THE SOUTHERN REGION 2016 FOSTER PARENT LAW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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History of the Foster Parent Law

In the late 80's as Chair of the Child Welfare Subcommittee, Representative Tom Dart traveled around the state listening to child welfare issues. Foster parents who were already involved in the Illinois Foster Parent Association attended those town meetings and began voicing their concerns. As a result, a select few were invited to testify in political forums. The result of Representative Dart's findings led to a legislative report of recommendations for improving the child welfare system. Included in those recommendations was a Foster Parent Bill of Rights.

Representative Dart introduced the Foster Parent Bill of Rights to the Illinois General Assembly, but because of its lack of legal language and corresponding responsibility section the Bill was referred back for negotiations. A Governor's Task Force was formed to create a "responsibility" section and to write the entire recommendation in a legal format. A few legislators, selected DCFS staff, and some of the original group of foster parents were assigned to this taskforce.

On June 3rd, 1995, Governor Edgar signed Public Policy 89.19 into law. The original Foster Parent Bill of Rights, now incorporated in The Foster Parent Law, became a reality on its third trip before the legislature. Its title is misleading because it is actually good child welfare practice that is not intended to be a solution but a step toward better teamwork between DCFS and foster parents. Indeed, it is the foundation for all foster parent trainings, conferences, and work groups. It is also a part of new worker training and will be included in Best Practice.

The fifteen Rights and seventeen Responsibilities listed in the Foster Parent Law provide a job description for foster parents. The Foster Parent Law is also a part of DCFS policy (P.T. 2000.14) and rule (Foster Parent Code 340). "The Department and purchase of service agencies are responsible for developing annual plans for implementation of the law to insure that foster parents are provided with the information and support to fulfill their responsibility to fully participate as a member of the child welfare team," [Foster Parent Code – Section 340.30]. Annual plans must be submitted to the Illinois Statewide Foster Parent Advisory Council for review and approval. The implementation plan must state how each DCFS region or private agency will implement the law for their licensed foster parents. These plans are graded and must achieve a passing rate or they are returned to the agency for resubmission. A monitoring process is being developed that will hold regions and agencies accountable for their plans.

I. 2015 Annual Implementation Plan Report

The Southern Region is proud to present the following annual report.

The Statewide Foster Parent Advisory Council evaluated and reviewed the Southern Region's Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan for 2015 and rated it *Acceptable*.

The Southern Region Foster Parent Law Training was successfully implemented. A total of ten trainings were held in the Southern Region. The trainings are conducted by Southern Region staff with foster parent collaboration. The trainings were attended by both staff and foster parents throughout the region. This provides for excellent opportunity for enhanced communication between foster parents and staff. It has been particularly beneficial for newer staff and foster parents. Foster parents and staff were notified of the trainings by either direct mailing or email listing locations, dates, and times. As a result of these trainings staff gained a greater knowledge about the Foster Parent Law and what their responsibilities are in implementation, and what responsibilities foster parents and staff share. An interactive format allowed for staff and foster parents to discuss current practice and ideas as they relate to the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. The continued use of vignettes has proven effective to emphasize the Law's connection to direct services and real life application.

The Southern Region Foster Parent Advisory Council retained the quarterly meeting format in order to maximize foster parent representation. Four meetings were held using the teleconference format connecting six (6) geographically separate sites. Foster parents who were unable to attend physically at one of the sites were offered the teleconference number to call in to the meeting, as well. This arrangement minimizes travel for foster parents and increases their opportunity to participate. The meetings were held in the evening from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Southern Region Advisory Council meetings are preceded by an informal "pre-meeting" at each site where foster parents are encouraged to present any concerns, issues, problems, and suggestions. If issues discussed in the pre-meeting relate to the Foster Parent Law Rights and Responsibilities, then the site host will present these during the formal Advisory Council meeting. This has proven successful in helping to resolve issues informally at a local level. The intention is to strengthen this forum by continued distribution of the information about these meetings and encouragement locally by staff and other foster parents to increase in person participation.

In September a team of foster parents and staff met to review and revise the current plan. Suggestions for improvement that were listed in the notification scoring letter were used to guide any changes. Foster parent comments on the 2014 Implementation Plan were also reviewed and addressed where appropriate. After revisions were made, all foster parents in the region were notified by a direct mailing of the opportunity to request a copy of the plan for review, comment, and approval. These plans are also accessible at all DCFS field offices during the last week of October and first week of November. DCFS staff also received a similar notification via the Outlook email system.

Public comment was encouraged by publication in the official state newspaper, the *Taylorville Breeze-Courier* and also in direct mailings to all the region's foster families. Foster parents were advised that their comments would be kept on file and considered in development of the final plan.

Approval and sign-off procedures remained the same. All staff and foster parents who attended the final Advisory Council meeting of the year were given the opportunity to register their approval of the plan. In addition, foster parents or staff who requested the plan were provided with an "approval form" along with a stamped self-addressed envelope to return the signed form. A copy of the plan was placed in each field office with a notification to foster parents that they could review the plan in the office and sign a document registering their approval.

After approval, a letter is sent to all Southern Region foster parents letting them know that the approved plan is available to them in a hard copy or via email attachment.

Deficiencies/suggestions for improvement of the 2015 DCFS Southern Region Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan were discussed and addressed, as follows:

- The October 16th Review and Revision meeting appears to include only staff. We don't need staff names. Please send names of foster parents involved in plan development.
  Answer: Increased effort and focus on getting foster parents to attend and participate in the revision meeting were made this year. As a result we were able to get representatives from three different foster families to participate in our revision meeting. The sign in sheet, including both staff and foster parent names, is submitted as an attachment.
- Follow the Style Sheet we provide when writing your Annual report.
  Answer: The Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan Revised Style Sheet guide, dated 08-2015, was consulted and used to write this year's annual report.
- Please use this form (our feedback) when revising your plan.
  Answer: The Reviewer's Overall Comments were shared with the Southern Region Foster Parent Advisory Council and with the participants in the revision meeting. The strengths, deficiencies/suggestions for improvement, and general comments were discussed and used to guide the revisions to this year's plan.
- Caseworkers should be trained to work with foster parents to identify placements at risk of disruption.
  Answer: This was discussed with the Southern Region Foster Parent Advisory Council and with the participants at the revision meeting. Significant changes to the "placement stabilization" services that we offer to foster children and families took place this last year. The goal of the changes is to increase the effectiveness of this service. Staff were given information on this service, including when and how to refer foster families to the new Intensive Placement Stabilization service.

The Southern Region grievance process remains unchanged. Foster parents received a copy of the procedure via direct mail in September to reacquaint them with this process. In addition, any Foster Parent who attended the Foster Parent Law trainings received a review of the process. A centralized filing system is still in use to maintain copies of all grievances. There were no formal grievances filed in 2015.

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FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS

(HOW THE AGENCY IS ADDRESSING EACH FOSTER PARENT RIGHT IN THE FOSTER PARENT LAW)

FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS	CRITERIA FOR ENSURING EACH FOSTER PARENT'S RIGHTS	THE SOUTHERN REGION'S CURRENT OR PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION METHODS TO ENSURE CRITERIA FOR FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS
1) The right to be treated with dignity, respect, and consideration as a professional member of the child welfare team.	• The agency or region has and implements strategies to ensure that its foster parents are treated with dignity and respect.	**The Southern Region has the following strategies in place to ensure that foster parents are treated with dignity and respect:** The Foster Parent Law is defined in the Southern Region Implementation Plan. Foster parents are made aware of the Plan via letter from the Resource Unit, the Our Kids section of Illinois Families Now and Forever newsletter, support groups, staff members, Foster Parent Support Specialist, their Leads, and it is discussed at Foster Parent Law training region wide. Foster parents are encouraged to submit their suggestions and comments either in person at the Advisory Council meetings, by mail, e-mail, phone calls, or at local support groups. Foster parents are very important members of the child welfare team. Mutual respect and confidence is built on positive experiences and open communication between the foster parent and the Department. Foster parents are given recognition for years of service and their crucial role as part of the team. This recognition is acknowledged through annual appreciation events, fairs, and coffee breaks hosted and attended by agency staff and foster parents. The success of the team approach to case planning is measured through foster parent satisfaction surveys. Foster parents are part of the Quality Improvement (QI) committees held in the field offices and there is also representation on the Regional Quality Council (RQC). **The foster parents are further treated with dignity, respect and consideration by the following methods and procedures:** Direct line staff learn techniques to engage and empower all members involved in the child welfare system, which includes treating foster parents with dignity and respect, during their initial training. This continues by offering Trauma Focused training. • Foster parents are encouraged to attend and provide input at Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's) • Foster parents have the opportunity to work with birth parents through mentoring and reunification activities • Foster parents serve as educational advocates for Foster Children, and have access to the Regional Educational Liaison • Foster parents are offered access to resources on LANs (Local Area Networks) and encouraged to become active participants in the community services for their foster children. • Foster Parent Satisfaction Surveys are utilized and the data gathered will shape future services. Information gathered is aggregated quarterly and provided to the appropriate RQC

FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS	CRITERIA FOR ENSURING EACH FOSTER PARENT'S RIGHTS	THE SOUTHERN REGION'S CURRENT OR PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION METHODS TO ENSURE CRITERIA FOR FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS
Right 1 (con't)		sub-committee and Quality Assurance staff. • As caregivers Foster parents are encouraged by caseworkers to participate in any meetings related to the best interest in permanency and placement of the child, including family meetings, Administrative Case Reviews, Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation, or other service providers.

2) The right to be given standardized pre-service training and appropriate ongoing training to meet mutually assessed needs and improves the foster parent's skills.	• Minimum standardized pre-service training • PRIDE training • Co-Training approach (foster parent/staff) • Regular utilization of mutual assessment tool for training needs • Training commensurate with levels of care provided • Evidence of ongoing training schedule or calendar	The Southern Region ensures foster parents' rights to training through on-going collaboration with Division of Training and Development Services. The following types of training are made available to foster parents on a continuing basis: • **Standardized Pre-Service** schedules are currently in place for the Southern Region. The PRIDE training is being revised and will continue to be offered in person but an online version will also be available soon. (See attached schedules in the Attachments Section). Relative Only caregivers have the option of receiving necessary training via DVD. • **In-service training** modules, educational advocacy, adopt only and adoption conversion for licensed foster parents occurs on a regular basis. In-service Training is offered at a variety of sites. • **Foster parent co-training** with staff occurs during PRIDE In-Service training, as well as, PRIDE Module Training. There is also Foster Parent Law co-training held at a variety of sites in the Region annually. • **Mutual assessment** for training needs occur at annual monitoring visits, during corrective action planning, at re-licensing or when changes occur in families that threaten to disrupt placement. • **Training commensurate with the levels of care provided** based on the mutual assessment listed above. Foster parents are encouraged to take advantage of available training, library material, conferences, seminars, and other community linkages. • **Evidence of ongoing training** (In-service/Modules) schedules or calendars can be found in the Attachment Section. The Division of Training and Development Services makes this information available on the DCFS web site, www.state.il.us/dcfs. For a copy of the current schedule, or to obtain a Virtual Training Center (VTC) identification number contact the Training Unit at 877-800-3393. At DCFS sponsored training, foster parents are given a form with information on how to set up a VTC account. (See Training Attachment section) The current schedules are also available in the *IL Families Now and Forever* newsletter. The challenges for the Southern Region continues to be the task of making training reasonably accessible to all foster parents due to the large geographical region, which includes thirty-four counties. Utilization of www.fosterclub.com for training hours and for general information on fostering and issues dealing with children is one way to address this barrier.

3) The right to be informed as to how to contact the appropriate child care agency in order to receive information and assistance to access supportive services for children in the foster parent care.	• 24 hour/7 day availability of emergency support • Established method for accessing support services (e.g., SASS, placement stabilization and staff phone numbers and on-call schedules)	**The Southern Region utilizes the following methods to ensure that foster parents have access to the Department's emergency services on a 24-hour 7 day a week basis:** The Southern Region maintains a comprehensive support system to ensure the accessibility of staff and other service providers to assist foster parents and foster children 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. An after-hours, emergency response can be accessed through the statewide Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-25-ABUSE). Hotline staff contact local Department staff who are "on call" to respond to reports of child abuse and neglect as well as crises experienced by foster parents. Many workers and supervisors share their home phone numbers with foster parents, particularly during times of crisis. If a foster parent and their worker (or on-call worker) are unable to resolve a crisis with a child themselves, the foster parent and worker can obtain crisis response services through their local Intensive Placement Stabilization provider. Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS) staff are also available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and can be contacted through the statewide Crisis and Referral Line/CARES 1-800-345-9049; TTY 1-800-905-9645; www.hfs.illinois.gov. If a foster parent is confronted with behaviors by a foster child that the foster parent believes may create an immediate risk of harm to the child or others, the foster parent is encouraged to access SASS services to assess the child for psychiatric hospitalization. SASS agencies are also contacted through the Statewide Crisis and Referral Line/CARES. New foster parents are instructed on how to seek assistance after hours during Pre-Service PRIDE training. Licensed foster parents are given information about after-hours support on an individual basis by their foster child's worker. Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS) are a valuable support to foster parents, and are experts on resources available in their counties. New foster parents are given the contact information of the FPSS serving their area. The Foster Family Handbook is another valuable resource tool, and section nine of the Handbook provides information about supportive services in detail. During PRIDE training, foster parents are also given information about Illinois Foster Parent Association meetings as one way of developing a peer support network. In addition to the Foster Parent Association, foster parent support groups are also available to foster parents throughout the Southern Region.

4) The right to receive timely financial reimbursement commensurate with the care needs of the child as specified in the service plan	• Regular board payment (attached rate schedule) • Payment for additional services, such as respite care and camp • Timely assessment and payment commensurate with levels of care provided • Method of resolving payment problems	The Southern Region recognizes that the prompt processing of 906 Placement forms is vital to ensure that foster parents receive a timely reimbursement. Effective July 1, 2006 the Case Assignment Payment Unit (CAPU) began data entering all Southern Region placements. Workers will submit the CAPU packets in a timely manner to ensure the foster parent provider receives their payment via the earliest board run. The Region expectation is that the 906 on all subsequent placement information be emailed in immediately following placements during regular business hours or the morning of the next business day for placements that occur after hours or weekends. Regular board payment rate schedule attached. Under the guideline of Department Rule/Procedure 359, the Southern Region ensures foster parent's rights to payment for additional services such as respite and camp on a child-by-child basis. The foster child's permanency worker, in conjunction with foster parent's input, initiates this request for extra support services. The immediate supervisor and Area Administrator, approves the request which is subsequently forwarded to the Regional Office for processing within five days. Timely assessment and payment commensurate with levels of care provided is assured by: All children who enter substitute care must be screened for special mental or medical health needs by the placing worker through the use of the "CFS 418-J; Checklist for Children at Initial Placement." When special needs are identified, the worker is to fax this CFS 418-J checklist and supporting documentation to the Specialized Gatekeeping and CAPU to consider for placement of the child in specialized foster care. If approved by the Specialized Gatekeeper, the child is referred to an agency that contracts with the Department to provide this, and the child is placed in a foster home that receives an intensive level of services from the agency along with a specialized foster care board payment. Often, a foster child's mental health or behavioral concerns are not readily apparent at initial placement. The Integrated Assessment (IA), which is completed in the first 45 days (at the present time only new traditional cases), is designed to identify any needs a child coming into care may have. However, when foster parents confront difficult behaviors from the child following placement, foster parents are afforded in-home crisis intervention, placement stabilization and other therapeutic services through local community resources and Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS). IPS providers assess the strengths and needs of the child and foster family and identify the necessary supports to preserve the child's placement. In the event that the IPS provider assesses that the child requires a higher level of foster care with more intensive services, the IPS provider will make this recommendation through a referral by the child's worker to the Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP). If the child is approved for specialized foster care, the child is referred to one of the contract agencies that provide this level of care. When it is in the child's best interest to remain with their current foster parent, the supervision of the child's placement in that foster home is provided by the contracted agency, and the foster

Right 4 (con't)		parent receives a specialized foster care board rate. Method of resolving payment problems: Foster parents who disagree with the determination on the child's eligibility for specialized foster care may file an appeal through the Administrative Hearings Unit. Any payment problems involving a DCFS foster parent caring for a child supervised by a private agency is directed to the regional Agency Performance Team (APT). Other payment issues are addressed in the Foster Family Handbook in Section 9, pp 18 – 23. The Southern Region Department staff offer foster parents help in addressing these issues.

FY 2015 Board Rates

MONTHLY PAYMENT SCHEDULE
Licensed, Non-Specialized Foster Care
Effective July 1, 2014

Child's Age	Board		Clothing		Allowance		Total
0 to 11 months	$366.00		$39.00	*	$13.00		**$ 418.00**
1 to 4 years	$368.00		$44.00	*	$14.00		**$ 426.00**
5 - 8 years	$371.00		$59.00		$15.00		**$445.00**
9 - 11 years	$379.00		$68.00		$25.00		**$472.00**
12 and over	$389.00		$77.00		$45.00		**$511.00**

* Personal allowance for children 4 years and under is to be used for incidentals (toys, rattles, etc.), which become the property of the child.

5) The right to be provided a clear, written understanding of a placement agency's plan concerning the placement of a child in foster parent's home. Inherent in this right is the foster parent's responsibility to support activities that will promote the child's right to relationships with his or her own family and cultural heritage.	• Foster parent participation in development of the case plan • Timely notification of changes in case plan/ permanency goal, including method of notification • Foster parent participation/ input into visitation/ communication plan	Foster parent participation in the development of the case plan is assured t communication between caseworkers and foster parents at home visits, ph Meetings, Child and Family Teams, at Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's ideas and suggestions are considered as the service plan is developed. Foster parents' rights to timely notification concerning changes in their foste being ensured by: • Established written notifications that provide foster parents the oppc foster child's ACR and share in case plan changes. Notification of t to the foster parent approximately 14 days prior to review in order tc date of the review and to gather information. • Foster parents are given a copy of the child's portion of the Service unable to attend it is mailed to them. • Often phone calls are utilized for timely notification of changes. • As stated in the permanency initiative Policy Guide 98.1 the Southe caseworkers provide the primary foster parents a monthly face-to-fa • Participation/input into visitation/communication plan is ensured anc the Behavior Log, and Medication Log. These are forms submitted parent and given to workers during monthly in-home visits. • Other means of gathering information for input into the plan is phon the foster parents. • The foster parent will notify the worker on the amount of communica the birth family that is comfortable for them. Foster parents can stip flexible telephone conversations with the birth family and their willin in their home. They will also discuss their ability to transport the chi order to build on the importance of family preservation. • The CFS 250-A Caregiver's Self Assessment of Reunification Prepa foster parents in conjunction with licensing staff at initial licensure a assist foster parents in determining their willingness and ability to pa reunification goal for a child in their care. If a foster parent needs fur training in regards to a reunification goal a three hour training is offe often, as needed, through the Department's Training Unit.

6) The right to be provided a fair, timely, and impartial investigation of complaints concerning the foster parent's licensure, to be provided the opportunity to have a person of the foster parent's choosing present during the investigation, and to be provided due process during the investigation; the right to be provided the opportunity to request and receive mediation or an administrative review of decisions that affect licensing parameters, or both mediation and an administrative review; and the	• Policy describing the agency's investigation of alleged violations and demonstration of how the agency disseminates that information to foster parents • Person of foster parent's choosing present during the investigation • Specified time frames for investigation • Procedure for appealing negative results/ corrective action plans (NOTE: Merely stating that DCFS procedure is followed is not sufficient.)	• Policy describing the agency's investigation of alleged violations is made available via the DCFS training website, www.dcfstraining.org. • During the initiation of licensing complaints, foster parents are granted a grace period of 4 hours to obtain an advocate. When initiating a licensing complaint, the assigned Foster Home Licensing Representative (FHLR) worker is required to verbally inform the foster parent that they may have an advocate of their choice present during the course of their interview. • There are specified time frames for investigation of complaints. FHLR worker must give foster parents 4 hours' notice. Additionally, the FHLR is required to explain to the foster parent under investigation of a complaint that within thirty (30) days of their interview they will receive written correspondence concerning their complaint. If an extension is necessary, the foster parent is informed in writing with the reason documented in the notice. • The procedure for appealing negative results/corrective action plans is explained in a written action plan stating the licensing violation, corrections need, and time frame for completion. The Foster Parent may request an informal review either verbally or in writing by contacting the FHLR supervisor. If agreement is not reached, the Foster Care Licensing Manager, upon request from the foster parent and prior to an Administrative Hearing will conduct an Informal Hearing. If an Administrative Hearing is requested, a meeting with the Foster Care Licensing Manager is scheduled within 10 business days In addition, this Region follows the Statewide policy of concurrent investigations for Division of Child Protection (DCP) reports. When a DCP report is received, the FHLR is notified and a concurrent investigation is completed. Foster parents are given a written notification of rights regarding child abuse/neglect investigations per CFS 1050-54, *What You Need to Know About a Child Abuse or Neglect Investigation.* The Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) and the Foster Family Handbook are two excellent sources for foster parents to review this process, have questions answered and get additional information. The Advocacy Office (1-800-232-3798) is also available to assist foster parents and depending on the circumstances may refer foster parents to the following Department offices for additional help:

Right 6 (con't) right to have decisions concerning a licensing corrective action plan specifically explained and tied to the licensing standards which were violated.		• Inspector General (1-800-722-9124) • Administrative Case Review (ACR) • African-American Services • Child Protection • Clinical Services • Communications • Foster Care and Permanency Services • Guardianship Administrator • Health Policy • Latino Services • Legal Services • Operations and Community Services • Agency Performance Team (APT) Monitoring • Quality Assurance • Office of Child and Family Policy • Support Services

7) The right, at any time during which a child is placed with the foster parent, to receive additional or necessary information that is relevant to the child's care.	• Caseworker training in all information to be disclosed • Description of how caseworkers are held accountable for sharing the information	Caseworkers are trained in Foundation training as to what information can or cannot be disclosed. Clinical Supervision is another avenue that deals with how caseworkers are held accountable for sharing information and deals with confidentiality and information to be disclosed. Additionally, the Southern Region has legal counsel available to provide consultation to field staff and supervisors regarding issues of confidentiality. The Southern Region currently utilizes a good practice policy that encourages its caseworkers to maintain a line of open communication with foster parents. It is the expectation that caseworkers share relevant information with foster parents concerning foster children in their care on an on-going basis. Caseworkers may share ongoing relevant information with foster parents about the child via: * Documented phone conversations with foster parents. * Documented monthly face to face home visits with foster parents * Regular scheduled Administrative Case Review (ACR) meetings * Documented case staffing concerning a foster child * Quarterly Child and Family Team meetings * Utilization of Inter-Ethnic Placement Act (IEPA) Matching Tool The Southern Region utilizes a placement protocol as one method to ensure foster parent's rights as to what information should be shared about a foster child in their care. Supervisory conferences with caseworkers are one way that caseworkers are held accountable for sharing information with the foster parents. Caseworkers are also accountable to ensure each child's folder follows the child throughout his/her placement history. New caseworkers are given an overview of PRIDE, which explains the expectations of foster parents on confidentiality.

8) The right at the time of placement with the foster parent to receive in writing the medical history of the child, educational history, a copy of the child's portion of the service plan, and other relevant background information.	• The agency or DCFS region has clear rules and procedures as to what information to share and how to share it with foster parents. • Staff are trained in all pertinent policies and procedures. • There is a description of how caseworkers are held accountable for sharing the information.	The Regional Administrator or designee has provided this information to all staff, as outlined in Public Act 94-1010, Rule and Procedure 301. Staff is trained during staffings, team meetings, regional meetings, supervisory conferences, Regional Quality Council (RQC) meetings, and through the DCFS training unit as to all pertinent policies and procedures regarding sharing information. *CFS 600-4, Sharing Information with the Caregiver*, is used to ensure this right is being met. Foster parents are provided with a copy of this form at the time of the child's placement. The supervisor ensures that policy is followed by the caseworker through monthly staffings and/or responding to foster parent concerns. Foster parents may receive additional information through the Administrative Case Reviews and juvenile court hearings.

9) The right to be notified of scheduled meetings and staffing concerning the foster child in order to actively participate in the case planning and decision making process regarding the child, including individual service planning meetings, administrative case reviews, interdisciplinary staffing, and individual educational planning; 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	• Foster parents notified and encouraged to participate in all meetings and staffings about foster children in their care • Foster parents informed of decisions made by agencies and courts • Foster parents encouraged to give input into case planning and input is given full consideration • Foster parents encouraged to communicate with all child team members	Foster Parents are notified and encouraged to participate in all meetings and staffings about foster children in their care by: • Staffings, Integrated Assessments (IA), Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) meetings and Child and Family Team Meetings—the Southern Region holds permanency workers to the Best Practice expectation of notifying and including foster parents in Case Staffings and Child and Family Team Meetings concerning their foster children. The additional expectation is that all team members involved in the foster child's case have a right to share information relevant to the care of the foster child on a need to know basis. Caseworkers are also expected to engage foster parents in an on-going mutual exchange when scheduling such activities as face-to-face foster home and sibling visits. • Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) may accompany foster parents to Case Staffings and Child and Family Team Meetings, if the foster parent chooses to invite them. On a child only case, other individuals are considered on a case by case basis. Foster parents are informed of decisions made by agencies and courts through a variety of measures: • Administrative Case Review (ACR)---the assigned case worker and the regional ACR unit collaborate to assure that a child's foster parents receive written notification, via US Mail, three to four weeks prior to ACR activities concerning their foster child. • Court proceedings---the assigned caseworker is responsible for notifying foster parents about court activities concerning their specific foster child and for documenting that notification in a case note. • If foster parents are unavailable to attend a court hearing or staffing the caseworker will inform the foster parents of decisions made by the agency and Court. All information shared regarding the agency and court decisions are documented in the child's record by the placement worker. • Foster parents can request that they appear in court on behalf of the child's best interest. Foster parents request through the child's worker or Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) to be heard in court. If the foster parents are denied the right to be heard in court, the foster parent can file a "writ of mandamus" so they can have a voice in court. Foster parents are encouraged to give input into case planning by the following: • Foster parents in the Southern Region are strongly urged to be active participants in all meetings relating to the child in their care. If foster parents cannot feasibly be present for

Right 9 (con't) 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, including therapists, physicians, and teachers.		the reviews, the worker and the reviewer facilitate a conference call so the family has crucial input. Foster parents are encouraged to communicate with all child team members. The Southern Region believes that foster parents are critical members of the Child Welfare Team. They encourage on-going open communication between staff and the foster parent. Workers meet with the foster families in their home at least once a month and encourage telephone contact when information is needed or to be shared by any team member. Foster parents are encouraged to participate in school staffings and to transport and participate in any counseling that involves the child. Foster parents are also encouraged to be an active participant in the Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) and Integrated Assessment (IA) process.

10) The right to be given, in a timely and consistent manner, any info. a caseworker has regarding the child and the child's family, which is pertinent to the care and needs of the child and the making of a permanency plan for the child. Disclosure of info. concerning the child's family shall be limited to the information that is essential for understanding the needs of and providing care to the child in order to protect the rights of the child's family. When a positive relationship exists between the foster parent and the child's family, the child's family may consent to disclosure of additional info.	• A description is given to foster parents at intake, and a prescribed method of disclosing information is utilized • Ongoing sharing of information that is pertinent to the well-being and health of the child	A description of the child is given to the foster parents at the initial intake by giving the foster parents verbal information that is pertinent to the care and needs of the child, along with a Child's Folder, which contains a face sheet with descriptive information about the child, the 906, health passport, reason for child placement, medical card, and the results of the initial medical screening. The prescribed method for disclosing this information is: placing workers will explain documents, answer questions, give whatever information the worker may have at their disposal regarding the child, as well as, relevant information about the child's family. See also RIGHT 8. The Southern Region has an expectation that requires its caseworkers to provide foster parents access to information relevant to the care of their foster child. The sharing of pertinent information with foster parents is considered an ongoing mutual process throughout the foster child's placement. The quality of this information sharing process is monitored on a formal level during caseworkers and supervisor conferences. Caseworkers document their efforts to share pertinent information via the child's case record. This information is summarized on the CFS 600-4 form; Sharing Information with the Caregiver. In the Southern Region foster parents expect open and honest communication regarding a description of the foster child at intake with the placement worker. Information that is pertinent to the wellbeing of the child's placement needs shall be disclosed at the time of placement. The worker shares all on-going information related to the wellbeing and health of the child with the foster parent so that they can continue to meet the child's needs. Workers actively encourage positive relationships between foster parents and the child's bio family by the use of Child and Family Teams to allow for improvement in the quality and quantity of information shared. Because permanency and best interest is the goal of the Department, open communication is practiced. Foster families are encouraged to transport and participate in the child's medical and clinical appointments. The information and the Healthworks documents will be transferred to the worker to be part of the permanent record for DCFS.

11) The right to be given reasonable written notice of (i) any changes in a child's case plan, (ii) plans to terminate the placement of the child with the foster parent, and (iii) the reasons for the change or termination in placement. The notice shall be waived only in cases of a court order or when the child is determined to be at imminent risk of harm.	• 14 day notice (not applicable for movements involving imminent risk) • Notice in writing • Appeal, including emergency review process, is given to foster parent	Foster parents receive from the placement worker a 14-day notice if the Department plans on moving a child. This letter must contain the date of the anticipated removal and the reasons why the decision to move the child has been made. The exception to this notice is if the child is in imminent risk or the court has decided that the child must move. Caseworkers can only take actions or make decisions for removal of a child after they have consulted with and received approval from their immediate supervisor. The 14-day notice (CFS 151, Notice of Decision Form) is sent to the foster parent in writing. When the 14-day notification letter is mailed to the foster family, it must also contain a notice of Right to Appeal brochure (which includes the clinical placement review process). Foster parents may request a clinical review to determine the best interest of the child. All critical decisions such as those mentioned above must be documented in the case file to ensure that parties being affected have been properly notified and included in the process. Foster parents receive information about this process during Foster PRIDE training.

12) The right to be notified in a timely and complete manner of all court hearings, including the notice of the date and time of the court hearing, the name of the judge or hearing officer hearing the case, the location of the hearing, and the court docket number of the case; and the right to intervene in court proceedings or to seek mandamus under the Juvenile Court Act of 1969.	• Method for notifying foster parents of hearings and their right to be heard • Description of how caseworkers are held accountable for notifying foster parents	As previously referenced in Right 9, the Southern Region ensures foster parents rights to timely notification of court hearings concerning their foster children through communication between the assigned permanency worker and foster parent, which is monitored through staff supervision and case record reviews. Foster parents receive notification of upcoming court dates. This information is given to the foster family prior to the scheduled court date. Foster parents are apprised of their right to be heard during court proceedings by the Foster Family Handbook (section 2), Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS), caseworkers, etc. In those instances where the foster parent is not present at court, caseworkers will document notification of all court hearings to foster parents in the child's service file. Caseworkers are held accountable through job performance and periodic reviews with their supervisor.

13) The right to be considered as a placement option when a foster child who was formerly placed with the foster parent is to be re-entered into foster care, if that placement is consistent with the best interest of the child and other children in the foster parent's home.	• Method for checking past placement records, when possible • Process for determining best interest regarding placement decision	The Southern Region utilizes the following methods for checking past placement records to ensure foster parents are considered as a placement option for foster children re-entering foster care who were formerly placed in their care: • When foster children re-enter the system the assigned placing worker ensures that a search is conducted on the Department's CM-07 screen and/or search of written records. The CM-07 screen and the Case Assignment Payment Unit (CAPU) provide data relevant to a foster child's previous placement history. • The assigned placement worker or placing worker consults with those persons having past knowledge of the child's previous placements. • Investigators and Placement workers discuss previous placement history with children who are verbal and explore the relationship with each of the previous foster families and document how a family selected is in the child's best interest. • Previous Investigators and Placement workers may also be consulted for additional information about a child's previous placements. In addition, the Permanency Achievement Specialist Team can assist in the process of identifying past placements. Southern Region's process for determining best interest regarding placement decisions includes use of Inter-Ethic Placement Act (IEPA) Matching Tool. This tool determines whether or not a foster parent is willing and capable of accommodating the child or sibling group and whether or not they are to be considered for permanency. Supervisors of placement workers are enforcing the "Best Practice" policy to make sure that former foster parents are to be considered for children previously in care. Former placements are documented in the child's case file. If the former placement was a positive experience, effort is put in force to replace the child in that home, if at all possible. When a child is returned home from a private agency foster home placement, and replacement occurs, the former home will be considered so the child will suffer less trauma.

14) The right to have timely access to the child placement agency's existing appeals process and the right to be free from acts of harassment and retaliation by any other party when exercising the right to appeal Right 14 (con't)	• Documentation that an internal appeals system has been established and description of how it prohibits retaliation • Process for accessing the external DCFS appeals system, when necessary	The Southern Region has adopted a grievance process as its internal appeals system for foster parents to contest agency decisions considered violations of the Foster Parent Law. Foster parents are given a brochure that explains the Southern Region grievance process. This process begins with an informal discussion of the issue between the foster parent and caseworker, with the assistance of the Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) and the caseworker's supervisor, if necessary. If the parties cannot reach an agreement informally, the foster parent has the right to file a formal grievance, using the Formal Grievance Form (See Attachment Section). This form provides a method for the foster parent to communicate the alleged violation of the Foster Parent Law as well as their desired resolution to the problem. Foster parents must submit this form to the caseworker's supervisor within 45 days of the incident that prompted the grievance. The foster parent's grievance is first heard at the supervisor's level, with grievances not resolved advancing to the next level of management, from supervisor to Area Administrators, to the Regional Administrator (RA). The matter may be resolved at any of these levels, with the resolution documented on a Resolution Form. The RA is the final authority in the grievance process. Decisions on the grievance must be reached within 30 days of the arrival of the grievance at the applicable DCFS office. Retaliation is prohibited, and diminished by the above multi-layered process. In the event of a perceived retaliation to a grievance, the foster parent will contact the FPSS Lead who will staff the situation with the Licensing Supervisor and Foster Care Licensing Manager. The Southern Region ensures foster parent's rights to be informed about the external DCFS appeal process by taking the following measures: • Local field offices stock and maintain adequate supplies of the brochures entitled "The Services Appeal Process Form CFS-1050-32." Field offices are also encouraged to display the service appeal brochures in manners that are readily accessible to foster parents and the consumers they served. Service appeal brochures may be distributed to foster parents as supplementary information during Foster PRIDE Training. The service appeal process is a two-step process. The first step in the process is mediation, which is a meeting open to all parties affected by the decision being appealed, to attempt to reach agreement on the issue in dispute with a mediator who assists the parties in resolving issues and drawing up an agreement. If the issue is not resolved through mediation, the next step is the fair hearing. At a fair hearing the Administrative Law Judge conducts a hearing in which the Department and all parties may present evidence supporting their position. The Administrative Law Judge then makes a recommendation to the Director of the Department based on the evidence presented at the hearing. The burden of proof shall be on the Department to show by a preponderance of the evidence that the

		decision made was in the best interest of the child, in accordance with professional social work standards and Department administrative rules. • This information is also in the Foster Family Handbook (Section 8), which is given to all foster parents, and is available to all foster parents on the DCFS website; www.state.il.us/dcfs . • The Council supports the Southern Region's method of informing foster parents with respect to their appeal rights through use of PRIDE training. In addition the Council recommends distribution of the *Conflict Resolution Between Foster Parents and Caseworker* (see Attachment Section). This document addresses internal appeals as well as external appeals and is distributed by FPSS's, trainers, licensing workers and supervisors.

15) The right to be informed of the Foster Parent Hotline established under Section 35.6 of the Children and Family Services Act and all of the rights accorded to foster parents concerning reports of misconduct by Department employees, service providers, or contractors, confidential handling of those reports, and investigation by the Inspector General appointed under Section 35.5 of the Children and Family Services Act.	• Training/ brochure is available on the Foster Parent Hotline and the Office of the Inspector General (OIG)	The Southern Region utilizes the CFS-1050-32, *Service Appeal Brochure,* as one means of educating foster parents so they may make an informed decision about the appeal process. In addition to containing detailed information on the service appeal process, this brochure also provides foster parents additional contact information. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigates allegations of misconduct and violations of rules, policies and procedures by employees, foster parents or contractors. The Office also investigates the death of a child when abuse or neglect is the suspected cause. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) toll-free hotline number and information is distributed to foster parents during PRIDE Training in the form of supplementary information. This information is contained in the Foster Family Handbook, which is available to all foster parents online. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) addresses and phone numbers are listed below: 2240 W. Ogden Avenue, 1st Floor Chicago, IL 60612 (Toll Free) 800-722-9124 (Phone) 312-433-3000 (Fax) 312-433-3032 4 W. Old State Capitol Plaza Springfield, IL 62701 (Toll Free) 800-722-9124 (Phone) 217-524-0074 (Fax) 217-557-8843

FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

(HOW THE AGENCY IS ADDRESSING EACH FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITY IN THE FOSTER PARENT LAW)

FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES	CRITERIA FOR ENSURING EACH FOSTER PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES	THE SOUTHERN REGION'S CURRENT OR PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION METHODS TO ENSURE CRITERIA FOR FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES
1) The responsibility to openly communicate and share information about the child with other members of the child welfare team.	• Training on type and importance	The Southern Region assists foster parents with their responsibilities to openly share information about their foster children with team members by providing them FOSTER/ADOPT PRIDE pre-service and PRIDE in-service training. Foster Parent Law Training is offered annually to workers and foster parents. This co-training covers Rights and Responsibilities and highlights child specific communication expectations. Service Planning, Integrated Assessment (IA), Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) and Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's) all serve as opportunities for workers/supervisors to share specific communication expectations.

2) The responsibility to respect the confidentiality of information concerning foster children and their families and act appropriately within applicable confidentiality laws and regulations.	• Initial and ongoing training on importance of confidentiality • Laws and regulations available to foster parents	The Southern Region collaborates with Division of Training and Development Services to assist and support foster parents regarding their responsibilities as licensed providers. The Southern Region offers foster parents a variety of initial and ongoing trainings to help them understand their roles in safeguarding the importance of confidential information concerning foster children and their bio-families. The concept of confidentiality for new foster parents is being re-enforced through pre-service PRIDE training. Confidentiality is an important part of the foster parent's responsibility and is part of the Licensing Standards Section 402.24. This is reviewed on an ongoing basis at each foster home licensing visit. Social Media has presented a new challenge with confidentiality. In April 2014 Administrative Procedure 28 was released which outlines how social media and mobile safety should be handled by foster parents, staff and wards. This procedure gives clear guidelines to use when confronted with issues surrounding social media and mobile technology. In conjunction with this procedure a new form was released, CFS 2034 Social Media/Mobile Safety Agreement. This form is a tool to be utilized by foster parents and caseworkers to establish agreed upon, clear rules regarding the use of digital devices and social media by DCFS wards. The current policy on laws and regulations regarding confidentiality is available and circulated by the Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS), through PRIDE training, the Foster Family Handbook, the DCFS web site; www.state.il.us/dcfs, and other trainings.

3) The responsibility to advocate for children in the foster parent's care.	• Educational advocacy training available • Court training available • Service appeal brochures and training available • Encouragement to participate in staffings, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), Child and Youth Investment Teams (CAYIT's), Integrated Assessment (IA), case conferences and court hearings (CAYIT now known as Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation CIPP)	The Southern Region actively encourages, assists and supports foster parents to advocate for children in their care by taking the following measures: The Educational Advocacy Training is mandatory for all licensed foster parents. Training is made available in conjunction with the completion of the Foster/Adopt PRIDE Training. An Educational Advisor is available for the Southern Region. The advisor services are available to workers and foster parents who are advocating for educational services. Information regarding access to the Educational Advisors is placed in the OUR KIDS section of *Families Now and Forever* newsletter on an annual basis. Court training is addressed in the pre-service training. The Foster Family Handbook also addresses the Court system. This information is found in Section 2 of the Handbook that is distributed in Pre-service PRIDE session 2. The Service Appeal Process is discussed in the Foster/Adopt PRIDE Training and is also addressed in the Foster Family Handbook under Section 8 pages 49-51. Service Appeal brochures are available as a PRIDE handout, via caseworkers, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), and in each field office. Participation in Staffings, ACR's, Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP), Integrated Assessment (IA), case conferences and court hearings is encouraged by: • Notification of ACR's by the ACR Unit. • Notification of court hearings by the caseworker as discussed in Right #12. • Notification of CIPP by caseworker as discussed in Right #1. • Notification of IA by the Intake Coordinator. • Monthly support from the Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS). • Routine communication with Placement Worker (in-person, phone, letter, etc.) • During the 9th Session of PRIDE the trainers, caseworkers, investigators, licensing staff, regional nurse, adoption workers, etc. reinforce the importance of foster parent participation in staffings, ACR's, CIPP, IA's, case conferences and court hearings. • As stated in the Permanency Initiative, Policy Guide 98.1, the Southern Region ensures that caseworkers provide the foster parents a monthly face-to-face consultation.

4) The responsibility to treat children in the foster parent's care and the children's families with dignity, respect, and consideration.	• Initial and ongoing training on this topic • Monitoring by staff charged with case management	The Southern Region utilizes initial training on the significance of the birth family in Foster/Adopt Pre-Service. Foster parents are trained to realize that birth families are significant players on the Child Welfare Team. Because children have a biological connection, acceptance of the family is important to the child to be able to build high self-esteem for the child needing placement. Ongoing training is provided through Module 5, *SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES*. This 9-hour module is offered throughout the Region on a regular basis, as budget allows. Foster parents are given the opportunity to participate in Life Book Training and activities, as well, which supports the telling of a child's story, including information about their birth families. Caseworkers, per Department Policy, are required to monitor the foster children. The foster parent must be visited face-to-face one time a month for the purpose of gathering information and at these visits caseworkers interview children privately to ensure they are being treated with dignity, respect and consideration by the foster parent. Caseworkers meet with the birth family and the foster family to enhance a working relationship that reflects dignity, respect and consideration for all team members. Foster Families are encouraged to work with the biological family and participate in Child and Family Team Meetings when appropriate.

5) The responsibility to recognize the foster parent's own individual and familial strengths and limitations when deciding whether to accept a child into care; and the responsibility to recognize the foster parent's own support needs and utilize appropriate supports in providing care for foster children.	• Ongoing mutual assessment method • Training based on assessments • Placements based on strengths • Support needs addressed	During the initial licensing assessment foster families assist the Foster Home Licensing Representative (FHLR) in determining the age range and capacity that best suits their family. This information is then utilized to mutually assess what types of children will best fit into the home and what type of training may be needed, based on the foster families perceived and identified strengths and needs. During the foster home licensing visits this information is reviewed again to ensure accuracy. Foster parents are encouraged to attend trainings, conferences, classes, etc., that address the areas the foster parents have identified through the assessment process as areas of need. Based on the assessment, workers encourage foster parents to enroll in PRIDE In-Service (modules) or to enroll in outside classes to become more competent in areas of need. Through the continuing Quality Improvement (QI) activities of the Foster Care Licensing Unit current foster parents and foster parents leaving service are mailed satisfaction surveys requesting input regarding the usefulness of training provided and/or additional needs. The Southern Region works to create an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect to express their right to say "no" to a placement during stressful times. The foster home is offered the opportunity to be placed on Voluntary Hold. The foster parents impose limitations (based on strengths) for themselves on the acceptance of a new placement. Foster parents are an essential team player when placements occur, and through open communication with their worker, they are open and assertive in obtaining services and skills necessary to be competent foster parents. Workers also utilize Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS), SASS, Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS), and many other available supports to enhance the foster parent's skills and competence. Foster parents are encouraged to be open to utilizing services offered to secure a placement. With the revised customer satisfaction survey for renewing caregivers, the Southern Region gathers information from a sample of families annually related to the availability and comfort level in requesting identified support services. Action plans are developed when appropriate.

6) The responsibility to be aware of the benefits of relying on and affiliating with other foster parents and foster parent associations in improving the quality of care and service to children and families.	• Affiliations with foster parent associations are encouraged and facilitated • Internal support groups encouraged, and information provided to foster parents	Foster parents are encouraged to engage themselves in Foster Parent Association meetings in their geographic area and also to be involved in the Illinois Foster Parent Association (IFPA). IFPA works collectively with DCFS and private agencies to support and assess the needs of foster parents. Local offices are encouraged to facilitate support groups and Foster Parent Associations. Currently both sub-regions have foster parent support meetings, Life Book events and periodic Foster Parent Cafes. Foster PRIDE trainers and Foster Parent Support Specialists (FPSS's) provide prospective foster parents supplementary information regarding Foster Parent Associations they may join as a means of on-going support. Foster Home Licensing Representatives (FHLR's) and FPSS's advise foster parents of any organizations in their areas. Foster Parents are invited to Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council meetings as a way to stay updated on Policy and Procedure changes and to participate in the discussion of new developments. Foster Parents are encouraged to attend internal support groups such as special events, foster parent appreciation dinners, the State Fair, and volunteer recognition dinners; information regarding these events is provided through various avenues. Contact information for support groups is published in the Our Kids section of the *Families Now and Forever* newsletter.

7) The responsibility to assess the foster parent's on-going individual training needs and take actions to meet those needs.	• Method and tool for assessing general training needs of foster parents • Process for providing for identified needs	The Southern Region's method and tools for assessing general training needs of foster parents is accomplished in several ways: 1) Mutual assessment between foster parents and Foster Home Licensing Representatives (FHLR's), 2) Needs assessments (via Foster Parent Survey) mailed out to foster parents asking for in-put on training needs, 3) Needs assessments (Staff Survey) to field staff asking for in-put on training needs for foster parents, 4) Quality Improvement (QI) subcommittee on Training (which includes foster parents representatives) to help develop needed and desired training for foster parents on a regional basis, and 5) Virtual Training Center (VTC). Identified training needs are provided through the 9 PRIDE in-service modules, which are offered in person (held throughout the region during the year) or on DVD. These modules provide a broad base of learning for foster parents. Additional training needs identified by foster parents, field staff and the Division of Training have included CPR and First Aid, Understanding the Foster Parent Law, and Substance Abuse and Families. (Trainings Listed in Attachment Section) The Southern Region Training Coordinator, the Regional Quality Council (RQC) and the Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council play important roles in the coordination and implementation of new training.

8) The responsibility to develop and assist in implementing strategies to prevent placement disruptions, recognizing the traumatic impact of placement disruptions on a foster child and all members of the foster family; and the responsibility to provide emotional support for the foster children and members of the foster family if preventive strategies fail and placement disruption occur.	• Method of early identification of children at risk of disrupting or creating disruption in the family • Training in purpose and availability of stabilization services • Support for foster children and family members if preventive strategies fail	Methods of early identification of children at risk: Foster parents are advised in Foster/Adopt PRIDE training of the stresses that being a foster family will present. Foster parents are trained through PRIDE to recognize early symptoms, what behaviors and red flags that may indicate possible disruption prior to acting out behavior and signs of placement disruption to foster family placements. Foster Families are encouraged to take advantage of services to assist in placement stabilization to include, but not limited to, IPS services, and respite services which can be accessed outside of the IPS system. Foster parents are instructed through the Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) or caseworker that they have the ability to access IPS Services when they feel behaviors are escalating and they need help in preventing a disruption from the foster placement. When the child's caseworker is unable to resolve a crisis, the caseworker and foster parent can access the IPS provider, who is required to respond to the foster parent within 60 minutes by phone and 4 hours in person. The IPS Program is available on a 24-hour basis by calling 1-800-345-9049. Phone numbers for each local IPS agency provider are also provided. If a foster child is out of control, a danger to himself/herself, or other members of the family, or in distress beyond capacity to manage, foster parent can access IPS or SASS services through the 24-hour Crisis Line. There is no limitation to how often you can request his help. The DCFS IPS program is available 24-hours, 7 days a week to help any foster parent in a crisis situation. Prospective foster parent applicants are educated about the traumatic effects of placement disruptions through a combination of Foster PRIDE Training and consultation visits by their designated Foster Home Licensing Representative (FHLR). Trainers in the Southern Region are providing new foster parents handouts about how to access IPS services. The Foster Family Handbook Section 5 (Health Services) identifies crisis numbers and information on how to access services. Foster families have Foster Family Handbooks available to them at all times online, and when they are unable to access their handbook, the FPSS or caseworker will assist them with numbers and protocol for receiving crisis services. Assigned placement workers are required to discuss with foster parents their comfort and capability levels with the child's behavior to ensure the placement is stable and to

		reduce the risk of possible disruption. FPSS's, caseworkers and FHLR's are there to provide ongoing support to the foster family. If preventive strategies fail, FPSS's, FHLR's, and caseworkers are available to offer support to the foster family in order to preserve the foster care resource. Foster families can receive family counseling services after a disruption, if desired. The Southern Region holds its caseworkers to good practice expectations that make it a prerequisite that caseworkers recognize and assist foster parents in accessing IPS services. Workers are particularly required to assist foster parents in those instances where foster children are presenting behavioral issues that might lead to the disruption of their foster placement.

9) The responsibility to know the impact foster parenting has on individuals and family relationships; and the responsibility to endeavor to minimize, as much as possible, any stress resulting from foster parenting.	• Training/methods to recognize and minimize stress factors • Respite available • "Voluntary hold" methods explained and understood • Counseling and other supports available	To recognize and minimize stress factors, the Southern Region provides training on stress through various trainers and caseworkers. Foster parents are also encouraged to attend local community Health Fairs, foster parent support groups, and community resources to learn more about stress. As foster parents and caseworkers recognize stress levels accelerating in the home, it is their responsibility to access Respite Care Services to preserve the placement. Respite Care Services are available to all foster parents. "Voluntary hold" methods are explained during initial and ongoing training. Foster parents are encouraged to recognize their limitations and to realize their stress and the need to stabilize their family before taking on any new responsibilities. When the family decides to go on voluntary hold they are expected to call their licensing worker and request to go on or come off of the hold list. Caseworkers may also counsel a family about utilizing voluntary hold, respite or other support services as the need arises. Counseling and other support services are available to foster children, as well as foster families, at no expense to the foster family. Foster families, foster children or caseworkers may request to utilize these supports. Supports available include, but are not limited to, the Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS), SASS, Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS), Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP), camps, respite, etc.

10) The responsibility to know the rewards and benefits to children, parents, families and society that come from foster parenting and to promote the foster parenting experience in a positive way.	• Foster parents informed of events/activities that acknowledge and support foster parents and participation is encouraged • Training in the public relations aspect of fostering parenting is made available	Various units send notification of special events to foster parents in the Southern Region and encourage their attendance in these events. Individual offices hold periodic events, such as Christmas/Thanksgiving potlucks and foster parent appreciation activities. Foster parent support groups throughout the region support this effort also. There is an annual foster/adoptive parent picnic held at the Du Quoin State Fair where resources are made available to foster parents regarding Early Education Head Start programs, drug awareness programs, and information regarding the Southern Region Foster Care Advisory Council meetings. Various recognitions and awards are given at this event. The Southern Region recognizes and values foster parents as very important role models in promoting foster parenting in a positive light. Staff development personnel are utilized in the Southern Region to train foster parents in the public relations aspect of foster parenting including media strategies for positive public relations. Foster parents receive information through PRIDE, at initial licensing and renewals on what information the foster parent may release and what to defer to caseworkers for publication. This information is also available in the Foster Family Handbook. Foster parents receive recognition through the *Families Now and Forever* newsletter and also through the media of the surrounding cities.

11) The responsibility to know the roles, rights, and responsibilities of foster parents, other professionals in the child welfare system, the foster child, and the foster child's own family.	• Training and co-training with staff is required • Regular meetings with other team members are held and encouraged • Foster parents have a recognized voice within the agency's management organization	The Southern Region assists prospective foster parents and licensed foster parents to understand their roles and responsibilities through the following training methods: • Foster PRIDE Training • In-service training • Co-training for PRIDE is delivered with agency personnel and a foster parent • The Foster Home Licensing Representatives (FHLR's), Placement and Investigative Supervisors, Adoption Staff, and Healthwork professionals are a part of the panel for Session 9 of the Foster/Adopt PRIDE, which is "Making an Informed Decision". Regular participation is encouraged in the following ways and foster parents have a recognized voice within the agency's management by: • Foster parents participate in the Regional and Statewide Quality Improvement (QI) process through membership on the Regional Quality Council (RQC) and field office site councils. Foster parents are also a part of the team building task force with the Regional Administrator (RA). • Foster parents are equal members on the Regional and Statewide Foster Parent Advisory Council. • Foster parents have a voice in the RQC Foster Care Issues Sub-committee.

12) The responsibility to know and, as necessary, fulfill the foster parent's responsibility to serve as a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act; and the responsibility to know the child welfare agency's policy regarding allegations that foster parents have committed child abuse or neglect and applicable administrative rules and procedures governing investigations of those allegations.	• Training, initial and ongoing, including Sexually Abusive Children and Youth reporting responsibility • Written foster parent acknowledgment / contract • Training involving allegations against foster parents and the applicable rules and regulations that govern the investigation of the allegations	Initial and ongoing training and reporting responsibility to also include Children with Sexual Behavior Problems (CSBP) is addressed with the Southern Region foster parents. • Through an overview of the investigative process during Session 8 of the Foster-Adopt PRIDE training. • DCFS workers are invited to Session 9, the graduation session of Foster-Adopt PRIDE to relay expertise information to new foster families. • Module 9- Managing the Impact of Placement on Your family is a 6-hour in-service training available in both sections of the Southern Region. The Training Unit and the VTC provides training information that is available with times, dates and locations of the training. • Foster parents are provided training (in pre-service and at home PRIDE connection material) on their responsibility to report unusual incidents that would include sexually abusive behaviors of children and youth by completing the Behavioral Log, CFS 534-1. • In addition to on-going PRIDE training, the Southern Region utilizes assigned Foster Home Licensing Representative (FHLR) workers to assist foster parents in understanding their mandated reporting status. Written foster parent acknowledgment: FHLR's are initially required to review with each foster parent an Acknowledgment of Mandated Reporter Status, (also known as a CANTS 22B). Assigned FHLR also reviews the CANTS 22B with foster parents during their annual and renewal visits. Foster parents must sign the CANTS 22B in order to maintain their foster home license. The form is then maintained in each foster family's individual licensing file. Foster parents all have access to Foster Family Handbooks online and Mandated Reporting is further discussed in the handbook. Training involving allegations against foster parents: Investigations of foster parents must be treated the same as anyone else. Every attempt is made to expedite the investigation (DCFS Procedure, 300.70). Foster parents have the right to know the exact allegation made, the circumstances surrounding the allegation and the right to offer names of people who will substantiate the foster parent's story. Foster parents also have the right and responsibility to seek advice prior to questioning or to have an attorney or representative present during questioning. In addition, foster parents are trained during the 9th Session of Foster/Adopt PRIDE regarding allegations and applicable rules and regulations that govern the investigation. This is further discussed in the "You Need to Know In Illinois" section of the PRIDE curriculum as well as in the "Mandated Reporter" booklet that is distributed. The Foster Family Handbook, section 8, also discusses Abuse and Neglect investigations.

13) The responsibility to know and receive training regarding the purpose of administrative case reviews, client service plans, and court processes, as well as any filing or time requirements associated with those proceedings; and the responsibility to actively participate in the foster parents' designated role in these proceedings.	• Training on the importance of participating • Emphasis on foster parents taking an active role in planning for the permanency goal through court hearings, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), etc.	Southern Region foster parents receive training on the importance of participating in Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), court proceedings, and client service plans. Through pre-service, PRIDE modules, Foster Family Handbook and contact with Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) and other team members. The Southern Region puts an emphasis on foster parents taking an active role in planning for the permanency goal. Foster parents in the Southern Region are part of the Child and Family Teams. They are extremely important in advocating for their children's needs. Teamwork is enforced throughout the PRIDE pre-service training and is enhanced by communication between the worker and the foster family. Foster parents provide workers with the documentation needed to attend ACR's through open-communication during home visits, telephone contacts, and attendance at the case reviews. Foster parents provide valuable information to advocate for the needs of the child in placement. By attending ACR's and court hearings, foster parents are knowledgeable of the progress of the family and also the permanency plans for the child toward reunification.

14) The responsibility to know the child welfare agency's appeal procedure for foster parents and the rights of foster parents under the procedure.	• Awareness of agency's internal systems and utilization • Rights of foster parents spelled out	The Southern Region promotes the foster parent responsibility to be aware of agency's internal appeals and grievance system and how to utilize them by distribution of appeals brochures through pre-service, Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS), and Foster Home Licensing Representative (FHLR). The Rights of Foster Parents are spelled out in the Implementation Plan that is distributed and available on the DCFS website at www.state.il.us/dcfs . A letter was sent to every foster parent informing them of who to contact for a complete copy of the Implementation Plan, which includes the Grievance Process (refer back to Right 14).

15) The responsibility to know and understand the importance of maintaining accurate and relevant records regarding the child's history and progress; and the responsibility to be aware of and follow the procedures and regulations of the child welfare agency with which the foster parent is licensed or affiliated.	• Training provided on importance of complete records • Regulations/ expectations are available in writing • Agency provides folder, notebook, or case record for the storage and/or transportation of foster parent records	Training is provided about the importance of maintaining complete records. As new children are placed the Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) has contact with the family and clarifies the information required in the child's folder (provided by the agency). A written guideline is given that explains information to be contained in the sections for education, medical, personal/physical maintenance, and service planning/visitation. In addition foster parents are encouraged to maintain updated photographs, fingerprints and Lifebooks. The Foster Home Licensing Representative (FHLR) explains the importance of documentation and verifies that the documentation is current at monitoring visits. PRIDE trainers direct foster parents to read the "You Need to Know in Illinois" in Session 9. A licensing worker discusses the importance of maintaining complete records. A record keeping guide for the Child Folders is distributed by FPSS's.

16) The responsibility to share information, through the child welfare team, with the subsequent care giver (whether the child's parents or another substitute care giver) regarding the child's adjustment in the foster parent's home.	• Training on this expectation is offered	Foster parents receive training regarding the sharing of relevant information through Foster/Adopt PRIDE. Foster Home Licensing Representative (FHLR) reinforces the importance of sharing relevant information during their annual and renewal visits. Foster Parent Support Specialist (FPSS) consistently reminds foster parents to share information with the child's worker. The Behavioral Log and Medication Log is to be completed by the foster parent for each child and shared with professionals during foster home visits.

17) The responsibility to provide care and services that are respective of and responsive to the child's cultural needs and supportive of the relationship between the child and his or her own family; the responsibility to recognize the increased importance of maintaining a child's cultural identity when the race or culture of the foster family differs from that of the foster child; and the responsibility to take action to address these issues.	• Training encouraged and made available, both initial and ongoing • Internal and external resources made accessible or available	Training is encouraged and made available both initially and ongoing regarding cultural identity and cultural awareness is emphasized during PRIDE pre-service. In the Southern Region PRIDE trainers inform participants of the need for children in care to be knowledgeable of their cultural background and heritage The Southern Region has ongoing internal and external training available through Module 7 that is "Promoting Children's Personal and Cultural Identity". This is a 6 hour internal training and is offered throughout the Southern Region. The training schedule is provided upon request or online via the Virtual Training Center. Foster families who care for children of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds are encouraged to enroll in Module 7. Sexual Health Training addresses issues of parenting lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered and questioning youth. Effective Black Parenting Training for families that foster children of an African-American background is available.