

# Lakeside Community Committee Inc.

## Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan

7418 South Cottage Grove Avenue Chicago, IL 60619

# 2025



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# Lakeside Community Committee

## 2025 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan

# Annual Report

**Lakeside Community Committee**  
**2024 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan**  
**Annual Report**

1. A committee was formed to develop the Plan consisting of 3 (three) foster parents and 8 (eight) staff members, which met on three different dates, namely on October 2, 2024, October 15, 2024, and October 25, 2024, respectively. The members discussed thoroughly all the aspects of the Plan and participated in decision making.
2. Direct Service Staff was selected by the director of foster care and licensing coordinator. Lakeside tries to select direct service staff that have a range of experiences and input from different perspectives.
3. As there were no Public Comments, hence, the committee did not have to address this topic.
4. A copy of the Plan will be available in the office all the time. Also, caseworker will take a copy of the Plan with them when conducting a visit to a foster home for the foster parent.
5. There were not any major deficiencies in the last year's Plan (2024) which needed to be discussed in the 2025 plan.
6. Lakeside utilizes the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services rule 340 that is required by all private agencies involved in foster care by contract in developing our procedure to address violation of the Illinois Foster Care Law. Foster Parents are given the opportunity to review the grievance procedure in their monthly meetings.
7. The right narratives that were revised this year were Rights # 2; There are fifteen virtual sessions on the learning development center that are up to two hours each that is needed to become a licensed relative caregiver. At the first training session, caregivers are provided with the Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE virtual orientation. Lakeside licensing staff will assist traditional and relative caregivers with establishing an account and completing their registration on the Learning Development Center. The LCD is a requirement for foster parent training.

8. There were changes to right # 4 to describe the expectations for foster parents to receive direct deposit, and details how checks will be mailed if not picked up at the foster parent meeting for foster parents who do not have direct deposit. There were changes to the foster parent law to state that if a hotline call is made against a foster parent, a worker will visit their home in-person within 24 hours to assess the home for safety.
9. There were grammatical changes, and changes to the format of the entire plan. Therefore, please read and review the entire plan.

# Plan Narratives

**Lakeside Community Committee**  
**2025 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan**  
**Rights and Responsibilities**

## Foster Parent Rights

### Foster Parent Right #1

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

### Lakeside Implementation Plan

In recognizing that the foster family is an essential ingredient to a successful placement, Lakeside Community Committee is committed to the support of its caregivers through the provision of casework practices, pre-service and continuing education training, and their role as a member of the Child Welfare Professional Team. As members of the Child Welfare Professional Team, foster parents are treated with the same level of dignity and respect afforded to any other member of the team.

Lakeside Community Committee (LCC) shares all pertinent information regarding the child at every opportunity such as: the Child & Family Team meetings that occur at least every 3 months for as long as the case remains open. Information is also shared in the monthly home meetings, when the current goals and/or permanency are discussed. Furthermore, during supervisory meetings, supervisors re-enforce to the caseworkers the need to keep the Foster Parents aware of any new information and to keep the Foster Parents connected to the rest of the team, all Lakeside Staff must return phone calls to Foster Parents within a reasonable period of time not to exceed 24-48 hours or alert other team members or the Supervisor to return the Foster Parent's call, if the Case Worker is unable to do so within 24-48 hours. At Lakeside, we consider all Foster Parents and their concerns a high priority.

To ensure the respect and dignity of all Foster Parents as professional team members, Lakeside has implemented the following:

- Case managers visit the home of all foster parents at least once monthly to keep the foster parents in all aspect of development including appropriate school placement of the child.
- Children and youth placed with licensed caregivers, whether traditional or kinship must be visited once monthly.

- Those children and youth placed with unlicensed kinship foster parents must be visited twice monthly. Circumstances may require foster parents to be visited more often depending upon the needs of the child or youth and/or risk factors present.
- Regular telephone conversations and/or email correspondence with the foster parent does not prevent the case manager from visiting the home as required.

The purpose of the home visit is not only to assess the child or youth's adjustment and behavior, safety and well-being in the home, but to also ensure that the foster parent has a safe and specific time to freely address all concerns related to the care of the children, role as a member of the Child Welfare professional team, or the adjustment to fostering. Additionally, it is also a time to monitor the delivery of services (e.g. tutoring, mentoring, counseling, etc.), update the caregiver on the status of the case, provide next court and administrative case review dates (in writing), review and obtain health information, and discuss the frequency and quality of sibling and/or parent-child visits. The case manager aims to establish a positive and cooperative relationship with the foster parent based on mutual trust and respect.

Licensing representatives are required to visit foster parents at least two (2) times a year. However, in compliance with COA standards, our Representatives attempt to visit and monitor homes on a quarterly basis to ensure compliance.

Lakeside maintains its open-door policy and foster parents are encouraged to walk in the office without an appointment to address any concerns. Foster parents may utilize this time to openly and honestly address any concerns regarding the children whom they are caring for, their biological families, Lakeside staff, service providers, birth parents the foster parents, siblings, or extended family, court personnel and proceedings, etc. Lakeside conducts annual Foster Parent Satisfaction Surveys of our Foster Parents. This survey is used to assess the foster parent's level of satisfaction with agency services and intervention and provides an opportunity for foster parents to offer suggestions to improve service provision. The survey is designed to be anonymous however the foster parent may choose to sign his or her name. A suggestion box is placed at the foster care office and foster parents can provide feedback to Lakeside staff.

All Foster Parents are given an organization chart, and a job description of the Lakeside staff that is part of the Professional Team. Lakeside will also supply all Foster Parents with a copy

of Lakeside's calendar of events that includes all scheduled staff meetings, youth recreational activities, and scheduled holidays, etc.

The Chicago Foster and Adoptive Parent Council is supported by Lakeside and was designed to ensure that all Foster Parents have a forum to discuss their areas of concerns or issues related to fostering, child welfare policy and procedural changes, and other problems with their peers who are often dealing with the same or similar issues.

As professional members of the child welfare team, Foster Parents are expected to not only comply with DCFS Rule 402 Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes but will also cooperatively and consistently carry out the service plan for the youth in their care. Foster Parents are encouraged to attend staffing at the child's school or at other agency designated sites. Foster Parents may host child and family team meetings in their homes and work with other team members to develop intervention, prevention, and preservation strategies that teach the children in care how to cope and relate in a functional family setting.

|                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Foster Parent Right #2</b>                                                             |
| The right to be given standardized pre-service training and appropriate ongoing training. |

### **Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

#### **Pre-service for Prospective Foster Parents:**

Lakeside refers all prospective Foster Parents to the Foster/Adopt PRIDE Pre-Service Training that is offered by the Department of Children and Family Services or the HMR-Project Training. Participants are referred to the trainings by their assigned licensing representative. DCFS approved pre-service in-class trainings are held at different DCFS/Private Agency locations, as well as online. Training must be successfully completed prior to becoming a licensed Foster Parent. Foster PRIDE training consists of 27 clock hours of training. There are fifteen virtual sessions on the learning development center that are up to two hours each that is needed to become a licensed relative caregiver. At the first training session, caregivers are provided with the Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE virtual orientation. ALSO:

1. Pursuant to Rule 402, Foster Parents are required to receive 4 hours of training per year. However, Lakeside Community Committee (LCC) ensures that all traditional Foster Parents have access to a minimum of 8 hours of on-going training classes per year. Additionally, DCFS is requested to approve 1 credit-hour each month for the training **the licensed** foster parents receive in the agency.
2. Lakeside provides access to additional nine hours of training as required by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services' 402 Licensing Standards for Foster Parents who are applying for expanded capacity licensure.
3. Lakeside licensing staff will assist traditional and relative caregivers with establishing an account and completing their registration on the Learning Development Center. The LCD is a requirement for foster parent training.

Lakeside's ongoing training program is designed to not only assist and support Foster Parents in their daily interactions with children in care, but to also enhance the foster parent's skill set. Every step in this process is designed to build a healthy, safe and loving environment. The meetings are designed to inform/train the foster parents as well as staff. The Licensing Supervisor will also utilize an adoptive/traditional Foster Parent in the recruitment of prospective Foster Parents. The COO, the Director of Foster Care, the Licensing unit, Continuous Quality Improvement Department and the CFAPA are responsible for the formulation and administration of all Foster Parent trainings.

Recognizing our foster parents' expertise, seasoned foster parents serve as co-trainers on various topics as they have firsthand experience with many of the training topics. For example, foster parents who have been successful at engaging birth parents through visitation and shared parenting activities co-train on this topic each year. They can provide concrete examples of how their involvement has helped enhance the birth parent's parenting skills and assisted in reunification. One of the foster parents shares how she continues to support the birth family and has been appointed Godparent by the birth mother. Annually, Foster parents complete a self-assessment identifying their own training needs and/or resources. When special circumstances exist, such as a child or youth with a potentially life-threatening illness and or chronic behavioral problems, a foster parent may be referred for external training that will adequately prepare and inform the foster parent as to handle the special circumstance.

One of Lakeside's primary goals is to develop nurturing homes conducive to the individual growth of every child in this program. Lakeside and its foster parents mutually assess the strengths and weaknesses of the foster home. This mutual assessment process is done through direct interviewing and observation of the foster parent. An informal discussion with the foster parent regarding strengths and challenges occur and the insight and information from this process is used to assist the Foster Parent to the appropriate training.

Since late 2017, Lakeside began researching assessment tools for our foster parents and prospective foster parents. We began utilizing the Foster Parent Role Performance Scale for current foster parents. For prospective foster parents we utilize the Casey Foster Applicant Inventory. The utilization of these tools has helped the caregiver, Licensing and Case Management staff to identify caregiver deficiencies and other areas of concern that may impact the caregiver's ability to provide quality care. Training and/or education is provided to the caregiver as needed based on their identified deficiencies

After each training session Foster Parents are encouraged to complete the training evaluation form. This tool is used to rate the trainer, determine if the information presented was clear, useful, and to obtain suggestions for additional trainings.

Although monthly trainings are offered by Lakeside our Foster Parents may utilize trainings at the designated sites selected by IDCFS and other recognized **bodies**. Lakeside provides all Foster Parents with information about contacting other service providers that may offer trainings and/or resources. Foster Parents are also strongly encouraged to utilize the Learning Center for additional training opportunities as well.

The supervising agency will require that foster parents take training specific to the educational, developmental, emotional, mental health, behavioral and trauma issues that affect the children placed in their care. When the agency requires training that will enhance the foster parent's ability to meet the need of the children placed in their home, it would count toward the minimum 8 hours of on-going training classes per year. For example, caregivers who care for an adolescent who is experiencing issues related to conduct or behavior problems would be required to take Module 12-Understanding and Promoting Pre-Teen and Teen Development.

### **Foster Parent Right #3**

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

### **Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

At each foster parent's meeting, a few minutes are dedicated to reiterating the process of how to access agency staff after hours. Each foster parent is made aware who the assigned licensing representative is for his/her home. Prior to placement of any children, each Foster Parent is given the name of each child's assigned worker, the worker's supervisor, and the Director of Foster Care. Upon placement, the foster parent is provided with information regarding accessing supportive services. Contact information for supportive services such as System of Care, Youth Care, Advocacy Office, ICARES (Illinois Crisis and Referral Entry Services) hotline, the Fussy Baby Network, Older Caregiver Project, fostering connection program after guardianship is completed until the youth turns 21 **etc.**, is provided in writing for assistance with finding resources during office hours and after hours as well.

During routine visits, case managers dialogue with the foster parents about the need for supportive services and provide referrals as needed. Lakeside caseworkers share information regarding accessing needed supportive services for the child and family during staffing. Foster parents need to complete a CFS 315 Special Service fee Sibling Visitation form to be reimbursed for servicing sibling visits. Additionally, information on newly developed or identified supportive services is provided to foster parents at foster parent meetings and/or in the monthly meeting mailings.

Lakeside Community Committee maintains after hours telephone coverage to ensure that foster parents can reach Lakeside staff 24 hours each day, seven days a week. The answering service telephone number is the main number of Lakeside Community Committee, as this ensures that in case of any emergency foster parents know how to reach the appropriate personnel. Case Manager Supervisors are responsible for responding to any calls they receive and for working with the involved parties until the emergency is resolved.

If an emergency occurs on the weekend or after business hours, the traditional or kinship caregiver or other involved parties are to call the answering service. The answering service will contact the assigned Case Manager or Supervisor to relay the emergency message. If no return phone call is received within 30 minutes, the Director of Foster Care will be contacted.

The Foster Family Handbook, from the Illinois Department Children & Family Service (IDCFS) is distributed to the Foster Parents at the monthly Foster Parent meetings and copies are available in our office. This handbook contains many resources and we have encouraged our Foster Parents to use them where applicable. To reiterate its importance, we re-copied this section and presented it to all our Foster Parents at a training session.

To provide better services to the children, Foster Parents, especially non-relatives, must inform the case manager if they notice or observe any major problems, concerns, or unusual behavior in the child about which they were not informed before. This issue may be discussed in the subsequent monthly meetings until the problem is addressed/resolved.

|                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Foster Parent Right #4</b>                                                                                                       |
| The right to receive timely financial reimbursement commensurate with the care needs of the child as specified in the service plan. |

### **Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

Foster parents receive payment based on two payment structures:

- Department of Children and Family Services pays room and board at the standard of need rate for unlicensed foster parents.
- Lakesides pays licensed foster parents (traditional and kinship) room and board, clothing, and personal allowance at the DCFS-established board rate.

Board payments are issued to Foster Parents in person at the end of the monthly Foster Parent meetings that are typically held on the 25th of the month or via mail when absent from the meeting. The board payment schedule, which includes the calendar of monthly meetings, is mailed to the Foster Parents at the beginning of each calendar year. Unlicensed foster parents receive the standard of need rate based upon the date determined by the State of Illinois, that typically occurs between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. Now, the foster parents have the option for Direct Deposit. But they must complete a Direct Deposit Authorization form.

The agency will ensure that everyone is afforded the opportunities to attend the foster parent monthly meeting; the agency will be more versatile in scheduling meeting to accommodate

foster parents' schedules. Therefore, Foster Parents monthly board payments will be mailed if parents are unable to attend the monthly meetings or check is deposited directly to their bank account.

| <b>Additional funds are provided for all children to cover non-recurring costs that may include the following:</b> |                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| • Camp expenses                                                                                                    | • Music instrument purchase or rental                   |
| • Lessons in recreational or artistic endeavors                                                                    | • Extraordinary expenses to and from medical facilities |
| • Musical instruments                                                                                              | • School transportation                                 |
| • Membership fees, i.e. Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, YMCA, etc.                                                        | • School supplies                                       |
| • Educational expenses, i.e. books, supplies, fees                                                                 | • Tutoring                                              |
| • Gym shoes and equipment                                                                                          | • Summer school fees                                    |
| • Respite                                                                                                          | • Placement-related travel                              |
| • Graduation expenses                                                                                              | • Medical expenses not covered by the medical card      |
| • <b>Parent child and sibling visits</b>                                                                           |                                                         |

To receive the special services fee, the foster parent must complete a CFS 315 special services fee form or sibling visitation form and parent child visitation form.

Foster parents may also receive reimbursement or payment for transportation expenses incurred for sibling or parent-child visitation, court appearances, for attending administrative case reviews, etc. To receive the special services fees, they need to fill out CFS 315 and submit that to their caseworker.

Foster parents should discuss and receive approval from the case manager prior to making any purchases. Once approved Lakeside attempts to issue payments within 3-5 working

days. Generally, if the check request is submitted by Wednesday at 3:00pm, the check is available on Friday morning.

If problems arise concerning payment issues, the matter is immediately addressed by the assigned Case Manager, and/or Case Manager Supervisor where attempts are made to resolve the issues. If foster care staff is unable to resolve the payment issue, the issue and all available documentations are forwarded to the Chief Financial Officer for investigation and resolution. The Director of Foster Care or The Chief Executive Officer will be consulted as needed.

If the foster parent and Lakeside mutually determine that the youth's needs may be best met in a specialized foster care setting or other more restrictive setting, i.e., group home or other residential facility, the youth will be referred for a Clinical Intervention meeting to Preserve Placement within 10 business days.

#### **Foster Parent Right #5**

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

#### **Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

When discussing the possible placement of a youth with a caregiver, the foster parent is provided with non-identifying information that clearly outlines the youth's current circumstances, including why a new placement is being considered and level of engagement with siblings, birth parents, and extended family members. Recognizing the foster parent's right to choose whether to be involved with the birth family, foster parents are asked to consider actively participating with the birth family to support the youth in maintaining a relationship with the birth family.

Upon placement and at subsequent Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM) and staffing, foster parents are encouraged to actively participate and engage in the development of the youth's service plan as well as supportive services (counseling, mentoring, tutoring, etc.). If court or the youth's needs require a change in the service plan, foster parents will be notified immediately via phone call or email and will receive written follow up within 10 days.

Foster parents are encouraged to participate in shared parenting with the birth parents. Shared Parenting acknowledges that both the birth parent and foster parent have a special role in taking care of the child or children in care while the birth parent(s) work toward reunification.

The more the caregivers (birth and foster parents) work together, the better both will be able to care for the child. Foster parents who support shared parenting through regular visitation with birth parents who are making satisfactory progress toward reunification are eligible to receive the family reunification support special service fee.

Each youth is placed in the home of a foster parent who can meet the youth's needs for safety and well-being. Lakeside Community Committee does not offer a one-size fit all approach to its child welfare practices. All services are designed to meet the needs of each individual and family and our practices are responsive to the particularities of various cultures. Therefore, our foster parents are trained to and charged with ensuring that the children can participate in ethnic, cultural and religious activities and that they develop a sense of identity consistent with their cultural traditions.

#### **Foster Parent Right #6**

The right to be provided a fair, timely, and impartial investigation of complaints concerning the foster parent's licensure and to be provided the opportunity to have a person of the foster parent's choosing present during the investigation.

The right to be provided the opportunity to request and receive mediation or an administrative review of decisions concerning a licensing corrective action plan specifically explained and tied to the licensing standards violated.

**Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

All Lakeside Community Committee (LCC) Case Managers and Licensing Representatives receive training annually in the investigation of licensing complaints as related to Rule 402 Licensing Standards and the Foster Parent Bill of Rights.

The Lakeside Licensing Representative provides the foster parents with notification of complaints:

1. Within 24 hours of notification of the allegation in-person.
2. Within 1 to 10 days the investigation begins.
3. 1 to 10 days the interviews and evidence collection begin.
4. Within 10 to 30 days the Foster Parent is presented with the agency findings.

The severity of the allegations determines the agency response time however all investigations should be initiated within 10 days of Lakeside being notified of the allegation. Also, due to the nature of some allegations, at times some investigations may take longer than 30 days to complete.

Lakeside Community Committee investigates all alleged foster home complaints within 24 Hours of notification of the alleged event. Our Licensing Representative goes to the home and informs the Foster Parent of the allegations and their rights. The assigned Licensing Representative/Case Worker assists the Foster Parent in all requests for mediation. The Foster Parent is informed that a person of their choosing may be present during the investigation. These allegations are then discussed very openly and fairly with the Foster Parent. The Licensing Representative interviews all parties involved.

Once all the concerned parties (including children) have been interviewed, all related documents and data are collected the Foster Parent is presented with the findings of the agency. If further investigations are proven to be founded, the Foster Parents are informed that the findings may lead to the removal of the children from their home. If the safety of the children can't be maintained during the investigation, the child/children in care may be removed immediately.

If a licensing investigation pertains to the special violations within the realms of the 402 Licensing Standards, the violations are cited on a 597-C and signed by the Foster Parent and the licensing worker. A compliance date is given, and the Foster Parents are advised how to accomplish all compliance goals. Lakeside staff supports the foster parents in accomplishing these goals as necessary.

After a finding is substantiated, the Foster Parent has ten (10) days from the postmarked date of the DCFS letter to make a written request for a hearing and, if desired, to request a written statement of the charges. If the Foster Parent requests a hearing within the allotted timeframe, the hearing date must be within thirty (30) days of the postmark on the Foster Parent's request letter. DCFS must also notify the Foster Parent by registered letter at least 15 days in advance of the hearing.

Both DCFS and the Foster Parent may subpoena witnesses and provide relevant documents for the hearing. Parents may hire an attorney to represent them if they choose to do so.

A shortened version of the timeline is outlined.

- 24 Hours: Foster Parent is notified of investigation and possible implications.
- 1 to 10 days: Investigation begins.
- 1 to 10 days: Interviews and evidence collection.
- 10 to 30 days: Foster Parent is updated, notified, and presented with findings.

|                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Foster Parent Right #7</b>                                                                                                                                        |
| The right, at any time during which a child is placed with the foster parent, to receive additional necessary information that is relevant to the care of the child. |

**Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

All Lakeside Community Committee Supervisors and Case Managers in the Foster Care Program are required to take and pass the CERAP, 402 Licensing Standards, and the Childcare Act examinations. They are also encouraged to attend Pride classes and other seminars and classes offered by DCFS.

All staff meetings within the agency include updated information regarding new licensing practices and renewals of the established guidelines. Additionally, twice a year LCC case management staff is updated on the rights and responsibilities of Foster Parents.

At these meetings, case managers are trained in all information to be disclosed to the Foster Parents initially and are instructed to immediately respond with full and complete answers to any later inquiries from the Foster Parent about the child/children in their care.

Case managers are to show via written documentation, supervision, and other service provisions that they are forthcoming about information that will enable the Foster Parent to care for the children in care. Several times a year case files are reviewed, Foster Parents are randomly called to inquire about the services they are provided, and they are asked to complete satisfaction surveys. Disciplinary action is taken if these processes determine that services are not being provided.

Currently our agency gives foster parent a binder with the following information when children are placed in their homes:

- Name(s) and age(s) of child or children
- Date of Birth
- Grade level child is supposed to be in
- Previous placement history
- Presenting behaviors (positive or negative)
- Educational status (to include Individual Education Plan (IEP))
- Health status (to include immunization records)
- Medical Card
- Dates of pending ACR's, court dates, medical appointments, and other staffing
- General information regarding the child's parents, siblings, and other involved relatives.

- Status of involvement in counseling or therapy services (includes known social or behavioral information necessary to care for and safeguard the child)
- A copy of the child's portion of the client service plan, including the parent-child and sibling visitation plans. The foster parent must be consulted in the development and/or revision of the visitation plan.
- A binder with all information of the child/children is provided as and when a new child is placed.

Lakeside wants the Foster Parent to be fully informed about the children who are placed or being placed in their homes. As new information becomes available, case managers are charged with sharing this new information with the foster parents. To ensure caseworkers are held accountable for sharing the information, case managers must document that the conversation occurred. The supervisors are responsible for reviewing the case notes and providing follow-up as needed.

Lakeside prepares a journal (binder) that is given to each Foster Parent to record information about the child. The case manager asks to see this journal during home visits. It is of special importance in instances where the child is on medications to have the medication log checked frequently. This binder accompanies each child in placement.

There is periodic in-house training for case managers on information to be disclosed to Foster Parents relevant to the care of the child. Whenever pertinent information comes to us from IDCFS that would be helpful to the Foster Parents, this information is immediately communicated to the Foster Parent, either via the case manager, in person or through a written memorandum.

Case managers are held strictly accountable for sharing information they receive in training programs, staff meetings, and other venues leading to the child's well being. Our case managers report to a supervisor; the supervisor checks the status of reports to and from Foster Parents ensuring that there is viable communication between the two. If there is a gap or a void, this is rectified by the supervisor, along with the case manager. Lakeside is committed to providing the best service possible for its children, their families, and Foster Parents. We have an open-door policy, and we provide an environment that permits Foster

Parents to feel comfortable in calling us, both to impart information and to gain information. This is reiterated at monthly Foster Parent trainings and meetings.

Any inquiry from the Foster Parents concerning the child or children placed or being placed in their home is immediately addressed by the LCC case manager and the Licensing Representative if these staff persons are unable to give a satisfactory response to a Foster Parent, the Case Management Supervisor or the Lakeside Administrator will address the issue. The Foster Parents are also encouraged to bring any unresolved issues to the attention of the Chicago Foster and Adoptive Parent Association.

|                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Foster Parent Right #8</b>                                                                                                         |
| Receive specific information from DCFS and private agencies listed in Children and Family Services Act and the Childcare Act of 1969. |

**Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

According to Policy Guide 2007.14, Changes in The Foster Parent Code, Lakeside will ensure (pursuant to Lakeside's in-house policy – Foster Parent Code (#26)) the following information is provided to all its Foster Parents and prospective adoptive parents upon the placement of a child in their Foster home, whenever possible.

The information to be provided to the caregiver shall include:

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

3. A copy of the child's portion of the client service plan including any visitation arrangements and all amendments or revisions; case history of the child, including how the child came into care; the child's legal status; the permanency goal for the child; a history of the child's previous placements; and reasons for placement changes, excluding information that identifies or reveals the location of any previous Foster or relative home caregiver.
4. Other relevant background information of the child, including any prior criminal history; information about any behavior problems including fire setting, perpetration of sexual abuse, destructive behavior and substance abuse habits; and likes and dislikes, etc.
5. In case of an emergency placement, when all of the able referenced information may not be available, the worker shall provide known information verbally as it becomes available and subsequently provide this information in writing.
6. In advance of placement, the caseworker may provide the foster parent or adoptive parent with a written summary of the information listed in subsection a.
7. Within 10 days after the placement, the caseworker shall obtain from prospective adoptive parents, foster parent or other caregiver signed verification of receipt of the information described in subsection a. And forward a copy of the information to the child's Guardian Ad Litem.

The Verification of Receipt will be documented on the following forms:

- Prospective Adoptive/Foster Parent/Caregiver Verification of Receipt of Information
- Medical History Form
- Educational History Form
- Child's Portion of the Service Plan Form
- Other Relevant Information Form

8. Supervisory review and approval is required prior to providing any information to the foster parents or prospective adoptive parents.

As pertinent information becomes available to us from IDCFS this information will immediately be communicated to the foster parent. Lakeside trained all case managers (child welfare staff) and licensing staff on the 2017 Implementation Plan which included the policy on the Foster Parent Code and the Verification Receipt Forms. Case managers use these forms to ensure all relevant information to be shared has been provided.

Our supervisors are required to approve all relevant information on the Verification Receipt Forms before they sign it. This completed packet is then distributed to the foster parents or prospective adoptive parent. Case managers must obtain the foster parent or prospective adoptive parent's signature and return those signed verification forms to their supervisor as proof of discussion and handoff. The packet, with all applicable signatures is forwarded to the child's Guardian Ad Litem.

If this process is not followed, caseworkers will be subject to disciplinary action that may include suspension.

#### **Foster Parent Right #9**

The right to be notified of scheduled meetings and staffing concerning the "child-in-care" in order to actively participate in the case planning and decision-making process regarding the child, including individual service planning meetings, administrative case reviews, interdisciplinary staffing, and individual educational planning meetings.

The right to be informed of decisions made by the courts or the child welfare agency concerning the child.

The right to provide input concerning the plan of services for the child and to have that input given full consideration in the same manner as information presented by any other professional on the team.

The right to communicate with other professionals who work with the within the context of the team, including therapist, physicians, and teachers.

**Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

LCC will provide Foster Parents with a two-week written notice or as soon as they are aware of all staffing, court, ACR, and visits requesting their attendance to participate. Foster Parents schedules are considered when scheduling agency staffing. Foster parents are also given the option of communicating via teleconference.

Foster Parents are notified of all Foster Parent meetings and activities in the following manner:

- Notices placed in their reimbursement checks.
- Notices mailed to licensed/unlicensed Foster Parents.
- Telephone calls made by the officers of Lakeside's CFAPA, who come into the office to handle CFAPA business issues.
- Verbal reminders from Case Managers and Licensing Representatives who urge the Foster Parents to attend.
- Large postings in the office.

If a Foster Parent is unable to participate in administrative case reviews, Juvenile Court Hearings, Medical Staffing or any meeting relating to a child who is placed in their home, the Lakeside Case Manager and/or Supervisor is mandated to inform the Foster Parent in writing of any decisions made that may affect the child's placement in the home. Lakeside's case manager and/or supervisor then put themselves at the Foster Parent's disposal to assist in carrying out the decisions made at the meeting.

Foster Parents are TEAM members and are also involved in all aspects of case planning for children in their homes and we, at Lakeside, specifically encourage them to share their thoughts and ideas in the development of any plan that is being established to support a child's growth. These ideas are given full consideration in the same manner as information given by any other professional on our team.

The Lakeside staff encourages the Foster Parents to maintain regular contact with the professionals who render services to the children in care, asking for information which allows the Foster Parent to help achieve the goals set by the professionals (such as teacher,

therapist, physicians, etc.) in conjunction with the parents. We encourage Foster Parents to ask questions, make their own suggestions and give to the professionals all the information they can bring to bear on situations. The child's best interest and progress must be foremost; thus, shared information and open communication are imperative between the Foster Parents, case managers and other members of the professional team.

In accord with the directives of our Chief Executive Officer, Foster Parents are encouraged to come into the office, telephone or write to the agency regarding any matters that may concern them. Every Foster Parent can access the telephone numbers and email address of his/her assigned Case Manager, the Supervisor, and the Program Manager.

The agency will create a checklist of questions for the caregiver to ask the assigned case manager during monthly home visits to ascertain information about all scheduled meetings, court, administrative case reviews, and any decisions being made about the children placed in their care to actively participate in the case planning process. This checklist will consist of the next court date, progress toward achievement of the permanency goal, and parent/sibling/family visitation.

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| <b>Foster Parent Right #10</b>                                                                                                      |
| Be provided, before placement, with any information a caseworker has that is pertinent to the child's care and the permanency plan. |

**Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

At the point of placement into a foster home the receiving Foster Parent is given a brief outline of information that includes:

- Child's name, IDCFS ID# and birth date.
- The name and pager phone# of the LCC Case Manager and Supervisor.
- Current medical and dental information.
- Current school status.
- Any behavior issues.
- Any pending counseling appointments.
- Dates, times, and places of pending ACR's and Court Hearings.
- Scheduled visitation with biological parents and siblings.
- Relevant information regarding the child's family history that does not violate confidentiality disclosure.

All children are placed with, clothing, medical cards, and a medical examination report that is dated not more than 24 hours prior to the child's placement in the home. All information that is relevant to the child's growth and development is always shared with their Foster Parent during case planning meetings, home visits, court hearings, licensing reviews and all other staffing that relate to the well-being of the child in their care.

In accordance with this philosophy, the Lakeside Community Committee utilizes the services of programs such as the System of Care, Individual and Family Counseling programs and the CARES hotline to assist Foster Parents in their efforts to stabilize children in their homes.

All LCC Foster Parents are provided with a listing of supportive community – based agencies as well as other local City, State and Federal agencies.

The agency created a checklist of questions to ask the assigned case manager during monthly home visits regarding the status of parent/sibling/family visitation. This will allow the foster parent to be aware of all contact between the child and their family of origin.

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| <b>Foster Parent Right #11</b> |
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Receive written notice of any change in a child's case plan or of plans to terminate the child's placement, along with the reasons for the change or termination.

**Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

In the event changes occur in a youth's service plan or permanency goal, the case manager ensures that the changes are reviewed through System of Care, i.e., Interactive Placement Stabilization plan, with the foster parent within 10 days.

When Lakeside Community Committee makes the critical decision to remove a youth, Lakeside will inform the foster parent, youth's family, and youth (through the youth's representative), that the youth will be moved to another placement.

Unless there are concerns for the youth's safety, Lakeside Community Committee will notify the involved parties in writing at least 14 days prior to the proposed move. The staff person removing the youth will hand the caregiver a copy of the CFS 151-B, Notice of Change of Placement, at the time of the removal. Copies must be sent to the youth's family and the youth (through the youth's Guardian Ad Litem).

In the event Lakeside Community Committee has reason to believe the safety of the youth cannot be assured in the current placement, the youth will be removed immediately. Assessment of the safety of the youth will be determined in accordance with the Child Endangerment Risk Assessment Protocol. Upon removal, the staff person will hand the caregiver a copy of the CFS 151-B Notice of Change of Placement. Copies of the form must also be sent to the youth's family and the youth (through the youth's Guardian Ad Litem).

The major reasons for the removal of a child from a foster home but not limited to are:

- Imminent risk.
- The need for psychiatric hospitalization.
- The child's placement in DOC or another correctional system.
- The child reaches the age of emancipation.

- The child has been reunited with his/her family.
- The child needs to be placed in a specialized home or group setting.

Lakeside provides appeals information and hands out brochures. Foster Parents are given these brochures which are available to them at every Foster Parent meeting. Our grievance policy (*see Grievance tab*), which also outlines the chain of command, is an option for Foster Parents to use prior to filing a service appeal. This topic is the subject of an annual training offered by Lakeside. Despite the issues or concerns requiring the placement change, Lakeside will continue to work with the foster parents as members of the professional child welfare team while assuring that the placement change occurs in a manner that is least disruptive to the youth's physical, emotional, and mental health. Should the foster parent choose to file an appeal of the removal, LCC Licensing Representative and/or Case Manager will assist the foster parent with filing an appeal, if requested. The agency will create a checklist of questions for the foster parents to ask the assigned case manager during monthly home visits to ascertain information about case planning and achievement toward the court set permanency goal. This would allow foster parents to have some concrete information about the established timeline for the achievement of the permanency goal or changes to the child's legal status. The checklist provides foster parents with pertinent information that assists with preparing the children placed in their home with the transition back to their family of origin, or further adjusting into the foster parent's home as a permanent family member through adoption and guardianship.

| Foster Parent Right #12                                                          |
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| Timely notification of court hearings and right to intervene or request mandamus |

### Lakeside Implementation Plan:

The Foster Parents of the Lakeside Community Committee are notified of all hearings or appointments related to the welfare of the child in their home by mail and by in-person

contact. Lakeside's Case Managers are required to send Foster Parents copies of any notices they receive concerning a child's progress in the Foster Parent's home.

Lakeside Community Committee provides foster parents with notification of upcoming court hearings in writing and verbally. Once the case manager receives notification of court hearings, a notice is sent to the foster parent outlining the following:

- Date and time of hearing
- Location of the hearing
- Purpose of the court hearing
- Name of the Judge hearing the case
- The court docket number of the case

Foster parents are made aware of their right to intervene in the court proceedings through annual court training.

Foster Parent are encouraged and expected to share relevant information about their children in care to the Case Manager in reference to all court hearings.

If any Case Manager fails to submit this information to Foster Parents on a consistent basis that staff person may be subject to disciplinary action. Their supervisors are responsible for maintaining a checklist for these notifications and reviewing them with the assigned Case Managers, during their weekly individual supervisory meetings.

| <b>Foster Parent Right #13</b>                                                                                                         |
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| <p>Be considered as a placement option when a Foster child who was formerly placed with the Foster Parent is re-entered DCFS care.</p> |

**Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

When a child re-enters the **system**, Lakeside's Intake Team checks past placements to determine if the Foster Parent is interested in pre-placement his/her, license is in good standing and whether space is available. It is our policy to consider the last viable home for placement prior to any other home as we strive for the best interest, of the child. However, a child is never placed in a home without the verbal and written consent of the Foster Parent.

Foster Parents are reminded during the monthly Foster Parent meetings and by their case managers that if a child comes back into the system that their home will be considered for placement. This occurs during the monthly meeting to ensure that all foster parents remain aware that they will be notified if a child/youth that they have previously cared for returns to the foster care system that he or she will be contacted to request placement.

The Intake Team, which consists of the Foster Parent, Case Manager and Supervisor, Licensing Coordinator and COO meet to discuss whether it is in the best interest of the child to return to the previous placement. The youth's permanency, safety, and well-being need as well as the youth's best interest and the foster parent's current circumstances are considered in making a placement decision.

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| <b>Foster Parent Right #14</b>                                                                                               |
| Access the existing appeals process with the assertion that the appeal will be free from acts of harassment and retaliation. |

**Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

Lakeside's existing internal and external appeals processes are available to all Foster Parents at 7418 S. Cottage Grove or via telephone at (773) 224-9217 during regular business hours and/or from any Lakeside staff member. The DCFS Service Appeal Process informational brochure is available at each monthly Foster Parent meeting. Lakeside provides annual in-service training on the service appeals process.

Lakeside's Foster Parents can appeal decisions internally through the Lakeside grievance process. Lakeside Foster Parents are informed of the internal appeals process from the supervisory to the executive level.

The licensing representatives and case managers are available to assist the Foster Parents to begin the appeals process. In accordance with COA standards and DCFS policies, Lakeside Community Committee informs all Foster Parents of their right to request a hearing to formally discuss the issues resulting in the appeals process by our agency or IDCFS.

Foster Parents can request an appeal of these hearings by contacting the LCC Manager, Case Managers, Supervisors or the LCC Quality Improvement Consultant. LCC Quality Improvement Consultant schedules the internal appeal hearing and notifies all parties of the date, time and place by inter-office correspondence or mailed letters.

**Such hearings may include the following people:**

- Foster Parent
- Any persons invited as witnesses by the Foster Parent
- Assigned LCC Case Manager and/or Supervisor
- LCC Manager
- Licensing Representative from LCC and/or DCFS
- LCC Quality Improvement staff person

When requested or deemed necessary the internal appeal processes can also include other DCFS Representatives, a Representative from the Juvenile Court or the office of the GAL, Medical, Educational or Clinical Consultants, Legal Representatives and staff from the LCC Business Office. A representative of the Chicago Foster and Adoptive Parent Association may be present at the foster parent's request to provide peer support and advocacy.

Foster parents are informed that if they are not fully satisfied with Lakeside's decisions, they can further exercise their appeal rights through the DCFS service appeal process.

Foster Parents are assured that there will be no retaliation or harassment from Lakeside Community Committee staff or any changes in the quality of service they receive because of their service appeal. Foster Parents are encouraged to utilize the Grievance Procedure (#12) (see Grievance Policy tab) to address issues and concerns.

**Foster Parent Right #15**

Be informed of the Foster Parent Hotline and the rights for foster parents when reporting misconduct by child welfare personnel.

**Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

Lakeside Community Committee maintains an answering service that is accessible through the main office number of (773)224-9217 that is available to Foster Parents and their representatives 24 hours each day, seven days a week. This service is utilized as a Hotline for Foster Parents and their representatives. Responses to these calls are made within 30 minutes.

Our in-service training program and packets and the DCFS guidelines for Foster Parents include information concerning access to LCC & DCFS Hotlines. Foster Parents are also advised of this Right whenever a child is placed in their home, and they are reminded during the monthly Foster Parent meetings.

Each Foster Parent is given the Foster Family Handbook with all pertinent information concerning the Foster Parents' Rights and Responsibilities, which also includes the Foster Parent Hotline number (800)624-5437. LCC provides orientation on how to utilize the Foster Parent handbook.

Foster Parents are advised in pre-service training, on-going training of the confidentiality of reports and investigations and how Foster Parents can be involved in any of the three different types of investigation:

- Child Abuse/Neglect Investigations
- Licensing Complaints
- Office of the Inspector General

It is important that Foster Parents understand their roles and rights regarding each type of investigation listed above. Therefore, Foster Parents are trained on the three types of investigations and their roles and rights in the investigations.

They are trained on their role as a Mandated Reporter. They are told to call DCFS abuse/neglect hotline (800)252-2873 if they have reason to believe that a foster child in their care has been harmed or are in danger of being harmed -physically or through neglect and that another person either committed the harm or should have taken steps to protect the child from the harm. As mandated reporters, Foster Parents are sent a letter after the investigation notifying them if the report was found to have credible evidence of abuse or neglect (indicated) and if not, the report would say it was unfounded.

The Licensing complaint investigation process is explained to all Foster Parents as well as the possible enforcement actions of the licensing standards in violation.

Foster Parents are informed of the roles of the Office of the Inspector General in reference to investigations. They are informed that the Inspector General is legally authorized to investigate allegations of misconduct, violation of rules, procedures or laws by any employee, Foster Parents, or contractors of DCFS. LCC works diligently with the Foster Parents in resolving issues however Foster Parents are given the phone number (800)722-9124 of the Inspector General's Office if they feel the issue they need to address has not been resolved to their satisfaction.

LCC encourages Foster Parents to use the chain of command and/or the internal grievance procedure in resolving issues prior to contacting the Inspector General or the Advocacy Office.

### **Plan Narratives: Foster Parents Responsibilities**

#### **Foster Parent Responsibility #1**

Communicate and share information with the Child Welfare team.

### **Lakeside Implementation Plan**

To assist Foster Parents in open communication with the other team members, Lakeside offers specific training and/or information sharing sessions that promote team building. Open communication skills are modeled during each of the trainings, meetings, and interactions with caregivers. Lakeside also encourages the Foster Parents through non-traditional means and activities. In a non-traditional sense we have activities to promote teamwork and information sharing. Lakeside financially supported the Foster Parent council event to draw in all the agency's Foster Parents. The purpose behind these non-traditional events is to create familiarity with staff, support the team approach and reduce any tension or anxiety when it comes to case planning for the children.

It is the dual responsibility of our agency and our Foster Parents to openly share issues and concerns regarding children and families under our jurisdiction. We are in daily contact with Foster Parents; their needs and desires are addressed immediately. The Foster Parents are also asked to participate in agency team meeting and seminars. Lakeside's "open-door" policy to Foster Parents is clearly established in our comprehensive pre-service and ongoing training components. Foster Parents are valued members of the Professional Child Welfare Team and Lakeside recognizes the importance of free-flowing information from the Foster Parent as well as to the Foster Parent, in providing quality services that target toward specific problems and issues relevant to the child and his/her family.

Foster Parents and caseworkers meet regularly (i.e., home visit, staffing etc.) to communicate openly and honestly regarding child's placement.

Lakeside Community Committee (LCC) provides monthly training to its Foster Parents. All foster parents are given training agenda of monthly training. Although Rule 402 requires Foster Parents to have 4 hours of training per year, Lakeside provides Foster Parents with at least 8 hours of basic training per year. For homes with special needs children or expanded capacity, additional training is required in addition to the eight hours.

LCC Foster Parents have the responsibility to read and sign the LCC Foster Parent Agreement as it relates to sharing of information regarding the child.

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| <b>Foster Parent Responsibility #2</b> |
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| Respect the confidentiality of information about the child and his/her family. |
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### **Lakeside Implementation Plan**

Confidentiality is also a major component of every aspect of Lakeside Community Committee's goals for meaningful trust and relationships with Youth. Foster Parents jointly share this incentive and conduct themselves in a manner that is in total compliance with the DCFS rules and regulations regarding confidentiality.

Specifically, pursuant to Rule 402.24 Foster Parents are responsible for safeguarding the personal and identifying information concerning Children in care, including his/her family, and the identity and location of all other persons or families with whom he/she has been, or will be placed, shall be treated as confidential by all persons involved with the child, including Foster Parents' family members.

These principles are constantly reinforced in our ongoing training programs regarding the Foster Parent Law (Public Act 89.19). Copies of this Law and decisions concerning Public Act 89.19 are given to Foster Parents during in-service trainings. Copies are also always distributed at Foster Parent meetings and available in our office.

Foster Parents are responsible for attending yearly confidentiality trainings and reading the Lakeside Community Committee Foster Parent Agreement regarding client confidentiality.

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| <b>Foster Parent Responsibility #3</b> |
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| Advocate for the children in the care of the Foster Parent. |
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### **Lakeside Implementation Plan**

The Foster Parents and staff of the Lakeside Community Committee are philosophically, spiritually and realistically a major contributor to the strengths and growth of children and to

the community at large. This is done through their functions in various activities, training components and seminars that teach and practice advocacy for children.

Noted below are some of the Advocacy actions that involve Lakeside Foster Parents and/or staff:

- The development of Administrative Case Review (ACR) and Juvenile Court Reports.
- Attendance at ACRs and Juvenile Court hearings.
- Participation in all staffings regarding a child's safety, permanency and well-being.
- **Foster Parents must attend IEPs and all other meetings at the school.**
- Educational training and certification by the Chicago Public School System.
- On-going training and information distribution regarding the Foster Parent Law, Service Appeals and their participation in the Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) ACR & Juvenile Court Hearings.
- Participation in Legislative Rights Programs for children, families and Foster Parents.
- Participation in a multiracial and multiethnic school is important for a foster child to get exposed to multiculturalism from childhood to have a better understanding of the American society of this day.
- Participation in the local and national Chapter of the African American Foster Parent Association.
- Participation in local, state, and national chapters of LBGTQ Foster Parent Association.
- Participation in local, state, and national chapters of Latino Foster Parent Association.
- Participation in local, state, and national chapters of Native American Foster Parent Association.
- Participation in any planning for family reunification, adoption or guardianship for a child in their care.
- Leadership responsibility in the development of new agency initiatives to benefit youth and families.

- Leadership responsibility in activities that will protect and better serve children in foster care.

All foster families are encouraged by our agency to actively embrace and involve themselves in court hearings, Administrative Case Reviews, Clinical Intervention to Preserve Placement meetings, Child Welfare Conference and any other projects that will enhance their child welfare skills in working with children and families. Advocacy support and services are a priority of our Foster Parent Council and Management Staff of Lakeside Community Committee.

Foster Parents are responsible for attending training to enable them to become Educational Advocates for their children in care. At the time of their first renewal Lakeside Foster Parents must have completed the Educational Advocacy training given by the DCFS Training Division. Foster Parents are given 6 credit hours for completing this training.

Additionally, to ensure Foster Parents can be able to advocate for their foster children, Lakeside will provide training on court processes and procedures.

Foster Parents have the right to know the appeal process. Therefore, Foster Parents are given a copy of the Service Appeal brochure during their in-service training; additionally, these brochures are available to them at every Foster Parent meeting. Our grievance policy (*see Grievance Policy tab*), which also outlines the chain of command, is an option for Foster Parents to use prior to filing a service appeal.

| <b>Foster Parent Responsibility #4</b>                                         |
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| Treat the child and his or her family with dignity, respect and consideration. |

#### **Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

Lakeside understands the importance of treating children and their families with dignity, respect and consideration. Training for foster parents on this important responsibility begins in the initial Pride Training. It is also discussed during our monthly foster parent meetings.

Ongoing training is offered to those who violate this responsibility, and our Licensing Representatives will assist in educating our foster parents on this issue.

Lakeside case managers monitor foster parent's responsibility in this area during their regular visits to the foster home and their communication with family members. If there are issues, the caseworker will request a Child and Family Team Meeting or Clinical staffing so that these issues are addressed openly. Lakeside case management staff are required to pass 402 as well as Childcare Act and are familiar with the requirements of a licensed foster parent. If there are concerns as to the quality of care in any particular home, the licensing Department is informed, and an investigation is conducted.

As part of the Licensing standards, it is the expectation that foster parents treat the children in their care with dignity and respect. Lakeside Licensing Representatives visit our foster homes on a quarterly basis in keeping with the Council on Accreditation at which time this standard is reviewed. If our birth families and children appear to be treated in any way not consistent with this responsibility our staff will take **appropriate** action.

Lakeside foster parents are encouraged to maintain open communications with the child's birth family by supporting visitation planning and reunification. By working together, they demonstrate their respect and consideration to the child and his/her birth family.

Foster Parent's input is solicited regarding the scheduling of communication and visitation with the birth parents and extended family members. Foster parents are strongly encouraged to give their opinion regarding the quality, quantity and length of visitation as it relates to the care of the children and his/her well-being.

| Foster Parent Responsibility #5                                                                                          |
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| Recognize their individual and family's strengths and limitations and to utilize appropriate supports as <b>needed</b> . |

**Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

Lakeside is responsible for conducting ongoing assessments of its Foster Parents to mutually assess their strengths and weaknesses. These assessments **will** ensure that the placement is suitable for both Foster Parent and child including the child's cultural background. The assessment information is gathered via interviews and observations.

Foster parents will also complete a self-assessment identifying their own training needs. With the acquired information, planning is developed along with needed adjustments to the child's plan of care. Such adjustments are not limited to providing support to the Foster Parents but also may include recommending the Foster Parents to another service provider for supportive services such as therapy, mentoring, respite and transportation.

Prior to the placement of any child with a Lakeside Foster Family, the Lakeside Licensing Representative, the assigned Case Manager, and the Foster Parent Liaison review the following matters:

- The Foster Parents' preference of foster children's specific sex (male or female), age, racial or cultural background, etc., to be respected.
- The foster families' preference to manage behavior problems or physical limitations.
- The working hours and substitute care hours of the household members.
- The availability of schools, medical facilities and other community facilities in proximity to the foster home.
- The availability of support services in the foster home community.
- The foster families' compliance with the rules and regulations of DCFS and Lakeside policies.
- Personal and family demands as well as the needs of the child entering the family.

An assessment is completed based on the needs of the child at intake as to whether the Foster Parents can meet the needs of the child.

Any supports that may be needed for the foster family or the child are discussed prior to the child's placement in the home or at the time of placement. Through the Integrated Assessment process, the screener and case manager meet with the foster parent to discuss the dynamics of the case and service needs. Based on this assessment we learn if this foster

parent can meet the needs of the child and the supports and training necessary to ensure a successful and stable placement.

After placement, the case is reviewed every six months by means of ACR and the service plan is revised. Any additional supports are added at this time if needed. If services are needed, these issues are to be resolved in 24-48 hours or less.

If our agency determines that a Foster Parent requires additional training, he/she is referred to the DCFS Training Division to attend additional training classes that are based on but not limited to, the following objectives:

- Reinforcement of strengths to make sincere commitment to initiate, support and sustain functions that will enhance the social and educational status of children.
- Reinforcement of all concepts of the Foster Parent Law (Public Act 89.19).
- Specific information regarding availability of support services that are responsive to the needs of the Foster Parents.
- Specific training techniques to be used in the home that are designed to change attitudes and behavior of children, relatives and the community-at-large.

| <b>Foster Parent Responsibility #6</b>                                                                           |
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| Be aware of the benefits of relying on and affiliating with other Foster Parents and Foster Parent associations. |

### **Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

The LCC agency distributes brochures, from other service providers that offer trainings around the city, at the monthly Foster Parent meetings held on the 25<sup>th</sup> of every month. In addition, flyers are mailed out to all Foster Parents, with contact information, updates and links to local service providers and to other agencies. We have also provided information to all our Foster Parents on the existence of the Statewide Provider Database. The phone number and the web page are listed respectfully: (312)814-1228

[www.illinoisoutcomes.dcfs.illinois.gov/spd](http://www.illinoisoutcomes.dcfs.illinois.gov/spd)

Our foster families are also encouraged to join boards and commissions which directly affect the lives and affairs of children and families and to utilize community resources that sponsor and support family needs. Lakeside foster parents are involved with the SWFCAC and IFAPA and attend trainings and conferences. The information that is learned is shared with other foster parents at the monthly meeting. Lakeside attempts to sponsor as many foster parents as possible at the conferences.

A Foster Parent representative is invited to the Lakeside Community Committee's Board meetings and their Annual Retreat, to present the issues and concerns to the entire Executive Board of Lakeside Community Committee.

Also, LCC will encourage the foster parents to remain in contact online, those who have access to computers, with other foster parents and LCC staff on important issues and bring those issues for discussion in the monthly foster parents' meetings.

LCC Foster Parents meet to offer support to each other. With the assistance of the CFAPA, LCC has asked Foster Parents to set up the "buddy system" with each other so that they can be a support to each other during (vacation, respite care, etc.). The CFAPA has also agreed to provide LCC with the names of experienced Foster Parents who are interested in mentoring and offering additional support to newly licensed Foster Parents. LCC Foster Parents are encouraged to join the Illinois Foster Parent Association and become a part of the Statewide Advisory Council.

| <b>Foster Parent Responsibility #7</b>                                    |
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| Assess their on-going training needs and take action to meet those needs. |

**Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

To assist the Foster Parents in determining their ongoing training needs one-on-one interviews are conducted to determine areas where training is necessary. Moreover, through observations during various child-care situations (i.e., disciplinary measures, baby teething and adolescent behavior) and staffing, Lakeside staff discusses their observations and makes suggestions to Foster Parent on how to adjust in areas with potential concerns.

Training and support needs for foster families are under constant observation by our Licensing Representative and our Case Management Staff during their visits to the foster homes and during other in-person interactions with Foster Parents. Annually, Foster parents will also complete a self-assessment identifying their own training needs and or resources. When special circumstances exist, such as a child or youth with a potentially life-threatening illness and or chronic behavioral problems, a foster parent may be referred for external training that will adequately prepare and inform the foster parent as to how to handle the special circumstance.

Our foster parents were encouraged to participate in Trauma training and to learn CPR. Over the course of the next 12-18 months Lakeside **will** embark on a journey to become a trauma informed, trauma-focused organization. Staff and foster parents will participate in various trauma trainings. By becoming a trauma-informed organization, LCC will assist itself and other agencies in more effectively fulfilling our mission of providing high quality services to children and families. Additionally, **by** becoming a trauma-informed **agency will** enhance our staff and foster parents' competence in working with youth and families who are increasingly experiencing multiple and complex traumas today.

If it is determined that the Foster Parents have needs to be addressed, one of the following steps are initiated:

- A meeting with the foster family and all other concerned parties, including the designated staff person from our agency and the Foster Parent Advocate.
- Immediate referral to resource services (i.e. CHIPS, CARES, SASS, United Way, DMH, etc.) to identify and administer services to the family.
- Initiation of in-home services to stabilize the home environment or financial situation.
- Referrals to outside resources and services to resolve the presenting problems.
- Enrollment in Lakeside or City College Classes designed to enrich children and community life.

Inherent all of these resolutions is the on-going team relationship of the foster families and Lakeside staff. This relationship allows us to have constant access to the foster homes and to the Foster Parents and their needs and functions. This type of teamwork gives the agency and

the foster families the support we need to continue the work we provide for the welfare of children.

The Foster Parent helps to assess his/her own needs through the feedback we get from the training sessions (both anonymous and oral) and using a suggestion box as well as an evaluation tool following each training session.

| <b>Foster Parent Responsibility #8</b>                                                                                   |
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| <p>Strategize with agency representatives to avoid placement disruptions and support the child if disruption occurs.</p> |

### **Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

Lakeside is currently requiring all Case Managers to do a Comprehensive Assessment within 5 days after contact with a new case. This information is communicated to our Case Management Units to determine if the child's needs are being appropriately addressed for a stable placement that provides a caring and nurturing environment and is conducive to the specific emotional, psychological and developmental needs of any child in the home.

This meeting also provides an opportunity for the Foster Parent to ask questions regarding the issues and behavioral observation areas that he/she may need assistance to manage. We also assess and identify other aspects that require more support.

As far as possible, pertinent background information of the foster child is provided to the foster parents prior to the child's placement.

It is always our plan to ensure that the information resulting from this meeting is followed by providing the Foster Parent with written documentation outlining a comprehensive summary of the meeting, with time frames for follow-up review and evaluation with the

foster family. They are also informed to verbally provide their Case Manager with on-going updates of their observations on a weekly basis. One method of early identification is the initial placement meeting, as well as the matching tool that is done within five (5) days of contact with the new cases. It presents an opportunity for our staff to identify any additional training resources that may be required. This meeting sets the tone for identifying any early or possible disruptions.

LCC case managers will ensure that Foster Parents and children have access to all supportive services to help stabilize a placement. The case manager is responsible for monitoring, observing and identifying disruption risks. Once the disruption risks are identified they will make the referrals to the following programs as needed.

**Support Services:**

- System of Care
- Counseling
- CARES
- CHIPS
- SASS
- United Way
- DMH
- Respite Care
- Homemaker Services
- Training

Child and Family team meetings will also be used as an intervention to assist in identifying areas of concern that may **prevent** placement disruptions.

Whenever possible, all efforts are made to prevent placement disruptions. Emotional support is given to the Foster Parent and the child in care through individual, family or group therapy. Foster Parents are trained **in** separation and loss issues. During pre-service

and on-going trainings foster parents are also told that the goal is to find a permanent home for the child if reunification with the biological parent is not an option. Foster Parents are also told that a child's stay may be a short one depending on the permanency goal. Case managers do concurrent planning with Foster Parents when placing a child in a foster home.

In the event disruptions occur, case managers are available to provide emotional support. If the child has difficulties adjusting to the placement change, LCC ensures that counseling is provided to assist in this transition. Where appropriate, the Foster Parent may be requested to attend counseling with the child.

Lakeside Community Committee will seek a guest speaker to talk on the topic of placement disruptions at our Foster Parent meetings.

| <b>Foster Parent Responsibility #9</b>                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Recognize the impact of foster care on relationships and take steps to minimize stress as much as possible. |

**Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

Inherent to all the Lakeside training components for staff and foster families is the on-going process of teaching stress management techniques. These evaluations and techniques include, but are not limited to the methodologies noted below:

- Contact with the LCC office for referral sources, respite care or financial buttress for themselves or any members of their families.
  - Contact with clergies from a church of their choice.
  - In-home therapeutic counseling by professional family therapist.
  - External counseling services that are available for emergency intervention.
  - Consultation with Lakeside's Educational Liaison.
  - Employment resources (including Workman's Compensation).

- Insurance programs that cover household, car and family liabilities.
- Contact with Legal Assistance Foundation or other legal resources.
- Drug and gang rehabilitation intervention programs.

Our experience, commitment to service and on-going professional training enables us to impact the personal lives of families in an effective and successful manner. Foster families are constantly observed and talked with concerning any stress related issues that might impair their parental effectiveness.

Current Voluntary Hold information will be provided to Foster Parents at the monthly Foster Parent meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> of every month and mailed out to all Foster Parents. The voluntary hold process is a temporary stress reliever that is available to all licensed Foster Parents. This is a topic that will be covered in an upcoming training.

We are a Traditional/HMR Foster Care Agency and the need for respite care is minimal. However, once a request is made, our Case Management staff immediately processes it. With the advent of its foster Parent Advisory Council, Lakeside plans to implement quarterly stress management in service training classes to emphasize the importance of and need to have healthy foster families.

All Foster Parents are trained **in** the placement hold process, whether voluntary or involuntary, as well as who may place a home on hold.

| <b>Foster Parent Responsibility #10</b>              |
|------------------------------------------------------|
| Positively promote the benefits of foster parenting. |

### **Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

LAKESIDE Agency positively promotes the Foster Parenting experience by supporting annual recreational activities among the Foster Parents and providing various social activities, such as Picnic and Bowling, throughout the year for both children and adults. The festive atmosphere (the Bowl-a-Thons and picnics) provided by the agency enable Foster

Parents to connect with other Foster Parents in safe environments where lessons, stories and resources can be shared without an agenda to be maintained. Guest speakers are invited to speak with the Foster Parents at the monthly meetings where Lakeside often has Foster Parent giveaways for all in attendance. Further, these non-traditional activities help to foster supportive relationships.

Currently CFAPA members and other licensed Foster Parents take the responsibility of suggesting the events and activities in which they would like to participate. They actively play a major role **in** implementing these suggestions. Each planned activity is followed up by a team of foster parents coming into our office and getting support from LCC in contacting the rest of the foster parents that do not attend the foster parent meetings.

One such activity is Lakeside's annual Christmas party, a festive event to which our Foster Parents are invited and **in** which the agency shows its appreciation to them. At the party, there is a brief program during which Foster Parents are highlighted and **is** shown our appreciation.

Other annual activities include the children's Christmas outings (0-12 years and 13 to 18 years), Lakeside also sponsors in September a "Back to School" party to assist Foster Parents in getting their foster children ready for the new school year by providing paper, pencils, book bags, and other school items for the students.

Foster Parents are an active part of our recruitment effort. At Lakeside's informational meetings, experienced foster parents talk with the prospective parents about the rewards of Fostering. The Chicago Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (CFAPA) President emphasizes the support given to Foster Parents through such vehicles as the CFAPA, and the other Foster Parent Advisory Councils in the area. Other necessary resources are outlined that will prepare the new Foster Parents for parenting children and providing quality foster care.

Lakeside encourages Foster Parents to make referrals to the LCC agency for prospective Foster Parents. When a referred home becomes licensed the referring Foster Parent receives a financial reward of Fifty dollars. Foster Parents accept responsibility to recruit others. Their enthusiasm and good feelings about Foster Parenting are conveyed by word-of-mouth to

their neighbors and friends. The Foster Parents are made aware of the benefits to society when preventing children from languishing in shelters, residential facilities, and group homes. The Foster Parents accept the responsibility of helping to reunify children with their biological parents where possible and gain a positive feeling in knowing they played a major role in reuniting families.

The Foster Parents are rewarded when they recognize the benefits to the children, themselves, their families, and society at large when providing permanent homes through the adoption or KinGAP progress.

To continue empowering our Foster Parents, we encourage them to participate in public hearings. These hearings are beneficial **if** they inform the Foster Parents about what is going on in their communities in terms of available resources and potential concerns/problems of the communities.

Lakeside Community Committee **always seeks** to protect our Foster Parents through continuous training; therefore, we provide Foster Parent with trainings on the media. It is our expectation that this training will enable our Foster Parents on how to appropriately handle media attention.

|                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Foster Parent Responsibility #11</b>                                                                                                                 |
| Know the roles, rights, and responsibilities of Foster Parents, other professionals in the child welfare system, the child, and the child's own family. |

**Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

The CFAPA receives written and verbal communication to attend one of Lakeside Community Committee's bi-annual meetings. The information from the meetings is disseminated by Chicago Foster Adoptive Parent Association and is not limited to information concerning their rights and responsibilities.

The Chicago Foster Adoptive Parent Association has enforced their request for a segment of all Lakeside Community Committee Child Welfare Staff to attend their monthly meetings. Lakeside has implemented this request as a mandated policy to all workers. The Chicago Foster Adoptive Parent Association's philosophy is that staff are always aware of their needs and accomplishments.

The major strengths of the Lakeside Agency are tied closely by the compatibility and teamwork that exist between the staff and the Foster Parents. Together, they have developed the nucleus of all special events for children.

A representative of the CFAPA is invited to the Lakeside Board of Director's Meetings. The Council's input is considered very valuable and is utilized in areas of concern that best service the children in their homes, particularly during the process of strategic planning. Other avenues where Foster Parents can voice their issues/concerns are at the Agency's Retreat and when the Agency conducts random phone surveys. Foster Parents are also given a voice at the Agency's Strategic Planning Meetings.

The revisions to the new Foster Parent Implementation Law are discussed with foster parents at the January and February meetings. At that time, all Foster Parents are given the updated copies of the new Implementation Plan and the Job Description. Foster Parents are also given handouts of other members (lawyers, judges, case reviewers, etc.) of the Professional Team. The IDCFS Foster Family Handbook that was given to the Foster Parents will be utilized to define the different members of the Professional Team as well as explain the court and Administrative Case Review process.

During the trainings held throughout the year Lakeside takes time to introduce and define the roles of members of the professional childcare team. Person who are not always visible, support staff and/or other persons who may have occasion to interact with the Foster Parents are given a human face and are given a chance to meet with Foster Parents. At other times at least 2 a year at the monthly Foster Parent meeting the RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES of Foster Parents are reviewed and discussed. This is a co-training event that is led by Foster Parents with support from Lakeside staff. The trainings provide the Foster Parents with the confidence to demand accountability from all the other professional team members. This

co-training model demystifies the entire process and generates buy-in from all our Foster Parents.

Because we understand peer relations, several experienced Foster Parents have been selected to co-facilitate the monthly Foster Parent meetings/trainings. Recognizing our foster parent's expertise, seasoned foster parents serve as co-trainers on various topics as they have first-hand experience with many of the training topics. The trainers of these meetings are composed of the Foster Parents, licensing department, the quality assurance department and case management. The meetings are designed to inform/train staff as well as the Foster Parents.

|                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Foster Parent Responsibility #12</b>                                                                                                         |
| Know and fulfill their role as a mandated reporter and know policies regarding allegations that foster parents have committed abuse or neglect. |

**Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

All Foster Parents are given a Mandated Reporter Form along with their initial application package, or when the licensing representative meets with the applicant. This form is explained in details and they are asked to sign it. They are advised when given these documents of the importance of their participation and the ramifications of the detriments that could happen to a child if the foster family neglect to report their observations. This form shall be reviewed at least yearly at the Foster Parent meetings to insure its integrity.

Further, Foster Parents are verbally advised about the process of investigation, if there are allegations against them or any individual(s) residing in their homes. During this process, there is an explanation of all rules that can affect them. Scenarios are demonstrated to assist them in understanding their responsibility to participate in an open manner. They are advised to communicate openly and honestly and also to assert their rights to disagree or cooperate.

An LCC Licensing Representative informs them of these processes and the 10-day time period they have from the date of investigation. Foster Parents are made aware that all persons in their household at the time of the allegation will be investigated and any other knowledgeable persons contacted.

Foster Parents will have ongoing training on licensing complaints and allegations in an effort to ensure their understanding of the process. They will be asked to sign written statements of acknowledgement/contract to confirm their participation in the training.

In an attempt to keep our Foster Parents aware of behavioral changes with the child in their care, LCC will provide various training or re-training such as on the Children and Youth with Sexual Behavior Problems Program. It is the expectation that the trainings will alert Foster Parents on their responsibility as a mandated reporter, how to handle a particular incident and maintain a protective or safety plan.

In addition to the above training, Policy 300 - Reports of Child Abuse & Neglect, Part 337 – Service Appeal Process (ensure Foster Parents understand what can be appealed), Part 383 – Licensing Enforcement, Part 386 – Children’s Product Safety will be discussed.

|                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Foster Parent Responsibility #13</b>                                                                             |
| Know the purpose of and to participate in administrative case reviews, client service plans, and court proceedings. |

### **Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

Lakeside helps the Foster Parent fulfill their responsibilities in this area by ensuring that the Foster Parents are knowledgeable about all components of the child welfare system. For example, Lakeside provides an annual training that is specifically geared towards court proceedings. During this training numerous topics are discussed.

For example, we train the Foster Parents **in** Permanency planning, the child’s sense of time, when the Foster Parent has the right to intervene as a party to the Juvenile Court proceedings, etc. We also train **in** the ACR process and how important it is for the Foster Parent to **participate** in this activity as Foster Parents are part of the professional child

welfare team. Foster Parents are encouraged to attend CIPPs because they are with our children more than the workers and have valuable information to share. The Foster Parents' participation at these events is invaluable. This information is given to all Foster Parents routinely.

|                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Foster Parent Responsibility #14</b>         |
| Know the Child Welfare Agency's appeal process. |

**Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

All Foster Parents are given a Service Appeal Brochure in the initial application stage of becoming licensed. The Service Appeal brochures are available at all Foster Parent meetings. Time is spent individually with each applicant to assist them in understanding their rights regarding the Service Appeal Process and clarification of the terminology used throughout the brochure.

It is also important to note that the Service Appeal Process is re-explained if allegations are actually reported. In this instance, a Lakeside Licensing Representative will work with the family to determine opportunities to discuss allegations and/or establish a corrective action plan if needed.

Additionally, Foster Parents are informed of their right to report to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services' Office of the Inspector General any concerns of suspected abused, neglected or financial exploitation of individuals with a disability.

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) assists individuals with physical and/or mental disabilities by investigating all reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation in order to foster humane and caring treatment of individual with disabilities.

At least two training sessions are devoted to the Appeal Process at which time there is a discussion, with ample time given to questions and answers regarding the rights of Foster Parents under this procedure. Every effort is made to ensure **that** the Foster Parent

comprehends agency's internal appeal process. They are trained in the agency's internal grievance policy (*see Grievance Policy tab*) and they are encouraged to utilize LCC's in-house process first before the DCFS and DHS/OIG Service Appeal processes kick in, if necessary.

|                                         |
|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>Foster Parent Responsibility #15</b> |
| Maintain accurate record.               |

### **Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

Foster Parents are given the opportunity to learn how to keep accurate records for the children in their care. A special training session designed to teach the importance of proper record keeping will be put on the training calendar. Methods of keeping relevant and accurate files, (that can be accessed or shared by or with authorized childcare professionals), were reviewed and introduced to the Foster Parents.

Moreover, Lakeside offered support in this area by providing Foster Parent binders so that they can maintain pertinent information of the children in their care. Finally, the Foster Parents were encouraged to have these binders readily available for review when asked by the case manager, or licensing representative who can provide information on current changes or new IDCFS initiatives/requirements.

Lakeside's Foster Parents receive on-going verbal communication as well as documents of the agency's regulations/expectations that constantly support their knowledge of the child's progress. In the training, they also are made aware of their responsibility to maintain records of their intervention and findings of the children.

These documents are to be reviewed by licensing representatives and case workers and evaluated twice yearly. Our licensing representatives and Foster Parents identify the trainings which can address the assessment. A mutual agreement, that more information about these responsibilities is needed, when it becomes apparent that a Foster Parent is not knowledgeable of the basic concepts. The LCC Case Manager is notified to review the accuracy of their notes during their bi-monthly visits. The Case Manager and Supervisors proceed to provide the Foster Parents with stronger support and direction.

LCC will distribute three ring binders with sectionals to all Foster Parents via case managers or in Foster Parent meetings for the purpose of storing/transporting the children information. The convenience and accessibility of these binders with the Foster Parents' recordings could prove to be helpful in permanency planning and in the event of subsequent placements.

| <b>Foster Parent Responsibility #16</b>                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Share information about the placement with subsequent caregivers/parents. |

**Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

Lakeside supports this responsibility by subscribing to the notion of "full disclosure". Lakeside shares all information at its disposal before any placements are made. As new information regarding any Children in placement is brought to our attention, via therapy, clinical assessments, medical exams and etc.,. Lakeside is duty bound to share this information with the current caregivers and subsequent caregivers.

This information sharing and notion of full disclosure ensures that the best outcome for child welfare services is achieved. Foster parents have the responsibility to ensure that they transport and/or virtually ensure that children between the age of 0-3 should receive a Bi-annual developmental evaluation, and an annual evaluation between the ages of 3-5. This responsibility is further supported by inviting foster parents to Court Hearings, ACRs, CIPP, Child & Family Team meetings, school staffing, and all medical appointments. Thusly, this process is repeated anytime a child in care experiences a placement change.

Finally, Lakeside ensures that the birth parents are made aware of the child's experiences in foster care including how the youth is adjusting in the foster parent's home. The birth parents are also encouraged to participate in 0-3 Developmental Screenings, Court Hearings, ACRs, CIPP, Child & Family Team meetings, School Staffing and all Medical appointments.

**Foster Parent Responsibility #17**

Provide care that respects the child's cultural needs and support the relationship between the child and his or her own family.

**Lakeside Implementation Plan:**

Lakeside Community Committee client population is predominately African American; however, we do have a small population of other ethnic groups and all of our Foster Parents have a strong commitment to ensuring that LCC staff and communities and other service providers are sensitive to the children's cultural background.

If a child is placed in a home with different cultural or ethnic background, the Lakeside Case Manager will ensure that any identified home possesses the sensitivity needed to embrace the specific rights and needs of the children in their home. These goals are accomplished through Lakeside's provision of information to the Foster Parent, with additional input regarding the child's ethnic and cultural background. This information is accumulated from the data in the child's case record and other inquiries about their cultural and ethnic heritage.

It is clearly communicated to the Foster Parent that it is the responsibility of that Foster Parent to help the child understand similarities and differences between their cultures and that of the Foster Parents (training is provided on Interethnic Placement Act – Procedures 301.60). By accepting this responsibility our Foster Parents prevent the child from feeling disconnected from their families and history.

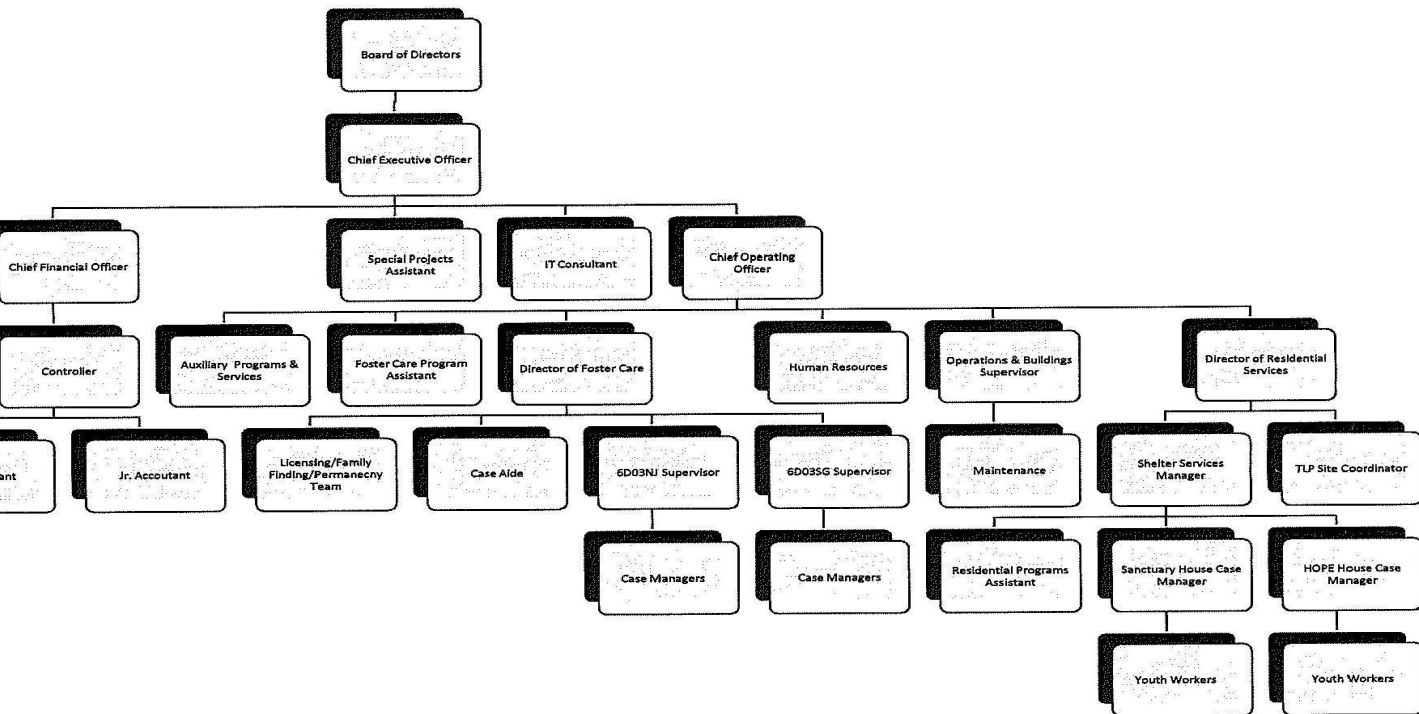
LCC is aware and in compliance with the Interethnic Placement Act (IEPA). Additionally, LCC Foster Parents are trained **in** "Cultural Sensitivity" internally and also by a staff from the Harold Washington College Training program, if available. Foster Parents are required to attend and actively participate in **this** training.

The case manager will help to provide the Foster Parents with information about outside cultural resources that fit the Child's heritage. This may include plays, movies, museums, and sculptures in the park, books, and music.

# Attachments

# Lakeside Community Committee

## Organization Chart



# Training Calendar

| <b>Foster Parent Training Calendar</b>                              |                      |                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lakeside Community Committee 2025 Foster Parent Implementation Plan |                      |                                                                                     |
| <b>Month</b>                                                        |                      | <b>Training</b>                                                                     |
| <b>January</b>                                                      | 24 <sup>th</sup> (F) | 2025 Foster Parent Implementation Plan                                              |
| <b>February</b>                                                     | 24 <sup>th</sup> (M) | Cultural Diversity                                                                  |
| <b>March</b>                                                        | 25 <sup>th</sup> (T) | Being an Effective Child Welfare Professional Team Member                           |
| <b>April</b>                                                        | 25 <sup>th</sup> (F) | The ABC's of Child Welfare (Juvenile Court Training and Administrative Case Review) |
| <b>May</b>                                                          | 23 <sup>rd</sup> (F) | Visitation –Staying Connected                                                       |
| <b>June</b>                                                         | 24 <sup>th</sup> (T) | Discipline: Guiding Children                                                        |
| <b>July</b>                                                         | 25 <sup>th</sup> (F) | Providing to children in care Health Care Services                                  |
| <b>August</b>                                                       | 25 <sup>th</sup> (M) | Rule 314: Educational Services                                                      |
| <b>September</b>                                                    | 24 <sup>th</sup> (W) | Stress Management/Unsafe Children Products                                          |
| <b>October</b>                                                      | 24 <sup>th</sup> (F) | Home Safety Checklist                                                               |
| <b>November</b>                                                     | 21 <sup>st</sup> (F) | No Meeting-Pick-up checks Only                                                      |
| <b>December</b>                                                     | 23 <sup>rd</sup> (T) | No Meeting-Pick-up checks Only                                                      |

Note: The above dates are tentative, subject to the approval of the Accounting Department.

Also, Board payment checks are made available on these days.

# **Foster Parent and Staff Input**

Lakeside Community Committee  
Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan Committee-2025 Meeting  
Sign-In-Sheet

| Lakeside Foster Parents            | Signatures | Meeting Date<br>October 2, 2024 |
|------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Annette Lanier<br>Foster Parent | Zoom       | 10/02/2024                      |

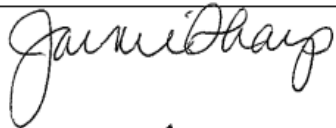
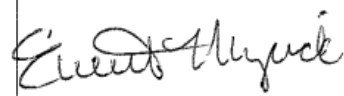
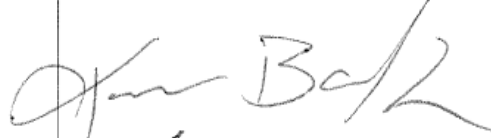
Lakeside Community Committee  
Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan Committee-2025 Meeting  
Sign-In-Sheet

| Lakeside Foster Parents                        | Signatures     | Meeting Date<br>October 15, 2024 |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Foster Parent Association<br>1. Annette Lanier | Annette Lanier | 10-15-2024                       |

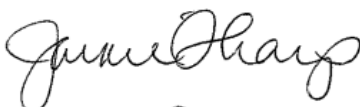
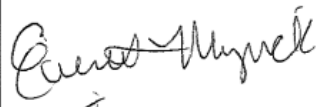
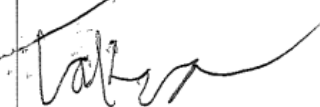
Lakeside Community Committee  
Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan Committee-2025 Meeting  
Sign-In-Sheet

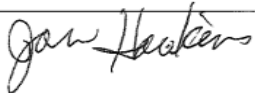
| Lakeside Foster Parents                        | Signatures       | Meeting Date<br>October 25, 2024 |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Foster Parent Association<br>1. Annette Lanier | Annette Lanier   | 10-25-2024                       |
| 2. Katie Brinson                               | Katie L. Brinson | 10/25/2024                       |
| 3. Cora Weed                                   | Cora Weed        | 10/25/2024                       |

Lakeside Community Committee  
Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan Committee-2025 Meeting  
Sign-In-Sheet

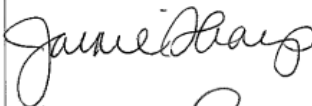
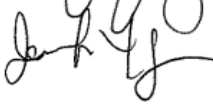
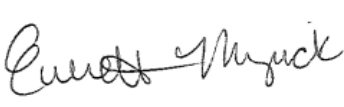
| Lakeside Staff                                             | Signatures                                                                           | Meeting Date<br>October 2, 2024 |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Dr. Jackie Sharp<br>President & Chief Executive Officer |    | 10/2/2024                       |
| 2. Dr. Tiffany Johnson<br>Chief Operating Officer          |     | 10/2/2024                       |
| 3. Jennifer Young<br>Director of Foster Care               |     | 10/2/2024                       |
| 4. Shabahyah Harris<br>Licensing Coordinator               |    | 10/2/2024                       |
| 5. Everett Myrick<br>Licensing Coordinator                 |   | 10/2/2024                       |
| 6. Kenneth Baker<br>Case Manager                           |  | 10/2/24                         |
| 7. Kameron Williams<br>Case Manager                        |  | 10/2/24                         |

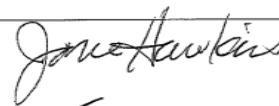
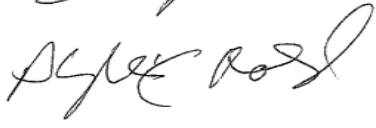
Lakeside Community Committee  
Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan Committee-2025 Meeting  
Sign-In-Sheet

| Lakeside Staff                                             | Signatures                                                                          | Meeting Date<br>October 15, 2024 |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Dr. Jackie Sharp<br>President & Chief Executive Officer |   | 10/15/2024                       |
| 2. Dr. Tiffany Johnson<br>Chief Operating Officer          |    | 10/15/2024                       |
| 3. Jennifer Young<br>Director of Foster Care               |   | 10/15/24                         |
| 4. Shabahyah Harris<br>Licensing Coordinator               | MEDICAL LEAVE                                                                       | 10/15/24                         |
| 5. Everett Myrick<br>Licensing Coordinator                 |   | 10/15/24                         |
| 6. Tara Kerege<br>Foster Care Supervisor                   |  | 10/15/24                         |

|                                                  |                                                                                    |            |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 7. James Hawkins<br>Foster Care Case Manager     |  | 10/15/2024 |
| 8. Kameron Williams<br>Foster Care Case Manager  |  | 10/15/2024 |
| 9. Rachael Durojaiye<br>Foster Care Case Manager |   | 10/15/2024 |

Lakeside Community Committee  
Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan Committee-2025 Meeting  
Sign-In-Sheet

| Lakeside Staff                                             | Signatures                                                                          | Meeting Date<br>October 25, 2024 |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Dr. Jackie Sharp<br>President & Chief Executive Officer |   | 10/25/2024                       |
| 2. Dr. Tiffany Johnson<br>Chief Operating Officer          |   | 10/25/2024                       |
| 3. Jennifer Young<br>Director of Foster Care               |    | 10/25/2024                       |
| 4. Shabahyah Harris<br>Licensing Coordinator               | MEDICAL LEAVE                                                                       |                                  |
| 5. Everett Myrick<br>Licensing Coordinator                 |   | 10/25/2024                       |
| 6. Tara Kerege<br>Foster Care Supervisor                   |  | 10/25/24                         |

|                                                     |                                                                                    |          |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| 7. James Hawkins<br>Foster Care Case Manager        |  | 10/25/24 |
| 8. Kameron Williams<br>Foster Care Case Manager     |  | 10/25/24 |
| 9. Rachael Durojaiye<br>Foster Care Case Manager    |  | 10/25/24 |
| 10. Phyllis Roland<br>Foster Care Program Assistant |  | 10/25/24 |

## Summary of Foster Parent Comments

Upon review of the 2024 Implementation Plan, the responding foster parents reviewed and acknowledged the suggestions for improvement that the official reviewers noted.

To provide better services to the children, foster parents, especially non-relatives, must inform the case manager if they notice/observe any major problems, concerns or unusual behavior in the child about which they were not informed before.

This issue may be discussed in the subsequent monthly meetings until the problem is addressed/resolved.

## Summary of Employee Comments

Upon review of the 2024 Implementation Plan, the responding employees reviewed and acknowledged the suggestions for improvement that the official reviewers noted.

LCC will continue to encourage the foster parents to remain in contact online, those who have access to computers, with other foster parents, and LCC staff on important issues and bring those issues for discussion in the monthly foster parents' meetings.

## **Summary of Agency Response to Foster Parent Comments**

Lakeside Community Committee has agreed to develop a closer alliance with the relative and non-relative foster parents to assess the emotional and developmental needs of youth in care.

There will be detailed discussion of any observable behavioral, developmental, or emotional problems in the monthly meetings for the agency to be proactive in meeting the youth's need.

## **Summary of Agency Response to Employee Comments**

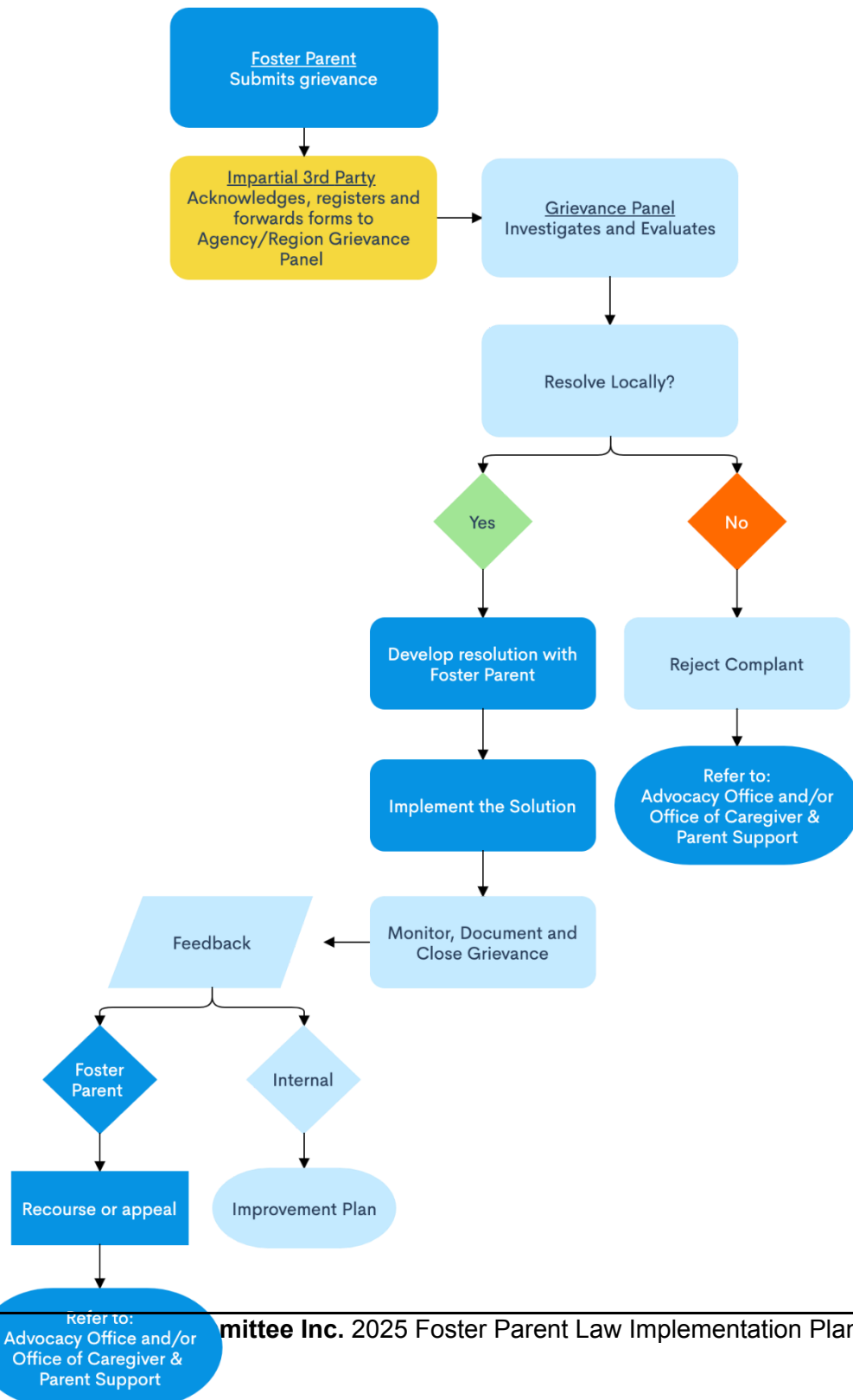
Lakeside Community Committee will continue to encourage foster parents to review online information provided by the Illinois Department and Children and Family Services. Also foster parents will continue to be encouraged to email the case management staff and talk to one another for support or topics that they would like to address at monthly foster parent meetings.

## **2024 Summary of Agency Response to the Public**

Lakeside Community Committee has not received any public requests for the review of the 2024 Implementation Plan.

# Plan Endorsement

## Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure



## *FOSTER PARENT LAW*

### Caregivers Rights:

- Be Treated with Dignity, Respect and Consideration
- Be provided pre-service and appropriate ongoing Training to improve skills
- Be informed on how to receive supportive services from the agency
- Receive timely financial reimbursement commensurate with child's service plan.
- Be provided a clear, written understanding of the plan concerning the child's placement and how it will support his family relationship and cultural identity.
- Fair, timely and impartial investigations of licensing complaints
- Be notified of scheduled meetings and staffing to participate in case planning and decision making
- Be provided, before placement, any information that a caseworker has that is pertinent to the child's care and the permanency plan.
- Receive written notice of any change in a child's case plan or of plans to terminate the child's placement, along with the reasons for the change or termination
- Timely notification of court hearings and right to intervene or request mandamus
- Be considered as a placement option when a foster child who was formally placed with the foster parents' re-enters DCFS care
- Access the existing appeals process with the assertion that the appeal will be free from acts of harassment and relation
- Be informed in-person within 24 hours of the Foster Parent Hotline and the rights for foster parents when reporting misconduct by 00child welfare personnel

### Caregivers Responsibilities:

- Communicate and share information with the child welfare team
- Respect the confidentiality of information about the child and his family
- Advocate for children in the care of the foster parent
- Treat the child and his or her family with dignity, respect and consideration
- Recognize their individual and family strengths and limitations and to utilize appropriate supports as appropriate
- Be aware of the benefits of relying on and affiliating with other foster parents and foster parent associations
- Assess their ongoing training needs and take action to meet those needs
- Strategize with agency representatives to avoid placement disruptions and support the child if disruptions occurs
- Recognize the impact of foster care on relationships and take steps to minimize stress as much as possible
- Positively promote the benefits of foster parenting

- Know the role, rights and responsibilities of foster parents, other professionals in the child welfare system, the child and the child's own family
- Know and fulfill their role as a mandated reporter and know policies regarding allegations that foster parents have committed abuse or neglect
- Know the purpose of and to participate in administrative case reviews, client service plans and court proceedings
- Know the child welfare agencies appeal process
- Maintain accurate records
- Share information about the placement with subsequent caregivers/parents
- Provide care that respects the child's cultural needs supports the relationship between the child and his or her own family

# Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure

DCFS Rule 340 requires all DCFS regions and private agencies involved in foster care by contract with the Department of Children and Family Service have a procedure in place to address violations of the Illinois Foster Parent Law. This process is to be used only for grieving alleged violations of the Foster Parent Law that are not covered by an already existing grievance or appeal process. For example, service appeals, indicated cases of child abuse/neglect and licensing investigation findings or revocations would be addressed through other channels.

**Retaliation is prohibited.** Any circumstances of perceived retaliation should immediately be reported to:

DCFS Advocacy Office      217-524-2029 or 800-232-3798      [dcfs.advocacy@illinois.gov](mailto:dcfs.advocacy@illinois.gov)

DCFS Office of Caregiver & Parent Support    217-782-2947

[DCFS.StatewideFosterCareAdvisoryCouncil@illinois.gov](mailto:DCFS.StatewideFosterCareAdvisoryCouncil@illinois.gov)

## Submitting a Grievance

If you have attempted to resolve an issue informally through the persons involved and did not come to a mutually agreeable resolution, please complete and submit this form.

| FOSTER PARENT INFORMATION |          |
|---------------------------|----------|
| Foster Parent Name        |          |
| Provider Number           |          |
| Street Address            |          |
| City, State, Zip Code     |          |
| Phone Number      Day:    | Evening: |
| Email Address             |          |
| Case Name                 |          |
| Case ID#                  |          |
| Worker's Name             |          |
| Worker's Phone #          |          |
| Office Location           |          |

### A. Foster Parent Law

Which right from the Foster Parent Law has been violated, in your opinion?

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### B. Complaint Details

Describe the alleged violation, including names, dates, and other information that will be useful in coming to an agreeable resolution.

[illegible]

Describe any steps already taken to resolve the issue:

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Please provide any suggestions for helping us work together to resolve this issue:

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Signature : \_\_\_\_\_

*For Office Use Only:*

**A. Intake Information**

Date Completed Form Received: \_\_\_\_\_ 30-Day Deadline for Resolution \_\_\_\_\_

Foster Parent Acknowledged by:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Which Right was allegedly violated? \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Investigation**

Steps in investigation and evaluation with dates/ names of people participating in each step:

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**C. Results**

Decision to Resolve Locally: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes:

Describe steps you have taken to resolve the issue with the foster parent. Include names/dates.

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Did you determine there was a violation? If yes, please describe:

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Please describe the way you monitored the solution, documenting the outcomes:

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If this was not resolved in-house, why not?

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#### D. **Feedback**

Did you refer the complainant to the DCFS Advocacy Office? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Did you refer them to the DCFS Office of Caregiver & Parent Support? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

What has your agency/region learned from this process? How will it impact service delivery?

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E. **Signatures** of everyone involved in the grievance resolution:

|       |             |
|-------|-------------|
| _____ | Date: _____ |
| _____ | Date: _____ |
| _____ | Date: _____ |
| _____ | Date: _____ |
| _____ | Date: _____ |
| _____ | Date: _____ |

## **2024 Foster Parent Grievance**

**There were no grievances received from the foster parents during the 2024 fiscal year.**