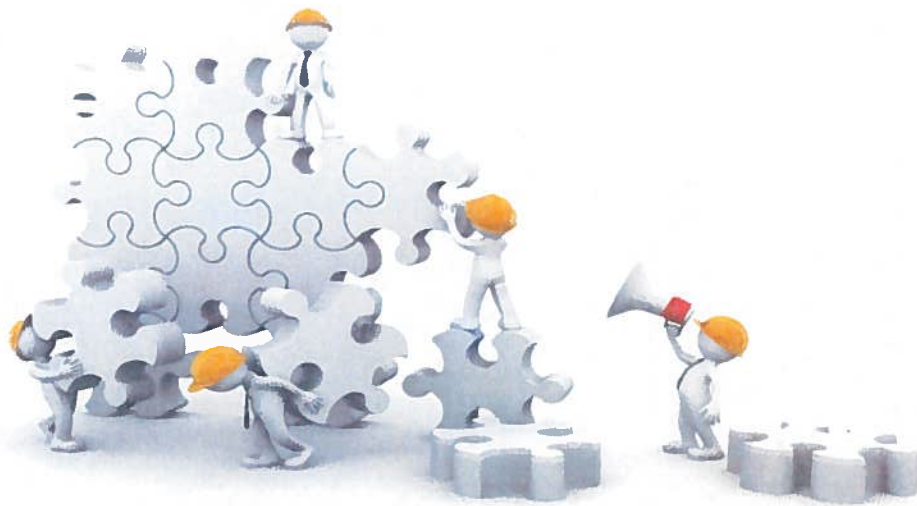


Foster Care Program 2023 Implementation Plan



*Taking on Disabilities
Together*



I.

Annual Report

Annual Report 2022

Foster Parent Input:

Agency held two zoom meetings with foster parents to review agency updates and discuss the foster parent Implementation Plan. Foster parents were informed that additional suggestions for improvements after the meeting were encouraged and to contact the representative, who was hosting the meeting.

1. Comment: There was concerns, with the recent staff turn-over that we continue to make sure new staff are trained on the Implementation Plan, as well as basic dcfs policy & procedure.

- **Response:** The agency continues to train new staff and foster parents every year, on the Implementation Plan. On-going training should be discussed during the caseworker/supervisor monthly meetings. This should limit foster parent frustration, if a worker is more knowledgeable on what to do. However, it was agreed that staff turn-over rate is higher then usual. And the agency is under-staffed.

2. Comment: Grievance procedure was discussed.

- **Response:** The grievance procedure was reviewed by foster parents during the zoom meeting with no noted changes. Everyone agreed during the meeting that the foster parent grievance representative for 2023 will be Dana Mindeman. Dana has been the representative for the last several years. Agency encouraged other foster parents to become the representative. No response.

3. Comment: Most foster parents are comfortable with zoom/virtual training. Some foster parents wanted the face-to face options.

- **Response:** Agency only offered two face-to-face trainings. CPR/1st aid and health and safety training. Our agency relied on the VTC(Virtual Training Center) for additional on-line training. This year the agency will get back to the yearly scheduled training submitted at the beginning of the year.

4. **Comment:** It was suggested last year & again this year that the foster parent annual satisfaction survey be put on a post card, with a stamp, in belief that the agency will get a better response.

- **Response:** The agency will look into this suggestion. However, the agency failed to mail out the satisfaction survey. This survey will go out this year.

5. **Comments:** The worker needs to respect foster parents time when they are running late or need to reschedule. Agency workers need to communicate this through phone contact.

- **Response:** This is common curtesy and should be taking place on a daily basis. A caseworker also suggested this to go both ways.

6. **Comments:** Foster parents need to be more involved in their role, regarding following up on appointments (dental, vision, hearing), and being the child's advocate in school.

- **Response:** Foster parents are responsible for taking the child to dental, vision, & hearing appointments. A copy of the form should be given to the agency caseworker.

7. **Comments:** Agency went over an agreement form. Foster parent suggested to change the form from mother or father, but rather parent 1 and parent 2.

- **Response:** Form was changed.

Direct Service Staff Involvement

Agency sent text correspondence to both foster parents and staff to encourage participation in the 2023 implementation plan meeting. Two meetings was held via Zoom on 10/5/22 & 10/18/22 from 6-7:00 p.m., with participation from both staff and foster parents. The mixture included 13 foster parents and 6 staff, for a total of 19 participates between both meetings. The plan was visible to all during a shared screen on Zoom. Everyone had an opportunity to make changes and ask questions. The agency implementation plan representative contacted individual foster parents and staff directly to encourage additional input in the plan. Contact was made to those who were previous involvement in the plan and could offer input. The agency received suggestions from foster parents on how to strengthen relationships between foster parents and staff, but minimal information on actual changes to the plan were made.

Public Comments

*No public comments were made to the agency this year.

Plan Availability

The plan is made available on the Easterseals website: www.joliet.easterseals.com, and at our front desk. Additional copies of the agency plan is mailed to all foster parents.

Deficiencies

*There were no noted deficiencies.

Grievance Procedure

Develop & review:

Foster parents had an opportunity to review and make changes to the grievance procedures during the two zoom meetings.

Approval:

After review and discussion agency asked if any foster parents would be interested in becoming the grievance representative. Several foster parent suggested the current representation for the upcoming year. There were no objections. There were no changes made to this year's grievance procedure. The agency has an official grievance form which was previously developed by foster parents.

Notification:

Copies of the 2023 Grievance Policy, to include the grievance representative name and phone number Dana Mindeman 815-603-5132, mailed yearly with the Implementation Plan . Additional copies will be made available by contacting the office or by visiting the Easterseals website at www.joliet.easterseals.com.

Revised Rights & Responsibilities

Right#4-updated the payment scale

No changes in Responsibilities

There were no revisions, with the exception of updating the payment scale. Foster parents & caseworker staff felt our agency had a strong plan, but just needed to continue to implement things identified in the plan.

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(Right 1) Dignity and Respect

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

Foster parents at Easterseals are treated with dignity and respect as a team member having expertise in child welfare. A foster parents' input is extremely valuable because our foster parents interact, nurture, advocate and support our children daily. The Service Plan is driven from our foster parents' observations and interactions. This information is included in the assessments of other members of the child and family team. Foster parent suggestions are valued, encouraged, supported, and documented in the service plan. Family Team meetings are held quarterly which allow foster parents to advocate and give input regarding the child. Foster parents are part of the decision making process for the child in their home.

Foster parents are encouraged to complete an anonymous satisfaction survey. The information from the survey is gathered and discussed in a staff meeting. The survey is also available online at www.joliet.easterseals.com. Suggestions are developed and implemented by staff in order to better the agency.

Foster parents are also given information on the grievance policy and are informed of their right to file a grievance as well as the name and number of the foster parent grievance representative.

The foster parent advisory council allows foster parents to be part of the planning committees. The advisory council assists in the planning of activities and events that allows the agency to acknowledge foster parents for their dedication, support, commitment, and leadership.

Caseworker staff are in the foster parent's homes 1 to 3 times a month. Input received during the visits is instrumental in allowing casework staff to document and report to the courts. Foster parents are given visitation logs to be signed by all staff; caseworkers, nurses, behavior analyst etc., as proof that visits are being performed in the home.

Caseworker staff are trained to be considerate and flexible in scheduling appointments with foster parents. Caseworker staff is instructed on the importance of timely call backs to our foster parents.

Foster Parents have access to our 24/7 after hour emergency cell (815) 274-5409.

Home visits, sibling/family visits, counseling/therapy schedules are coordinated to the foster parent preference.

(Right2)-Training

Pre-Service Training:

Training includes 39 hour DCFS Foster Pride/Adopt Pre-service and 6 hours Educational Advocacy. After completing PRIDE Training, potential foster parents are allowed to make an informed decision regarding their desire to continue the licensing process.

Co-Trainer Model

Co-trainer models are used when trainers are available. Co-training consists of the pairing of one foster parent trainer to one staff trainer. Foster parents that are

2. The right to be given standardized pre-services training and appropriate on-going training to meet mutually assessed needs and improve the foster parent's skills.

part of the Co-trainer model offer insight and real life experiences that are deemed to be informational and educational. Foster parents and staff are trained together as trainees, and information is then presented to foster parents for in-service training hours.

Mutual Training Assessments:

Training assessments are completed by both the licensing worker and the foster parent during initial and semi-annual visits. The initial foster home licensing assessment identifies the population and age range the foster parent is interested in accepting. Discussion includes the current amount of hours needed, information on upcoming trainings, and an assessment of children that are currently placed in the home. Training recommendations and suggestions are made based on both the foster parent and licensing input. The yearly training schedule is completed each year, from direct input made by the foster parents.

Assessment for Level of Care:

Foster parents, with children under the agency's traditional contract are required to attend a minimal of four (4) hours of training per year. If it is determined that the child is eligible for specialized care, an additional 12 training hours will be required per year. Foster parents receive information regarding board payments prior to placement. Information regarding levels of care is located in the foster parent handbook. The placement authorization form is given to foster parents for initial placements, and includes the foster parent payment amount.

Training Schedule:

Training needs are assessed by the licensing specialist during semi-annual visits. Discussion includes recommended training, upcoming trainings, and the current hours in the training database. Foster parents are instructed to make contact with the training institute (877- 800- 3393) to obtain a password and to review their current hours in the training database. Foster parents shall complete sixteen (16) hours per year of training when caring for children that requires specialized care and four (4) hours of training per year for children that requires traditional care.

Easterseals foster parents are also informed of and encouraged to attend internal and external trainings and workshops. Foster parents receive emails, written correspondence, and phone calls regarding updated training information. The yearly training schedule is developed from input involving foster parents, caseworker staff, licensing, and additional agency internal supportive services. Additional training is available online www.fosterparenttraining.com, the DCFS Virtual Training Center (VTC) at www.dcfstraining.org/vtc and Infinitec online training, registration is available through Easterseals.

3. The right to be informed of 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.

(Right 3) Supportive Service

Easterseals is the primary child placement agency of children referred from DCFS. Foster parents receive information and assistance through the agency caseworker staff. If Easterseals is unable to link the family to the needed service, the caseworker will help locate outside resources. Foster parents are also given the

DCFS Foster Parent Handbook and the Easterseals Foster Parent Handbook to access appropriate services support. Easterseals 24 hour support, is given to Foster Parents in the agency handbook upon licensing and annually. The Easter seals on-call cell number is 815-274-5409. Updates to the foster parent handbook are made yearly and distributed with the Implementation Plan.

Foster parents receive information detailing emergencies, which are inclusive of: hotline reports, unusual incidents, hospitalization, injuries, runaways, police involvement or absence of the foster parent for 24 hours or longer. Foster parents are instructed to use the agency general business number, 815-741-5531, during normal business hours, Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. If a foster parent or child is at imminent risk of harm, foster parents are instructed to contact the police or placement stabilization (SASS) at 1-800-345-9049.

Also, at the time of placement, foster parents receive the phone number of caseworker staff and the after hour's phone number. The 800 numbers for Guardian Consents and Advocacy are given to the foster family. The abuse hotline #800-25-Abuse, is given to foster parents.

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

(Right 4) Timely Financial Reimbursement

Board Payment:

Monthly board payments occur on the last Friday of the month. Foster parents are provided the Board Payment Rate Schedule in the Foster Parent Handbook which is as follow:

Regular Rate:

<i>Age of child</i>	<i>Board</i>	<i>Clothing</i>	<i>Allowance</i>	<i>Total</i>
0 – 11 months	\$481	\$46	\$17	\$544 Monthly
1 – 4 yrs	\$475	\$51	\$18	\$544 Monthly
5 – 8 yrs	\$525	\$67	\$19	\$611 Monthly
9-11 yrs	\$547	\$79	\$30	\$656 Monthly
12yrs & over	\$513	\$89	\$54	\$656 Monthly

Specialized Rate:

Reference the above chart for clothing & allowance.

Level I.....	\$45.12 Per Day
Level II.....	\$47.35 Per Day
Level III.....	\$50.13 Per Day

Foster parents receive the assessed payment amount on the initial client face sheet which is given to foster parents by casework staff upon initial placements.

Additional Payment Services:

Foster parents may receive an initial emergency voucher for clothing and equipment provided the child comes into care directly from the biological parent. Once the referral is made by caseworker staff, payment can take up to 5 – 10 business days. Foster parents are given two additional options for initial clothing and equipment. Foster parents can shop for the child's clothes with an approved budget amount, and submit the receipts to the caseworker staff for reimbursement. Or foster parent and agency staff will shop together, and the agency will pay for the purchased items at time of checkout.

Foster parents are allowed up to 15 hours of respite per month for specialized children. A flat rate of \$100 for the first child and \$50 for each additional child is the respite payment. The respite provider must be CPR/First Aid Certified and have a background clearance with the agency. Easterseals provides CPR/First Aid training to non-licensed respite providers for a small fee. Foster parents receive prior approval from the agency before respite is performed. Respite approval forms are then submitted monthly. Payments are distributed directly with the foster parent monthly board payment and foster parents are responsible for paying the respite provider.

Camps, sport activities, mileage, school fees, drivers education fee's etc. are submitted to caseworker staff and assessed by the agency within 5 – 10 business days for payment. Graduation expenses/fee's are paid in the sum of \$500. Mileage is paid based on the current contract. Traditional contracts require travel to exceed 200 miles per month and specialized contracts require travel to exceed 400 miles per month. Both are reimbursed a flat rate of \$100 per month.

Foster care clients over the age of 15 will receive monthly personal and clothing allowance payments, directly from the agency. Foster parents are encouraged to help assist clients with direct management of the monies allocated.

Emergency or advanced payment for existing or new children in the program may be given to foster parents. It is explained through the Easterseals "Rules of the Road Training" that the board payments are one month behind the date in which the child is placed in their care. Foster parents are also notified when there is a rate increase provided by the state, agency, or by re-evaluation of the child's needs or disability. Foster parents are given the option of direct deposit which is submitted directly to the agency's business office. Information regarding direct deposit is included in the first board payment issued by the business office with instructions on enrollment.

Assessment for Level of Care:

A recommendation to assess the level of care for children under the "Traditional" contract can be made by the agency. A referral packet is gathered by the caseworker staff to include; doctor, psychologist, and therapist reports, current diagnosis, school I.E.P's (Individual Educational Program) etc. The packet is submitted to the Clinical Intervention to Placement Preservation (CIPP) and a decision is made to either approve or deny the request. Children that are currently under the "Specialized" contract can also be reassessed by the agency. The caseworker staff will discuss the proposed recommendation to the caseworker supervisor for review of a level increase. This information is reviewed by the Director for approval or denial within 30 days. Easterseals currently has three levels of care under the specialized contract.

Payment Resolution:

If a family has a problem with their payment, the business office is notified 815-725-2194. If the business office is unable to answer a foster parent's question, supervisory staff is consulted for resolution. Financial matters within the control of Easterseals are responded to via phone contact within two (2) business days.

Financial matters beyond five (5) days will receive a telephone contact with a resolution time-frame.

(Right 5) Placement Plan

5. The right be provided a clear, written understanding of a placement agency's plan concerning the placement of a child in the foster care home. Inherent in this 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.

Child Service Plan Development:

A service plan is created within 45 days of a child being brought into DCFS custody. This plan is initially development by DCFS staff or agency caseworker staff, with input from foster parents, and reviewed every six (6) months thereafter. Amendments to the plan are submitted by Easterseals caseworker staff, inclusive of foster parents input gathered through home visits, nursing notes, behavior analyst suggestions, and Child & Family Team meetings. Caseworker staff works closely with the foster parent to identify the child's needs. Foster parents provide caseworker staff with information received through participation in individual educational plans (IEP's), medical appointments, phone calls, and direct in-home observations. Foster parents are part of the planning process for parent/child visitation. Input provided by the foster parent helps develop new goals that are in the best interest of the child. Foster parents are provided a copy of the service plan that includes the child's targeted goals and objectives.

Timely Notification:

Foster parents receive notification from their caseworker regarding changes in the service plan. Changes to the service plan can be made based upon the input of the foster parents. Foster Parents are kept informed of administrative cases reviews (ACR's), court, and visitation requirements. Visitation is a team discussion based on the availability of the foster parent, caseworker, and biological parent. All parties input are important in the visitation planning. Foster parents are trained and informed of their right to confidentiality. Foster parents are also informed of the importance of communication between the birth family and foster parent for successful reunification.

Foster Parent Participation:

The foster home initial licensing assessment, caregiver's self-assessment reunification tool, and the caregiver's matching tool, allows the foster parent, caseworker, and licensing specialist to address cultural heritage, foster parents' strengths and their willingness to support a child's relationship with biological parents. Foster parents are educated during the Easterseals "Rules of the Road" training on what their obligations are in the areas of supporting a child's ties to his or her birth family, sibling(s), family visits, etc. The agency's agreement plan is signed by foster parents detailing the expectations of the agency prior to receiving the foster care license. Foster parents are encouraged to engage in activities with the child & biological parents to work toward

reunification. Foster parents are asked to participate in visits by identifying a location, supervising, mentoring, transporting and providing an objective opinion of the visit. The foster parent and biological parent both participate and sign off on the activity log (“Family Reunification Support Service Fee Log”) after the visit is completed. This information is submitted to the caseworker staff for approval. Examples include: birthday parties, medical appointments, school I.E.P’s etc.

(Right 6) Investigation of Alleged Licensing Violations

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 licensing corrective action plan specifically explained and tied to the licensing standards violated.

Foster parents are informed both verbally and in writing when they are subject to a complaint investigation. The investigation procedures are in the DCFS Foster Parent Handbook given to foster families at licensure, presented during Pride and “Rules of the Road” training. Written materials are distributed to foster parents during the licensing process and at trainings. Procedures on allegations of sexual abuse, physical abuse, or child endangerment and the decision to remove a child are reviewed. Foster Parent Training on unusual incidents reports (UIR’S) include the following: complaints, response time frame, parent rights, investigation completion time frame, and informal reviews.

Licensing Complaint Investigation Process is as follows:

Within 2 Business Days

The licensing worker will complete an unannounced visit to the foster home. Foster parents are then informed of their right to have a person of their choice during the investigation as a witness or an advocate. If the person of choice is not available, foster parents have at least 4 hrs to have them present. The witness/advocate must agree to DCFS rules of confidentiality. Any person who is a witness/advocate will not be notified of the outcome of the licensing investigation.

Within 30 Calendar Days of the Complaint

The investigation should be completed within 30 calendar days of the complaint, but can be extended another 30 days upon written notice to the foster parents.

15 Days after Completing the Investigation

DCFS or private agency must make a formal determination of whether or not a licensing violation has occurred.

5 Calendar Days after DCFS Determination

DCFS or the private agency will send the foster parents being investigated a certified letter summarizing the findings of the licensing investigation.

Foster Parent: Informal review of the Decision:

If the foster parent disagrees with the licensing investigation decision, he/she may make a written request for an informal supervisory review of the decision within 10 days of the postmarked date of the letter. The licensing worker, the supervisor, and the foster parent are required to attend this meeting. The foster parent may bring an attorney or representative to this meeting. Foster parents may share additional information at the meeting which they believe to be relevant.

After the informal supervisory review, if the licensing decision is overturned, the licensing process stops. If the decision is not overturned, there are several possible outcomes and enforcement actions will proceed.

- ✚ The telephone numbers of the Services Appeal Unit- (312) 814-5540
- ✚ Advocacy Office- (800) 232-3798
- ✚ Office of Inspector General- (800) 722-9124

These numbers are provided in the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services Foster Parent Handbook and the Office of Inspector General brochures.

(Right 7) Information on the Children in Placement

Information Given at Time of Placement:

7. The right at the 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.

Easterseals caseworker staff receives yearly training on information to be disclosed to foster parents. Discussion includes sharing of information, documentation, confidentiality, and review of the Easterseals "Satisfaction Survey" submitted by foster parents.

Easterseals foster parents are given medical, social, behavioral, and any need to know child specific information to provide care to children placed in their home by their caseworker. All relevant information Easterseals has regarding a child is presented to the foster parents on the first day of placement. This includes the Authorization for Placement form, which is also referred to as the, 906. Foster parents are given an outline and a record keeping system for information pertinent to the child in care. This is a matter of policy that enables foster parents to be aware of behavior, medical, or other concerns that will occur during the child's time in placement. Caseworker staff is required to document the sharing of child information in the case record.

Caseworker Accountability:

Caseworker staff is responsible for submitting and sharing information regarding a child. Follow-up on information given to foster parents by caseworker staff is reviewed in supervision. The caseworker supervisor is responsible for confirming the foster parent is in receipt of all necessary documentation. Information that is submitted requires a signature from, supervisory staff, caseworker staff, and foster parent. Foster parents are informed in writing that if through reasonable efforts and an extended period of time, the family has not received requested information from their

8. *The right to be given information concerning a child 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.*

caseworker the foster parent should contact the supervisor. In addition, foster parents are informed of their right to file a grievance.

(Right 8) How Information is Shared

Sharing of Information with Caregiver:

The “Sharing of information with the caregiver” form is a one page summary sheet with a brief over-view of client information that is given to foster parents upon initial placement. The form is inclusive of: child’s medical, educational, service plan, and behavioral information. The form also includes the Easterseals after hour emergency cell, upcoming court dates, child’s name, date of birth, permanency goal, and other pertinent information needed to care for the child. This information is received by the foster parent from the agency and requires signatures from the caseworker and foster parent, and is reviewed by the caseworker supervisor. Foster parents are trained in Pre-Service Pride on information received at initial placement.

Medical History:

Upon initial placement foster parents received, medical and insurance cards, information regarding communicable diseases in writing, and at least 5 days of medication. If applicable, a 30 day script for psychotropic medication is given to the foster parent, which allows the foster parent 30 days to locate a psychiatrist in their area.

Educational History:

All pertinent educational information regarding a child will be copied and submitted to the foster parent at initial placement. All information submitted will be recorded on the “sharing of information with the caregiver” form that must be signed by the foster parent, and caseworker staff.

Service Plan:

Foster parents will receive, in writing, information regarding a child’s current visitation plans, which will include how often and how long visitation will take place. Foster parents will also receive amendments/revisions of a child’s case history, including how the child came into care, legal status, permanency goal, placement history, and reasons for placement history, and reasons for placement changes. This information is located on the “sharing of information with the caregiver” form.

Caseworker staff are trained on how to submit to the foster parent a copy of the social history. Caseworker staff have been instructed to review the document and omit names and other confidential information. The legal status and permanency goal for the child is located on the “sharing of information with the caregiver” form. Caseworker staff will submit a copy of the placement history to foster parent, which includes a brief statement for reason of placement change, and excludes information that identifies, or reveals the location of previous foster or relative placement.

Relevant Background Information:

A brief background history will be documented in writing on the “sharing of information with the caregiver” form. Detailed background history is located in the social history which is updated every six months. Information about a child is shared, both verbally and in writing. Foster parents are reminded that information received is confidential.

Staff Accountability for Sharing of Information:

Staff receives yearly training on Policies and Procedures at the beginning of each year, presented by supervisory staff. This information is inclusive of the “sharing of information with the caregiver” form. Caseworkers are responsible for completing the “sharing of information with the caregiver” form and submitting all pertinent information to the foster parent. The caseworker supervisor reviews the signature form required from both foster parent and caseworker as proof that the form has been completed. Caseworker staff are instructed to make a documented note in the case record. On-going training on the implementation of this policy is received at the monthly foster care team meetings and during supervision.

(Right 9) Notifications of Meetings

Foster Parents are Notified & Encouraged to Participate in Meetings:

Easterseals foster parents are informed in writing and encouraged to participate in administrative case reviews (ACR’s), child & family team meetings, staffings, court hearings, and clinical intervention to placement preservation (CIPP) meetings. Notifications of administrative case reviews (ACR’s), staffings, or any meetings pertaining to a child in foster care are given to the foster parent within a two week time frame. Easterseals caseworkers are required to forward decisions made by the agency and courts either in writing or verbally, to include phone calls by caseworker staff, family team meetings, and discussion during monthly home visits.

Foster Parent Input:

Foster care clients have a service plan that allows foster parents to give input on the goals and objectives of the child. Participation and input is given by foster parents to caseworker staff during monitoring visits that are performed in the foster home. This discussion is on-going through phone contact, emails, letter correspondence, and child and family team meetings. Foster parents are encouraged to communicate areas of concern with their caseworker, understanding that their input is important in the child’s plan and will be given full consideration. Foster parents are provided a copy of the service plan by caseworker staff.

The service plan is on-going and is developed from:

- Foster parent direct observation of the child (daily home routines, behavior after a visit, behavior around other child/animals etc.)
- Service providers’ feedback (teachers, therapist, physicians, etc.)
- Home visits
- Data gathering (emails, phone calls, etc.)

Foster parents are required to complete Education Advocacy training and are encouraged to attend all scheduled Individual Educational Plan (IEP’s) meetings. Education Advocacy training is required in order for foster parents

9. The right to be notified of schedule meetings and staffing concerning the foster parent child in order to actively participate in the planning and decision-making process regarding the child; the right to provide input concerning the plan of the service for the child and to have the input given full consideration in the same manner as information presented by any other professional on the team; and the right to communicate with each other professionals who with

10. *The right to be given, in a timely and consistent manner, any information a case worker has regarding the child and child's family which is pertinent to the care and needs of the child and to be making 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 and providing care to the child in order to protect the rights of the child's family. When positive relationships exist between the foster parents and the child's family, the child's family may consent to disclosure of additional information.*

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 a 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.*

to be educated on how to advocate for their child in care. Additionally, foster parents are advocates for children in care through the schools, medication management appointments, court, visits performed with biological parents, etc.

(Right 10) Information Regarding the Child and Family

Disclosure of information:

Disclosure of information concerning the child's family shall be limited to the information that is essential for understanding the child's needs and providing care to the child in order to protect the rights of the child's family. Caseworker staff will work diligently to obtain consent to disclose information on the natural parents background when a perspective adoptive parent is identified. Once the natural parent agrees to provide consent, the caseworker and adoption specialist will work to gather any pertinent information needed to understand the child's history.

Easterseals caseworker staff is trained to child welfare best practices through agency and DCFS trainings upon hire. Specific training is provided on the, who, what, when, where, and how on the sharing of information. Examples of Easterseals Caseworker training topics include, Code of Ethics, Communication, Confidentially, Consents, and HIPPA.

Upon acceptance into a foster home, the licensing representative will provide the expandable file to the caseworker for the foster parent to file the child's profile summary, medical, and educational information and the necessary background information that brought the child into the Child Welfare System.

During the caseworkers monthly visit, staffings, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), or court hearings, Easterseals foster parents are provided with pertinent information regarding their foster child in order to assist them in their care of the child and the preparation of the child for his/her permanency goal. A health work passport is given to foster parents at the time of placement, which is a current update on the child's medical report & diagnosis.

(Right 11) Child Movement-Replacement

(14) Day Notice:

Agency and foster parent sign a Contractual Agreement upon licensure, consenting to the fourteen (14) day notification rule. Both agency and foster parents are given at least two weeks' notice, both verbally and in writing, prior to the removal of a child from their home, unless the removal is court ordered or the child is determined to be at imminent risk of harm.

In addition to the notice, a staffing is scheduled to either plan for discharge or support current placement. The following includes steps to making an appeal:

Step 1:Filing an Appeal

Foster parent have 45days from the date of "Notice of Decision" to file an appeal. Ten calendar days, when filing an emergency appeal. The appeal letter is inclusive of:

1. Agency name

2. Child's name, ID, and Date of Birth
3. Caseworker information (Name, Phone)
4. Foster parent request (mediation, fair hearing, emergency review)
5. Briefly list the issue
6. Foster parent information (Name, address, phone)

Service appeal letters are sent to:

Service Appeal-312-814-5540
DCFS Administrative Hearing Unit
310 S. Michigan, 10th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604

Step 2: Mediation

Requests for mediation is resolved within 30 calendar days. Mediation is optional and informal. Foster parent has 15 days after mediation to accept or reject the mediation agreement. If an agreement is not resolved, foster parent may request a fair hearing instead, or at any time during the mediation process.

Step 3: Fair Hearing

Foster parent may decide not to do, step 2 (mediation), and move to step 3, fair hearings. Fair hearing is a formal process within 45 calendar days of the filing date of appeal. If an agreement is not reached the Administrative Law Judge will recommend to the DCFS Director how the issue should be resolved.

Step 4: Final Decision

DCFS Director will issue a final decision within 90 days from the filing date of the appeal.

Removals are done with careful consideration of the child and the effects of the transition. Staff develops a plan for the best interest of the child with long-term consideration and a least disruptive setting. Foster parents receive training on filing an appeal in the Easter Seals "Rules of the Road Training".

(Right 12) Court Hearing Notification

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; and the right to intervene in court proceedings or to seek mandamus under Juvenile Court Act of 1987.

Foster parents are informed of court hearings that affect their foster children, through written notification, in-person, and/or phone calls. Foster parents are also notified when they are expected to appear on behalf of a child in their care. This notification is done by letter, in-person home visits, and phone. Easterseals requires the caseworker to provide written notification to the foster parent 30 days prior to the court date. When Easterseals has not received prior notice of a court date, Easterseals will contact the foster parent by phone, upon receipt of the pertinent information.

Caseworker staff is required to discuss and document upcoming court dates on the Easterseals Home Visit Report. This report requires a signature from foster parent and caseworker staff as proof of the visit. The caseworker submits the monthly Home Visit Reports to their supervisor. The caseworker then documents this information in a case note.

Easterseals court training provides foster parents with information on their right to be heard in court. The training is a helpful resource to prepare foster parents on what to expect, and their role as a foster parent in court.

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

(Right 13) Placement Option for children Re-entering Care

Placement History:

The former Easterseals foster parent is given first consideration for placement of a child re-entering the foster care system. The child's best interest is the primary placement factor when making placement decisions. A placement history log allows caseworker staff to keep track of the number of placements as well as time frames in which a child is placed. A placement history summary is given to foster parents as part of the intake process when a child is initially placed in the home.

Determining Best Interest:

Best interest is determined by discussion with the foster parents, caseworker staff, additional support staff, and the child re-entering into care. Foster parents are

informed of any current behaviors, in order to make an informed decision. Placements decisions are based on the following data:

- Would the child like to return back to his/her previous placement?
- Any current concerns in the foster home (complaint, investigations, capacity issues, evaluation of current children in the home, etc).
- Current behaviors of the child being placed
- Is the foster parent interested in accepting the child back in the home for placement?

14. The right to have timely access to the child placement agency, 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.

(Right 14) Timely Access to Service Appeal System

Foster parents receive information on the Service Appeal procedures in the DCFS distributed Foster Parent Handbook, Easterseals Core, and "Rule's of the Road" Training. Foster parents are also informed of their right to an appeal and the appeal process, prior to removal of a child for imminent risk of harm and in a written 14 day notice.

Right to File a Grievance:

The implemented grievance procedure of having a foster parent representative enhances a harassment/retaliation-free environment when filing an appeal. The Grievance procedure is as follow:

Informal (STEP 1)

❖ **Casework/Licensing Staff**

Prior to the Foster Parent filing a written grievance, the foster parent and caseworker and/or licensure staff are encouraged to meet in an attempt to resolve the law violation(s). The grievance representative may be asked to participate in the informal meeting.

The informal meeting will be documented in a case note and placed in the licensing file. If the situation is not resolved during the informal meeting then a formal grievance is filed.

Formal Grievance (STEP 2)

❖ **Immediate Supervisor**

The foster parent or foster parent representative shall submit within 10 business days from the date of the informal meeting a written grievance to the immediate supervisor. The content of the grievance shall contain a brief statement of the violation and the specific law violation. The immediate supervisor shall submit a written response to the foster parent within five business days after the grievance is presented. The grievance representative, foster parent, licensing, caseworker supervisor, and caseworker staff shall be a part of this meeting.

❖ **Director of Residential & Social Service, Vanessa Hunter (STEP 3)**

If the grievance is not resolved it shall be presented in writing by the foster parent representative within five business days from the response. Within 10 business days after the grievance is presented the Intermediate Supervisor shall meet, discuss, and attempt to resolve the grievance with the Foster Parent. The Intermediate Supervisor shall send a written response within five business days following the meeting.

❖ **President, Debbie Condotti (Step 4)**

If the grievance is not resolved, it shall be presented in writing to the Agency Head within five days. Within ten days of the receipt of the written grievance, the parties shall meet and hold discussions in an attempt to resolve the grievance. The Agency Head shall submit the written response to the foster parent within five business days following the date of the meeting.

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

If the foster parent is not satisfied with the Agency Head's decision, the complaint about the law violation should be directed to the DCFS Advocacy Office at 800-232-3798. Foster parents are also informed of their right to file an appeal with DCFS 312-814-5540, free from harassment and retaliation.

(Right 15) Foster Parent Hotline

Easterseals foster parents are informed of the foster parent Advocacy number, 800-232-3798. The Advocacy number is listed in the DCFS and Easterseals Foster Parent Handbook. In addition, brochures and yearly training is available at the Easter Seals office, through the "rules of the road" training. Foster parents are encouraged to use the advocacy office as a resource if the foster parent is not satisfied with the agency's response. Contacting the advocacy office allows foster parents to receive higher consumer satisfaction and have access to impartial feedback.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) monitors and investigates misconduct. Brochures and yearly training is available at the Easterseals office and through the "Rules of the Road" training. Additional information is located on the DCFS website www.illinois.gov/dcfs.

Office of Inspector General Locations:

2240 W Ogden
Chicago, Illinois 60612
Telephone: 312 433 3000
Fax: 312 433 3032

4 West Old State Capital Plaza 8th floor
Springfield, Illinois 62701
Telephone: 1-800-729-9124

Responsibilities

1-17

(Responsibility 1) (16) Open Communication

The Child Welfare Team:

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

Foster parents receive one time a month visit for traditional clients or three times a month visits for specialized clients to discuss and openly communicate concerns, feedback, and questions regarding the child. The Easterseals “Rules of the Road” training details examples of things that should be shared, and with whom. Foster Parents are trained on the importance of documentation and reporting. Foster parents are responsible for sharing information regarding a child in their care with other members of the Child Welfare Team. This may include information about medical and psychological adjustments, school reports, family/sibling visits, unusual incidents, or information on any changes or experiences that have an impact on the child. When concerns are reported to Easterseals, the child welfare team will assist the parent in coordinating services necessary to resolve the issue. Caseworker home visit data sheet requires a date and signature by both foster parent and caseworker staff. This information is discussed in monthly supervision and submitted to the case worker supervisory for review.

(Responsibility 2) (17) Confidentiality

The Practice of Confidentiality:

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

Confidentiality is a part of the Pride Training curriculum and is practiced daily within our agency. Confidentiality is a primary topic in the Easterseals “Rules of the Road” training. Easterseals yearly training schedule offers training that focus strictly on confidentiality. Confidentiality is of high priority in Easter Seals Code of Ethics and HIPPA compliance. Unless written consent is obtained from the guardian, information is not released.

The safe-guarding of records is another essential component in the Confidentiality Policy. Additional resources regarding confidentiality, DCFS handbooks, brochures, etc, are available in the office.

(Responsibility 3) (18) Advocating for Children in Care

Educational Advocate:

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

Foster Parents are trained as educational advocates for the children and are required to attend school staffings. Educational Advocacy training is available through DCFS and is mandatory for initial licensing and every four years thereafter (licensing renewal).

Court Training:

Easterseals training schedule includes court training as well as training information regarding service appeals. Informational brochures on how to file a service appeal are available in the office and during training sessions.

Additional Training:

Easterseals foster parents are trained and instructed to keep on-going progress notes of daily activities as a part of the record keeping procedure. The "Rules of the Road" training addresses the importance of documentation. Foster parents are informed in writing and are encouraged to participate in staffings, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), Integrated Assessment (IA), Court Hearings, and Clinical Intervention to Placement Preservation (CIPP), and case conferences, through phone calls, verbally, during home visits, and emails.

(Responsibility 4) (19) Treating Children & Families with Dignity, Respect, & Consideration

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

Initial & Ongoing Training:

Easterseals caseworker and licensure staff provide monthly quality assurance and discussion with the foster parent on their responsibility to treat children in care and the children's family with dignity, respect and consideration. Foster parents are trained on dignity and respect during the Pre-service training and the discussion is on-going through caseworker staff visits. Training on this topic is done by the agency at the beginning of each year.

Monitoring by Staff:

Caseworker staff are instructed to speak with children, in private, for a one-on-one discussion during each contact. Biological parents are given a copy of their rights at initial placement of the child. Caseworker staff provides on-going education to the foster parent as it relates to the child's family and the minor, to be treated with dignity and respect. Foster parents are informed that when reunification is the goal, biological parents retain some rights. Examples: visitation, religious beliefs, cultural foods, hair restrictions, birth names etc. Caseworker staff are trained on, and responsible for ensuring violations do not occur.

Supporting Reunification:

Foster parents are responsible for working with the team to develop a visitation schedule, maintaining a relationship with the child's biological parent, encouraging religious attendance in the child's own faith, keeping a child connected to his/her ethnicity, helping develop a life book, and the overall support of reunification.

Foster parents are informed of the status/goal of the child before placement and throughout the time of placement. Foster parents are asked to help work with staff and the child for return home goals and/or other permanency outcomes.

(Responsibility 5) (20) Foster Parent Strengths & Weaknesses

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.*

Placement Decisions Based on Strengths:

The Caregiver Matching Tool is used to help determine appropriate placement of a child based on the foster parent strengths. The caregiver tool is completed by both the caseworker staff & foster parent together. The caretaker matching tool allows caseworkers to determine the characteristics and profile of the child and foster parent. This matching tool also helps evaluate if a foster parent needs additional support and training. Information is reported to the licensing worker, who helps assist in training based on the child in the home, and additional assessment needs of the foster parent.

Foster parenting requires self-awareness; a demonstration of a personal understanding of self, and knowledge of personal strengths and deficiencies. Placements are identified based on the caregiver's strengths and best interest of the child. The decision making process is based on the information gathered from the licensing assessment home study and the agency's Child Welfare Team. Caseworker staff is responsible for communicating, observing, documenting and reporting information regarding both the child and foster parent. Feedback is provided to foster parents of their strengths and deficiencies.

Supportive Services:

Supportive Services include, daycare and/or after school programs for working foster parents, respite providers, and agency supports (behavior analyst, anger management, mentoring, counseling, and nursing services). Discussion regarding supports is reviewed and documented during the initial licensing process. Additional supportive services recommendations are made to accommodate the child in placement.

(Responsibility 6) (21) Support Groups

Foster Parent Networking:

The Easterseals Child Welfare Team encourages foster parents to join Foster Parent Support/Networking groups:

- DCFS Monthly Support Meetings
- DCFS Conferences
- Agency Advisory Council
- Agency Foster Parent Support Groups

Discussion regarding outside affiliations and internal networking is presented in support group meetings. Foster parents that attend outside affiliations or external workshops are allowed to discuss any updates, changes, events, activities, during the support group meetings. External affiliations help strengthen the agency by providing information that is informative and helpful for the growth of the agency. On-going correspondence is sent by the agencies licensure staff to encourage participation. Foster parents are encouraged to take classes offered by DCFS in order to be informed on up-dates that involve the child welfare system. Easterseals foster parent support groups are provided as a way of communicating with foster families.

The agency's Director attends foster parent support group meetings quarterly for an open discussion on foster parents needs, concerns, suggestions, feedback, and review of the foster parent satisfaction survey. The Agency's

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.*

Director has an open door policy. Foster parents can contact the agency's Director by phone, email, or walk-in.

7. The responsibility to assess the foster parents on-going individual training needs and take actions to those needs.

(Responsibility 7) (22) Foster Parent Training Needs

Developing a Training Schedule Based on Needs:

Annually, the agency requests training suggestions and feedback from foster parents and staff. The yearly training schedule is submitted at the beginning of each year based on input received from both foster parents and staff. Foster parents are required to participate in training throughout the year. The foster parents receive information regarding classes, seminars, etc. that are specific to the child's needs in their care.

Information and feedback is received by the foster parent, caseworker staff, behavior specialist, and nursing staff with suggested training needs based on current placements. Training needs are reviewed by the licensing worker and foster parent during semi-annual visits. The licensing worker reviews current training logs of each foster parent and calculates the current training hours against the amount needed before the next scheduled visit. A recommendation for training hours is discussed with the foster parent. Foster parents are reminded to complete credit approval forms when attending training not approved by DCFS, in order to receive appropriate training credit.

8. The responsibility to develop and assist in implementing strategies to prevent placement disruption, 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 member of the foster family if preventive strategies fail and placement disruptions occur.

(Responsibility 8) (23) Strategies to Prevent Placement Disruption

Identifying the Need for Help:

Caseworker staff performs in-home visits to discuss and receive input from the foster parent on the progress of the child. Based on the information gathered from in-home visits, caseworker staff assess if the child is at risk of a placement disruption. On-going documentation of a child's daily activity and supportive services from the agency's clinical team are an important part of our preventive approach to placement disruptions. The agency behavior analyst, nurses, and professional staff are available to foster parents, to help prevent placement disruptions.

Available Supports:

The DCFS Placement Stabilization/System of care (SOC) 1 800 345 9049 services is made available to families in emergency situations. Foster parents may also be advised to take advantage of respite services to prevent burnout. Following are a list of additional agency supports:

- ✦ Emergency After Hour Cell
- ✦ Respite Service
- ✦ Placement Stabilization
- ✦ Caseworker Staff Assistance
- ✦ Behavior Analyst
- ✦ Counseling Service

Foster parents are required to give a written and verbal 14 day notice once all strategies to preserve a placement have been exhausted.

Training:

Training is provided to families to stabilize a child through the agency's clinical staff inclusive of the behavior analyst and anger management services. Foster parents are trained on placement disruptions during in-service PRIDE training and the agency's "Rules of the Road" training.

(Responsibility 9) (24) Impact of Foster Parenting

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.

Methods to Recognize & Minimize Stress:

Discussions between caseworker staff and foster parents are important in order to support and develop a better understanding of our families. Home visits address changes in family household, work schedules, and the foster parent ability to cope with the current children that are placed in the home. Discussion on how an individual foster parent is able to recognize stress, and techniques used to relieve stress are discussed and documented on the initial foster home assessment. Training on how to minimize stress is available through DCFS, Module #9 – Managing the Impact of Placement on your Family and Easter Seals "Rules of the Road".

Respite:

A total of 15 hours of respite per month is available for each family who has a child that is on the agency's specialized contract. Foster parents are allowed to choose a respite provider who agrees to perform respite in the foster home, submit to a background check, and have current CPR/First Aid on file. Forms are submitted at the end of each month and payment is issued in the foster parent monthly board payment.

Foster parents with children under the agency's traditional contract are also encouraged to take respite. Payment for service is the foster parent's responsibility. Advance notice is required when a foster parent requests the agency to locate a licensed foster parent as their respite provider. Foster parents may also identify a licensed foster parent from another agency. Approval must be completed before respite is performed.

Deciding not to Accept Additional Placements:

A Non-Active Status Request is defined as a foster parent's decision to not accept placements. Easterseals encourages foster parents to complete the Non-Active Status Request form to avoid burn-out or when a decision is made by the foster parent to not accept children until further notice.

Easterseals offers the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services to our foster parents as well as staff. Through this program, foster parents and staff receive up to two free counseling services.

(Responsibility 10) (25) Promote Foster Parent Positively

Easterseals foster parents are encouraged to acknowledge and promote the rewards and benefits of foster parenting. Understanding the positive and negative impact of foster care is important. A foster parent responsibility is to

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.

be the role model for parenting. Many of Easterseals' foster parents are also encouraged to speak at local functions, churches, or to the media regarding the rewards and benefits of being a foster parent.

Annually, Easterseals has a Telethon that features and showcases all programs. Several Foster Parents participate by telling their story publicly through a televised interview focusing on the benefits of foster parenting. The agency's best marketing tool is "word of mouth" as foster parents continue to recruit other parents. The idea of highlighting the positive aspects of foster parenting is encouraged and promoted to all Easterseals parents. Training on public relations is made available yearly through the Easterseals training schedule.

(Responsibility 11) (26) Roles, Rights, & Responsibilities of Child Welfare Team

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

Co-Training Model:

The Easterseals "Rules of the Road" training is provided yearly to foster parents as a Co-Trainer model. The training is an overview of the caseworker and foster parent role, including foster parent rights & responsibilities. Training regarding this topic is also addressed in the Pre-Service Pride training. Information on "Foster Parent Role" is available in the DCFS handbook. Additionally, foster parent training addresses the role of a foster parent, working as a member of the professional team, the foster child, and the biological family.

Participation in Team Meetings:

Foster parents receive written correspondence encouraging participation in Child & Family Team Meetings, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), and Individual Educational Plans (I.E.P's). Foster parents have an opportunity to discuss and advocate for the child placed in their home.

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 neglects and applicable administrative rules and procedures governing investigations of those allegations.

Foster Parent Voice within the Agency's Management:

The advisory council allows foster parents to have a voice in the agency's management organization. Agency support group meetings give foster parents the opportunity to network with other foster parents in the agency, voice ideas, complaints, and provide suggestions for improvement. Foster parents are encouraged to complete the anonymous satisfaction survey. The survey is gathered yearly, reviewed by the Director, and discussed in a staff management meeting & foster parent support group meetings.

(Responsibility 12) (27) Mandated Reported Responsibility

Foster parents are trained initially during Pride training and provided annual training on reporting abuse and neglect. DCFS website offers an online mandated reporter training, www.dcfstraining.org. A foster parent must report to the hotline any suspected abuse or neglect of a child, even if he/she is unsure about it. Acknowledged and signed statements of the mandated reporting forms are on file.

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.*

Foster parents receive training on rules, regulations, and rights when an allegation has been made against them. This information is presented in the "Rules of the Road" Training. Additional training is provided by the agency in the yearly training schedule to include: Time frames of an investigation, the difference between stand alone & concurrent investigations, the right to have an advocate, how to file an appeal etc.

(Responsibility 13) (28) Administrative Case Review and Court Hearing

Training on the Importance of Participation:

Foster parents are trained during the initial Pre-service Pride training, rules of the road training, and additional on-going training, on the importance of active participation in administrative case reviews (ACR's), court hearings, service plans, and all staffings' for the child placed in their home. Foster parents are informed of court hearings and administrative case reviews through written notification, in-person, and/or phone calls. Foster parents are encouraged to maintain a relationship with the Guardian Ad Litem (GAL), and Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) to help insure that best interest of the minor is being addressed. Discussion with the GAL and CASA, and court attendance is encouraged to address the status of the child in placement and to be advocates.

Taking an Active Role:

Foster parent's role in the planning process plays a signification part in a child's permanency goal. Information received from foster parents is a direct observation of the child's daily activities. Foster parents are considered to be part of the team and are encouraged to be continuous advocates for the child in care by sharing information about the child and his/her progress. Foster parents are encouraged to participate in the client service plan, even if they do not agree with parts of it. The foster parent must submit their assessments, observations, etc. to the child welfare team and the court to promote a successful and productive permanency goal.

(Responsibility 14) (29) Appeal Systems

Easterseals provides training on the appeals procedure, which gives foster parents the knowledge to be able to initiate an appeal within Easterseals or within DCFS in a correct and timely manner. Foster parents receive training to understand his/her rights in any given situation and to know the policy for addressing their grievances to administration. DCFS Office of Inspector General brochures are used during training to explain the appeal procedure.

Annually, foster parents provide input and direction to the grievance policy and procedures. This year foster parent Grievance Representative is: Dana Mindeman – (815-630-5132).

(Responsibility 15) (30) Accurate & Complete Records

Training on the Importance of Complete Records:

Easterseals provides training on the importance of accurate record keeping. Additional information is discussed during the initial Pre-Service Pride

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

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.*

training and is part of the 402 licensing standards. Review of files and accurate record keeping is monitored by the licensing staff during semi-annual visits.

Written Expectations for Record Keeping

Foster parents receive training that includes new DCFS policies, procedures, updated forms, and information on how to use the agency's expandable folder for the child in their home. The foster parent will keep a file on each child in care containing the following:

1. Name & date of birth of the child, the legal guardian of the child, religion of the child, and arrangements for education of the child.
2. Record of immunization the child has received; any physical problems, limitations, or allergies the child has; any current recommendations for special medical care.
3. The name, address, and telephone number of child's physician, guardian, and supervising agency.
4. Log of medications prescribed and given.
5. Names, address, and telephone numbers of persons to contact in case of emergency.
6. Names and persons to whom the child may be released.
7. A record of waivers for immunizations, medical examinations, and treatment.
8. Record and/or receipts for distribution of allowance and clothing funds.
9. Record of the emergency evacuation plan and quarterly rehearsals.
10. Record of the child care supervision plan.
11. Copy of the CFS-592, Overnight Visit Arrangements that shall be kept for the duration of the visit.
12. Copy of any CFS-432, Guardian's Consent for Out of State Travel, or extended trips.

Agency Provided Folder:

Each foster family is required to keep a folder on each foster child in their home. The folder is given to the family upon placement of a child by the agency. The family is then reminded on how information should be gathered for the folder. Foster parents are first taught how to use the expandable folder during the Easter Seals records training. Additionally, if a child is moved from a foster home their folder must be moved with them.

(Responsibility 16) (31) Sharing information with Subsequent Caregiver

Training:

Training regarding the sharing of information is discussed in the Pre-Service Pride training and Easterseals "Rules of the Road" training.

The sharing of information is an important part of the child welfare system. It helps maintain a consistent routine, when possible, for the child in care. The goal when sharing information with other members of the team is to reduce disruption when transitioning a child to a new home environment. Foster parents may be asked to meet with the subsequent caregiver and help assist in

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 parents home.

17. The responsibility to provide care and services that are respectful of and responsive to the child's cultural needs and 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.

planning for the child's future. During a child's transition the caseworker is responsible for collecting the child's file from the foster parent. The file should provide noted documentation, and additional information that will help the new caregiver.

(Responsibility 17) (32) Cultural Sensitivity & Supportive Services

Training:

Cultural diversity awareness is addressed in Pre-Service Pride training and throughout the licensing process. Foster parents learn in "Pre-Service Pride" the importance of assisting their foster child in preparing a life book, inclusive of pictures, cultural icons etc.

Easterseals offers an in-service multi-cultural training class to better understand cultural sensitivity. DCFS offers additional in-service trainings for discussion on cultural awareness and supportive relationships, inclusive of; Module # 5) Supporting relationships between children & families, Module # 7) Promoting children's personal & cultural identity, and the importance of "Reunification". Foster parents learn about the idea of shared parenting. Shared parenting was developed to include biological parents in; holiday's and birthday celebrations, medical, educational, religious or social needs, preparing a meal, and other family activities.

Internal & External Resources:

Discussion between the foster parent and licensing staff addresses the importance of supporting a child's ties to his or her biological family. The licensing assessment deals with the foster parent willingness to accept children of a different race, culture, and religion. The assessment identifies ways the foster parent is willing to preserve a child's culture. The "Family Reunification Support Special Service Fee Log" provides reimbursement to foster parents for shared parenting activities and supportive services. Foster parents are taught and encourage to include the child's culture in daily routines, inclusive of: books, cultural museums, parades, community events, food, etc

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Information Disclosure/Sharing	8&10/ Rights & 16/ Responsibility	8,9,10,11,24
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Know Child Welfare System	11/ Responsibility	21,22
Licensing Investigations	6/ Rights	6,7
Maintain Accurate Records	15/ Responsibility	23,24
Mandated Reporter	12/ Responsibility	22
Notification of Scheduled Meetings	9/ Rights	9,10
Payments	4/ Rights	3,4
Placement Changes	11/ Rights & 4,8/ Responsibility	11,12,17,19,20
Placement Information	5/ Rights	5,6
Promote Foster Care Positively	10/ Responsibility	21
Share Information	16/ Responsibility	24
Strategies to Avoid Placement Disruptions	8/ Responsibility	19,20
Strengths & Limitations	5/ Responsibility	18
Support Services	3/ Rights & 5, 9/ Responsibility	3,18,20,21
Training	2/ Rights & 7/ Responsibility	1,2,3, 19
Visits, Parent/Child & Sibling	5/ Rights & 4/ Responsibility	5,6,17

Attachments:



Training Schedule



Names of Involved Parties



Endorsements Signatures



Grievance Procedure



Grievances Filed

Training Schedule 2023

January

Topic: Implementation Plan Meeting

Date: January 26, 2023

Time: 6:00p.m.-8:00p.m. (Co-Trainer Model)

Location: 991 Essington Road, Joliet, IL 60435 or Virtual Zoom

February

Topic: Foster Parent Support Group Meeting/Bridging the Communication Gap

Date: February 23, 2023

Time: 6:00p.m-8:00p.m.

Location: 991 Essington Road, Joliet, IL 60435 or Virtual Zoom

March

Topic: Child Trauma

Date: March 14 &16 2023 (Tuesday & Thursday)

Time: 6:00p.m.-8:00p.m.

Location: 991 Essington Road, Joliet, IL 60435 or Virtual Zoom

April

Topic: Behavior Management/Safety Care Training

Date: April 18, 2023

Time: 10:00a.m.-1:00p.m.

Location: 991 Essington Road, Joliet, IL 60435 or Virtual Zoom

May

Topic: The Adoption/Guardianship/Kinship

Date: May 23, 2023

Time: 10:00a.m.-2:00p.m.

Trainer: Adoption Specialist

Location: 991 Essington Road, Joliet, IL 60435 or Virtual Zoom

June

Topic: Cultural Sensitivity

Date: June 20, 2023 (Tuesday)

Time: 6:00p.m.-8:00p.m.

Location: 991 Essington Road, Joliet, IL 60435 or virtual zoom

July

Topic: CPR/1st Aid

Date: July 8, 2023

Time: TBA

Location: 991 Essington Road, Joliet, IL 60435 or virtual zoom

September

Topic: What every foster parent needs to know about public relations, court, ACR's and CIPP

Date: September 12, 2023

Time: 6:00p.m.-8p.m.

Location: 991 Essington Road, Joliet, IL 60435 or virtual zoom

October

Topic: Reunification. The transition between foster parent and the biological parent

Date: October 26, 2023

Time: 6:00p.m.-8:00p.m.

Location: 991 Essington Road, Joliet, IL 60435 or virtual zoom

Foster Parent Input

Jerome & Ebonie Simmons

Karen Evans

Dana Mindeman

Phyllis Summers

Shantell Evans

Dominique Kennedy

Adam & Sarah Kempenaar

Kenya Shelton-Riley

Connie Henley

Learline Mitchell

Gina & John Fleming

Anabel & Mario Orozco

Carmelita Moore

Staff

Betty Hite-Case Aid

Tanisha Moore-Licensure & Training Coordinator

Karen Jackson-Casemanager Supervisor

Clara Hampton-Lee-Quality Assurance

Danielle Crowder-Casemanger

Alexis Stella-Casemanager

Endorsement of the 2023 Implementation Plan

Acknowledgment of endorsement completed through email attachment. Following are the list of names.

1. Learline Mitchell-Foster Parent
2. Bridget & Jim Withrow-Foster Parent
3. Shantell Evans-Foster Parent
4. Anabel & Mario Lopez-Foster Parent
5. Sarah & Adam Kempennar-Foster Parent
6. Ivy Smith-Foster Parent
7. Gina & John Fleming-Foster Parent
8. Connie Henley-Foster Parent
9. Dominique Kennedy-Foster Parent
- 10.

Endorsement of the 2023 Implementation Plan

15 messages

Tanisha Moore <tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com>

Fri, Nov 11, 2022 at 3:04 PM

To: karenevans2204@gmail.com, "LadyMitchell1@yahoo.com" <LadyMitchell1@yahoo.com>, Bridget Withrow <bridie2177@gmail.com>, KJShelton30@gmail.com, karenjones1026@comcast.com, "kcunited88@gmail.com" <kcunited88@gmail.com>, shantellelevans90@gmail.com, "ALOPEZ_020@YAHOO.COM" <ALOPEZ_020@yahoo.com>, carmelitamooore19@yahoo.com, "carmelitamoore2@gmail.com" <carmelitamoore2@gmail.com>, conniehenley@msn.com, "bassoon77@aol.com" <bassoon77@aol.com>, Sarah Kempenaar <skempenaar@gmail.com>, A Mindeman <themindemans@yahoo.com>

I attempted to sent a signature form. However, you may also reply to this email by stating you Endorse the 2023 Easter Seals foster parent Implementation Plan. or you can download the attached form and sign. Thanks!

--

Tanisha Moore
Licensure and Training Coordinator
Easter Seals Joliet Region, Inc.
991 Essington Road, Joliet, IL 60435
T - (815) 741-5531, ext. 202
F - (815) 741-5537

 Endorsement of the 2023 Implementation Plan.docx.pdf
26K

Mail Delivery Subsystem <mailer-daemon@googlemail.com>

Fri, Nov 11, 2022 at 3:08 PM

To: tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com



Address not found

Your message wasn't delivered to **shantellelevans90@gmail.com** because the domain gmail.om couldn't be found. Check for typos or unnecessary spaces and try again.

[LEARN MORE](#)

The response was:

DNS Error: DNS type 'mx' lookup of gmail.om responded with code NXDOMAIN Domain name not found: gmail.om Learn more at <https://support.google.com/mail/?p=BadRcptDomain>

<kcunited88@gmail.com>, shantellelevans90@gmail.com, "ALOPEZ_020@YAHOO.COM" <ALOPEZ_020@yahoo.com>, carmelitamooore19@yahoo.com, "carmelitamoore2@gmail.com" <carmelitamoore2@gmail.com>, conniehenley@msn.com, "bassoon77@aol.com" <bassoon77@aol.com>, Sarah Kempenaar <skempenaar@gmail.com>, A Mindeman <themindemans@yahoo.com>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Fri, 11 Nov 2022 15:04:52 -0600
Subject: Endorsement of the 2023 Implementation Plan
----- Message truncated -----

Learline Mitchell <ladymitchell1@yahoo.com>
Reply-To: Learline Mitchell <ladymitchell1@yahoo.com>
To: Tanisha Moore <tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com>

Fri, Nov 11, 2022 at 3:43 PM

I accept and agree to the plan

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This e-mail, including any attachments, contains information from Easter Seals Joliet Region, Inc. that is confidential or privileged. The information is intended to be for the use of the individual or entity named above. If you are not the intended recipient, be aware that any disclosure, copying, distribution or use of the contents of this information is prohibited. If you have received this e-mail in error, please notify the sender immediately by a "reply to sender only" message and destroy all electronic and hard copies of the communication including attachments.

Bridget Withrow <bridie2177@gmail.com>
To: Tanisha Moore <tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com>

Fri, Nov 11, 2022 at 4:43 PM

We endorse the 2023 Implementation Plan.
Bridget & Jim Withrow

Sent from my iPad

On Nov 11, 2022, at 3:08 PM, Tanisha Moore <tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

 **Endorsement of the 2023 Implementation Plan.docx.pdf**
26K

Anabel Lopez <alopez_020@yahoo.com>
To: Tanisha Moore <tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com>
Cc: karenlevans2204@gmail.com, LadyMitchell1@yahoo.com, Bridget Withrow <bridie2177@gmail.com>, kjshelton30@gmail.com, karenjones1026@comcast.com, kcunited88@gmail.com, shantellelevans90@gmail.com, carmelitamooore19@yahoo.com, carmelitamooore2@gmail.com, conniehenley@msn.com, bassoon77@aol.com, Sarah Kempenaar <skempenaar@gmail.com>, A Mindeman <themindemans@yahoo.com>

Fri, Nov 11, 2022 at 5:00 PM

We Anabel and Mario Orozco endorse the Easterseals 2023 foster parent implementation plan.

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 11, 2022, at 3:08 PM, Tanisha Moore <tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

 **Endorsement of the 2023 Implementation Plan.docx.pdf**
26K

Tanisha Moore <tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com>

Fri, Nov 11, 2022 at 5:19 PM

To: Anabel Lopez <alopez_020@yahoo.com>

Cc: karen-evans2204@gmail.com, LadyMitchell1@yahoo.com, Bridget Withrow <bridie2177@gmail.com>, kjshelton30@gmail.com, karenjones1026@comcast.com, kcunited88@gmail.com, carmelitamooore19@yahoo.com, carmelitamooore2@gmail.com, conniehenley@msn.com, bassoon77@aol.com, Sarah Kempenaar <skempenaar@gmail.com>, A Mindeman <themindemans@yahoo.com>, "shantelle-evans90@gmail.com" <shantelle-evans90@gmail.com>, dominique Kennedy <dominiquekennedy83@gmail.com>

added S. Evans & Kennedy

[Quoted text hidden]

Mail Delivery Subsystem <mailer-daemon@googlemail.com>

Fri, Nov 11, 2022 at 5:23 PM

To: tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com

[Quoted text hidden]

Final-Recipient: rfc822; karenjones1026@comcast.com

Action: failed

Status: 5.1.1

Remote-MTA: dns; mxa-00143702.gslb.pphosted.com. (148.163.141.77, the server for the domain comcast.com.)

Diagnostic-Code: smtp; 550 5.1.1 User Unknown

Last-Attempt-Date: Fri, 11 Nov 2022 15:23:20 -0800 (PST)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Tanisha Moore <tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com>

To: Anabel Lopez <alopez_020@yahoo.com>

Cc: karen-evans2204@gmail.com, LadyMitchell1@yahoo.com, Bridget Withrow <bridie2177@gmail.com>, kjshelton30@gmail.com, karenjones1026@comcast.com, kcunited88@gmail.com, carmelitamooore19@yahoo.com, carmelitamooore2@gmail.com, conniehenley@msn.com, bassoon77@aol.com, Sarah Kempenaar <skempenaar@gmail.com>, A Mindeman <themindemans@yahoo.com>, "shantelle-evans90@gmail.com" <shantelle-evans90@gmail.com>, dominique Kennedy <dominiquekennedy83@gmail.com>

Bcc:

Date: Fri, 11 Nov 2022 17:19:48 -0600

Subject: Re: Endorsement of the 2023 Implementation Plan

----- Message truncated -----

Shantell Evans <shantelle-evans90@gmail.com>

Fri, Nov 11, 2022 at 5:44 PM

To: Tanisha Moore <tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com>

I Shantell Evans endorse in the 2023 implementation plan.

[Quoted text hidden]

Sarah Kempenaar <skempenaar@gmail.com>

Fri, Nov 11, 2022 at 6:08 PM

To: Tanisha Moore <tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com>

We, Sarah and Adam Kempenaar, endorse the 2023 Easter Seals Foster Parent Implementation Plan

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

Ivy Smith <kcunited88@gmail.com>
To: Tanisha Moore <tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com>

Sun, Nov 13, 2022 at 11:10 AM

I Ivy Smith endorse the Easterseals 2023 foster parent implementation plan.

[Quoted text hidden]

Gina Fleming <bassoon77@aol.com>
Reply-To: Gina Fleming <bassoon77@aol.com>
To: "tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com" <tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com>

Sun, Nov 13, 2022 at 3:50 PM

John and Gina you Endorse the 2023 Easter Seals foster parent Implementation Plan.

[Quoted text hidden]

Gina Fleming <bassoon77@aol.com>
Reply-To: Gina Fleming <bassoon77@aol.com>
To: "tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com" <tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com>

Sun, Nov 13, 2022 at 3:54 PM

John and Gina endorse the 2023 Easter Seals foster parent Implementation Plan.

Gina Fleming

-----Original Message-----

From: Tanisha Moore <tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com>

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]

Connie Henley <conniehenley@msn.com>
To: Tanisha Moore <tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com>

Sun, Nov 13, 2022 at 8:09 PM

I endorse the 2022 - 2023 Implementation Plan

Sent from my T-Mobile 5G Device

Get Outlook for Android

From: Tanisha Moore <tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com>
Sent: Friday, November 11, 2022 5:19:48 PM
To: Anabel Lopez <alopez_020@yahoo.com>
Cc: karenevans2204@gmail.com <karenevans2204@gmail.com>; LadyMitchell1@yahoo.com <LadyMitchell1@yahoo.com>; **Bridget Withrow** <bridie2177@gmail.com>; kjshelton30@gmail.com <kjshelton30@gmail.com>; karenjones1026@comcast.com <karenjones1026@comcast.com>; kcunited88@gmail.com <kcunited88@gmail.com>; carmelitamooore19@yahoo.com <carmelitamoore19@yahoo.com>; carmelitamooore2@gmail.com <carmelitamoore2@gmail.com>; conniehenley@msn.com <conniehenley@msn.com>; bassoon77@aol.com <bassoon77@aol.com>; **Sarah Kempenaar** <skempenaar@gmail.com>; **A Mindeman** <themindemans@yahoo.com>; shantelleavans90@gmail.com <shantelleavans90@gmail.com>; **dominique Kennedy** <dominiquekennedy83@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Endorsement of the 2023 Implementation Plan

[Quoted text hidden]

dominique Kennedy <dominiquekenedy83@gmail.com>
To: Tanisha Moore <tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com>

Mon, Nov 14, 2022 at 8:46 AM

I endorse Easter seals implementation

On Fri, Nov 11, 2022 at 5:23 PM Tanisha Moore <tmoore@joliet.easterseals.com> wrote:
[Quoted text hidden]



Grievance Procedure

Grievance Policy
Easterseals Joliet Region, INC

Easterseals Joliet Region INC foster parents agree that in order for the grievance procedure to function efficiently and effectively all parties attempt to resolve grievances at the lowest possible Level of this procedure. The foster parents and the foster care employee will each appoint a grievance representative.

Definition

A grievance shall be considered a violation of the Foster Parent Law.

Grievances may be presented in an informal (verbal) or formal (written) format by the foster parent grievance representative on behalf of the foster parent or on behalf of a group of foster parents. The foster parent may have a grievance representative present at any step of the procedure.

“The grievance process is to be used by foster parents only for grieving alleged violations of the Foster Parent Law that are not covered by an already-existing grievance or appeal process. It cannot be used to address issues that are covered by the service appeal process, the appeal process for indicated cases of child abuse/neglect, the process for appealing licensing investigation findings or license revocations etc.”

Informal (STEP 1)

Casework/Licensing Staff

Prior to the foster parent filing a written grievance, the parent and case manager and/or licensure staff are encouraged to meet in an attempt to resolve the law violation(s). The grievance representative may be asked to participate in the informal meeting.

The informal meeting will be documented in a case note and placed in the licensing file. If the situation is not resolved during the informal meeting then a formal grievance is filed.

Formal Grievance (STEP 2)

Immediate Supervisor

The foster parent or foster parent representative shall submit within ten (10) business days from the date of the informal meeting a written grievance to the immediate supervisor. The content of the grievance shall contain a brief statement of the violation and the specific law violation. The immediate supervisor shall submit a written response to the foster parent within five (5) business days after the grievance is presented. The grievance representative, foster parent, licensing, casework supervisor and caseworker staff shall be a part of this meeting.

(STEP 3)

Director of Residential & Social Service, Vanessa Hunter

If the grievance is not resolved it shall be presented in writing by the foster parent Representative within five (5) business days from the response. Within ten (10) business days after the grievance is presented the Immediate Supervisor shall meet, discuss, and attempt to resolve the grievance with the foster parent. The Immediate Supervisor shall render a written response within five (5) business days following the meeting.

(STEP 4)

President, Debbie Condotti

If the grievance is not resolved, it shall be presented in writing to the Agency Head within five (5) days. Within ten (10) days of the receipt of the written grievance, the parties shall meet and hold discussions in an attempt to resolve the grievance. The Agency Head shall submit the written response to the foster parent within five (5) business days following the date of the meeting.

If the foster parent is not satisfied with the Agency Head's decision, the complaint about the law violation should be directed to the DCFS Advocacy Office at 800 232 3798. Foster parents are also informed of their right to file an appeal with DCFS # 312 814 5540, free from harassment/retaliation.

Foster Parent Official Grievance Form

Foster Parent Name: _____

List the Right that has been Violated (Include the #:)

Give a brief description of your Grievance:

I authorize the Foster Parent Representative, (name: _____)
To act for me during the review of this grievance.

Date: _____ Foster Parent Signature: _____

Please check the following,

Grievance Resolved: Describe resolution for each violation

Need more time? Follow-up Date: _____

Unresolved, Move to the next step



No Grievances filed