

YOUTH SERVICE BUREAU
OF
ILLINOIS VALLEY

FOSTER PARENT LAW 2024
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

10/30/2023

Acknowledgments

We want to thank the 2024 Foster Parent Implementation Plan Committee members for the many hours they have dedicated to this project. We acknowledge their sacrifice of time, as well as the vision they shared with the agency through their questions, comments, suggestions, and reviews of the final plan.

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**YOUTH SERVICE BUREAU OF ILLINOIS VALLEY
FOSTER CARE PROGRAM
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2024**

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ACRONYMS

Department of Child and Family Services – DCFS

Parent Resource for Information, Development and Education – PRIDE Training

Learning Development Center – LDC

Youth Service Bureau – YSB

Administrative case review (ACR) means a review of permanency planning open to the participation of the parents of the child, conducted by a person who is not responsible for the case management of, or the delivery of services to, either the child or the parents who are the subjects of the review. The administrative case review is also open to the participation of other professionals involved in assessing or treating the child, any legal representative of the parent or child, and the foster parents as specified in this part.

A **child and family team meeting (CFTM)** is a gathering of family members, fictive kin, friends, and other invested stakeholders who join together to strengthen a family and provide a protection and care plan for the child to achieve child safety, permanency and well-being.

Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP) is a facilitator-guided, team decision-making process to improve placement preservation and increase placement stability. A CIPP staffing is conducted to determine the array and intensity of services needed for a child or youth whose current placement is threatened with disruption or whose care cannot be provided for in his/her current placement. A CIPP staffing is also conducted to determine the array and intensity of services needed for a child or youth whose placement has disrupted.

The **Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)** is a plan or program developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives specialized instruction and related services.

Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS) is a short-term placement stabilization program that provides services to children in foster care. IPS is expected to provide a mix of formal and informal supports to families to promote placement stability. As such, each service array is flexible, individualized and tailored to the needs of the child and family. A typical service array might include individual and family therapy, respite, family support, crisis intervention, recreation supplies, tutoring, school advocacy, and psychosocial education.

The **Integrated Assessment (IA)** offers comprehensive assessments and integrated case planning activities for children and families entering into protective custody. This process looks at the medical, social, developmental, and educational factors of both the child and adults involved in a case. This draws on perspectives of both the caseworker and screeners to provide a thorough clinical assessment to create more informed decisions regarding service interventions for cases coming into care.

ACRONYMS CONTINUED

Screening Assessment and Support Services (SASS) is an intensive mental health program designed to provide crisis stabilization, pre-admission screening, assessment, and treatment of any child who may be at risk of psychiatric hospitalization and who is eligible for public funding. Services are child-centered, family-focused, community-based, and culturally competent, and occurring in the least-restrictive setting, and include multi-systems.

YOUTH SERVICE BUREAU OF ILLINOIS VALLEY 2023 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOSTER PARENT BILL OF RIGHTS

Youth Service Bureau of Illinois Valley (YSBIV) recognizes the importance of foster parents' rights and responsibilities, which have been defined in House Bill 2227. This plan has been developed to show conformity with the Foster Parent Law. YSB continually updates its policies and procedures in the foster care program to conform to the law and ensure that all members of the foster care team are treated as equal parties.

Section 1-15 Foster Parent Rights

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

The employees of Youth Service Bureau (YSB) recognize that foster parents are not only valuable resources, but a fundamental part of the child welfare team. YSB staff encourages and expects foster parents to take an active role as a member of the child welfare team. This begins during licensure and is supported in the DCFS Parent Resource for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE) training, and is encouraged throughout the life of the case by the YSB case worker.

YSB staff will treat all foster parents with dignity and respect through timely responses, respectful interactions, and by displaying professionalism. YSB staff respect the foster parent's experience and knowledge of the youth in their care and value the information given to them from foster parents. In addition, YSB staff treats foster families with respect and consideration by promptly returning phone calls (generally within 24-48 hours), taking into consideration the family's schedule in making appointments, being on time for visits, and calling to cancel or reschedule in a timely manner. As members of the child welfare team, foster parents are invited and encouraged to attend Administrative Case Reviews (ACR), court hearings, and Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM).

YSB staff are held accountable for treating foster families with dignity, respect, and as a member of the child welfare team through supervision, observation and foster parent feedback. The agency utilizes varied methods of eliciting feedback regarding the foster parent's interactions with staff and what changes and improvements can be made. These include quarterly foster parent surveys that specifically inquire about being treated with dignity and respect, inquiries by licensing workers at monitoring visits, and on-going contacts with workers, which occur at least monthly. The feedback results are shared with supervisors and workers.

Should a caregiver feel disrespected by any agency employee and unable to resolve this with the employee, they are encouraged to address this with the employee's supervisor, their licensing specialist, or the Program Director.

If they feel the issue is not resolved, the foster parent may file a grievance through the agency's grievance process. All information regarding avenues of filing grievances or complaints is provided to foster families during the licensing process.

2) The right to be provided standardized pre-service training and appropriate ongoing training to meet mutually assessed needs and improve the foster parents' skills.

All foster parents licensed through YSB are required to complete the Parent Resource for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE) training provided by DCFS. YSB staff recognizes the importance of fully informed educated foster parents. YSB urges all foster parents to use the online Learning Development Center (LDC) resource that is provided by DCFS. The LDC includes training announcements, up-to-date course schedules, course registration information, and training transcripts. Licensing specialists encourage all foster parents to complete the LDC training: Introduction to Foster Parent Law. In addition, they are provided with a copy or link to the IL DCFS Foster Parent Handbook. A copy of the Foster Parent Handbook can be located on the agency's website at www.ysbiv.org under the Foster Care Resource section.

All foster parents who are deemed as Specialized Foster Parents will now be required to complete the NCTSN (National Child Traumatic Stress Network) Resource Parent Curriculum: Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma, comprised of 8 training modules to assist in dealing with the needs of specialized youth. This training will be offered to traditional and relative homes but is not mandatory for them unless they are deemed Specialized. This training will be provided by YSB utilizing the NCTSN curriculum.

Licensing specialists will assist foster parents in completing their required minimum 16 hours of in-service training over the 4-year licensing period. During the licensing process, a licensing representative will assist foster parents on how to access the LDC with written instructions or links. Any foster parent who does not have access to a computer or internet can contact their licensing representative to request a copy of their training transcript and up-to-date course schedules. Additionally, on-demand trainings with direct links have been added to the YSB agency website at www.ysbiv.org.

These trainings include the Home of Relative (English/Spanish versions), Confidentiality, Sexual Harassment, and Service Appeal Process trainings. Foster parents can access these trainings at any time and are viewed as essential trainings for foster parents and are a requirement for the agency. Additional training will be added to the website as deemed appropriate. YSB is currently developing training to educate foster parents on the role of a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) in Juvenile Court cases and is enlisting the assistance of a YSB foster parent who is involved with CASA. This training will be offered via Zoom, with an online power point option.

Ongoing training needs are assessed through discussions with foster parents, caseworkers, and the licensing specialist. Training is based upon the type of care provided (traditional or specialized) ages and needs of the youth, caregivers needs, required trainings, and areas of interest. Training needs are mutually agreed upon by the foster parent and the agency. Training

needs are incorporated into the semi-annual Foster Home Monitoring Record. These discussions allow the agency to identify training needs for individual families and trends across the agency.

The training, either in-person or via Zoom, that are provided, by the agency will include a foster parent as a co-trainer to provide support and perspective to the training. Currently the agency is developing a training schedule to include: Medication Management and Safety, Parenting and Behavioral Management, and Multi-Cultural Hair Care. The training schedule will be provided to all foster parents and posted on the agency website as well as social media venues. Additional training resources, as known, are shared with foster parents through emails, mailings and/or direct contact.

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.

During the licensure process, foster parents are provided with appropriate contact information for agency staff, as well as the statewide numbers for the Advocacy Office, OIG (Office of the Inspector General), and the Foster Parent Hotline as listed in the Implementation Plan in Right # 15.

Upon placement of children in their home, caregivers are given a Child Folder which contains contact information for the Illinois Healthworks, DCFS Medical Consent Unit, the Screening Assessment and Support Services (SASS) program when children are experiencing a mental health crisis, placement stabilization service, and protocols for missing and runaway children. In addition they are provided with the children's case workers and supervisor's contact information, as well as any providers currently in place. Case workers also educate foster parents on how to utilize this information and access services listed within the Child Folder.

If a crisis does arise, YSB staff are available to help foster parents through all emergency situations 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Each office has an on-call phone number which is provided to foster parents upon placement. This emergency on-call number is to be utilized in situations of medical emergency, psychiatric or mental health emergency, police involvement, missing or runaway youth in care, or other emergencies. The on-call phone is staffed by a rotation of case workers and is monitored after 5 pm on weeknights and throughout the weekend. Case workers are expected to answer calls immediately, or if unable they must return the call within 30 to 60 minutes. The case workers themselves are supported by the on-call supervisor, providing an extra layer of support to the foster parent.

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

YSB foster parents are reimbursed on a monthly basis according to the rates set by DCFS for unlicensed relative care, traditional licensed care, or specialized licensed care. Foster parents are provided a copy of the board payment rate chart at the time of licensure, and a copy of the board payment rate chart is attached to this plan. The licensing staff explains prorated checks for partial

months and the payment schedules. Explanations or additional copies of the financial policy are available upon request.

Foster parents are reimbursed on the 16th of each month (or closest banking day if this day falls on a weekend or holiday) for foster care provided in the previous month. Reimbursements will be paid by check or direct deposit as requested by the foster parent. The board rate received reflects the number of days the child is in care and is based on the child's age and level of care.

The level of care is determined by the needs of the child and the expected level of care to meet the needs of the child. Most youth enter into foster care at a standard level of care but may be identified as Specialized. If a child is experiencing significant behavior/emotional or medical needs, or has experienced multiple placements disruptions, they will be or have been assessed through a Clinical Intervention to Placement Preservation (CIPP) meeting to be determined as Specialized. A child/youth can be assessed for a higher level of care at any point while in foster care. If a youth is approved as Specialized, the foster parent providing care will be reimbursed at a higher rate upon approval of Specialized Care. The extra payment is meant to cover the extra costs that the family incurs while caring for the child/youth and will be reimbursed at the next monthly board payment. If not approved for Specialized and have significant needs, a special service fee can be applied for on behalf of the child. If approved this will be added to the next monthly board payment.

All children/youth who initially come into care are eligible for an initial clothing allowance and children under 3 years are eligible for equipment allowances. These items can be purchased by the agency directly or by reimbursement to the foster or relative home, not to exceed the prescribed amount.

Payment or reimbursement for additional services may be disbursed based on the needs of the case and the availability of other resources. All case workers are trained in the YSB agency reimbursement policy which defines the costs that may be reimbursed to the foster parent.

Foster parents are reimbursed in a timely manner for expenditures that are pre-approved by the agency and with the appropriate documentation/receipts. Reimbursement requests will not be processed without appropriate supporting documentation or receipt. A comprehensive list of expenses that are not included in the board payment and **may be reimbursable** are listed as follows: Camp/recreational activities, Respite for qualified cases, cultural enrichment, educational expenses, and Emergency clothing replacement. **Reimbursement payments are also processed each month and paid on the closest banking day to the 16th, (see attached payment schedule).**

If foster parents have concerns or questions about their board payments or pre-approved reimbursements, they are encouraged to speak with their case worker, licensing worker, or the fiscal department directly to resolve the issue. Contact information for the YSB fiscal department will be provided by the case worker or licensing worker. A review of the reimbursement will be done immediately. If an error has occurred, efforts will be made to correct or resolve it as soon as possible. Finally, if a payment issue cannot be resolved through these steps, foster parents may request a review by the Executive Director.

5) The right to be provided a clear, written understanding of the 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.

At the time of placement, YSB makes every effort to ensure foster parents are informed about a child’s needs, frequency of involvement with his or her birth family, previous placement history, and historical involvement with DCFS. A copy of the written foster parent goals, child goals, child summary, and visitation plan are provided to the foster family, if a service plan is written, at the time of placement. If not, a copy will be provided to the foster family within (5) business days after an initial plan or subsequent/updated plan is developed.

Service Plans are based upon the family and youth’s needs. These plans are developed in conjunction with the family. Foster parents are encouraged to be a part of the assessment and service planning process, and to provide input regarding the child’s needs and strengths to be included in the plan. Foster parents are expected to support the permanency goal and services for the youth placed in the home. Foster Parents play a key role in the life of the youth and are expected to support the visitation plan which emphasizes and promotes family connections with parents and siblings, rituals and culture. When a youth of a different race or culture is placed in a foster home, the case worker or licensing worker will provide caregivers with information and/or training opportunities on the child’s cultural heritage where needed.

Foster parents are encouraged and are invited to attend Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM) which are held every quarter in addition to the Administrative Case Reviews (ACR) that occur every 6 months. This is another opportunity for foster parents to give their feedback regarding the child’s services and visitation, and to work with the team in developing resources and recognizing areas of strengths and weakness. Foster parents are provided a written copy of the child’s service plan at each CFTM and ACR, as well as an updated copy when any changes are made.

If a foster parent is unable to be present at these meetings, the caseworker is responsible for ensuring the foster parent is given the opportunity to provide feedback to be shared at the meeting. Case workers are to provide timely notification (within 5 business days), verbally and/or in writing, any changes in the service plan, visitation plan or permanency goal.

To assist foster parents in promoting reunification, as well as continuing the child’s relationship with his or her own family and cultural heritage, YSB utilizes the DCFS Reunification Support Special Service Fee. This is a fee in which foster parents can receive reimbursement for facilitating parent/child visits only if the foster parent is actively engaged in mentoring the biological parent. Foster parents wishing to utilize this fee must contact their case worker. It is important to keep siblings connected as much as possible, therefore foster parents are encouraged to be a part of sibling visitation. YSB believes that sibling visitation should occur in a home or community setting and asks that foster parents who are fostering siblings to develop a relationship and facilitate sibling visitation. Case workers are available to assist in this development.

- 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.**

Licensing complaint investigations are either standalone or concurrent. A standalone investigation is a complaint that alleges a violation or violations of a licensing standard or the Child Care Act. This type of investigation is completed solely by the licensing specialist. A concurrent investigation is a complaint investigation that involves an alleged violation of licensing standards as a result of a call made to the DCFS Child Abuse Hotline. Investigations that are concurrent involve a child protection investigator from DCFS and the licensing worker assigned to the home.

In the event of either complaint, the licensing specialist will make an unannounced visit to the foster home within two business days of receipt of a complaint investigation. Foster parents are advised at this time of their right to a fair, timely, and impartial investigation. They are given the right to have a person of their choosing present within four hours if they choose. They are advised that the investigation will commence within 30 days. In the event of a concurrent investigation, a 30-day extension may be granted.

Within **15 days after completing the investigation**, the agency must make a formal determination of whether or not a licensing violation has occurred. Within **5 calendar days after this determination**, the agency will send the foster parents a certified letter, summarizing the findings of the licensing investigation. If the result of the investigation is substantiated, the foster parent is provided with a written copy of the finding including the specific violations that details the violation(s) from either Rule 402 or the Child Care Act and whether corrective action is required.

If a corrective plan is warranted as a result of a violation that cannot be corrected immediately, the licensing specialist will explain the corrective action and the foster parent will be given an opportunity to provide input and agree to the corrective plan. Foster parents are advised of their right to an informal supervisory review of the results of the findings in the investigation. They will also be informed of their right to receive mediation or administrative reviews of the decisions, recommendations, and corrective action.

The foster parent must make a written request to the agency for an **informal supervisory review** of the decision within **10 days** of the postmarked letter of decision. The licensing worker, supervisor and caregiver must be present at this meeting. If the decision is **not overturned**, there are several possible outcomes or enforcement actions that can occur. If licensing violations are found and correctable, and the foster parent is willing and able to correct them in a short time period, then a written corrective action plan will be developed. Foster parents are advised of their right to participate in the development of a corrective plan if they choose.

The written corrective action plan will always include the following: What exact licensing violations were found; A clear statement of what is expected in correcting them; and a specified time frame for completion and compliance with licensing standards. After the allowed time period, an agency licensing worker will make an unannounced visit to determine whether the licensing violations have been corrected.

Agencies, in consultation with DCFS, are responsible for ensuring that licensing standards are met by the foster family homes under their supervision. DCFS issues all foster care licenses, even to private agency foster homes, and has the *final responsibility and authority* to enforce licensing standards. If a prospective or current foster family **has not been willing or able** to comply with DCFS Licensing Standards, after reasonable steps have been taken to them comply, **negative enforcement actions** are usually the result, especially in serious licensing violations. **The following is a list of possible negative enforcement actions:** Denial of Initial License; Changing/Reducing Capacity of License (reducing the number of foster children allowed in the home); Refusal to Renew a License; Revoking a License, Administrative Order of Closure of License.

Prior to revoking, refusing to renew or issue a license, DCFS must notify the foster parent of this decision by registered mail. The DCFS letter contains information about how to request a hearing, if desired. This letter will be sent by the DCFS Central Office of Licensing. The foster parent has **10 days** from the postmarked date of the DCFS letter to make a written request for a hearing. The foster parent, in the same letter, may also request a written statement of the charges from DCFS. If the foster parent does not request a hearing within 10 days from the postmarked date, the license will be revoked, or the renewal or issuance of the license will be denied.

If the foster parent requests a hearing within **10 days** from the postmark date time limit, the hearing date must be within **30 days** of the postmark on the caregiver's request letter. DCFS must also notify the caregivers by registered mail at least 15 days in advance of the hearing date.

Both DCFS and the caregiver may subpoena witnesses and provide relevant documents for the hearing. A Hearing Officer will be appointed by DCFS and an attorney may represent the foster parents, if they choose to hire one.

After the hearing, DCFS will determine whether to revoke or not renew the license or decide that no action be taken. Foster parents can refer to the DCFS Foster Parent Handbook the DCFS Procedure 383 or consult with your Licensing Worker for a complete explanation of these Enforcement Actions. This information is also summarized in the YSB training [Know Your Rights: Understanding the Appeal Process](#), located on the agency website at www.ysbiv/our-programs/foster-care/.

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

YSB recognizes the need to protect a family's confidentiality as well as provide information to a foster parent that is relevant to a child's care. Upon a child or youth being placed in the foster

home, case workers will continue to provide additional and necessary information relevant to the care of the child in their care. Case workers will complete the CFS 600-4 Sharing Information with the Caregiver form at the time of a child/youth being placed in the foster home.

Case workers will share additional information during ongoing meetings with the foster family in their home or through phone calls or emails and is provided within the limits of confidentiality that does not violate HIPPA rights or the family's rights as it comes available. Case workers are trained in confidentiality, HIPPA, and what is necessary information. Case workers are encouraged to consult with their supervisors at any time if they are uncertain about what information they can share with a foster family about a child. Accountability is provided during regular supervision with the supervisor, and the supervisory review of the completed CFS 600-4 at initial placement. The additional information shared with the foster parent should be documented in a case note and can be audited through a file review. Additionally, supervisors are present during the CFTM, and can ensure that accurate information has been shared with the foster family.

8) The right to be given information concerning a child from the Department as required under Section 5 of the Child and Family Services Act and from a child welfare agency as required under Section 7.4 (c-5) of the Child Care Act of 1969.

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 will provide available written information necessary for the proper care of the child to the foster parent or prospective adoptive parent. The information to be provided to the caregiver shall include:

The medical history of the child, including known medical problems or communicable diseases, information concerning the immunization status of the child, and insurance or medical card information.

The educational history of the child, including any special educational needs and details of the child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) when the child is receiving special education services, or 504 Educational Special Needs Plan, if applicable.

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.

Foster parents are given other relevant background information of the child, including any prior criminal history; information about any behavior problems, including fire setting, perpetration of sexual abuse, destructive behavior, and substance abuse habits; likes and dislikes; etc.

In the case of an emergency placement, when all of the information referenced above is not available, the worker shall provide known information verbally as it becomes available and subsequently in writing. Prior to a placement, the caseworker may provide the foster parent or adoptive parent with a written summary of the information listed.

Within 10 working days after the placement, the case worker must provide the foster parent with the required available information in writing and will document this by completing the CFS

600-4 with the foster parent and a copy will be placed in the child's file. A copy will be provided to the foster parent as well. A copy of the information will also be provided to the child's guardian ad litem.

To ensure accountability, supervisory review and approval is required prior to providing this written information to the foster parent, with verification of the completed CFS 600-4. While in Foundation Training, case workers receive training on completing the CFS 600-4 form, Sharing Information with Caregivers, and during the agency program orientation training. The review of this policy and procedure occurs at on-going staff meetings.

To assist in keeping this information organized, foster parents are provided with a Child Folder. This is a resource folder specific to each child, which follows them if/when they change placements. The Child Folder includes the child's medical history, behavioral or mental health concerns, agency information, disbursement forms for clothing and allowance funds, family and sibling visitation information, emergency contact information, a section for foster parents to document significant events, medication logs, and educational records.

- 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 plan 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.**

YSB upholds the right for foster parents to be notified of and participate in, team meetings and staffings. YSB encourages and invites foster parents to attend court hearings, ACRs, CFTMs, IEPs, clinicals and other staffing. Foster parents often have a unique perspective of the child's strengths and needs that is valuable in planning for the child. Foster parents are encouraged to provide input concerning the plan of services for the child, and their input is given full consideration by the agency, like any other professional member of the team.

In rare instances, a foster parent and biological parent cannot attend the same meeting in person due to safety or clinical reasons, YSB staff will develop a plan for foster parents to contribute to the decision-making process. Examples of ways to include the foster parent are letters from the foster parents that are shared at the meeting, participation by phone, or holding multiple CFTMs.

Foster parents must be notified in a timely manner of all upcoming meetings. For ACRs and team meetings there will be a 14-day notice; foster families will be directly involved with scheduling CFTMs and IEPs. Case workers also provide dates and times of court hearings, any scheduled CFTMs, or other meetings via phone calls, email, and during home visits. This is documented in case notes and is discussed during monthly supervision meetings. YSB wants to ensure foster parents are well-informed and aware of any decisions made that affect the child in their care as these decisions can also affect the foster parent and must be notified of critical/important

decisions regarding the child within 48 hours. Foster parents that may not be available to attend all meetings or court hearings will be informed by the case worker of any outcomes or decisions that were made.

Foster parents are encouraged to regularly communicate with other professionals that work with the child including physicians, teachers, or therapists. They are provided with all contact information for the other professionals involved. All of the YSB therapists working with the child make themselves available before, during, or after counseling sessions to talk to the foster parents. Foster Parents are encouraged to call the therapists with any concerns or questions about their foster child. Foster parents are encouraged to take the Educational Advocacy training within the first year of licensure. Licensing workers reinforce the knowledge that foster parents are invaluable resources in the educational process and are often the first to identify the potential need for an IEP.

- 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 that 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.**

The foster parent will be given as much known information regarding the child and is able to be shared. In requesting placements, all case workers are required to complete the YSB Child Profile form detailing information about the child and known needs. When searching for an appropriate placement, licensing workers verbally share the information contained in the profile.

If a foster parent expresses interest or agrees to take placement of the child, the case worker is notified, and the foster parent's contact information is provided. The case worker must contact the foster family within 24 hours (less during emergency situations) to answer questions or provide any further information.

Upon placement, the foster parent is given a copy of the child's new placement/payment authorization form, a copy of the child's portion of the service plan, if available, the reason the child came into care, a visitation schedule, and educational information. As stated previously in Right #8, within 10 working days after the placement, the case worker must provide the foster parent with the required available information in writing. This will be documented by completing the CFS 600-4 with the foster parent and placing a copy in the child's file. A copy will be provided to the foster parents.

From that point forward, it is the case worker's responsibility to continually update the foster family on information learned about the child and his/her family concerning the health and well-being of the child and information pertinent to the child's care and permanency within the limits of confidentiality. Communication is done informally through monthly home visits, provision of written materials, quarterly CFTMs, and regular phone contact, as well as encouraging foster parents to attend court hearings. This is discussed with the worker in monthly supervision meetings.

Foster parents are encouraged to develop positive relationships, within healthy boundaries, with the biological family in the best interest of the child. Specific information about each other cannot be shared by the agency without specific consent to release this information.

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

YSB recognizes that all placement disruptions are detrimental for children in care, therefore stabilizing a placement is a top priority. Case workers, licensing workers, supervisors, therapists, and other professionals make every effort to prevent disruptions. When a family requests the removal of a child, YSB requests that foster parents give a 14-day notice if at any time the family determines they can no longer care for the child. YSB will accept a 14-day notice verbally or in writing. YSB works with children that have experienced trauma, therefore the 14-day notice allows for YSB to locate a home and have at least a minimum of one pre-placement visit prior to placement in the new foster home to help minimize the trauma of moving.

Except under court order or imminent risk situations, case workers are required to give foster parents a written 14-day notice if the child is to be removed from their care. Case workers utilize form CFS 151-B Notice of Change of Placement, which requires an explanation for the move, notifies the foster parent of their right to request a clinical appeal, and requires a minimum of 14 days before the move can occur. A copy of the CFS 151-B and the DCFS Appeal Brochure, including the emergency review process, is given to the foster parent at the time of serving this notice.

At licensure, foster parents are provided with a copy of the DCFS Service Appeal Brochure, which outlines their rights regarding an appeal of change of placement. A request by the foster parent to appeal the decision to have a child moved from the foster parent’s home is to be made within five days of receiving the notice. Per DCFS policy, foster parents cannot appeal the removal if the child was removed due to a court order or sibling consolidation.

Foster parents must follow the steps on the CFS 151-B Notice of Change of Placement to make a formal request to appeal.

If the child is at imminent risk of harm, the child is removed immediately, however, the foster parents are still provided with the necessary information and assistance to request a clinical appeal.

When a case worker makes changes to a child’s service plan, it is likely that the foster parents are already aware of the changes due to ongoing communication, monthly home visits and participation in team staffing. However, the case worker will provide a written copy of the plan to the foster family with the opportunity to discuss or express any concerns. This is done before the ACR or at the CFTM, or when the change is made.

- 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.**

YSB foster parents are encouraged to attend all court hearings regarding the child in their care and are informed of their right to attend and be heard in court during the licensing process and ongoing through monthly discussions with the caseworker. During licensure, foster parents review and sign the YSB Foster Home and Agency agreement, which has specific sections regarding the foster parents' right to participate in hearings. YSB recognizes that not all courts honor a foster parents or caregiver's right to be heard, but to continue to encourage their attendance. The case worker will help the foster parent understand their roles and responsibilities in court.

For all foster families, regardless of participation in court, will be informed of all court hearings, and will be provided a reminder two weeks before the scheduled hearing. This information will include the date, time, location, judge's name, and docket number. If a hearing should change location, time, or judge, the case worker will immediately notify the foster parent. Case workers typically provide this information verbally but can be provided in writing or via email. This is to be documented in their case notes. If a foster parent has a concern or complaint about this communication, it is brought to the attention of the supervisor, who will meet with the case worker and/or the foster parent to resolve the concern.

If a foster parent was unable to attend a hearing, the case worker will contact the family within 48 hours, verbally or in writing, to inform them of any major decision made by the court that relates to the child in their care. They will also be provided with the next date, time, location, Judge's name, and docket number for the next hearing. Supervisors ensure that case workers are notifying and encouraging foster parents to attend upcoming court dates through discussions, reviewing of case notes, and regular supervision.

- 13) The right to be considered 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 the other children in the foster parent's home.**

When a child with an ongoing case has been returned home and re-enters the foster care system, the case worker will review previous placements as a priority for placement options. They will determine which home(s) the child was previously placed in and the circumstances of their removal, if applicable. For licensed foster homes, the case worker will contact licensing staff to determine if that home still meets licensing standards and has capacity to accept the child. They will consult with their supervisor to determine if this placement is in the best interest of the child and other children in the home. Other factors to be considered are the needs of the children and ability of the foster family to meet those needs, other possible sibling placements, or available relative/fictive kin. If determined it is appropriate, the licensing worker will then contact the home and discuss placement with the foster family. If the placement was with unlicensed relative or fictive kin, the case worker will consult with the supervisor to determine if it is appropriate to contact them, using the same criteria. If deemed appropriate and in the child's best interest, they will contact the relative or fictive kin for possible placement.

If the child's previous case has been closed and has re-entered into foster care, DCFS may contact the YSB licensing department to inquire about a specific previous placement. Licensing staff will review the foster home file to ensure that it continues to meet licensing standards and has capacity. Licensing staff will also consult with previous case workers or supervisors in an attempt to determine if that placement would be in the best interest of the child before contacting the foster home. Even if the agency cannot accept or has not been assigned the child's case, YSB will still work with other child welfare agencies to utilize the YSB home.

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.

Foster parents have access to multiple processes for appeals, depending on the nature of their concern. If it is regarding a change of placement, foster parents must follow the appeals process outlined by the DCFS Appeals Brochure. They are provided a copy of this brochure at licensure, and again if a notice of removal is issued. DCFS also informs foster parents of their procedure for appeal at every ACR. In addition, during licensing investigations, foster parents are informed of their rights and the ability to appeal decisions made. If a licensing investigation is substantiated, foster parents are provided information on how to contact the licensing supervisor and request informal reviews.

Foster parents have the right to appeal any disagreement with YSB's implementation of the Foster Parent Law. Foster parents are encouraged to first discuss their concerns with the specific staff member and their immediate supervisor. If this does not address the issue, a formal grievance may be filed in writing and submitted to the Quality Improvement Department. The Foster Parent Law Grievance Policy and a copy of the grievance form can be found on the YSB website or by requesting it through a YSB staff member.

Foster parents are provided with this policy and the grievance form at licensure, and again when they receive the yearly Implementation Plan for review and approval. Finally, foster parents have the right to access the YSB internal grievance process. The YSB internal grievance process is to address case worker decisions and interactions with staff not covered by the Foster Parent Law or any other appeal process.

Foster parents are provided a copy of this policy at the time of licensure, and upon request. A copy of this internal appeals process is available upon request and on the YSB website. The procedure mirrors the Foster Parent Law Grievance procedure, with the exception that the foster parent appeal would be heard first by the case worker, the immediate supervisor, the Program Director, and then the Quality Improvement Director. Both the YSB Foster Parent Law Grievance Policy and the YSB internal appeals policy explicitly states that no retaliation by a case worker or any staff member will occur.

Each staff member is made aware that harassment or retaliation against a foster parent is strictly prohibited. YSB case workers are trained on all appeal processes during their initial orientation. Each worker is provided a copy of the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan and the Foster Parent Law Grievance Policy. The workers are required to sign an acknowledgement and

statement that they understand retaliation and harassment against a foster parent is prohibited by the agency. This is further supported at team meetings and individual supervision.

Case workers know that foster parents are very valuable members of our team and that a foster parent's concerns should be validated. At any point within the appeal process, foster parents have the right to contact the Office of the Inspector General, Advocacy Office, or the Foster Parent Hotline to address their complaints and concerns.

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 are well informed of their rights. All foster parents are required to complete the YSB training Know Your Rights: Understanding the Appeal Process, located on the agency website at www.ysbiv/our-programs/foster-care/, which includes information on the Foster Parent Hotline. YSB does not tolerate any misconduct by employees, service providers or contractors. YSB will provide support and information to foster parents in the event of any report of misconduct.

Brochures for the Appeal Process, Advocacy Office and the Office of Inspector are available at all agency offices and provided to foster families at the time of licensure, at ACRs and upon request. In addition, during licensure, they are provided with a list of resources and phone numbers to contact to voice any concern or complaint.

These phone numbers include but are not limited to:

- Statewide numbers such as the Advocacy Office (1-800-232-3798), Inspector General's Office and the Foster Parent Hotline (1-800-722-9124), and Foster Parent Helpline (1-866-368-5204).
- Local numbers: names and phone numbers for the YSB caseworker, supervisor and program director, and after hours/emergency number.

Section 1-17

Foster Parent Responsibilities

A foster parent's responsibilities 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 team.

Foster parents are encouraged to regularly share information about the child, including strengths and needs, in a timely manner, with the members of the team to ensure the best possible care. This is discussed during licensure and through ongoing contacts during the life of the case. The licensing staff may also recommend the foster parent complete the DCFS training "Working as a Professional Team Member." Foster parents are required to review and sign the YSB Foster Home and Agency Agreement, which outlines the importance of regular communication with the case worker and licensing staff. Foster parents are advised that they must notify the agency of any significant/critical event regarding the child or their care, immediately or within 24 hours, and are provided emergency/after-hours contact information, as well as the case worker and supervisor's contact information. Examples of significant or critical events can include medical emergencies, mental health emergencies requiring SASS services, runaway or missing youth, involvement with law enforcement, suspension or expulsion from school or any other emergency situation that affects the care of the child and the foster family.

During home visits, case workers will discuss the child's health, safety, well-being and permanency with the foster parent, and encourage them to discuss any concerns they may have. They are encouraged share information about the child at ACRs, CFTMs or other staffing. Foster parents are encouraged to maintain communication between visits through phone calls, text messages, and emails (that hold non-confidential information). In addition, foster parents are instructed to contact their licensing worker with any changes or anticipated changes in their household members, marital status, or address changes as this affects their licensure. Open communication is reinforced during the 6-month monitoring visits.

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

YSB understands that navigating the rules of confidentiality can be difficult and confusing. Children and their families, who are clients of a child welfare agency, have certain rights related to confidentiality and to their privacy. There are laws, as well as DCFS rules and policies which govern the requirements of maintaining the confidentiality of clients. These laws, rules and policies apply to foster parents. Licensing workers and case workers are expected to uphold confidentiality, educate foster parents, and model appropriate information sharing. YSB requires all foster parents to complete the YSB Foster Parent Confidentiality training and is available on the YSB agency website at www.ysbiv/our-programs/foster-care/; the applicable laws and rules are highlighted in this training. The foster parent can be referred to the Virtual Training Center (LDC) for specific training on social media confidentiality and the DCFS Foster Parent Handbook, Section 8. When DCFS or YSB make updates concerning confidentiality, licensing workers are responsible for providing that information to all foster parents.

Foster parents are required to sign the YSB Foster Home and Agency Agreement, which reinforces their responsibility to uphold the confidentiality of the child in their care. As members of the child welfare team, foster parents receive sensitive and personal information about the child and family situation that is necessary to care for the child and will learn additional confidential information about the child and their family as a result of their work as foster parents. It is the foster parent's responsibility to protect that information and use good judgement when deciding to share information with others involved in caring for the child or providing services. A breach of confidentiality diminishes trust in relationships, and ultimately, it is against the law. Sharing of confidential information should be based upon what is minimally necessary to provide services to or care for the child. The best plan is to have a discussion with the case worker to decide mutually what information should or can be shared. Foster parents may request additional training or clarification, if necessary, to assist them in understanding the importance of confidentiality of our children and their families.

If a foster parent has been found to violate confidentiality, the licensing staff and case worker will consult to determine if further education would benefit the foster parent. If so, they would be required to complete applicable training prior to accepting future foster placements. If the violation is severe, a licensing investigation will be completed, and the status of the license reviewed.

3) The responsibility to advocate for children in the foster parents' care.

Foster parents should be actively involved in all aspects of the youth in care's life, including but not limited to therapy appointments, school, and medical/dental appointments, and are educated on their responsibility to advocate on behalf of the child. All foster parents are encouraged to participate in Educational Advocacy training, currently provided online, within the first year of licensure, or sooner if the child has an IEP or 504 Plan. It is required for at least one foster parent to attend Educational Advocacy within the first 4 years of licensure. YSB believes the training is beneficial for both foster parents and to share responsibility in advocating for foster children in their care. At each monitoring visit, licensing workers discuss training requirements, including the Educational Advocacy training. A DCFS Educational Liaison may be contacted to further assist the foster parent and child, especially when specific educational needs are present.

It is the responsibility of the agency to provide ongoing instruction and training to foster parents about the court process. The worker will review the information regarding the juvenile court process as outlined in the DCFS Foster Parent Handbook, Section 2. A copy of the DCFS Foster Parent Handbook is given to foster parents during licensure and is also located on the agency website at www.ysbiv.org. Foster parents are encouraged to review this information as needed.

Foster parents are provided with a copy of the Service Appeal brochure at licensure and are required to sign the YSB Client's Rights and DCFS Client's Rights form showing that they received and understand the Service Appeal process.

All foster parents are required to complete the YSB training Know Your Rights: Understanding the Appeal Process, located on the agency website at www.ysbiv/our-programs/foster-care/.

Both case workers and licensing staff are available to assist foster parents in reviewing the process and filing an appeal.

They are encouraged to participate in all scheduled ACRs, CFTMs, IEP meetings, CIPPs, and court hearings where they can utilize their knowledge of the child to help develop appropriate services and resources. Whenever possible, these meetings are scheduled to accommodate the foster parent's schedule to ensure their participation.

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

Just as foster parents have the basic right of being treated with dignity, respect, and consideration by the agency, so do the children in their care and their family. This is discussed during licensure and ongoing throughout the case. Licensing workers discuss the importance and requirement of foster parents to protect all children from neglect and abuse and to treat all children in the home equitably. YSB defines equity as treating children fairly, which is different from treating children equally or the same. This means that foster parents should meet each of their child's needs individually. Basic rights, such as clean and appropriate bedding, nutritious and adequate food, etc. are also reviewed. Foster parents are provided with copies of the 402 Foster Family Home Licensing Standards as well as the Child Care Act of 1969 where this information is listed, in addition to the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting standards.

Foster parents are expected to treat all children placed in their home as valued household member on a daily basis. This can be accomplished by doing the following:

- Providing the foster child(ren) in your home with the same meals as your biological family unless the child(ren) has/have dietary or religious restrictions.
- Including the child(ren) in your care in family outings.
- Referencing or speaking about the child(ren) or child(ren)'s biological family in a respectful manner; supporting discussions from the child about their family with encouragement and sensitivity.
- Allowing and encouraging the child(ren) to participate in extra-curricular activities (and providing transportation to and from activities or planning for transportation).
- Being courteous of a child's feelings and belongings when they are moving from your home by ensuring they have all possessions and suitable moving supplies.
- Providing an open and welcoming environment for the child on a daily basis.

Foster parents are reminded that the Department forbids corporal punishment, verbal abuse, threats, or derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family. If a foster parent does not follow this licensing standard, they may be in violation of the licensing standards and may be subject to a corrective plan.

Foster parents are also encouraged to participate in shared parenting between biological parents and their child(ren) if appropriate. Foster parents are expected to support the permanency goal and services for the child placed in the home. Foster Parents play a key role in the life of the child

and are expected to provide on-going support and encouragement to the child and family as they work to reunify, and afterwards, if appropriate.

Case workers are trained to monitor the attitudes toward and treatment of foster children and their families to ensure that foster parents remember to treat them with dignity, respect and consideration. To monitor this case workers meet alone, one-on-one with youth in care during their home visits, and observe interactions between the foster parent, child and their family. In addition to general questions about school and activities, case workers check with the foster children to determine that they are being treated appropriately by their placements. Any allegations by a foster child that he/she has not been given this basic right will be investigated by the licensing and case workers.

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.

Choosing to accept a foster child into your home can be a complicated decision. Foster parents need to take into consideration what is in the best interest of the children living in the home and must assess their own abilities by looking at their strengths, weaknesses, and support systems. During the licensing process, foster home applicants and the licensing worker complete a checklist of behaviors commonly seen in foster children to determine strengths and weaknesses. During PRIDE training, foster parents are asked to identify their own strengths and weaknesses as well. Any concerns by the trainer are addressed with both the foster parents and the licensing worker. When a weakness is identified, licensing staff will seek out and recommend appropriate training for the foster parent.

If a new foster parent would benefit more from a mentor than a formal training, they are matched with an experienced foster home within the agency. Foster parents and licensing staff discuss the foster parent's support system during licensure, and information regarding local support groups is provided upon request. Respite foster care and Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS) will be provided as needed for foster parents. This will aid the foster parents in preventing emotional fatigue and be provided additional support.

When seeking a foster placement, the strengths and limitations of a foster family are considered, this includes information gathered from the checklist, the home study, previous placements, and ongoing conversations at monitoring visits. Informal matching meetings between the case worker and licensing staff are held, and information from the Child Profile and the foster family's strengths are compared. Additionally, licensing staff consider current foster children in the home, and consult with those case workers regarding any concerns they may have if a new child is placed in the home. With specialized youth, there is a more formal meeting between the case worker, supervisor, and licensing staff.

In either situation, the licensing worker will inform the case worker of a family who is interested in fostering a youth in care needing a placement after the consideration of the information provided to them.

After licensure, a foster parent can request assistance in locating training or resources to help strengthen an area of challenge or need they have identified for themselves. Formally, the Licensing specialist will conduct an annual home study assessment to update any changes in the foster family. During this assessment, the licensing specialist will review, and document foster parents' strengths and weaknesses as perceived by the family and the worker and assist the family identifying trainings or support to address these needs. The licensing specialist will also address this during the 6-month monitoring visit or at any time the family may require assistance.

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.

Ongoing support and advocacy are essential for foster families to maintain successful placement. The Licensing staff have ongoing discussions with foster parents about the benefits of relying on and affiliating with other foster parents, or foster parent associations within the community in which they live, and resources located on-line. Such online resources include:

- Illinois Foster Parent and Adoptive Parent Association: www.illfapa.org
- National Foster Parent Association: <https://nfpaonline.org/>

Foster parents are encouraged to seek out support from other foster parents and caregivers. YSB acknowledges that not every family has those resources, therefore licensing workers can arrange for mentoring with experienced foster parents. Licensing or caseworker can also provide foster parents with a list of support group resources, local and statewide, that are also listed on the YSB agency website. Some of these support groups include:

- Illinois Foster Parent Support (Facebook)
- IL Foster Closet: <https://www.ilfostercloset.com/> or www.facebook.com/Ilfostercloset

Our agency also believes that informal supports, such as family and friends, can also be effective for foster parents. Foster parents are encouraged to look within their family and friends for viable sources of support and backup caregivers during licensure and throughout their involvement with YSB.

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

All foster parents are required to take a minimum of 16 hours of training to renew their licenses. YSB licensing staff work with foster parents to obtain training in areas that are beneficial to the foster parent, not simply to meet the renewal minimums. During licensure, foster parents review a tolerance checklist with licensing staff to help determine what training may be needed. Beyond utilizing this checklist for future placement matching, it helps foster parents identify weaknesses or areas in which they would like additional training. At each subsequent monitoring visit, licensing staff will review the training requirements and ask foster parents for feedback and concerns. Foster parents are encouraged to discuss the areas they would like to receive training on or topics they would be interested in developing into a training to benefit themselves and other foster parents. If a case worker, therapist, or licensing worker identifies an area of need,

the team will either seek out or develop educational resources and trainings for that foster parent.

As a whole, the licensing team will look for trends within licensing investigations or worker concerns and increase training in those areas such as inappropriate discipline, inadequate supervision, etc.). Licensing workers will provide foster parents with information on upcoming training or resources that might be helpful or beneficial to them.

8) The responsibility to develop and assist in implementing strategies to prevent placement disruptions, to recognize 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 preventative strategies fail and placement disruptions occur.

When accepting a new foster home for licensure, YSB staff educates foster parents about the trauma to a child when placement disruptions occur. Foster parents are encouraged to discuss as a family each person's willingness and readiness to become a foster family. Further, they are asked to name support systems, sources of stress and methods for handling stress, and interests/activities that can continue and those that might be disrupted when a child is placed in the home. This education and assessment are the first step in a preventative strategy. Foster parents are also educated on the importance of communication and discussing concerns with their case worker before a situation becomes too difficult to maintain and a child is forced to leave the home.

When discussing placement of a child in the foster home, licensing and case worker staff provide all known information about the child so that foster parents can make a thoughtful decision. However, foster parents are also cautioned when a child is new to the system or has been in a home that failed to report behaviors, the agency may not be aware of all behavioral concerns or needs of the child. It is very important that the foster parents factor this possibility into their decision. Whenever possible, YSB arranges pre-placement visitation to ensure a good match and to educate the foster parent on the needs of the child.

To help foster parents understand the traumatic impact of placement disruptions on the family and the child, YSB encourages foster parents to attend the Trauma training offered by DCFS. Licensing workers also recommend foster parents to visit: www.empoweredtoconnect.org for resources and information. This will help them to have a greater understanding of the impact of trauma on relationships.

Again, the goal is to be proactive in early identification of children at risk for disruption, and work to prevent placement disruptions. Foster parents are encouraged to notify the case worker as soon as possible of any developing issues and not to wait for the next scheduled appointment. During monthly home visits and semi-annual monitoring visits, staff ask the foster parents if they have any concerns or difficulties, as well.

Should signs of possible placement disruption be identified, individual counseling, mentor programs, respite, and Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS) services can be put into place to

support the child and the foster family. Case workers will educate foster families on IPS and accessing Screening Assessment & Support Services (SASS), when necessary.

Foster parents are provided with YSB's on-call number and are encouraged to contact staff for any weekend or evening assistance in order to help stabilize the placement. If a child is specialized or determined by the case worker to be at a high risk of disruption (multiple placements, engaging in illegal behavior, history of parental sabotage), the case worker will proactively offer or develop these services at the beginning of the placement.

Case workers are responsible for continual assessment of the stability of a placement. Other means of assessment can occur at Clinical Intervention to Placement Preservation (CIPP) meetings, CFTMs, and ACRs for supportive services to promote stability.

When efforts to avoid a placement disruption have been unsuccessful, the licensing and case workers will provide support to both the foster family and the child affected by the move. They will work with the foster family to provide the child with a smooth transition into a new home, when possible. They will encourage the foster parent to be as sensitive as possible with the child, as this is a traumatic event for the child, while recognizing that this can be traumatic for the foster family as well.

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

Parenting children that have experienced significant trauma is stressful, and stressful situations need to be properly assessed and effectively dealt with by the foster families. Foster parents need to continually assess and tend to the stress levels within the home to help ensure foster children in their home can feel cared for and nurtured. Licensing workers spend a significant amount of time discussing support systems, stressors, and the potential impact that a placement or the end of a placement can have on all members of the family during the initial licensure. This information is documented in the DCFS home study and the child supervision plan. On an ongoing basis, both licensing staff and case workers inquire about any situations that may be causing stress to the family and are trained in recognizing signs of stress. Even if the family denies any stress but appears to be experiencing significant life changes (death in the family, divorce, birth of a new child) or other stressors, the family is reminded about respite, voluntary hold options and counseling. Counseling is offered and provided to the foster family at no cost to them, at any point they deem necessary or when suggested by the agency. All staff, including licensing workers, case workers, and counselors, are available for talking through issues, brainstorming solutions, and simply lending a sympathetic ear.

All foster parents are informed of the possibility of respite at the time of licensure and are provided with the YSB Respite Policy. Foster parents with specialized youth in placement may receive 15 hours minimally per month of respite care. While YSB encourages specialized families to use friends or family known to the youth, YSB will assist in locating licensed families to provide respite. If a licensing worker or case worker feel that the foster parent is overwhelmed or exhausted from dealing with a particular child or situation, respite will be offered to them in an attempt to stabilize the placement and the foster parent.

The option of a “voluntary hold” is shared with foster families during the licensure process and discussed at monitoring visits. YSB permits for voluntary breaks from fostering in two ways:

- Written or verbal notification to the agency of the family’s wishes to be “on hold,” which will result in the family not being contacted for placements. Note: families must maintain licensing standards including training requirements and allow six-month monitoring visits to occur.
- Inactive Status requires families to work with YSB’s licensing representative to complete necessary forms that are submitted to DCFS. Inactive Status should only be requested for a short-term basis, 6 months or less. In most cases, YSB will only approve requests that are based on life changing events. Note: families must maintain licensing standards, but six-month monitoring visits will not occur.

Foster families are encouraged to re-engage in fostering after the family feels refreshed and ready for the fostering experience again.

The Behavior Support and Management (BSM) training resumed in 2018 with a focus on trauma-informed care and de-escalation techniques. The training is designed to help foster parents understand the trauma experienced by the children in their care and the impact it may have on their emotions and behaviors.

10) The responsibility to know the rewards and benefits to children, parents, families, and society that comes from foster parenting and to promote the foster parenting experience in a positive way.

YSB recognizes that foster parents are doing the daily work of caring for our youth, therefore foster parents are YSB’s best resource for sharing the benefits and successes of fostering. Foster parents are encouraged to be advocates for the agency and their foster children through participation in the yearly revision of the Implementation Plan, through recruitment events or referrals, through volunteer activities, and membership in Foster Parent groups. YSB’s website, agency Facebook page, and updated mailings notify foster parents of these opportunities.

YSB encourages foster parents to participate in recruitment and promotional events, as known or scheduled. Any foster parent and staff who wish to represent the agency will receive training in recruiting and promoting foster parenting.

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 child’s own family.

Foster parents are informed of their rights and responsibilities during licensure through the Foster Parent Law. Every time a foster parent receives the Implementation Plan, it is explained that the foster parent shares the responsibility of ensuring this plan reflects their actual work as a part of the child welfare team. This also helps ensure that foster parents have their voices heard. Foster parents and workers are made aware of the on-demand: Introduction to Foster Parent Law, located on the LDC. Foster parents and workers are requested to complete this

training. New child welfare workers are now required, effective 10/1/2023, to complete this training as a part of their on-boarding. All foster parents review and sign a Foster Home and Agency Agreement that clearly defines these rights and responsibilities.

They are also provided with copies of the 402 Foster Family Home Licensing Standards, Foster Parent Law, and Child Care Act of 1969. After licensure, foster parents continue to be educated and reminded of their rights and responsibilities during monthly home visits with caseworkers and semi-annual monitoring visits. They are provided with information on DCFS and agency trainings that provide further education, such as Educational Advocacy, Adoption and Guardianship training, Working as a Professional Team Member or other trainings located on the LDC training site, and the DCFS Foster Parent Handbook, Section 3-Working Towards Permanency as a Team. They are encouraged to suggest training topics and to become a co-trainer on topics that would benefit other foster parents.

Foster parents are encouraged by staff to attend and participate in CFTMs, ACRs, CIPP proceedings, and any other team staffings. These meetings give foster parents an opportunity to have their voice heard and to contribute to a child's service plan. It also allows them the chance to express concern about any tasks they have been given or address any questions they have about their rights and responsibilities, and to understand the roles, rights and responsibilities of other professionals in the child welfare system, the child and their family. Case workers review and share the Foster Child and Youth Bill of Rights with children/youth in care on an annual basis, and foster parents are requested to sign this form for children under five years of age.

Agency supervisors are made available to foster parents at these meetings, via phone, or during one-on-one meetings. Foster parents are able to follow the chain of command all the way up to the YSB Executive Director if needed to resolve issues. Foster parents are also able to contact other members of management, such as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) if they have concerns about payments, or the Quality Improvement Director to voice any other concerns.

12) The responsibility to know and, as necessary, to 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 rule and procedures governing investigations of allegations.

During licensure foster parents are informed and educated on their responsibility as a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse and/or neglect. This includes the responsibility of reporting suspected sexually abusive children or youth. Current and prospective foster parents are encouraged to take the Mandated Reporter training provided through the DCFS public website. Licensing workers review the DCFS Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status form with each foster parent and indicate their understanding of this responsibility by signing the Mandated Reporter Status form. It is important to know that the willful act of failing to report child abuse and neglect as a mandated reporter is a Class A Misdemeanor for the first offense. Licensing and case workers reinforce the importance of being a mandated reporter on an on-going basis and aid the foster parent with each step in contacting the hotline if needed. The DCFS Child Abuse and Neglect hotline number is 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873).

As previously discussed, foster parents are provided with a copy of the agency's policy and procedures regarding allegations that foster parents have committed child abuse or neglect.

If allegations of abuse or neglect are made against a foster parent a licensing investigation will occur concurrent with the DCFS investigation as outlined in Right #6 in this plan. The procedure for abuse and neglect investigations is covered in the DCFS Procedure 300, and available on the DCFS website. The process to appeal indicated findings are covered in the mandatory YSB training, Know Your Rights: Understanding the Appeal Process and discussed in the DCFS Foster Parent Handbook. Licensing staff are available to answer any questions about the procedure and how this may affect their license.

13) The responsibility to know and receive training regarding the purpose of Administrative Case Reviews (ACRs), client service plans, and court processes, as well as any filing or time requirements associated with these proceedings, and the responsibility to actively participate in the foster parent's designated role in these proceedings.

Foster parents are introduced to this responsibility by the licensing worker and reinforced by the case worker. Licensing and case workers provide an explanation of these processes and stress the importance of the foster parent's participation. Detailed information about the court processes, ACRs, service plans, and integrated assessments can be found in the DCFS Foster Parent Handbook. This information is further supported by the Foster Home and Agency agreement reviewed and signed by the licensing worker and new foster parent. Participation by the foster parent as a team member is also supported in the PRIDE training, Session 2, Teamwork toward Permanence.

Continued education regarding court and administrative processes, as well as the service plan, is provided by the case worker. They are able to provide the foster parent with specific examples and details on how it pertains to the child in the foster parent's care. This is done informally during monthly home visits, and in more detail at Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM) and before each court hearing.

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

Foster parents are provided with information at the time of licensure regarding both the DCFS and YSB appeal and/or grievance procedures which includes: a copy of the DCFS Service Appeal Brochure and YSB Foster Parent policies, which contains both the internal grievance and the Foster Parent Law Grievance policy and procedures. The DCFS Appeal Brochure is provided to foster parents at all ACRs and if a child is removed from the home (given the child has been placed in the home for at least 60 days). All of these documents specifically forbid retaliation by staff or agency employees against the foster parent for filing an appeal or grievance. Foster parents are also provided with the DCFS and YSB Clients Rights forms. All YSB grievance policies are posted on the agency website at www.ysbiv.org under the Foster Care program.

YSB developed an online training for foster parents titled "Know Your Rights: Understanding the Appeal Process," which covers basic topics pertaining to appealing decisions through DCFS, as

well as the agency's internal grievance procedures and Foster Parent Law Grievances. This training is available on the agency website and is a required training for all of our foster and relative caregivers. YSB developed the Foster Parent Law Grievance policy with input from all foster parents and adapted the recommended grievance form and procedures. This is available on the YSB website and is distributed annually with the yearly Implementation Plan.

Foster parents are provided with a copy of the Foster Parent Law as well as the YSB Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan which spells out the rights and responsibilities of all foster parents.

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.

YSB foster parents are expected to understand the importance of accurate and relevant records regarding a child's health history, family history, needs, and behaviors. The agency often receives feedback from foster parents on the importance of complete information when accepting a child for placement, and licensing staff are able to relate that to ongoing documentation for future care of the child and/or return to the parents.

During the initial licensure, licensing staff review the CFS 590 Foster Family Home License Compliance Record form, which is a 21-page summary of the 402 Foster Family Home Licensing Standards. A section of the 590 covers the importance of maintaining documentation and provides examples of what information must be known and recorded by the foster parent. YSB provides a Child Folder in which foster parents can maintain the necessary documents and information. This folder follows the child to any future placements, and if returned home and relevant information from it can be provided to the biological parent. Records to be maintained by the foster family include but not limited to:

- The name and date of birth of the child, the legal guardian of the child, religion of the child, and arrangements for education of the child;
- The name, address, and telephone number of the child's physician, guardian, and supervising agency;
- The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of person to contact in case of emergency, including the names of persons to whom the child may be released;
- Sibling and biological parent visitation forms if supervising visits;
- A record and/or receipts for distribution of allowance and clothing funds;
- The CFS 432 Consent for Out of State Travel or Extended Trips;
- Completed medical, dental, vision, hearing and other specialty appointments; immunizations the child has received; any physical problems, limitations, or allergies the child has; any current recommendations for special medical care; log of medication prescribed and given; and all medical-related consents;
- Copies of child's school records i.e. report card, disciplinary notices, meeting notices, and Individualized Education Plan;
- Copies of evaluations completed (psychological, psychiatric, developmental, etc.)
- Records of completed foster parent training and other relevant 402 documentation;

- And a record of the emergency evacuation plan and quarterly rehearsals.

Foster Parent's responsibilities to the children they serve also include the guarantee that the foster child(ren) in their home receive annual physicals with updated immunizations as required by the state of Illinois, dental examinations, vision screenings, and hearing screenings.

Well-being is an important part of meeting the basic needs of every child, therefore well-being is monitored by YSB on a monthly basis. At every monitoring visit, foster parents are reminded of this responsibility and are given an opportunity for clarification.

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

The responsibility to share information with subsequent caregivers is a part of the necessary communication between foster parents, agency, and when appropriate, the biological parents to assist in the transition of the child. Case workers also reinforce this expectation when providing the foster parent with the Child Folder and educate the foster parent on the importance of this responsibility should the situation arise.

YSB recognizes that there may be instances when it is not appropriate for caregivers to communicate, such as when a child is removed from a foster home due to abuse or neglect. However, even in those instances, there is the opportunity to gather information about the child that is necessary for care in the new home.

If there are no concerns about the safety of the child or inaccurate information that could cause harm to a child, both foster parents are contacted and asked if the agency can share their contact information. Staff encourage the new foster home to contact the previous home with questions regarding the child's routines, educational requirements, behaviors, and "favorites" (food, clothes, stuffed animals, etc.). If the foster homes are not comfortable with this, the case worker will make attempts to obtain this information and pass it on to the new home.

When a child returns home to a biological parent, case workers follow the same procedure previously described. However, not all foster parents are comfortable working with the biological

parents and vice versa. Information in the Child Folder and information gathered via interview with the foster parent, is shared with the biological parent by the case worker. YSB takes this one step further and encourages an ongoing exchange of information between biological parent and foster parent at the beginning of the placement and throughout the child's time in substitute care. If either party is not comfortable with direct communication, or discussions at the time of visits, resources such as a daily journal can be utilized.

- 17) The responsibility to provide care and services that are respectful of, and responsible 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.**

Whenever possible, YSB follows the DCFS directive in placing children with relatives, siblings, or foster homes within the same race or ethnicity as the foster child. When this is not possible, it is even more important that the child's foster parents provide care that is respectful of the child's cultural needs and his/her relationship with the biological family.

During the initial meeting with potential foster parents, licensing workers discuss the family's openness to take placement of children who are of a different gender, race, ethnicity, religious, or cultural background. Licensing workers also share the importance of integrating a child's culture into the home by promoting culture through toys, stories, food, traditions, visiting museums, and/or attending community events. Incorporating the child's culture will help in supporting one's sense of self.

If a family needs additional assistance, YSB staff will provide other tools and resources to help the family support a child's ties to their biological family and culture. Foster parents are educated on recognizing different genders, races, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds in their PRIDE training course. YSB offers an informal mentoring program in which a new foster home is connected with an experienced foster home. They are able to create and help foster parents locate resources that maintain a child's cultural identity.

Attachment A: Board Payment Rates

**FY 24 FOSTER CARE PAYMENT RATE SCHEDULE
TRADITIONAL/LICENSED FOSTER HOMES**

	AGE 12 +	AGE 9-11	AGE 5-8	AGE 1-4	Under 1
BOARD	\$ 515	\$ 551	\$ 534	\$ 480	\$ 486
TRANSPORATION	\$ 160	\$ 126	\$ 123	\$ 117	\$ 117
CLOTHING	\$ 90	\$ 84	\$ 68	\$ 55	\$ 50
ALLOWANCE	\$ 62	\$ 35	\$ 21	\$ 20	\$ 19
TOTAL	\$ 827	\$ 796	\$ 746	\$ 672	\$ 672

**FY 24 FOSTER CARE PAYMENT RATE SCHEDULE
SPECIALIZED FOSTER HOMES**

	AGE 12 +	AGE 9-11	AGE 5-8	AGE 1-4	Under 1
BOARD	\$ 515	\$ 551	\$ 534	\$ 480	\$ 486
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 160	\$ 126	\$ 123	\$ 117	\$ 117
CLOTHING	\$ 90	\$ 84	\$ 68	\$ 55	\$ 50
ALLOWANCE	\$ 62	\$ 35	\$ 21	\$ 20	\$ 19
SPEC. REIM.	\$ 758.86	\$ 789.86	\$ 839.86	\$ 913.86	\$ 913.86
TOTAL	\$ 1585.86	\$ 1585.86	\$ 1585.86	\$ 1585.86	\$ 1585.86

FY 24 UNLICENSED RELATIVE/FICTIVE KIN PAYMENT RATE

\$479.00 per child placed in the home.

Attachment B: Board Payment and Reimbursement Schedule-

Foster Care Reimbursement Schedule

November 1, 2023, through October 30, 2024

November 16, 2023 (Thursday)

December 18, 2023 (Monday)

January 16, 2024 (Tuesday)

February 16, 2024 (Friday)

March 18, 2024 (Monday)

April 16, 2024 (Tuesday)

May 16, 2024 (Thursday)

June 17, 2024 (Monday)

July 16, 2024 (Tuesday)

August 16, 2024 (Friday)

September 16, 2024 (Monday)

October 16, 2024 (Wednesday)

**If you receive a paper check, checks are mailed out on the pay date above. If you have your reimbursement direct deposit, then it will be deposited in your account on the above date.

If you would like to set up direct deposit, please contact your licensing worker for assistance with setting this up.