

KANSAS FOSTER PARENTS' RIGHTS

Foster parents provide care for children who are in the custody of the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF). They play an integral, indispensable, and vital role in the State's effort to care for dependent children displaced from their biological families/caregivers. It is in the best interest of Kansas' child welfare system to acknowledge foster parents as active and participating members of this system and they should be supported through the following rights:

1. The right to be treated by DCF, KDOC-JS and/or DCF Case Management Grantees and other partners with dignity, respect, and trust as a placement/daily care provider and a member of the professional team caring for children in the care/custody of DCF Secretary.

2. The right not to be discriminated against on the basis of religion, race, color, creed, gender, marital status, national origin, age, or physical handicap.

3. The right to continue with their own family values and beliefs, so long as the values and beliefs of the child in foster care and the biological family are respected and not infringed upon. Consideration shall be given to the special needs of children who have experienced trauma and separation from their families.

4. The right to exercise decision making in connection with the child in foster care, consistent with the limits of the policies, procedures, and other directions of DCF, KDOC-JS and/or DCF grantees and within the limits of state and federal law.

5. The right to receive standardized pre-service training by DCF, KDOC-JS and/or DCF grantees and at appropriate intervals to meet mutually assessed needs of the child and to improve foster parents' skills. Training approved by the licensing agency and conducted by foster parent support groups shall be recognized as pertinent, and information about training offered by foster parent support groups shall be regularly shared with family foster homes licensed within the region served by those support groups

6. The right to receive timely financial reimbursement according to agreement and applicable law and to be notified of any costs or expenses for which the foster parent may be eligible for reimbursement.

7. The right to receive information regarding services, to reach DCF, KDOC-JS and/or DCF Grantee staff during regular business hours and the right to be provided contact information for after business hours emergencies.

8. The right, prior to the placement of a child, to be notified of any issues relative to the child and known to DCF, KDOC-JS and/or DCF Grantee at such time and which may jeopardize the

health and safety of the foster family or the child or alter the manner in which foster care should be administered.

9. The right to discuss relevant information regarding the child prior to placement. DCF and/or DCF Grantee will provide such information as it becomes available as allowable under state and federal laws.

10. The right to refuse placement of a child in the foster home or to request, upon reasonable notice, the removal of a child from the foster home per applicable law and policy.

11. The right, during the time a child is placed with the foster parent, to receive from DCF, KDOC-JS and/or DCF grantee ongoing information known to DCF and/or grantee, relevant to the care of the child and as allowed per applicable law.

12. The right to be notified of case plan meetings per DCF policy and the right to provide input and participate in the case planning process regarding the child.

13. The right to participate in and be informed about the planning of visitation between the child and the child's biological family, recognizing that visitation with the biological family is important to the child and necessary to the success of timely reintegration if reintegration is the case plan.

14. The right of foster parents to assist and support the birth family in the reintegration efforts.

15. The right to support and encourage the permanency goal of every child in foster care, including transitioning out of foster care.

16. The right to communicate with the child's Child Welfare Provider Case Manager (CWPCM) or KDOC-JS and to share and obtain relevant and appropriate information regarding child in placement.

17. The right to communicate related to the case plan of the child with other professionals who work with the child in foster care within the context of the professional team including, but not limited to, therapists, physicians, and teachers, as allowable by state and federal regulations/statutes.

18. The right to be notified in advance of any court hearing, including periodic reviews held by the court and the right to submit a completed Foster Parent Court Report Form per DCF policy.

19. The right to be considered, when appropriate, as a placement option when a child who was formerly placed with the foster parents has re-entered the foster care system.

20. The right to be considered, when appropriate, as an adoption resource when a child in care is eligible for adoption.

21. If the child in foster care has been placed in the home for more than six months, statutorily the foster parents have the right to a 30-day notice unless an emergency exists or the move is to the selected pre-adoptive family for the purpose of facilitating adoption. Moves should be generally planned, and foster parents should be included in the planning process, allowing for the opportunity for closure. The planning process should identify how the child is to be informed of the move, when appropriate to do so.

22. The right to file a grievance or complaint with DCF or DCF Grantee. DCF, DCF Grantee and each Child Placement Agency (CPA) have the responsibility to inform foster parents of their agency's grievance process. Foster parents have the right to be informed of options for submission of grievances.

23. When in the child's best interests, the right to continue contact and/or communication with child subsequent to the child moving from the foster parents' home, subject to the approval of the child, when age and developmentally appropriate, and child's biological parent/s whose rights have not been terminated.

24. The right to direct questions to DCF, KDOC-JS and/or DCF grantee regarding information, concerns, policy violation and/or a corrective action plan relating to licensure as a foster family home.

25. The right to fair and impartial assessment, evaluation and feedback from the sponsoring CPA.

26. The right to access DCF policy and procedure manual on the website of DCF.

27. The rights and responsibilities enumerated hereinabove shall be given full consideration when DCF develops and approves policies regarding foster care and adoptive placement.

28. DCF shall offer the Foster Parent Bill of Rights to every foster family at the time of initial licensure and at each renewal.