if received in the time period. Awards or honors achieved. Schedule of upcoming school meetings or IEP's or results of any of these meetings that occurred.** _____

8.) Problems and Needs: **Anything not listed in categories above.** _____

NOTES: In general, refrain from using words such as "good" or "ok" as the caseworker's interpretation of these words may be different from your own.

FINANCIAL PAYMENT POLICY [5101:2-5-13(6)] (eff. 1/1/03, rev. 5/1/06, rev. 12/17/07)

Financial responsibility for a child in foster care rests with the agency. This agency operates on a per diem rate of reimbursement to foster parents for daily expenses. **The current per diem rate, dependent on the age of the child, is: 0-5: \$17.55; 6-9: \$17.75; 10-11: \$23.75; and 12 + : \$24.10. This is also the rate to be used when providing respite for another foster child.**

This board rate is to cover things such as housing, food, personal hygiene items, care of clothing and similar routine expenses from the first day a child is in their home and every day thereafter that the child remains with them. **Also included in the board rate is the ongoing cost of replenishing school supplies, haircuts, special hygiene products, stamps, film, and film development.** Formula and diaper costs are included as part of routine expenses. Foster parents do not receive payment for the day the child leaves the foster home due to a change in placement. If a foster child is hospitalized or otherwise not in the foster home, but the agency is holding a placement for the child, with the exception of agency provided respite care, the foster parents would continue to receive the per diem. However, if the placement is temporarily filled, we will only pay for the child currently placed in the foster home.

The agency assumes financial responsibility for health care for a foster child. Initially, foster parents are given a blue medical card to present to health care providers which authorizes treatment or service to the child and directs that the agency be billed. Once a Medicaid card is obtained that card is to be used for health services.

To meet clothing needs of the child initially placed in foster care, the foster parents receive prior clothing authorizations to complete a minimum wardrobe. Each child will be given a \$150.00 voucher upon initial placement. The agency considers a minimum wardrobe to be one pair of pajamas, five sets of underwear, five pair of socks, five sets of clothing for everyday wear, one pair of shoes, and one coat/jacket. This initial clothing voucher cannot be used for personal care items as they are covered by the per diem. For each month the child is in foster care, foster parents receive a clothing allowance to meet the clothing needs of the child. Original receipts of clothing purchases should be sent to the agency for our records. The receipts must be identified with the child's name. **Clothing allowances are: 0-11 years - \$48/month; 12-18 years - \$60/month.**

The purchase of a minimum wardrobe at initial placement does not refer to movement of a child from one foster home to another. When a child leaves a foster home placement, we expect that any clothes or other items bought for the child go with the child to the new home.

An allowance of \$6 is also included as part of the daily rate provided for children between the ages 6-11 and \$16 for 12 and over. Foster parents are expected to provide this amount to the foster children. Receipt of the allowance cannot be associated with the completion or non-completion of chores. Therefore, it cannot be withheld by foster parents for any reason. It may be placed in a savings account for the child, instead of giving it directly to the child.

MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES are handled in the following manner:

- a. School fees are to be billed directly to the agency by the school.
- b. Foster children are eligible for the free lunch program at school and foster parents should fill out the appropriate school form for this program at the time of the child's enrollment.
- c. **School supplies are to be purchased by the foster parents who will be reimbursed upon submitting the *receipt for children in placement at the beginning of the school year and/or for new foster placements. Actual costs will be reimbursed. School supplies throughout the year, such as refill paper, crayons, pens/pencils, are NOT reimbursed as this is included as part of the per diem rate.**
- d. The agency will purchase up to \$500.00, in regard to senior and graduation expenses with prior approval. This is limited to those expenses directly related to the graduation event including, but not limited to, class rings, pictures, cap and gown, tuxedos or prom gowns. Senior expenses cannot be obtained before the summer of the child's senior year. *Receipts for all the above are necessary for reimbursement.
- e. Yearly school pictures may be purchased for foster children. The agency will reimburse the costs up to \$20.00.

Yearbooks may be obtained once per school year by those in grades nine through twelve only.
*Receipts still must be submitted. In most cases, you must ask for one from the school since they do not automatically provide one.
- f. Telephone calls. Foster parents may reverse the charges on telephone calls made to the agency about their foster child. Please note: The toll-free number to use for Clyde area is 547-7743. The toll free number for Bellevue is 483-3442.

If a foster child sees a physician, dental, or optical provider or goes to a school out of the foster parent's telephone exchange, the agency will reimburse the actual amount of the phone calls, up to \$15.00 per month. A copy of the actual phone bill must be submitted with the telephone calls highlighted.
- g. **Haircuts are still expected each month for boys and approximately every other month for girls. Costs incurred for this has been included in the per diem rate. Trimming of the hair does not require special permission. However drastic haircuts can only be gotten after informing the child's caseworker (who may need to confer with the child's parent).**
- h. **Perms OR highlights OR haircolor will be permitted to be reimbursed once every 4 months at a maximum rate of \$50. Special permission from parents will also be required.**
- i. Christmas. Costs for Christmas presents will be reimbursed upon approval from County Commissioners. Once the amount has been decided, the agency will contact foster parents. *Receipts must be submitted. Approval is normally received in October or November.

The agency also receives presents from area businesses and companies. The foster parent may want to check with the child's caseworker to get an estimate of what to expect, or to give the caseworker specific gift ideas for the child.

The following is a list by category of items Foster Parents are reimbursed for by the agency:

Included in Daily Rate

Housing (utilities)
Food (3 meals/snacks)
Laundry Detergent Shampoo
Skin Lotion
Toothpaste
Hair Spray
Deodorant
Toothbrush
Comb
Brush
Soap
Tampons
Diapers
Formula
School Supplies thru the year
Special Hygiene products related to race (if different from your own)
Stamps
Film and development
Your Time
Haircuts

Clothing Allowance

-Coats, Hats, Gloves
-Clothes
-Shoes, Boots
-Accessories (belts, purses, hair ribbons, jewelry)
-Dry Cleaning Expenses
-Halloween Costumes

Allowances for Foster Children

-Extra Movie, or other activity
-Makeup
-Special Brand Names of Shampoo, Hair Spray, etc., other than what is used in the household.

Miscellaneous

-Special Hair and Skin products due to skin conditions, lice or other health conditions for the foster child only.
-Initial School Fees
-School Pictures
-Graduation Expenses
-Special School Uniforms
-Alarm Clocks (over age of fourteen - \$10 limit)

*Receipts are necessary for reimbursement with the child's name listed on receipt. The receipts submitted to the agency for reimbursement must be the originals. **Please do not use highlighter on your receipts!!!**

NOTE: It is important that we have SEPARATE RECEIPTS for CLOTHING items and MISCELLANEOUS items because the clothing receipts go to one department and the miscellaneous receipts go to another department. We appreciate your cooperation in keeping the items separate. Remember that original receipts must be submitted to receive reimbursement.

DIFFICULTY OF CARE PAYMENTS (eff. 1/1/03)

The State of Ohio has defined special, exceptional, and intensive needs children. (5101:2-47-18)

If at any time during the foster child's case, any involved party (including foster parents) feels the child may fit into the special, exceptional, or intensive needs category, he/she can contact the caseworker to request a review. The caseworker will then make an assessment and submit the findings to the Social Programs Administrator. As of 1/1/03, our agency will only approve Family Foster Homes and children who have special, exceptional, and intensive needs will no longer be able to be placed in SCDJFS foster homes due to these new rules.

If a child has special, exceptional, or intensive needs, the child will be required to be placed in a specialized home. A child with these needs will also be required to be in respite in a specialized home. The new categories of specialized homes are now Treatment Foster Homes and Medically Fragile Foster Homes.

Our agency will evaluate the possibility of training and licensing these types of homes in the future, however, at this time, our agency will not proceed to license and train these types of homes. Our agency would be required to provide a separate pre-service and ongoing training program to these types of foster homes.

The following pages will give explanations of the different levels of specialized homes and the qualifications of the child and qualifications of the caregiver required for each category. If you have any questions about the possibility of having these programs at SCDJFS, please contact the foster care specialist.

SPECIAL NEEDS

5101:2-47-18

Qualifications of Child

- (1) Moderate emotional or behavioral management problems. These children may display a moderate degree of acting out marked by aggressiveness and/or delinquent behavior such as truancy, running away, substance abuse, or any other emotional problems with the primary location of treatment being in the treatment foster home;

-or-

- (2) Physical condition determined by a physician which requires specialized care.

Qualifications of Placement

- (1) The primary location of treatment must be in the treatment foster home which includes;
 - (a) Twenty-four hour availability for supervision;
 - (b) Ability to meet the child's basic needs; and
 - (c) Ability to meet the child's treatment needs, including supervision or provision of prescribed care, such as preparation of special diets or assisting in a program of physical therapy.
- (2) A child determined to have the above needs, must be placed in a treatment foster home.

EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS

5101:2-47-18

Qualifications of Child

- (1) More severe emotional or behavioral management problems than those children with special needs. May display a high degree of impulsive and acting out behavior toward themselves or others which is often characterized by verbal and physical aggression;
- or-
- (2) Has multiple and severe psychiatric, emotional, and behavioral management problems ranging from personality disorder, severe mental retardation, or autism to aggression toward animals, others, and self; sexual acting out; suicidal behaviors or ideation;
- or-
- (2) Has a physical handicap or disability as determined by a physician which requires a high degree of care and supervision; or who requires medical or remedial services recommended by a physician or other licensed or certified professional for the maximum reduction of physical or mental disability and restoration of the child to his/her best possible functioning level;
- (3) -or-For whom a licensed or certified professional, including a psychologist or psychiatrist, licensed social worker or licensed counselor must be involved in the child's care on an as-needed basis, but at least on a semi-annual basis; or who has a physical handicap or disability as determined by a physician which requires constant twenty-four hour a day supervision provided by a licensed registered nurse or persons closely supervised or trained by a licensed/registered nurse or physician;
- and-
- (2) For whom a licensed professional including a psychiatrist, physician, psychologist, licensed social worker, or licensed professional counselor must be involved in the child's care on at least a monthly basis.

Qualifications of Placement

- (1) The care and supervision that must be provided by the caregiver of an exceptional needs child shall include, but not be limited to:
 - (a) Twenty-four hour availability for supervision;
 - (b) A higher degree of personal involvement, patience and time than is required for a child without exceptional needs;

(c) Participation in the development and implementation of the child's case plan and/or individual service plan; and

(d) Ability to accept assistance and follow instruction and guidance in caring for the child.

(2) A child determined to have the above needs, must be placed in a treatment foster home.

INTENSIVE NEEDS

5101:2-47-18

Qualifications of child

- (1) The child requires a skilled level of care as defined in Chapter 5111 of the Revised Code for longer-term care services;
- (2) The child requires the services of a doctor of medicine or osteopathic medicine at least once a week due to the instability of the child's medical conditions;
- (2) The child requires the services of a registered nurse on a daily basis; and
- (2) The child is at risk of institutionalization in a hospital, skilled nursing facility, or intermediate care facility for the mentally retarded.

Qualifications of placement

- (1) A caregiver providing intensive needs services shall not have more than two intensive needs children who are not the caregiver's own children and a maximum of five children placed in his/her home at one time including foster children and his/her own children;
- (2) Care and supervision that must be provided by the caregiver of an intensive needs child shall include, but not be limited to:
 - (a) Supervision provided by a substitute caregiver on a twenty-four hour a day basis as approved by the Title IV-E agency;
 - (b) Provision of structured daily activities as approved by the Title IV-E agency;
 - (c) Provision of constructive guidance to assist in the management of negative behaviors;
 - (d) Participation in the development and implementation of the child's case plan and/or individual service plan and semi-annual administrative review(s) as identified in the case plan; and
 - (e) Recording of the child's progress toward the case plan or individual service plan goals and objectives as identified on the case plan.
- (3) A child determined to have the above needs, must be placed in a treatment foster home certified to care for medically-fragile children.

FOSTER CARE INVOICE

(Rev. 5/06)

Foster Parent	Board Per Day		Per Month Clothing Allowance		Other Misc. expenses- see foster care manual or call Lori Green
Street	Age	Amt	Age	Amt	Rate includes ongoing school supplies, haircuts, special hygiene products, stamps, film and film development.
	0 - 5	\$17.55	0-11	\$48	
	6 - 9	\$17.75			
City, State and Zip	10-11	\$23.75	12+	\$60	Rate includes allowance for children 6-11 as \$6 per month, and 12+ as \$16 per month.
	12 +	\$24.10			

Child's Name		Child's Name		Child's Name	
Case Number	Birthdate	Case Number	Birthdate	Case Number	Birthdate
Boarding Dates		Boarding Dates		Boarding Dates	
to		to		to	
Total Days		Total Days		Total Days	
Daily Rate	X	Daily Rate	X	Daily Rate	X
Subtotal	= \$	Subtotal	= \$	Subtotal	= \$
Clothing Allowance	+	Clothing Allowance	+	Clothing Allowance	+
Misc. Expenses	+	Misc. Expenses	+	Misc. Expenses	+
Travel/Special	+	Travel/Special	+	Travel/Special	+
TOTAL	= \$	TOTAL	= \$	TOTAL	= \$

Child's Name		Child's Name		Child's Name	
Case Number	Birthdate	Case Number	Birthdate	Case Number	Birthdate
Boarding Dates		Boarding Dates		Boarding Dates	
to		to		to	
Total Days		Total Days		Total Days	
Daily Rate	X	Daily Rate	X	Daily Rate	X
Subtotal	= \$	Subtotal	= \$	Subtotal	= \$
Clothing Allowance	+	Clothing Allowance	+	Clothing Allowance	+
Misc. Expenses	+	Misc. Expenses	+	Misc. Expenses	+
Travel/Special	+	Travel/Special	+	Travel/Special	+
TOTAL	= \$	TOTAL	= \$	TOTAL	= \$

TOTAL

Note: All expenditures must have receipts. Please identify the appropriate child on the corresponding receipt. Travel sheet must accompany invoice, including odometer reading. Please refer to handbook for approved misc. expenses. REMINDER INVOICES ARE DUE ON 2ND WORKING DAY OF THE MONTH!

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE FOSTER CARE INVOICE

PURPOSE:

The Foster Care Invoice is used by the foster parents to claim reimbursement from the Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services for allowable monthly board, clothing, travel, and other miscellaneous expenses.

GENERAL PROCEDURES:

This invoice is due no later than the second working day after the month the expense was incurred. The checks will be mailed the day the Department receives them from the office of the Sandusky County Auditor. The exact date is dependent on a number of factors determined by the Auditor's Office; however, the checks are usually mailed by the 21st of the month.

Send all invoices to: Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services
Attn: Social Program Administrator
2511 Countryside Drive
Fremont, Ohio 43420

INVOICE INSTRUCTIONS:

Foster Parent - print the name or names of the foster parent or parents in whose name the warrant is to be issued.

Street, City State, Zip Code - print the mailing address where the warrant is to be sent.

Board Per Day - this is a reference chart for the daily board rates per child depending upon the child's age.

Clothing Allowance Per Month - this is a reference chart for the child's monthly personal allowance depending upon his or her age. Attach receipts with child's name printed on each receipt.

Miscellaneous Expenses - due to the numerous details concerning this subject, please refer to pages 72-73 for further details. Print child's name on all receipts and attach to invoice. Please itemize all miscellaneous expenses on the back of the invoice.

Child's Name - print the legal first and last names of the child.

Case Number - write the child's case number as given to you by the Department.

Birth Date - Write the birth date of the child for whom you are billing. If the child had a birthday in the billing month, AND therefore, has changed from one daily rate to another, please complete two separate sections for this child. Write "prorated" in the "subtotal" box, in the "clothing allowance" box, and in the "total" box.

For example, if John Jones turned 10 during the month or turned 12 during the month, and was in the foster parents' home the entire month, the invoice should be completed as follows:

Child's Name: John Jones		Child's Name John Jones	
Case Number	Birthdate	Case Number	Birthdate
12345	4/15/84	12345	4/15/84
Boarding Dates (age 9) 4/1/96 to 4/14/96		Boarding Dates (age 10) 4/15/96 to 4/30/96	
Total Days	14	Total Days	16
Daily Rate	x 17.75	Daily Rate	x 23.75
Subtotal =	\$ 248.50	Subtotal =	\$ 380
Clothing Allowance (age 12)	(48/30)x 14= 22.40	Clothing Allowance (age 12)	(60/30)x 16= 32.00
Misc. Expenses	0	Misc. Expenses	0
Travel/Special	0	Travel/Special	0
TOTAL =	\$	TOTAL =	\$

Boarding Dates - Print the start date and ending date, including the year, that you are billing for.

Total Days - Write the number of days in the billing month the child resides with you. If according to special instructions of the Department, you are allowed days the child did not reside in your home, print the appropriate total number of days for the billing month. Remember, you count the day the child was placed, but not the day the child leaves.

Daily Rate - Write the dollar amount of the daily boarding rate for this child. See the small chart for the Board Per Day on upper right side of invoice.

Subtotal - Multiply the Total Days times the Daily Rate to calculate this total dollar amount of board for the billing month.

Clothing Allowance - print the dollar amount you spent on clothing for this child. Please refer to the chart in the upper right portion of the invoice to determine the maximum you could spend if

the child was in your home for the entire month. If the child was not in your home the entire month, take the total monthly clothing allowance divided by the number of days in the month. Take that number times total days in your home. This is the total clothing allowance.

Please note: Foster parents providing respite will not be responsible for purchasing clothing or paying allowances to the foster child in their temporary care.

Miscellaneous Total from Other Side - if no miscellaneous allowable expenses were incurred, print "0" here, skip this section's instructions and go to the Total Per Child instructions. If there are some allowable miscellaneous expenses incurred during the billing month, turn to the reverse side of the invoice and list each expense separately. There must be receipts with the child's name listed attached to the invoice for each miscellaneous expense.

Child's Name: Print legal first and last name of the child.

Items: Describe the item; use a new line for each item per child.

Amount: Write the dollar amount of the item on the line where the item is described.

Total Miscellaneous Expense Per Child: After all the items for one child are listed, print the total dollar amount for all of that child's miscellaneous expenses in this column. Write this same amount on the front page of the invoice under Miscellaneous Total From Other Side.

Total Per Child - add the sum of the Total Days x Daily Rates, the Clothing Allowance, and the Miscellaneous Total.

Grand Total - add each Total Per Child to equal the Grand Total you are entitled to be reimbursed for the billing month.

Copies - keep copies for your records. Mail the original to the Department.

If you have any questions, please contact the Foster Care Specialist at the Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services.

ORIENTATION AND ONGOING TRAINING (5101:2-5-33)

(rev. 12/17/07, eff 9/18/08)

Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services shall provide or arrange for an initial orientation program and ongoing training sessions on relevant topics for foster care applicants and licensed foster parents. All applicants and approved foster parents will be notified in writing of any available training.

Orientation:

All trainers will be knowledgeable, trained, or have direct experience in the topics for which they are training. Some courses may be co-trained with a foster/adoptive caregiver who can give personal examples. Each session held will be 3 hours in length. Foster Parents are required to complete 36 hours of pre-placement training prior to placement of any child in their home and prior to becoming licensed.

**Before becoming licensed as a foster parent, they must complete 36 hours of pre-placement training that includes the following state requirements:

- *Legal rights and responsibilities of foster caregivers;
- *SCDJFS policies and procedures regarding foster caregivers;
- *ODJFS requirements for certifying foster homes;
- *The effects placement, separation, and attachment issues have on children, their families, and foster caregivers.
- *Foster caregivers' involvement in permanency planning for children and their families;
- *The effects of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and substance abuse on normal human growth and development;
- *Behavior management techniques;
- *Effects of caregiving on children's families;
- *At least two hours of training on cultural issues in placement including cultural diversity training;
- *Prevention, recognition, and management of communicable diseases;
- *Community health and social services available to children and their families;
- *At least one hour of training on the Ohio Revised Code section 2152.72 which deal with information to be shared with foster caregivers regarding a foster child who has been adjudicated delinquent for the commission of certain violent crimes; and
- *Independent living and life skills.

If you will be unable to attend a particular session, you must notify the Foster Care Specialist immediately to discuss your options. If appropriate, and time permits, we may be able to make up a session with you individually. However, each situation will be evaluated on a case by case basis. If we feel that you must attend all sessions in group meetings, you will be asked to delay certification until you have attend all meetings. Sessions will be offered throughout the year at SCDJFS and other DJFS agencies.

All sessions of pre-service will require a training report which outlines knowledge gained during the training session. This will verify completion of the training session upon receipt of a certificate of attendance and training reports that outline and documents that each required piece of pre-service content was discussed.

Ongoing Training:

Once a foster care certificate has been issued, **each** professional foster parent is required by OAC 5101:2-5-33 to attend a **minimum of forty hours during each 2 year certification period in order** to receive a recertification to board children. Specific topics for ongoing training offered by our agency will include: *effects of child abuse and neglect on physical and psychological development of children; parenting skills; *natural and logical discipline and behavior management techniques; permanency planning procedures; *working with children and their families on placement, separation, and attachment issues; *dynamics of child abuse and neglect, clues and behavioral signs of abuse and how to recognize and prevent child abuse and neglect; proper methods and use of physical restraint of children; proper methods of treatment and precautions to be taken with children with communicable or sexually transmitted diseases; *substance abuse and dependency; legal issues in the child welfare system; grief and/or stress workshops; effective matching and selection of foster and/or adoptive placements; *building child protection teams with parents and foster parents; *effects of caregiving on children's families; *fostering/adopting the sexually abused child; *cultural competency; *symptoms of mental illness and learning disorders; *developmentally appropriate activities for children; *independent living activities; and lifebook trainings and/or workshops. *These trainings are currently required each year by a foster parent in conjunction with their Training Needs Assessment. The state requirement for continuing training will be followed in accordance with the most recent effective dates of the following rules: 5101:2-5-33 (C) (5) and 5101:2-5-40 (J). **Each training episode offered for ongoing hours will last at least 2 hours in duration and will be offered at reasonable times and places.**

The agency will provide scheduled trainings to help you acquire these hours. Unless the agency states that the specific workshop is required, you may choose whether or not to attend, depending upon your assessment of your skills and the special needs of the children you foster. The agency will attempt to offer a variety of trainings so that you may have several from which to choose to meet your required hours. Certificates of attendance will be kept in your agency file documenting the hours of agency- sponsored training which you have attended.

The Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services will also consider trainings offered by another agency or group for credit toward training hours. If you want our agency to count your attendance at one of these trainings, then the following must be provided: a completed training report and a certificate signed by the presenter or coordinator stating the title of the training and the number of hours attended or a certificate provided by this agency to be completed by the trainer or coordinator and a training description.

Another way for you to obtain credit for training is to view video tapes, read books, listen to radio programs or watch relevant television programs (in-active hours) which may not be counted for more than one-third of the required hours. The agency requires at least two-thirds of the required hours of ongoing training to be completed as "active" training in any of the following settings: workshops, seminars, conferences, agency trainings, etc.

NOTE: Each foster parent must have **at least 40 total hours during the two year certification period.** Failure to complete the required number of hours will result in the agency completing rule violation paperwork and subsequently developing a corrective action plan for the caregiver. If the situation is not remedied in accordance with the guidelines specified in the corrective action plan, additional rule violations will be written and the caregiver may not be recertified. Additionally, the state rules require that no more than one-third of the training requirements can be met by watching video/television presentations.

“GOOD CAUSE” [5103.032 (C)] (eff. 1/1/01, rev. 4/28/05)

This rule indicates that our agency must establish and implement a policy regarding “good cause” for a foster caregiver’s failure to complete the continuing training in accordance with division (A) of this section. If the foster caregiver complies with the policy, as determined by our agency, the department may renew the foster caregiver’s foster home certificate. Our agency is required to submit this “good cause” policy to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and to each foster home that our agency recommends for certification renewal.

“Good cause” will be determined by the agency on a case-by-case basis. What would constitute a “good cause” may not apply in every case and you should always inform the Foster Care Specialist and/or the Placement Supervisor of any questions regarding your circumstances.

Some examples of “good cause” may include (this list is not exclusive):

- Documented illness on dates of training
- Critical Emergencies in the foster home or with their family members
- Lack of accessible training programs (trainings held during caregiver’s work hours, for example)

Good cause may also be considered for a foster caregiver who has served in active duty with the armed forces of the U.S. outside Ohio for more than 30 days in the preceding two year period or has served more than 30 days in active duty in organized militia or National Guard duty in the preceding two year period and that active duty relates to either an emergency in or outside of Ohio.

Please remember that “good cause” documentation only means that you were unable to complete the 40 hours required during your certification and renewal of your license is contingent upon completion of the training hours. A rule violation will be completed and a corrective action plan will be required in order to make up the hours. Generally the agency will give no more than 3 months for the foster caregiver to complete the necessary hours. This excludes military service good cause. In those cases, there may be time extended to complete training one month for each month of duty. Procedures outlined in 5101:2-5-13 (A)(14) will be following regarding this extension and/or waiver. In addition, these hours will not be counted toward the next certification requirement of 40 hours.

If a foster caregiver does not complete the necessary training hours within the allotted three months given, the agency will suggest that the foster caregiver sign a voluntary withdrawal from the agency foster care program. If the foster caregiver does not voluntarily withdraw, the agency will contact ODJFS Children Services Licensing Section to consult with them on required evidence, procedures, and advice prior to notifying the foster caregiver of the agency’s intent to revoke a foster caregiver’s license. Please refer to page 13, “ENDING LICENSURE”, on your rights if the agency takes action to revoke your license.

ATTENDANCE OF TRAINING

Name of Person attending training:

Name of Training:

Date of Training: _____

Number of hours attended: _____

I hereby certify that the above named person attended the above noted training for the specified number of hours.

Signature of Trainer or Coordinator

**FOSTER PARENT
TRAINING REPORT**

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

SUBJECT/TITLE:

PRESENTER/AUTHOR:

LOCATION: _____

NUMBER OF HOURS: _____

1. What was the main subject or content of the program/book/etc.?

2. What did you learn and how can you apply this to being a foster parent?

3. Would you recommend this material to other foster parents?

ONGOING TRAINING REIMBURSEMENT (eff. 9/18/08)

Effective 4/1/03, the agency will be reimbursing foster parents for annual continuing training episodes attended at our agency (that last at least 2 hours and no more than six hours). The training stipend will be \$10 per person per hour for successful completion of the training episode. Foster parents who are licensed with our agency but live in another county (i.e live in Ottawa County), will not be required to follow the procedures below when traveling to Sandusky County for our training. This reimbursement is to cover the cost of sitters, meals, mileage, and any other expenses incurred for attending ongoing training. You will only be reimbursed up to 40 hours per certification period.

Our agency will still request prior approval for any out-of-county trainings of less than seventy-five miles each way. However, if you are attending a training at another county or state agency, you will also be able to get reimbursement up to \$10 per hour so long as that agency has an approved training plan with the state of Ohio. You will need to ask the training site if their plan is approved. If they are not familiar with working with our agency, you may not be permitted to attend their training without our agency and their agency having a signed contract. If you have any problems attending training at other locations, please notify your foster care specialist as soon as possible.

****Foster parents must give a certificate of completion of the training to the Foster Care Specialist no later than the second working day of the following month so that you can get paid in a timely manner. Failure to do so may result in lengthy delays in your payments****

TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT (eff. 12/17/07, rev. 1/29/09)

Foster parents are expected to incur travel-related expenses as it pertains to the care of foster children. It is

expected that foster parents will transport children to appointments, school and social activities, etc., as they would their own children. While the agency is able to assist in some transportation for foster parents, it is hoped that the travel reimbursement will help defray some of the costs incurred. Travel reimbursement for all foster parents is a privilege. Travel reimbursement will be made to foster parents at the **county-approved rate** for any approved travel that accrues over 60 miles each month. Examples of approved reimbursed mileage would include to and from: counseling appointments, medical appointments (doctor, dental, optical), TASC, Hospital admission and psychiatric appointments, health department appointments, IEP meetings, court hearings and probation hearings, and visits with family. Typically, the following will not be approved for reimbursement nor counted towards the 60 initial miles: work, school, extra-curricular activities, and pharmacy. If there are any questions or doubt, please contact the foster care specialist, supervisor or Lori Green before putting any questionable mileage on your travel sheets **or for the current rate of reimbursement.**

PROCEDURES FOR AUTHORIZING TRAVEL EXPENSES FOR FOSTER PARENTS TO SPECIAL EVENTS (8/6/02)

Special events are trainings, conferences and workshops which require travel of seventy-five miles or more each way, to and from the event.

The procedures to approve travel expenses are the same as those for approving travel for staff. Travel expenses are scrutinized carefully by auditors at all levels including the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Ohio State Auditor's Office. Therefore, the process must be exact with no or very little room for error. Since foster parents do not normally follow these procedures for their regular travel, the following instructions have been developed.

The process should begin at least three months in advance of the event and possibly even sooner. Only the Administrator of Children Services under supervision of the Director has the authority to determine who will attend the event and what travel expenses will be listed on the Travel Requests which are sent to the Board of County Commissioners for approval. In her absence, a supervisor will confer with the Director to make a determination. A Travel Request shall be completed by the Foster Care Specialist for each set of foster parents who will attend. The estimates should not be conservative due to the possibility of low estimates and the resulting problem that creates.

After the Board of County Commissioners signs the Travel Requests, arrangements shall be made for the agency to directly pay the registration fees and the hotel bill. The Administrator shall contact the registrar of the event to learn the procedures for direct billing if the agency has not been informed previously.

After the above arrangements have been satisfactorily made, the Administrator shall then notify the appropriate foster parents in writing, utilizing the attached letter or a similarly detailed letter.

Re: Travel Expenses

Dear Foster Parents:

Your attendance at the following event has been approved:

Event:

Dates:

Names of Participants: _____

For proper reimbursement, you must follow these instructions:

- 1. Mileage - Attached is a Travel Expense Report and a copy of the Travel Request. Please note the maximum mileage you are allowed according to the estimate on the Travel Request. On the Travel Expense Report, you need to write your odometer reading when departing and again when arriving at the event; follow the same procedure on the return trip. You will be reimbursed according to your actual mileage on the Travel Expense Report as long as it does not exceed the mileage amount authorized on the Travel Request.*
- 2. Meals - Meals included as part of the registration fee need not be listed separately. If there is no amount listed on the line for meals on the Travel Request, the only meals authorized are those included in the registration fee.*

If there is an amount listed for meals on the Travel Request, the limit is \$20.00 per day per authorized person; tips and alcoholic drinks are not reimbursable. Obtain dated, written receipts with the restaurant's name on each one and attach these to the Travel Expense Report after listing and itemizing the amounts on the front and back pages of the Reports. Reimbursement cannot be made for meals lacking a proper receipt.

Re: *Travel Expenses*
Page Two

3. Hotel - *Reservations for your room have been made as follows:*

Names on Reservations:

Authorized for:

Nights: _____ *Check In Time:* _____

The hotel bill for the above named persons for the above nights will be invoiced directly to the agency. If you elect to stay additional nights, you will be responsible for making the additional reservation and payment; no reimbursements for the additional nights will be available from this agency. Any extras such as local and long distance calls, cable and movies, shall be paid by the participant.

4. Registration - *The cost of registration for the persons listed above will also be invoiced directly to the agency.*

5. Parking/Tolls - *If no amount for these items is listed on the Travel Request, then no reimbursement is available. If authorization has been made for these items on the Request, obtain dated, written receipts with the parking facility/toll road name printed on each one, list the expense on the front and back sides of the Travel Expense Report, and attach the receipts to the Report. Reimbursement cannot be made for parking/toll expense lacking a proper receipt.*

The Travel Expense Report must be completed, signed, and submitted to this agency no later than the first working day of the calendar month following the month of the travel expense. Failure to properly complete the report may result in delay of reimbursement as travel expenses are examined carefully by all levels of auditors. Expect reimbursement to reach you very late in the month as these type of expenses are on a later schedule than the regular foster care bills.

Please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Social Program Administrator

SPECIAL CONCERNS OF FOSTER CHILDREN (eff. 8/6/02)

Children who require placement away from their own family tend to come largely from families where social disorganization or personality disorders of parents are so severe as to affect their ability to provide adequate parental care. These problems interfere with the child's normal development and frequently result in injuries to his emotional and sometimes physical well-being. All children have the same basic needs - the need to love and to be loved, the need to be secure, and the need to achieve. For the majority of foster children, one or more of these needs has not been adequately met. Separation, temporarily or permanently, from his parents can be a traumatic experience for a child. He will need special love and understanding until he has learned to know and trust you. His faith in you will be of utmost importance in his return home or moving to an adoptive home.

A child in most circumstances will continue to communicate with his family while in placement. A child must be allowed to keep his own identity. Each child will use his own name at school. This is important to both him and his biological family at the time he returns home.

Due to their separation from biological parents and placement in foster care, foster children may have feelings of anxiety and loss. They may have a mistrust for their parent figures and other adults as well as feelings of shame and rejection. Foster children sense the instability and insecurity in their lives and often have a conflict of loyalty between foster and biological parents.

Each child has an individual personality. No two children are alike, thus, you should not compare a foster child to other foster children you have had or to your own children. There are common problems exhibited by many foster children entering placement. Such problems are insomnia, poor appetites, bed-wetting, diarrhea, and colds. Usually these problems can be related to homesickness. Patience and understanding on the part of the foster parents is important. If a problem continues with no sign of improvements, the foster parents should contact the child's social worker. Together the foster parents, social worker, and the child will work to alleviate any problems.

Problems have arisen regarding jealousy or competition between a foster child and the foster parents' own children in the home. Time usually alleviates these feelings. However, if they should persist, the agency should be notified. Under no circumstances does the agency want your own child to suffer due to problems of a foster child. If necessary, the foster child can be moved to another foster home.

Because of all these feelings and problems, foster children need special parenting. Most of all, they need acceptance as an individual person, with all their talents and flaws. They need a secure, continuous placement where they can learn trust and how to give and receive love. They need help in establishing the feeling that they are worthwhile persons and in understanding the circumstances of their separation from natural parents. They need kind, consistent treatment to guide their behavior and an understanding by foster parents that correcting problem behavior may be a long term process.

A FOSTER CHILD IS OFTEN . . .

An Unhappy Child - He has been removed from the only people he has ever known and loved, and has been placed among strangers in unfamiliar surroundings.

A Confused Child - He does not understand what has happened to him and what this means. Because, like all children, he needs to excuse his parents, he manufactures all kinds of apologies.

A Bad Child by His Own Judgment - Where he excuses his parents, he practically never excuses himself. Because his early surroundings are filled with bad experiences, he concludes that he is bad. One of the ways you can help is to lead him slowly to the realization that he is lovable on his own account.

An Angry Child - To be let down by one's parents or to be disappointed by them, can cause a child to be angry. One of the ways you can help is to make him feel his anger is not unjustified and that you understand and do not blame him for feeling as he does. Let him express how he feels.

A Child Who Feels "Inferior" - Sometimes foster children feel that they are unattractive, dumb, and different from other children. You can help the foster child by acting in a manner which shows that you consider him important and pretty "special". The way you feel about him will affect how he feels about himself.

A Child Who Feels Guilty - He likely regards himself as failure prone or a "Born Loser". All too frequently, he feels that he has caused the tragedies in his life and that he should be punished.

A Child Who is Usually Fearful and Anxious - He is afraid for the present and for the future. The future to him is an unknown quantity and into it rush all kinds of questions. By preparing the foster child for placement in your home, by letting him know what to expect, by allowing him to meet you and your family before he is placed in your home, by having him participate in plans being made for him, you greatly reduce his fear about his future.

THE FOSTER CHILD AND HIS/HER FAMILY (eff. 8/6/02)

Before placement, a child's family and community help him to feel secure—even if his family and surroundings aren't always helpful or optimal. After placement, a child often feels uprooted. He will need your help to feel secure again.

TO HELP YOUR FOSTER CHILD FEEL MORE SECURE . . .

DO -- Accept the foster care caring (bragging, boasting, etc.) about his family.

DO -- Listen if he needs to talk about his family or past experiences.

DO -- Remember you will not replace his family.

DON'T -- Discuss your foster child's background, parents or adjustment problems with neighbors, relatives, or friends. The foster child has the right to have his privacy protected and as a professional parent, you have the responsibility to protect that privacy.

Examples of DON'TS:

"It's not his fault he's like that. You should hear about his mother!"

"The way her parents treated her -- no wonder she's cranky. Poor little thing."

SOME COMMON BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS OF FOSTER CHILDREN

(eff. 8/6/02)

While we know from experience that not all foster children present all these kinds of behaviors, here are some of the behaviors that may occur and some possible ways of handling them.

I. Temper Tantrums

Some reasons child may act this way:

1. May be getting too many "no's".
2. May feel frustrated.
3. May be getting too much attention to his outbursts.

Some ideas to try:

1. Redirect his interest.
2. Help child talk about his anger.
3. Respect his/her resistance. Be firm and friendly about holding him/her to the rules.

II. Bed-wetting

Some reasons child may act this way:

1. Unconsciously releasing physical or emotional tension.
2. Over-concerned and fearful that he/she will wet the bed.
3. Poor training (parent was too strict or too lax).

Some ideas to try:

1. Help him/her reduce his/her fears by talking out his/her worries.
2. Let him/her know that you are not angry at him/her for wetting the bed.
3. Give him/her reassurance and acceptance.

III. Fears

Some reasons child may act this way:

1. Tension.
2. Lack of confidence in himself/herself.
3. Imagines things.
4. Imitates fears of adults.

Some ideas to try:

1. Be tolerant and friendly about his/her progress or lack of it.
2. Praise him/her for his/her efforts.
3. Give him/her affection to help him/her over his/her insecurities.
4. Show him/her you're not afraid.

IV. Eating Problems

Some reasons child may act this way:

1. Imitates adults (e.g.: picky eaters).
2. Feels "starved" emotionally and thus over-eats.
3. Not used to being fed regularly or adequately.

Some ideas to try:

1. Vary his/her diet and make it interesting.
2. Help him/her to know that he/she can expect meals at regular times.
3. Control his/her snacking between meals.

V. Sleeping Problems

Some reasons child may act this way:

1. Too much activity before bed times.
2. Has irregular hours.
3. Fears (e.g.: afraid of dark, of nightmares, of being left alone).

Some ideas to try:

1. Have child get into regular hours "for going to bed".
2. Make going to bed a more pleasant experience with quiet games or stories.
3. Help him/her reduce his/her fears by talking out his/her worries. Give him/her reassurance.

VI. Stealing

Some reasons child may act this way:

1. Feels that he/she has never "owned" anything.
2. Anger toward the person he stole from.

Some ideas to try:

1. Respect his/her property - give him/her some toys of his/her own and a place to keep them.
2. Show him/her that you not only respect his/her possessions, but other person's possessions.
3. Help him/her to know what consequences to expect and to accept the consequences of his/her behavior.

VII. Lying

Some reasons child may act this way:

1. Does not trust adults.
2. Exaggerates because he/she does not know reality from non-reality.
3. Imitates adults.

Some ideas to try:

1. Be honest and truthful to children.
2. Avoid making him/her feel you do not trust him/her.
3. Help him/her learn to tell the real from the unreal.

VIII. Destructiveness

Some reasons child may act this way:

1. Curiosity.
2. Poor muscle control ("Bull in China Shop" type).
3. Anger toward others.

Some ideas to try:

1. Give him/her toys to play with that are made to come apart and put back together.
2. Help him/her to know what consequences to expect and to accept the consequences of his/her behavior.
3. Help him/her talk about his/her anger.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR FOSTER CHILDREN (eff. 9/18/08)

We believe all children coming into agency placement will benefit from some common expectations of acceptable behavior. These common expectations of behavior will not only allow children to move from placement to placement in the agency, but also can be used by foster parents as a good educational tool to prepare children for successful community living. This code is a guide to be interpreted in light of each foster home's own conduct expectations. It is hoped it will promote growth socially, emotionally, intellectually, physically, and spiritually.

1. Language and Respect - All people have a responsibility to show respect to others and, in turn, have the right to receive respect. This includes the manner in which one relates to others - their physical and emotional privacy, as well as the way one treats another's feelings and property.

Profane and/or menacing language, as well as belittling remarks are not part of a respectful attitude and should not be used.

2. Stealing, Possession of Stolen Property - Stealing is not acceptable either socially or legally. Possession of stolen property is equally unacceptable.
3. Physical Abuse - Physical abuse by any person perpetrated against any other person violates that person's right to safety, to respect, and to personal dignity. Abuse includes striking, punching, biting, scratching, burning, etc., and is not to be tolerated.
4. Weapons - Under no circumstances should a child possess articles such as knives, guns, clubs, etc., which that particular child is likely to use as a weapon. Decisions by appropriate adults will be made regarding possession of these articles, based on the individual child's living situation, age, and maturity level.
5. Drugs and Alcohol - Children are not permitted to use drugs, alcoholic beverages, or other substances. Prescription medication should be taken as directed and under the supervision of an adult.
6. Appropriate Dress - The guidelines for designated dress are to be defined by appropriate adults, based on the child's present situation, age, and the activity he/she is pursuing. In defining appropriate dress, the child should be involved in the decision-making process.
7. Whereabouts - Foster parents are responsible for knowing at all times about the whereabouts of children in their care. Children are responsible for seeking permission from foster parents and following regular rules of the house regarding whereabouts.

8. Smoking - Because of health and safety factors, smoking shall not be allowed by any of the children on the premises of the foster home.
9. Destruction of Property - Releasing feelings through the willful destruction of property is not appropriate. Adults should help the child understand that such behavior is not acceptable.
10. Fighting - This is a behavior which is not condoned. While fighting is one of the usual behaviors of preschool children, the behavior becomes progressively less acceptable as the child matures.
11. School - All children of the appropriate age are to be enrolled in an educational or training program.

It is the responsibility of each child to conduct himself/herself in such a manner as to insure his/her right to an education. This includes appropriate dress, regular attendance, and participation in class work.

It is the responsibility of foster parents to give the child all possible support, encouragement, and guidance in this area.

12. House Rules - All homes have specific house rules regarding bedtime, chores, special privileges, etc. Depending on the specific home, there may be other house rules not covered here. It is expected that house rules will be followed.

DISCIPLINE AND CARE POLICY [5101:2-5-13(1)] (eff. 8/6/02, rev. 4/28/05, rev. 12/17/07)

In providing a home for foster children where they can feel safe, accepted and cared for, discipline is an important issue. All children need structure and guidance to help them grow into responsible adults. The following guidelines should be used in providing discipline.

1. A foster parent will not discriminate in providing nurturance, care and supervision to the foster child on the basis of age, race, sex, religion, color or national origin.
2. A foster parent will treat each foster child with kindness, consistency and respect.
3. A foster parent will use humane, instructive discipline that stresses praise and encouragement for desired behavior rather than punishment and which is appropriate to the age and functioning level of the child.
4. A foster parent will explain their rules to each child at initial orientation and expectations according to the child's age and ability to understand. A foster parent will remind the child of the appropriate rule prior to any disciplinary action for violation of such rules.
5. A foster parent will never punish a foster child for actions over which the child has no control.
6. A foster parent will never punish a foster child for bed-wetting or mistakes made during toilet training.
7. A foster parent will not verbally abuse or swear at a foster child, threaten the child with violence, or threaten the child with removal from the foster home.
8. A foster parent will not make derogatory remarks about foster children, their families, their races, their religions, their sex, their color, or their national origin.
9. A foster parent will not use any of the following punishments for a foster child:
 - A. Any type of physical punishment including hitting, spanking, paddling, punching, shaking, biting, hair pulling, pinching, rough handling or any type of physical punishment inflicted in any manner on the child's body.
 - B. Physically strenuous harsh work or exercises.
 - C. Requiring or forcing the child to take an uncomfortable position such as squatting or bending, or to repeat physical movements.
 - D. Denial of social or recreational activities for excessively prolonged periods of time (must not exceed 2 weeks).
 - E. Denial of social or casework services, medical treatment or educational services.
 - F. Denial of visitation or communication rights with the child's family.
 - G. Deprivation of meals or denial of sleep.
 - H. Denial of shelter, clothing, bedding or restroom facilities.

- I. Any type of device to prevent or restrict movement.
10. A foster parent will ensure that each foster child who is not capable of meeting their own personal hygiene needs, shall be clean and groomed daily. Shoes and clothing shall be clean, well-fitting, seasonal and appropriate to age and sex. If appropriate to the age, sex, race, and national origin of the child, the child should be provided with adequate personal toiletry supplies and instruction on good habits of hygiene, personal care, and grooming.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY (eff. 8/6/02, rev. 12/17/07)

Physical restraint may be appropriate and used by the caregiver in the following situations:

1. For self protection.
2. For protection of the child from self-destructive behavior.
3. To protect another person from a foster child.

****Physical restraint can be used only by a caregiver who has had specific training in restraint and attends an annual review in methods of restraint that are acceptable.****

Foster Caregivers may use only the least restrictive physical restraint necessary to control the situation.

Effective 7/1/00, the use of chemical or mechanical restraints is completely prohibited.

The agency shall be notified immediately if a foster parent uses physical restraint on a foster child and must follow up by submitting a written report to the agency with twenty-four hours. A copy of this report will be placed both in the foster parent's file and the foster child's file.

Effective 7/1/00, any act of omission or commission by a foster caregiver or other member of the household which results in the death, injury, illness, abuse, neglect, or exploitation of the foster child shall be grounds for the denial or revocation of a family foster home certificate.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCIPLINE (eff. 8/6/02)

In creating an environment where children can grow emotionally, socially, intellectually, physically, and spiritually, foster parents must first be aware of their role in the adult-child relationship. Effective foster parents combine firm and consistent management with understanding, warmth, flexibility, and a relaxed attitude. This provides children the opportunity for growth within the security which comes from knowing limits will be set on their behavior when they do not control their actions.

The twelve expectations (Code of Conduct) listed previously serve as a starting point for foster parents. As the adults responsible for each child's well-being, foster parents need to help the child understand these expectations. Once the child is told what our expectations are, we as adults should help the child understand and follow through.

All children need to go through the learning process of establishing relationships with others, conforming to rules and interacting in society without infringing on the rights of others. Often, children who enter placement may have had faulty learning experiences in these areas. Therefore, when children enter placement, our role as responsible adults is to determine their needs and assist them in further development through education. This education relies on the effective use of discipline applied on a consistent basis. Discipline is a tool used to help foster parents enforce expectations, which along with other services, makes it possible for children to grow in all areas.

The following suggestions are offered to foster parents to assist them in working with children to help them develop their full potentials.

1. Know yourself. Ask yourself the following questions:
 - A. How do your feelings on such things as abusive parents, lying, drug use, etc., affect your response to a youngster's problems?
 - B. In working with children, what are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? Do you have self-confidence and self-respect?
 - C. Are you able to determine when you should handle a situation immediately and when it is better to wait until both you and your youngster can deal with it more constructively?
 - D. Are you able to seek assistance and take advantage of opportunities provided to discuss problems?
 - E. Are you willing to involve yourself in training programs?

2. Promote a positive image of authority. In doing this, consider the following:
 - A. Use role modeling to set an example. Look at your feelings toward authority. How do you relate to authority? Your feelings will be picked up by youngsters.
 - B. Negotiate for change and offer alternatives when possible. If a power struggle can be avoided neither individual is threatened by the situation.

3. Develop a relationship of mutual respect and trust on which to base effective discipline.
Consider:
 - A. Are you sensitive to the child's readiness to form a relationship?
 - B. Do you show the child respect and give him reason to trust you?
 - C. What are your feelings for this particular child?
 - D. How do these feelings influence your relationship?

Suggestions for working with children:

The following are suggestions for the effective use of discipline in working with children:

Provide consistency in terms of expectations presented to the youngster. Consistently enforced logical rules are important, as is establishing a daily routine in regard to bed-making, brushing teeth, changing clothes, showering, and so on. External structure and consistency to this extent are important in helping the child to gain control of himself and to help the child feel safe and secure. Keep the following in mind:

- Make sure that the youngster knows what you expect. Be prepared to repeat or rephrase guidelines. Don't assume that saying it once will be enough. All rules and expectations made shall be explained to the child in a manner appropriate to his age and understanding.
- Make sure that expectations are reasonable. Recognize that if you are working with more than one youngster there will be differences in terms of each individual's needs and abilities.

Accentuate the positives a youngster possesses in order to enhance his self image and self respect. Encourage the youngster to choose appropriate behavior by providing him with positive reinforcement. Simply saying "Thank you", "I really appreciate that" or "What a nice job you did," can really go a long way!

Make discipline relevant to the behavior. Consider at what level the child is presently functioning and choose consequences that are realistic and will provide a learning experience. Discipline methods should stress praise and encouragement for desired behavior rather than punishment for non-desired behaviors.

There are five basic types of intervention available to adults as disciplinary tools: 1. natural consequences; 2. loss of privileges; 3. reparation or repayment; 4. removal and isolation; and 5. physical restraint. Each type is presented below with suggestions and implementation.

1. Natural consequences - In some situations the most effective way of dealing with a behavior is to allow the natural consequences of that behavior to occur. This technique is especially effective in helping the child assume responsibility for his own actions. Some examples of how this technique could be effectively used are:
 - A. If a child is late for dinner, natural consequences are that the child will either have to eat a cold dinner, reheat it himself, or fix himself something else.
 - B. When a child doesn't put his dirty clothes in the clothes hamper, the natural consequences are that his clothes don't get washed so the child needs to wash his own clothes.
 - C. When a child is careless with toys, belongings or money and loses them, the natural consequence is that she has to do without the lost object.

Of course, this technique would not be appropriate if the child's health or welfare could be threatened by the natural consequences. Additionally, you must take into consideration the age of the child when deciding whether or not to let natural consequences occur. For example, obviously a three year old cannot be expected to wash his own clothes.

2. Loss of Privileges - Every youngster is entitled to adequate clothing, food, shelter, and family contact. In addition to these guarantees, youngsters enjoy a variety of privileges which may be withheld for unacceptable behavior. Again, it is important to consider the youngster's present level and make consequences logical and relevant to the offense. The following privileges can be withheld or modified.
 - A. Phone calls - Phone privileges can be eliminated for a period of time or restricted in the following manner (excluding court ordered conversations):
 - Amount of time (five minutes, ten minutes, etc.)
 - Days (middle of week or weekend)
 - To whom (friends)

- B. Community/neighborhood activities - This area encompasses a variety of activities. A youngster may be restricted (grounded) completely or partially from going to the store, movies, friends' homes, playing in the yard, etc., as long as it is not for excessively long periods of time.
 - C. Special outings - Youngsters can be restricted from special activities such as:
 - Parties
 - School social activities in terms of athletic events, dances, clubs, etc.
 - Special events (trips to Kings Island, State Fair, circus, zoo, etc.)
 - D. Allowances - Allowances are given by the agency. However, you may decide not to give it directly to the child. Remember you cannot completely withhold the allowance, at a minimum it must be put in a bank account.
 - E. Television - Viewing can be restricted completely or limited in terms of:
 - Late night movies
 - Special programs or favorite shows
 - F. Other special privileges such as:
 - Cooking
 - Use of toys or equipment (bikes, stereo, tools, radio, etc.)
 - Inviting friends to dinner or to visit
 - G. Snacks - Depriving youngsters of snacks can be an option if they are not part of the daily nutritional needs. Suggestions include:
 - Between meals
 - Bedtime or television
 - Desserts
 - H. Free time - Time which the child has the option of using as he wishes can be withheld or modified by giving special assignments, studying, work.
 - I. Dating - Dating can be restricted completely or limited in terms of:
 - Days
 - Hours
3. Reparation or repayment - Reparation or repayment of damages can be required within reason. Children can be expected to return things they have acquired improperly, pay for damaged or destroyed property and/or make repairs when appropriate. For example:
- A. In the case of a child who has taken another child's personal property, the item(s) are to be returned. If appropriate, the child should personally return the item(s) to the owner.
 - B. A child who trampled a neighbor's flower bed could be expected to do weeding and other gardening chores for that neighbor for a designated (and reasonable) amount of time.
 - C. A child who is responsible for breaking a window could be expected to make reasonable

restitution for replacing the window. Restitution can be made out of his weekly allowance or a special task assignment from which the child earns money. It would be preferable to budget a certain amount of each allowance rather than causing the child to go for an extended period of time without any allowance.

D. A youngster who has stolen something can be taken to the store or owner to admit his guilt and make arrangements to pay or return the item. In these situations, the youngster should be given the opportunity to apologize for his actions. Forcing or expecting an apology from a youngster who is unwilling may reinforce dishonesty.

4. Removal and Isolation - Removing the youngster from a situation and reducing stimulation of the immediate environment is an acceptable means of intervention. When isolation is used as the alternative choice, the amount of time should be limited to brief periods. The responsible adult should be nearby to supervise the child and remove the child from isolation when it is deemed that this alternative had achieved its purpose. Isolation can take several forms as indicated in A, B, and C below. Note that for some children, the type of isolation must be carefully selected based on the child's past experiences. Special consideration should be given to the child who has experienced trauma through abandonment, placement in a closet, or similar circumstances. In these situations, isolation should not be used. Please check with your caseworker if you have questions about whether or not to use this form of discipline.

When isolation is appropriate, the following are some suggestions:

- A. Removal and isolation which can occur in a room, chair, or corner. When possible, it is preferable to allow the child to voluntarily remove himself from the current situation and have some control over the length of time. Use good judgment when using isolation. The place should be safe for the child and never too dark or scary.
- B. If the child is involved with others, the friends can be sent away.
- C. If the child is outdoors, the child can be brought inside.

5. Physical restraint - In certain situations, the use of physical restraint may be appropriate to control the child who has not responded to other techniques:

Remember, physical restraint of a foster child shall only be utilized in certain situations and only by a caregiver who has received specific training and annual review in acceptable methods of restraint. Only the least restrictive physical restraint necessary to control a situation is to be used. Chemical and mechanical restraints are prohibited. (See the physical restraint policy on previous pages.)

Physical restraint, when used, must be reasonable and not excessive. The foster parents should discuss both, type of physical restraint used, and frequency of such with a social worker at regular conferences. When there is need to use physical restraint, an immediate report should be made to the caseworker. Whenever physical force is used, the adults involved should talk with the youngster later about the situation.

Corporal punishment may be viewed by the child as a manifestation of the adult's aggression rather than as discipline, and so may reinforce any feelings he/she may already have that the world is hostile. For many children, it is a repetition of the experiences they have had at home and that have been a contributing factor to their problem. In accordance with state rules, corporal punishment is prohibited.

If a foster parent is in conflict with these disciplinary guidelines, discussion about alternatives should take place with the social worker.

Educational services will be offered to foster parents regarding alternative techniques. If foster parents are still unable to comply with the guidelines, consideration will be given to phasing out or closing the home. In considering the use of any form of physical discipline, foster parents should recognize the legal liability that is involved.

SURVIVAL TIPS FOR FOSTER PARENTS (eff. 8/6/02)

The following tips may help you to survive being a foster parent:

RULE 1: DON'T EXPECT MORE FROM THE CHILD THAN YOU DO FROM YOURSELF.

If you want the child to pick up his/her toys, then you must pick up those things which belong to you.

If you don't want the child to call you or other people names, then you should not call the child names.

If you want the child to wait on himself/herself, then you must wait on yourself.

The old saying, "Practice what you preach", is certainly true when raising children.

RULE 2: BE CONSISTENT WITH YOUR CHILD:

To be consistent, parents should have as few rules as possible in the home. Then you will have more time to pay attention to these few rules rather than trying to keep track of a lot of rules.

Think of how many rules you give the child every day. Don't have rules that you won't have time to enforce.

To be consistent with the child is a very difficult thing to do. But, it is the most important thing you can do. The definition that we give for consistency is simply, if you say "no" to your child, then it must be "no". Often when you say "no", the child may start crying or teasing you. To stop the crying, you change your mind and give the child what he/she wants. If you do this enough times, then you teach the child that he/she can get what he/she wants if he/she behaves badly enough. To get yourself out of this habit, ask yourself if each "no" is really necessary. If so, then it must be "no".

RULE 3: MAKE RULES THAT ARE REASONABLE.

A rule that is reasonable must be consistent with the age, maturity, and ability of the child. It is important to remember that children are not miniature adults, and they do not reason as we do.

It is not reasonable to expect a six-year-old to clean his bedroom as well as you might.

It is reasonable to expect a six-year-old child not to interrupt another person who is talking.

It is not reasonable to expect a three-year-old child to share every toy he/she has. It is reasonable to expect a three-year-old to go to bed at an appropriate time.

It is not reasonable to expect the child to agree with you all of the time.

It is reasonable for you to expect respectful behavior from the child. But remember, respect is a two-way street. As foster parents, you must respect the child's natural needs, questions, and not expect blind obedience.

RULE 4: DON'T HAVE RULES THAT YOU CANNOT ENFORCE.

When you have rules for the children that cannot be enforced, then you make the children feel more powerful than you are.

When you say to the child, "Go to bed and go to sleep", you cannot enforce "go to sleep". If you tell the child that he cannot smoke, to enforce that rule, you would have to be with the child twenty-four hours a day. Often children will express their anger by breaking those rules that they know a parent cannot enforce. This, in turn, enables them to feel very powerful because they have disobeyed you and there is nothing you can do about it.

RULE 5: STAY AWAY FROM POWER STRUGGLES WITH THE CHILD.

Whenever you make a demand of the child which he/she refused to obey, a power struggle develops. If you say to your child, "Sit in that chair for fifteen minutes", and the child refuses to sit in the chair, then you have become involved in a power struggle. You demanded something that must now be enforced. Before making such a demand, parents must decide that they are ready to enforce the demand.

When a parent gets involved in a power struggle with his/her child, the parent often loses. Again, this makes the child feel more powerful. Each time you lose in a power struggle with the child, the less control you have over him/her and the more behavior problems will develop.

RULE 6: IF POSSIBLE, TRY TO IGNORE "BAD" BEHAVIOR.

You should not ignore destructive behavior or behavior that shows disrespect. However, some bad behavior can be ignored. Teasing, whining, and temper tantrums are attention-getting behaviors which are best ignored. When you pay attention to this kind of behavior, the child is rewarded by getting your attention. He/She then learns to use this behavior to get his/her own way. Ignoring these behaviors is very difficult sometimes, but it is often very effective.

RULE 7: DON'T ACT AS IF THE CHILD DID SOMETHING ON PURPOSE WHEN, IN FACT, IT WAS AN ACCIDENT.

Children have accidents just like adults do. When you accuse the child of doing something on purpose which, in fact, was an accident, then he/she may become very angry at you. This may also make him/her feel very inferior. The child ends up feeling that he/she cannot do anything right. Bed-wetting, breaking something, or messing his/her pants, may be accidental and can be seen often in foster children.

RULE 8: DON'T ASK A CHILD IF HE/SHE DID SOMETHING WRONG WHEN, IN FACT, YOU KNOW THAT HE/SHE DID IT.

Often a child will say he/she didn't do something, even though you saw him/her do it. If you then ask the child if he/she did it, you may be setting him/her up to lie to you. Instead, state to the child that you know what he/she did and then choose an appropriate discipline.

RULE 9: DON'T TRY TO BE THE FAIR PARENT.

When something happens out of your sight and you ask your two children which of them did it, they will try to blame one another. You have no way of knowing the facts, so you cannot judge which child should be disciplined. Therefore, discipline both children. Yes, one child is unfairly disciplined, but unless one child admits he/she is at fault, you cannot be fair.

RULE 10: BE CALM WHEN YOU ARE GOING TO DISCIPLINE THE CHILD.

Some parents scream and yell at their children as a form of discipline. This seldom works. Instead, be calm and state your punishment firmly. "You will stay in your bedroom for twenty minutes". "No, I will not come into your bedroom again tonight. If you continue to ask me, you will not watch television tomorrow night".

RULE 11: CORRECT THE CHILD'S BEHAVIOR WITHOUT CRITICIZING THE CHILD.

If you tell the child that he/she is doing something wrong, be patient and explain to him/her how to correctly accomplish the task. Do not continue to make comments to the child like the following: "You never can do anything right". "You know better than that". "Aren't you ever going to learn anything".

These statements simply make a child feel inferior. Repeated often enough, the child may begin to believe he/she is a failure.

Make as many positive comments to the child as you can. Build the child up; don't tear him/her down. During the early years, children believe everything their parents say. Therefore, what parents say to their children can affect their sense of self worth.

RULE 12: GIVE THE CHILD YOUR ATTENTION WHEN HE/SHE BEHAVES CORRECTLY.

Pay attention to the child's interests and activities and encourage him/her to talk with you about such things. Even short periods, such as five minutes of undivided attention, will go far in improving your relationship with a child, if those intervals are frequent, such as once or twice a day. Some families make dinnertime a special time for sharing the events of the day. In general, parents who pay attention to their children's good behaviors have to deal with fewer misbehaviors. Parents often pay attention to their children when they misbehave. If you want to change negative behavior, you should pay more attention to the child when he/she is behaving correctly.

If you tell the child to quiet down and he/she does, then tell him/her how much you appreciate his/her not making noise. Don't be afraid of complimenting the child. You will not spoil him/her. More than likely, he/she will want to do more for you.

RULE 13: GIVE THE CHILD CHOICES TO MAKE, AND THEN HOLD THE CHILD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CHOICE HE/SHE MAKES.

You can say to the child, "You can go out to play, but not until your bedroom is cleaned up". The choice of "when" is up to him/her. He/She may not clean up the bedroom, but this technique saves you from nagging the child. If going out to play is important to the child, sooner or later he/she will choose to clean up his/her bedroom.

Sometimes a child will consistently misbehave. For example, a child might always be late for supper or does not seem to want to eat at supper time. If this is considered to be a problem to the parents, then the parents can make a contract with the child. However, the contract must be stated very clearly; in fact, it may be best to write it down.

For example, say to the child, "We eat dinner at six o'clock. If you choose not to be home at that time you will have the choice of eating a cold dinner or fixing yourself something else. I will not fix a second meal just for you." The first time the child arrives home after six o'clock and misses dinner, more than likely, he/she will say something to try and make you feel guilty. Pay no attention, except to remind your child of the contract and that he/she chose not to be home on time.

One clear way to spoil children is to let children make choices, but not to hold them responsible for the choices they make. Children should be allowed to make choices that are reasonable for their age and do not endanger their well-being.

RULE 14: IDENTIFY WITH THE FEELINGS THAT THE CHILD IS EXPRESSING.

One of the major steps that foster parents can take to build and maintain a good relationship with their child is to identify with the child's feelings. You can always

identify with the feelings the child is expressing, even when you cannot accept some behaviors. A boy hitting his sister may have good reasons to be angry. You could say, "I can see why you are angry, but you should not hit your sister". All feelings are generally acceptable and can be identified with. Many behaviors accompanying such feelings are not acceptable.

An example of this is when a child falls and hurts himself/herself. The parent will say to the child, "Now stop your crying, it doesn't hurt that much". Or, he/she might say to a three-year-old boy, "Now big boys don't cry over a silly thing like that". Here the parent is denying the actual pain felt by the child. The parent might better accept the child's feelings by saying, "I'll bet that really hurt, didn't it?"

Often a child become angry at the foster parents for some reason. Perhaps because of a rule you have, or because you have disappointed him. Let the child express his/her anger and the feelings that you don't understand or don't care. It is important to say to a child, "I know you must be very angry at me for having that rule; however, we still must have the rule". Don't change the rule because the child is angry about it, but do allow the child to express how he/she feels about it.

There are many times that foster parents can let their child know that they understand by acknowledging how the child probably feels. It is important also that the parents not make fun of how the child feels about something.

RULE 15: BE HONEST WITH THE CHILD.

A child must be able to make sense out of his foster parents' statements. Honest statements always make the most sense to a child.

Questions regarding sex or death should be answered honestly and clearly. It is not necessary to have long discussions or ask curious questions as to why they are asking; just give simple honest answers to sincere questions.

RULE 16: TEACH THE CHILD TO FUNCTION AS AN INDEPENDENT PERSON.

Don't do things for a child that you know the child can do for himself/herself. Example of things children can often do for themselves are: getting dressed, preparing for bed, tying shoelaces, putting on boots, and getting a drink of water. Doing these things for the child creates an unnecessary dependency; however, use good judgment when deciding how, where and when to let the child be independent. Children will often express their independence by saying, "no" or by refusing to take their parent's hand when crossing a street. Allowing a child this kind of independence may be dangerous.

RULE 17: IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE FOSTER MOTHER AND FATHER AGREE ON CHILD REARING TECHNIQUES.

When parents agree on how to raise foster children, there will be more consistency for the child, and he/she will be less confused about how to behave. When issues arise that you don't agree on, take time to discuss them privately.

If parents choose to disagree and relate to their child differently, then the chances are good that the child will learn to manipulate one parent against the other.

RULE 18: LOVE THE CHILDREN.

Expressing love involves much more than saying, "I love you". To express the love you have for the child, show patience, understanding, sympathy, and firmness. Take some time to talk with and listen to the children. Play with them, encourage them, support them, and discipline them. Be reasonable with them and responsible for them. You will not spoil foster children by loving them too much.

RULE 19: RULES FOR CHILDREN UNDER AGE THREE.

Children under three years old can be very demanding and frustrating to parents. At this age, children are curious, selfish, stubborn, and simply want their own way. They don't want parents to interfere with them or to control them in any way.

In addition to the eighteen rules above, children three years old and under need additional guidance and understanding.

Children below the age of three do not understand the value of an object; they only know that it is fun to play with.

This age child must be protected from hurting himself/herself. Constant screaming will only upset him/her without accomplishing anything.

Controlling the younger child is best accomplished by distracting him/her. Get him/her away from things you don't want him/her to do and give him/her something you do want him/her to do.

The suggestions outlined are offered as methods for working with children. Not all are appropriate for use with every child. Consideration of the child's background and personality should enter into the decision to discipline. Any repeated difficulties should be shared with social worker or counselor, if appropriate.

WHEN THE CHILD LEAVES (eff. 8/6/02)

Although you have known all along that your foster child could not stay with you always, one of the hardest tasks of being a foster parent is the necessity of giving him/her up. It is always difficult to invest a great deal in a child and then say goodbye. At all times, a child's feelings must be considered. Helping a child to move from your home is a big job, but one that is also worthwhile. You have helped the child to grow spiritually, mentally, and physically; now you and the social worker can help the child face the future with more assurance and self-confidence. Try to help him/her look forward to his/her future and what it will bring. Because all children have different needs, it should be discussed with the social worker as to when to tell the child that he/she is leaving.

When the decision is made to return the child to his/her parents or to place the child with new parents where he/she will live the rest of his/her life, your assistance in preparing the child for this move may be one of the most important things you ever do. If at all possible, you and the social worker can prepare the child for the new situation by having visits with the family, by telling the child about family members or by other means. Do not ask the child if he/she wishes to return to you, you will only confuse him/her.

Please be aware that the children view material things which they use in your home as their possessions. Therefore, clothing which they have worn and toys which you bought for them should be sent with them when they move.

Soon you will be called again to take care of other foster children. We thank you for your love and devotion and that part of you every foster child will take with them when they leave.

Addendum 1 – Sandusky County DJFS Disaster Preparedness Plan

RULES

This section contains the actual rules which the State has established for foster care. While mentioned in various sections of this handbook, these actual rules are contained within the Ohio Administrative Code and are what the agency uses to establish those policies. In this section, you should place rules 5010:2-5 and 5101:2-7, which you should have received at the time of your initial inquiry.