

Lancaster County Children and Youth Social Service Agency and Foster /Resource Parents Agreement of Mutual Rights and Responsibilities

Foster/Resource Parents and Agency staff understand and agree that:

1. We will treat each other, birth parents, and foster children with consideration and respect for personal dignity.
2. All final responsibility for planning for the child rests with the Agency. It may not be possible at the time of placement for the Agency to know how long a child will remain in placement. Whenever possible, foster/resource parents will have the opportunity to participate in scheduled planning meetings and will have input into the case planning and decision-making process regarding the child.
3. The Agency and the foster/resource parents will work together mutually to fulfill the directions and orders of the court regarding each child under court jurisdiction.
4. The Agency will pay the foster/resource parents a board and clothing allowance.
5. The State Medicaid Program will pay medical and dental care for the child. Foster/resource parents will schedule medical and dental appointments in compliance with State regulations and attend these appointments with their child.
6. Foster/resource parents are responsible for day-to-day decisions involving the child so that he/she feels as much a part of his/her family as possible.
7. Foster/resource parents will not use physical discipline, which is prohibited by State regulation and Agency policy.
8. The Agency caseworkers, through regular contacts, will assist the foster/resource parents in helping their foster child to separate from his/her family, adjust to his/her home and handle other necessary changes. There will be open, complete, and timely response from the Agency when contacted by the foster/resource parents. The Agency will provide support services to assist in the care of the child, consistent with the child's approved Permanency Plan.
9. Foster/resource parents will each receive a minimum of eight (8) hours of Agency-approved training every year that will be appropriate to enhance their skills and abilities in areas needed or requested. Foster/resource parents and staff are encouraged to seek additional training above the minimum in order to fulfill their roles to the best of their abilities.
10. Foster/resource parents will cooperate with the child's court ordered visitation plans. Most children need to keep in touch with their birth parents and siblings. State regulations stipulate that birth parents have the right to visit with their children at least every two (2) weeks or as ordered by the court. Foster/resource parents will be on time for visits with birth parents.
11. Foster/resource parents agree to transport the Children and Youth Agency's foster children to and from visits, medical appointments, counseling sessions, parenting classes, etc. The Agency will provide timely notification of these appointments, where needed.

12. Foster/resource parents will give at least ten (10) working days' notice to the Agency if circumstances develop that make the foster/resource parents feel they can no longer keep the child. The Agency will provide support services to assist in the care of the child, and will assist with the coordination of services for dealing with family loss and separation when a child leaves the resource family's home, when relocation is not the result of an immediate threat to the health and safety of the child caused by the foster/ resource family, and when the foster/resource family requests such service.

13. Any major changes in foster/resource home or family since the Home Study was completed must be discussed with, and approved by, the Agency. Foster/resource parents will notify the Agency in advance if another person is coming into their home to live.

14. Foster/resource parents will not allow a foster child to be taken from their home without Agency permission.

15. Foster/resource parents cannot take action for adoption or guardianship of a foster child without Agency permission.

16. Foster/resource parents are bound by the same Confidentiality Regulations as Agency staff. Foster/resource parents will share information given to them regarding the child and birth family only with necessary Agency personnel. This confidentiality will also extend to any allegation of abuse involving a member of the foster/resource family. The provision of confidentiality shall not interfere with the safety of the child.

17. The Agency agrees to consult with the foster/resource parents in the decision to release the foster/resource family's address to the child's birth parents or extended family, and be informed when such information has been shared.

18. The Agency shall release all information necessary to provide adequate care to the child such as: Information about the child's medical history, mental health diagnosis, general behaviors, and necessary information regarding the relationships between the child and his/her birth parents. This information shall be provided to the foster/resource parents as soon as possible by the Agency. The Agency will decide what information is necessary to know in order to care for the child, while protecting the confidentiality of the child's birth parents and extended family. The Agency will exercise the same judgment when releasing information concerning the child's educational history, life experiences, and placement circumstances.

19. The Agency will furnish the foster/resource parents with information on Agency policies and procedures as well as directions on how to receive services and reach emergency personnel on a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week basis.

20. The Agency and the foster/resource parents will mutually respect the cultural and religious heritage of the child's birth family.

21. It is the responsibility of foster/resource parents to help the foster child in their home. To do the best job, it is important that the foster/resource parents and the Agency develop a positive working relationship by both using a common sense set of standards. There may be occasions when the foster/resource parents and the caseworker are unable to agree on matters relating to the child. If this should occur, there are steps to follow to maximize the opportunity to resolve areas of disagreement. Resource parents have the assurance that these steps can be taken with confidence that the Agency will not discharge, threaten, discriminate or retaliate when decisions and practices are questioned that are in the interest of the children in care.

- A. Let the caseworker know that there is an area of disagreement. If foster/resource parents are not satisfied with the response, go to the next level.
- B. Contact the caseworker's immediate supervisor and ask for a meeting. If not satisfied with the response, go to the next level.
- C. Contact the Director of Placement Services and ask for a meeting with all parties.
- D. If you are unable to reach anyone because of voice mail or night and weekends, and it involves a matter that cannot wait:

- 1. Weekdays - Call the main Agency number, (Number here) and ask to speak to someone immediately.
- 2. Evenings and Weekends - Call the on-call caseworker through the Medical Bureau at (Number Here).

Please remember that every problem has a solution if we take the time to ask questions and work as a team. If you have questions about foster care in general or Agency policy, you may contact your Resource Unit caseworker. At any time during this process you can also contact the Lancaster County Foster Parent Association for support.

Our goal is to maximize your foster care experiences.

Children & Youth Agency Representative

Date

Foster/Resource Mother

Foster/Resource Father