

The following agreement was done in cooperation with Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association, Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators and Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Family Services. This agreement was put into place using all the points in the Resource Family Care Act and is very thorough. It has also been being reviewed by the policy department of Office of Children Youth and Family Services. We are encouraging all public and private agencies to use this for a model and it may be manicured to fit the individual agency or FPA needs.

Model Agreement of Mutual Rights and Responsibilities

The following is suggested model language which can be added to the agreement between an agency and resource parents, including foster, kinship and adoptive parents, to address the requirements of Act 73 and Act 68 of 2005.

1. Both [the Agency] and resource parent(s) will interact with each other with consideration, respect and fairness and mutually work to develop and maintain a positive working relationship.
2. [The Agency] will treat resource parents as part of the team in caring for the child(ren) served and agree to work collaboratively to ensure their safety, permanency, and well-being.
3. [The Agency] will respond in an open, complete and timely fashion when contacted by the resource parents regarding questions, issues or concerns about their role and/or the care of the child(ren) in their home.
4. [The Agency] will inform the resource parents regarding the child's medical history, mental health diagnosis, general behaviors, relationships between the child and his/her parents, educational history, life experiences, and previous and prospective placement circumstances to facilitate the resource parents' care for the child. The availability and timeliness of this information being available to [The Agency] will affect how quickly it can be shared with the resource parents. [The Agency] will continue to update the resource parents as appropriate when additional information is received.
5. [The Agency] will provide resource parents as much notice as possible of scheduled meetings regarding the child(ren) in their home, in an effort to facilitate their participation in the case planning and decision-making processes. Such meetings include, but are not limited to, court reviews and Individual Service Plan (ISP) meetings.
6. Resource parents are expected and encouraged to attend meetings and to actively participate and offer input into the service and permanency planning process regarding the child(ren) in their home. Resource parents agree to implement and/or facilitate the actions stated in the ISP to the best of their ability.
7. [The Agency] will work with the resource parents to identify, facilitate, arrange and/or provide support services to assist in the care of the child consistent with the child's ISP. Such support services include, but are not limited to, medical and dental care, mental health and/or substance abuse evaluation and/or treatment, and social work services. Individualized educational planning and services will be determined and implemented in mutual cooperation with the child's legal parent(s), school staff, [Agency] staff and resource parents.
8. The resource parents agree to provide transportation for the child to and from any appointments, including for medical and dental care, therapy, evaluation, counseling, education and/or any other care, treatment, or service appointment. Resource parents also agree to provide transportation to and from meetings regarding the child in their home, including ISP and court reviews. [The Agency] will work with the resource parents to arrange transportation, as needed.

9. [The Agency] will provide orientation information, including a review of Agency policies and procedures, applicable state regulations or statutes, emergency and non-emergency Agency contact information and protocols, and instructions on how to receive services. In addition, [the Agency] will provide on-going direction, supervision, and in-service training for resource parents to maintain continued understanding of mutual expectations, roles, and needs.
10. The resource parents agree to ensure the confidentiality of all information provided to them about the child and his/her parents and/or extended family, and to only share information received from the child and his/her parents and/or extended family with Agency staff or other professionals (i.e. physician, therapist, etc.) as appropriate. The resource parents also agree to be supportive of a child's relationship with his/her birth family and treat and/or speak of them with consideration and respect.
11. In accordance with state regulations, [the Agency] will provide the name, address and phone number of the resource parents to the parents of the child in their home, unless doing so (a) is restricted by court order, (b) threatens the health and well-being of the child or resource family, or (c) if [the Agency] is able to document a plausible basis for refusing such disclosure. [The Agency] will advise the resource parent as to the timing of the release of this information and will be available to address any concerns the resource family may have regarding this process.
12. Upon request, [The Agency] will work with the resource parents to assist with the coordination of services needed to address family loss and separation issues stemming from a child leaving the resource family's home, when such relocation is not the result of an immediate threat to the health and safety of the child caused by the resource family.
13. In the event that the goal for a child who has resided with the resource parents for at least six (6) months is changed to adoption and the resource parents are interested in being an adoptive resource for the child, [the Agency] will ensure that the resource parents are interviewed and considered by the appropriate county or private agency. When more than one adoptive resource is available, the Agency shall document the basis for selection of the adoptive family resource for the child in the child's case record. The agency shall share information regarding the criteria used in the selection of the adoptive family with the resource parents within the limitations of confidentiality provisions.
14. Resource parents agree to complete a minimum of [six (6)] hours of training annually as required by state regulations or in compliance with [Agency] policies to enhance their skills and abilities in areas requested and/or deemed necessary. Resource parents are encouraged to seek additional training above the minimum requirements in order to further enhance their performance and abilities in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.
15. According to state law, [Agency] staff are mandated to report child abuse. In the event that an allegation of abuse is made regarding a resource parent or member of their household, [the Agency] will follow protocols in reporting the allegation and ensuring the safety of the child. [The Agency] will ensure that information pertaining to the report is kept confidential and released only in accordance with state regulation. The Agency policies will be shared with the resource parents.
16. Resource parents have the opportunity to be heard regarding Agency decisions or practices involving a child(ren) residing in with their home. [The Agency] will not discharge, threaten or otherwise discriminate or retaliate against the resource parents for an appropriate inquiry regarding such decisions or practices.
17. [The Agency] will provide a copy of this Agreement to the resource parents upon their approval as a resource family, along with a copy of the responsibilities enumerated in Act 73, the Resource Family Care Act and Act 68, the Foster Parent Consideration Act.

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 (Phone Number) and ask to speak to someone immediately.
 - 2. **Evenings and Weekends** - Call the on-call caseworker (Phone Number)

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 caseworker. At any time during this process you can also contact the Local Foster Parent Association for support. Our goal is to maximize your foster care experiences for you and the child entrusted to your care.

Agency Representative

Date

Resource parent

Resource parent