



FAMILY SERVICE  
& CHILDREN'S AID

**Family Service & Children's Aid**

**330. W. Michigan Ave. Jackson, MI 49201**

**517-787-7920**

**[www.strong-families.org](http://www.strong-families.org)**

# Foster Parent Handbook

# Table of Contents

Emergency Contact	2
Role of Foster Parent/Relative Caregiver	3
Role with Birth Parent	3
Birth Parent Contact/Parenting Time	3
Agency's Role	4
Foster Parent Training/Education	4-5
Child Placement	5-6
Moving a Child	6-7
<b>The Foster Home</b>	
Home maintenance	
Heat, Light, ventilation	8
Flame and Heat Producing Equipment	8
Smoke Detectors, Carbon Monoxide Detectors	8
Bathrooms	8
Bedrooms	8-9
Telephone	8-9
Weapons	9
Hazardous materials	10
Household Membership	10
<b>Foster Child Services</b>	
Infant/Toddler Care	11
Religion	11
Mail	11-12
Education	12
Child's Personal Possessions/Money/Allowance/Clothing	12
Household Responsibilities	12
Recreation	13
Food and Nutrition	13
Transportation and Car Seat laws	13
Mileage Reimbursement	13-14
Out of State Travel	14
Substitute/Respite Care Policy/Daycare	14-15
Service Plans/Treatment Plans	15
Internet/Media/Cell Phones	15
Medical and Dental Care	16
Emergency Medical and Dental Care	16
Medications	17
Mental Health Care	17
Birth Control	17
<b>Foster Parent Responsibilities and Reporting Requirements/Emergency Procedures</b>	
Accident or Injury	18
Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect	18
Runaway or AWOL (absent without leave)	18
Death of a Child	18
Fire/Tornado/Natural Disaster	18
Evacuation	18
Reporting Changes within a Foster Home	19
License Application Filing	19
Change of Residence	19
Records to be kept by Foster Parents	19-20
Confidentiality & Right to Privacy	20
Grievance Procedure	20
Special Evaluation	20-21
Foster Parent/Agency Agreement	22-25
Child Management Policy Agreement	26
Fire & Tornado Plan	27
Foster Parent Handbook Receipt Acknowledgement	28

## FAMILY SERVICE & CHILDREN'S AID FOSTER PARENT HANDBOOK

Adopted September 27, 1988  
Amended May 14, 2001  
Amended August 7, 2003  
Amended Feb. 22, 2010  
Amended December 1, 2010  
Amended July 11, 2013  
Amended August 01, 2015  
Amended December 15, 2015  
Amended October 12, 2017  
Amended February 25, 2019  
Amended June 16, 2023

FAMILY SERVICE & CHILDREN'S AID (FSCA)  
330 W. MICHIGAN AVENUE  
JACKSON, MI 49201  
PH#: 517-787-7920

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint foster parents with Family Service & Children's Aid's (FSCA) rules, policies, and procedures in accordance with our Foster Care Program. These rules, policies and procedures are based on the requirements of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and our own standards. The handbook contains the foster parent/agency agreement, and the child management policy. Each foster parent is required to receive a copy of this document before the foster parent is licensed. Each foster parent must read this book, agree to comply with its content, and sign and date the attached form (see the last page) verifying that this has been done. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions pertaining to specific information in this book, please contact FSCA.

### EMERGENCY CONTACT

IF YOU HAVE TO CONTACT THE AGENCY AT NIGHT OR ON THE WEEKEND, CALL 517-787-7920 AND SELECT THE PROMPT FOR CHILD WELFARE AND YOU WILL BE CONNECTED TO OUR ANSWERING SERVICE. THEY WILL CONTACT THE ON-CALL WORKER, WHO WILL RETURN YOUR CALL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IF YOU HAVE YOUR FOSTER CARE WORKER OR SUPERVISOR'S CELL PHONE, YOU MAY ALSO CONTACT THEM AT THAT NUMBER.

### **THE ROLE OF THE FOSTER PARENT/RELATIVE CAREGIVER**

Foster parents provide a valuable service to the community and to the children in their care. Foster parents provide a child with a home when it is not possible for that child to live with his or her own family. It is the foster parent's responsibility to provide twenty-four-hour supervision and care to the child placed in their home. Your role as a foster parent is to provide food, clothing, shelter, support, love, protection, medical care, dental care, guidance, and educational training. Foster parents have a responsibility to help the child develop a good self-image and to have positive feelings about his or her past, present and future. Foster parenting is not a lifetime commitment to a child, but a commitment to temporarily fulfill a parental role in the child's life. Foster parents should never try to replace a birth parent, but should still love and care for the child, build trust, and meet their emotional needs.

Parenting a foster child is often a challenge, as many of these children have experienced trauma. These children come from many different backgrounds, and they all have experienced loss and separation. Their experiences are very different from children who have grown up in your family. It is important to have realistic expectations of the children placed in your home. For healing to occur, foster children need a lot of love, patience, and assurance. It is important to remember healing occurs gradually.

### **YOUR ROLE WITH THE BIRTH FAMILY**

Foster parents play a crucial part in helping children reunite with their families. One of the significant roles for foster parents is to maintain and encourage healthy ties between the child and his/her family. It is important to remember that it is your responsibility to remain positive towards the birth parents and child, even when you do not agree with how they have treated their child in the past or perhaps the current situation. This will enhance and validate the child's feelings by showing you are supportive of his/her birth family and display respect for the love he/she has for his/her birth parents.

### **BIRTH PARENT CONTACTS/PARENTING TIME**

One of the significant steps in the reunification process is regular and frequent visitations. These visitation times are to promote contact and healthy bonding with the birth parents. Hence, it gives the birth parents the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned through their various services. As a foster parent, you are a valuable team member, by sharing parenting skills and discipline techniques with the birth parent or caseworker that have been successful with their child. The basic guidelines for visitation are the following:

- Ages newborn-five years, visits occur at a minimum of twice a week.
- Ages six and older, visits occur at a minimum of once a week.
- Frequency, length, location, and supervision of visits may vary case to case by the court and the recommendations of the foster child's caseworker.
- Extended family member visits will be addressed on a case-to-case basis and approved by the caseworker.
- Phone calls and visits outside of the agency need to be approved by the caseworker.

The visitation plan between a foster child and their birth parents shall be consistent with court orders and developed by the foster caseworker as agreed upon by the foster parents and the birth parents. Foster parents shall not withhold, censor or open mail sent to or by the foster child, unless ordered by the court, as they help to foster the bond between the child and his/her parents.

Birth parent involvement in medical appointments, parent-teacher conferences, and other events the child may have at school or in the community is for the reunification process. You can discuss these opportunities with your caseworker and get guidance on what would be appropriate for the birth parent to attend. Birth parents continue to make decisions regarding children in care. Therefore, prior approval is needed for changing a child's appearance (haircut, piercings, hair color, tattoos etc.). In addition, there are other required approvals needed such as children obtaining a drivers licensing, participating in hunting experiences, and entering the military. For further guidance reference Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard or contact your caseworker.

The primary goal of foster care is for children to return home if the birth home can become a safe environment. As part of the child's professional team your active involvement, encouragement, and support for the child and birth parents are essential in assisting in reunification. As a foster parent, you play a significant role in helping a child adjust and cope with changes that occur during placement and legal status changes. It can help them to move forward with security and confidence.

Foster parents must cooperate with the foster child's visitation plan and shall provide the foster child with transportation to and from visits. Under normal conditions, birth parents will not have the address or phone number of the foster home, unless agreed to by the foster parents and the caseworker. Foster parents can be reimbursed for mileage for transporting the child to and from birth parent and sibling visitations.

It is the responsibility of both the agency and the foster parents to follow the treatment plan and court orders regarding contact with the birth family. Foster parents do not have the right or authority to alter any of these contacts without approval from the caseworker or the courts. Parental visits are NEVER to be restricted as a method of behavior management or punishment.

### **THE AGENCY'S ROLE WITH YOU**

The agency's role is to assure that all children receive quality services that will enable them to return to their birth home or to a permanent living situation. Regular visits to the home by the child's caseworker are required to monitor the placement, discuss problems, develop a treatment plan, and a behavioral support plan if needed. The following are the minimum guidelines for caseworker visits:

First month-within 30 calendar days after initial placement:

- Two face-to-face contacts with the child, at least one of which must occur in the placement: plus, two phone contacts.
- The first visit with the child must take place within five business days from the date the case is assigned to the caseworker.

Second month:

- Two face-to-face contacts with the child, at least one of which must occur in the placement: plus, two phone contacts.

Subsequent months:

- Face-to-face contact with the worker a minimum of once each calendar month whether the child is placed in a foster home, relative/unrelated caregiver's home, independent living, or in a residential/institutional setting. The visit must take place in the child's residence.
- Each visit must include a private meeting between the child and the foster care worker.

The child's worker will provide you with useful information regarding the child's birth family, and what precipitated the child coming into care. The caseworker will make you aware of all known behaviors. The caseworker will inform you of all court hearings and inform you of the outcomes. The caseworker will be available to attend school meetings with you and to schedule Individualized Educational Planning (IEP) conferences if needed. The child's caseworker will function as a child advocate and liaison with mental health treatment providers.

The agency's licensing worker is responsible for making sure your home meets the State of Michigan licensing requirements and is available to provide training and support to foster parents. Concerns about licensing or questions about foster parent education should be directed to your licensing worker.

### **FOSTER PARENT TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

All foster parents licensed through FSCA will be required to comply with the Licensing Rules for Foster Family Homes, State

of Michigan and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) requirements for foster parent orientation and training. Foster parents will be notified of all training offered by FSCA or known to FSCA. Written notice of additional training required by FSCA will be provided to all foster parents.

DHHS and FSCA requires that you attend an orientation and receive twelve (12) hours of pre-service training (GROW), Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard, and First Aid/CPR before a foster care license is issued by the State of Michigan. Every foster parent must complete a minimum of (6) hours of annual training and at least one of the caregivers in the home must be certified in First Aid/CPR. Foster parents who accept placement of children with more severe behaviors will need additional training beyond the minimum training requirements.

Training opportunities are available through FSCA throughout the year and through the Jackson Area Foster Parent Training Coalition. Foster parents may also attend trainings through the State of Michigan, community colleges, universities, conferences, or foster parent associations. Training credit can be earned by reading books and articles and completing online training that are relevant to foster parenting. Please check with your licensing worker or the agency website for more information about how to access relevant training opportunities.

Family Service and Children's Aid requires that pre-service training must be the State of Michigan's GROW training. The following topics are covered during GROW Training:

Child & Adolescent Development  
Systems, Policies, & Advocacy  
Attachment & Relationships  
Diversity & Inclusion  
Toxic Stress, Trauma, & Trauma Informed Parenting  
Foster, Adoptive, & Kinship Parent Well-Being  
Child & Adolescent Mental Health & Special Needs

Other training that is required include the following:

- Behavioral, emotional, and physical needs of the types of children the agency serves, and methods to aid in the development of these children.
- The rights and responsibilities of foster parents and the agency
- Supportive services available to the children and foster families
- Emergency procedures including fire safety, and first aid.
- Firearm storage and safety
- Unique needs of foster children based on individual identities related to culture, race, and ethnicity, religion and spirituality and sexual orientation, gender, identity, and expression (SOGIE).

A training plan for the year will be completed with you during your annual licensing evaluation process, and additional training may be required if there is a special evaluation, and the result is a finding of non-compliance.

### CHILD PLACEMENT

When a child comes into FSCA foster care, usually through either DHHS or other agencies, the licensing worker or supervisor will review all the foster homes that are available and whose home study recommendation is consistent with the children's needs and locate the best possible match for the child.

The licensing worker will then call the prospective foster parents and provide as much information as available. The agency shall provide a foster parent with all the following information before the placement of a child:

- Child's name
- Child's date of birth
- Available known information about the child's health

- Any known history of abuse or neglect of the child
- All known emotional and psychological problems of the child.
- Circumstances necessitating placement of the child.
- Any other known information to enable the foster parent to provide a stable, safe, and healthy environment for the foster child and the foster family.
- Name of assigned caseworker for the child

For an emergency placement, if any of the information is not available at the time of placement, then the information shall be provided to the foster parent within 7 calendar days of the placement.

When a foster child moves from one foster home to another a pre-placement visit will occur, whenever possible, time and circumstances permitting.

Once the child is placed in the home, the child's caseworker will give the family specific information about various issues, such as, appointments the child may have, school enrollment, visitation, etc.

When the child is placed in your home you will be given the following information:

- Case Open Checklist
- Medical Consent Card
- Guidelines for Foster Parents and Relative Caregivers for Health Care and Behavioral/Mental Health Services
- Emergency Procedures
- Foster Care Provider DOC Report
- Clothing Inventory Checklist
- DHS 5307- Rights and Responsibilities for Children and Youth in Foster Care
- Placement Checklist
- Medical/Dental/Travel/Educational Authorization
- Medication Agreement
- Foster Parent Confidentiality Statement
- Foster Care Provider Report
- Notice to Current School
- Neglect Ward Access Information for L-GAL
- Youth Yearly Dental Record
- Incident Report
- Filing for Child Care Assistance
- Youth Placement and Educational Record
- Clothing Allowance Letter

This information is confidential and should be kept in a **locked file cabinet**. All child-specific information except for payment records must be returned to Family Service & Children's Aid after a child leaves the foster home for another placement.

#### MOVING A CHILD TO ANOTHER FOSTER HOME

Research has shown us that moving a child multiple times is detrimental to a child's ability to attach and intensifies behavioral and mental health problems. The agency's goal is always to try to maintain a placement if the home is a safe and secure place for the child. When problems arise with your foster child, immediately notify your caseworker, so that services can be put into place to help resolve the problem. Within the agency the child welfare staff and counseling staff collaborate to help give foster parents the tools they need to continue to meet the challenges of the children in their care. However, there are times when problems are too severe for the placement to be maintained or the safety and security of the child is in jeopardy.

A Team Decision Making Meeting (TDM) must be held when a child is moved. (See index for more information on the TDM).

**When an agency must move a child from a foster home the following must occur:**

- The agency and the foster parents must prepare the child appropriate to the child's capacity to understand, which includes an explanation as to why the change is necessary.
- The current foster parent must be notified in writing of the change not less than 14 calendar days in advance of the change, except when prior notification would jeopardize the child's care or safety. If prior notice is not provided, then the agency shall notify the foster parent, at the time of the change, why prior notice was not given.

**If a child is moved by the agency for the following reasons:**

- Agency has reasonable cause to believe sexual abuse, non-accidental injury, or emotional harm has occurred to child while in that placement.
- Agency has determined that it is in the child's best interest to be moved.

The foster care agency must notify the Foster Care Review Board and the family has three days to appeal the decision.

**When a foster parent wants a child removed from their home, the following must occur:**

- The agency and the foster parents must prepare the child appropriate to the child's capacity to understand, which includes an explanation as to why the change is necessary.
- The foster parent must provide written notification to the agency of the need for a foster child to be moved from the foster home not less than 14 calendar days before the move, except when a delay would jeopardize the foster child's care or safety or the safety of members of the foster family.



## THE FOSTER HOME

### HOME MAINTENANCE

A foster parent shall ensure the home, grounds, and all structures on the grounds of the property are maintained in a clean, safe, and sanitary condition, and in a reasonable state of repair within community standards.

### HEAT, LIGHT, AND VENTILATION

Heat, light, and ventilation shall be adequate to meet the needs of all household members. All windows and doors must be screened when used for ventilation.

### FLAME AND HEAT PRODUCING EQUIPMENT

All furnaces, water heaters, fireplaces, hot water pipes, steam radiators, wood burning stoves, and all other flame or heat producing equipment shall be maintained in a safe condition. Portable heating devices or space heaters may **not** be used in bedrooms. It may be required of foster parents to put safety measures in place so access to flame and heat producing equipment is not accessible to young children.

### SMOKE DETECTORS, CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

At least one smoke detector that is approved by a nationally recognized testing laboratory shall be installed and maintained in working order in the following locations:

1. On each floor of the home, including the basement.
2. Between each sleeping area and the rest of the home.
3. In each area of the home that contains flame or heat producing equipment other than domestic stoves and clothes dryers.

At least one carbon monoxide detector that is approved by a nationally recognized testing laboratory shall be installed and maintained in an area of the home as recommended by the manufacturer.

### BATHROOMS

A foster home shall have a minimum of one flush toilet, one sink, and one shower or bathtub, all of which must be in working order. A foster home that provides care to a foster child, who regularly uses a wheelchair, walker, or other durable medical device must have a barrier-free bathroom. The temperature of the hot water in the sinks and bathtub shall not exceed 120 degrees Fahrenheit. The home's water supply shall be from a public source or private well that has been approved by the local health authority. All sewage shall be disposed of through a public system, or in a manner that meets public health requirements for a private septic system.

### BEDROOMS

A foster parent shall ensure that bedrooms comply with all the following provisions:

- Provide an adequate opportunity for both rest and privacy and access to adult supervision as appropriate for the age and functioning level of each child. **The use of video cameras in the bedroom of any foster child over the age of 2 is strictly prohibited.**
- Have sufficient space for all the following:
  - a) Occupants.
  - b) Beds with adequate head clearance for each child.
  - c) Space to store clothing and personal belongings.
  - d) A clear path to the bed, belongings, and the door.
- Have floor-to-ceiling permanently affixed walls, and painted or sealed surfaces, privacy barriers, and hazard-free flooring.
- Have a latch able door that leads directly to a means of egress. As used in this rule, latch able means that the door can be closed and will remain closed until someone opens it. Latch able does not mean lockable.
- Have at least 1 outside window that complies with all the following:
  - a) Is accessible to the room's occupant or occupants.

- b) Can be readily opened from the inside of the room.
  - c) Is of sufficient size and design to allow for the evacuation of the room's occupant or occupants.
- If a family member occupies or uses a level of a home that is above the second floor, then the building must have 2 exits to ground level, at least 1 of which must provide a direct means of egress to the outside at ground level.
- The bedroom must be free from all the following:
  - a) Furnace.
  - b) Water heater.
  - c) Portable heating devices.
- A room that is primarily used for purposes other than sleeping may not be used as a bedroom, and includes the following:
  - a) A hall.
  - b) A closet.
  - c) A stairway.
  - d) A garage.
  - e) A shed.
  - f) A detached building.
  - g) A room or space, including an attic, that is accessible only by a ladder, folding stairway, or through a trapdoor.
  - h) A common area of the home.
- A foster parent shall ensure that bedding and sleeping equipment comply with all following:
  - a. The standards set forth in the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Safety Standards for Full Size Baby Cribs and Non-Full Size Baby Cribs; Final Rule 16 CFR Parts 1219, 1220 and 1500 (<http://www.cpsc.gov>) for the age of the child using the equipment.
  - b. Pillows, linens, and mattresses must be clean, safe, age appropriate, and in good repair.
  - c. Infants, birth to 12 months of age, must rest or sleep alone only in a crib, bassinet, or Pack 'n Play, based on the age, size, and needs of the infant.
  - d. A foster parent must follow the department's safe sleep practices located at [www.michigan.gov/dhhs](http://www.michigan.gov/dhhs).
  - e. Objects may not be placed or draped over a crib, bassinet, or Pack 'n Play, and an infant's head may not be covered during sleep.
  - f. The foster parent must have the appropriate sleeping equipment available in the home prior to licensure or a change in terms for all children who will be covered under the terms of the license.

Sleeping arrangements must meet the following criteria:

- All children in the home must be treated equitably, meaning each child has similar sleeping arrangements as other household members.
- **Foster parents must designate sleeping arrangements that are appropriate for each child's age, SOGIE, medical and mental health needs, behavior, and history of abuse.**
- A child who is no ambulatory and cannot readily be carried by 1 member of the household must sleep in a bedroom that has a means of exiting at ground level.
- A child may not share a bedroom with a non-parent adult unless the child and adult are siblings, the child and adult are foster siblings who shared a room prior to one of them turning 18, or the child has special medical needs that requires the attention of an adult during sleeping hours.
- Each child must sleep alone or may share a bed with a sibling in a bed based on the functioning level, size, and other special needs of the child.

#### TELEPHONE

- A foster parent shall ensure that a working telephone is available in the foster home or in close walking proximity to the foster home.
- A foster parent shall ensure that emergency telephone numbers, including Poison Control, are posted in a prominent place in the home.
- The foster parent must provide the telephone number to the certifying agency and inform the agency within 24 hours if the number changes.

## WEAPONS & HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

- Federal standards for a foster family or group home include specific safety requirements for weapons, pools, hot tubs, and spas, as these pose a particular preventable danger to children.
- Resources for gun safety: [Gun Safety and Children | CS Mott Children's Hospital | Michigan Medicine and Home - Project ChildSafe](#)
- Dangerous equipment and objects, weapons, chemicals, medications, poisonous materials, cleaning supplies, and other hazardous materials that may present a risk to children placed in the foster home must be stored securely and out of the reach of children, as appropriate for the age and functioning level of the children.
- Resources for pool safety: [362 Safety Barrier Guidelines for Pools.pdf \(cpsc.gov\)](#)
- Unless carried in the licensed home and on the licensed property as permitted by law, firearms and ammunition must be stored as follows:
  - a) Locked in compliance with 1 of the following:
    - I. By a cable lock
    - II. By a trigger lock
    - III. In a gun safe
    - IV. In solid metal or wood gun case
  - b) Unloaded
  - c) Stored separately from ammunition unless stored in gun safe or a solid metal or wood gun case.
  - d) Inaccessible to children
  - e) Ammunition must be stored in a locked location and inaccessible to children.
  - f) All applicable laws regarding the possession, use, transportation, and storage of firearms and ammunition, including for hunting, still apply.
  - g) Licensees with a CPL may possess a firearm pursuant to the law in a vehicle on the licensed property, provided it is done so in such a manner to prevent foster children from having access to it, such as being on the licensee's person or stored in a locked container.
  - h) Licensees may engage in hunting, range shooting, and target practice with a foster child in accordance with the reasonable and prudent parenting standard as defined in section 1 of chapter XIA of the probate code of 1939, 1939 PA288, MCL 712A.1

\_\_\_\_\_ Caregiver's initials to signify they understand this policy. \_\_\_\_\_ Caregiver's initials to signify they understand this policy.

## SMOKING

No individual may smoke any substance inside the foster home while a foster child is placed in the home. No individual may smoke any substance inside a vehicle while transporting foster children.

## HOUSEHOLD MEMBERSHIP

FSCA needs to have information about every member of the household. Qualification for membership in a household licensed by FSCA shall broadly be defined by regular and significant presence in the home of the foster family and similar contact with established members of the household, including foster children. All adult household members must meet the criminal history background check requirements in R400.9205 in the licensing rules.

## PETS

All pets must be vaccinated according to State of Michigan guidelines. The agency needs to be informed of a new within 3 business days.

## FOSTER CHILD SERVICES

### INFANT/TODDLER CARE

Children birth to 12 months shall rest or sleep alone in a crib, bassinet, or Pack N Play. Children 12 months to 24 months shall rest or sleep alone in a crib, Pack N Play, or toddler bed. See SAFE SLEEP guidelines provided to you or obtain them at [Safe Sleep \(michigan.gov\)](http://www.michigan.gov).

A foster parent shall maintain supervision and frequent monitoring of an infant for signs of distress not exclusively via a baby monitor.

Infants, birth to twelve months, shall rest or sleep alone in a crib that meets the criteria included in U.S. consumer Product Safety commission, Safety Standards for full Size Baby cribs and non-full size baby cribs; final Rule 16 CFR Parts 1219, 1220 and 1500 (<http://www.cpsc.gov>) with the following:

- A firm, tight-fitting mattress with a waterproof, washable covering
- No loose, missing, or broken hardware or slats
- Not more than 2 3/8 inches between the slats
- No corner posts over 1/16 inches high
- No cutout designs in the headboard or footboard
- A tightly fitted bottom sheet with no additional padding between the mattress and the sheet.

An infant's head should remain uncovered during sleep. Soft objects, bumper pads, stuffed toys, quilts, comforters, or any object that could smother a child shall not be placed with or under a sleeping infant or child.

Infant car seats, infant seats, infant swings, highchairs, waterbeds, adult beds, soft mattresses, sofas, beanbags or other soft surfaces are **not approved** sleeping equipment/spaces for children who are 24 months or younger. If a child falls asleep in an unapproved space, they shall be moved to an approved sleeping area appropriate for their size and age. Substitute care providers must follow the same safe sleep requirements as foster parents.

### RELIGION

A foster parent must, at a minimum, ensure that the foster child can receive religious instruction and may participate or choose not to participate in religious or spiritual instruction, engage or choose not to engage in religious or spiritual practices, or attend or choose not to attend religious or spiritual services. The foster child shall be made aware of this policy, so far as the child is able to comprehend.

If a foster child or his or her birth family has no religious affiliation or shared spiritual belief, a foster child may participate in the foster family's religious activities provided the foster child or the child's birth parents have no objections. **A foster child may not be required to attend religious or spiritual services or follow specific religious or spiritual doctrine.** A foster child shall not officially join a particular place of worship or be baptized or confirmed in a particular religion without the prior consent of the child's birth parents.

A case which requires that all contact between a foster child and his or her birth family be supervised, or is prohibited, and the child wants to attend the birth family's place of worship, may be a basis for denying the foster child the right to attend the religious services of his or her choice. This would need caseworker approval.

### MAIL

A foster child shall be permitted to receive and send mail. Mail should be addressed to the child in care of the agency. To ensure the mail is in the best interests of the child's mental and physical health, a method of sending and receiving mail shall be arrived at by the child's caseworker and shall be monitored by the caseworker and the foster parents.

Mail shall not be censored in any way unless:

- The mail is suspected to contain unauthorized, injurious, or illegal materials,
- If it is court ordered.

In this case, the agency Foster Care Supervisor shall consult with the agency Chief Executive Officer. If the Chief Executive Officer believes the suspected mail should be censored, legal consultation shall be provided to ensure proper procedure is followed.

## **EDUCATION**

Within five school days of placement, the caseworker and the foster parents will work together in making educational provisions for each child. Each foster child of school age must be enrolled into a school program as defined by law. For a foster child under school age, the caseworker may suggest enrollment in Head Start or other pre-school setting. If a foster child is placed in your home during summer months, consult with the caseworker about educational plans. The State of Michigan does not allow foster children to be home schooled.

The caseworker shall assure that the school administration is notified in writing of the name of the individual who represents the child. The caseworker shall also maintain in the child's record the current grade placement, school, and type of school program in which the child is enrolled.

## **CHILD'S PERSONAL POSSESSIONS/ MONEY & ALLOWANCE/ CLOTHING**

Foster parents shall provide a safe place for each foster child's personal possessions and money. All gifts and clothing that are purchased for the child during placement with the foster family remain the property of the foster child. Each child should have a place in which he can keep some of his personal things and which is "off limits" to others, a box or drawer or chest. If possible, his "private treasure box" should have a lock but be sure you keep a spare key or copy of the combination.

The amount of the daily board and care rate designated for the foster child's personal incidentals and allowance shall be given directly to the child. Under current guidelines, the rate for allowances for children 0-12 is \$2.36 per day, and for children 13 and above is \$3.04 per day. If the child is young, then a procedure shall be agreed upon between the foster parent and the caseworker for the use of the personal incidentals and allowance monies on behalf of the child. The foster parents shall keep an accounting of all money disbursed to the child or put it into a bank account for the child.

The foster parents should keep a record of money and other valuables a child entrusts in their care. Whatever the amount or value of his possessions, it is essential that they be returned to him or given to an FSCA worker when the child leaves the foster home.

Helping to safeguard the foster child's possessions is the responsibility of the foster parent. Even more important is the message such safeguarding gives to the child; he is important and both he and his possessions deserve to be respected and protected.

Foster parents shall provide and maintain sufficient, adequate, and appropriate clothing for a foster child. Once a child is placed in the home, you will be asked to complete a Clothing Inventory Checklist. Once this is given to the caseworker, they will determine how much money, if any, should be requested. Clothing allowances for each foster child referred by DHS is provided in three forms: 1) an initial clothing allowance (if the child enters your home with little or no appropriate clothing), 2) semi-annual clothing payments, which are distributed in October and April and 3) an ongoing clothing allowance which is part of the daily board and rate paid to foster parents. Receipts must be submitted to the caseworker. All clothing acquired for the foster child belongs to the foster child, and that clothing or any unused clothing money, must go with the child when they are removed. You will be asked to complete the Clothing Inventory Checklist prior to the child leaving your home.

## **HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES**

Foster parents shall require a foster child to perform only those household tasks and responsibilities that are within the child's ability, are reasonable for a child of that age, and are like those expected of other members of the household of similar age and ability.

## RECREATION

Foster parents shall provide for a variety of indoor and outdoor recreational activities and shall encourage a child to participate in neighborhood, community, school, and recreational activities that are appropriate for the child's age and ability.

## FOOD AND NUTRITION

Foster parents shall provide for the nutritional needs of each child in the foster home. A child shall be provided with meals which are served at regular intervals, and which conform to any dietary restrictions. Food that is provided shall be nutritious, well balanced, and available in sufficient quantity. Only a licensed physician shall prescribe special diets.

A foster child shall be permitted to eat with the other members of the foster family and shall be served the same meals as other members of the foster family unless a special diet has been prescribed or the food conflicts with a child's stage of development, medical condition, or the birth family's religious beliefs.

Refrigeration shall be used for perishable foods. Food shall be prepared and stored in a safe manner. Only pasteurized milk products shall be served to foster children.

## TRANSPORTATION

It is the responsibility of the foster parent to transport foster children for the following:

- Routine medical and dental examinations and treatments
- Any required follow-up medical care
- Visits at the agency with the birth family
- Counseling and/or therapy sessions
- School or pre-school attendance, if not provide by the school
- Recreational, religious, and social activities

The cost for regular and routine transportation of foster children is included in the daily board and care rate; foster parents do not receive any additional reimbursement for these costs. The exception is transportation to and from visits with birth parents and sibling visits.

## CAR SEAT LAWS [Child Passenger Safety \(michigan.gov\)](http://michigan.gov)

It is the responsibility of the foster parent to ensure that children are in the proper car seats according to the State of Michigan Car Seat Laws.

### MICHIGAN SEAT BELTS AND CHILD RESTRAINTS

- Children younger than age 4 must ride in a car seat in the rear seat, if the vehicle has a rear seat. If all available rear seats are occupied by children under 4, then a child under 4 may ride in a car seat in the front seat. A child in a rear facing car seat may only ride in the front seat if the airbag is turned off.
- All children must be buckled in a car seat or booster seat until they are 8 years old or 4'9".
- It is recommended that children 8 and older be placed in an age- and weight-appropriate child safety seat if the vehicle's seat belt does not fit properly. All children ages 12 and under ride in a rear seat.
- Drivers, front-seat passengers regardless of age, and all passengers ages 8 through 15 are required to wear properly adjusted seat belts.

## MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

Mileage Reimbursement is available upon request for transporting children to parent/child visitations.

- Mileage will be reimbursed for round-trip travel from the foster parent's home to the location of the parent/child visitation at the agency or other community location.
- Mileage will be reimbursed at the current state standard rate, as published in The Department of Technology, Management & Budget Vehicle and Travel Services Schedule of Travel Rates.
- Your foster care worker can give you the current rate.

- Mileage reimbursement is paid per mile and may only be claimed once per trip, regardless of the number of children transported.
- The route or routes taken to and from the destination must be the shortest and most cost effective.

Mileage reimbursement requests should be submitted monthly by the foster parent. The foster parent must include the following information and supporting documentation:

- A memo including the child(ren)'s name(s), date(s) of birth, dates of travel, number of miles traveled and amount to be reimbursed.
- A MapQuest print-out showing distance to the approved destination.

Mileage reimbursement should be submitted no later than the 2<sup>nd</sup> business day of each month. For example, if you wish to turn in October mileage reimbursement, turn in the documents no later than November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Please submit mileage reimbursement request and documentation directly to your caseworker.

**FSCA will distribute mileage payments to foster parents after the agency receives them from DHHS.**

### **OUT OF STATE TRAVEL**

If the foster parent is planning to travel out of state and intends to include the foster child, the written consent of the birth parents must be obtained by the caseworker. If the parents of the temporary ward cannot be reached, permission to travel can be obtained by the court. Permanent wards may obtain permission to travel out of state from the agency director. All requests for out of state travel require at least two weeks' notice.

### **SUBSTITUTE CARE POLICY/RESPIRE/DAYCARE**

A foster child may only be left with a caregiver who is at least 18 years of age, and capable of handling children with special needs and behaviors. They must be willing to follow all FSCA's policies and procedures. The caregiver must be provided with phone numbers for the foster parents and FSCA agency staff. The foster parent is required to provide FSCA the name, date of birth, address, phone number and a copy of driver's license of any substitute caregiver annually. Prior to leaving a foster child in their care, an ICHAT background check and a DHHS Central Registry Check must be run by the agency on all substitute caregivers unless they are licensed by the State of Michigan to provide childcare. The foster parent is required to get agency approval for substitute care if it is for more than 3 days. If the foster child is going to spend more than five nights per month out of the foster home, the county DHHS must be notified by FSCA.

On a case-by-case basis, FSCA is willing to consider a teenage child living in the foster home as a substitute caregiver for short periods of time. The foster parent must get agency approval in writing prior to allowing a youth under 18 to provide substitute care. Upon request by the foster parent, FSCA's licensing department will assess the youth's ability to provide care to a specific foster child.

If you feel that your foster child is mature enough to stay home alone for short periods of time, you may allow them to do so if you discuss a safety plan and emergency procedures with them beforehand.

We encourage our foster families to make arrangements for short-term respite care with other foster families. FSCA is willing to help you make arrangements with other foster families, but financial arrangements must be made between the foster parents.

Family Service & Children's Aid is not responsible for childcare expenses or filing the application to apply for childcare assistance through the Department of Health and Human Services. As a foster parent you may apply for childcare services in person at:

Department of Health and Human Services  
301 E. Louis Glick Highway  
Jackson, MI 49201

Or you may apply online at:

[www.michigan.gov/childcare](http://www.michigan.gov/childcare)

Click on the icon Parents located on the left, and follow the prompts under How Do I Apply for Assistance?

If you intend to apply, please do so immediately after placement because DHHS will not pay for expenses incurred prior to the date the application was submitted to DHHS. DHHS pays a specific rate to childcare providers, so you will want to check with your provider to find out if they accept the DHHS pay rate. If the childcare provider charges more than the allowable DHHS rate, it is the responsibility of the foster parent to pay the difference.

Notify DHHS of changes: when the child leaves your home or no longer attends childcare while in your home.

\_\_\_\_ Caregiver's initials to signify they understand this policy. \_\_\_\_\_ Caregiver's initials to signify they understand this policy.

### **SERVICE PLANS/TREATMENT PLANS**

The agency shall complete written treatment plans for each child as follows:

- Within 30 calendar days after initial placement
- Within 90 calendar days after the initial service plan and updated treatment plans at least once every 90 calendar days after that.
- The agency will review the plans with the foster parents. Information contained in the plan shall be kept confidential by the foster parents.
- The agency will develop service plans with the child, the child's parents, the agency, and other service providers.
- The agency shall involve the foster parents in the development of the child's treatment plans to enable the foster parents to understand the plan for the child and the foster parent's role in assisting the agency in carrying out the plan. Copies of treatment plans for the children in their care can be provided to foster parents.

### **INTERNET & MEDIA & CELL PHONES**

FSCA does not allow pictures of foster children to be put on websites, blogs, or social networking sites. The agency needs to know if a foster parent has a family website or blog where they share information about a foster child in their home. When referencing a foster child on a blog or website we ask that you use only their first initial and be very careful not to use any information that might identify the child. Please seek guidance from your child's caseworker or your licensing worker before posting pictures or information about a foster child on the Internet.

FSCA recommends that you follow social networking website policy and not allow youth under the age of fourteen to have accounts on social networking sites. Youth who do have email, social networking accounts, or instant messaging accounts should be closely monitored.

FSCA recommend that foster youth under the age of sixteen not have their own cell phones. We recommend that for youth who do have cell phones, that foster parents closely monitor whom they are calling and receiving calls from.



## MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE

### **MEDICAL AND DENTAL CARE**

A physical examination by a licensed physician must be completed on every foster child within 30 days of placement. This must be documented on the "Well Child Exam" form. If documentation of immunizations for a foster child is unavailable, immunizations must begin within 30 days of placement and then as recommended by their physician. Well Child Exams must be done at the following intervals:

For children under 3 years old, the periodicity schedule for EPSDT/well child exams is as follows:

- Newborn -1 week of age
- 4 weeks of age
- 2 months of age
- 4 months of age
- 6 months of age
- 9 months of age
- 12 months of age
- 15 months of age
- 18 months of age
- 24 months of age
- 30 months of age

Children aged 3 and older require the EPSDT/Well Child Exam annually.

**Your caseworker will give you a form to keep track of medical and dental visits, so please have the doctor or dentist fill these out and return them to your caseworker on the agreed upon date. These forms can be accessed on our website.**

Dental examinations are required for each foster child who is one year of age or older within the first 90 days of placement and within 30 days of their first birthday as well as every six months after they turn one year old. Each foster child shall have a dental examination every six months, or as often as medically necessary. Please keep a copy for your foster child(ren)'s record folder that you maintain in the home.

When a foster child enters care, foster parents shall be presented with the necessary documents required to provide routine and emergency medical/dental care for the child. This includes a Medicaid card and an emergency medical authorization card signed by a representative of the agency. Medicaid covers most medical needs. If a specific need is not covered, the foster parents shall consult with the caseworker regarding possible reimbursement. In a rare instance, a foster child may not be eligible for Medicaid, and an alternative plan for payment of a foster child's medical needs will be made with the caseworker. A birth parent, or the court must approve elective and non-emergency surgical treatment; the child's caseworker will assist in securing this approval. If the foster child is a permanent ward of the state, consent for surgical treatment must be obtained by the MCI superintendent. All non-emergency medical or dental care should be discussed with the caseworker prior to treatment.

A foster child may receive medical/dental care by his or her own physician/dentist, the foster family's physician/dentist, or a different physician/dentist. It should be noted, however, that not all physicians and dentists accept Medicaid. The foster parent may work with the caseworker in securing a physician and dentist who accepts Medicaid.

Within ten working days after each examination, reports of initial and subsequent medical and dental examinations shall be given to FSCA on forms furnished by the agency.

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL AND DENTAL CARE**

Foster parents may authorize emergency medical, surgical or dental treatment for their foster children. **IF YOUR FOSTER CHILD IS ILL OR INJURED AND YOU ARE UNSURE IF THEY NEED MEDICAL TREATMENT, CONTACT YOUR CASEWORKER OR THE AGENCY ON CALL PERSON IF IT IS AFTER HOURS.**

Elective surgery, including body piercing or tattooing and other cosmetic surgery, CANNOT be performed without the consent of the birth parent or the legal guardian.

### **MEDICATIONS**

Some children enter foster care with medications prescribed by a previous physician. Some children are prescribed medications after they enter foster care. Either way, it is essential that medications are managed by a physician and given exactly as prescribed.

Concerns you may have as a foster parent need to be addressed with the prescribing physician and caseworker. All medication should be secured in a locked cupboard or box. You may not begin, stop or alter the dosage of any prescribed medication without written documentation from the prescribing physician.

### **FOSTER PARENTS CANNOT AUTHORIZE THE USE OF PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATIONS THIS MUST BE DONE THROUGH THE AGENCY.**

### **MENTAL HEALTH CARE**

Every child entering the foster care system must have a developmental/mental health assessment within 30 days of entering care. A primary care physician, during the initial well child exam, will complete a developmental screening on children 0-3 years of age. An assessment with a mental health professional will be done with children over the age of 3. Your caseworker will schedule the appointment and notify you of the date and time. If counseling is recommended, the foster parent is required to provide transportation to the appointments and cooperate with the therapist.

### **BIRTH CONTROL**

Recent statutes have legalized the purchase and use of birth control and contraceptive devices by minors with no parent or guardian approval required. This means that neither FSCA nor foster parents can legally approve or disapprove of the purchase and use of such materials by a foster youth. FSCA and the foster parents must make every effort to work with a foster youth, in conjunction with the child's birth parents, if appropriate, to pursue all available information regarding this issue to guide the foster youth in making the appropriate decision. A foster youth's decision whether or not to use birth control or contraceptives will be influenced by many factors, including the involvement of the foster parents, however the final decision rests with the individual youth.

Foster parents who disagree with the use of birth control or contraceptives by a foster youth must either agree to abide by this policy or not accept the foster youth into the home.

\_\_\_\_\_ Caregiver's initials to signify they understand this policy. \_\_\_\_\_ Caregiver's initials to signify they understand this policy.

## FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS/EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

### **ACCIDENT OR INJURY**

In the event of an accident or injury requiring medical attention, the foster parent shall **FIRST** secure medical assistance by calling 911. If the child can be moved, the child needs to be transported to either the emergency room or to their physician's office. If a foster child needs to be hospitalized, the foster parent shall **FIRST** admit the child to the hospital; **SECOND**, the caseworker or the supervisor must be notified within 24 hours. (At the time of placement, the foster parent is given written authorization to secure and consent to emergency medical and dental care for the child.)

### **REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

#### **Report Abuse Now! 855-444-3911**

Foster/adoptive parents who suspect abuse or neglect of any child must make a report immediately to Child Protective Services as mandated by State Law. If the suspected abuse or neglect occurred in the foster/adoptive home, or to the foster/adoptive child placed in the home, the foster/adoptive parents shall report the incident to the licensing worker immediately. If your worker isn't available, you must speak to their supervisor or the Chief Executive Officer. The worker is required to report any suspected abuse or neglect to the Department of Human Services. The Child Protection Law provides for protection of your identity if you wish.

### **RUNAWAY OR AWOL (absent without leave)**

If a foster/adoptive child runs away from your home or is absent from your home and their whereabouts are unknown, within one hour, the foster/adoptive parent shall **FIRST**: call the police and file a missing person's report, **SECOND**, contact caseworker or supervisor.

### **DEATH OF A CHILD**

If a child dies while in your care, the foster/adoptive parent shall **FIRST** call EMS, **SECOND**, immediately contact the caseworker, or supervisor. The caseworker or supervisor will immediately contact the Chief Executive Officer who will ensure appropriate notifications.

### **FIRE, TORNADO, NATURAL DISASTER**

Follow your families' safety plan and contact the caseworker or supervisor after the immediate danger has passed, but no later than 24 hours after the event.

### **EVACUATION**

Family Service & Children's Aid shall approve the written plan for a foster/adoptive home that provides care for a person who requires assistance to evaluate the home during an emergency.

Your first responsibility in an emergency is to take whatever steps are necessary to care for and protect the foster/adoptive child. At the time of placement, you will be given the authorization card and the child's Medicaid number or card that you should always keep on you.

After attending to the child's health and safety, it is important that you contact your caseworker or their supervisor as soon as possible. Each of the emergencies listed above requires specific actions and time frames that the agency must take. We want you, the child, and the agency to be protected from any possible consequences, which may result if the agency is not notified in a timely manner. The agency needs to report certain events to the licensing authority as required by the licensing rules. In addition, the agency wants to assist in protecting you, in the event of allegations of liability if something happens to the child and you did not report the emergency.

\_\_\_\_ Caregiver's initials to signify they understand this policy. \_\_\_\_\_ Caregiver's initials to signify they understand this policy.

## **REPORTING CHANGES WITHIN THE FOSTER HOME**

Foster parents shall report any significant changes in the foster home, including any of the following, to the licensing worker by the next working day after the time the foster parents became aware of the change:

- A change of employment status of the foster parent
- Serious injury, illness or death of a foster parent or member of the household.
- Changes in household composition (household members moving in or out).
- Visitors (adult, child, or former foster children) who will be staying overnight in the home for longer than two weeks.
- Separation or divorce of the foster parents.
- Marriage of a foster parent.
- Arrests or criminal convictions of a foster parent or other members of the household.
- Parole or probation of a foster parent or other member of the household.
- Admission to or release from correctional treatment, or therapy of a foster parent or other member of the household for substance abuse, relationship problems or mental health problems.
- Substantiated child abuse or neglect by a foster parent or other member of the household.
- Any revocation or modifications of a driver's license.
- Any major changes or renovations to the structure of the foster home.
- New pet in the home.

## **LICENSE APPLICATION FILING**

A foster parent must notify the agency within five working days if they apply for an adult foster care license, a family childcare home certificate or registration, or a group childcare home license. The agency will evaluate whether an addendum to foster home license is necessary.

## **CHANGE OF RESIDENCE**

A foster parent must notify the agency and submit a new foster care license application four weeks in advance of a change of residence. An inspection of the new residence by the licensing worker must take place before the license is approved.

## **RECORDS TO BE KEPT BY THE FOSTER PARENTS**

Foster parents shall maintain a record for each foster child in their home which should include anything given to the caregiver about the child. This could include social history, placement documents, medical, dental, and mental health records, and school information. The records shall be stored and maintained in a manner to prevent unauthorized access. In almost all cases, this should be in a locked file cabinet. **When a foster child moves from the foster home, all records regarding that child must be returned to the agency.**

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY**

Information obtained and records maintained by a foster parent regarding a foster child or a foster child's birth family shall be kept confidential and shall be released only with the approval of the agency and only to persons specifically authorized by the agency and the Department of Health and Human Services. Special precautions should be taken when discussing a foster child's case with authorized persons in public areas such as waiting rooms, public offices, hallways, etc. This policy seeks to ensure the safety, privacy, and dignity of a foster child and his or her birth family. This applies to the use of a foster child's picture in publicity campaigns. A child's photo or likeness may not be used for the sake of publicity unless the consent of a foster child's legal parent, the department or the court is obtained prior to using the child in any form of publicity. It is permissible to seek the advice and consent of the Juvenile Court in matters of confidentiality in cases of the Court's jurisdiction. It should be noted that the Court may subpoena agency records, which may include confidential information, and the agency must release the records to the Court.

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If you have a problem or concern, please talk to your foster care worker or licensing worker first. If you are unable to come to a resolution, please contact your worker's supervisor. If you are unable to come to a resolution, please contact the Chief Program Officer. If you would like to file an official grievance because you believe the agency has violated your rights under MCL 722.958a, you must put your grievance in writing and send it to the Chief Executive Officer. Please mail to Family Service & Children's Aid, Attn: Chief Executive Officer, 330 W. Michigan Ave. Jackson, MI 49201. The agency has 30 days to respond with a written statement of how foster parent's grievance will be addressed. If the supervising agency does not provide a written response within 30 days after a grievance is filed, the foster parent may file a complaint with the Michigan Division of Child Welfare Licensing.

This entity's contact information can be found at [www.michigan.gov/dhs](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs)

\_\_\_\_\_ Caregiver's initials to signify they understand this policy. \_\_\_\_\_ Caregiver's initials to signify they understand this policy.

## SPECIAL EVALUATION

### **Policy**

Family Service & Children's Aid and all foster parents shall comply with all State laws, rules and regulations that relate to allegations of rule non-compliance by licensed foster parents.

### **Comment**

Family Service & Children's Aid is required by the Division of Child Welfare Licensing (DCWL) to conduct a special evaluation anytime there is the allegation that a licensing rule has been violated. Family Service & Children's Aid is required to report to DCWL, within five working days, that a report of alleged non-compliance involving one of our licensed foster homes has been received. The foster parents will be notified that a special evaluation has been opened in writing.

If FSCA or the Department of Human Services receives a complaint about a foster parent or a foster home regarding the care of a foster child, or a rule violation, an agency licensing worker **must follow up with a special investigation regardless of the nature or the source of the complaint.** FSCA is licensed by the State of Michigan to provide foster care services and under that contract we have agreed to follow all DCWL rules. If FSCA does not investigate every incident that could be a licensing violation, we could lose our contract and license with the State of Michigan.

In most cases, the licensing worker will contact the foster parents and inform them of the complaint and set up an appointment for a home visit to investigate the complaint. If the complaint involves allegations of abuse or neglect, Child Protective Services (CPS) Maltreatment in Care unit will also investigate. There is now in every DHHS office a special investigator that handles all complaints of potential neglect and abuse in licensed foster homes and in the homes of relative caregivers. A Protective Services referral source has the right to remain anonymous. We cannot take the risk that abuse or neglect of a child or potential threat to a child's well-being will go unreported or undiscovered because the person who knows about it is afraid to report it. We would rather investigate allegations that have no basis than to risk one child being harmed or endangered because the circumstances or concerns were not reported.

Allegations do not always mean that we will remove the foster child from your home. Sometimes to protect the child, the foster parent, and the agency, we will remove the child from your home pending the outcome of the special evaluation. In many instances, we will leave the child with you. If it is necessary to remove the child, then we will tell you why and what will happen to the child.

There are three possible outcomes of a licensing investigation:

1. The complaint is unsubstantiated resulting in no change in the license.
2. The complaint is substantiated but there is no threat to the safety of the foster child, and a corrective action plan

is put into place. It is possible that in serious or repeated violations, the licensing worker will recommend that the home be placed on a provisional license and there will be an increase in supervision.

3. The complaint is substantiated and there is a threat to the safety of a foster child, and the agency will recommend that DCWL revoke the foster care license.

The foster parents will receive a copy of the special investigation report within 10 calendar days of completion. If the foster parent disagrees with the outcome, he or she may file an appeal and challenge the decision. In such instances, the licensing worker will inform the foster parents of the proper procedure.

Family Service & Children's Aid may recommend to DCWL that the terms of a foster home or group home license be reduced or revoked based upon documented evidence of a serious licensing rule violation. Any time that the agency recommends an adverse action, the foster parents may request an administrative hearing. The Bureau of Regulatory Services shall notify the foster parents in writing of the agency's recommendations. To request a hearing, you must contact:

Michigan Division of Child Welfare Licensing  
Bureau of Administrative Hearing  
P O Box 30041  
Lansing MI 48909

There is no way we can prevent allegations from being made or keep you from having the anxiety, distress, anger, frustration, and other feelings that accompany a special evaluation. We do want to assure you that we care about your feelings and that you will have support and cooperation as we work together in these situations. We encourage you to discuss with your licensing worker any questions you have now or in the future.

## **FOSTER PARENT/AGENCY AGREEMENT**

DHHS requires that Family Service & Children's Aid (FSCA) have a signed agreement with each foster family, which spells out the responsibility of both the foster parents and the FSCA Foster Care Program. Two copies need to be signed each time a placement is made the agreement is as follows:

In accepting a foster care placement from FSCA, we acknowledge our responsibility to carry out its direction for the care of the child or children placed with us. We agree to maintain the standards for foster family homes described in the Licensing Rules for Foster Family Homes and Foster Family Group Homes for Children, and FSCA's Foster Parent Handbook, which we have read carefully. We further agree to the following provisions:

As foster parents, we agree:

To respect the confidentiality of information concerning each foster child or the child's birth family's physical, mental, and social background and to share this information only with appropriate persons specifically authorized by FSCA. In addition, foster parents will not respond to media inquiries without prior authorization.

To recognize the special needs, fears, and concerns of each foster child and to treat each child with sensitivity and respect.

We will comply with the licensing rules and regulations that are listed in the State of Michigan's Licensing Rules for Foster Family Homes and Foster Family Group Homes for Children.

To immediately notify FSCA of changes in our household composition such as: plan to move into a new residence, plan to divorce or marry, and anytime any person moves in or out of the home.

To immediately notify FSCA of any unusual incidents, unauthorized visits or contacts by a former foster child or child's birth parents.

To immediately notify FSCA of any plans for out of state travel and obtain the necessary legal permission to transport a foster child out of state.

To immediately notify FSCA of any serious illness, hospitalization, or accident of a foster child or a member of the foster home family.

To keep specific financial records, school records, immunization records, and all necessary receipts as requested by the agency and to provide copies to the assigned caseworker.

To have a plan acceptable to and proved by FSCA for the provision of care and supervision of each child in placement by a competent adult, at least eighteen years of age whenever foster parents are absent from the home.

To admit representatives of FSCA and DHHS monitors into the home whenever deemed necessary to cooperate with FSCA monitoring program for the maintenance of foster home quality.

To accept and support FSCA's final responsibility to remove a foster child when, in the opinion of FSCA, such removal is indicated.

To notify FSCA at least two (2) weeks in advance of any conditions which require termination of care to a particular child unless an emergency arises within the family or home so that physical care for the child can no longer be provided.

We will participate in Family Team Meetings (FTM) regarding the foster child in our home.

We will help prepare a foster child to leave our home in a constructive and supportive manner.

We will cooperate with FSCA in the plan of care for each child, and to share all information about the child that might assist with that planning.

We will participate in the required amount of foster parent training.

If we are licensed by FSCA we will not take a foster child in our home from any other agency or referral source without the permission of the agency.

To provide shelter, food, care, supervision, and necessary items such as furniture, laundry facilities, bedding, and toilet articles to each foster child.

To ensure that each foster child attends school, that we will attend parent/teacher conferences, and that we will monitor each child's academic growth.

To provide transportation for the child to and from visits with his or her birth family, to see his or her caseworker, therapy appointments, medical and dental appointments, and to other activities or services that will help in the child's psycho/social development.

We understand a child in placement may damage or create more wear and tear on furniture and household items and that it is our responsibility to replace or repair such items. It is understood that claims will be made against our insurance company when necessary (i.e., stolen items, major damage).

We will maintain adequate insurance protection for our dwelling and family.

We will inform the licensing worker of any weapons in our home and agree to keep them secure and inaccessible to each child.

To immediately report any known or suspected criminal activity, delinquent activity, or substance abuse by the foster child or any other family member residing in the foster home.

We will not use any form of physical punishment and to adhere to FSCA child management policy.

We will hold FSCA free of any liability occasioned by the acts or omissions of the foster parent(s) in connection with the care and supervision of the foster child.

To work with the foster child's birth family in a supportive and cooperative manner and to support and cooperate with planned visits or placements with the child's birth parents, adoptive parents or with other persons important in the child's life. We agree to respect the birth family's wishes by not altering the child's appearance in any way without appropriate permission to do so (i.e., hair cutting, ear piercing, etc.)

To constructively teach our foster child those skills that will enable him or her to live independently such as hygiene, handling money, work skills, etc.

To directly communicate our feedback, concerns and feelings about the foster child, birth family and/or the case plan to the assigned caseworker or supervisor and to work toward constructive resolution of disagreements or disputes about the case plan when they arise.

To cooperate with the child's lawyer guardian ad litem (LGAL), who is the child's representative at court, and state and tribal courts and other attorneys appointed by the court. The LGAL is required to contact the child's caregiver before each court hearing to make sure the child's needs are being met.

Family Service & Children's Aid agrees:



That with the foster parents, birth parents, foster child, and the referring source will determine the best plans for the child and will guide the attainment of these goals with everyone involved.

To work with the foster child's birth family in a supportive and cooperative manner allowing them to visit and assisting them in the reunification of their family.

To provide consultation, support, and assistance to foster families while the child is in foster care and provide the foster parents with the phone number through which they can contact the caseworker, supervisor, or designated representative on a twenty-four-hour basis.

To provide counseling and treatment services to the foster child, birth family and foster family as needed.

To pay the foster parents at the current agency rate, stated in writing to the foster parents, and to assure that such payments are made promptly and regularly if the agency has legal authority to make such payments. It can take up to 3 weeks for the first payment to be received by the foster parent, and they will be paid every two weeks after that until the child is adopted by the caregiver or is no longer in the home.

To provide the foster parents with a written verbal explanation of foster home licensing rules and regulations, medical consent authorizing routine medical and dental care, including emergency procedures.

To advocate for medical and dental services required for the child and to meet the special clothing needs of each child upon initial placement in the foster home. The authority for making necessary appointments and purchases shall be with the foster parents in agreement with the agency.

Obtain necessary written permission for surgery from the child's parent, guardian, or from the referring agency or probate court.

To share information with the foster parents about the child including background, placement planning, visitation rights of the birth family, that will help the foster family to meet the child's needs and enable the foster family to determine if the child's placement in their home would be an appropriate match. Foster parents will not be required or expected to accept a child if, in their opinion, it would not be in the best interests of the child or the foster family.

To provide an explanation for removing a child from the foster home and to provide an opportunity for the foster parents to help prepare the child for this separation; and to provide as much notice to the foster parents as possible regarding the decision to remove a foster child.

After receiving two weeks' notice from the foster parents of the need to remove a child from their home, FSCA shall remove the child within 48 hours after expiration of the notice or within a mutually agreed upon time.

Maintain the quality of the foster home program through an active and regular routine training of foster parents and evaluation of foster homes to assure compliance with licensing standards.

To explain fully to foster parents any changes in their license or reasons whereby a license is revoked or not renewed.

Involve the foster parents in the treatment plan of the foster child.

To encourage a straightforward relationship and open lines of communication with the foster parents so that both can grow professionally and learn from each other.

To work toward constructive resolution of disagreements or disputes about the foster child's case plan when they arise.

Encourage foster parent involvement in program development and recruitment efforts.

To coordinate and approve respite arrangements with other licensed foster homes when given at least two weeks prior notice.

I (We) have read the Foster Parent/Agency Agreement above and agree to follow the agency's rules, policies and procedures as stated above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Licensing Worker

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**CHILD MANAGEMENT POLICY AGREEMENT**

Family Service & Children’s Aid places children who are wards of the State of Michigan in foster and adoptive homes. It is the agency’s responsibility to help parents with positive discipline strategies. Examples of positive discipline are rewarding good behavior, redirection, praise, setting appropriate expectations, modeling positive behaviors, using loss of privileges, and fulfilling the basic developmental needs of children. Service plans for each child should include specific strategies for behavior support. Discipline must be age appropriate. Infants do not require discipline.

A foster parent may not physically discipline or use corporal punishment for any reason with a foster child and will intervene with a child in ways that are trauma-responsive, positive, and consistent, and are based on each foster child’s needs, stage of development, and behavior. Children must always be treated with dignity, sensitivity, compassion, and respect.

**CHILD ABUSE IS AGAINST THE LAW AND IS SUBJECT TO PROSECUTION**

Family Service & Children’s Aid will not tolerate the use of the following methods:

- Corporal punishment, any type of restraint, or any kind of punishment inflicted on the body, including applying of substance or causing a child to ingest a substance that would cause physical pain/discomfort or cause a child to be burned.
- Confining a child in an area such as a closet, locked room, box, or similar cubicle.
- Withholding food, rest, clothing, toilet use or entrance to the foster home.
- Mental or emotional cruelty, such as humiliating, shaming or frightening a child, including threatening loss of love or removal from the home.
- Verbal abuse, including the use of derogatory or discriminatory language, including negative references to the child’s SOGIE, yelling at youth, threats, ridicule, or humiliation.
- Withholding visits or communication with birth family or threatening to do so.
- Denial of necessary educational, medical, counseling, or social work services.

I have read and understand the Child Management Policy of Family Service & Children’s Aid. I have had an opportunity to discuss the policy with my worker and ask questions. I also understand that the area of child management will be discussed throughout the foster care/adoption process, and should problems arise, I should discuss them with my worker. It is my intent to comply with the Child Management Policy of Family Service & Children’s Aid.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

330 W. Michigan Ave.  
P.O. Box 6128  
Jackson, MI 49204



Tel: 517-787-7920  
Fax: 517-787-2440  
[www.strong-families.org](http://www.strong-families.org)

## Fire and

## Tornado Plan

Use the space below to create a drawing of your home and the escape route that your family will use in case of a fire. If there is multiple levels of the home create an escape route for each level.

Please describe what your families plan is in the event of a tornado:

---

---

---

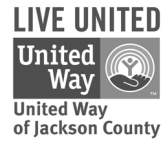
---

\_\_\_\_\_  
Foster Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Foster Parent Signature



Strong Families Build Strong



FOSTER PARENT HANDBOOK RECEIPT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I/We, \_\_\_\_\_ affirm that I/we received a copy of the Family Service & Children's Aid Foster Parent Handbook, and that I/we have read and understand the document and agree to comply with the content.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Foster Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Foster Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date