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Webster-Cantrell Hall

2018 Plan for Implementation of the Foster Parent Law.

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A Plan for ensuring that
Webster-Cantrell Hall
actively works to implement
Public Act 89.19 describing the
Rights and Responsibilities
of Foster Parents as participating
members of the Child Care Team.

ANNUAL PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF FOSTER PARENT LAW

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Summary Letter and attachments for review board only.

- *Proof of ongoing training
- * Names of Foster Parents who reviewed the 2017 Implementation Plan.
- * Signatures of foster parents who approve the final 2018 plan.
- * Webster-Cantrell Hall Foster Parent Law Violation Grievance Procedure
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The Webster –Cantrell Hall vision statement is:

“All children and youth are nurtured, loved, and live in safe homes.”

Thank – you all foster parents from the staff at Webster-Cantrell Hall. Foster parenting is a demanding task that affects your lives everyday. We strive to help our foster parents understand the rules and philosophy of the Foster Care System so that we can all work through the life of a foster child’s case. We emphasize that we are working towards returning the foster children home to their parents until it is determined by the judge that this goal is no longer possible. Webster-Cantrell Hall provides trainings, home visits, and team meetings to prepare foster parents for this goal. We recognize that being a Foster Parent is an emotional task and support the Foster Parents with respite, celebrations, and their support group. Webster-Cantrell Hall defends what is in the best interest of the foster child. We know that foster parents are caring people with big hearts. We need the foster parent’s input about the foster child because you are a very important member of the team. Webster-Cantrell Hall upholds all clients’ rights to be treated ethically, truthfully, and with dignity. We appreciate our foster parent’s participation in this team effort to protect children in need.

ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT OF 2017 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

Foster Parent Involvement in the Development the Implementation Plan

All Foster Parent involved in the Webster-Cantrell Hall program are mailed a copy of The Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. Included in the Plan is a signature sheet asking for the foster parent’s suggestions to improve the Implementation Plan. Additionally, copies are kept at the front reception desk, in the licensing office, and online at webstercantrell.org.

All foster parents involved in this Agency’s foster care program, were sent a survey concerning the Implementation of the Foster Parent Law by the Webster-Cantrell Hall Foster Care Program. The surveys ask about each right and reviews each responsibility. This is also an opportunity for criticism without retaliation. The foster parents can choose to sign their surveys or not to sign and to remain anonymous. Comments from these surveys are included in staff trainings to increase our effectiveness in working with our foster parents.

The Agency will also continue to schedule meetings to allow the Foster Parents the opportunity to verbally express their concerns, suggestions, or to provide feedback regarding the Implementation Plan. Surveys and trainings allowed the foster parents to make suggestions on the plan itself. Licensing also reviews specific points in the plan at home visits and meetings to ensure that foster parents understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Staff involvement in the Development of the Implementation Plan

Staff are also given a copy of the new Plan at the beginning of each calendar year. They are asked to suggest improvements and updates for the upcoming year. During the year, staff is formally trained

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on each aspect of the Plan. Suggestions are also taken before the Plan is revised for the upcoming year. Foster Care Staff are trained on the Foster Parent Law by Licensing and asked for their suggestions on improvement of this document. Meetings are held with the entire foster care staff and the Chief Clinical Director.

Suggested Improvements

Foster parents and staff stated that they approve the plan as written. Licensing reviews new Policies that would be relevant in updating the Implementation Plan for 2018. The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council found the 2017 Plan to be acceptable. The Council suggested that we use foster parents as co-trainers. In the January 2018 newsletter and this document, we are asking foster parents to tell us what they want to co-train. What experiences and expertise can you share with other foster parents? We continue to need more foster parents to co-train in 2018. We continually ask foster parents what they feel they need training in. Trauma has been requested. In 2017, we set up a Trauma training but it was cancelled due to low enrollment. Trauma 101 is offered online with dcfstraining.org. I am asking all foster parents to take this training. The Trauma 201 has been rescheduled in 2018 in the Decatur area. All the trainings are listed in the agency's newsletter. Trauma 201 is provided by the DCFS training department and there is no babysitting for the State training. WCH does provide babysitting and snacks for our agency sponsored trainings. We have had some great pot lucks in 2017!

We have a limited Specialized Care contract and are able to place specialized children into our foster homes. Due to these specialized cases, there is an increase the mutual assessment of what the foster parent wants to be trained in. The board payment rates in the appendix does not reflect the specialized board payment. Each foster parent with a specialized child is informed about their board payment rate. Suggested improvements by the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council on timely assessment and payment have been incorporated into the text of this document under Right #4.

Complaints from foster parents this year include the lack of consideration when scheduling appointments, canceling, and showing up late. There is also concern from the Advisory Council on how the caseworkers are held accountable for the flow of information including notification to the foster parents on court hearings. These issues are addressed at Staff Foster Care meetings. Also, Caseworkers have supervisory review meetings with their supervisors and all aspects of the case are discussed. The supervisor is to insure that caseworkers are telling foster parents about all scheduled meetings, court dates, counseling, etc. All foster parents can contact their caseworker's supervisor to ask questions, lodge a complaint, and schedule team meetings. The Chain of Command is attached in the Appendix.

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Foster Parent Review of the Grievance Procedure

In 2001 a Foster Parent grievance procedure was developed with input from foster care staff and Foster Parents. This procedure, the Webster-Cantrell Hall Foster Parent Grievance Procedure provides for the specific needs of Foster Parents in a grievance process. A survey asking every foster parent about the Agency upholding the Foster Parent Law is mailed out every year. In this survey are questions about the grievance procedure and an area for comments. No Foster Parent has stated that they want the procedure changed. The Grievance procedure is discussed with each Foster Parent during the licensing process and investigations to ensure they understand this right. This will also be addressed in 2018 at one of our trainings to insure that Foster Parents understand the procedure and to get their feedback.

Revision narratives on Foster Parent Rights & Responsibilities

Aside from the date changes, updated phone numbers, and some grammatical revisions the following areas were revised with updated information:

Right #2. Updated information on the PRIDE Pre-Service 39 hours of training and the Supplemental “On Demand” trainings.

Right #4. A discussion on the timely assessment and payment commensurate with the type of care provided. CFS 906-I Placement/Payment Authorization Form.

Right #10. How caseworkers are held accountable for the flow of information.

Right #12. How caseworkers are held accountable for court hearing notification.

Responsibility #8. Support for foster children and families if disruption occurs.

Responsibility #12. Training for Mandated Reporters.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR YEAR 2018

The Illinois State legislature to firmly establish foster parents as a vital and participating part of the child welfare team has enacted the Foster Parent Law. This law provides for the statement of the rights and responsibilities of foster parents. This annual plan developed by Webster-Cantrell Hall in compliance with the Foster Parent Law, is developed by the Agency child welfare foster care team with the foster parents as full, participating members, and is hereby submitted as required.

This plan is structured for Foster Parents to use this as a resource. The Table of Contents lists each Right and Responsibility so Foster Parents can look up specific areas. Each Right and Responsibility attempts to completely explain that topic.

Statement of Foster Parent Rights

Following are the statements of Foster Parent Rights as written in the law and strategies for implementation of each statement by Webster-Cantrell Hall during the year 2018. The rights of each foster parent include, but are not limited to, the following:

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

As full participating members of the Agency child welfare teams, Foster Parents are treated with the same dignity, respect, and consideration as are all members of these teams. This team has the primary responsibility to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate foster care services for children joining the foster family. The child welfare team listens to the unique needs of the Foster Parent, provides for the respect of the confidentiality of information regarding the Foster Parent, provides for the privacy of the Foster Parent, ensures that the Foster Parent fully understands the information they encounter within the child welfare team context, and ensures the timely resolution of complaints. Therefore, an attitude of cooperation and collaboration is created. Webster-Cantrell Hall staff will be considerate of scheduling issues and respectful of the time that Foster Parents put into a foster child's case.

The Agency schedules a meeting for training and discussion between Foster Parents and Agency staff. New Foster Parents are trained in agency policy as well as the role of the Foster Parent on the child welfare team. Training is held for Foster Family Care Staff outlining how to effectively interact with Foster Parents while ensuring that all Foster Parents are treated with dignity and respect.

The foster parents are informed regarding the grievance procedure during the licensing process. Foster Parents are encouraged to engage in this procedure if they feel they are having problems with their team role and communication with other agency staff. Foster Parents can also request the assistance of the Licensing Representative when engaging this procedure. If the Foster Parent is not comfortable asking for staff assistance, they may seek assistance from an experienced Foster Parent. Caseworkers fully disclose the current status of the case promptly and honestly. Through the use of this grievance procedure, the Foster Parent is ensured the timely, objective resolution of problems and/or complaints they may have. In 2001, a Grievance Procedure (attached) was established regarding the Foster Parent Law.

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

DCFS office of training assures that standardized pre-placement training is offered on a regularly scheduled basis for all Foster Parents. All licensed non-relative Foster Parents have to participate in a thirty-nine hour training –PRIDE (Parents' Resource for Information, Development, and Education). This comprehensive pre-service training is scheduled a minimum of once per quarter throughout Illinois. This pre-service training is offered on various days in order to attempt to meet the individual scheduling needs of the Foster Parents. New online classes were added in July of 2017. These online sessions include the complete PRIDE pre-service training. The additional 12 hours are available to licensed foster parents in the "On Demand" section of the dcfstraining.org website. Licensed

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Foster parents are encouraged to complete the additional Supplemental trainings for training credit. The Supplemental training topics are: Trauma, Human Trafficking, Keeping Children Connected, Social Media, and the Life of the Case.

Relative Foster Parents are to complete a six hour pre-service training through PRIDE in order to be eligible to apply for a Foster Family Home License and, this can also be completed by watching a video at home. Relative Foster Parents are encouraged to complete the full thirty-nine hour training. Ongoing training dates and times are sent to Foster Parents in our newsletter monthly.

Each Foster Parent has access to a new manual during licensing. This manual and The Foster Parent Handbook are complete guides to most of the situations a Foster Parent might encounter. Training materials and schedules are available on line at the Virtual Training Center (VTC) at <http://www.dcfstraining.org>.

Ongoing training is offered after licensing is completed. Foster parents and agency staff are encouraged to participate in training opportunities. In 2017, we utilized foster parents in one co-training. The Support Group also initiated their own guest speakers and foster parents as trainers. Foster Parents are required to attend four core training hours per year in order to be eligible for re-licensure. This Agency does have specialized foster care cases and training is individualized when needed to meet the needs of the Foster parents. A specialized foster home is to take 16 hours of training a year.

The VTC web page has class descriptions and schedules. Foster parents can call the DCFS Training Office at 1-877-800-3393 to sign up for a class. The VTC also offers online trainings and on demand trainings. Upon completing a training or book, the foster parent must fill out a Foster Parent Training Credit Approval Form (TCAF). This form is available online at dcfstraining.org or from your licensing worker. Other approved online training links are listed in the VTC.

We encouraged the increased use of the Foster Parent trainings provided by the State, including Trauma in Children, Teen Development, and Healthy Sexual Development and Pregnancy Prevention. This Agency continues to discuss Reunification activities and foster parent involvement. We look at discipline training to focus on the reason a child has negative behaviors and focus on the child's emotional needs including building self esteem. This Agency encourages the youth in foster care, ages 14 to 21 years old, to go to the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) meetings. These meetings provide information for Youth about services provided by the State after they turn 18, including college scholarships. Adopted children are also eligible for college scholarships through Youth in Care (YIC).

The Licensing Representative and Foster Parent mutually assess areas of concern and identify training to address those areas of concerns. The Licensing Representative documents these areas of concerns on the CFS 590 Licensing Compliance and Monitoring

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Record throughout the Licensing Process for new Foster Parents and bi-annually for licensed Foster Parents. Ongoing in-service training is planned mutually by the Foster Parents and the Agency to meet assessed needs and to improve Foster Parent skills. A calendar is developed to ensure that training is organized, and ongoing. Lifebooks are expected to be developed by the Foster Parents and we will continue to train on this every year. Furthermore, should a need arise that would benefit from a training, an appropriate training will be implemented. Due to an increase in training needs for our homes, we ask the foster parents what their training needs are. We are building our specialized program and will address these training needs. We will seek out other agencies that offer training resources for various subjects including autism, developmental disabilities, and mental health issues.

The Agency copies and files the foster parents' transcript printed from the DCFS Virtual Training Center (VTC), which tracks the various training sessions attended. Foster Parents also have access to their own transcript through the VTC. The Agency keeps Foster Parents informed via newsletters, training fliers, and support meetings regarding training opportunities available to them, and to encourage their attendance.

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

All Foster Parents are informed during the Licensing Process regarding how they can contact staff to receive information and assistance to help them access supportive services for children in their care. Pre-Licensure training as well as the caseworker and Licensing Representative discuss the type of support services available and how to contact support services. Webster-Cantrell Hall has staff available 24 hours a day, weekends and holidays through the Foster Care on call phone, to assist Foster Parents during emergencies and for other resource needs. The number is (217) 423-6961. The phones are staffed by Residential Staff who are trained in crisis intervention. The Residential Staff then contact the Foster Care Program On-Call Worker who will contact the Foster Parent and appropriate services. This procedure is reviewed in the licensing process and during home monitoring visits.

The Child Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) program is designed to emphasize early intervention to improve placement stabilization by preserving social connections and minimizing placement changes. The caseworker or foster parent can initiate a CIPP staffing to discuss services needed for the foster child. When receiving a call from a caregiver, CIPP Intake shall contact the caseworker prior to scheduling a meeting. CIPP shall accept referrals from caregiver only for purposes of identifying services and supports needed to preserve the current placement. When requesting a CIPP meeting, the caseworker or foster parent shall contact CIPP Intake by phone at 312-814-6800.

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Webster-Cantrell Hall also accesses placement stabilization services, such as respite care, Systems of Care (SOC), and Screening Assessment and Support Services (SASS). SOC has been changed to Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS). All references to SOC have not changed to IPS in all DCFS documents. Intensive Placement Stabilization is a network of providers who help children maintain stability in relative or traditional foster care placements. It is a community and outreach-based service system that focuses on stabilizing children whose placements are at risk due to emotional or behavioral issues. SASS is an evaluation and recommendation for crises, counseling, and immediate staff response to issues or concerns of Foster Families. Foster parents can call the SASS office for psychiatric issues and receive help from a local agency. The IPS and SASS contact phone number is called CARES at 800-345-9049.

All foster parents receive current information regarding the WCH Foster Care Program “Chain of Command” (copy attached) to ensure that all of their resource and support needs are met in a timely manner.

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

Webster-Cantrell Hall staff ensures the reimbursement of funds to all Foster Parents associated with the Agency. At the time a foster child is placed in a Foster Home, the caseworker completes a “Face Sheet” which creates the “CFS 906 – I, Placement/Payment Authorization”. This form is submitted to the DCFS payment office and generates the payments for the agency and the foster parents. A copy of the CFS 906-I is to be given or mailed to the foster parent for their records. This form also indicates if the child is at the regular board rate or the specialized rate.

For those parents for whom the Agency is responsible, Licensed Foster Homes, the Agency ensures reimbursement of appropriate funds no later than twelve days after the month in which the care was provided, or the funds expended. Webster-Cantrell Hall issues monthly board payment reimbursement on the 10th of each month. If the 10th falls on a weekend or holiday, the board payment reimbursement is issued the weekday prior to the 10th. If there is a dispute or oversight regarding the distribution of funds, Webster-Cantrell Hall will resolve the problem within five working days. If there is a discrepancy with the payment, we ask the foster parents to immediately contact the caseworker, licensing worker, or supervisor to clear up the issue.

On the day the funds are distributed, Foster Parents can either pick up their check at the agency between 3:00pm to 5:00pm or it will be mailed directly to their home. Three different people check to ensure the accuracy of board payments. During the Licensing Process the Licensing Representative reviews when funds are distributed and expenses that the Agency will reimburse.

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A Board Rate table is in the Appendix. For those Foster Parents who are not the sole responsibility of the Agency, Unlicensed Foster Homes, and the Agency assists them to receive appropriate reimbursement from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in a timely manner. If the Foster Parent is experiencing payment problems or concerns, the Webster-Cantrell Hall foster care staff works with the Foster Parent to resolve the issues of concern. The DCFS Payment hotline phone number is: 1-800-525-0499. This office is open 8:30 -11:00am on Monday thru Friday.

Additionally, the Agency provides a subsidy to enable Foster Parents to purchase special needs glasses, dental care, camping opportunities etc., outside of the Foster Care contract for the children in their care. This is to help them overcome financial problems or other issues. The Foster Parent is to submit an estimate for such items to the Foster Care Placement Coordinator. The Foster Care Placement Coordinator submits the estimate to the Chief Clinical Director who then determines how to provide funds for the request. Respite funds continue to be available to assist our agency foster parents. Webster-Cantrell Hall pays our foster parents for respite care. Checks are mailed to the respite provider within a month.

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

All Foster Parents are included as full participating members of the child welfare team. All Foster Parents participate in the assessment of the child's needs, the development of the child's goals, service plan, and in the evaluation of progress toward those goals. This service plan is comprehensive, addressing the child's functioning and developmental needs, as well as those needs which relate to the child's right to have a relationship with his own family and cultural heritage. Also, the Foster Parent has the opportunity to provide input into the visitation and communication plan for their foster children with their biological families.

The child and the Foster Parents receive a clearly written summary of the Foster Parent goals, the child's goals, and the child's summary of the service plan. This written plan, or summary of the plan, is provided to the Foster Parents within forty - five days of a child's initial placement in the foster home, and within five days of the subsequent re-placement of a child in the foster home.

In the event of unplanned changes in the service plan, including action that results in the movement of a foster child from the foster home, the foster parents are notified of such changes immediately by telephone or in person followed by a written "Notice of Decision." Foster parents are notified of ACR's by DCFS in writing and verbally by agency treatment team staff. Foster parents receive every support needed to encourage them to attend all ACRs and to cope with movement of a foster child as well as with changes in the treatment plan of the child.

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

The agency licensing representative is trained regarding foster parent and child rights, and how to conduct an investigation for a licensing complaint. This is included in ongoing and core training. The statement of Foster Parent rights as is stated in the Foster Parent Law is printed on a form resembling the "Miranda" statement of rights and is available to a Foster Parent who is the subject of a licensing complaint at the time of the investigation of the complaint. The Agency Licensing Representative assumes the responsibility for reading and explaining this printed statement of this right to a Foster Parent in the event of a complaint against them. The foster parent has the right to have an advocate of their choosing present during the investigation.

The Licensing Representative provides the Foster Parent with a written copy of the violations with the specific standard alleged to have been violated, and with the section number of the standard identified so that interpretation of the standard, and of the complaint may be sought. If needed, the Agency Licensing Representative will ensure that this right is guaranteed, in full, to the Foster Parent.

The investigation and resolution of licensing complaints are conducted according to the following time frames as required by 89 Ill. Adm. Code 383. First, the complaint is subjected to an informal review within 10 days. If a corrective plan is not acceptable to the Foster Parent or to the Agency, the licensee is sent a certified letter within 30 days. If the complaint remains unacceptable, a second certified letter is sent to the Foster Parent within another 30 days. If corrective steps are not taken at this time, the Agency proceeds with formal enforcement action which may result in license revocation. The DCFS central office is notified of this action. Foster parents are informed in writing of their right to appeal and to whom and within what time frames this can occur. Also, Foster Parents who wish to appeal any recommended remediation actions, are encouraged and supported by Webster-Cantrell Hall foster care staff in their appeal process.

A licensing investigation is to be resolved within 30 days but if needed an extension can be granted. If the Foster Parent has a problem or concern with any part of the investigative process, they have the right to enter into a grievance process within the framework of the Webster-Cantrell Hall Foster Parent Law Violation Grievance Procedure (copy attached).

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This procedure was written specifically to provide objective communication for the Foster Parent and an opportunity for their concerns to be resolved.

If the investigation is concerning an abuse or neglect allegation, DCFS will send a DCP or Division of Child Protection Investigator to the foster home. For this type of investigation, Licensing will do a concurrent investigation. DCFS will take the lead and licensing will be subject to their time frames. This investigation is to be resolved in 30 days but can be granted an extension in order to gather information. The Advocacy Office is available to assist foster parents. The Advocacy Office phone number is 1-800-232-3798.

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

All agency caseworkers receive training regarding what information that is relevant to the care of the foster child may be shared or disclosed. Caseworkers are held accountable for sharing such information through the close supervision by the Foster Care Director, and careful on-going monitoring of the case record documentation.

All information which becomes available to the Foster Parent and/or to the child's caseworker, regarding the child's health, safety, behavioral, or emotional well being, will be exchanged in a timely manner with other members of the child welfare team. The Agency provides Child Record Folders to the Foster Parents for their use to keep necessary information about the child in an orderly and retrievable manner.

Such information is exchanged in the most accountable and timely manner possible, in child welfare team staffing exchanges, Administrative Case Reviews, court hearings, and/or in person or by telephone. The child's team caseworker or the supervisor shares this information. Foster parents and other team staff receive specific training regarding confidentiality issues, what may be or should be shared. Also, if an issue of what is appropriate information that may be shared arises this question is addressed in a one on one discussion, and/or team staffing meetings.

8. At the time the caseworker places a child with a foster parent or prospective adoptive parent, or prior to placement of the child, whenever possible, the worker shall provide available information necessary for the proper care of the child in writing to the foster parent or prospective adoptive parent.

Webster-Cantrell Hall Foster Care Staff have been trained in the Admission/Placement Checklist includes the 10 day deadline on obtaining the Foster Parent signatures. A form has been created for these signatures ensuring that the details in this policy are adhered to and that there will be a written record on file. The Foster Care Licensing Department will file this form in the foster parent's file and send the signature page to the GAL.

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- a. 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; and
 - 4) Other relevant background information of the child, including any prior criminal history; information about behavior problems including fire setting, perpetration of sexual abuse, destructive behavior and substance abuse habits; and likes and dislikes..
- b. In the case of an emergency placement, when all of the above referenced information may not be available, the worker shall provide known information verbally as it becomes available and subsequently provide this information in writing.
- c. 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.
- d. Within 10 working days after the placement, the worker shall obtain from the prospective adoptive parent, 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, GAL.
- e. Supervisory review and approval is required prior to providing any information to the foster parents or prospective adoptive parents.

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

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Webster-Cantrell Hall caseworkers are accountable for giving notification in a timely manner to Foster Parents regarding scheduled meetings and staffings concerning foster children in their care. This is done in writing and followed up with an in-person reminder or phone call. Foster Parents are encouraged and expected to attend meetings to ensure that they receive all pertinent information regarding the needs of the child within the planning context of the child welfare team functioning. In addition, if the foster parent is unable to attend the meeting or court appointment, the caseworker will inform the foster parent about any decisions that were made.

The Agency child welfare team caseworker assumes the primary responsibility for the information flow, as well as staffing information between the Foster Parent and the Agency team. The team caseworker is responsible for ensuring that Foster Parents are informed of decisions made by the agency and courts regarding children in their care. The casework staff is responsible for giving the Foster Parents an opportunity to provide input into case planning activities and that the input of the Foster Parent is given full consideration in the formulation of the case plan. Further, the casework staff is responsible for encouraging Foster Parents to communicate regularly with all team members to ensure that the expertise and concern of Foster Parents for their foster children is foremost in the design of the best plan of care for those children.

Agency staff and supervisors complete CRMRS (Case Review Monthly Roster) from which DCFS sends out ACR notices to foster parents. The Foster Parents are notified of and expected to attend the Administrative Case Reviews (ACR) for the child, and in the event that the Foster Parent is unable to attend an ACR or staffing, all pertinent information that was shared in that setting is given to the Foster Parent in a timely fashion. Also, visitation plans are given to foster parents in writing by the team case manager. Subsequent changes in the visiting plan are communicated via telephone notification, and are followed with a written copy of the plan as soon as it is available.

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

Foster Parents receive any and all information important to the care and needs of the foster child. Typical kinds of information that are shared include a parental history of substance abuse that the child was exposed to, as well as information regarding emotional, sexual

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and/or physical abuse. During all exchanges of information the requirements regarding client (parental) confidentiality are respected.

At admission of a foster child into the foster family, the Foster Parent is provided with temporary medical card and a Foster Child Record Folder from the Agency. Healthworks of Illinois is the office responsible for tracking the medical information for children in foster care. Healthworks will supply the foster parent with all medical history know about the child. This paperwork is called the E-Health Passport or Health Passport. The Health Passport is for tracking immunizations, doctor appointments, and known allergies, dates of any scheduled follow up doctor appointments, and the name, birth date, Social Security number of the foster child if known at this time. Healthworks will generate an E-Health Passport for all new foster child cases but will only track the children's medical information for ages 0 to 6 years old. The Healthworks phone number for Macon, Clark, Coles, Cumberland, Douglas, Edgar, Shelby, and Moultrie Counties is 217-423-6988.

The team casework or supervisory staff is accountable for sharing appropriate information with the Foster Parent in a timely manner in writing, by telephone, or by face-to-face conferences. New information is communicated to the Foster Parents by the caseworker as it is learned, including decisions made in Administrative Case Reviews. Caseworkers review their cases with their supervisor to ensure that all information has been shared with the foster parent. Foster parents can contact a supervisor if they have questions, concerns, or complaints about the foster child's case and the service they are receiving.

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

Webster-Cantrell Hall caseworkers guarantee that Foster Parents are, under reasonable circumstances, given a fourteen day written notice in every instance in which plans are made to change a child's case plan or to terminate the placement of the child with the Foster Parent. This fourteen day notice does not apply in situations where movement of the child is based a court order or when the child is determined to be at imminent risk of harm.

Included in this written notice is the reason for the change or termination of the child's placement and a statement of the right of the foster parent to appeal the decision with instructions on how to do so. If the Foster Parent wishes to appeal or have an emergency review process conducted regarding the change in case plan or termination of placement of the child, the team caseworker is accountable for assisting the foster parent with the process.

In any event in which the Agency determines that the foster child is at imminent risk of harm, this fourteen day notice will be waived and the child can be immediately removed

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from the foster home. The Foster Parents then will be given verbal and written notice of the full reason(s) for the termination of the child's placement. Foster children can also be removed from a foster home without a 14 day notice during an investigation on that foster home. This is not considered a termination of placement until the investigation is complete and then a termination of placement will be addressed if needed.

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

When a court date is set, the caseworker gives verbal or written notification to the foster parent. Trainings, licensing personnel, team meetings, and ACR supervisors review this information and ask if the foster parent has been notified about court dates. Foster Parents have the right to be in the court hearings for their foster child. The judge is the only person that can ask you to leave their courtroom. Juvenile court hearings are closed hearings. In other words, you have to a part of the child's case to be in the room and you will have to introduce yourself.

The team caseworker is accountable for ensuring that notice of all court hearings, including the date and time of hearing, name of judge or hearing officer, location of the hearing, the court docket number of the case, and the right to intervene in court proceedings or to seek mandamus under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. In the event of the scheduling of a permanency hearing, the agency caseworker informs the Foster Parent of this hearing a minimum of three weeks prior to the hearing date. This time is needed as the Foster Parents are required to complete a *Foster Parent Court Report* for submission to the court two weeks in advance of the scheduled hearing. All Foster Parents are informed of their right to intervene in court proceedings or to seek action from the court for their foster child, under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 as a part of their pre-service and on-going in-service training. Please ask for help in the appropriate way to write a *Foster Parent Court Report*. The Foster Parent's report will be given to the caseworker and submitted to the court with their report. Additionally, the agency encourages and supports Foster Parents in their seeking additional training regarding court procedures. Foster parents can also contact a supervisor if they are not being informed about court dates. The supervisor will address this with the caseworker to ensure that future court dates are disclosed.

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.**

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As provided by Illinois law, Foster Parents who previously had a foster child in placement in their home are given priority consideration as a placement option in the event that a child who was formerly placed with the Foster parents is reentered into foster care. This priority consideration is given unless such replacement is not considered consistent with the best interest of the child or that of other children in the foster home. The foster home must also have an available opening within their capacity. DCFS maintains these records and has access to past placement history when a child is brought into foster care. The Agency has established an on-going Foster Parent Placement Log to better ensure that the original Foster Parent is considered before other Foster Parents for children for whom reentering foster care will happen.

Either the agency or DCFS caseworker for the child facing reentry into foster care assess the risks of placement in a previous foster home for the foster child and for other children residing in that foster home. Through comprehensive study of the past placement and the current status of the foster child and other children in the home of question, a collaborative decision is made regarding what is the “best interest” of the children and family. If there is a low or non-level of risk to the children and family, agency staff assists the foster family in pursuing their right to be considered as a placement option.

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.

In 2001 a Foster Parent grievance procedure was developed with input from foster care staff and Foster Parents. This procedure, the Webster-Cantrell Hall Foster Parent Grievance Procedure provides for the specific needs of Foster Parents in a grievance process. A survey asking every foster parent about the Agency upholding the Foster Parent Law is mailed out every year. In this survey are questions about the grievance procedure and an area for comments. No Foster Parent has stated that they want the procedure changed. The Grievance procedure is discussed with each Foster Parent during the licensing process to ensure they understand this right. This will also be addressed in 2018 at one of our trainings to insure that Foster Parents understand the procedure and to get their feedback.

Grievance discussions that occur as part of an investigation are not included in this section. The agency does provide for Foster Parents to use this internal appeals process. Foster Parents have access to a complete and objective process which ensures the timely resolution of concerns and problems, without fear of retaliation or harassment.

Foster Parents receive information about the use of the Webster-Cantrell Hall Foster Parent Grievance Procedure in their licensing home visits. The Foster Parents are also informed that the grievance procedure may be used when a Foster Parent feels that there has been a violation of the Foster Parent Law. Additional options for Foster Parents experiencing difficulty include the Advocacy Office for Children and Families at 1-800-232-3798 and the

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Foster Parent Hotline at 1-800-722-9124. Foster parents have internet access to the Foster Parent Manual (DCFS Foster Family Handbook) and the WCH Client Information Manual is provided by this agency. These provide information regarding the appeals resources that are available to them. The team caseworkers are responsible for assisting Foster Parents in accessing the external DCFS appeals system when it might be needed or advisable.

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.

Foster Parents receive information regarding the Foster Parent Hotline and of all the rights accorded to foster parents to report misconduct within the foster care system. The hotline telephone number is published monthly in the Foster Parent Newsletter. The foster parent hotline number is 1-800-722-9124.

The agency also provides on-going training about the Foster Parent Hotline and the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) investigations. When appropriate, agency casework and administrative staff provide support and information to specific foster parents in the event of reports of misconduct. Foster Parents also receive on-going information regarding the implementation of these stated rights through their participation in Agency sponsored Foster Parent Training and the Central Illinois Foster Parent Support Group, the regularly issued Foster Parent Newsletter, and membership in the Illinois Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (IFAPA).

Statement of Foster Parent Responsibilities

In recognition of the above stated rights for Foster Parents, the Foster Parent Law also provides that Foster Parents shall also have certain responsibilities. Following are the statements of Foster Parent Responsibilities as expressed in the Foster Parent Law, and the implementation of each statement by Webster-Cantrell Hall. The responsibilities of each foster parent include, but are not limited to, the following:

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

Foster Parents are fully informed of this responsibility in pre-service and ongoing in-service training opportunities. Foster Parents are assisted to assume this responsibility as they participate as full members of the professional child welfare team serving foster children. The team caseworkers regularly assist the active communication of information to and from the Foster Parent. Case workers need immediate information concerning the foster child's unusual behaviors and unusual statements, or any physical problems. These issues are

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evaluated to see if the foster child will need increased mental or physical health services. These issues also need discussed to provide support for the foster parents.

Trainings are provided on topics in general and within the PRIDE trainings that include Court Proceedings, the Foster Parent Rights, and Appeal Rights. These training opportunities all include discussions about the type and importance of communicating various kinds of information about their foster child(ren), with the focus on helping Foster Parents learn what types of information should be urgently shared, and what types are of more general nature and are not urgent.

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

In pre-service training, Foster Parents are fully informed of the responsibility to comply with the mandates of the Illinois Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Confidentiality Act. A copy of the act is given to Foster Parents prior to their working with foster children, and periodically thereafter when appropriate is in the Client Information Manual. As needed, the child welfare caseworkers inform the Foster Parents of the implications of violating confidentiality mandates, and are encouraged to participate in further training on confidentiality and other related issues. Foster Parents also participate in an agency training that addresses confidentiality, and what and how information may be shared. We have had continued discussion this year on restricting social media information and monitoring cell phones (or other electronic devices) to not only respect confidentiality issues but also to protect the foster children. This agency recommends restricting information on social media for the security of the foster home. The Social Media/Mobile Safety Agreement document CFS 2034 is to inform all foster parents about these confidentiality issues. This Safety Agreement continues to be used as needed with each foster child that is 13 and older.

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

Webster-Cantrell Hall actively provides advocacy for all clients, including Foster Parents and foster children and their families. Foster Parents receive training opportunities to learn more about advocacy for foster children. These training opportunities include the Educational Advocacy Training that is required for all Foster Parents by DCFS. Additionally, Foster Parents will be assisted and supported in their advocacy efforts on behalf of the foster children in their care. Trainings and brochures regarding service appeal issues address issues on working with the courts, and the appeal process, specifically the DCFS Service Appeal Brochure that is given to and/or mailed to each Foster Parent.

Team Casework Staff encourage Foster Parents to actively participate in staffings and ACRs, and in every way to advocate for the rights of foster children in their care.

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Caseworkers support Foster Parents in participating in Placement Review Teams, Child and Family Team Meetings, and court hearings.

Webster-Cantrell Hall works with the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) who advocate for Macon County children and youth, including Foster children. The CASA program is based on a national court advocacy model, which provides trained volunteer advocates for youth who are in the courts system. These advocates work with youth and family (including the Foster Family) to smooth the way in the judicial system, to support the youth, and to work on behalf of the youth to ensure that their case is handled professionally, and in the best interest of the youth.

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

Webster-Cantrell Hall, in keeping with its Code of Ethics for Personnel, expects that all staff, including Foster Parents, to always treat all clients and client families with dignity, respect and consideration. Failure to do so can result in the employee or the Foster Parent having their relationship with the Agency terminated. Foster Parents are also required to read and sign the Acknowledgement and Understanding regarding the Department's policy concerning corporal punishment, verbal abuse, threats and derogatory remarks.

A subject of initial licensing and ongoing trainings is the need for ways to ensure that foster children and their families are treated with dignity, respect and consideration. Team casework staff completes initial and ongoing training regarding how to incorporate the Foster Parent, foster children when appropriate and the children's families as a part of the Child Welfare Team. PRIDE In-Service offers training for the Foster Parents regarding the roles and responsibilities of each member of the Child Welfare Team. This training is offered to all Foster Parents. Foster Parents are encouraged to work with the biological family in order to best meet the needs of the child(ren). Foster Parents are encouraged to journal and keep Life Books to share with the biological family.

Team casework staff is always alert to monitor the attitude toward and treatment of foster children and their families to ensure that Foster Parents remember to uphold this responsibility. This monitoring is part of home visits, phone discussions with the Foster Parent, and participation in such events as court hearings, case reviews, and ACRs. The caseworkers are trained to speak separately to the child(ren) in order to discuss any concerns the child may have. This allows the child to express any concerns, fears or questions. The caseworker in return can either address the issues directly with the Foster Parent or speak to the Licensing Representative and Supervisor. Licensing also evaluates the Foster Families ability to support the identified permanency goal at bi-annual home visits. Permanency goals are an on-going discussion between the Foster Family and the Licensing Representative. The Licensing Representative as well as team casework staff encourages

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the Foster Family to be involved with court hearings, case reviews and the Child and Family Team meetings.

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.**

Webster-Cantrell Hall foster care staff continually work to objectively ensure that Foster Parents have realistic views of their individual and family strengths and limitations in dealing with foster children. This process begins with the licensing process and the pre-service training opportunities. It continues through in-service training opportunities, and in the ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of the Foster Parents. Every effort is made to make placements of foster children based in part on the mutual assessment of some level of compatibility between the Foster Parent and the foster child's needs, strengths and limitations. The Licensing Representative also meets in the home with the Foster Parent every six months in order to discuss any needs or concerns regarding the Foster Parent and foster child. During these discussions the Licensing Representative and Foster Parent continue the ongoing mutual assessment of strengths and limitations in dealing with foster children. The Licensing Representative works with the Foster Parent to identify appropriate trainings to address areas of concern and/or limitations. Webster Cantrell Hall also encourages their foster homes to establish a network of support in order to further utilize their strengths or receive assistance for areas of improvement.

During the Licensing Process, the Licensing Representative discusses with the Foster Family the need to develop a list of questions they would like answered before a child is placed in their home. Foster Families are also encouraged to deny placement if they are not comfortable with the information given regarding the child or children. Foster Families work with the Licensing Representative to identify a capacity and age range which best fits their daily routines and parenting skills. Foster parents are asked about their placement preferences in age, race, and gender. The Foster Parent completes the Tolerance for Behavior Problems during the licensing process in order to address the type of behaviors they feel they are comfortable caring for, will need help or can not provide adequate care for. This allows the foster care team staff to know before contacting the Foster Parents if the child(ren) will adjust to placement in the home, as well as the ability for the Foster Parents to adjust. If a child is being placed from another foster home or for an adoptive placement and time allows, pre-placement visits are encouraged. Pre-placement visits allow the Foster Parents as well as staff to identify concerns and make recommendations regarding long term placement.

Foster Parents are encouraged to make inquiries regarding their concerns and service delivery plans for each child in the decision making process regarding the placement of a child in their home. Foster Parents are expected to discuss their strengths and limitations, to

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seek training to meet those needs, and to seek support systems and resources as they work to provide care for foster children. The Team caseworker also meets with the Foster Parent twice a month in the home and discusses with the Foster Parent the areas of concern regarding the Foster Parent's limitations and dealing with foster children currently in placement.

Important sources of support are the regular Foster Parents meetings convened by the Agency, and the on-going work of the child welfare team. Additional support for Foster Parents comes from their participation in the activities of the Foster Parent Associations and local support groups. All supports are targeted to assist the Foster Parents to better assess the ongoing needs of the foster child, and their ability to serve that child. Foster Parents are encouraged to call the Agency Foster Care Staff with any issues that might arise. The agency maintains a 24 hour help line for Foster Parents.

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.

Webster-Cantrell Hall provides several on-going avenues through which Foster Parents can be aware of the benefits of affiliating with other Foster Parents, and with Foster Parent associations. Some of these include the regular Foster Parent meetings, newsletters, and training opportunities. Agency staff provide information on support groups for Foster Parents to encourage alliances with other Foster Parents. We also encourage all Foster Parents in our area to join the "Central Illinois Foster Parent Support Group". This Agency has initiated and continues to aid the Foster Parent Support Group. This Support Group has a face book page <http://www.facebook.com/groups/371640296222773/>. The support group and their Facebook page are run independently of this agency. We do not monitor the meetings or discussions. The support group is open to all foster parents in our area.

The Licensing Representatives present the availability and benefits of support groups during the Licensing Process and ongoing home monitors. Foster Parents are presented the opportunity to participate in Foster and Adoptive Parent Associations and Councils throughout training and the Foster Parent Newsletter. The Illinois Families – Now and Forever newsletter provides the dates of the Foster Parent Council meetings scheduled regionally throughout the year. Several Foster Parents also attend community support groups such as the local Illinois Foster Parent Association sponsored support group.

Webster-Cantrell Hall encourages Foster Parents to utilize the trainings to connect with more experienced foster parents. All Foster Parents have strengths and skills in different areas. At the trainings, Foster Parents benefit from cultural and racial diversity/sensitivity. For example, a Caucasian foster parent who is fostering an African-American foster child (or visa versa) is connected to a Foster Parent of the same cultural/racial background as the foster child to help with questions. The most frequent issue addressed is hair care.

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

The Agency continuously provides information through Foster Parent meetings, child welfare team activities, newsletters, and training opportunities to assist Foster Parents to be able to better assess their ongoing training needs. Foster Parents are encouraged to attend and participate in training opportunities. Foster Parents are informed about community-sponsored parenting-training opportunities. The Licensing Representative and Foster Parent mutually assess strengths and needs in order to continue improving their skills to meet the needs of foster children. These strengths and needs are documented on the CFS 597-FFH Family Foster Home Licensing Monitoring Record and case notes. The Licensing Representatives and support group ensures that all Foster Parents are aware of trainings through mailings, hand-outs at meetings, the Foster Parent Newsletter, and verbally. This is working and several Foster Parents have identified specific trainings they would like to attend. The Licensing Representative is available to assist in registration, and to help the Foster Parents complete the trainings if needed. Foster parents are also active in other support groups and inform licensing about their meetings to share with all foster parents. The survey also asks what type of trainings the foster parent would like.

Newsletters always have the contact information for the Illinois Foster Parent Association and support groups in each issue. At the Licensing Monitor visits, training needs for renewal and immediate needs for understanding to deal with a foster child are discussed. The caseworkers also discussed the needs of the foster parents and training issues. Licensing was able to identify specific needs of foster parents then staff with the Family Services Supervisor and Chief Clinical Officer to implement new trainings. Licensing has also encouraged one to one training by asking seasoned Foster Parents with more experience to discuss their personal stories in order to help other Foster Parents.

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

The Integrated Assessment Program (IA) happens when a new foster child comes into care, the case is received by a DCFS Intake Coordinator and assigned to a Clinical Screener who works directly with the Agency Caseworker. In this initial assessment process, the Clinical Screener and Caseworker conduct joint interviews with the child, Foster Parents, and birth parents. A DCFS Master Level worker completes the Integrated Social Assessments. This method will help identify a child at risk and outline services for the child. During the IA the child is screened for physical, emotional, and developmental needs.

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Foster Parents will work with that team to develop and implement strategies to prevent placement disruptions for the child(ren) in their care, and for foster children generally. These parents as well as the team caseworker have the availability to contact the Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS), formally known as Systems of Care (SOC), in order to submit a referral for added support. IPS is used when there is a crisis causing placement disruption and the Foster Child does not need psychiatric intervention and is not a danger to themselves or others. SASS or Screening, Assessment and Support Services are called for psychiatric issues. The CARES office should be called if the foster child has unusual behaviors, is self-harming, or harming others. The CARES phone number is 1-800-345-9049. Increased levels of casework intervention and monitoring are considered to be indicators of increased risk of placement disruptions in a foster family home. Webster-Cantrell Hall requires caseworkers to be in the home bi-monthly in order to assist in identifying signs of disruption and as a tool to deescalate a potential crisis situation. The team caseworker accesses IPS services when increased risk of placement disruption begins to become clear. IPS provides counseling for the foster child and training to work with the identified behaviors for the Foster Parents. SOC also provides financial support for items that will help in maintaining the stabilization of the placement.

Foster Parents are in a particularly good position to develop strategies, due to their day-to-day involvement with difficult behaviors, and to their perspective as experienced parents. Agency staff assists the Foster Parents in this effort through ongoing training opportunities, and resolution of problems as they arise. The Agency Licensing Staff adds important web site information to the monthly Foster Parent Newsletter.

Additionally, Foster Parents are assisted to become knowledgeable about the services and resources they may need to prevent placement disruptions. This is particularly important for Foster Parents who may be dealing with difficult behaviors or special needs children. Such assistance includes but is not limited to helping Foster Parents to access and utilize the Intensive Placement Stabilization services. The IPS program accesses mentors for children in care. The Intensive Placement Stabilization program creates a higher level of support for the child as well as the Foster Family.

Efforts are also expanded to include educating Foster Parents regarding the benefits of respite care for children, and the assistance from participation in various support groups through which they can access a system of exchanging baby sitting opportunities. The addition of the availability of respite funding also assists foster parents to get a much deserved break.

Foster Parents are encouraged to openly communicate their own needs regarding trainings on specific areas such as Trauma, Mental Health Services, At Risk Youth, and appropriate discipline. Counselors are available to assist Foster Parents in developing Behavioral Management techniques and to educate the Foster Parent in areas such as the effects of sexual abuse, physical abuse, and/or mental health diagnosis. Foster Parents are encouraged

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to communicate with counselors in order to better serve the foster children and decrease the chance of placement disruption. Counselors will often contact the Foster Parents to discuss areas of concern or invite the Foster Parents to participate in counseling with the child.

Prior to a Foster Parent adopting a foster child(ren), the Foster Parent is required to attend the Fostering to Adoption training provided through PRIDE. This training provides resources for adopted children and the Foster Parents who adopted them. Placement disruption issues are still addressed after an adoption occurs. There is a Post Adoption Unit to call for assistance with Foster Children that have been adopted. They have the knowledge and resources to help with many issues such as subsidy payment, Medicaid card, therapeutic daycare, medically fragile respite care, Educational and Transitional services for the child, Preservation services, Crisis intervention, Support groups, Mental Health Advocacy, Search for birth family, and Adoptive Parent Training. The Post Adoption Unit also has access to Summer Camps for children with mental health diagnosis. This has been very helpful to many of our foster parents. Adoptive and subsidized guardianship parents can call the Adoption Support Line number: 866-538-8892 or 217-278-5316 in the Central Region.

If preventative strategies should fail, the Foster Parent is required to give the Team caseworker a fourteen day written notice of their request to have a new placement secured for the foster child. During this time period the caseworker discusses where the preventive strategies failed in order to ensure more successful preventative measures are in place prior to the placement change. Foster Parents are asked to consult with the professionals in the foster child's team (psychiatrists, counselors, teachers, etc.) to understand the foster child's behaviors. The Foster Care staff also discuss with the Foster Parent, trainings that are available to improve upon the strengths and limitations of the Foster Parent in order to assist in the preparation of another foster child being placed in their home. If a disruption occurs, we understand that it is not due to any inadequacies with the foster parent. We want to support our foster parents with their decision to have a child moved out of their home and review what child will fit in their family. At the same time, the child being removed will be having evaluations and increased services to address that child's specific needs.

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

The Agency expects that Foster Parents learn about the impact foster care may have on individuals and the family as a whole. This topic is a very important part of the mutual assessment process included in the PRIDE pre-service training. This ability is important for Foster Parents to be able to evaluate and anticipate the various events that can result in an abnormal amount of stress for the family. It is a frequent topic featured in face-to-face communication between Foster Parent and Agency staff and newsletter articles.

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The topic Managing and Minimizing Stress for the Foster Parent is addressed for the Foster Parents in pre-service and on-going in-service training, and as an agenda item for the regular Foster Parent meetings. Agency staff encourages Foster Parents to openly communicate questions and concerns regarding the stress which can and probably will occur for the Foster Parent, as a result of their having foster children join their family.

The Webster-Cantrell Hall foster care staff encourages the use of “voluntary hold” methods in instances where the Foster Parent is indicating that, due to increased stress in the family or other circumstances, they do not want any additional foster children placed in their home on a temporary basis. The use of these voluntary methods can often assist the foster family to regroup and learn to better manage the strain they may be facing. The uses of the “voluntary hold” methods are taught during the licensing process and ongoing Foster Parent training sessions. This option is also offered by casework staff if a Foster Parent is indicating increased levels of stress.

Foster Parents are encouraged to utilize community support and resources in order to help reduce stress. Several strategies of stress management are encouraged to stop placement disruption. Communication with counselors and team caseworkers is highly encouraged. The team caseworker may also initiate support services, such as the Intensive Placement Stabilization, in order to provide support not only for the foster child, but the Foster Parents as well. The Agency Staff also encourage the Foster Parents to utilize trainings and support services during home monitors. The Agency offers respite care on a regular basis to give foster parents a break. We encourage traditional foster parents to participate by taking in these children for a short time and help another foster home.

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.

Webster-Cantrell Hall firmly believes that effective foster care can be critical in the development of children who are separated from their families. This Agency continuously strives to reflect the concept that the foster care system benefits not only the children in care and their families, but the community and society as a whole. Therefore, Foster Parents receive training in the public relations aspect of foster parenting.

This positive perspective of the foster care service is addressed in pre-service and on-going in-service training opportunities for Foster Parents, and in the child welfare team activities in which they participate for individual children. The Director of Marketing Development for the agency, working with the Foster Family Care program, routinely strategizes media exposure to provide public awareness of the importance of the fostering experience and to recruit new foster family homes. Components of this media strategy are newspaper articles, radio spots, television interviews, billboards, speaking to community groups, and letters to local churches. Additionally, the local print media are encouraged to do positive special

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articles on various aspects of the foster parenting experience. The Director of Marketing has spoken to local businesses about the foster care program. During the Plan year 2018, Webster-Cantrell Hall will continue to give attention to the recruitment of new foster family homes. Foster Parents are invited to participate in recruitment/retention efforts and recruitment/retention committees.

The Foster Parent Mentor Program will also continue to focus on the rewards and benefits of fostering. This program gives foster parents the opportunity to network with other foster parents who have experienced similar situations. The foster parent mentor is a positive support and reminder that fostering does not only hold rewards and benefits for the foster parent, but also for the foster child, parents, families and society.

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.

The process of assisting the Foster Parent to know and understand their role, rights and responsibilities as a child care professional, and the role, rights and responsibilities of all other professionals, the foster child, and the child's family, begin with the first contact leading to the licensure of the Foster Parent. Agency staff teach all Foster Parents of their role, rights, and responsibility through their participation in activities of the child welfare team, through pre-service and in-service training, and through all on-going contacts with the Foster Parents. This Agency encourages all Foster Care staff to attend all Foster Parent trainings to stay updated with new information. Foster Parents are encouraged to attend trainings and participate in co-training experiences with foster care staff. This responsibility is stated through the regular newsletter, manuals from the agency and from DCFS, and from the Bill of Rights committee. Foster Parents are encouraged to attend the PRIDE training entitled "Working as a professional Team Member", which discusses in depth the roles and responsibilities of each member of the professional child welfare team. In Plan year 2016 staff and foster parents trained together.

Foster Parents assist in the development and revision of the Webster-Cantrell Hall Annual Implementation Plan of the Foster Parent Law (Public Act 89.19) and participate in the evaluation of the implementation of this plan. Agency staff continuously assist the Foster Parents to better understand the mandates of the Foster Parent Law. All Foster Parents are given each Annual Implementation Plan of the Foster Parent Law (Public Act 89.19) for their reference. A copy of how this agency implements this plan is mailed to every foster parent, licensed and unlicensed, that is working with this agency at the beginning of each calendar year. Foster Parents provide their continuing input to each annual plan development.

Foster Parents have a recognized voice within the Webster-Cantrell Hall management structure. Their concerns and problems are relayed to agency administrative staff on a

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regular basis by the Foster Care Placement Coordinators, Family Services Intact Coordinator, and the Chief Clinical Director. The CEO convenes an administrative team meeting every workday morning, and if appropriate, Foster Parents may attend these meetings to enter into a direct dialogue with the team. Please contact your caseworker, Placement Coordinator Supervisor, or Chief Clinical Director to be included in an Administrative meeting.

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.**

Foster Parents are required to sign the Mandated Reporter Form at both the initial licensure and at the renewal of licensure. Licensing personnel discuss this with each foster parent to insure they understand that they have to report child abuse and neglect. Foster parents agree to report child abuse and neglect of any child to the Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-252-2873 or 1-800-25-ABUSE. . Foster Parents are taught their responsibility as mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect, and of the investigative processes which accompany such reports. Foster parents are to inform the caseworker for the child involved and call the hotline. PRIDE pre-service trains the foster parent on being a Mandated Reporter. An in depth training on being a Mandated Reporter is offered online at dcfstraining.org. Foster parents receive training credit for this training.

Foster parents have the responsibility to report abuse and neglect and may also be accused of child abuse and neglect. Webster-Cantrell Hall includes a discussion of the responsibilities of Foster Parents under the mandates of the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, and of the Agency Personnel Policy, 3.9.2 - Suspension and Dismissal Policy. This addresses Agency Policy regarding allegations of child abuse and/or neglect for employees/volunteers. The Suspension and Dismissal Policy applies to Foster Parents as to all other Agency personnel. Foster Parents may receive the support of Agency staff in any such 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 parent's designated role in these proceedings.**

The Agency assumes the responsibility to provide and/or facilitate the provision of pre-service training for Foster Parents regarding Administrative Case Reviews, client service plans, and court processes, and for observing filing time lines. While the Foster Parents are responsible for knowing these processes, including filing and time requirements, the Agency

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realizes that these are complex service issues. To date a majority of Foster Parents attend family meetings in preparation for their foster child's Administrative Case Review (ACR).

The Foster Care Team did not report an increase or decrease of Foster Parent attendance at court hearings or administrative case reviews. During the plan year 2017, emphasis on ensuring that Foster Parents are active participants in these proceedings will continue. The Agency assists the Foster Parents to learn these processes and to practice them as participating members of the child welfare team. This gives time for the Foster Parent to fully understand their role in these proceedings and court appearances. Emphasis is placed on the active participation in these proceedings.

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

The Webster-Cantrell Hall Foster Care Program staff assumes the responsibility for training the Foster Parents regarding the Agency Grievance procedure for Foster Parents, and regarding the appeal procedure as set forth in Title 89: Social Services, Chapter III: Department of Children and Family Services, Subchapter a: Service Delivery, Part 337: Service Appeal Process. Agency staff also assists Foster Parents in the event that they would need to access either procedure, and to understand their rights under each. Additionally, a brochure on the appeals process is distributed to foster parents. A training session on the Appeals Process of the Court System is offered as needed. The rights of Foster Parents are clearly stated in the Agency's Implementation Plan and in the Foster Parent Handbook. (Available at <http://www.dcfstraining.org/>)

This Grievance process is to be used by foster parents only for grieving alleged violations of the Foster Parent Law that are not covered by an already existing grievance or appeal process. Therefore, it cannot be used to address issues that are covered by the service appeal process, the appeal process for indicated cases of child abuse/neglect, the process for appealing licensing investigation findings or license revocations, etc. We review the Grievance Procedure and appeals process in training and home visits. The foster Parents can ask for clarification and make suggestions for improvement every year verbally and by making written suggestions on the signature page.

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.

Webster-Cantrell Hall provides pre-service and on-going in-service training to Foster Parents regarding the maintenance of the Foster Child Records, a rule in Licensing Standards. The Instructions for maintaining the Foster Child Record are in the Child Care Folder given to each foster parent for each foster child at the beginning of a case. An

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explanation of the Clothing Allowance and Personal Allowance records to be maintained is also included in the Appendix.

Foster Parents receive a written statement of the regulations and expectations for their maintenance of complete, meaningful, and useable foster parent records. The Foster parent learns of their responsibility in maintaining accurate, relevant, and complete records regarding the child's history and progress that become a part of the client record. The case record folders ensure the safe storage and transportation of foster children's records. The team caseworker monitors the records to ensure that those records are updated and fully document the progress of the child.

The knowledge of procedures and regulations is further reinforced in the ongoing participation of the Foster Parent in the child welfare team. Foster Parents are expected to include the child's "Health Works Passport" in the Child Care Folders and to update these documents regularly.

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

All Foster Parents, as members of the child welfare team, are trained to fully disclose all pertinent information regarding how the child adjusted to living in their home. They also receive training regarding this disclosure of information as a normal and usual part of the child welfare team. We strive to accurately assess the child and to make service plans that are beneficial to the child. Caseworkers expect the free exchange of information regarding a child and reinforce the Foster Parents for their objective assessment and sharing of information.

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

Webster-Cantrell Hall continuously implements a plan by which all staff, including the Foster Parent, receives initial and ongoing training regarding how to effectively address issues of race and culture that are identified client needs. Additionally, all staff work to ensure that the cultural needs and identity of all clients are understood and respected. This is considered a particularly sensitive and important issue to address when the cultural identity of the foster child differs from that of the foster family. The goal of being sensitive to this need and the means by which that is accomplished become components of the child's individual service plan. PRIDE In-Service has Cultural Diversity Training for all Foster

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Parents. In 2017, this agency provided our own Cultural Diversity training. Foster Parents are also encouraged to utilize the Foster Parent Mentor Program support services for foster children which are of different culture or race of the Foster Parent in order to continue to provide a sense of identity for the foster child. The Foster Care Staff will assist in matching Foster Parents with foster children of different cultural and racial backgrounds with veteran Foster Parents of the same cultural or racial background of the foster child.

Foster and/or adoptive parents are encouraged to meet the cultural needs of children outside their racial or cultural boundaries through books, trainings and outside resources. Further, the Agency includes resources throughout the community that can be helpful to Foster Parents in being more responsive to the cultural needs of foster children.

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WEBSTER-CANTRELL HALL FOSTER PARENT VIOLATION GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The Agency provides for a procedure of grievance for Foster Parents in order to specifically address alleged violations of the Foster Parent Law by Agency staff, and to promote positive service delivery environment within which communication between Foster Parents and the Foster Care Program Director, the agency Clinical Director, and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is encouraged regarding such alleged violations. This grievance process is to be used by foster parents only for grieving alleged violations of the Foster Parent Law that are not covered by the service appeal process, the appeal process for indicated cases of child abuse/neglect, the process for appealing licensing investigation findings license revocations, etc.

This procedure is developed within the input of agency foster care staff and Foster Parents.

A grievance is defined as any alleged violation of the Foster Parent Law by Webster-Cantrell hall staff that subject thinks or feels has been committed. Foster Parents (hereinafter referred to as Grievant) may submit grievances for such alleged violation of the Foster Parent Law by Agency staff according to the following sequence:

Step One (Informal – verbal or in writing)

1. A grievance at this level may be presented to the Agency Foster Care Director or the Clinical Director, either verbally or in writing. The grievance must include:
 - Full name of grievant and Director to whom the grievance is submitted.
 - Date, time, and place the initial informal grievance was submitted.
 - The specific alleged violation of the Foster Parent Law that has occurred.
 - Specific nature of the grievance.
 - Corrective or remedial action sought by the grievant.
2. The grievance must be submitted within ten (10) calendar days of the event that prompted the grievance. Every effort is taken to resolve the grievance at this initial informal step. An informal Memorandum of Record is prepared by the Director to whom the grievance was submitted, and is signed by the Director and the grievant, whether the grievance is resolved or not.
3. A copy of the Memorandum of Record is forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer within ten (10) calendar days of the date of submission of the grievance.
4. A copy of the Memorandum of Record is placed in the grievant Foster Parent Record.

Step Two (Formal Written Grievance Process)

1. If the grievance has not been resolved at Step One – the informal stage of the grievance process, and the grievant desires a review of the informal resolution of the grievance by the CEO, the grievance must now be submitted in writing to the CEO, also within ten (10) calendar days of the original informal submission of the grievance. In this written grievance submitted to the CEO, the grievant must state:

- The decision why the decision or resolution made by the Director to whom the grievance was submitted is considered unjustified or unwarranted; and
 - The evidence that the grievant wishes for the CEO to consider.
2. The CEO will, within ten (10) calendar days of the submission of the grievance for Step Two – formal stage of the grievance process, render a written decision regarding the resolution of the grievance.
 3. The written decision of the CEO represents the final Webster-Cantrell hall decision.
 4. The CEO will convene a meeting with the grievant, the appropriate Director(s), and a DCFS representative to further clarify and discuss the resolution of the grievance.

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