

# Agreement Between Foster Parents and Placement Agency

A child's foster parents and the agency supervising the child's placement in foster care share responsibility for the care of the child. They must work together to ensure that the standards and policies set forth by law and the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services are met. To accomplish this, the foster parents and the agency need to understand not only what is expected of them but also what they may expect of one another.

## The Foster Parents May Expect the Agency to:

1. Conduct an orientation session for foster parents that:

- Clearly explains the respective roles of the agency (or agencies when both a private and county foster care agency is involved), the foster parents and the child's family.
- Clearly explains the practice of permanency planning for children in out-of-home placement.
- Provides information on relevant laws and rules regarding the responsibilities of a foster parent, private foster care agencies and county foster care agencies.

2. Provide the foster parents with training opportunities.

3. Help the foster parents make an informed decision as to the suitability of their home to care for a particular child before placement:

- Provide all information about the child and the child's family that is pertinent to the foster parents ability to effectively carry out their role.
- Describe the child's behavior patterns, problems and needs.
- Describe the plan for the child, including such things as the length of time the child is likely to need a placement and the permanency goal for the child.
- Describe what may be expected of the foster parents in the child's visitation plan.
- Inform the foster parent that their decision not to take a particular child will not jeopardize either the continuance of their license or the consideration of their home for other children.
- Inform the foster parents of their role in supporting reunification efforts.

4. Include the foster parents in the development and implementation of the Out-Of-Home Placement Plan. Provide the foster parents with a copy of the plan.

5. Help the foster parents address everyday needs of growth and development. Provide services to assist the foster parents with the child's significant needs.

6. Establish a plan for regular support visits by the social worker to help the foster parents address any problems they may be experiencing in caring for the foster child.

7. Explain the importance of visitation in maintaining the child's bond with the child's parents and siblings and how the foster parents' mentoring and support of visitation can aid the permanency plan.

8. Establish a visitation plan for the child and the child's parents and siblings that takes the foster parents' life style and plans into consideration. The plan clearly sets out the schedule of visits so the foster parents can plan accordingly. The visitation plan is reviewed periodically.

9. Help the foster parents understand how the visitation plan will affect the foster child and the foster family. Help them resolve any problems created by the visits.

10. Inform the foster parents of the agency's established rate scale and provide payment for board, clothing and personal allowance.

11. Assess every child entering foster placement for a difficulty of care (DOC) payment. The agency will inform the foster parents of the DOC rating. If they disagree with the DOC rating established by the agency, the foster parents may seek a fair hearing review of the DOC assessment by the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

12. Ensure that every child has a physical examination within 12 months prior to or 30 days after placement and at least annually thereafter.

13. Provide for the child's medical and dental needs with clear instructions about what is expected of the foster parents, including billing arrangements, keeping records up to date and what to do in an emergency.

14. Provide the foster parents with the child's medical history that includes information on childhood diseases, immunizations, significant illnesses, surgery, allergic reactions and any other particular medical or dental needs the child may have.

15. Support a child's placement in the foster home. This includes assessing concerns and problems for additional strategies and support services to resolve issues which would lead to a request for removal of the child from the home. When all resources have been exhausted, the agency will remove the child from the home within 45 days.

16. Guide the foster parents in preparing the child to leave their home and help the foster family understand and deal with the effect of the child's leaving.

17. Provide an opportunity for the foster parents to discuss and deal with their feelings about the placement including how it will affect whether they choose to be foster parents to another child.

18. Provide ongoing evaluation of the foster home with self-evaluation by the foster parents, during and after the placement.

19. Provide the foster parents with written and verbal opportunities to evaluate agency practices.

20. Describe the agency's policies regarding insurance coverage and liability insurance coverage. Plan. The foster parents must know the whereabouts of the foster child in their care.

- Make every effort to increase their understanding of and respect the religious, racial and cultural heritage of the child and the child's family.

## The Agency May Expect the Foster Parent to:

1. Allow representatives of the supervising agency or the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services to visit their home for the purpose of foster care planning, placement and supervision.
2. Accept for placement only children who are placed by the supervising agency or placed in connection with a plan approved by the supervising agency.
3. Provide the child with a safe and healthy family life that promotes the child's development as a physically and mentally healthy person. This includes:
  - Providing for the basic needs of the child
  - Including the child in the activities of daily family life, as much as possible considering the child's age, the child's needs and the out-of-home placement plan. This would include eating meals with the family and participation in recreational activities.
  - Facilitating the child's school attendance.
  - Providing the child with timely access to basic, emergency, and specialized medical, mental health, and dental care and treatment by qualified persons.
  - Encouraging age-appropriate activities, exercise and recreation.
  - Explaining house-rules and telling the foster child about the foster parents expectations regarding behavior, the treatment of others and household items.
  - Providing supervision in accordance with the child age, needs and Out-Of-Home Placement
4. Actively cooperate and participate with the child's case manager and other appropriate professionals to develop and implement the child's out-of-home placement plan.
5. Respect the importance of the child's family to the child and make every effort, as recommended by the agency, to keep alive the child's relationship with the family.
  - Respect the importance of the out-of-home placement plan and comply with its requirements. A foster family must be willing to make adjustments to accommodate visitation.
  - Acknowledge the effect of the separation on the child and the difficulties of adjusting to the new environment of the foster home.
6. Make every effort to understand and be patient in addressing challenging behaviors of the child that result from separation and grieving.
7. Report to the supervising agency any possible plan to move or any change in household membership.
8. Report to the supervising agency any serious family illness and any serious illness or accident involving the foster child.
9. Comply with agency policies prohibiting corporal punishment, relying instead upon other constructive methods of discipline.
10. Consult with the supervising agency and obtain consent before taking a child out of the state or out of the foster home for longer than three nights.
11. Recognize that the supervising agency is responsible for making and carrying out the service plan for the child. This may include, but is not restricted to, planning for returning the child to the child's parents or relatives, transferring the child to another home or placing the child for adoption.
12. Maintain continuous contact with the supervising agency regarding matters significant to the adjustment and the welfare of the child including reporting behaviors, problematic or otherwise, that would help the agency understand the child's current emotional and behavioral state.
13. Seek consultation and direction from the placing agency if issues arise that cannot be resolved between the foster parents and the foster child. Prior to requesting the placing agency to remove a child from a foster parent's care, the foster parents shall assess with the agency if additional strategies or support services can resolve the issues leading to the request for removal. When all resources have been exhausted, provide the agency with sufficient time (45 days if possible) to make an adequate plan for the child.
14. Keep information about the child and the child's family confidential and discuss it only with appropriate agency staff members and other professionals designated by the agency.
15. Ensure that the social worker and the child have opportunities to meet alone.
16. Participate in educational opportunities provided by the agency.

This information is available in other forms to people with disabilities by contacting us at 651-282-5329 (voice). TDD users can call the Minnesota Relay at 711 or 1-800-627-3529. For the Speech-to-Speech Relay, call 1-877-627-3848.

**We understand the policies and practices and our respective roles. We agree to carry out our responsibilities.**

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Foster Parent

Date

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Foster Parent

Date

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Child Foster Care Social Worker

Date

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Director / Supervisor

Date