



Foster Parent Law 2020 Implementation Plan

FAMILYCORE

ANNUAL REPORT FORM

08/20
18

Do NOT track changes in your plan **but be sure to list all narratives that contain content revision in #7 and #8.**

1. Provide a general description of the process used to obtain foster parent input into your plan review/revision. This should include a summary of foster parent comments and your response to those comments. (A bullet point list is fine.)

The FamilyCore Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan committee scheduled Implementation Plan Meetings with foster parents in July, 2019. Two sessions were schedule an A.M. and P.M session. The morning session focused on the foster parent rights and the evening session was to focus on responsibilities, however, no foster parents attended the evening session.

A draft version of the 2020 Plan was e-mailed to foster parents and their feedback was requested.

Summary of foster parent comments:

- Foster parents reported that they are treated with dignity and respect and that they are treated as a member of the team.
- Foster parents are aware that there is training online and that there are support groups available at FamilyCore. They are aware that DCFS also offers in person training. One foster parent expressed frustration that foster parents are required to complete training hours for renewal. None of the foster parents reported any training that is not currently being offered that they would like to have covered at a support group. The training that the foster parents found to be the most valuable is the trauma training. Foster parents would like to have Normalcy training offered in person. One foster parent asked how a foster parent that has placement of a medically specialized child could receive more training and it was explained that the agency has a nurse on staff that is willing to train foster parents one on one for the individualized needs of each child.
- The majority of foster parents reported that they did not know the emergency on-call phone number, with the exception of one who had it programmed into her phone. The foster parents all knew who their caseworker was but unable to name their caseworker's supervisor. They did know that if they called the agency and asked to speak to the supervisor for their caseworker, they would be connected to them.
- The foster parents asked about mileage and said that they knew there was some change but were not sure what it was. It was explained to them that they not receive reimbursement for the price of fuel, not a payment per mile. It was also explained that they do not receive reimbursement for everything, that it must be an

extenuating circumstance caused by the child being in foster care, and that it must be approved by the supervisor prior to submission. One foster parent stated that she has never received the medical card for a child that has been in her home for 2 years, another foster parent added that the children that have been in her home for 6 months also have not received a medical card. Foster parents were encouraged to call the Medical Card hotline.

- In regards to the service plan, only one foster parent reported ever having been to an administrative case review but reported that she received the administrative case review invite. One foster parent reported that she had been invited to an administrative case review, but did not know what it is. It was explained how important it is for foster parents to participate in administrative case reviews because they are the expert on the child and that is their opportunity to share with DCFS about the child and to get another opinion on any services that are needed. One foster parent said that she was aware of the services that the child had been referred to, but that she is currently on a 6 months waiting list and the child needs help now, not in 6 months.
- Foster parents stated that they may not receive all of the information on the child; but that they receive just enough and they learn more as they go. Foster parents were instructed to attend to court hearings, administrative case reviews, and child and family team meetings to learn more about the case. It was discussed that the agency can only give the information that the agency is given. It was explained that sometimes the licensing team does not know much information about the case when calling a foster parent to arrange a placement because the caseworker does not know much information about the case due to the case being new. Foster parents expressed how important it is to learn about the child's health history and health care needs.
- Foster parents understand the grievance policy form and are aware that they should follow the chain of command when they have an issue that is not being resolved. Foster parents asked what they should do when no one at the agency, from the caseworker to the CEO, is willing to resolve the issue. Foster parents were instructed that if they are having difficulty with the agency, they can go outside of the agency to the guardian ad litem or the advocacy office.

The following foster parents participated in this meeting: Kenda Taufer, Ted Taufer, Felina Mitchell, Donna McNeil, Cherall Fields.

The following staff participated in this meeting: Stacy Duren, Sam Lacey and Kristine Smith.

2. Describe the way direct service staff were involved in plan development and review.

At this meeting four groups were established and assigned either three rights or three responsibilities to review and make comment. The Rights were #'s: 1, 4, 5, 7, 10 and 11. The responsibilities were #'s 1, 2, 4, 7, 13, and 15. The groups were given a copy of the 2019 plan and discussed how they implement each of their assigned right/responsibility and record if there are any changes or additions to each.

The 2019 Plan was specifically reviewed again with the licensing staff so that the feedback they receive from foster parents during Monitoring visits would not be overlooked. The revised Plan was then submitted by e-mail to the child welfare department for questions and review.

3. Provide a summary of your response to public comments.

The 2019 Plan is on the Agency website. There have been no public comments.

4. Describe how foster parents are made aware of the availability of your plan.

Foster parents are given a copy of the Plan at the time they are initially licensed and then at the Annual Monitoring Visits. The foster parent newsletter announces that the Agency's Implementation Plan has been revised and is available. Once the plan is approved it is sent by email to foster parents. The Plan will be a topic at one of the monthly trainings provided by FamilyCore.

The Agency uses many of the same approaches to notifying foster parents that Implementation Plan has been revised as is used to provide updated information to foster parents –direct contact through monthly training and support groups as well as monitoring visits and casework contacts, e-mail, and direct mailings to foster parents.

5. List the needs/deficiencies identified in our 2019 comments and how they were addressed in this plan.

2019 Deficiencies/Suggestions for Improvement:

- 1) Please identify foster parents to demonstrate foster parent input.
- 2) Waiting on the next monthly home visit might be too long to wait to learn of changes in the service plan/permanency goal.
- 3) As noted in narrative 8, please follow your plan to ensure caseworker accountability. Please describe how caseworkers are trained to do the work.
- 4) Please remove blank pages around narrative 22 prior to distribution. Please replace narrative 23. It is missing and only part of narrative 24 is included.
- 5) Directly address Rule 340 in narrative 26. Criteria for scoring is not covered.

6. Describe how your Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure was developed or reviewed and approved by foster parents, and how foster parents are notified annually that it is available for their use.

The Procedure was updated in November 2018. Family Core was reviewed for recertification by the Council on Accreditation in 2019. The Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure was updated for that process.

The Grievance Procedure is given to foster parents at the time of licensure and annually thereafter at the annual Monitoring Visit. The foster parents sign a receipt for the Procedure which is then filed in their licensing record.

The Grievance Procedure is a simple explanation of how to communicate an issue to management if direct service staff have not adequately addressed the foster parent's concern. Foster parents are encouraged to process their concerns initially through the caseworker and then the supervisor, and if it would be valuable using their licensing representative as an advocate.

There were no Foster Parent Law Grievances filed during the calendar year.

7. List ALL rights narratives that were revised this year.

#1; #2; #3; #4; #5; #7; #8; #12

8. List ALL responsibilities narratives that were revised this year.

#1; #3; #4; #5; #6; #7; #8; #9; #10; #13

9. If no revisions were made, please explain why.

N/A

ANNUAL REPORT ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Proof of training
- 2) A list of the names or actual signatures of the foster parents that had input into the plan.
- 3) Actual signatures of foster parents who attest that they've reviewed/ approved your final 2020 plan. This must contain a clear statement of endorsement and identify signers as foster parents.
- 4) Copy of the agency's/region's Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure.
- 5) Copies of the newsletter "The Messenger".
- 6) Foster Parent Client Satisfaction Survey-Spring 2018 Results

FamilyCore

FOSTER PARENT BILL OF RIGHTS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2020

Foster Parent Rights

A foster parent's rights include, but are not limited to, the following:

Right #1

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

What does this mean? When a family becomes licensed with FamilyCore they become a member of a team dedicated to reuniting families. As a team member they are to be treated with dignity, respect, and their input on a child in care is important. They are acting as a substitute parent and should be treated as such.

How does FamilyCore do this?

Each year a committee of staff and foster parents work on revising FamilyCore's Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan.

Newly licensed foster parents are given a hard copy of the current Implementation Plan and the licensing worker discusses the Plan with them. Copies of the Plan are also provided at the Annual Monitoring Visit. An "Acknowledgement" of receiving and understanding the Plan is filed in each foster home file. For access by staff, the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan is located under "Reference Documents" in FamilyCore's on-line Process Manual. The Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan is also located on FamilyCore's website. All foster parents or interested parties have the right to review our Foster Parent Plan and are encouraged to do so. Staff are alerted to the revised Plan at a staff meeting and the "Rights" and "Responsibilities" are discussed. Foster parents are alerted in the newsletter that the new Plan is available, and they are sent the Plan by e-mail as well.

Foster parents are asked to participate in annual satisfaction surveys to determine levels of satisfaction and to solicit their comments and suggestions for improving our services. Surveys are mailed and available through g-mail link or phone to all foster homes, licensed and unlicensed, currently working with FamilyCore. Survey responses were sent to the Council on Accreditation (COA) and are topics for the Agency's quarterly Performance Quality Improvement (PQI) meetings. These meetings include Board members, staff and foster parents. In addition, during the COA reaccreditation foster parents were also interviewed during the process. COA reported that our response on the surveys was very good and the interviews with

the foster parents indicated that the foster parents were satisfied with the services that FamilyCore provides.

Implementation Plan Meetings were held with the foster parents and staff in preparation for the Implementation Plan, and the Survey Monkey tabulations of the foster parent survey results, show areas of satisfaction among foster parents with their agency experience. In response to the meeting on July 18th the foster parents reported that they are treated with dignity and respect and that they are treated as a member of the team. However, there are some areas in which improvement is needed to fully support this right.

The expectation is that caseworkers document that they have informed foster parents of court dates, ACRs and Child & Family Team Meetings. Supervisors are to review these entries as part of their staff supervision, better ensuring the information is being provided.

Licensing monitoring visits are another way of assessing the foster care program, services provided, agency performance and foster parent strengths, areas of concern, and the foster parent's experiences as a professional member of the child welfare team. Sharing the information gathered at these visits is a way to bring foster parent concerns to the attention of the Management Team.

Licensing meetings are held two times per month and follow-up staff, supervisors and other pertinent staff are invited to facilitate the sharing of information. Topics appropriate for these meetings are training needs for foster parents or staff, supports needed for a foster family possibly leading to CIPP or IPS referrals in addition to staff involvement, recruitment needs, licensing concerns, progress licensing relatives, etc.

Unlicensed relative foster parents are seen in the home twice a month by the case work staff. In addition to allowing the caseworker to assess the safety and well-being of the children in the relative placement, these meetings can be utilized much as Monitoring Visits to address the needs and concerns of the foster parents.

Each year FamilyCore hosts several events to recognize the partnership between foster parents and the other members of the professional team. In May FamilyCore hosts a Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner recognizing foster parents' contribution to the child welfare team. This event is attended by child welfare staff and is an enjoyable way for members of the professional team to get to know each other better. In December a Holiday Celebration featuring crafts, food, and a visit from Santa is held.

FamilyCore publishes a quarterly newsletter, *The Messenger*, which highlights both training and support groups available to foster parents. Training and support are ways of keeping foster parents informed and involved and recognizes the need for their professional development. An example is the reminder in the newsletter of the requirement that foster parents complete Educational Advocacy Training for the first renewal of their license. The newsletter provides the dates, times and locations of the trainings and how to register. The newsletter also contains

announcements of up-coming events as well as information valuable to foster parents such as local summer camps and updates on Medication Safety. The newsletter is mailed to foster parents as well as sent to them by e-mail. Agency staff also receives the newsletter by email.

The Peoria area social service community hosts a number of on-going events open to foster parents of all agencies: Circle of Support (4th Tuesday, DCFS sponsored); Parent Café (monthly, sponsored by LSSI); periodic training through Center for Youth and Family Solutions (grant funded); Foster Parent Orientation (periodically offered through Children's Home); CPR/First Aid (FamilyCore). FamilyCore is an active agency participant in participating in suggesting training needs and the planning of cooperative events.

In addition to the community wide events available to foster parents, FamilyCore offers support groups which meet on the third Thursday of each month. To accommodate as many foster parents as possible group meetings are held at two different times on that day, 10:00 – 12 pm and 6:00 – 8 pm. In 2019 the support group was held every month except for August. Starting in October 2019, FamilyCore partnered with Imago Dei Church, a local church, to offer support groups on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month as well.

Right #2

The right to the given standardized pre-service training and appropriate ongoing training to meet mutually assessed needs and improve the foster parent's skills.

What does this mean? When a family decides they want to become foster parents it is important they be given the information and tools to be successful. Every foster parent in the state of Illinois must attend PRIDE Pre-Service training in order to become licensed. Once a family is licensed there is ongoing training that builds on the foundation began with PRIDE Pre-Service training. Ongoing training is determined by the foster parent and staff.

How does FamilyCore do this?

All prospective foster parents are referred to PRIDE Pre-Service training as part of the licensing process. Foster parents must complete all of the required sessions in order to be licensed. For renewal purposes foster parents are required to complete a minimum of sixteen (16) hours of training every four (4) years. For foster parents who are providing foster care for children designated as “specialized”, the minimum number of required hours is 16 hours per year.

Once a family is licensed they are eligible to access other PRIDE or DCFS approved trainings. Foster parents are informed of training opportunities through The Messenger, FamilyCore's quarterly newsletter, and Illinois Families Now and Forever, the statewide newsletter published by the Department of Children and Family Services. These publications outline training opportunities, training locations and contact numbers to register. A copy of The Messenger may be found in the attachment portion of this Implementation Plan. Training may be recommended based on the *specific* needs of the foster parent or foster child determined at a CIPP meeting or through IPS involvement. Licensing workers discuss training with foster

parents at Monitoring Visits and document trainings completed by the foster parents in the record. FamilyCore is committed to assisting foster parents in registering for trainings.

Many of the monthly support group meetings sponsored by FamilyCore include a training component on topics specifically requested by FamilyCore foster parents. Recent examples are hair and skin care, and a review of the juvenile court system and the role of foster parents in the court process. In 2019 the Agency reviewed sections of the Foster Parent Handbook. While foster parents receive a copy of the Handbook when initially licensed, reviewing sections in response to concerns or questions raised by the foster parent made the information in the Handbook more pertinent and meaningful.

A list of training topics available to FamilyCore foster parents this past year may be found in the attachment portion of this Implementation Plan, as well as topics specifically covered at FamilyCore.

Right #3

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

What does this mean? When a child is placed in a foster home all contact information should be given to the foster parent. This contact information includes the name and telephone numbers of the agency and caseworker working with the child.

How does FamilyCore do this?

As part of pre-placement training and licensing, all prospective foster parents are made aware of the importance of using supports to maintain a placement and they are made aware of the process for accessing these services. Upon placement of a child, foster parents are given the names, positions, and contact information for the child's treatment team. If complete information is not available at the time of a child's placement the foster parent is provided minimally with the Agency phone number and the on-call number, and instructed to contact on-call for an emergency after-hours and their licensing worker during work hours until the contact information is available. Every issue of *The Messenger* newsletter will include the list of important phone numbers as a ready reference for foster parents.

Calls to FamilyCore are answered by a receptionist who contacts the staff person being called and notifies them that they have a call waiting. During regular business hours the foster parent should ask for the caseworker first and leave a voice mail message if the caseworker is not available. If the caseworker does not respond within two business days, or the situation is an emergency, the caseworker's supervisor should be requested. If neither the caseworker nor caseworker's supervisor is available, the program director should be contacted. If none of these staff is available in an urgent situation the receptionist will locate assistance.

On-call services are available for emergency support after regular business hours and on weekends. The worker on-call is provided an agency cell phone and a binder with contact information for the child welfare caseworkers, supervisors and program director should the On-call worker need assistance in resolving the foster parent's emergency situation. If foster parents have a child who is experiencing behavioral, medical or mental health issues, a child welfare supervisor will coordinate access to the appropriate services.

The after-hours number is given to foster parents at the time of licensure on the face sheet of the orientation folder, and it is included in every issue of the newsletter, *The Messenger*. Additionally, foster parents are provided with refrigerator magnets that display the on-call phone number for easy access. Foster parents with cell phones will be encouraged to add the on-call number to their "contacts" list.

Right #4

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

What does this mean? The state of Illinois establishes a rate of pay for each child based on age, behaviors and medical needs. This payment should go to foster parents in a timely manner monthly in the room and board checks.

How does FamilyCore do this?

Foster parents are reimbursed for room and board and other expenses according to DCFS guidelines based on the level of care and the age of the child in their care. Room and board checks are issued in the third week of each month to coincide with the payment from the Department. FamilyCore foster parents can select Direct Deposit for their reimbursement. The foster parents who do not have direct deposit, the check is mailed. Family Development Specialists will provide foster parents with a breakdown of their monthly stipend if requested.

Family Development Specialists arrange for the payment of initial clothing and infant care grants at the time of placement. Other payments such as the reimbursement to foster parents for hosting sibling visits, or allowable fuel reimbursement, are handled by the casework staff.

At the Implementation Plan meetings foster parents had a variety of questions regarding payments other than Board checks. Their questions showed that more information about how these payments are approved and processed is needed, and are part of the larger issue with communication. The newsletter is utilized to review the payment process minimally every six months, and licensing workers are encouraged to ask about any payment concerns at Monitoring Visits.

Should a child's child welfare team identify the need for evaluation of the level of care a child requires, the child's caseworker completes the necessary paperwork for a *Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation* staffing, also known as CIPP. Foster parents are encouraged to

maintain notes on children in their care and report any unusual incidents to the caseworker. The foster parents are provided behavior logs by licensing worker and a case note form. These notes can be used to demonstrate the need for a CIPP as well as be used in the CIPP as a history of behaviors or needs. Once a child is identified as being specialized, FamilyCore increases the monthly reimbursement to the specialized rate.

All foster parents will be assisted with any payment issues by the child's caseworker or their Family Development Specialist. Once a payment issue is identified the issue is referred to the Program Director. The Program Director will work with the agency accountant to try and resolve the issue within 24 hours. FamilyCore also has a contact person in the Central Payment Unit who can help resolve payment issues. There have been no unresolved payment issues this year.

Right #5

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

What does this mean? When a child is placed in foster care a service plan is developed outlining what is required of birth parents, foster parents, the caseworker, and the child. This service plan gives a basic framework to what is expected of all involved. In addition, foster parents are required to support a child's connection to birth family and to respect a child's cultural heritage. Cultural heritage is not just race, but other things of value to the child, such as family traditions and rituals.

How does FamilyCore do this?

During Child Family Team Meetings foster parents are encouraged to provide their input regarding the needs of a child in their care. Such issues as visitation, additional contact between the child and biological parents, service needs of the child, and communication with the service providers are discussed during the monthly home visits and quarterly Child Family Team Meetings. The foster parents will also have opportunities to share their perspective during the Administrative Case Reviews and court hearings. Foster parents are professional members of the child welfare team, and their input is very important in determining the service needs of the child.

FamilyCore understands the importance of providing foster parents with notification of any changes in the case plan or permanency goal in the event the foster parents are unable to attend the ACR or Court. The monthly home visit is an excellent time to inform the foster parents of any changes and to discuss the meaning of the changes that were made.

When a child is first placed into a foster parent's home the caseworker requests their input regarding the visitation plan and how the team members can maintain communication to help

the child stay connected to their biological family, if appropriate. Medical appointments, phone calls, letters and school events are means of maintaining this connection. The foster parent's comfort level, schedule, work hours, and number of children are all factors taken into consideration in developing a visitation and communication plan.

Cultural sensitivity is critical for all members of the child welfare team. From the comments made at the foster parent forums, foster parents want to understand the culture of the child in their home, including how the differences in socio-economic status between persons, even of the same race or ethnicity, can present challenges to supporting and understanding the child. For example, hair and skin care are two practical areas of care, and FamilyCore has staff that assist white foster parents in learning how to care for the skin and hair of the children of color placed in their homes. However, as a number of the foster parents' recognized, culture is broader than grooming knowledge, and as a program we need to understand the lens through which the various groups we work with see the world.

To meet this need FamilyCore provided a training on Cultural Competency. In addition, cultural competency forums and on-line trainings will be identified, and foster parents will be encouraged through the newsletter and Monitoring visits to take advantage of these resources.

Right #6

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

What does this mean? If a foster home comes under investigation that home have specific rights. These rights cover who can be involved, how long the investigation can take, and if you don't agree with the outcome of the investigation, what actions you can take. If a foster parent is found to be at fault during an investigation, a plan is put in place to correct the problem(s). The foster parent must be able to understand what is expected of them with this plan.

How does FamilyCore do this?

When a licensing complaint is made against any agency foster parent(s), the person shall be made aware, in writing, at the start of the investigation of the specific licensing violation as it relates to Rule 402, Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes. They shall also be allowed the opportunity to have a person of their choosing, including a foster parent advocate or their attorney, present during the investigation and due process, the right to be provided the opportunity to request and receive mediation and/or administrative review of decisions which affect licensing parameters, and the right to have decisions concerning a licensing corrective action plan specifically explained and tied to the licensing standards violated. Licensing staff

have been informed of the above policy. As part of the Pride training process, foster parents are made aware of the complaint procedure. Foster parents are also informed of the appeal process any time an issue arises related to an allegation of abuse/neglect or a licensing violation. Licensing provides them a copy of the appeal process when the investigation is a “stand alone” investigation of a possible licensing violation. When DCFS is investigating an allegation through the hot-line they provide the Appeal pamphlet. Foster parents are also provided with information regarding the Advocacy’s office to voice their concern.

The Family Development Specialist is required to address licensing concerns in a timely manner, no later than two working days following notification by the agency of the alleged violation. Within 30 days or less, after a careful review of all information, a determination will be made as to action, if any, is needed. This action may include record monitoring and/or further follow-up related to a corrective plan. If the foster parent does not agree, he/she may exercise their rights as outlined above.

For complaints alleging violation of licensing standards an investigation shall commence within two (2) business days of the receipt of the complaint if it meets the criterion for an investigation. The investigation should be completed within 30 calendar days of receipt of the complaint. The investigation can be extended upon written notice to the licensee. Within fifteen (15) days of completing the investigation, FamilyCore shall make a formal determination of whether a licensing violation has occurred. Within five (5) calendar days of the determination, a certified letter will be sent out to the licensee summarizing the findings of the investigation. If there is a determination that a licensing rule or standards have been violated, the letter shall:

1. Cite the licensing rules or standards violated;
2. Notify the respondent that within ten (10) days of the postmark date of the letter they may send a written request to the licensing coordinator requesting an informal review of the decision.
3. Notify the licensee that failure to correct the violations may result in the revocation or refusing to renew a license or refusing to issue a full license to the holder of a permit.

When the licensee requests an informal review and shows a willingness to correct the violations, a time period for compliance shall be allowed. The agency will confirm, in writing, the time period allowed. A licensed representative will make unannounced on-site visits to determine whether the identified violations have been corrected within the time period allowed for compliance. If the findings of the informal review do not demonstrate reasonable compliance within the specified time period, the licensee shall be notified by registered mail of the agency intent to revoke the license or refusal to issue or renew it. The licensee shall also be notified that they have ten (10) days from the postmark date of the registered letter to make a written request for a hearing. When a licensee does not request an informal review of the agency's intent to revoke a license or refusal to issue or renew a license, the agency shall proceed to revoke or refuse to issue or renew the license.

Foster parents are provided copies of important numbers through our quarterly newsletter. These numbers include the Advocacy Office, Appeal office, and the DCFS Field office. It is our worker's responsibility to assist a foster parent if they want to appeal an issue. The worker will help them write the letter, mail the letter to the appropriate office, and provide any documentation the agency has pursuant to the issue. When a Family Development Specialist writes up a corrective action plan he/she will meet with the foster parent and go over the plan. If the foster parent(s) understand the corrective action plan we request that they sign off on the plan. The Supervisor goes over all corrective action plans to make sure they are written because a license standard has been violated. Our intention is to retain a foster home and not close it down. A corrective action plan is developed to keep all members safe. It is the agency's responsibility to assist any foster home to help them to be in compliance with Rule 402, Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes.

Foster parents are reminded during the investigation that they can have any one of their choosing present to advocate for their needs, including an attorney. A licensing corrective action plan shall be jointly developed by the foster parent and the Family Development Specialist and approved by the immediate supervisor. By collaborating on a corrective action plan a foster parent will have ownership and retain a feeling of teamwork.

For each violation the plan shall describe in exact terms the standard violated, what the foster parent will/must do to correct the violation and a date by which time the violation will be corrected. Thirty days will be the maximum time allowed. However, if 24 hours is enough that time frame will be used. An example of a shorter time frame would be the replacement of batteries in smoke detectors. The Family Development Specialist shall inform the foster parent that the corrective action plan is not complete or in effect until the licensing supervisor has reviewed, approved and signed the plan.

Right #7

The right, at any time during which a child is placed with the foster parent, to receive additional or necessary information that is relevant to the care of the child.

What does this mean? When a child first comes into care all the information concerning a child may not be known. As the people involved, birth parent, child, investigator, and caseworker, establish relationships more information may be shared with the foster parent. FamilyCore makes every effort to ensure that as much information as possible is gathered. When a child is initially placed into care a Child and Family Team Meeting must be held within 14 days of placement, and this gives the foster parent an opportunity to learn more about the child from the biological parent. This information needs to be shared with the foster parent in order for the foster parent to provide the best care possible.

How does FamilyCore do this?

FamilyCore believes that it is very important to disclose all information regarding a child placed into one of our foster homes. A foster parent must understand where a child has been to understand where the child is now. When asking a foster parent to take placement of a child the placing worker shares as much information as possible. This information includes the reason the child is coming into care, whether or not the child has been in placement before, and any known medical, behavioral, or educational issues. The foster parent's participation in the initial and on-going Child and Family Team Meetings aids in keeping the foster parent informed of the information crucial to meeting the child's needs.

The CFS 600-4 Sharing Information with the Caregiver form documents information shared with the foster parent. When a caseworker meets with a foster parent after placing a child the expectation is that the caseworker completes the CFS 600-4 and has the form signed by the foster parent. The form is to be placed in the child's section of the case record. Supervisors are to ensure that caseworkers are in compliance with this expectation during supervision. During peer file reviews the form is noted, and if missing the caseworker and supervisor must correct by completing and filing the document. Family Development Specialists also review the value of this form with foster parents during the licensing process. If a foster parent indicates they have not received the form, or desire more information, the Family Development Specialist will contact the caseworker and have the situation corrected.

Right #8

The right to be given information concerning a child (i) from the Department as required under Section 5 of the Children and Family Services Act and from a child welfare agency as required under Section 7.4 (c-5) of the Child Care Act of 1969.

What does this mean? When a child comes into care the placing agency must give the foster home certain information if available. This information includes the child's educational and health history, placement history, the child's portion of the service plan, special education information if the child receives special education services, and any known social or behavioral issues necessary to care for and safeguard the child.

How does FamilyCore do this?

FamilyCore has always had a policy of sharing information with foster parents, especially information that impacts the care of a child placed in the foster parent's home.

When a child has been identified as needing placement, caseworkers must complete a Placement Request Form. The Placement Request Form includes information about placement needs, placement history, IQ, mental health diagnosis, general medical diagnosis, educational information, emotional/behavioral needs, sexual behavior problems, current services, placement restrictions, and youth strengths, interests, and hobbies. While this form is not all inclusive it is a starting point for foster parents to make a decision about whether or not a child is a good match with their home.

A CFS 600-4 Sharing Information with the Caregiver form is to be completed for each child placed in a foster parent's home and the information shared with the foster parent. Within 10 working days of placement the caseworker is to obtain signed verification of receipt of the information and forward a copy of the 600-4 to the child's guardian ad litem. A copy will be placed in the child's section of the case record. Supervisors are to ensure that caseworkers are in compliance during supervision, and the form will be noted during peer record reviews.

Right #9

The right to be notified of scheduled meetings and staffings concerning the foster child in order to actively participate in the case planning and decision-making process regarding the child, including individual service planning meetings, administrative case reviews, interdisciplinary staffings, and individual educational planning meetings; the right to be informed of decisions made by the courts or the child welfare agency concerning the child; the right to provide input concerning the plan of services for the child and to have that input given full consideration in the same manner as information presented by any other professional on the team; and the right to communicate with other professionals who work with the foster child within the context of the team, including therapists, physicians and teachers.

What does this mean? Foster parents are members of a child's team. In order to be effective members it is important for the foster parent to participate in a variety of meetings meant to ensure a child's needs are being met. It is the right of the foster parent to be informed of and attend all meetings. As the caregiver to the child, the foster parent has valuable information that assists other team members in providing effective services. The foster parent has the right *and is encouraged* to share this information with the other members of the team.

How does FamilyCore do this?

The caseworker or designated person shall make every reasonable effort to notify the foster parent of all scheduled meetings, staffings, and court and do so in the foster parents preferred method of communication. The caseworkers will automatically list the foster parents on the Notification List when they are mailed notices of every administrative case reviews regarding the children in their care. The expectation is that the caseworker will inform the foster parent of administrative case reviews and court hearings in writing as well as verbally. These contacts are entered into the case notes.

In the foster parent Implementation Plan forums foster parents complained that they do not always know about upcoming events. Supervisors will make a periodic review of case notes to ensure that the notifications are being provided.

If a foster parent is not able to attend meetings related to the child's welfare such as administrative case reviews, court hearings or staffings, the caseworker shall notify the foster parent of any actions taken at such meetings as they may impact the child. Whenever there is a

critical decision such as an increase or decrease in parental visits or whether or not visits are supervised or unsupervised, the foster parents are included on the distribution list for the notice of decision and are verbally informed by the caseworker for the child.

When the service plan is being developed or a court report being written, the foster parent is involved and asked for their input. The caseworker incorporates the information from a foster parent about the child into the service portion of the child's service plan. An example would be a child having issues adjusting to placement. The worker would ask that the child receive counseling. For court reports, information received from foster parents is included in the caseworker's child assessment portion of the report and documented as having been reported by the foster parent.

The agency encourages all foster parents to maintain notes on children in their care and report any unusual incidents to the caseworker. If a child is identified as possibly needing enhanced clinical intervention, foster parents are invited to participate in the CIPP process to review the clinical needs. The CIPP process is also used to review the clinical needs in order to prevent disruptions in the placement. The foster parent has the opportunity to discuss positives and challenges regarding the child in order to develop a plan of action.

Foster parents are encouraged to communicate with all child team members. As the caregiver to the child the foster parent has a unique perspective and the most "hands on" experience with the child. The foster parent is encouraged by both the caseworker and family development specialist to communicate with the other professionals on the child welfare team.

Right #10

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

What does this mean? As a case progresses and relationships are built, information may come out that is important in the care of a child. This information is to be shared with the foster family in a timely manner. A foster family does not have the right to know information about a birth parent that does not directly impact the care of the child. It is acceptable for a birth parent to choose to share more information with a foster parent once a relationship has been formed.

How does FamilyCore do this?

As members of the child's casework team, foster parents are allowed to have access to relevant information that will aid in their understanding of the child and his/her needs. As part of

FamilyCore's philosophy, they are able to review the child's file to assist them in this process. The caseworker discusses with them any important information that affects the child in their care or how the child is to be cared for, and the foster parent is given written copies of pertinent information.

FamilyCore encourages positive working relationships between foster parents and birth parents. In order to help children in placement and to assist foster parents, birth parents are encouraged to complete "Things to know about my child" information lists and to share those with the case manager or foster parent.

As members of the child's team, foster parents are given copies of all information pertinent to the care and well being of the child at the time of the initial placement, including medical and educational information. If the placement is an emergency placement, written records will be given within 10 days. Foster parents shall also be given copies of any new information that is pertinent to the care and well being of the child. Information will be provided to the foster parents in a timely manner.

Right #11

The right to be given reasonable written notice of (i) any change in a child's case plan, (ii) plans to terminate the placement of the child with the foster parent, and (iii) the reasons for the change or termination in placement. The notice shall be waived only in cases of a court order or when the child is determined to be at imminent risk of harm.

What does this mean? The foster parent has the right to be given notice in writing that there is an upcoming change in the child's case plan or it is the intention of the agency to move the child to a different home. The written notice is not required if the court orders the change or a child is in serious risk of being hurt.

How does FamilyCore do this?

When the agency has assessed that it is in the child's best interest to be moved from his or her current foster home the following shall be done:

A Notice of Change of Placement (CFS 151-B) shall be completed and sent to the foster parents, the biological parents, and the child's Guardian Ad Litem.

A Notice of Change of Placement is filled out citing reasons for the removal. Along with the Notice of Change of Placement, the foster parent is verbally informed of the decision and the reasons and given a copy of the appeal process. All foster parents are given 14 day notice in compliance with the Rule unless the child is in serious risk of harm, and are informed of their right to file an appeal.

Right #12

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

What does this mean? Court plays an important role in determining services for birth parents, as well as whether or not a child is to be returned home. Foster parents have the right to be in court and therefore need to be informed of dates and times in order to be able to make arrangements to be there. Additionally, foster parents have the right to know the name of the judge, location of court, and the court docket number of the case. A foster parent has the right to be represented by a lawyer in court and seek mandamus. Mandamus is a written order by a superior court ordering a public official or body or a lower court to perform a specific duty.

How does FamilyCore do this?

It is the responsibility of the caseworker to notify the foster parent of all court hearings affecting any child in their care. Foster parents are encouraged to attend all court hearings allowable under law and to have input into the recommendations. If the foster parent attends court they are given the next court date, time, and location at that time. If the foster parent was unable to attend the caseworker will notify the foster parent verbally or by letter. The worker shall document in the case file the date and method of notification. In the Implementation Plan foster parent forums some foster parents stated that they prefer getting a letter with the court hearing information.

Supervisors will ensure during supervision that caseworkers are in compliance with notification expectations.

Right #13

The right to be considered as a placement option when a foster child who was formerly placed with the foster parent is to be re-entered into foster care, if that placement is consistent with the best interest of the child and other children in the foster parent's home.

What does this mean? As a foster parent you have the right to be considered as a placement resource for a child who is re-entering the foster care system. A foster parent must have enough capacity and appropriate bedroom space to accommodate the child re-entering the foster care system in order to be considered.

How does FamilyCore do this?

FamilyCore strongly supports the concept of placing children re-entering the system with the former foster parent when it is in the best interests of the child and does not violate licensing standards as defined by Rule 402. The DCFS placement team checks for previous placements and contacts the agency currently working with the foster family. FamilyCore, through our own

records system, is also able to verify if any child/family has been served previously by our agency.

When discussing best interest of a child in terms of placing the child with previous foster parents staff look at how stable the placement was, whether or not an attachment formed, and if the family is willing to offer permanency. As a part of monitoring visits, information about placement history is recorded on the CFS 597-FFH Foster Family Home Licensing Monitoring Record and CFS 604-1Foster Family Utilization Assessment forms. This information becomes a part of the foster parents' permanent licensing file. Additionally, the Foster Parent Data Sheet records placement history and is also filed in the foster parent's permanent licensing file. These forms all make it easier to assess what is in the child's best interest in terms of placement when a child re-enters foster care.

Right #14

The right to have timely access to the child placement agency's existing appeals process and the right to be free from acts of harassment and retaliation by any other party when exercising the right to appeal.

What does this mean? If a foster parent has an issue which they feel has not been adequately addressed by the FamilyCore chain of command, they have the right to file an appeal. If a foster parent does file an appeal there should be no acts of harassment or retaliation by anyone.

How does FamilyCore do this?

Should a foster parent wish to file a grievance or appeal they are provided a copy of the agency's written grievance policy and procedure. If a foster parent needs assistance in writing an appeal or grievance, assistance will be provided by the foster family's family development specialist. The agency will act on any appeal in accordance with its stated procedures and a time line of one month from the filing of the appeal, unless there are other issues that would cause urgency and therefore, the need for a quicker response. The foster parent will be informed in writing of the resolution of any appeal and a copy of the notification is maintained in a grievance file.

In addition to the agency's own grievance/appeal process foster parents are provided, information regarding the DCFS appeal process for administrative care reviews and investigations as a licensed foster family home.

Right #15

The right to be informed of the Foster Parent Hotline established under Section 35.6 of the Children and Family Services Act and all of the rights accorded to foster parents concerning reports of misconduct by Department employees, service providers, or contractors,

confidential handling of those reports, and investigation by the Inspector General appointed under Section 35.5 of the Children and Family Services Act.

What does this mean? There is a Foster Parent Hotline which is to be used by foster parents to report any misconduct by someone who is part of the child welfare team. If it is necessary to use the Foster Parent Hotline there are rights that a foster parent has concerning confidentiality and the investigation process.

How does FamilyCore do this?

As a part of licensure foster parents are told about the foster parent hotline and Office of Inspector General. Brochures are also given to the foster parent at that time. This information is shared routinely with foster parents during annual monitoring visits. The number is also listed in the newsletter, *The Messenger*.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

A foster parent's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

Responsibility #1

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

What does this mean? Open communication is important to any successful team. It is important that foster parents share information that they become aware of with the rest of the team. It is also important that foster parents share concerns like school related issues or stressors the child is experiencing with the team in a timely matter.

How does FamilyCore help foster parents meet this responsibility?

Foster parents all sign a "Responsibilities of Traditional & Licensed Relative Foster Parents" or "Responsibilities of Specialized Foster Parents" agreement prior to becoming licensed.

Family Development Specialists encourage the documentation of information concerning foster children on Foster Parent Notes. The documented information is to be shared with caseworkers.

Child and Family Team meetings increasingly are held on a quarterly basis to update on the status of the case and to share any concerns that need to be addressed. Caseworkers are reminded at staff meetings and during supervision of their importance. Supervisors maintain a Child and Family Team Log. Foster parents are part of this team and they are encouraged to attend all of the Child and Family Team meetings. Major decisions regarding the child's permanency goal and service needs are discussed at these meetings. The foster parents are

very aware of the child's current physical and emotional needs, therefore their input is very valuable.

Foster parents are encouraged to attend all school staffings or any other service provider staffings of the child. We depend upon our foster parents to bring to the team updated information regarding the progress of the child, or simply updating the other team members on whether the services are working or not working for the child.

Family Development Specialists encourage foster parents to call a child's caseworker with information pertinent to the child's care. The Family Development Specialists recommend leaving a message should the caseworker be unavailable to talk with immediately. Additionally, administrative staff have been advised to forward calls first to the case manager, then supervisor, and finally the program director if an issue is not resolved. Foster parents have indicated that they also prefer electronic communication and are encouraged to use such communication when appropriate for potentially faster response times.

Responsibility # 2

The responsibility to respect the confidentiality of information concerning foster children and their families and act appropriately within applicable confidentiality laws and regulations.

What does this mean? Confidentiality is one of the most important responsibilities for those on a child welfare team. Foster parents learn sensitive information about the children in their care and the children's birth parents. Making sure this information is shared only with people who need to know is a basic principle that is necessary for successful team work.

How does FamilyCore help foster parents meet this responsibility?

This responsibility is clearly stated in FamilyCore's orientation and training and is continually stressed and reinforced throughout the relationship with the foster parent while the child is in their care. The Responsibilities of Traditional & Licensed Relative Foster Parents and Responsibilities of Specialized Foster Parents agreements also address confidentiality. All foster parents receive a copy of Rule 402-Licensing Standards for Foster Homes, in which this responsibility is clearly stated. The family development specialist also re-states this during regular monitoring and support visits to the home.

Foster parents sign a statement that they have received a copy of Rule 402. In section 402.24 Confidentiality of Information it states, "All personal and identifying information concerning a foster child; including but not limited to, his background, his family, and the identity and location of all other persons or families with whom he has been, or will be placed, shall be treated as confidential by all parties involved with the child."

Social media has added a new dimension to confidentiality considerations for foster parents, particularly relative foster parents who may already be used to sharing family information. Foster parents are notified at the time of placement by the Family Development Specialist that

they cannot share information or photos of their foster children on line unless permission has been obtained by the caseworker from DCFS. Reminders will be given during the licensing process and at Monitoring Visits, as well as included in *The Messenger*. Violations are taken seriously as a failure to abide by the Rule, and as a failure to respect the family of the child

Responsibility #3

The responsibility to advocate for children in the foster parent's care.

What does this mean? As the caregiver to the child, the foster parent has valuable information about the child and their needs. It is important that the foster parent use this information to ensure a child receives services or whatever else necessary to provide for the well being of the child.

How does FamilyCore help foster parents meet this responsibility?

As a part of licensure, foster parents sign a Statement of Responsibilities, which includes advocating for a child's needs. They are part of the child family team and it is our expectation that a foster parent will advocate for what is in the best interest of a child who is in their care. In their parental role, the foster parent is more aware of the child's emotional and physical needs. This information is valuable in obtaining needed services for the child.

Educational advocacy is an important role for foster parents as many children in care experience academic issues. As part of the licensing process family development specialists discuss the importance of Educational Advocacy and are encouraged to attend the class as soon as possible. Foster parents are informed of Educational Advocacy training schedules in the agency newsletter, *The Messenger*. Additionally, if a child is known to have educational issues a foster parent is asked specifically to attend Educational Advocacy Training in order to help meet the child's educational needs.

Court is another area a foster parent can advocate for a child. At the forums a number of foster parents noted that they did not understand the court process. In order to help the foster parents understand the court process and their roll in that process, as well as their rights, the Agency is provided a training for foster parents on October 15, 2019.

Foster Parents whose children are receiving psychiatric care are encouraged to be part of the regular meetings of the child and the psychiatrist. This allows the foster parent to ask questions and share their day to day experience of living with the child.

At each monitoring visit the family development specialist reviews the foster parent's training transcripts and remind the foster parent of the requirement that at least one foster parent in the household must have Educational Advocacy training for renewal. Family Core also employs an Educational Liaison to assist foster parents as needed. Foster parents are able to contact the Liaison directly and are reminded at Monitoring Visits by the licensing workers to do so.

The concept of “Normalcy” parenting is now a required training topic and is a discussion point at monitoring visits.

Foster parents are given the service appeal brochures at the time of licensure. Each appeal process is discussed in terms of when and how it is used. These brochures are reviewed annually at the Monitoring visit. The caseworker documents in their case notes the foster parent’s involvement in services for the child.

Responsibility #4

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

What does this mean? Dignity, respect, and consideration are important to building and maintaining a team. It is important to treat a foster child and their family with dignity, respect, and consideration by listening to the child and their family’s concerns and incorporating their suggestions into the care of the child. It means supporting the relationship between the foster child and their family.

How does FamilyCore help foster parents meet this responsibility?

Under Rule 402.12(i) unless parental rights have been terminated, foster parents shall respect and support a child's ties to his or her biological family and shall cooperate with the supervising agency and the service plan for the child and his/her family. Foster parents are encouraged to transport children to visits and supervise if possible, and FamilyCore has a high number of foster parents who do so. This level of involvement allows the parents and foster parents to become better acquainted, which is very positive for the children. The details of the foster parent’s involvement are outlined in the service plan.

Rule 402.12 (i) is routinely covered during licensing monitoring visits. Rule 402 and other important policy and procedure items will continue to be discussed as a part of the quarterly newsletter.

Foster parents at FamilyCore are encouraged to use photo albums and notes as a means of keeping biological parents connected to their children. With reunification almost always the initial goal, licensing workers review document 250-A “Caregiver Self-Assessment as Reunification Prepared” with homes they are preparing. Foster families are encouraged to attend reunification preparation training offered locally by DCFS .

Feedback from the staff Implementation Planning meeting suggested that staff encourage foster parents to maintain a child’s personal possessions if necessary until arrangements by the agency are made. This can be used if a youth is detained in DOC or on Run Status.

Social media presents new situations for foster care programs to address. The inclusion of foster children on a foster parent’s social media site is not allowed under the confidentiality

agreements signed by the foster parents, both traditional and relative. Birth parents have expressed great distress when they learn that their children's status as foster children and their photos are on-line.

Responsibility #5

The responsibility to recognize the foster parent's own individual and familial strengths and limitations when deciding whether to accept a child into care; and the responsibility to recognize the foster parent's own support needs and utilize appropriate supports in providing care for foster children.

What does this mean? When considering a placement, foster parents must be able to identify their strengths and weaknesses. It is the foster parent's responsibility to identify any assistance they may need to care for the child and use supports.

How does FamilyCore help foster parents meet this responsibility?

Assessment of foster parents strengths and limitations is an ongoing process that begins in the licensing process and continues until a license is surrendered. This is a mutual assessment process, which includes the foster parent and staff. The foster parent and Family Development Specialist discuss current family makeup and what impact an additional child's placement might have. Once a foster family has had a placement the assessment process continues, in part through the Monitoring Visits with discussion of what worked and what didn't work.

Although this is a responsibility of the foster parent, it is also an ongoing responsibility of the agency to assess the strengths and limitations of the foster parent so as not to push them beyond their capabilities, which could result in a disrupted placement. The Resource meetings are opportunities to assess foster parent needs and training issues. Additionally, various supports are also discussed when needs are identified to help a foster parent meet the needs of a child in care or the foster parent's own family. Ideas for training and support are then discussed with the foster parent. If the foster parent is in agreement with receiving additional training and support the referrals are made.

Foster parents are valuable members of the child welfare team, and FamilyCore is committed to their professional growth. We search out workshops, counseling, and other supports that can assist them in becoming the best foster parents that they can be.

Responsibility #6

The responsibility to be aware of the benefits of relying on and affiliating with other foster parents and foster parent associations in improving the quality of care and service to children and families.

What does this mean? Support that foster parents gain from other foster parents is invaluable. It is important that foster parents know this and use this support to improve the quality of care and service they provide to children and families.

How does FamilyCore help foster parents meet this responsibility?

FamilyCore is fully aware and supportive of the concept of foster parent support groups, both formal and informal. To this end, FamilyCore promotes the various foster parent support groups and activities available through the collaboration of the social service agencies in the Peoria area. Parent Café is an on-going monthly support group that utilizes FamilyCore staff to help facilitate discussions and is publicized in *The Messenger*, along with other opportunities for foster parents to meet.

FamilyCore in conjunction with other community agencies, offer support through Youth Services Network Panel. At Youth Services Network Panel meetings foster parents benefit from networking with other foster parents as issues of discipline, relative care and support services are discussed.

FamilyCore sponsors two monthly support groups at FamilyCore and this information was provided to the forum participants. Staff noted that attendance at support group meetings in recent years has been very low, often times just a few people. The observation was made by a number of foster parents that they need to be encouraged to attend support groups and participate. The Family Development specialist have been sending email reminders to families that have email. FamilyCore will continue to explore with foster parents more effective ways to provide that encouragement.

Responsibility #7

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

What does this mean? It is important to build on the foundation of the pre-service training all foster parents receive. In order to meet the needs of children in care and maintain a healthy balance in their homes, foster parents must look at themselves, their families, and the children in care in order to identify training needs. The foster parent must discuss those needs with the foster care team in order to find resources to meet those training needs.

How does FamilyCore help foster parents meet this responsibility?

Training needs is part of the ongoing assessment of foster parents. Through discussion in Child Family Team meetings, monitoring visits, and Resources meetings these needs are identified. Foster parents at the forums noted that their training needs are being met; they are aware of the trainings through the newsletter and from Family Development Specialists and case workers.

When a training need is identified, resources are reviewed within the DCFS training, the Virtual Training Center, the DCFS lending library, and specialized trainings offered in the community. Foster parents are then referred to the appropriate training by their licensing worker. If necessary, FamilyCore pays for any fees associated with the training.

Responsibility #8

The responsibility to develop and assist in implementing strategies to prevent placement disruptions, recognizing the traumatic impact of placement disruptions on a foster child and all members of the foster family; and the responsibility to provide emotional support for the foster children and members of the foster family if preventive strategies fail and placement disruptions occur.

What does this mean? It is important for a foster parent to realize what can cause a placement to fail in their home. Being sensitive to these issues and asking for help before it is necessary to move a child is an important part of what a foster parent does. Having a placement fail can impact all involved including the foster child, foster parents, and the members of the foster family. It is important to recognize this.

How does FamilyCore help foster parents meet this responsibility?

All foster parents are informed and encouraged as part of training to communicate early on as to any problems occurring in the foster home with the child. This can help avoid unnecessary disruptions that sometimes occur when the foster parent attempts to deal with all of the problems on their own and become overwhelmed before asking for help.

Early identification of children at risk of disrupting or creating disruption in the family is through the assessment of the caseworker, Family Development Specialist, and the foster parents. If they observe that a child is being suspended from school frequently, there is an increase of acting out behavior in the home and school, the child is exhibiting more aggressive behaviors, the child has run away, or all the family's energy is being focused on this child, there is a high risk for disruption. Also, there is an assessment in the beginning of the placement if a child is going to be high maintenance due to the child's special needs that could lead to a disruption. Communication is very important between the foster parents and other members of the child's team.

The regular Resources meeting will be invaluable in early identification of the situations that could lead to a placement disruption. The expectation is that the issues will be identified and the caseworkers, licensing workers and foster parents will engage in developing interventions.

To avoid placement disruption, FamilyCore will call a Child and Family meeting to gain input from all members of the team. Options like increasing counseling sessions, increasing home visits by the caseworker, frequent contact with the school, request for a psychological evaluation, referral to Intensive Placement Stabilization or a request for a CIPP are just a few options that may be explored to stabilize the placement. FamilyCore has a Day Respite

program for foster children who are suspended from school and who have a working foster parent. We also offer our foster parents respite care for overnight.

Communication is very important between the foster parents and other members of the child's team. At the foster parent forums foster parents noted that timely response by staff to their questions and requests would significantly help maintain placements.

Support for foster children and family members, if preventive strategies fail, will come in three areas; the therapist/counselor, the child family meeting members, and the agency's staff. A failed placement does not mean that the work is completed because we all are responsible in helping the child transition into a new placement. All team members will have the opportunity to process with one another what worked, what did not work, and what this child needs to succeed in his/her next placement. The licensing supervisor will coordinate this stage of the fostering process. An example of the follow-up service provided would be encouraging the foster parents to attend a foster parent support group. If our foster parents feel that they need individual or family counseling we will authorize counseling through our counseling department.

Through Foster/Adopt PRIDE training, agency newsletters and agency staff our foster parents are educated about the availability of support services. Stabilization services are available to foster parents who are dealing with difficult placements or with placements in danger of disrupting. Foster parents are informed of stabilization services and how to access them. This information comes from caseworkers, Family Development Specialists and through the list of important numbers in the newsletter.

Responsibility #9

The responsibility to know the impact foster parenting has on individuals and family relationships; and the responsibility to endeavor to minimize, as much as possible, any stress that results from foster parenting.

What does this mean? It is important for the foster parents to understand how being a foster family home will change their family and what it will mean for each individual in the household, including their children, extended family members and the foster child in the home. The foster parents should know that they could use the agency as a support system in times of stress.

How does FamilyCore help foster parents meet this responsibility?

FamilyCore attempts to maintain close working relationships with our foster parents through our Family Development Specialists as well as the casework staff who work with the foster parent and children in the foster home in order to identify the stress issues of the foster parent. The agency attempts to be proactive by utilizing support services and respite to help the foster parent to keep stress from building to an unmanageable level. Respite is discussed as a means of preserving placements and maintaining strong families as a part of the licensing process. During monitoring visits Family Development Specialists again discuss with the foster parents

the need to use respite if they have been dealing with a particularly difficult placement or experiencing difficult personal issues that a break would help. If a caseworker informs a family development specialist that the foster parent is having a difficult time, the foster parent is called and respite offered. Foster parents are constantly reassured that using respite does not mean they cannot handle fostering, but rather are making an investment in maintaining a placement.

Through support groups foster families can develop a network of support. These meetings allow foster parents to bring up areas of concern impacting their fostering experience and family. As a group, ideas are offered for how to deal with these concerns and resources for help are suggested. During periods of high stress the Family Development Specialists will remind foster parents of the value of attending support groups and make sure the family knows about up-coming meetings. Should a foster parent request counseling or other supports FamilyCore will make the necessary referrals.

Foster parents are also being encouraged to network with one another outside of the support group setting as a way of keeping down the stress related to foster parenting.

Children's Home provides an orientation to foster parenting that is open to foster parents of all area agencies, and this information is provided to the new foster parents. The 2018 Plan noted that FamilyCore was making plans to develop an orientation for new foster parents to help them understand how FamilyCore works, with the goal of making our partnership with the foster parents stronger. Along with the training, the agency planned to develop an initial packet of medication/behavior logs, mileage forms, emergency numbers, the name of the worker if known at the time of placement, list of services of the agency, amount of board payment, payment schedule, initial clothing information, any know upcoming appointment for the child(ren), and Day Care forms. This is in process. The licensing supervisor will be the point person for developing and orientation meetings and information packet.

Responsibility #10

The responsibility to know the rewards and benefits to children, parents, families, and society that come from foster parenting and to promote the foster parenting experience in a positive way.

What does this mean? Foster parents have an opportunity to share with other individuals in the community the positive impact foster parenting can have for their families and for the children in their home. This can also be an opportunity to recruit potential foster parents by sharing their experience.

How does FamilyCore help foster parents meet this responsibility?

As part of the initial and ongoing training, as well as through the area foster parent support groups, the values and benefits of foster parenting are reinforced. FamilyCore works closely with other area foster care agencies to promote foster care positively, for example Hands

Around the Courthouse. Current foster parents have played a major role in promoting and recruiting other foster parents. They have attended various local publicity events to speak to potential foster parents. They also meet one-on-one when requested with potential foster parents to answer questions and provide information on the positive aspects of foster parenting.

Responsibility #11

The responsibility to know the roles, rights, and responsibilities of foster parents, other professionals in the child welfare system, the foster child, and the foster child's own family.

What does this mean? To know and understand what foster parenting means is a critical part of foster parenting.

How does FamilyCore help foster parents meet this responsibility?

The roles, rights, and responsibilities of foster parents are stressed throughout the training and licensing process. As a part of licensing foster parents are given rights and responsibility contracts. The foster parents sign an acknowledgement form stating they have received and understand their rights and responsibilities and this is filed in their record.

Foster parents are informed about the roles, rights, and responsibilities of other professionals in the child welfare team, the foster child, and foster child's own family during initial training required for licensure and through in-service training and Monitoring visits.

All Casework staff and supervisors are trained on the current implantation plan upon it being approved. In April of 2019 the licensing team developed "Implementepardy Game" to review the current plan. There was a pre and post-test from this experience and it was well received.

Responsibility #12

The responsibility to know and, as necessary, fulfill the foster parent's responsibility to serve as a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act; and the responsibility to know the child welfare agency's policy regarding allegations that foster parents have committed child abuse or neglect and applicable administrative rules and procedures governing investigations of those allegations.

What does this mean? Licensed foster parents are mandated reporters. It is important to understand what is abuse or neglect and how to report it. Foster parents can also be investigated for child abuse or neglect making it necessary for the foster parents to understand the investigation process and the rules that apply.

How does FamilyCore help foster parents meet this responsibility?

This is an area that is covered in great detail, during initial training and ongoing training. Foster parents are aware that both they and the agency staff are mandated reporters. The initial

Foster/Adopt PRIDE training covers foster parents' mandated reporter responsibilities. Also, included in the mandated reporter responsibilities is reporting sexually reactive children. The Family Development Specialist and caseworker provide ongoing training to foster parents regarding mandated reporter responsibilities.

At the time of initial licensing all foster parents receive a copy of the Mandated Reporter Manual and sign a Mandated Reported Acknowledgement form, which is placed in their file. The Mandated Reporter status is reviewed annually with foster parents.

Foster parents are made aware that they may become the focus of an investigation under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. Foster parents are informed of the agency's position as a licensed child welfare agency and our policy regarding investigations and allegations, as well as the rules and procedures governing the agency and the agency's need to comply with them.

Responsibility #13

The responsibility to know and receive training regarding the purpose of administrative case reviews, client service plans, and court processes, as well as any filing or time requirements associated with those proceedings; and the responsibility to actively participate in the foster parent's designated role in these proceedings.

What does this mean? Being an active participant on the foster child's team requires a foster parent receive the training necessary to understand the purpose of client service planning, case reviews and court hearings.

How does FamilyCore help foster parents meet this responsibility?

As a part of PRIDE Pre-Service and the licensing process foster parents are trained on the importance of participating in administrative case reviews, court and any other meetings impacting a child in care in their home. Many foster parents of FamilyCore attend administrative case reviews and court hearings. They are encouraged to do so, particularly if it has a bearing on the case.

The foster parents will also receive information on the purpose of administrative case reviews, client service plans, and court processes annually through the newsletter. Through a team approach, foster parents receive information on how to fulfill their role as an advocate for the children in their home through the administrative case review process, service planning, and court hearings, as well as how to share what they know about a child in their home so that other members of the child welfare team may also advocate for the foster child.

Responsibility #14

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

What does this mean? FamilyCore has an appeal procedure for when a foster parent has not had issues addressed to the foster parent's satisfaction. Foster parents should know what this procedure is and their rights under this procedure.

How does FamilyCore help foster parents meet this responsibility?

All foster parents are given a copy of the DCFS appeal process, as well as a copy of the agency's grievance procedure and can exercise these rights. Foster parents are encouraged to try to work out differences with their foster child's caseworker prior to going to the next level. As part of the training process (Foster/Adopt PRIDE) all foster parents are given a copy of the Foster Parent's Bill of Rights and Responsibilities.

Foster parents also receive The Foster Parent Handbook at the completion of training. The Foster Parent Handbook is an excellent source of information on conflict resolution, appeal processes and rights and responsibilities.

Each foster parent, through the caseworker and the Family Development Specialist, has access to FamilyCore's Grievance Process. If needed, assistance will be given to complete the form and submit it to the proper person.

Responsibility #15

The responsibility to know and understand the importance of maintaining accurate and relevant records regarding the child's history and progress; and the responsibility to be aware of and follow the procedures and regulations of the child welfare agency with which the foster parent is licensed or affiliated.

What does this mean? As a foster parent you become the historian for the child in care. Keeping daily notes and other records for a child is a valuable part of your role as foster parent. It is the foster parent's responsibility to know FamilyCore's expectations on how to maintain a foster child's records.

How does FamilyCore help foster parents meet this responsibility?

Foster parents are given this information as part of the initial training process and updated through Monitoring visits.

Foster parents acknowledge this responsibility when they sign the Responsibilities Statement. This responsibility is also discussed during monitoring visits.

Foster parents are encouraged to create a Foster Child Record Folder for each child in order to keep detailed records of all required information. Foster parents are encouraged to maintain the Child Record Folder and to make it available for use at administrative case reviews and Child Family Team meetings. At the foster parent forums a suggestion was made that training

be provided on how to organize a child's records. Record keeping is covered in the licensing standard 402.26, and a list of the records to be maintained is included here to immediately inform foster parents what records they need to keep.

- The name and birthdate of the child, the legal guardian of the child, religion of the child, and arrangements for education of the child.
- A record of immunizations the child has received; any physical problems, limitations, or allergies the child has; any current recommendations for special medical care.
- The name, address, and telephone number of the child's physician, guardian, and supervision agency.
- A log of medication prescribed and given.
- The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of person to contact in case of emergency.
- The names of persons to whom the child may be released.
- A record of waivers for immunizations, medical examinations and treatment.
- A record and/or receipts for distribution of allowance and clothing funds.
- A record of the emergency evacuation plan and quarterly rehearsals.
- A record of the childcare supervision plan, when required under Section 402.11(c)

Foster parent notes should also be kept as part of the child's record.

The Licensing supervisor will look into getting binders with labeled pocket folders for each foster child in their home

As a part of the monitoring visit provided by the Family Development Specialist, the child record folder will be reviewed. The Family Development Specialist will make suggestions on how to document information to make it more usable by the caseworker and other team members, as well as to support the foster parent's requests for services.

Responsibility # 16

The responsibility to share information, through the child welfare team, with the subsequent caregiver (whether the child's parent or another substitute caregiver) regarding the child's adjustment in the foster parent's home.

What does this mean? Foster parents know important information about a child and their adjustment in their home. When it becomes necessary to move a child, sharing this information is an important way to help make a good transition.

How does FamilyCore help foster parents meet this responsibility?

Foster parents receive training during PRIDE Pre-Service training about the responsibility to share information regarding the child's adjustment in the foster parent's home with the child's parents or another substitute caregiver. This training covers what kinds of information to share

and how to document the information. Portions of the record the foster parent has maintained will be provided to the subsequent caregiver. The Family Development Specialist will facilitate the sharing of the information.

Responsibility #17

The responsibility to provide care and services that are respectful of and responsive to the child's cultural needs and are supportive of the relationship between the child and his or her own family; the responsibility to recognize the increased importance of maintaining a child's cultural identity when the race or culture of the foster family differs from that of the foster child; and the responsibility to take action to address these issues.

What does this mean? It is important for a foster parent to be culturally sensitive and willing to help a child maintain their cultural identity. A foster parent must be willing to learn what is necessary to provide for a child of a different culture, whether it is hair and skin care or cultural activities. A foster parent must be supportive of the child's relationship with their family.

How does FamilyCore help foster parents meet this responsibility?

A significant number of foster children are placed in homes culturally different from the child's birth family. Because of this, training is offered through PRIDE Modules to assist foster parents to understand the culture of the child in their care. The goal is to promote respect for the child's culture and family, and to reduce the possibility of misunderstandings that come from not knowing or being aware of the cultural differences.

FamilyCore supplements the PRIDE Modules by sharing written materials and arranging for presentations from community members on the best ways to support and nurture a child's cultural identity. Staff teach white foster parents proper hair and skin care of children of color, and encourage the foster parents to engage the birth parents, if appropriate, in their child's grooming during visits. Parents are also encouraged to research this information on the internet and network with other foster families.