

TABLE OF CONTENTS
Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan 2017

I.	Annual Report.....	1
II.	Plan Narratives for Rights 1-15 and Responsibilities 1-17.....	5
III.	Attachments	
	a. Proof of on-going training (schedule).....	37
	b. A list of names/signatures of foster parents involved in reviewing and/or revising the plan.....	38
	c. Actual signatures of foster parents who reviewed and approved our plan.....	43
	d. Copy of Arden Shore’s Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure.....	53
	e. Copies of any Foster Parent Law Grievances filed during the past year.....	55
	f. Copy of Mutual Assessment Tool.....	56
	g. Copy of Foster Parent Newsletter.....	57



November 15, 2016

Ms. Terry McGlothlin
Department of Children and Family Services
406 E. Monroe Street
Mail Station 225
Springfield, IL 62701

Dear Ms. McGlothlin:

Enclosed is Arden Shore's 2017 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. This letter serves as our Annual Report for our 2017 plan.

Our Foster Care Department has seen continued growth this past year. We currently serve 130 foster children and have over 80 foster homes (both traditional as well as home of relative foster parents). Our Foster Care Department consists of three full time Supervisors, one full time Licensing and Recruitment Specialist, one full time bilingual Licensing and Recruitment Specialist/Permanency Specialist, and 8 case managers (5 of which are bilingual, Spanish-speaking). While our supervisors are not Spanish-speaking, the Director of Program Operations assists as needed to ensure there are no language barriers in our practice.

Thank you for your time and attention in reviewing our 2017 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Carlos Argueta, M.A.
Director of Program Operations

ANNUAL REPORT

1. Provide a general description of the process used to obtain foster parent input into your plan review/revision.

This year the agency continued to use a multi-approach strategy in obtaining foster parent input into our Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. Three supervisors and the director of the program met with several foster parents in their homes and spoke with others to discuss the 2016 plan and document feedback and suggestions. Prior to these in-home visits, the foster parents were contacted by licensing staff members to confirm their interest in participating and were sent a copy of the 2016 plan for review. The supervisors and director then contacted each home to arrange a convenient time for the meeting and spent an average of 60 minutes conducting these home visits. Additionally, every Arden Shore foster parent was invited to the agency to participate in an on-site meeting to review and develop the new plan. Due to the large numbers of Spanish-speaking foster parents, a meeting was held in Spanish to help facilitate their participation and ascertain their needs and suggestions. The agency provided dinner and dessert for all attendees and their families prior to the meetings and then free childcare during the meetings. In addition, Arden Shore provided a \$25 stipend for each family that attended our meeting. Caseworkers were present to introduce foster parents to other foster parents and encourage interaction and engagement. The foster parents then met with the case management staff to review the entire plan and discuss each narrative. The Spanish language meeting was facilitated by the Director of Programs, Carlos Argueta, while the English language meeting was facilitated by Licensing Specialist Jane Lough and Licensing Supervisor Emily Odiase. The most frequent request of the foster parents in these meetings was for more opportunities to meet with other foster parents and to support one another. Because of this, the agency has identified two foster parents who are willing to facilitate a Foster Parent Support Group and is in the process of compiling a list of interested foster families. After revising the plan for 2017, the plan was mailed to every foster family for review and approval.

2. Describe the way direct service staff were involved in plan development and review.

When employees are hired, the supervisor goes over the plan with each new hire. Then prior to the foster parent meeting to discuss the plan, a staff meeting was held. The staff read every responsibility and right and discussed the implications of each for foster parents, staff, and ways in which to improve coordination and communication. This year the meeting was held on 10/12/2016. Then at our in-person dinner and meeting, held on 10/13/2016, all Foster Care Program staff were in attendance to help facilitate and participate in the discussions. Finally, the plan is discussed during individual supervision throughout the year, as this is one strategy to training staff and encouraging increased understanding and cooperation with the plan.

3. List the needs/deficiencies identified in our 2016 comments and how they were addressed in this plan.

- Narrative #2 includes too many details about specific trainings, some left over from 2014. Focus on Rule 340 and be sure to describe your mutual assessment method: Addressed by redrafting the entire narrative and updating the training information.
- Provide more detail in Narrative #6. How long does an investigation take? What are the timeframes for completion?: Addressed by providing details about these aspects of investigations.
- Don't use the phrase, "as stated earlier." Restate content for each applicable narrative.: We deleted any variation of this phrase throughout the plan and restated content where necessary.
- Describe the information given at intake and a prescribed method of disclosure. This is not the confidentiality narrative. Follow Rule 340.: We took out the majority of the information regarding confidentiality and instead focused on intake, what information is provided and how information is disclosed.
- Use caseworker visits to the home for early identification of risk of placement disruption.: Added this to Narrative #11.
- Describe how foster parents have a recognized voice within the agency's management organization.: Added this to Narrative #1 and Narrative #25.
- Provide training involving allegations against foster parents and the applicable rules and regulations which govern the investigation of the allegations: Added to Narrative #6.
- Provide training re: the importance of open communication: Added to Narrative #2.
- Narrative #29(14) should describe your agency's internal appeals process: Updated and delineated the internal appeals process.

4. Describe how your Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure was developed or reviewed and approved by foster parents, and how foster parents are notified annually that it is available for their use.

The Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure was developed with input from the agency staff and foster parents in past years. It is reviewed during the licensing process and annually after that at in-home licensing compliance visits. In addition, it was reviewed at our in-person meeting to review the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. The grievance procedure was also mailed out with the new Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan for 2017. The grievance procedure is as follows:

If an issue can not be resolved with the assistance of the Foster Care Supervisor, the foster parent will be asked if they want to file a grievance. They will then complete the grievance form which is submitted to the Foster Care Supervisor who will forward it to the Director of Program Operations. The Director of Program Operations conducts an investigation which may include face-to-face interviews, interviews with other staff and a file review. The foster parent then receives a written response within 7 days and is offered the opportunity to meet with the Director of Program Operations. If this response is not satisfactory, the foster parent has the right to meet with our Director of Quality Improvement and/or our President/CEO. Any alleged grievance filed by a foster parent is discussed with Arden Shore's

Agency Performance Team monitor. The foster parents are informed of the availability of the grievance procedure and their right to exercise the procedure at any time. This policy follows DCFS, Medicaid and COA guidelines.

5. List All Rights narratives that were revised this year.

Narrative #1
Narrative #2
Narrative #3
Narrative #6
Narrative #10
Narrative #11
Narrative #15

6. List ALL responsibilities narratives that were revised this year.

Narrative #18
Narrative #21
Narrative #22
Narrative #24
Narrative #25
Narrative #26
Narrative #28
Narrative #29
Narrative #31
Narrative #32

7. If no revisions were made, please explain why.

Not applicable as revisions were made throughout our plan.

Implementation Plan for
Foster Parent Law (Public Act 89.19)
Arden Shore Child and Family Services
2017

THE RIGHTS OF FOSTER PARENTS SHALL INCLUDE:

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

At Arden Shore, no one team member is any more important than another as every team member must be looked upon with respect, dignity and a sense of professionalism, regardless of their respective area of expertise. Foster parents are a major part of the multi-disciplinary professional team, which provides an array of services to the children involved with the child welfare system. Foster parents have expertise through their foster parenting experience, along with education, vocational, and life experiences. Arden Shore foster parents are respected, listened to and given the status of any other professionals in the service team. Foster parents are invited to attend court, family meetings, administrative case reviews, and school meetings as well as other meetings related to case planning such as the quarterly Child & Family Team meeting. The inclusion of foster parents in these meetings and events allows foster parents to give input, and to be heard as active members of the child welfare team. Documentation of these contacts are recorded in case notes. In addition to being involved in the case planning and other professional meetings for the child or children in their care, foster parents are encouraged to participate in local area groups, training opportunities and networking with other foster parents. Arden Shore provides information to our foster parents on these opportunities through email, mail and in-person contacts. In addition, Arden Shore is in the process of developing a Foster Parent Support Group, as this was the most frequently identified modification to our current Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. The Support Group will be hosted and facilitated by foster parents and will be offered as a means to increase support, share resources, and grow each foster parents' "village" in their effort to raise each child. As professional members of the child welfare team, all communications with our foster parents, both written and verbal, reflect this philosophy of dignity, respect and consideration. Phone calls and emails from foster parents are returned in a timely manner – the same day whenever possible. Arden Shore is committed to providing the time and attention to foster parents whenever they reach out to us. Respect for their time and families are demonstrated daily in our professional interactions with them in and outside of their homes. Foster parents are encouraged to take advantage of the DCFS ongoing training, "Working as a Professional Team Member," either in class or through the Virtual Training Center, to elevate their skills. In addition, Arden Shore has created a newsletter for our foster parents that helps disseminate training and support services information, celebrates adoptions and permanency achievement, offers a vehicle for communication amongst foster parents, and conveys the agency's appreciation for all foster parents. Arden Shore foster parents are also an integral

part of our agency's Council on Accreditation reviews where they provide feedback and insights. Excellence in foster parenting is acknowledged in many ways throughout the year individually and publicly, but Arden Shore's Foster Parent of the Year award presented at our annual meeting is considered our top honor. This award recognizes foster parents who demonstrate not only outstanding commitment to the children in their care, but their professionalism in working with Arden Shore and the child welfare system. Finally, our agency's licensing team meets with our foster parents regularly to determine needs, request suggestions, and offer solutions. On a monthly basis, the licensing team meets with the supervisor to discuss the totality of these home visits and to report any and all concerns, questions, and suggestions. These are then communicated by the Licensing Supervisor to the management team. This is intended to give our foster parents a voice in the administrative process and to affect policy change when necessary.

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

Arden Shore is committed to the education of not only our foster parents, but other foster parents in the area as well. A foster parent's career in child welfare begins with the 27-hour *Foster Parent PRIDE* pre-service training for traditional foster parents. Although the Department of Children and Family Services coordinates and conducts this standardized training, Arden Shore frequently hosts pre-service for our foster parents, as well as foster parents from other agencies, in the Arden Shore Community Room. Arden Shore provides copies of training materials and *PRIDE Connections* to all foster parents in attendance. Arden Shore also hosts *Foster Parent PRIDE* in Spanish providing the same hospitality and materials to any Spanish-speaking individual in the area. The *PRIDE* pre-service training lays the basic foundation for parenting children in foster care.

Relative caregivers becoming licensed foster parents are required to take *Foster Parent PRIDE* Sessions #1 and #2, are encouraged to attend these trainings in person if possible. When this is not desired or convenient for them, Arden Shore provides these caregivers with the DVD version of the *Relative Foster Parent PRIDE* pre-service training so they may complete the training at home. Relative caregivers who do not wish to become licensed foster parents are encouraged to take this training as well.

As professional members of the child welfare team, all Arden Shore foster parents and relative caregivers are afforded access to consistent and quality training throughout the duration of their foster parenting careers. Foster parents are encouraged to participate in these training opportunities to ensure uniformity, professionalism and individual client needs are being met. All licensed foster parents complete at least 16 hours of DCFS-approved training during each period of licensure.

The first class required is *Educational Advocacy*. All foster parents are expected to be educational advocates for the children in their care. This 6-hour class teaches foster parents how to work with public schools and how to be an integral part of the child's educational planning. Foster parents learn about various educational assessment tools, programs and the educational rights of children in care. Foster parents are provided with the tools needed to advocate for their foster children in a positive, confident way. Arden Shore also hosts *Educational Advocacy* in the Arden Shore Community Room for any foster parent in the area interested in attending.

Arden Shore assures that new foster parents, as well as seasoned foster parents, receive ongoing trainings targeted to their experience, understanding, skill level and the specific needs of their foster children. Foster parents are encouraged to use the DCFS Virtual Training Center. The VTC is an excellent resource for foster parents who cannot attend DCFS classroom trainings or prefer the convenience of in-home training. The VTC offers exceptional trainings including:

- *The Foundation for Meeting the Developmental Needs of Children*
- *Using Discipline to Protect, Nurture and Meet Developmental Needs*
- *Addressing Developmental Issues Related to Sexuality*
- *Responding to the Signs and Symptoms of Sexual Abuse*

In addition to taking *Adoption Certification* in the classroom, *Adoption Certification* is also available through the VTC. This class educates foster parents on the impact of adoption on their relationship with the child, and provides general preparation for the adoption process.

Arden Shore will be offering the exceptional DCFS foster parent training *Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma* in our Community Room in 2017. This 15-hour training explores the physical as well as emotional affects of abuse, neglect and removal have on children. Other DCFS trainings scheduled for 2017 are:

- *The Sexual Development of Children and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse*
- *Transcultural Parenting*
- *Educational Advocacy*

Arden Shore is also beginning a **Foster Parent to Foster Parent** training series in 2017. The topics planned for co-training with staff are:

- *Working with Your CASA* – Kathy Zumwalt, former CASA trainer
- *Open Communication* – Melissa Kinast, specialized foster parent
- *Trauma-Informed Parenting* – Jill Sepulveda, specialized foster parent
- *Working With Natural Parents* – Jennifer Marsh, 2016 Foster Parent of the Year

Arden Shore is also partnering with Camelot Care to share training opportunities throughout the coming year.

Arden Shore provides updated information on local area trainings as well as DCFS trainings to foster parents through the staff, email or direct mailing. Foster parents may attend approved trainings at any participating college, school, hospital, library or community center. This flexibility allows foster parents to attend trainings convenient for their schedules and locations. Licensed foster parents also receive "Fostering Illinois" which includes state-wide training information. Arden Shore also publishes a newsletter that provides additional local training opportunities through the College of Lake County or McHenry County College for example.

Arden Shore solicits feedback from foster parents to identify training needs in other ways as well. Arden Shore utilizes our *Mutual Assessment Tool for Foster Parent Training Needs* to identify these needs. At home visits the caseworker and foster parent discuss challenges and training needs specific to the foster parents and the children placed in their home. With the help of the caseworker, the foster parent identifies general areas where he or she believes training would be beneficial. The caseworker and foster parent then assess training needs based on the experience level of the foster parent and needs based on the children currently placed in the home. After training needs are identified, the foster parent, caseworker and Licensing Specialist work together to find trainings that will address the need. This includes providing one-on-one training in the home or searching for local or DCFS resources. Arden Shore caseworkers work with foster parents to make sure transportation to training sessions is available.

Arden Shore caseworkers and Licensing Specialist also provide individual coaching to relative caregivers and traditional foster parents during home visits. This informal, but very targeted, individualized training, is extremely important to the success of any foster care placement. These coaching opportunities increase the quality of care for every placement and significantly help to avoid disruptions. These individual trainings including, but not limited to, behavior management techniques, alternative disciplinary techniques, court procedures, administrative case reviews, additional educational advocacy and cultural competency. Individual specialized trainings related to specific client or foster parent needs are provided as needed. For example, teen sexuality help and coaching for foster parents of preteen youth, or nebulizer training for foster parents of children with asthma.

At Arden Shore our experienced foster parents are a tremendous resource. We utilize the experience, knowledge and strengths of experienced foster parents to individually mentor other caregivers in our foster care program. Several of our foster parents dedicate many hours a month to helping other foster parents through mentoring, both in person or by phone. The Licensing Specialist assesses new foster families at licensure for interest in having or being a mentor. These new families are frequently matched to another Arden Shore family with similar interests, backgrounds or placement preferences. For example, a young couple where both of their fathers are pastors was introduced to a slightly older couple where the foster father is a pastor. Additionally, both couples had experience as a biological child in a family that fostered. This

common ground is hopefully the foundation for a long-lasting friendship and mutual source of support and mentoring for both.

Our foster parents are also our greatest resource for recruiting new foster parents. Arden Shore foster parents are coached in presenting the child welfare system and Arden Shore in a positive way to their friends, community and the public at large. Most of our foster parents appreciate the need for not only additional foster families, but additional foster families with diversity. Most of our best new foster family referrals come from licensed foster parents as a result of their work in public awareness and outreach.

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.

Arden Shore provides to each current and new foster parent an updated list of phone numbers for 24-hour crisis response to emergencies. The numbers include (by are not limited to):

- Arden Shore main number and staff directory – which includes all members of the Foster Care Program: Case Managers, Supervisors, Licensing Specialist, Director of Program Operations, Clinical Counseling Supervisor.
- Foster Parent Advocacy Line
- Daycare Information Line
- Child Abuse Hotline
- DCFS Medical Consent Line
- SASS Line
- DCFS Training Registration Line

The agency is also distributing a quarterly newsletter that has these important phone numbers prominently displayed on each edition. These numbers are listed with descriptions that identify what type of situation will prompt their use and what assistance will be offered. The newsletter is intended to provide continuous and updated access to all pertinent contact information.

In addition to the above, the Foster Care program now has a cell phone dedicated to serve as an avenue for communication for all foster parents specifically for 24-hour crisis and emergency purposes. The phone number will be shared with all foster parents along with the procedure for utilizing that cell phone number. The carrying of the cell phone will be a rotating duty shared between the Foster Care Supervisors and Director of Program Operations. The Supervisor/Director will retrieve voicemail messages and respond to the foster parent request for crisis services immediately.

When contacted, Arden Shore caseworkers assist foster parents in making contact with any agency or office that can provide relevant information, assistance, and or support services. Caseworkers and the foster parent determine if it is more appropriate for the foster parent or caseworker to make such contact. The agreed to plan is then implemented. Offices which are contacted when appropriate include: Advocacy Office, Medical Consent, Foster Parent Law Advisory Council, Board of Education, SASS, Inspector General, Department of Public Aid, Department of Rehabilitation Services, and Office of Mental Health of the Department of Human Services, schools, hospitals, counseling agencies, public health organizations etc.

The caseworker is the foster parent's first line of contact regarding assistance in locating special services or supports if the child is exhibiting special needs at any given time. Caseworkers not only have knowledge of local resources but also have access to the agency's referral process. The process of having foster parents work with the caseworker as a team allows for the use of each team members skills and knowledge to arrange for the best service provision possible.

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

Payment is made commensurate with the levels of care provided by the foster parents according to the contract. Payments to all licensed foster parents are distributed no later than the twentieth of the month by the agency. Foster parents are instructed to contact their worker if there is a delay in their payment or if they have any questions regarding their payments. The caseworker discusses the issue with his/her supervisor and the Finance Department and arranges for the correction of, or explanation of, the issue within 10 business working days. For unlicensed relative foster parents who are paid by the state, Arden Shore caseworker will encourage the foster parent to contact the DCFS Payment Unit at 1-800-525-0499; option #2; between 8:30 am-4:30 pm to address payment problems. The Foster Care Supervisor will assist the foster parent as needed.

When a child needs a particular item, service or wants to take advantage of an unusual opportunity, Arden Shore can often assist with the expense. Arden Shore budgets annually for client needs such as high school graduation expenses, sports camps, educational opportunities, cultural events and other opportunities. For example, a school trip with a fee is financed through monies budgeted for these kinds of expenses. DCFS supports many of these expenses. Additionally, Arden Shore researches and secures many other forms of funding to help meet our clients' needs and provide additional services. These generous resources include the Arden Shore Board of Directors, area corporate and individual donors. Arden Shore is fortunate to have Panasonic as a funding partner to our agency. Panasonic alone provides over 150 filled school backpacks and holiday gifts every year for our clients in care and in our Intact program. Our Director of Development works closely with supervisors and staff to ensure donations are maximized, used

appropriately and donors are thanked. In Lake County the Mother's Trust also provides funding for many of our clients' additional opportunities. Case managers and supervisors are sometimes able to get fees waived for our children and youth in care. When DCFS does not reimburse for extracurricular activities for our children under their Special Service Fee, Arden Shore will review requests on an individual basis to determine if it will be able to cover the cost.

It is the policy of Arden Shore that under no circumstances, should regular board payments, nor payments for respite care, camp, "extracurricular" activities such as special athletics training, and musical training, and the like be withheld for any reason.

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

When a child is placed into a foster home, Arden Shore caseworkers give as much information to the foster parent as possible. This includes background information and information about the permanency goal for the child. At the time of an initial foster care placement there is an Integrated Assessment team formed to meet with all individuals that are pertinent to the case. This includes the foster parents and the child(ren). At this time when the assessment team meets with the foster parent and child(ren), the foster parent is asked for information and input into creating the assessment and services for themselves and the child. This information is collected and incorporated into the services plan. Foster parents are provided clear and comprehensive child's portions of service plans as soon as such documentation is completed. This includes changes, deletions, and/or additions to the plan. Foster parents receive a copy of the completed service plan at the ACR or it is mailed/given to them if they do not attend. Foster parents are invited to give input regarding the child's plan and are asked for such information by the caseworker before the ACR so it may be included in the written plan. Foster parents are always encouraged to participate in the ACR. The information contains as much of the following as possible:

- a. information on physiological/biological/medical backgrounds, needs and treatment histories of children
- b. information on behavioral backgrounds, needs and psychosocial histories of children
- c. information regarding prior and current educational backgrounds and needs of children
- d. information regarding types of prior placements which may be significant to the child's current and future needs, and previous services received by the children
- e. information on confidentiality and agency policy

Once the Arden Shore caseworker explains the parameters of what the visiting plan needs to have included, the foster parent helps develop and implement the visiting plan and makes sure visits are recorded on a visiting record or sibling visit forms (DCFS Visiting Record Form). This allows the foster parent to be included in the decisions of the visitation plan and helps to reinforce the expectation of the foster parents' participation in the facilitation of the visiting plan.

Any changes in the case plan or decisions affecting the child's placement are discussed with the foster parents and their input is sought. Arden Shore also encourages foster parents to attend the permanency hearing to stay informed of the permanency goal for the child. If for any reason the foster parent cannot attend, Arden Shore caseworkers would discuss any changes in the goal and explain any possible outcomes of that goal. Foster parents are expected to understand their foster children's cultural heritage, teach the children about their heritage and help them to practice the traditions of their culture. Many of our foster placements are in a relative home where the foster parent's often share the same cultural heritage as the children. Arden Shore follows the regulations under MEPA/IEPA in making placement decisions.

Arden Shore also follows the rule of the Burgos Consent Decree and attempts to place any Spanish speaking or bilingual child in a bilingual home with a bilingual foster care specialist. Arden Shore makes every effort to assure that children receive the communication and activities necessary to continue their identification with their cultural heritage and language.

As many of our foster children are Latino, Arden Shore makes every effort to recruit and license bilingual foster homes and to employ bilingual foster care workers. The bilingual foster care specialist may also facilitate our providing other services such as a Spanish speaking mentor or therapist to enable the child to continue to use their Spanish as much as possible and to facilitate the highest level of communication with the child and the biological family.

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.

At the beginning of the licensing process, the foster parents are given information on how complaints against their license are handled. Moving forward, Arden Shore will provide training regarding allegations against foster parents as well as the rules and regulations that govern the investigation of the allegations. This information includes DCFS Procedures 383: Enforcement and the names of individuals to contact for foster parent assistance (see attached). When the licensing supervisor is notified of a licensing complaint, the licensing specialist is informed and initiates an impartial investigation immediately. The licensing specialist reads the complaint thoroughly to not only understand the complaint, but to look for possible inappropriate motives on the part of the complainant. The licensing specialist interviews the caseworker and supervisor, and reviews the foster parent licensing file to determine if the alleged violation has been reported before.

The licensing specialist conducts a home visit within two working days. As with all foster parent interactions, the licensing specialist displays consideration, dignity and respect for the foster parents throughout the investigation process. Foster parents are advised of their right to have any advocate of their choice present for support and assistance with the process. The licensing specialist explains the specific licensing standard in the complaint, the nature of the complaint, the investigation procedure and time frame for completion. Foster parents are informed if this is a stand-alone licensing investigation or if there will also be a DCFS investigation regarding the complaint. The time frame for completion of a stand-alone licensing investigations is 30 days. The time frame for a licensing investigation paralleled with a DCP investigation is 60 days. The licensing specialist interviews the foster parent(s) and any other adults involved regarding the licensing complaint. New directives prohibit the investigation of children by licensing workers. If possible, the licensing worker provides the foster parent with the written investigation finding on this visit. When additional information is required, the licensing specialist provides the written finding as soon as it is determined. When all interviews are completed, and documentation has been collected and reviewed, the licensing specialist and supervisor meet to discuss the validity of the complaint. If the complaint finding is "unsubstantiated" the foster parents are notified in writing immediately.

If the complaint is “substantiated,” the licensing specialist will write a Corrective Action Plan for the foster parents. The Corrective Action Plan is complete, easy to understand and follows Procedures 383 policy. The licensing supervisor must approve any recommendation for a Corrective Action Plan. The licensing specialist conducts another home visit to review the plan with the foster parents. The licensing specialist asks for the foster parent’s input and discusses how the licensing Corrective Action Plan is specifically tied to the licensing standard violated. If the licensing specialist can assist the foster parent to remedy the concern, the licensing specialist will do so. For example, if a licensing complaint is the use of an out-dated car seat, the licensing specialist may purchase a new car seat with agency funds.

When foster parents are notified of a “substantiated” complaint investigation, the licensing specialist sends the *Confirmation of Substantiated Violations* by certified mail which includes the offer of mediation at a Supervisory Review and contact information to request a Supervisory Review. Foster parents are provided with information to request mediation at an Informal Review with DCFS if they do not agree with the decision in a Supervisory Review. These reviews are held in a timely, impartial and professional manner. Foster parents are encouraged to bring individuals for support if they choose.

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.

The caseworker assigned to the case meets with the foster parents and discusses any concerns, questions or issues related to the child’s history, experiences, and care which will and can impact the home of the caretaker. Workers share any relevant information as it is obtained. Participation in court hearings, administrative case reviews, and other meetings is strongly encouraged, so that the foster parent is able to gain as much information as possible at the time it is disseminated and so that the foster parent may provide important information as to the child’s current adjustment in the foster home. When foster parents are unable to attend court hearings, administrative case reviews, staffings, etc. the worker brings their comments and concerns to the meeting and also shares information and recommendations from the hearing or meeting with the foster parents afterwards.

All pertinent information about a child is shared with foster parents unless this information affects the confidentiality rights of another family member. The worker then explains to the foster parent the confidentiality standard that applies to the situation and why the sharing of the requested information is prohibited. All staff receives training about information that can be disclosed and not disclosed due to confidentiality reasons.

The foster care supervisor will discuss during supervision and will review worker’s case notes to be sure that information is being shared appropriately. When

indicated, the supervisor will check with the foster parents to ensure that workers are giving the appropriate and necessary information so that the foster parents may adequately care for the child.

8. The right to be given information concerning a child from the Department as required under Section 5 (u) of the Children 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. [20 ILCS 520/1-15].

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

Arden Shore foster care staff are all trained either at the time of hire and or at least yearly in the procedures for assuring that foster parents or prospective adoptive parents have necessary information about the child(ren) at the time of placement.

This information shall include:

- the child's medical history including immunization status, known medical problems or communicable diseases, and insurance and medical card information
- the child's educational history including any special educational needs and details of the child's individualized educational plan (IEP), Individual Family Service Plans (IFSP) when the child is receiving special educational services or 504 Educational Special Needs Plan, if applicable
- a copy of the child's portion of the client service plan including visitation arrangements, case history of the child, how the child came into care, legal status, permanency goal, history of the child's previous placement and reasons for placement changes. Information identifying or revealing the location of any previous foster or relative home caregiver will be redacted.
- Other relevant background information of the child including any prior criminal history, behavior problems including fire setting, perpetration of sexual abuse, destructive behavior and substance abuse habits and like and dislikes.
- The child's cultural and ethnic background especially related to any language or communication needs. Children whose family speaks Spanish will be placed in a bilingual home with a bilingual foster care specialist whenever possible.

In addition, whenever possible the caseworker will provide the foster parent or adoptive parent with a written summary of the above information prior to placement. In an emergency placement, the worker shall provide known information verbally as it becomes available and subsequently provide this information in writing.

Supervisory review and approval is required prior to providing any information to the foster parent or the prospective adoptive parents. The foster care supervisor as part of on-going case supervision will make sure that this information was given to the foster parents or adoptive parents and this is documented in the file as well as in supervisory case notes.

9. The right to be notified of scheduled meetings and staffings concerning the foster child in order to actively participate in the case planning and decision-making process regarding the child, including individual service planning meetings, administrative case reviews, interdisciplinary staffings and individual educational planning meetings; the right to be informed of decisions made by the courts or the child welfare agency concerning the child; the right to provide input concerning the plan of services for a 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.

The caseworker is responsible for notifying the foster parent of all staffings and meetings regarding the child. Foster parents are encouraged to attend all such meetings so that they can be involved as an active member of the child welfare team. Foster parents are given information regarding involved professionals on the case and encouraged to speak with them when necessary. Foster parents are notified by telephone and may be offered transportation if necessary. Foster parents are notified of ACR's through the normal notification process, (ACR cycle). Foster parents are also immediately informed of any change in the date for ACR's, court hearings, etc. by telephone. As foster parents may be notified of a school staffing prior to the caseworker, foster parents are asked to notify their worker as soon as they have been informed of any such meetings.

The worker will train the foster parents in the ACR process and court dates, importance of their attendance, the participants and what to expect at these various appointments. Foster parents are informed during foster home visits or by a phone call of the upcoming appointment. The foster parent receives a copy of the visiting plan and a copy of the visiting record and sibling visiting forms. Any changes in the case plan or decisions affecting the child's placement are discussed with the foster parents and their input is sought.

If foster parents are unable to attend court hearings, ACRs etc., the caseworker encourages them to participate by giving feedback to the caseworker before the meeting which is presented to the team during the meeting. After the meeting or hearing, the caseworker informs them of the details and content of the meeting or hearing and any decisions, changes, or recommendations affecting the child and

future services. The foster parent is viewed as an integral part of the team and their attendance and input is highly valued. When appropriate the foster parents are given a copy of the written feedback from the ACR reviewer whether they attend the review or not. The foster care supervisor also makes sure that all foster care specialists are notifying foster parents of all relevant meetings and encouraging their attendance.

This is done through supervisory discussions. Arden Shore caseworkers also help facilitate communication between the foster parents and the child welfare team when necessary. Facilitating communication includes translating service plans, letters, etc. into Spanish for biological and foster parents, translating the content of meetings and the results of meetings for families who do not speak English, and advocating for the cultural and ethnic differences for families from other cultures at court, meetings and ACR's.

10. The right to be given, in a timely and consistent manner, any information a caseworker 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 child's family, the child's family may consent to disclosure of additional information.

All relevant and required information is provided to foster parents when a child is placed and when subsequent information is made available. This information includes:

- the child's medical history including immunization status, known medical problems or communicable diseases, and insurance and medical card information
- the child's educational history including any special educational needs and details of the child's individualized educational plan (IEP), Individual Family Service Plans (IFSP) when the child is receiving special educational services or 504 Educational Special Needs Plan, if applicable
- a copy of the child's portion of the client service plan including visitation arrangements, case history of the child, how the child came into care, legal status, permanency goal, history of the child's previous placement and reasons for placement changes. Information identifying or revealing the location of any previous foster or relative home caregiver will be redacted.
- Other relevant background information of the child including any prior criminal history, behavior problems including fire setting, perpetration of sexual abuse, destructive behavior and substance abuse habits and like and dislikes.

- The child's cultural and ethnic background especially related to any language or communication needs. Children whose family speaks Spanish will be placed in a bilingual home with a bilingual foster care specialist whenever possible.

In addition, whenever possible the caseworker will provide the foster parent or adoptive parent with a written summary of the above information prior to placement. In an emergency placement, the worker shall provide known information verbally as it becomes available and subsequently provide this information in writing.

All foster parents meet with the child's caseworker on a monthly basis at minimum and during these in-home contacts caseworkers routinely disclose any and all information pertaining to the child to the foster parent(s). When information is provided to the case management team, the caseworker and supervisor meet to assess the impact of the new information and to determine the timeframe for disclosing the information to the additional team members, including the foster parent. If the information will affect the daily functioning of the child or would aid in the care of the child, the information will be disseminated immediately to the foster parent via a phone call by the caseworker or supervisor. However, it is routine for non-emergency information to be provided at home visits during in-person contact. In addition to the disclosure of information occurring during home visits, the foster parent attends school meetings, Administrative Case Reviews, and juvenile court proceedings where information regarding the family and child is disclosed within legal limits.

11. The right to be given reasonable written notice of any change in a child's case plan, plans to terminate the placement of the child with the foster parent, and the reasons for the change or termination of 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.

All foster parents are notified verbally as well as in writing of any decision in regards to placement especially if there appears to be a concern in regards to continuing placement. Arden Shore values transparency and therefore requires ongoing communication between the foster parent and caseworker. During home visits, the caseworker is required to assess any potential placement disruption risks and help identify resources and supports that will help mitigate the risk. There should be an ongoing conversation between the foster parent and the case management team regarding safety, health, and well-being of the child and any issues regarding these areas by any members of the child welfare team. Whenever there is concern about a child's safety or need to remove him/her from a placement this is discussed in a supervisory session and/or agency staffing and documented in a critical decision case note. Arden Shore follows the Department's policy regarding

Notice of Decision, prior to the removal of a child. Foster parents are given a written 14-day notice of removal. Exceptions to this policy are only to be made if the child is assessed to be at imminent risk. Arden Shore views the foster parent as an integral part of the child welfare team. Therefore, Arden Shore discusses any concerns that arise in regards to the care of children in any given foster home with the foster parent. Arden Shore also discusses with the foster parent any allegations that may arise during the care of the children. The only exception would be, if the Department of Child Protection has requested no discussion while an investigation is in process.

Arden Shore believes that all lines of communication must be open to best care for all children in the system. Foster parents are notified and given information about their right to appeal any such decision including decisions made in the emergency review process and court hearings. Foster parents are also given assistance with the process if necessary.

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.

The foster parents are given verbal and may receive written notice of upcoming court hearings including the necessary information such as the date, time, name of the judge, location of the hearing and the docket number. Workers also follow up with reminder phone calls prior to the actual hearing. The foster care supervisor assures that all foster care specialists are notifying foster parents of court hearings and encouraging their attendance. This is done by both discussion in supervision as well as review of case notes. Arden Shore staff ensures that foster parents know that the Lake County Juvenile Court welcomes and encourages foster parents to participate in the court hearings. Foster care specialists explain the foster parent's role and rights and responsibilities in court as described in the Foster Parent Handbook. If foster parents are unable to come to court their participation can take the form of communication through the caseworker, communication through the CASA worker or the GAL, letters to the court, or any other form of appropriate communication. Arden Shore's foster care staff inform each foster parent that each foster child has a guardian ad litem that is their own lawyer in court. This lawyer is also available to the foster parents in communicating to the court and worker what is the best interest of the child. Arden Shore encourages the foster parent to contact this guardian regularly. The supervisor is required to sign court reports for the caseworker and hence, is aware of all court dates. During supervision with the individual caseworker, the supervisor discusses court dates to ensure that the foster parents are being notified appropriately.

13. The right to be considered as a placement option when a foster child who was formerly placed with the foster parent is to be re-entered into foster care, if that placement is consistent with the best interest of the child and other children in the foster parent's home.

With the implementation of SACWIS, (State Automated Child Welfare Information System) it is much easier to obtain immediate information about prior placements about any child. The current foster care intake rotation system already takes into account prior involvement with an agency when determining agency assignment. Arden Shore maintains records which includes such information as placements and corresponding foster parents. Upon the notification of a child who is re-entering the foster care system, Arden Shore checks the files and determines if the previous placement is a viable option and in the best interest of the child. Arden Shore makes every effort to maintain continuity for foster children so we would try to place a child in a previous placement as long as this was in the best interest for the child and others in the foster home.

A multi-disciplinary team approach is used to determine best interest for the child. Many areas are considered when determining the best interest of the child including but not limited to previous bonding, whether the placement is an option for permanent placement, long term plans for the child, behavioral issues, child's needs, etc.

14. The right to have timely access to the child's 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.

All foster parents are notified of the supervisor's name and telephone number at the time of case assignment. Caseworkers are trained to inform their clients, foster parents and other professionals to notify their supervisor of any concerns about their job performance, decision-making and case management. Clients and foster parents are able to file a grievance, which must be addressed within two working days.

If the grievance is also with a supervisor of the foster care unit, the Director of Program Operations will handle the grievance. If the Foster Parent Grievance is not able to be resolved at this level, the President/CEO will be responsible for handling the grievance process. The foster parent is informed of the service appeal process and will receive documentation regarding the service appeal process (Rule and Procedure 337). Licensed foster parents are also trained on the appeal process in Foster Pride Training.

Under no circumstances will harassment or retaliation directed towards a foster parent be permitted or condoned as a part of an appeal process. Behaviors such as

these will be addressed by the immediate supervisor or Director, with appropriate corrective actions.

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 can contact the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services-Advocacy Office for Children and Families, 406 E. Monroe Station #10, Springfield, IL. (800) 232-3798. Foster parents will be provided with this information at the time of the child's placement and when they are informed of the appeal process and grievance process. It is also included on the *Foster Parent Times* quarterly newsletter.

FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES SHALL INCLUDE:

- 16(1). The responsibility to openly communicate and share information about the child with other members of the child welfare team.

The child welfare team is defined as the caseworker, parents, foster parents, school, court personnel, other professionals, (i.e., therapist, mentors, and respite care providers). Other members that can be included are other relatives and others with significant relationships to the child and family. Caseworkers are taught to focus on teaching open communication. Foster parents are also taught this in Foster Pride Training. It is the expectation that all foster parents will interact and contribute to the child welfare team.

Foster parents will be available to meet with their child's caseworker, therapist, and other professionals on the child welfare team on a regular basis or as needed. Caseworkers are expected to teach foster parents the importance and responsibility of sharing honest information. Foster parents are expected to share honest information with the caseworker about their foster child's progress in school, therapy, and with their visits with their parents. This includes the clear expectation that foster parents notify their caseworkers about unusual incidents and emergencies that either involve or may impact the child or the home in which the child lives. Part of the responsibility in openly communicating and sharing information about the child includes being an active member of the child welfare team in court and during the administrative case review process. Foster parents must realize that they are integral members of the team and that their input about the child is most

valuable when making decisions about the child's future, whether it be in court, during permanency planning, or during the course of making routine care plans.

17(2). The responsibility to respect the confidentiality of information concerning foster children and their families and act appropriately within applicable confidentiality laws and regulations.

Foster parents will respect the child and family's rights to confidentiality and privacy. Foster Pride Training addresses the issue of confidentiality and it is the expectation of Arden Shore foster care staff to regularly review this with the foster parents. In addition to Foster Pride Training, Arden Shore foster care specialists provide on-going individual training during their regular visits with foster parents. This individualized training provided by the foster care specialists is especially important for relative families who have not participated in Pride training. This training includes a focus on confidentiality issues to help foster parents clarify the confidentiality laws and regulations and understand the action that these laws and regulations require. Arden Shore adheres to the confidentiality regulations described in the Child Care Act. In addition, all client information is protected in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA).

Foster parents are responsible for maintaining the integrity of their professional role in the child welfare team by ensuring each foster child's involvement with DCFS and the juvenile court remains confidential. Foster parents are encouraged to request additional training or clarification if necessary to assist them in understanding the great need for confidentiality of our children and their families. In addition, the need for confidentiality is reviewed with the foster parents on an ongoing basis by the caseworker. Each foster parent is encouraged to discuss with their caseworker situations in which they may need assistance in ensuring the confidentiality of their foster children (such as school, doctor visits, etc.) Arden Shore staff model respect for confidentiality and expect the same from foster parents.

18(3). The responsibility to advocate for children in the foster parent's care.

In order to advocate for the children in their care foster parents are encouraged to participate in the ACR, court hearings, community support groups and meetings, and foster care network. Arden Shore considers all foster parents to be vital members of the case management team and a highly important component of the agency's approach to ensuring that the safety, health, and well-being of each child is addressed. Foster parents are also encouraged to attend trainings and recognize child welfare issues that may impact the child/children in their care. The caseworker and foster parent will continue to evaluate their need for information

and training, and seek out how these needs can be met. It is important that foster parents are actively involved in all aspects of their foster child's life, including psychiatric appointments, school, and other ordinary appointments. Foster parents are expected to attend educational advocate training so that they may be prepared to fully advocate for their foster children at school, especially those who are involved in special education services. In addition, the agency provides information about online educational advocacy trainings for foster parents who are caring for children with specific learning disabilities or other IEP qualifiers. Foster parents should take the initiative to learn all there is to know about upcoming court hearings and administrative case reviews. Trainings on understanding the court system are made available to the foster parents by Arden Shore. The caseworkers routinely prepare their foster parents for what to expect in upcoming court hearing and case reviews. As a member of the child welfare team, foster parents must take their role as caretaker for their children seriously and advocate to all appropriate bodies for their foster children. Foster Parents are also informed of the appeal process through Foster Pride Training and their caseworkers. They are offered assistance with an appeal if they are in the process of appealing any decision. In addition, the DCFS Advocacy Office phone number is provided on the Foster Parent Times newsletter along with a description of this office's role in the appeals process.

19(4). The responsibility to treat children in the foster parent's care and the children's family with dignity, respect, and consideration.

Foster parents recognize the need to treat children and their families with respect, dignity and consideration. They are encouraged to treat children and families as they wish to be treated. This is most often stressed in discussions around confidentiality. This is an important issue and will continue to be stressed in all discussions around the children and trainings. Along with confidentiality, foster parents are encouraged to understand sensitive issues for children and their families; workers are trained to remind foster parents when a sensitive time or issue may be arising in a child's life. Children's needs in regard to cultural practices and language are addressed with foster parents at the time of placement. This is emphasized especially when the child and/or biological family is of a different culture from the foster family. The bilingual foster care specialist provides resources to the foster family to help them understand the child's cultural/language needs. The foster care specialist discusses these issues with the children in the home to assure that their cultural needs are being met with dignity and respect. All individuals living in the foster family should command the same respect and consideration, whether they are foster children or biological children. It is important that foster children and their families are afforded the same courtesy that all members of the professional team receive. Arden Shore caseworkers discuss with their unlicensed and licensed caregivers the importance of preserving a positive attitude about the child's family. This issue is further discussed in PRIDE training, as well as the importance of confidentiality. Caseworkers emphasize to

foster parents that it is important to refrain from speaking negatively about a child or child's family. This too is addressed in Foster Pride Training.

20(5). The responsibility to recognize the foster parent's own individual and familial strengths and limitation 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.

Arden Shore is a relative/traditional foster care provider. Workers discuss the family's ability to continue to provide, services, along with the child's progress in placement at least monthly. If relative foster parents are aware of other family members at risk for having children entering placement, workers will discuss their ability to provide foster care services to other children.

Children are usually placed in the relative foster family's home prior to Arden Shore's involvement with the family. The exception to this would be when a family already open to Arden Shore as an Intact family case requires foster placement or if there is a need to replace the child due to a placement disruption. In this instance, Arden Shore would help to find relative or traditional placement for the children, if this was appropriate.

The suitability of placement is gauged by the Foster Care Supervisor and Licensing worker with input from the caseworker and foster family on an ongoing basis with discussions designed to assess the appropriateness of the placement occurring at least once a month. Caseworker presence in the foster home during in-person visits aid to identify a risk of placement disruption – both early on upon placement, as well as on an on-going basis. Arden Shore's workers also ask the foster parents to identify strengths they see in themselves and their family. As a result of these discussions, the caseworker develops an understanding of the foster families strengths and needs. The caseworker uses this information to help the foster parent identify supports that may be beneficial in providing care for their foster child(ren). The caseworker discusses the viability of continued placement with the foster family and the appropriateness of the family taking additional children into care. Additionally, the caseworker provides necessary background history that assists the foster family in understanding the needs of the children in their care and children referred for placement. In addition, training is made available to the foster family to aid them in learning alternative techniques for caring for special needs children. Caseworkers solicit feedback from foster parents on what additional support is needed to best care for the child (ren) in their care. The foster family is made aware of the support the caseworker offers as well as the availability of other support services that can strengthen the family's ability to care for the child. Types of support that can be provided are: respite, counseling, additional training, placement stabilization services, System of Care services (SOC), Child & Adolescent

Behavioral Services (CABS); psychiatrist, psychological testing, medication management services and tutoring.

21(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.

Arden Shore believes in the proverb, “It takes a village to raise a child”. To this end, Arden Shore offers foster parents a quarterly newsletter that contains information regarding online support services for foster parents, foster parent associations, as well as ways to engage with other foster parents within Arden Shore. In addition, the agency is in the process of facilitating a Foster Parent Support Group, the idea for which germinated through the process of writing this plan. The agency has at least two foster parents willing to host the group and is currently composing a list of interested foster parents. It is the hope of the agency that this support group will increase the size of each foster parents’ “village” to increase their strengths, mitigate any areas of concern, and encourage more consistent and productive collaboration within the foster parent sector.

Foster Parents are notified by workers through mailings and sometimes reminder phone calls, of upcoming events. Foster Parents are also notified of any formal trainings both nationally and statewide, which can enhance their skills and allow them the opportunity to network with any other foster parents. As many of the relative foster parents involved with Arden Shore are grandparents, these foster parents are also encouraged to participate in a local grandparent support group.

Foster parents indicated a desire to have an on-going support group that would address educational issues as well as offer each of them support. All Arden Shore foster parents are recipients of foster parent newsletters, which inform them of local goings-on of foster parents in the State. Foster parents have a strong voice to advocate for all foster parents and the children they serve. Foster Parents are encouraged to have affiliation with both state and national Foster Parent Associations.

22(7). The responsibility to assess the foster parent’s ongoing individual training needs and take action to meet those needs.

The caseworker, licensing worker and the foster parent will assess the needs of the home and the training necessary to assist with the best provision of services. This will be an ongoing process. We have continued to use a mutual assessment tool so that training needs can be identified between caseworker and foster parents. These will be completed during visits to the foster home. Foster parents will identify general training needs, as well as, any training specific to the children placed with

them at the time the assessment is completed. The caseworker will assess training needs based on the experience level of the foster parent and needs based on the children currently placed in the home. When the worker is aware of trainings that will meet the foster parent's needs and will assist with their ability to meet the needs of the children in their care, the foster parent will be informed. The caseworker will share the needs of their foster parents with the local area network when identifying training needs for the area. Arden Shore will regularly mail out any notifications of trainings that will benefit the caretakers and eventually the children in their care. PRIDE modules are specifically geared to offer the most common training request. Foster parents are encouraged to share their wishes for training with their caseworkers on a monthly basis. The introduction of a new child to a foster family may make a training need apparent, and the caseworker may suggest a suitable training at that time to the foster family in an effort to provide support. Foster parents will also be able to offer training topics at the Foster Parent Cafes. Additionally foster parents are being offered online trainings through the foster parent newsletter. Finally, the licensing team meets with a minimum of 5 foster family homes per month and addresses training interests and needs during these in-home visits.

- 23(8). The responsibility to develop and assist in implementing strategies to prevent placement disruptions, recognizing the traumatic impact of placement disruptions on a foster child and all members of the foster family; and the responsibility to provide emotional support for the foster children and members of the foster family if preventive strategies fail and placement disruptions occur.

The foster parent will maintain ongoing communication with the child welfare team members; they will be a proactive member in notifying members of any emergencies, acting out behaviors, or any sudden changes in mood and behavior. They will cooperate with any services necessary to maintain placement and stabilize the children.

Arden Shore will use its own resources to provide in home counseling and other means to stabilize a placement. Caseworkers will continue to assist foster parents to stabilize a child in their care. They will continue to participate in services until any transition is complete and services are no longer necessary.

The foster family will remain active in the transition process unless the child presents a danger to themselves or others in the environment. As a member of the child welfare team, the foster family will be encouraged to recognize the effect placement disruptions have on the children they serve. As the foster families are supported in their eventual decisions to ask for the removal of a child from their home, foster families are expected to support their foster children in the transition from their home to a new foster home. Foster parents will be expected to accept the

assistance of their caseworker and other support services, including SASS, placement stabilization services through System of Care, therapy, and respite in the course of the transition if that is found to be suitable in that situation. Arden Shore's counseling division will provide counseling services, including in-home, if necessary, as well as other means to stabilize a placement. These counseling services are available in either English and Spanish. In the event that the placement becomes unstable, the case will be referred for a CIPP (Clinical Intervention to Placement Preservation) meeting to determine what the placement needs are for each child. At times, this may mean that a child may be recommended for a more restrictive environment.

Foster parents will be trained regarding the purpose and availability of stabilization services. This will be accomplished by the foster care staff. This will be a topic of a training offered at Arden Shore's offices, yet if foster parents cannot attend this training it will be conducted in home by their case worker and/or recruitment/licensing specialist, and possibly include the program supervisor as well.

Foster parents must recognize that a 14-day notice of decision is expected prior to moving a child at their request.

24(9). The responsibility to know the impact foster parenting has on individuals and family relationships, and the responsibility to endeavor to minimize, as much as possible, any stress that results from foster parenting.

Caseworkers work with foster parents to learn to recognize when they (the foster parents) are experiencing stress. Foster parents are offered training opportunities on stress factors identified with being a foster parent and ways to cope with that stress. Foster parent PRIDE training also contains information on the stressors of foster parenting. The foster parent is encouraged to inform the caseworker, other foster parent support, or other community supports when foster parenting is causing them stress. Involvement in the agency's foster parent support group will allow them the opportunity to receive support from other members, who may have experienced the same stressful events in their lives. Training and discussions with their caseworker will help the foster parent recognize the impact foster parenting can have on their family. Foster parents are encouraged to utilize the support services that are available to them as well as ongoing training to aid them in both recognizing and minimizing stressors.

Open and honest communication with their caseworker, as both are part of the child welfare team, is necessary, so they can work together to determine the causes of stress and solutions to handle it. Some solutions employed are mentoring, counseling, extra visits and staffings to help the foster parents strategize ways to reduce/minimize stress. When needed, experienced foster parents are open to

providing mentoring, either by telephone or in person, to new foster parents. Foster parents are encouraged to build a support network. Arden Shore believes that this can assist new foster parents during stressful situations. During the placement process, caseworkers inform foster parents about the availability of respite services to assist them in stressful situations and explain how the caseworker and foster parent will work together to access respite services if this becomes necessary. The process to request respite is for the foster parent to inform the case worker of the dates respite is needed. The caseworker then fills out a Respite Request form which is utilized by the licensing team to identify the best respite home for the children in question for the dates specified. The licensing worker then facilitates the respite placement and provides contact information for the respite family and foster parent to the case worker. The caseworker then provides the information to all parties, helping to make the respite experience smooth for the foster family, the children, and the respite family. In addition, foster parents are allowed to place a voluntary hold on their home if they wish to have a period of time with no new children placed in their care. After a placement moves from a foster home, the licensing team talks with the foster parent to assess their possible issues of grief, loss, and needed support and attempt to identify resources to help address any areas of concern. The foster family and licensing team work together to determine if a hold is warranted or if the family need time before accepting a new placement. The agency has an in-house counseling department that our foster parents can utilize to help process stress and grief related to foster parenting.

25(10). The responsibility to know the rewards and benefits to children, parents, families and society that come from foster parenting and to promote the foster parenting experience in a positive way.

Foster parents are introduced to the responsibility to present fostering and child welfare in a positive light during their PRIDE pre-service class training. This training competency is woven in and reinforced during several later sessions. During the foster home licensing process, potential foster parents are taught one-on-one about the importance of promoting foster parenting in a positive way.

Although confidentiality is always observed, foster parents are taught that they have an opportunity to enlighten their family, friends and community about the tremendous personal and community rewards of foster parenting. The foster care staff and the licensing specialist continue to coach foster parents on presenting the positives of foster care and the child welfare system throughout their fostering careers. Foster parents are encouraged to take advantage of two trainings that include this important aspect of foster parenting:

- *Working as a Professional Team Member*
- *Managing the Foster Care Experience*

Arden Shore recognizes that our foster parents have the opportunity to be our

greatest recruiters. These experienced, professional caregivers are able to explain first-hand the challenging, but rewarding, experience of foster parenting, and encourage other members of their community to become licensed caregivers too. Arden Shore utilizes experienced foster parents to “co-recruit” at fair booths, community events, one-on-one and at agency events. These foster parents are able to speak about the rewards, benefits and joy of being foster parents. They are truly our greatest spokespeople.

Foster parents are encouraged to recruit other families and refer them to Arden Shore. There is a recruitment incentive program for foster parents. If a current foster parent refers another family to Arden Shore and that family becomes a licensed foster home, the referring foster parent receives a \$500 check. The foster family needs to be in good standing and have a placement within one year.

Foster parents are encouraged to share their experience with the child welfare team, foster parent groups, and other members of the child welfare community.

Foster parents are encouraged to form relationships with other foster parents in support groups. Through training, foster parents are given an opportunity to learn more about foster parenting and share their experiences with other foster parents. As foster parents are more exposed to other foster families, they are given an opportunity to share experiences and promote foster parenting.

Given the immense increase of the power of social media, Arden Shore has maintained a Facebook page, partly for the benefit of foster parent recruitment, but also to share news, events, training opportunities, resources, and also to advertise the many contributions of foster parents. It is our hope that our foster parents will access our website and Facebook page, and we will encourage them to contribute articles, valuable links, etc. so that they can further promote the foster parenting experience in a positive way.

The licensing team meets with our foster parents regularly at in-home visits to determine needs, request suggestions, and offer solutions. On a monthly basis, the licensing team meets with the supervisor to discuss the totality of these home visits and to report any and all concerns, questions, and suggestions. These are then communicated by the Licensing Supervisor to the Arden Shore Management Team., which meets on a bi-weekly basis. This is intended to give our foster parents a voice in the administrative process and to affect policy change when necessary.

26(11). The responsibility to know the roles, rights, and responsibilities of foster parents, other professionals in the child welfare system, the foster child, and the foster child’s own family.

The foster parent is trained by the caseworker on a regular basis to assist in understanding the child welfare system, however many times veteran foster parents

help train new caseworkers. Caseworkers also use a publication from DCFS entitled "Substitute Care and Your Child", as an additional guide to help the foster parents understand their roles and responsibilities and others on the professional team. Arden Shore caseworkers will also rely on the strengths in other foster parents to train additional foster parents. Training includes their role in Administrative Case Reviews (ACRs) and court hearings. The client service plan is discussed with the foster parent prior to the ACR with special emphasis on their part of the plan. It is especially important that foster parents understand the rights and responsibilities of the foster children in their care and the foster child's own family. The worker explains the roles, rights and responsibilities of all members of the team. This information can be supported through service planning and participation in administrative case reviews. In addition to participating in these meetings, foster parents learn more of their role, rights and responsibilities by participating in Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings, meetings with the therapist/psychiatrist, being involved in medication management when applicable; being involved in hospital meetings when applicable and participating in the Individual and Family Service Plan (IFSP). Involvement in regular training will allow them the opportunity to understand roles, rights, and responsibilities. Regular clarification by all members will allow for careful communication around expectations and responsibilities.

Foster parents are also encouraged to communicate their thoughts, suggestions, ideas, concerns, issues, etc. with their caseworker, supervisor, and director of the program. Foster parents have contacted as far as our President & CEO at times, after going through the appropriate chain of command. At Arden Shore, the chain of command is: caseworker – supervisor – director – President & CEO. Our Director of Quality Improvement also is an additional avenue for foster parents to communicate with, and is involved in grievances/conflict resolution. Foster parents have been asked to attend agency events and speak on behalf of the work that they do in concert with our agency, as agency ambassadors – but more importantly, as a voice for the primary caregivers of the children that we serve. Foster parents are recognized by our management team as well as Board of Directors.

Through training, foster parents are afforded an opportunity to further explore their role and the roles of each professional in the child welfare team. As foster parents become more involved in the fostering process, through attending ACRs and court hearings as well as family meetings, they are given hands on insights into the roles each person plays in the life of the children and families we serve. In addition, caseworkers encourage the foster parents to ask questions about what each member's role is in the child welfare system. Foster parents are prepared for each court hearing, case review, and family meeting, so they typically know what to expect from each member of the team.

- 27(12). The responsibility to know and as necessary, fulfill the foster parent's responsibility to serve as a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, and the responsibility to know the child welfare agency's policy regarding allegations that foster parents have committed child abuse or neglect and applicable administrative rule and procedures governing investigations of those allegations.

In pre-service training the foster parent is taught that they are mandated by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect and are expected to cooperate with the requirements of mandated reporting. All foster parents are required to sign a CANTS 22B form which is written acknowledgement of their mandated reporter responsibilities. When they sign this form the responsibilities and expectations are explained to them. Relative foster parents who have not participated in pre-service training receive individual training from their foster care specialist on this important responsibility of their position. Foster parents must be examples in the community to foster the reporting of any mistreatment to any child and insist that there is a response to these issues. Foster parents are responsible for maintaining a stable, and nurturing living arrangement for all children they serve. As part of this responsibility, foster parents are expected to report any suspicion or evidence of abuse and/or neglect of any of their foster children. Further, foster parents are encouraged to serve as advocates for all children, and in this respect foster parents are asked to report any allegation of abuse to DCFS immediately. Arden Shore caseworkers also discuss with foster parents the importance of reporting abuse and neglect allegations and also the consequences and procedures of an investigation if a child in their home is alleged to be abused and/or neglected.

- 28(13). The responsibility to know and receive training regarding the purpose of administrative case reviews, client service plans, and court processes, as well as any filing or time requirements associated with those proceedings; and the responsibility to actively participate in the foster parents designated role in these proceedings.

Through Pride training, on-going group training, and individual training from their caseworker, foster parents are trained to understand the importance of their involvement in ACRs, client service plans and court hearings. Prior to each case review, caseworkers obtain foster parents input regarding the child's portions of the service plan. Any changes in the case plan or changes in the child's placement are discussed with the foster parents and their input is sought. Foster parents are notified of any upcoming meeting or court date ahead of time by the caseworker and are encouraged to attend. If the foster parent cannot attend any meeting or

hearing, the foster parent and caseworker both have the responsibility to make contact and communicate the outcome, developments, and issues pertaining to the meeting/hearing.

29(14). The responsibility to know the child welfare agency's appeal procedures for foster parents and the rights of foster parents under the procedure.

Appeal procedures and rights are explained at the beginning of the foster parent and agency relationship, and again when any situation arises that it is deemed necessary. The entire appeal process is explained in the Foster Parent Handbook outlined in DCFS Rule 337. This information is also covered in Pride Training. Families who have not participated in Pride training are given the information by their foster care specialist and encouraged to ask any questions for clarification. Foster parents can be assisted in the appeal process by the caseworker, the agency supervisor, and any other identified advocates of their choosing. Arden Shore informs foster parents of their rights under the appeal procedure.

Foster Parents can also communicate, at any time, with their caseworker and/or supervisor, an appeal regarding their case details, service plan tasks, visitation, etc. They may request a conversation over the phone or in-person at the agency or a location of their choosing, at a mutually agreed upon date/time. If foster parents continue to have issue with any part of their case with Arden Shore, they are free to request the Director of Program Operations. This Director will communicate and be responsive to our foster parents. The Director will listen to concerns/issues brought forth by our foster parents and provide resolution in the immediate, if at all possible. In person meetings to hold a discussion with all agency members of the team are offered. If this does not bring resolution to the issues/concerns, foster parents are also free to contact our Director of Quality Improvement, and up to our President & CEO.

30(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.

Foster parents are responsible for keeping records that are accurate, current, and confidential regarding the child's history. Caseworkers will provide blank documents that can assist with the record keeping process. The licensing worker and caseworkers encourage foster parents to keep a file for each child of important documents (ie: birth certificate, medical information etc.). These records are important and contain child's progress, history, school and medical information.

Foster Pride Training offers assistance with record maintenance and the importance of accurately maintaining current data. Foster parents are provided with written documentation of regulations and expectations for keeping relevant and up to date records.

As more knowledge is obtained about the child's history, the foster parent is given the relevant information about the child's history. Involvement in family meetings, ACRs, and court hearings also afford foster parents different perspectives and firsthand information about each foster child's history and their progress. Caseworkers check regularly with foster parents and assist with how to document important information. They also instruct foster parents on exactly what records to keep and will suggest ways to organize and keep the documents.

31(16). The responsibility to share information, through the child welfare team, with the subsequent caregiver (whether the child's parent or another substitute caregiver) regarding the child's adjustments in the foster parent's home.

As stated above caseworkers, work with foster parents in keeping appropriate records. Training is provided on the importance of record keeping and sharing of pertinent information. Foster parents are the greatest source of current and relevant information on the children in their care.

Their input and information is necessary in assisting with the service provision and planning for the child. The foster parent shares information with any and all members of the child welfare team. They have pertinent information on behaviors, concerns and daily living issues. They are the most able to identify milestones and should keep records of pertinent information to pass on for the child's future and social history. Foster parents have a responsibility to share their insights into the foster child's adjustment into their home with the parents and other members of the child welfare team. Each foster parent should be recognized for the great wealth of information they can provide about the child's ability to tolerate structure; the child's school performance and ability to complete homework; the child's response to discipline; what disciplinary techniques are best suited for the child in their care; and what the child reports to them about the separation from their parents. All of these insights and observations are valuable in making decisions about the child and the foster parent is the primary source that the child welfare team relies upon. This information is especially important when it is given in an attempt to create a smooth transition for a child from the foster home into another home, whether it is another foster home or back to their parent's home.

The foster parents are invited to the Child and Family Team meetings and are very helpful to the team when they are able to provide information regarding the child(ren) in their care. Again, the foster parents are the primary source of information regarding the child (ren) and play an integral part of this team.

Arden Shore is in the process of having all staff and foster parents trained in the creation and maintenance of Life Books. Life Books are intended to help document the foster child's life before, during, and after foster care. These books help subsequent caretakers to share memories with the child and to create a sense of cohesion and continuity for the child. The agency is working on distributing these Lifebooks to all foster parents and training caseworkers on assisting families in putting these together. Arden Shore is very excited about implementing this important component to our foster care program.

- 32(17). The responsibilities to provide care and services that are respective of and responsive to the child's cultural needs and are supportive of the relationship between the child and his or her own family, the responsibility to recognize the increased importance of maintaining a child's cultural identity when the race or culture of the foster family differs from that of the foster child, and the responsibility to take action to address these issues.

Arden Shore is committed through the Foster Care Program and Behavioral Health and Support Services to provide language appropriate and culturally sensitive services to all children, especially Spanish-speaking children and families.

The role of the foster parent is to encourage and support a child's cultural identity and diversity. This begins by familiarizing themselves with the culture of the child and providing some of the basics, allowing children to use the language of their choice (encouraging children to translate), cooking food they are accustomed to eating, and watching programs on television that they typically watched in their family and home (culturally appropriate). Foster parents are expected to familiarize themselves with cultural competency if they accept a child from another culture. Training is made available to all foster parents in learning to maintain the cultural identity of children not of their same culture. Through the Virtual Training Center, foster parents can take *Promoting Children's Personal and Cultural Identity*. This excellent training is also available in a classroom setting. Arden Shore also provides linkage to community supports, area trainings, other foster parents, and community resources.

Cultural competency is taught one-on-one by a mentor, foster parent or staff member of that culture. In our service area this is especially needed for African-American and Latino children. Arden Shore offers foster parents the opportunity to link with minority foster parents to provide firsthand cultural information about the care and support of minority children. The Licensing Specialist assists on this process of selecting foster parent mentors. Of course cultural competency is not limited to just race/ethnicity, as such all other cultural identity factors will be addressed and training resources/opportunities made available.

The Arden Shore foster care program employs a well-rounded, multi-cultural staff. Our Director of Program Operations and four of our nine foster care caseworkers are Latino/Spanish-speaking (bilingual/bicultural). We also are excited to announce that Arden Shore is now employing a Latino/Spanish-speaking licensing worker. This will aid Arden Shore in working with Latino foster parents as well as with helping foster parents caring for Latino children better learn about their culture. Whenever safe and possible, the child's biological family members are employed in assisting the foster family preserve the child's cultural identity. This includes offering history on the child's likes, dislikes, cultural identity and upbringing, as well as experiences prior to placement.

Arden Shore foster parents are fortunate to live near Chicago where a wealth of cultural opportunities are available. Foster parents are encouraged to take advantage of museums, galleries, restaurants, libraries, neighborhood activities and celebrations. Our children and youth in care can all benefit from these experiences, so they are highly encouraged to take advantage of all of the opportunities available.

Additional Components

Public Notification

This requirement is met in cooperation with the DCFS Office of Foster Parent Support Services.

Grievance Process

Arden Shore Child and Family Services has a policy and procedure in place for foster parents to participate in a grievance process. This policy/procedure includes foster parents grieving alleged violations of the Foster Parent Law. During the licensing process and yearly after that, all foster parents are given the agency's policy and procedure and grievance form. The grievance procedure is mailed to the foster parents along with the update of the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan, both to assure their continued awareness of the grievance process as well as to obtain any suggestions for changes to this process.

If the issue can not be resolved with the assistance of the Foster Care Supervisor, the foster parent will be asked if they want to file a grievance. They will then complete the grievance form which is submitted to the Foster Care Supervisor who will forward it to the Director of Program Operations. The Director of Program Operations conducts an investigation which may include face-to-face interviews, interviews with other staff and a file review. The foster parent then receives a written response within 7 days and is offered the opportunity to meet with the Director of Program Operations. If this response is not satisfactory, the foster parent has the right to meet with the President/CEO. Any alleged grievance filed by a foster parent is discussed with Arden Shore's Agency Performance Team monitor. The foster parents are informed of the availability of the grievance procedure and their right to exercise the procedure at any time. This policy follows DCFS, Medicaid and COA guidelines.

Arden Shore Child & Family Services

2017 Training Schedule

The Licensing Specialist provides foster parents with a printed list of DCFS Digital PRIDE trainings available on the Virtual Training Center at every monitoring home visit. The training needs of the foster parent(s) are discussed and suggestions are made to meet those needs. All of these trainings are also open to case management staff to expand their knowledge on these topics and to work in tandem with foster parents.

Arden Shore is offering to host the following DCFS sponsored trainings in 2017:

- *“Foster Parent / Adopt PRIDE” (27 hours)*
- *“Educational Advocacy” (6 hours)*
- *“Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma” (15 hours)*
- *“The Sexual development of Children and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse” (9 hours)*
- *“Transcultural Parenting” (9 hours)*

Arden Shore Foster Parent-to Foster Parent Trainings in 2017:

- *“Working with Your CASA” – Kathy Zumwalt, former CASA trainer*
- *“Open Communication” – Melissa Kinast, specialized foster parent*
- *“Trauma-Informed Parenting” – Jill Sepulveda, specialized foster parent*
- *“Working With Natural Parents” – Jennifer Marsh, Foster Parent of the Year*

FOSTER PARENT LAW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN MEETING 2017

SIGN-IN SHEET

Michael B. Johnson

Joanna DeBono

Jeanie Perkins

Synthia Taylor

Cynthia Taylor

Priscilla Williams

Vonnie Williams

Benjamin Bickel

Bryan Bickel

Suzanne R. Bickel

Elizabeth Bickel

~~Suzanne R. Bickel~~

Mark Marcia

Amy Roth

Amy Roth

Foster Parent Approval of Arden Shore's 2017 Plan

As a foster parent with Arden Shore Child and Family Services, I have received a copy of the agency's proposed Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan for 2017.

My signature reflects my approval/endorsement of the plan that has been submitted for 2017.

Cheryl Matky
Foster Parent Signature

11-11-2016
Date

Foster Parent Signature

Date

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Diana Kynard

Foster Parent Signature

11/10/16

Date

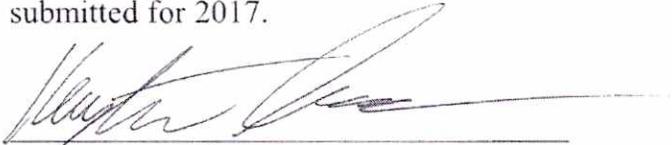
Foster Parent Signature

Date

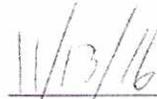
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Foster Parent Signature



Date

Foster Parent Signature

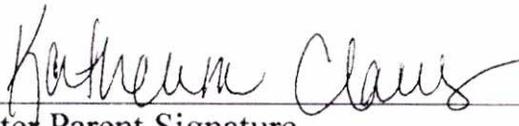
Date

Kaytlyn Corbett-Inselberger

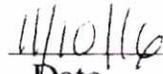
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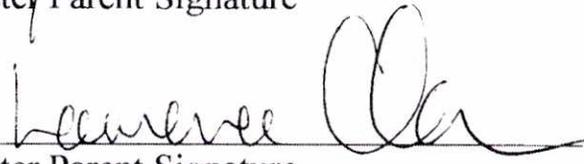
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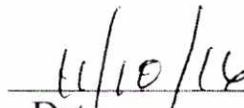
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Date



Foster Parent Signature



Date

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Lilia Mendez
Foster Parent Signature

11/11/2016
Date

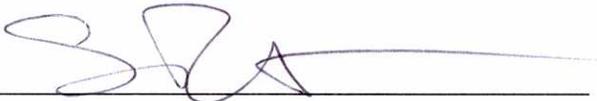
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Foster Parent Signature

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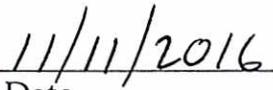
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Foster Parent Signature



Date

Foster Parent Signature

Date

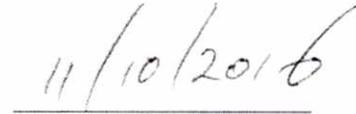
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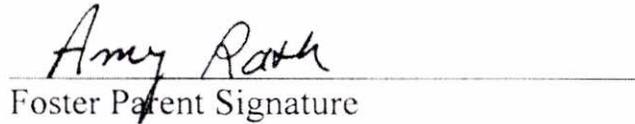
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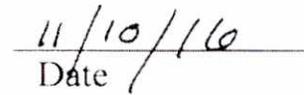
Foster Parent Signature



Date



Foster Parent Signature



Date

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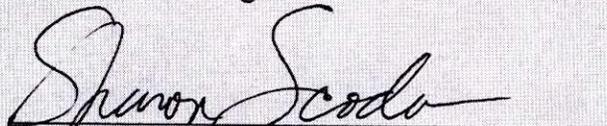
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Foster Parent Signature

NOVEMBER 10, 2016
Date



Foster Parent Signature

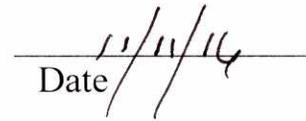
November 10, 2016
Date

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Foster Parent Signature


Date

Foster Parent Signature

Date

ARDEN SHORE

Child and Family Services

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

Department: Foster Care/Program Operations/Quality Improvement

Procedure Title: Foster Parent Grievances

Purpose: To provide a mechanism for Foster Parents to make and resolve complaints or disputes about services or conditions at Arden Shore. The grievance process is also to be used by foster parents only for grieving alleged violations of the Foster Parent Law that are not covered by an already existing grievance or appeal process. E.g. it cannot be used to address issues that are covered by the service appeal process, the appeal process for indicated cases of child abuse/neglect, the process for appealing licensing investigation findings or license revocations, etc.

Procedure:

- All Foster Parents have the right to complete a grievance form at any time.
- If a Foster Parent makes a complaint, it is first addressed by the Foster Care Supervisor with the involved staff member and the foster parent in an attempt to resolve the issue by discussion/negotiation.
- If a Foster Parent makes a complaint that cannot be resolved by discussion/negotiation between the foster parent and the personnel of the specific program, the Foster Parent Grievance Form is completed. Grievance forms are readily available in all of the agency's facilities. In addition, the Foster Parent can also contact the Director of Quality Improvement to receive a Foster Parent Grievance Form. Personnel will assist Foster Parents in completing the form if necessary.
- The Foster Parent Grievance form is forwarded to the Foster Care Supervisor and documentation of attempts to resolve the grievance is documented on the form. If the grievance is resolved, the completed Foster Parent Grievance form is forwarded to the Director of Program Operations with a copy to the Director of Quality Improvement. The Foster Parent will receive a written response, if requested..
- If the Foster Parent's grievance can not be resolved by the specific program coordinator/supervisor, it is then forwarded to the next level of management (i.e. Division Director or the Director of Program Operations or designees).
- The Division Director, Director of Program Operations or designees initiates an investigation into the Foster Parent's grievance. Such investigation includes but is not limited to face-to-face interview with the foster parent, interview with other personnel and a review of records. Activities involved in conducting the investigation and the findings of the investigation are documented on the Foster Parent's Grievance Form and the Foster Parent receives a written response. If the grievance is resolved, a copy of the completed Foster Parent Grievance Form is forwarded to the Director of Quality Improvement.
- If the grievance is not resolved, the Foster Parent may request a face-to-face meeting with the President & CEO.
- The President & CEO will review previous attempts to resolve the grievance and make a final decision. The President & CEO may bring in other Directors as necessary. The final decision will be documented on the Foster Parent Grievance Form and the Foster Parent will receive a written response with the final decision. The completed Foster Parent Grievance Form is forwarded to the Director of Quality Improvement.
- Foster Parent grievances are resolved, if possible, within seven (7) business days.
- Foster Parent grievances are reviewed on a quarterly basis with the program of origination. In addition, the Management Team of Arden Shore is provided with aggregate data on a quarterly basis.

Special Considerations

| If a Foster Parent grievance contains allegations of abuse or neglect, a report is made as required by law. If there is a language issue, the agency will provide an interpreter through out the process who is not affiliated with the client or the program.

Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation:

This procedure is effective as of the date indicated below. This procedure is reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis by the President/CEO. The Director of the Department is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this procedure.

Approved by:

President/CEO

Effective Date

MUTUAL ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR FOSTER PARENT TRAINING NEEDS

[This tool is to be used at any time to mutually assess any foster parent training needs, especially prior to placement of children, but also as needs are identified. Foster parents are to identify general training needs but also child-specific training needs. Case managers are also to assess for any general foster parent training needs based on their experience level and child-specific placement.]

General training needs (to be completed by Foster Parent):

Current placement specific training needs (to be completed by Foster Parent):

General training needs (to be completed by Case Manager):

Current placement specific training needs (to be completed by Case Manager):

Any recommendations from other key stake holders such as court and/or DCFS personnel, therapists, etc. (if any):

Foster Parent signature(s) and date

Case Manager signature and date

THE FOSTER PARENT TIMES

Welcome to Our Very First Edition

As you are all too aware, there are many people involved in the lives of each and every foster child. From attorneys to ACR reviewers, case managers to CASA volunteers, school personnel and sometimes therapists of a seemingly endless variety-developmental, psychological, occupational, and on and on. Everyone involved in each foster child's life is working toward the best interest of the child with regards to safety and well-being and permanency. But none are doing so on the type of giving-hugs-and-consistency, chasing-away-monsters-under-the-bed and wiping-runny-noses-and-tears-off-of-eyelashes, cheering-for-each-positive-report-card-and-each-emotional-breakthrough, facing-the-possibility-of-loss-and-the-

unexpected-blessings-of-gain, being-the-person-who-carries-their-heart-in-your-heart, kind-of daily-basis way like our FOSTER PARENTS.

We love you guys. We really do.

And we value your contribution to the team and your dedication and perseverance and your courage and your ability to love more and give more and stay the course and not give up. Foster parenting is not easy and we know that. We know that no case

ever goes as quickly as you imagined or as smoothly. We know that you are now part of a club that most people don't understand and that probably sometimes you don't understand the rules of membership and how you are going to keep loving and possibly losing, saying goodbye and saying hello, providing one more document or packing one more overnight bag. It is not always fun and it is hardly ever easy. But in the end, it is worth it a million times over and the blessings are there all along : in your foster child's smile and laugh, in their ability to attach to you and their ability to learn how to love and be a family from you, in their first "I love you" and when they finally go home to their family-stronger and happier-or they become a permanent part of your family. For all that you do, we celebrate you!!! This newsletter is our way of saying **THANK YOU** for all that you do!!!

IF YOU WANT TO GO FAST, GO ALONE. IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER.

-AFRICAN PROVERB

SUPPORT GROUP

In meeting with several foster parents over the past month while working on our Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan, it has come to our attention that many foster parents are seeking additional

support and a more personal connection with other foster parents. To that end, we would like to start a Foster Parent Support Group for Arden Shore Foster Parents.

INITIAL INFORMATION

We would ideally like this group to be foster parent-lead so that everyone will feel comfortable to be candid with one another. We have already spoken with one foster parent who is willing to lead and

potentially host at her home. If you would be interested in either of these roles, please feel free to volunteer when you complete the Next Step.

NEXT STEPS

We would like to obtain a

list of interested foster parents and their contact information before announcing the date and location of the first support group meeting. If you are interested, please email Emily Odiase, Licensing Supervisor, at ecodiase@ardenshore.com or call Emily at 847-623-1730 x. 124.



STORIES OF FOSTERING AND ADOPTION

SIMONE BILES-OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST; FOSTER CHILD



SIMONE BILES' FATHER: ADOPTION 'A WONDERFUL THING'

Ron Biles sat quietly as he watched his daughter Simone fulfill the first part of her golden Olympic destiny, joining in with an occasional chant of "U-S-A" but for the most part watching contentedly with fatherly pride.

And as Simone and her victorious teammates charged around the venue Tuesday to where the American families sat, the world's finest gymnast looked into the stands and blew kisses.

"Mom!", she yelled. "Dad!"

Ron is not only Simone's maternal grandfather but also her father – legally, practically and emotionally. He and his wife Nellie adopted Simone and her sister Adria when Simone was six, after their biological mother, Shanon Biles, experienced drug and alcohol issues and the children went through various foster homes.

With Simone's team event victory likely to precede a swath of additional gold medals in the individual competition, the 19-year-old is on a fast track to becoming one of America's best known and most popular athletes. On Wednesday, she sent out a social media message to celebrate that reached 1 million Instagram followers. More are surely on the way. Ron is a quiet man and he and his wife remained that way even after NBC commentator Al Trautwig sparked controversy by referring to

them on air as Simone's grandfather and his wife, then getting into a social media dispute with a commenter and claiming they were "NOT her real parents." Trautwig later apologized.

Ron said he hopes that the attention from the brouhaha will have a positive effect on American society and encourage prospective parents to consider adopting or fostering a child. Child welfare group Children's Rights estimated that on any given day there are around 415,000 children in foster care in the United States.

"It is a wonderful thing," he told USA TODAY Sports, when asked what advice he would have for people considering fostering or adoption. "It gives you the opportunity to enrich the life of yourself and the child, and enrich everyone who is involved in your life.

"Raising kids is just a wonderful thing. You get to see them grow and be a part of that and I can't think of anything more satisfying. It is an important issue and I could only say good things about it."

According to Dr. Suan Stapatyanon, who runs the Our Small World foster agency in Orange, Calif., the emergence of a high-profile adopted athlete such as Biles could provide a boost to a stretched system.

"There is always a need for good people to help these kids," Stapatyanon said in a telephone interview. "There is always a stigma attached to foster care or kids who come through the system

and a positive role model like this can raise understanding and awareness greatly." Simone rounded out the team competition with a spectacular floor performance and is an overwhelming favorite in the individual all-around. She was too young to compete in London in 2012 but set her sights on Rio and won 10 gold medals at the three world championships since.

"It was after London that she decided she wanted to be in the next one," Ron Biles said. "How proud am I? That is a good question. I am still getting used to it. Yes, I am pretty darn proud. It is an interesting time. It has been a wonderful journey.

"We have had so much satisfaction from all of our kids. We love family and everything involved with it. We share all the special moments together and this is a pretty special one." While enjoying the Athletes Village and spending time and posing for photos with other competitors such as Michael Phelps and members of the USA men's basketball team, Biles has still found time to stay in regular contact with her parents via FaceTime and sent her Dad a happy birthday message.

-Martin Rogers , USA TODAY Sports
August 10, 2016

*Simone Biles won 4 Gold Medals in Rio!!

Training Opportunities and Online Resources

CHILD WELFARE INFORMATION GATEWAY-WWW.CHILDWELFARE.GOV

This site offers Foster Parent Inservice Training with resources that address curricula and materials offering inservice training to foster families on topics such as behavior management, sibling issues, independent living, and more. Resources include: ADHD: A Guide for Families, Early Identification of Developmental Disabilities: Practical Tools for Foster and Adoptive Parents, Foster Parent Training: Managing Child Behavior Problems, Foster Parent Training: Problem-Solving Strategies, Parenting a Child Who Has Been Sexually Abused: A Training Program for Foster Caregivers and Adopters, etc.

FOSTER CARE & ADOPTIVE COMMUNITY TRAINING-WWW.FOSTERPARENTS.COM

This site offers training courses on topics such as Life Books, First Aid and CPR, Alcohol and Drug Related Issues, Behavioral Issues, trainings on specific disorders such as ADHD, Autism, Panic Disorder, etc., as well as Educational and School Issues and General Issues including Child Developmental Stages. In addition, the site offers Interactive Courses in which the trainee can communicate directly with the course instructor online. All of these courses can be paid via credit,

“A child born to another woman calls me mom. The depth of the tragedy and the magnitude of the privilege are not lost on me.” -Jody Landers

debit card or electronic checking, starting at \$5.95 per course. After completion, contact the Licensing Department or go to VTC for a Training Credit Approval Form to be credited for these hours.

FOSTERCLUB TRAINING: WWW.FOSTERCLUB.COM

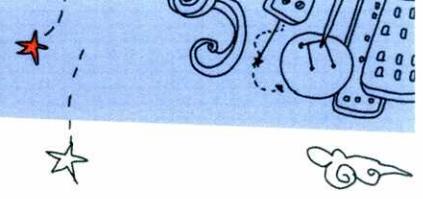
This site offers curriculum which covers issues important to foster youth, helps adults understand youth better, provides best practice information from leading child welfare experts. The courses cover peer relationships, permanence, preparation for adulthood, including family connection and well-being. The course content costs \$24.95 per year per parent for a subscription and two new courses are added monthly. Includes foster parent message board and community.

VIRTUAL TRAINING CENTER: WWW.DCFSTRAINING.ORG

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services offers training at the Virtual Training Center. You can access DCFS-approved trainings that are offered both in online formats as well as in-person. Check back regularly for new training opportunities.

LENDING LIBRARY: [HTTPS://WWW.ILLINOIS.GOV/DCFS/LOVINGHOMES/ADOPTION/DOCUMENTS/LENDINGLIBRARY.PDF](https://www.illinois.gov/DCFS/LOVINGHOMES/ADOPTION/DOCUMENTS/LENDINGLIBRARY.PDF)

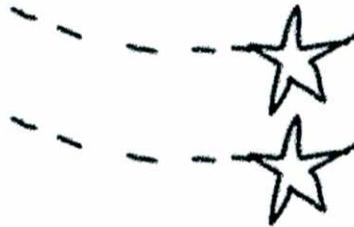
IDCFS offers multiple resources through its Lending Library. Parents are encouraged to borrow Lending Library resources from their local library and to use the Lending Library catalog as a source of approved reading and video materials for foster parent training credit, and as a list of recommended readings. Foster parents will receive 1 training credit for materials that are up to 150 pages and 2 credits for materials that are 151 pages or more. For videos, you will receive 1 training credit for anything less than 2 hours and 2 training credits for anything 2 hours or more. Foster parents must submit a completed Training Credit Approval Form to DCFS Training for each resource they read, watch or listen to in order to be credited.



Adoption Day Hooray!!

The Blanchfields

Jim and Patti Blanchfield adopted their daughter Anne on 11/3/2016. Anne joins her older sister, Nikole, in being a part of this loving and lively family. The Blanchfield are DCFS-licensed foster parents who have cared for and now adopted two relative foster children. Please join us in celebrating their happy ending and the completion of their family!



The Bernard Family

Scott Bernard and Laura Selvage adopted their grandson, Joshua, on 11/3/2016. Josh forever has a loving, supportive and happy place to call home. The Bernard's are licensed relative foster parents who have had the opportunity to care for Josh since birth. Please help us congratulate them on becoming Josh's forever family!





Important Phone Numbers

ADVOCACY

---☆ DCFS Advocacy Office for Children and Families

800-232-3798

- Help or information for foster caregivers in understanding/verifying DCFS rule, policy and procedure; obtaining services for children in foster care, adoption or subsidized guardianship homes; and understanding what can be appealed through the DCFS Service Appeal system or in filing a service appeal with DCFS, including emergency appeals. Callers should have the following information ready: Child's name, birth date, identification number, caseworker + supervisor's name and phone numbers.

APPEALS/MEDIATION

---☆ DCFS Administrative Hearings Unit

312-814-5540 M-F 8:30-5 pm

- Information about filing a service or licensing appeal; and how to file an appeal through DCFS.

BEHAVIORAL/MENTAL HEALTH + CRISIS: HELP IN AN UNEXPECTED CRISIS

---☆ Crisis and Referral Entry System Helpline

800-345-9049 24/7

- Community and outreach-based service system to stabilize children whose placements are at risk due to emotional or behavioral issues; provide assessments, 24-hour crisis intervention, Child and Family Team meeting facilitation and wraparound planning, individual and family counseling/therapy, linkage to community resources and assistance to stabilize placement.
- Call if a child's unexpected behavior threatens his or her safety or placement with your family. A crisis worker can come to your home within 60 minutes (city) or 90 minutes (rural) if you request.
- Community based agencies provide mental health Screening, Assessment, and Support Services (SASS) for children who appear to be ready to harm themselves or others. Can determine the need for inpatient treatment in a hospital setting.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH

---☆ GENERAL RESOURCES FOR ALL ILLINOIS CHILDREN

800-323-4769

- Referral to ALL Illinois programs which directly impact children, including Early Intervention programs for children 0-3 and programs related to disabilities and Women, Infants, and Children.

DENTAL CARE

---☆ GENERAL RESOURCES FOR ALL ILLINOIS CHILDREN

888-286-2447

- Help with locating routine dental care.



Important Phone Numbers Continued....

EMERGENCIES (FOR BEHAVIORAL, SEE ABOVE)

- ★ Poison Hotline: Illinois Poison Center 1-800-222-1222
- ★ Runaway/DCFS Child Location Services 866-503-0184/Toll-free, 24 hrs
 - If child runs away, make a police report. Contact your agency.

MEDICAL

- ★ MEDICAL CARD 800-228-6533
 - If you have lost the medical card or have questions, call this number.
- ★ MEDICAL CARE LAKE CNTY 847-377-8070/MCHENRY CNTY 815-334-4510
 - Call your local HealthWorks agency for a referral to a primary health care physician.

PAYMENT

- ★ PAYMENT LINE (DCFS) 800-525-0499/24 HOURS
 - Call your agency first and then contact DCFS. If licensed, your payment comes directly from your agency so please do not use this number.

Arden Shore Numbers:

Arden Shore Fax Number	847.623.1733
Arden Shore Main Number	847.623.1730
Licensing Specialist: Jane Lough	847.623.1730x135
Licensing Specialist, Spanish: Alexis Palomar	847.623.1730x127
Director of Operations: Carlos Argueta	847.623.1730x128
Foster Care Supervisor: Jennifer Woods	847.623.1730x123
Foster Care Supervisor: Margaret Vergamini	847.623.1730x133
FC/Licensing Supervisor: Emily Odiase	847.623.1730x124
Behavioral Health Supervisor: Noell Juola	847.623.1730x102

Other Important Numbers:

Daycare Information	815.987.7640
Child Abuse Hotline	800.252.2873
DCFS Medical Consent Line	800.828.2179
DCFS Training Registration	877.800.3393

Lost or Found

by Lorne Michaels Harris
Foster Focus Magazine
Volume 6 Issue 3

Just because something finds its way to the Lost and Found, doesn't mean it wants to be there. Just because something finds its way to the Lost and Found, doesn't mean that the person who lost it doesn't care for the lost item. And just because something finds its way to the Lost and Found, doesn't mean someone will ever come to claim it.

On July 4th 1962, I
there on

found myself in the Lost and Found of mankind. One version of my story reads that I was placed
purpose. The other version maintains that I was placed there by the person who stole me. I
personally believe that it was a little of both.

I am only one child, but in total there were 22 mothers. 22 individual women who wore their own
distinct "version" of what it means to be...a mother. 22 individual women who saw something
totally different from the other, each and every time they looked at me. 22 different faces that I
would either squeeze with all my might to remember in times of pain, heartbreak, or misery...
or push away with all my might to forget.

Mother #1 fulfilled her initial duty of escorting me into this life, of keeping me safe for three
weeks, of nurturing me for as long as she could. Mother #1 entrusted me to Mother #2 until
such time as she could provide me and the four older siblings she kept with the home she
so dreamed of. Mother #2 fulfilled her initial duty of caring for me as if I were her own. She
raised me for the next 11 years in an environment that was filled with love, security, and
hope for a brighter tomorrow. She intended with all her heart to return me to Mother #1
when the time was right. But where love for me grew deeper by the second...the right
time never came. She would have made better choices had she known that she
would unexpectedly depart this world, without having made any provisions for my
return to Mother #1. She would have died all over again from a broken heart, had she seen

me handed off to Mothers 3-22, courtesy of the roulette underworld otherwise known as: The State Foster Care

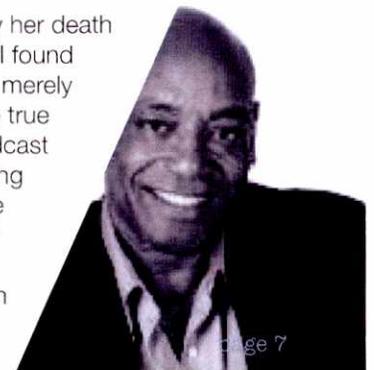
System. During my five years of bouncing through the Foster System, I became more and more lost. By year five, I was acutely
aware that the loss of my family, my home, my name, my entire world as I had known it...was nothing compared to what I could
lose, if I did not decide soon, to better deal with my existence in the Lost and Found.

To this day, I believe it was in my seeking to find the good in all 22 of my mothers that enabled me to begin to loosen the harness of
self-doubt, shame, and the hurt associated with the abuses I had experienced so far in life. The 21 mothers that were responsible
for my care after the departure of Mother #1, either taught me what a mother should always represent, or they reminded me of how
not all women are capable of the true honor of being called a mother. Each of these mothers provided me with her personal version
of what it meant to belong or what it meant to be excluded. I shall never forget the moment, after 32 years of seeking, when an old
neighbor called to inform me that yes, she did in fact know the woman who could very well be my birth mother—the original—my
very own Eve. The neighbor went on to tell me that, she needed to call the woman first. She needed to ask if it was all right to give
me the woman's telephone number. "After all," she said, "not everyone wants to be found."

After 32 years, this was the moment when it dawned on me that this entire quest, this adventure that had been such a persistent
part of my life...could very well have been in vain, IF Mother #1 did not wish to be found.

But this wouldn't be much of a story if that were true now, would it? Mother #1 had kept her memory of me alive and vibrant for all
those 32 years. Mother #1 did indeed wish to be found, and she opened the door to her past, her home, her heart,
and my original family...simply because we were once one person.

We shared over 20 wonderful years together before we were separated a second time in this life,...by her death
which, for me, came far too soon. In finding Mother #1, I found so much of what life is truly all about. I found
that family is based on LOVE...and not merely on blood. And I found that I was never truly lost, I was merely
finding my way. When I found Mother #1, I also lost some things: I lost the square root of much of the true
sadness in my life. I lost the relentless commentator that resided within me, the one who would broadcast
one tragedy after another, if I allowed him to do so. But most importantly, I lost the belief that my having
had 22 mothers was something to be ashamed of. I did not realize it then, but I do now: each of these
women played the role they were chosen to play in my life. None of the 22 ever truly had control over
whether I belonged or not...that call would always be left for me to make. It was when I broke out of
these walls of self-judgment, that I discovered my greatest truth of all: that not everyone has to remain
lost.



LOREN MICHAELS HARRIS:

A MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER
AND RECORDING ARTIST
RESIDES IN NAPERVILLE,
ILLINOIS. LOREN SHARES
HIS STORY OF HAVING
SURVIVED 5 YEARS WITHIN
THE MICHIGAN FOSTER
CARE SYSTEM AFTER HIS
ADOPTED MOTHER
UNEXPECTEDLY PASSED
AWAY WHEN LOREN WAS
ONLY 10 YEARS OLD.

BOOK CLUB

- ★ The Arden Shore Licensing Team is interested in starting a book club for Foster Parents and Case Managers who would like to read books pertaining to children and youth in today's modern world.
- ★ We will be choosing books from the DCFS Lending Library's Suggested Reading List and meeting once per quarter to discuss the book and to disperse additional resources.

If you are interested in joining Book Club, please call Emily Odiase at 847-623-1730 ex. 124 or email me at eodiase@ardenshore.com. After January 1, 2017, information regarding book club will be sent to all parties who have expressed interest.

