

LCFS FOSTER PARENT LAW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF 2025





Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan of 2025

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I. INTRODUCTION OF THE LCFS FOSTER PARENT LAW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF 2025 (Public Act 89/19)

Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois (LCFS) improves the well-being of people across the state by protecting children, strengthening families and building futures for those who have experienced trauma. LCFS Mission is to nurture and strengthen children and families in need. Our vision is a world where all of God’s children have the opportunity for safe, healthy and meaningful lives.

The LCFS Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan serves as a comprehensive resource for foster parents, outlining their mutual rights and responsibilities as defined by the Illinois DCFS Foster Parent Law Rule 340, also known as the Foster Parent Code, to ensure clarity, collaboration, and informed caregiving.

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, or SUGGESTIONS?

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Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois is a social service agency and an incorporated not-for-profit approved 501 c (3). The address of the Agency’s Corporate Support Office is One Oakbrook Terrace, Suite 501, Oakbrook Terrace, Il 60181. The Agency provides services throughout the state of Illinois.

LCFS Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan of 2025 was developed by the LCFS Child and Family Team (CFT) which members include our foster parents, the Licensing Team, Permanency and Placement Team and the Leadership Team. This plan was developed in compliance with the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) Foster Parent Law, Rule 340. LCFS foster parents and CFT reviewed the 2024 Law Implementation Plan and incorporated comments and revisions,



that were obtained throughout the year, to develop the LCFS Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan of 2025.

The LCFS Law Implementation Plan of 2025 is made available to all Foster Parents and CFT through the organization's website <https://lcfs.org/> . This plan will be reviewed and discussed and reviewed throughout the year during monitoring and home visits, foster parent forums and staff meetings with foster parents and LCFS staff. The implementation process includes reviewing LCFS' plan and the foster parent signs the LCFS Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan of 2025 Signature Page that will be placed in his/her licensing record, acknowledging the receipt of the information and understanding of his/her rights and responsibilities as a foster parent in the State of Illinois.



II. STATEMENT OF FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS

The rights of our Lutheran Child and Family Services foster parents include, but are not limited to, the following as listed. Pursuant to each right is the response of LCFS.

1. The Right to be Treated with Dignity and Respect

The Right to be Treated with Dignity, Respect, and Consideration as a Professional Member of the Child Welfare Team.

- 1.1 Lutheran Child and Family Services (LCFS) conducts an annual meeting of stakeholders. Invitees to this meeting include foster parents, board members, members of congregations, funding bodies, members from all levels of the organization, consumers, and other interested parties. Since child welfare services are critical for LCFS, the involvement of foster parents is valued and encouraged.
- 1.2 LCFS values the rights of our foster parents, recognizing them as essential partners in service delivery, outcomes and achievement of our mission. LCFS is committed to ensuring the rights of our foster parent, as Team Members, honored with dignity, privacy, informed advocacy, courtesy and mutual respect. Foster parents are important partners, that LCFS recognizes are critical members of the child welfare team who work together to achieve safety, permanency, and well- being for our children.

Foster parents provide the daily support, care and supervision of children entrusted in their care. LCFS acknowledges their need for information and support and open two-way communication as it relates to planning, resolving concerns impeding the collaborative process of caring for children, advocacy and the need to be treated as part of the team when conflict arises, or barriers need to be addressed. LCFS utilizes multiple forums to enhance and strengthen interactions with foster parents including training, foster parent support groups, Child and Family Team Meetings, home visits by both child welfare specialist and licensing representatives, foster parent appreciation events and conferences.

- 1.3 As part of its Continuous Quality Improvement processes, LCFS conducts quarterly surveys and random quality checks regarding service provision and foster parents experience with the organization. Surveys are given to foster parents and clients quarterly as part of the peer review process and at the time of discharge/exit from LCFS services. Foster parents and clients do not have to disclose their identity as a means to provide valuable input and their opinions to the Agency. Through the service process, foster parents have the ability to express any comments, concerns, or issues that they may have. Feedback received is then incorporated into LCFS policies, procedures and practices when improvements have been identified to deliver on the commitment to excellence. As part of their



responsibilities, supervisors discuss issues, concerns, and quality of service provision with foster parents. These discussions occur during Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM), licensing monitoring visits and/or through LCFS Foster Parent Forums. When issues arise, the child welfare specialist and supervisor work diligently to resolve the situation in a timely manner. If the issue cannot be rectified, the concern can be raised to the next level of leadership through the chain of command within the Agency's organizational structure. Foster parents are also able to utilize the LCFS Grievance Procedure if they feel their concerns remain unaddressed. Licensing representatives are available to assist and help advocate for our foster parents through this process.

- 1.4 LCFS values the input of foster parents and strives to have regular communication. Foster parents are encouraged to regularly communicate with their child welfare specialist and/or licensing representative throughout their time with the Agency. LCFS recognizes the time and effort that our foster parents engage with children and families and that foster parents are encouraged to provide information and any recommendations based on their experiences in caring for our children. During the licensing assessment process, the licensing representative emphasizes their role in supporting foster parents. LCFS reassures foster parents that they can voice concerns without fear of retaliation.
- 1.5 Foster parent trainings are offered at a minimum quarterly by members of the LCFS Team, foster parents, and professionals in the field in person or virtually. All CFT members are encouraged to participate in trainings to help strengthen their working relationships with foster parents and clients with whom we work. Foster parents and CFT members are encouraged to suggest and/or select training topics to address their interests and to develop skills to meet their individual needs as well as the needs of the children for whom they are caring for. LCFS encourages **co-training** led by both foster parents and CFT to build mutual understanding and skill development. Suggestions for training topics can be provided to your Child Welfare Specialist (CWS), Licensing Representative or any member of the LCFS Team.
- 1.6 LCFS' Associate Vice President of Child Welfare meet with foster parents to gain feedback and input from the Foster Parents during the LCFS Foster Parent Conference, monthly FAQ's and Quarterly Foster Parent Forums. Information is shared with the LCFS leadership team and is integrated into LCFS strategic and operational plans that may involve professional development opportunities for the Agency's CFT. Feedback shared during the Foster Parent Conference informs strategic initiatives and continuous improvement plans.
- 1.7 LCFS demonstrates respect and appreciation to all foster parents by acknowledging and celebrating their contributions to vulnerable children and families at special events such as annual picnics, foster parent conferences, sponsored trainings, and holiday celebrations.



- 1.8 LCFS is committed to being **Welcoming, Inclusive, Diverse, Equitable (W.I.D.E.)**. LCFS intentionally and strategically leverages our ability to be an active social impact organization that advocates and institutes equitable treatment, vision and justice for children and families served, foster parents and the people serving within our organization. All levels of CFT and foster parents are consistently engaged in building their capacity to live out the W.I.D.E. values. This include learning opportunities to enhance competence, cultural. humility, healing, and a reflection of values that aides in achieving the mission of LCFS and partnering with children involved ·n the child welfare system. W.I.D.E. has measurable goals, objectives and outcomes for CFT and critical stakeholders, such as foster parents. This training was recommended by LCFS' Inclusion Council. The mission of the **LCFS Inclusion Council** is to support LCFS in b coming a welcoming, inclusive, diverse and equitable organization. W.I.D.E.'s goals include specific training metrics, participation rates, and outcome reviews.
- 1.9 LCFS believes that communication and expedited resolution of issues, which are raised by foster parents, are imperative and supports the collaborative process of caring for children and families as well as ensuring that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect. The Agency ensures responses to foster parent communication occur **within 24-48** hours to uphold trust and respect. LCFS is expected to keep foster parents informed of significant Agency and/or program changes. LCFS ensures that foster parents have a voice by providing them the opportunities to share their thoughts and expressions with the Agency.
- 1.10 In 2024, LCFS received a special grant opportunity, funded by the Kott Memorial Charitable Trust, to support our valued foster caregivers aged 50 and older. Foster parents in this age group who are caring for children through LCFS may apply for a \$500 grant. This funding can be used for family activities, child-specific assistance, or respite care, showing our commitment to treating foster parents with the dignity and respect they deserve as they provide essential care and support to children in need.
- 1.11 Foster parents have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, which includes being well-informed about policies that affect their caregiving role. Understanding the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Normalcy Policy is essential, as it empowers foster parents to make everyday decisions that allow children in their care to engage in typical childhood activities. Foster parents are encouraged to visit <https://dcfs.illinois.gov/loving-homes/normalcy.html> or contact their licensing representative or child welfare special to receive more information on reasonable and prudent parenting standards.



2. The Right to be Given Standardized Pre-Service Training

The Right to Be Given Standardized Pre-Service Training and Appropriate Ongoing Training to Meet Mutually Assessed Needs and Improve the Foster Parent's Skills.

2.1 All non-related foster parents are required to participate in the mandated 34-hour Parent's Resource for Information, Development, and Education (**PRIDE REDESIGN Redesign**). Pre-Service Training, which includes an orientation (1/2 hour), PRIDE REDESIGN In-Service Training (30.5 hours) and (3) hours of LGBTQI+ Supplemental Video.

PRIDE REDESIGN Training Breakdown

Pre-Service Core Training – [30.5 hours](#)

- This is the main segment of PRIDE REDESIGN, covering essential topics like the roles and responsibilities of foster parents, child development, trauma-informed care, behavioral management, and the needs of children in foster care. These 30.5 hours are mandatory for all unrelated foster parents as part of their licensing requirement.

Orientation – [0.5 hours](#)

- This initial orientation introduces prospective foster parents to the fostering process, basic policies, and the PRIDE REDESIGN training structure itself. This orientation is included at the start of the PRIDE REDESIGN training series.

Supplemental Training - [3 hours](#)

- The only supplemental video is now called LGBTQI+ & Youth in Foster Care Caregiver Training.

All licensed foster parents are required to complete 16.0 credit hours of in-service training within their 4-year license period. v Specialized foster parents are required to complete 16.0 credit hours per year of in-service training. 4 years' x 16.0 hours = 64.0 hours. v Homes with an expanded capacity must complete 9.0 hours of training per calendar year.

These training sessions are designed to equip foster parents with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively care for children with specialized needs. Foster parents are encouraged to consult with their licensing representatives to identify appropriate training opportunities that fulfill these requirements.

2.2 As of July 1, 2024, relative training is now a 12-hour training and referred to as **Relative and Kin Caregiver (RKC)** training. Related and fictive kin foster parents interested in licensure are required to complete 12 hours of Kin Caregiver (RKC) training. Relative and fictive kin foster parents are able to complete this training virtually.

2.3 A foster family home license is valid for 4 years. Each foster parent, both licensees if the couple is married, must complete a minimum of 16 hours of training in order to renew their traditional foster home license. In order to stay on pace to meet licensing



requirements, foster parents are encouraged to complete 4 hours of continuing education training each calendar year of the four-year licensure.

- 2.4 If the foster home has an expanded capacity license, each licensee is required to complete an additional 9 hours of training each calendar year for renewal; resulting in a total of 52 hours of training needed for renewal.
- 2.5 If the foster family has a specialized license, each licensee is required to complete an additional 12 hours of training every year for renewal; resulting in a total of 64 hours of training needed for the renewal.
- 2.6 Licensing Representatives (LR) discuss training needs during the six-month compliance monitoring visits. Child welfare specialists discuss training needs with foster parents during their home visits. It is recommended that foster parents gear their continuing education course topics to those that support the specific needs of the children in their care. The Child Welfare Specialists (CWS) and licensing representatives work closely with foster parents to assist them in identifying and locating trainings that would assist them in meeting the needs of the children placed in their care.
- 2.7 LCFS encourages foster parents to engage in training opportunities through LCFS, DCFS, and other community resources. Foster parents are able to obtain training hours through the reading material approved by LCFS and DCFS, viewing approved videos, or completing online and in-person trainings. In some instances, foster parents will need to complete and submit a Training Credit Approval Form (TCAF) along with supporting documentation to licensing representative. Foster parents can submit a Training Credit Approval Form (TCAF) within 30 days of completing a training for approval and transcript entry in order for the training to be approved by the Department and added to the foster parent's training transcript. Foster parents can access their training transcripts on the DCFS Learning and Development Center (LDC), website <https://learning.dcf.illinois.gov/en/index-por>. Additionally, foster parents are encouraged to contact the DCFS Training Unit at 877-800-3393 if further assistance is needed.
- 2.8 Foster parents can find a list of pre-approved trainings by going to: <https://learning.dcf.illinois.gov/en/index-por> - under the Approved In-Service Credit link, which will be located after clicking the Foster Parents link on the top of the page, caregivers will then be provided with several different links that will take them to a list of approved trainings. Offered trainings involve some of the following topics: educational advocacy, protecting and nurturing children, child development, substance abuse exposure, adolescence, supporting the relationship between children and their birth families, mental illness, trauma, self-care and teamwork.



- 2.9 Foster parents can identify trainings in the community and submit a **TCAF CFS 574** for approval. Trainings must address at least one of the five competencies of PRIDE REDESIGN:
- 1) protecting and nurturing children,
 - 2) meeting developmental needs / addressing developmental delays,
 - 3) supporting relationships between children and families,
 - 4) connecting children to safe, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime, and
 - 5) working as a member of a professional team.
- 2.10 During Regional and Statewide Foster Parent Annual Conferences, the Agency provides foster parents and CFT members with several different training breakout sessions to attend. Agency CFT and external providers collaborate to deliver training at regional and statewide conferences. LCFS held our Statewide Foster Parent Conference in April 2024 and the theme was “The Balance: Taking care of yourself to care for children” Foster parents received training on the following in which they were able to receive training credit hours:
- Partnership between Foster & Birth Parents
 - Supporting Teens in Foster Care
 - Ins & Outs of Specialized Foster Care
 - De-escalation/Emotional Regulation
- 2.11 As needed, LCFS will provide individualized trainings for foster parents. These trainings are usually conducted by a LCFS nurse and/or clinician and cover specific medical and/or behavioral needs of youth who are placed in the foster family’s care. LCFS will recommend and/or refer foster parents to external trainings based on the needs of the family.
- 2.12 Training schedules are available on the LDC <https://learning.dcf.illinois.gov/en/index-por>, 877-800-3393) throughout the calendar year and are announced at meetings, licensing monitoring visits, and other training and social events. LCFS provides alternative training schedules, including day and evening hours as well as weekend trainings, to accommodate foster parents’ schedules. In some instances, child care may be provided so that foster parents are able to attend. LCFS provides day, evening, and weekend training options, with occasional childcare, allowing foster parents to attend based on their availability. LCFS offers **ongoing training and/or support groups**. The 2024 trainings that were offered included, but not limited to these training topics: Common Childhood Mental Health Diagnosis, Critical Information Sharing/Respecting Confidentiality/Consent, Administrative Case Reviews/DCFS Court Process and Advocacy, Difference Between Discipline and Punishment, Foster Parent Rights and Responsibilities/Grievance Procedure (Foster Parent Implementation Plan Comments and Review Session), CPR Training, Licensing Renewals, Monitoring, Investigations, Supporting Biological Relationships and Trauma Informed Care. On-going training scheduled is attached to the Annual Report.



- 2.13 Licensing representatives, child welfare specialists, and supervisors are utilized to model skills and offer support to caregivers. LCFS understands the importance of utilizing experienced foster parents to model skills and provide real life examples to other foster parents. This is encouraged during support meetings, social events, and agency sponsored trainings. During these events, LCFS will work with experienced foster parents to provide their knowledge and experience to other foster parents to allow our foster parents to learn from each other. This **co-training** can include foster parents presenting on a topic and/or leading discussions.
- 2.14 Licensing representatives and DCFS notify foster parents of the supplemental and module trainings in their community through the foster parent newsletter, selected mailings, via email and during in-person licensing monitoring visits. LCFS offers trainings regionally. These trainings are featured in the LCFS Foster Parent Newsletter and are posted on the www.lcfs.org website. Trainings offered through agency-guided support groups may be approved for continuing education credit through the facilitator or by submitting a TCAF. Check with your licensing worker if such trainings should be submitted for approval by the Department.
- 2.15 All licensing representatives maintain training logs which are kept in each foster parent's licensing file. At the six-month compliance visit, foster parents should inform their licensing representative of any trainings completed since the last compliance visit. Licensing representatives are to update the training log at least every 6 months.

Any foster parent that obtained their license prior to July 1, 2021 is also now required to complete **3 hours of supplemental LGBTQI+ training** in order to have their foster home license renewed. This training is part of the required 15-hour Supplemental Training that new prospective foster parents complete during their PRIDE REDESIGN training.

- 2.16 **LCFS Best Start for Families Program** <https://lcfs.org/program/best-start-for-families/>
The LCFS Best Start for Families Program offers LCFS foster parents both in-person and virtual parenting support groups. These groups provide a space for foster parents to connect with others, share experiences, and discuss challenges and successes.

Participants will learn how building social-emotional skills can strengthen family relationships for both parents and children. Additionally, foster parents will receive a Children's Social/Emotional Activity Booklet and a Caregiver Handbook to support their parenting journey.

Best Start for Families provides motivation, tools, and skills to assist parents in navigating the challenges of parenting successfully, especially in situations where child trauma has



been experienced. The program is designed to empower foster parents by equipping them with practical strategies and emotional support to meet the unique needs of the children in their care.

The parenting group sessions are offered as a 14-week series and are described as extremely helpful, engaging, enjoyable, and supportive throughout the challenges and joys of fostering. Participation in these programs counts towards 14 foster licensing credit hours, with an additional 2 special sessions focused on foster parent policies. This comprehensive program ensures foster parents are equipped to create nurturing environments that promote healing, growth, and stability for the children in their care.

Foster parents are able to obtain credits from training that they may receive from counselors, physicians, physical therapist, and other medical professionals with the appropriate supporting documentation and a TCAF. Contact your licensing representative for more details and registration.



3. The Right to Have Child Placement Contact Information

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.

3.1 Foster parents are able to contact their Child Welfare Specialist (CWS), Licensing Representative (LR), Supervisors, and Regional Director or any other member of the Child and Family Team (CFT) by contacting their local office general number. Regular office hours are Monday-Friday from 8:30a.m. – 4:30pm. Each local office has an emergency/after-hours numbers that can be utilized by foster parents for contacting agency CFT outside of office hours in the event of an emergency or crisis involving the youth(s) in their care. The emergency/after-hours number is provided on the general voice mail message for each local office. The **general numbers** for each office are as follows:

- Bourbonnais: (815) 929-1970
- Decatur: (217) 428-8380
- Evergreen Park: (773) 753-0600
- Joliet: (815) 409-4440
- Mt. Vernon: (618) 242-3284
- Oak Brook: (630) 543-5170
- O'Fallon: (618) 234-8904
- Springfield/Quincy: (217) 523-4725

3.2 In case of an emergency occurs outside normal business hours, foster parents are able to contact the after-hours on-call number. The emergency/after-hours on-call worker will take the call from the foster parent and then work on a resolution to solve the issue. Foster parents are provided with the emergency/after-hours number during the licensure process and when youth are placed in their care. The numbers are also printed regularly in the Foster Parent Newsletter. In addition, the emergency/afterhours number is provided on the general voice mail message for each local office. The **emergency/after-hours** numbers for each office are as follows:

- Decatur: (217) 972-4302
- Evergreen Park: (800) 673-6828
- Mt. Vernon: (618) 316-4119
- Oak Brook, Joliet and Bourbonnais: (708) 237-6021
- O'Fallon: (618) 409-4092
- Springfield/Quincy: (217) 502-9681

3.3 During for additional support related to youth care services. Monthly home visits with the assigned Child Welfare Specialist (CWS), and monitoring visits with the Licensing Representative (LR), foster parents are provided with contact phone numbers for additional support services. These include:



- **DCFS Advocacy Office- 1-800-232-3798** – For addressing complaints, concerns and inquiries related to DCFS services and policies. The **Crisis and Referral Entry Services (CARES) Line** is a 24/7 hotline in Illinois for children and adolescents experiencing mental health crises. By calling 1-800-345-9049, individuals can access immediate support and, if necessary, initiate the **Screening, Assessment, and Support Services (SASS)** program. **Child Abuse Hotline 800-252-2873** for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect, and **Youth Care Hotline 1- 844-289-2264** for additional support related to youth care services.

3.4 Foster Parents are encouraged to attempt to resolve issues and/or concerns with their assigned CWS Foster Parents are provided with the Regional Agency “Meet the Team” flyer, which includes phone numbers, email addresses and photos of each Leadership (Supervisors, Managers, Directors, Associate Vice President and Vice President.)

4. The Right to Receive Timely Financial Reimbursement

The Right to Receive Timely Financial Reimbursement Commensurate with The Care Needs of the Child as Specified in The Service Plan.

- 4.1 According to LCFS policy and procedure, foster parents receive a reimbursement board check on a regular, monthly schedule. The board checks are mailed to LCFS licensed foster parents between the 15th and 20th day of each month. LCFS offers both licensed and unlicensed foster parents the option to receive their monthly board payment by direct deposit. Foster parents should allow seven to ten (7-10) business days for delivery of a paper board check. Foster parents with direct deposit should allow three to five (3-5) days from the mailing date for their board payment to be reflected in their account.
- 4.2 LCFS will re-issue a lost board payment after 30 days of mailing the check if the foster parent reports not receiving their board payment.
- 4.3 Children who are served in the LCFS Specialized Foster Care Programs are paid an increased rate as established by DCFS contracts. Licensed foster parents, who are caring for a child with specialized needs, receive their board payment in the same manner as described in 4.1.
- 4.4 Children who are served in the LCFS Regenerations/RUR Programs are paid an increased rate as established by a DCFS contract. Licensed foster parents, who are caring for a youth under this DCFS contract, receive their board payment in the same manner as described in #1. The board checks are mailed to LCFS licensed foster parents between the 15th and 20th day of each month. LCFS offers both licensed and unlicensed foster parents the option to receive their monthly board payment by direct deposit.



- 4.5 LCFS reviews its reimbursement procedures annually, including DCFS protocols. Foster parents will need to provide receipts and verification for the eligible reimbursement item(s) promptly (within 30 days) for eligible reimbursements and obtain prior approval for purchases. Foster parents must submit receipts promptly (within 30 days) for eligible reimbursements and obtain prior approval for purchases. Foster parents are required to obtain agency approval prior to seeking reimbursement for items purchased.
- 4.6 If there are issues or concerns regarding board payments, foster parents are to contact the assigned CWS, and the CWS Supervisor, or a member of the LCFS CFT will then contact the LCFS Financial Department to seek clarification and information. Upon receipt of that information, the appropriate CFT member contacts the foster parent to achieve resolution.
- 4.7 Training regarding the payment authorization process, 906 process, and respite services is provided to all CFT members in order to ensure prompt and accurate payment to foster parents. Foster parents receive 906 to ensure payroll will be submitted in a timely manner.
- 4.8 Title IV-E funds are available to cover special needs or events. The funds are for nonrecurring expenditures, such as graduation expenses, camp, extra-curricular and recreational activities. Foster parents are provided the policies and procedures needed regarding reimbursement in addition to the documentation needed to submit for reimbursement.
- 4.9 LCFS provides foster parents with the specific procedures and criteria regarding bed holds. Bed hold payments apply when a child is absent due to hospitalization (medical or psychiatric), runaway episodes, placement in detention centers, or admission to inpatient substance abuse treatment programs.
Typically, bed-hold payments are approved for up to 30 consecutive days per absence episode. Extensions beyond this period require special approval. All requests for bed hold payments must be submitted and approved on the CFS 906-5, Bed Hold Payment Request. LCFS foster parents must meet the specific eligibility criteria, delineated by DCFS. Child welfare CFT members will discuss these situations with foster parents who may be eligible to receive payment through a bed hold. LCFS is currently able to reimburse a foster parent within two (2) weeks of the request's approval. Funds are distributed via direct deposit or check.



2025 LCFS BOARD PAYMENT MAILING DATES

Below are LCFS Board Payment Mailing Dates. Payment is made for the prior month's service, i.e., the payment received in January is for the month of December.

Month of Care	Payment Date
December 2024	January 17, 2025
January 2025	February 18, 2025
February 2025	March 18, 2025
March 2025	April 16, 2025
April 2025	May 16, 2025
May 2025	June 17, 2025
June 2025	July 17, 2025
July 2025	August 18, 2025
August 2025	September 17, 2025
September 2025	October 16, 2025
October 2025	November 18, 2025
November 2025	December 16, 2025
December 2025	January 20, 2026

For Direct Deposit Enrollment, payment discrepancies, or If you do not receive your check after 30 days please send an email to FinanceTeam@lcsf.org or contact the appropriate staff below.

Southern Region, Northern Region, Cook County

(Theda Robinson)

Phone: (708) 907-1728

Central Region

(Lorrie Tinker)

Phone: (217) 264-4907



Reimbursement Rates

Foster parents receive monthly board payments to cover the cost of caring for a child. These payments are determined by the child's age and specific needs. As of the latest update, the standard monthly board rates are:

LCFS Foster Parent Board Schedule Fiscal Year 2025 Traditional Home of Relative, Fictive-Kin – Monthly Rate

Child's Age	Board	Transportation	Clothing	Allowance	Total
0 - 11 months	\$486.00	\$117.00	\$50.00	\$19.00 *	\$672.00
1 through 4 years	\$480.00	\$117.00	\$55.00	\$20.00 *	\$672.00
5 through 8 years	\$534.00	\$123.00	\$68.00	\$21.00	\$746.00
9 through 11 years	\$551.00	\$126.00	\$84.00	\$35.00	\$796.00
12 and over	\$515.00	\$160.00	\$90.00	\$62.00	\$827.00
Unlicensed Rate **					\$479.00

**Personal allowance for children age 4 years and under is to be used by foster parents for incidentals (toys, rattles, etc.) which become the property of the child.*

Additional Reimbursements

Foster parents may be eligible for reimbursements for specific expenses, with pre approval including:

- a) Respite Care: Temporary relief care for foster parents. Prior approval is required, and reimbursement rates are determined based on the duration and type of care provided.
- b) Camp Fees: Reimbursement for camp expenses is available, with a maximum annual amount set by DCFS.
- c) Daycare Services: For working foster parents, reimbursement for daycare services may be available. Rates vary based on the type of daycare and the child's age. Prior approval and proper documentation are required.
- d) Sibling Visits: Expenses related to facilitating visits between siblings placed in different homes may be reimbursed. This includes transportation costs. Prior approval is necessary.
- e) Mileage: Reimbursement for mileage incurred during transportation to approved appointments and activities is available. Foster parents should maintain a mileage log and submit it monthly for reimbursement.
- f) Graduation Expenses: payment for graduation expenses such as yearbook, pictures, cap and gown rental, class ring, new clothing for the graduation ceremony and other related fees. The student must be in their junior or senior year for payment of the class ring. He or she must be in the senior year of high school to obtain payment for other graduation items.



5. The Right to be Given a Clear Placement Plan in Writing

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.

- 5.1 The Child Welfare Specialist (CWS) provides foster parents with essential documents within 24 hours of placement, including the foster care payment authorization (906) and a temporary medical card. Additional information, such as the Health Passport and medical reports, is shared as soon as possible, along with a brief overview of any immediate medical needs. Medical needs can include the current medical and health history, including immunization records, details of any known medical conditions or special needs and contact information for child’s current healthcare providers.
- 5.2 LCFS foster parents are provided with the **CFS 600-4** from the CWS, which is entitled, **“Sharing Information with Caregivers.”** The CFS 600-4 verifies information the foster parent receives from the child welfare specialist including but not limited to:
1. Case information and history;
 2. health and medical information;
 3. educational information and history;
 4. placement history;
 5. behavior/social information; and
 6. if any, emergency placements.

The CFS 600-4 is completed by the child welfare specialist at the initial placement and updated as additional information is gathered. This document is completed at any subsequent placement changes throughout child’s time in out-of-home care. Foster parents receive a copy of this form and sign it as an acknowledgement of receipt of said information. Foster parents have the right to request additional information and are provided with an updated CFS 600-4 after more information becomes available.

- 5.3 The 497 Service Plan is a plan that establishes what services and supports a family needs to work towards achieving permanency. The foster parent component of the service plan is developed with the foster family and the other members of the child welfare team during the course of the case. This section of the plan addresses the individual needs of the child and the needs of the foster parents as it pertains to the foster parents supporting the youth in achieving permanency. The foster parent will receive a copy of the service plan.



- 5.4 Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM) are scheduled quarterly for all cases. Foster parents are considered part of the Child and Family Team (CFT) and are strongly encouraged to attend and participate in these meetings. During a CFTM, the service plan, visitation and service needs are discussed in detail by the team. This meeting allows for the foster parent to communicate their concerns, issues and observations related to the child. CFTM's are held virtually, via phone or in-person based on the needs and preference of the family and team members within 2 weeks of scheduling the meeting. If the foster parent is unable to attend this meeting. The CWS will follow-up with the foster parent to provide them an overview of what occurred during this meeting within 48 hours as it pertains to the child. The CWS coordinates with all CFT members to schedule meetings at times that are convenient for the majority if not all of the team.
- 5.5 Visitation between the child and birth family requires the cooperation of the foster family. Visitation schedules are established in collaboration among team members, the birth parents, the foster parents, and the Agency's CFT members. If deemed appropriate by the child welfare specialist and/or court, any communication between the birth parents and children that occur in the foster home are to be supported and monitored by the foster parents. All parties understand that when shared parenting occurs between foster and birth parents, reunification is supported. It is imperative that foster families are active members of the reunification process.
- 5.6 Sibling visitation is required for all children who are not able to be placed with the same foster family. Sibling visits between a minor who is in care and a minor who was not brought into care are not required to occur unless otherwise specified. When children are not placed together, the Department requires that siblings visit at a minimum of four hours per month. Sibling visitation can occur at the same time as parent/child visits if all siblings are present. If the sibling visits occur during the weekly parent/child visits, additional sibling visits are not required.
- 5.7 It is not a requirement for foster parents to supervise parent/child visits. Foster parents are encouraged to supervise parent/child visits when they feel comfortable with having direct contact with parents. Supervising these visits allow for shared parenting to take place between the foster family and biological family and can assist in youth returning to the care of their parents' sooner.
- 5.8 Foster parents are highly encouraged to assist the agency in transporting youth to and from parent/child and sibling visits when at all possible; as this can also assist the foster family in developing a relationship and becoming familiar with the youth's family and relationships. Foster parents are able to get assistance with mileage/gas when assisting the agency with transportation to these services.



- 5.9 It is imperative that foster parents support the children’s relationship with their siblings. As such, foster parents are encouraged to assist in ensuring youth placed apart are participating in 4 hours of sibling visitation a month. Foster parents, both licensed and unlicensed, are also eligible to receive financial assistance for supervising sibling visitation outside of regularly scheduled parent/child visits.
- 5.10 Foster parents, both related and unrelated, who assist in supervising parent/child visits qualify to receive financial assistance for supervising these visits under the Family Reunification Support Special Service Fee (FRSSSF) which is a reimbursement program designed to support foster parents in facilitating reunification activities between children and their parents. This fee covers expenses such as transportation, entrance fees, and food associated with these activities. Caregivers can receive reimbursements at four levels, depending on the number of **qualifying activities** conducted within a month. For instance, engaging in up to 12 activities in a month can result in a \$400 reimbursement. It's important to note that the FRSSSF is not specifically for supervising parent-child visits but rather for participating in reunification activities alongside the parents. The assigned caseworker can provide guidance on the requirements and assist both the family and caregiver in navigating this program.
- 5.11 An integrated assessment is developed for every child in care that includes information regarding the child, birth parents, and their family backgrounds. For new cases, the Integrated Assessment (IA) is completed in collaboration with the integrated assessment screeners at DCFS within 45 days of case opening. Foster parent involvement and information that they share is crucial in meeting the child’s current and possible future needs while in care. In accordance with the Department’s Rule 431 regarding confidentiality, the additional information which is relevant to the child’s care is shared with the foster family and documented on the CFS 600-4. The child welfare specialist reinforces the importance and need for confidentiality of this information.
- 5.12 It is best practice for foster parents to provide LCFS with a written 14-day notice when requesting a change in the child’s placement. Whenever possible, foster parents are strongly encouraged to provide more notice. It is hoped that this additional time provides the opportunity to address the concerns/issues, which have been raised by the foster family, and implement services that will stabilize the placement. LCFS makes all efforts to prevent a disruption in placement. LCFS recognizes that smooth transitions are essential for child and family stability. In cases of placement change, LCFS will coordinate pre-placement visits whenever possible. If this is not possible or appropriate, the child welfare and licensing CFT members work together to identify an appropriate placement for this child. Foster parents must submit a formal written notice to their LCFS caseworker or the supervising agency at least 14 days before the desired removal date.



5.13 Upon placement and throughout the child’s time with the foster family, the Agency reiterates the foster parent’s responsibility to respect and promote the child’s relationship with his/her birth family and **cultural heritage**. LCFS maintains that one of the best ways a foster parent can support the child’s rights to relationships with their birth family and cultural heritage is for the foster family and birth family to get to know each other and understanding of the cultural needs.

6. The Right to a Fair, Timely, and Impartial Investigation

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 and 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.

6.1 The purpose of a licensing investigation is to determine whether an agency-licensed foster home has violated any 402 licensing standards or the Child Care Act. These investigations do not address allegations of abuse or neglect, which are handled separately by DCFS’s Child Protective Services staff. Licensing investigations are initiated based on allegations from a complaint, which can originate from various sources, including agency staff who observe concerns during home visits. Additionally, complaints may be referred to the agency via the State Central Register (SCR) following a Hotline call made against the home. Within 2-days of receipt of the initial licensing complaint, a licensing representative, who has been trained in the investigative process, conducts an unannounced visit to the foster family. The licensing representative will present to the foster parent a written statement informing them of the alleged licensing violation and explains the investigatory process.

A fair and impartial investigation is completed within thirty (30) calendar days. Extensions may be granted only with documented approval from a supervisor, and all parties will be informed of any delay in the timeline. The licensing representative will also inform the foster parent of their right to have an advocate or friend of their choosing, present during any interviews conducted during the licensing complaint investigation and document their findings using the CFS 596 series forms. Foster parents can choose to accept or decline their right to have an advocate by signing the Right to an Advocate (CFS 596-29) form. If a foster parent requests an advocate—any individual of their choosing—the interview portion of the licensing investigation may be postponed for up to 4 hours. However, licensing workers still have the authority to inspect the home to ensure there are no environmental hazards that could pose risks to the children in care or other household members.



Licensing investigations fall into two categories based on the nature of the allegations:

1. **Stand-alone investigations:** These occur when the allegations involve violations of the 402 licensing standards only.
2. **Concurrent investigations:** These happen when both Little City’s licensing department and the DCFS Department of Child Protection (DCP) conduct investigations simultaneously. This typically occurs when a report of abuse or neglect within the foster home has been made to the DCFS Hotline.

Licensing investigations result in one of two outcomes:

1. **Substantiated:**

A substantiated finding indicates that the licensing team has confirmed violations of 402 licensing standards and/or the Child Care Act, either as alleged or as discovered during home visits and interviews. The foster family is informed of the findings both by phone and in writing. A Corrective Action Plan is developed to address the violations in accordance with procedure. The licensing representative notifies the family of substantiated findings in writing using the 596-04 letter, which also provides the foster parent with the option to request an informal review of the findings with the licensing supervisor.

2. **Unsubstantiated:**

Even if violations are not substantiated, a Corrective Action Plan is created and reviewed with the foster parent to address any issues identified during the investigation. Foster parents are required to sign the plan as confirmation that it has been reviewed with them. Typically, foster parents are given 30 days to resolve the violations. While the Corrective Action Plan is active, the agency conducts regular unannounced home visits. If the foster family does not address the violations as outlined in the plan, the agency may escalate licensing actions, which could include placing the home on hold for future placements or revoking the license.

6.2 LCFS trains all CFT members and foster parents on the rights of foster parents during the investigatory process and the role of various members. During the initial licensing process, foster parents are provided with a copy of their rights regarding the investigation process and Rule 402 which outlines the specific standard for violations in the foster family home. At the start of the investigation, foster parents will receive a copy of all relevant documents, including the Foster Parent Bill of Rights, Rule 340, Rule 402, and DCFS’s investigation and appeal processes. These documents outline the standards, their rights, and the specific steps of the investigation process. During the initial licensing process, foster parents are educated and informed that during an investigation process, LCFS has the right to remove the children if there is evidence of imminent risk of harm. In addition, foster parents are informed that LCFS can recommend to place the home on an involuntary



hold during the investigation and reassessment process. LCFS notifies foster parents of their licensing status both verbally and in writing. During the initial licensing process, foster parents are informed of the process in filing an appeal and the finding through LCFS' grievance procedures. LCFS has established the Foster Parent Grievance Procedure which is a process utilized to appeal violations of the foster parent statute. The Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure is reviewed periodically with all foster parents. Foster parents are part of the process in reviewing and clarifying these procedures. Foster parents have the right in this procedure to appeal decisions through LCFS' organizational structure to have their issues addressed. The grievance procedures regarding any violations of the Foster Parent Law, Rule 340, are addressed in Section 13. Note: Issues such as child maltreatment findings, revocations of licenses, and licensing violations are not handled through the grievance process. Child maltreatment findings, revocations of licenses, and licensing violations are covered by other established mechanisms within DCFS. <https://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/089/08900402sections.html>

- 6.3 During investigations, LCFS may interview children and household members separately. Foster parents are notified of licensing status change both verbally and in writing. LCFS has the right to remove the youth in care from the home if there is evidence of imminent risk of harm. In addition, LCFS retains the right to be able to recommend that the foster home be placed on an involuntary hold during the investigation and reassessment process. Notification of their licensing status is completed both verbally and in writing.

- 6.4 Once the licensing investigation is completed by the licensing representative, it is submitted to the licensing supervisor for approval within 7 days. The licensing supervisor submits the completed licensing investigation to the DCFS Agency and Institution (A & I) representative. The Agency and Institution representative from DCFS reviews the complaint and makes a final decision of the recommendations. If the complaint is determined to be substantiated, a corrective action plan is formulated. The purpose of the corrective action plan is to resolve the violations identified in the investigation. If the licensing supervisor approves the corrective action plan, a clear and specific timeline with measurable goals will be provided to the foster parent, detailing each step for remediation. The licensing representative must notify the foster parent of the findings in writing within 10 business days after completing the licensing investigation. The notification will include any identified violations and specify the corrective actions required to address them. The licensing representative works closely with the foster parents to ensure that they understand each step of resolution with the complaint and how the violation impacts their license. The licensing representative offers support and assistance in the corrective action process.



- 6.5 The notification also informs the foster parents of their right to request a supervisory Staffing. If this does not resolve the issue, foster parents have the right to request an agency Administrative Review and mediation of the decision.
- 6.6 Foster parents have the right to meet with an LCFS supervisor and the investigating licensing representative regarding the results of a licensing complaint investigation and are informed of this in writing. During this meeting, the foster parents' perspective is heard by the Licensing Supervisor in a non-prejudicial and unbiased manner. Their feedback is considered carefully. The foster parents' right to an unbiased supervisory review is ensured by involving staff members who have no prior involvement in the case. The licensing supervisor will consider the foster parent's feedback and issue an impartial decision based on the findings. After this meeting, the Supervisor is responsible for reaching an impartial and fair decision regarding the alleged violation. Foster parents have the opportunity to challenge the findings at the next level of appeal. The Licensing representative is available to assist the foster family and to offer support and assistance throughout this process if they do not agree with the supervisory decision.
- 6.7 LCFS has an established Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure. This grievance process is utilized to appeal founded or substantiated violations of the foster parent statute. Other issues, such as the child maltreatment findings, revocations of licenses, and licensing violations, are not handled through this process. These matters are covered by other established mechanisms. The Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure is reviewed annually with all foster parents.
- 6.8 Foster parents are part of the process of reviewing and clarifying these procedures. Foster parents have the right in this procedure to appeal up through LCFS' organizational structure to have their issues addressed. The grievance procedures regarding any violations of the Foster Parent Law, Rule 340, are addressed in Section
- 6.9 LCFS CFT and foster parents are provided information on the rights of foster parents during the investigatory process and the role of various CFT members during this process.
- 6.10 LCFS completes an investigation on a LCFS licensed foster home, unlicensed and relative home. If this is a concurrent investigation with both LCFS and DCFS involved, then LCFS cannot complete the Licensing Complaint Investigation until DCFS concludes with their investigation. During this process, the foster family is encouraged to remain in continual contact with both DCFS and LCFS.



Investigation Process and Procedure Overview

At the onset of the investigation, the foster parents are provided with an additional copy of the Foster Parent Bill of Rights, service appeal, 402 Licensing Standards, and the Agency Implementation Plan. These outline the investigation process and role of various CFT. Rule 402 Licensing Standards of Foster Family Homes outlines the specific standard for violations in the foster family home. Foster parents are notified of their right to appeal any decisions made through the LCFS grievance procedures. At the onset of the investigation, foster parents are informed of their right to have a person or advocate of their choice present during the interviews and throughout the process. A fair and timely impartial investigation is to be completed within thirty (30) calendar days. If additional time is needed to complete the investigation, the Licensing representative can submit a written request to the Licensing Supervisor for an extension.

Investigation Procedure

1. Within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt of the initial licensing complaint, a trained licensing representative conducts an unannounced visit to the foster home.
2. The licensing representative presents the foster parent with a written statement informing the foster parent of the alleged licensing violation and the licensing representative explains the investigation process.
3. The licensing representative conducts interviews with individuals residing in the foster family home. The licensing representative meets with household members separately and together.
4. Following the interview process, the licensing representative documents the recommendations of the licensing investigation. The licensing representative submits the recommendations to the Licensing Supervisor.
5. The licensing supervisor has seven (7) days to approve the recommendations or return the recommendations to the licensing representative.
6. Following the licensing supervisor's approval, the Agency and Institution Representative from DCFS reviews the complaint and makes the final approval of the recommendations. If the complaint is determined to be substantiated, a corrective plan is developed. The corrective plan is developed to remediate the violation.
7. The licensing representative meets with the foster parents to inform them of the results of the licensing investigation and the licensing representative will discuss any actions that need to be taken. When a complaint is determined to be substantiated and a corrective action plan is developed, the licensing representative works closely with the foster parents to ensure that the foster parents understand how the violation impacts the foster family home license and the licensing representative offers support and assistance in the corrective action process. A follow up letter, explaining the results and recommendations, is sent to the foster parents. In addition, the letter informs the foster parent of their right to request a supervisory Staffing. If this does not resolve the issue, foster parents have the right to request an agency administrative review, and mediation of the decision.



8. Foster parents will receive written notification of the right to meet with a supervisor and the investigating licensing representative regarding the results of a licensing complaint investigation. During the meeting, foster parents will have the opportunity to verbalize their opinion to the non-prejudicial and unbiased supervisor. The foster parent's feedback and perspectives will be carefully considered. Following the meeting, the supervisor will reach an impartial decision regarding the alleged violation. Following the meeting, if the foster parents do not agree with the decision, they have the opportunity to file a formal written grievance with the Regional Program Director. In cases where foster parents disagree with the supervisory decision, the licensing representative is available to assist the foster family with moving forward in the appeal process. The Licensing Supervisor informs foster caregivers that if they are unsatisfied with the results or outcome of the supervisory review, they may request an informal review with DCFS.

7. The Right to Receive Relevant Information Throughout Placement

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.

- 7.1 LCFS believes that foster parents are integral members of the child welfare team. As such, any information regarding the child for whom they are caring is shared with the foster family as a matter of practice. A major frustration of all team members, including foster parents, is the lack of information at initial placement. LCFS strives to gather quickly as much information as possible in order to share this data with foster parents and thereby, encouraging informed decision making for the children who are presently in their care. Whenever an issue or condition is identified by the Department of Child Protection (DCP), the child welfare specialist places a high priority on gathering additional information so that all team members, including foster parents, can better meet the needs of the individual child. Additionally, LCFS foster parents are given the DCFS form CFS 600-4, Sharing Information with Caregivers form. This document includes the following information:

1. case information and history;
2. health and medical information;
3. educational information and history;
4. placement history;
5. behavior/social information; and
6. emergency placements.

The CFS 600-4 is completed by the assigned child welfare specialist during the initial placement and updated as additional information is gathered. Additionally, this document is completed whenever there is a subsequent change in placement for a child. Foster parents receive a copy of this form and sign it as an acknowledgement of receipt of said



information. DCFS Foundations Training and LCFS trains child welfare specialists on how to obtain and share appropriate information.

- 7.2 Throughout the life of the case, the child welfare specialist continues to share pertinent information regarding the child with the foster family. Usually, this occurs during monthly home visits. Additional information is also gathered during Child and Family Team Meetings and from internal or external service providers. When new information becomes available this is shared with all involved team members. In addition, Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM) occur quarterly or whenever circumstances dictate the need for a CFTM, such as possible disruption in the child’s current living situation.

A Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM) can occur when a child moves from their initial placement as well as subsequent placement changes/disruptions. LCFS is committed to placement stability and recognizes its importance to a child’s well-being. However, occasionally, it is necessary to move a child. When placement change is necessary, LCFS strives to hold a meeting with all members of the child welfare team which includes current foster parents and potential foster parents. This allows for direct communication of the issues surrounding the disruption so that the potential foster parent can receive first-hand information relevant to the child. In addition, pre-placement visits are recommended to ensure a smooth transition.

- 7.3 The team, including the child welfare specialist and the supervisor, is required to share non-confidential, pertinent information as soon as possible with the foster family. By doing so, the foster family can make informed decisions regarding their ability to provide the appropriate care to the youth in care. This is particularly important when the child presents atypical behaviors and physical conditions. Whenever possible, this information is given to the foster family in writing prior to placement utilizing the DCFS form CFS 600-4.

Examples of such information include: changes in permanency goal, visitation schedule, and/or family composition. Certain information is protected by the Confidentiality Act and cannot be shared with foster parents (e.g. psychological evaluations of birth parents). It is expected that child welfare specialists discuss with the foster family only the findings and the recommendations of counseling and psychological reports that are relevant to the daily care of the child. Training of foster parents in appropriate disclosure of information is provided on an ongoing basis. Child welfare specialist receive training during Foundation Training and during regular supervision Workers are reminded during this time of the importance of obtaining and sharing all information with foster parents which is pertinent to the care of the child. LCFS requires mandatory training for all employees on such topics as HIPAA and Confidentiality.



- 7.4 It is the practice at LCFS that supervisors discuss each child and family with the child welfare specialist and document these supervisory sessions. This is a critical strategy to ensure accountability. During the discussion with the child welfare specialist, it is noted what information has been shared with the foster family. If it is discovered that relevant information has not been shared with the foster family, a plan for doing so is developed in an appropriate time frame.

Caseworkers are held accountable for sharing timely and accurate information with foster parents through regular supervision and performance monitoring. During monthly supervision sessions, supervisors review communication practices, address any barriers, and set clear expectations for proactive, transparent updates to foster parents.

Accountability is reinforced through documentation checks, adherence to response timelines, and follow-up measures. When gaps in communication are identified, corrective actions, including performance improvement plans and, if necessary, disciplinary measures, are implemented to ensure that foster parents consistently receive the information they need to support the children in their care.

- 7.5 Foster parents are encouraged to keep an agency provided folder of all pertinent child records. The purpose of the folder is to keep necessary information about the youth in care accessible. Foster parents are strongly encouraged to share any concerns or accomplishments that occur with the children in their care. Early identification of concerns is necessary to ensure that the appropriate supports and services are put into place to minimize the chance of disruption and to provide the needed assistance to foster parents and the children in their foster home.

This system of record-keeping helps foster parents organize critical child information, fostering a proactive approach to care and promoting early identification of potential needs. Foster parents are encouraged to document any significant milestones, medical appointments, or concerns, facilitating open communication with LCFS staff to support the child's development and stability.

- 7.6 Dissemination of information is shared by the child welfare specialist and licensing CFT members. The direct service CFT members (child welfare specialists and their supervisors) are responsible for child-specific information and telephone numbers. Licensing CFT members are responsible for distribution of the appeal procedures and list of possible questions that could be asked at the time of initial placement.

Licensing CFT regularly check-in with foster parents to see how they are doing with their placements. Licensing CFT continually reminds all foster parents that licensing in there to



provide ongoing supports and any recommendations to assist them in caring for their foster child(ren).

To ensure that foster parents have comprehensive and current information, LCFS child welfare specialists are responsible for completing and updating the DCFS form CFS 600-4 at initial placement and during any subsequent placements. The foster parents will receive a signed copy of this form to acknowledge their receipt of the information, promoting transparency and accountability in the information-sharing process.

Licensing staff conduct periodic check-ins with foster parents to ensure that they have all necessary resources and information to provide appropriate care. During these check-ins, licensing staff review the CFS 600-4 form to confirm it includes the latest information about the child and addresses any questions or concerns from the foster parent.

8. The Right to be Given Information Concerning a Child

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]

8.1 Whenever a licensed child welfare agency places a child in a licensed foster family home, the agency shall provide the following to the caretaker:

Available detailed information concerning the child’s educational and health history, copies of immunizations records (including insurance and medical card information), a history of the child’s previous placements, if any, and reasons for placement changes, excluding any information that identifies or reveals the location of any previous caretaker. In addition, LCFS foster parents are given the DCFS 600-4 form, “Sharing Information with Caregivers.” The CFS 600-4 verifies information the foster parent receives from the child welfare specialist including but not limited to the following:

1. case information and history;
2. health and medical information;
3. educational information and history;
4. placement history;
5. behavior/social information, and
6. emergency placements.

The CFS 600-4 is completed by the assigned child welfare specialist at the initial placement and updated as additional information is gathered. Moreover, this document is completed at any subsequent placement change throughout the time a child is in out-of-home care. Foster parents receive a copy of this form and sign it as an acknowledgement of receipt of



said information. Lastly, a copy of the completed CFS 600-4 is given to the licensing CFT members and is placed in the foster parents licensing file. This information is available to the foster parent per request.

- 8.2 LCFS provides information in the following areas: education and if applicable, the child's Individual Educational Plan, the medical card, and the results of the child's current dental and physical examinations. It is recommended this information be kept in the foster parent's folder for each child in placement. Generally, the history of a child's placement is provided to the foster parent prior to the initial placement of a child in their home. The child welfare specialist discloses to the caregiver the youth's behaviors and reason for the youth's prior disruption.
- 8.3 Specifically, the foster parent is provided a copy of the service plan that only pertains to the child, including any visitation arrangements and any other provisions that are related to the child. The child specific components of the service plan are given to the foster parents. Foster parents are informed that the visitation schedule frequently changes and their input will be solicited. Any such changes are shared with the foster family by the child welfare specialist within 24 hours of changes. To maintain transparency, any changes to the child's permanency goal, educational plan, or visitation schedule will be communicated to foster parents within 24 hours for significant changes and within 48 hours for all other updates. This ensures timely information sharing, allowing foster parents to adapt their care approach accordingly. LCFS provides the foster parent with access to the child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and encourages their attendance at school meetings, staffing, and other educational events. Foster parents are provided contact information for LCFS's educational liaison to support them in navigating educational needs and advocating effectively for the child. For all other changes, foster The child's individualized educational plan is shared. Foster parents receive a copy of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Child welfare specialists are required to review and discuss the IEP with the foster parent. In addition, the foster parents are encouraged to take an active role in the child's education and participate in all school Staffing and events. The name and telephone number of the Department's educational liaison is given to all of LCFS's foster parents and are encouraged to contact the educational liaison if they have questions or need assistance. CWS will be available to assist in the process when additional support is needed.
- 8.4 LCFS shares with foster families any known social or behavioral information that includes but is not limited to any criminal history, fire setting, sexual abuse, substance abuse, and any other destructive behaviors. LCFS prioritizes the timely communication of any safety-related or behavioral concerns to equip foster parents with the information necessary to create a secure and supportive environment for the child. Foster parents are encouraged to ask for clarification on any of these details as they relate to daily caregiving.



- 8.5 Foster parents are not only given the child specific service plan but the plan is discussed with them as well. Furthermore, a Staffing is conducted with the foster parent, child welfare specialist, licensing representative, program supervisor and therapist, if applicable, to ensure everyone understands the dynamics surrounding the circumstances that led to the child entering out-of-home care. In addition, the information, which has been collected through an Integrated Assessment, is shared with the foster family.
- 8.6 LCFS may prepare a written summary of the information, required by this subsection, and provide to the foster or prospective adoptive parent prior to placement. The foster or prospective adoptive parent may review the supporting documents in the child’s file in the presence of the child welfare specialist. In the case of an emergency placement, child welfare specialists shall, at least, provide information verbally, if necessary, and must subsequently provide the information in writing as required by this subsection. In the case of emergency placements, when time does not allow for the review, preparation, and collection of written information, LCFS shall provide such information as it becomes available. In emergency placements, verbal communication of available information will be provided immediately to foster parents, with a written summary and supporting documentation shared within 72 hours as additional information is collected. This process ensures foster parents receive essential information promptly, in line with DCFS regulations for emergency placements.
- 8.7 The Department shall adopt rules necessary for the implementation and regulation of the requirements of this subsection (c-5).
- 8.8 LCFS is committed to gathering all of the necessary child specific information as quickly as possible to provide to the foster parents (no later than 15 days for new cases and 30 for existing new cases.) The initial Child and Family Team Meeting, which occurs within 45 days of the initial placement and quarterly thereafter, is used for information sharing. Written documentation, such as immunizations, academic performance, the child specific service plan, and visitation plan are provided to foster parents and when it is appropriate for the case. The initial Child and Family Team Meeting will occur within 45 days of placement to facilitate the comprehensive exchange of information, including health, educational, and social updates. CFTMs will then occur quarterly or as needed, ensuring foster parents remain well-informed on the child's case progress and support strategies.
- 8.9 If foster parents are unable to attend the meetings, the child welfare specialist reviews and discusses the meeting detail with the foster family at the next scheduled home visit and as it pertains to the youth in care. Any vital information, which has been obtained, is given to the foster family immediately. If the change is substantial, such as a goal change



ordered by the court, foster parents will be notified within 24-hours, parents will be informed within 48 hours.

- 8.10 LCFS utilizes regular supervision between the child welfare specialists and supervisors to ensure that all available and necessary information is shared with the foster parent(s). Documentation of their contacts with the foster family is given to the Supervisor for review and approval. Documentation of all information shared with foster parents, including copies of the CFS 600-4 and updates provided during supervision, is stored in SACWIS. This approach ensures transparency and allows supervisors to verify compliance with DCFS policies on information sharing with foster parents.
- 8.11 Supervision notes are documented in SACWIS. These notes include the safety, wellbeing and permanency issues and concerns that were discussed as well as the supervisory direction and consultation. This includes what information that may need to be shared with foster parents.
- 8.12 Moreover, the Regional Director holds regular supervisory conferences with their front-line supervisors. During these conferences, contacts between foster parents and direct line CFT members are reviewed, as well as what information has been shared with the foster family. The multilevel system of supervision is one way in which LCFS ensures that foster parents are provided with the best possible information so that their ability to provide optimum care to children is maximized.
- 8.13 In addition to receiving information during Foundations Training, Child Welfare Specialist learn through agency trainings, supervision and all CFT meetings when and how they need to share child specific information with the necessary stakeholders throughout the life of the case.

9. The Right to be Notified of Scheduled Meetings and Staffing

The Right to be Notified of Scheduled Meetings and Staffing 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 Staffing's, and Individual Educational Planning Meetings; The Right To Be Informed of Decisions Made by The Courts or The Child Welfare Agency Concerning The Child; The Right to Provide Input Concerning the Plan of Services for the Child and to Have that Input Given Full Consideration in the Same Manner as Information Presented by Any Other Professional on the Team; and the Right to Communicate with Other Professionals Who Work With The Foster Child Within The Context of The Team, Including Therapists, Physicians, and Teachers.



- 9.1 All members of the child welfare team, (child welfare specialist, supervisor, licensing representative, licensing supervisor, case assistant, counselor, and foster parents) are responsible for giving timely notification regarding scheduled meetings to foster parents. Foster parents are encouraged and notified via mail, telephone calls, in-person, and during home visits to attend such meetings to ensure they receive all pertinent information regarding the needs of the child. The foster parents' contribution and input are considered essential to all planning since they are the ones providing daily care and observing the behavior of the child. If a foster parent is unable to attend the meeting or Staffing, the child welfare specialist is responsible for informing the foster parent of any actions taken regarding the care, placement, and service of the child within 5 working days.
- 9.2 When the permanency goal is reunification, all parties are notified of the Child and Family Team Meetings. This expectation is delineated in DCFS policy. The initial Child and Family Team Meeting is to occur within 45 days of case assignment and held at least quarterly thereafter. Child welfare specialists are to encourage the foster parents' attendance and participation in these meetings and are a way to reinforce that LCFS considers them vital members of the team. In alignment with LCFS's commitment to shared decision-making, foster parents are encouraged to actively participate in permanency planning and reunification efforts.
- 9.3 If it becomes necessary to conduct a Clinical Intervention to Preserve Placement (CIPP) Staffing on a child in placement, the child welfare specialist completes a CIPP referral form that documents all individuals invited to the CIPP. The foster parent is always included as an invited member of the team. Prior to submission of the CIPP documents, supervisors review the information to ensure that foster parents are part of the process. Upon submission of the CIPP documents, the CIPP team ensures that all parties are notified verbally and/or in writing of the time and location of the CIPP meeting.
- 9.4 Foster parents receive notice of ACRs, court hearings, and other events either by phone, in-person, or by mail. When foster parents are unable to attend, relevant updates will be communicated within 5 working days to ensure they remain informed about the child's case. Foster parents are notified by telephone, in-person, and/or by mail of Administrative Case Reviews (ACR), court hearings, and visits as well as location of these events. If a foster parent is unable to attend any of these events, all pertinent information concerning the child is given to the foster parent in a timely manner. Foster parents are expected to communicate on a regular basis with the child welfare team so that their concerns, knowledge, and issues are part of the ongoing plan for the care of the child.
- 9.5 Child welfare specialists are responsible for completing a Case Review Monitoring Report (CRMR) and submitting it to DCFS in order to ensure that foster parents receive timely notice of Administrative Case Reviews. The Case Review Monitoring Report ensures that



foster parents receive notification directly from the Department about the time and location of this meeting for any child in their care.

- 9.6 Foster parents are provided information on the LCFS grievance procedure at the time of licensing. Foster parents are routinely informed of the LCFS service appeal process through the Foster Parent Newsletter and during licensing monitoring visits.
- 9.7 LCFS reviews records quarterly as part of its peer review process, to ensure that foster parents are notified of Staffing, court hearings, and visits. Relevant documents are reviewed for foster parents' signatures. The results of these reviews are presented to supervisors, managers, and directors for follow-up actions. In addition, supervisors check for compliance during supervision on a quarterly basis.
- 9.8 Child welfare specialists' schedules are reviewed by their supervisors on a monthly basis as a way to ensure that the appropriate events are occurring as planned and/or needed. Supervisors are ensuring that foster parents are receiving proper notifications. All these activities are documented in SACWIS supervision notes. These activities are documented in SACWIS to ensure compliance with DCFS standards on notification and oversight.
- 9.9 It is the Child welfare specialist's responsibility to inform foster parents of the results of court hearings within 48 hours of a court hearing. In addition, the child welfare specialist will discuss the outcome of all court hearings during the next scheduled home visit and at that time the foster parent will be informed of the next hearing date. This information may be provided to the foster parent in writing.
- 9.10 The child welfare specialist should inform the foster parents of any changes to State rules/regulations during any Pandemic. The scheduling of video conferences, court hearings and/or other meetings held via video conferences will be discussed and scheduled with the foster parents to insure they are properly notified and able to participate in any meeting such as court hearings, ACRs and CIPPs. During emergencies or pandemics, LCFS will coordinate virtual meetings (such as court hearings, CFTMs, ACRs, and CIPPs) and ensure foster parents receive advance notification. Foster parents will receive guidance on participating in these virtual meetings to ensure they can remain active members of the team.



10. The Right to be Given Information in a Timely and Consistent Manner

The Right to Be Given, in A Timely and Consistent Manner, Any Information a Case Worker Has Regarding the Child and The Child’s Family Which Is Pertinent to The Care and Needs of the Child and to The Making of a Permanency Plan for The Child. Disclosure of Information Concerning the Child’s Family Shall Be Limited to That Information That Is Essential for Understanding the Needs of and Providing Care to The Child in Order to Protect the Rights of the Child’s Family. When A Positive Relationship Exists Between the Foster Parent and The Child’s Family, The Child’s Family May Consent to Disclosure of Additional Information.

- 10.1 Upon receipt of an intake from DCFS, LCFS receives preliminary information regarding why the child came into care. This information is used to complete the DCFS CFS 2017 form (Caregiver Matching Tool), which assists in identifying possible placements. Foster parents receive any and all pertinent information for the care and needs of the foster child when this information is available to the child welfare specialist. **Within 10 days**, LCFS foster parents are given the DCFS form CFS 600-4 which is entitled, “Sharing Information with Caregivers.” The CFS 600-4 verifies information the foster parent receives from the child welfare specialist. This information includes, but is not limited to, the child’s case history, covering his/her legal status, permanency goal, educational performance, and medical history. Information sharing is a vital way to focus on meeting the needs of children and achieving positive outcomes on their behalf.

- 10.2 LCFS child welfare specialists assist the birth parents in sharing personal information about themselves with foster parents. If they decide to do so, a written release of information is signed by the birth parents. Foster parents are reminded that information, which is shared with them, can only be discussed with authorized individuals as indicated in the confidentiality agreement which was signed during the initial licensing process and subsequent renewals of licensure. In cases where a positive relationship between the foster and birth family allows for further sharing, additional information may be disclosed if the birth parents provide written consent.

LCFS adheres strictly to DCFS confidentiality guidelines. Foster parents are informed that any shared information must be kept confidential and may only be discussed with individuals authorized per the signed confidentiality agreement. This agreement is reviewed at each licensing renewal to reinforce compliance with confidentiality standards

- 10.3 The sharing of information regarding each child in care allows foster parents to be well informed and well prepared to care for each child in their home. Therefore, it is encouraged to have caregivers speak to one another as it strengthens their understanding of the child’s needs and enhances their ability to meet a child’s needs. Full disclosure facilitates the ability of foster parents to enhance the well-being of a child and facilitate the achievement of permanency in a timely manner. Comprehensive information sharing supports foster parents in addressing each child’s unique needs effectively and is critical



for achieving positive outcomes. By promoting open communication, LCFS ensures that foster parents are equipped to provide tailored care that enhances the child’s stability and well-being, ultimately facilitating timely permanency planning.

- 10.4 Foster parents are encouraged to ask questions they may have regarding a child who may be placed in their care. Asking questions assists foster parents in their decision making and may ensure the foster parents are able to meet the specific needs of the child. When possible, pre-placement visits and/or Child and Family Team Meetings are held prior to the placement of a child. These actions add to the decision-making process of foster parents.

11. The Right to be Given Reasonable Written Notice

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 in Placement. The Notice Shall Be Waived Only in Cases of a Court Order or When a Child Is Determined to Be at Imminent Risk of Harm.

- 11.1 Foster parents are given a **written notice of decision**, the CFS 151-B Notice of Change in Placement, in all situations where a decision has been made to terminate the current placement of a child. The CFS 151-B is provided within 14 days prior to any change unless there is imminent risk to the child. When LCFS makes a critical decision to move a child, the foster parents are given a written notice that includes the specific reason for the change or termination of the child’s placement and notification of the foster parent’s right to appeal the change through DCFS. In the CFS 151-B, the foster parent is provided an avenue to request a **clinical placement** review where they are able to express their opinions regarding the change in placement. (DCFS **CPR# 1-800-225-1431**). The LCFS child welfare specialist provides the foster parents with the [DCFS CFS-1050-32, Service Appeal Brochure](#).
- 11.2 If LCFS determines that a foster child is at imminent risk of harm, the 14-day notice is waived, and the child is immediately removed from the foster home. The foster parents are given written notice of the full reasons for the termination of the child’s placement. The foster parent is given the CFS 151-B, which includes information on appeal rights. The 14-day notice may be waived in the event of a court order dictating a change in placement. The foster parent may waive the 14-day notice if both parties are in agreement.
- 11.3 LCFS acknowledges the foster parent’s right to give LCFS a written fourteen-day notice for the removal of a child. Every effort is made to maintain the placement and put additional supports in place to preserve the placement. If these efforts are unsuccessful, LCFS is committed to comply with their request and to provide special support until a new placement can be identified.



- 11.4 Foster parents are informed of the appeals process during initial and ongoing training sessions, ensuring they fully understand their rights and options if a placement change is recommended.

12. The Right to be Notified of Court Hearings in a Timely Manner

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.

- 12.1 Information about court hearings, including the court dates and the nature of the court proceedings, is provided to the foster parents by the Child Welfare Specialist (CWS). Foster parents are encouraged to attend these proceedings. Documentation of these discussions between placement CFT and foster parents are documented in a case note and located in the case file. In monthly supervision sessions, barriers to timely and appropriate communication with foster parents are identified and addressed to hold caseworkers accountable for keeping foster parents informed. When necessary, disciplinary actions are taken to ensure caseworkers fulfill their responsibilities in notifying foster parents.
- 12.2 Supervisors review monthly schedules to ensure CWS notify foster parents of court hearings and encourage their participation. This compliance is discussed during individual supervision and at quarterly Child and Family Team Meetings, while respecting birth parent confidentiality. Discussion of court proceedings is covered in the quarterly child family team meeting (while respecting birth parent confidentiality). Foster parents are encouraged to attend the Child and Family Team Meetings as well.
- 12.3 All foster parents are made aware of their right to be heard during court proceedings. Additionally, they are informed that if their request to be heard is denied, they may file a “writ of mandamus” with an attorney’s assistance. Additional training in court procedures is available to foster parents and all child welfare CFT members.
- 12.4 LCFS makes training available to foster parents regarding their legal rights and the court process so they will feel more comfortable in juvenile court settings. LCFS CFT members are trained in the legal rights of foster parents.
- 12.5 Lastly, foster parents are able to speak with the youth’s assigned Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) as it pertains to court dates, nature of proceedings and any other concerns the caregivers may wish to share with the Courts regarding the youth in their care.



13. The Right to be Considered as a Placement Option

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.

- 13.1 Foster parents have the right to be considered as a placement option when a foster child, who was formerly placed with them, re-enters foster care. This is contingent upon such placement being consistent with the best interests of the child and other children in the foster home. LCFS prioritize previous foster parents as potential placement options when a child re-enters foster care, unless such a placement is not in the best interests of the child or other children in the home.
- 13.2 LCFS Child Welfare Specialist (CWS) and/or Family Resource and Engagement Specialist (FRES) will utilize the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) and Augintel to review and verify the child’s previous placements. This includes assessing the history of care, relationship quality, and the previous foster family's current circumstances. LCFS CWS will use SACWIS records to verify the child’s previous placements and determine whether the previous foster family is a suitable option based on the child’s best interests.
- 13.3 Placement decisions will involve collaboration among Child Welfare Specialists (CWS), Supervisors, and Licensing Representatives (LR’s) as part of the Child and Family Team (CFT) process. CFT will collaborate in making the most appropriate choice for placement of a youth in care. Decisions are based on the child’s best interest, which includes but is not limited to, their age, needs, family situation, educational placement, family’s home community, and the youth’s permanency goal.
- 13.4 When a re-entry placement is under consideration, LCFS will give precedence to placements with relatives or siblings if such arrangements are in the best interests of the child.
- 13.5 All re-entry placement decisions will be documented in SACWIS and communicated to all relevant parties, including the child’s guardian ad litem (GAL), current foster parents, and biological family (if applicable). Foster parents under consideration for re-entry placement will receive timely updates and have the opportunity to participate in decision-making discussions.



14. The Right to Have Timely Access to Appeals Processes

The Right to Have Timely Access to The Child’s Placement Agency Existing Appeal Process and The Right to Be Free from Acts of Harassment and Retaliation by Any Other Party When Exercising the Right to Appeal.

14.1 Foster parents are informed of their rights to appeal through both LCFS and DCFS appeals processes. This information, along with literature on the Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure, is provided during the initial licensing interview and upon request. Foster parents also receive reminders of these rights during regular trainings and through written materials.

In line with the LCFS grievance policy, foster parents receive information on the appeals process, including the Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure, during their initial interview with a child welfare specialist or licensing representative. Foster parents are provided with a copy of the LCFS grievance procedure, ensuring they understand their rights to access this process at any time.

14.2 LCFS follows a two-tier grievance process. Foster parents are encouraged to resolve complaints at the first level, working with their assigned child welfare specialist and supervisor. If unresolved, the grievance moves to a formal process, allowing foster parents to escalate to the Program Director, Corporate Officer, or Vice President as necessary. Foster parents may provide their grievances verbally, with assistance from staff to document the issue if needed. The second tier is a grievance. The grievance procedure is as follows:

- a. When the outcome of the meeting between the foster parent and their child welfare specialist and/or supervisor is not satisfactory, foster parents are able to file a formal written grievance with the Regional Director. The child welfare specialist or licensing representative will provide the foster parent with contact information and the appropriate paperwork to assist in filing a grievance. Foster parents are asked to put the complaint in writing. If a foster parent does not choose to do so, the child welfare specialist will complete the paperwork on their behalf and place a copy in their foster parent file. Within 10 working days of receiving a foster parent’s grievance, LCFS will schedule a meeting to attempt to resolve the issue.
- b. If the issue is not yet resolved, the grievance is moved to the LCFS Corporate Officer whose authority includes the foster care program. The LCFS Corporate Officer will contact the foster parent to attempt to resolve the grievance. At each level of escalation, LCFS management will provide a written response to the foster parent within 30 days, documenting the steps taken to address the grievance and ensuring



transparency throughout the process. The foster parent's right to appeal remains protected, with clear communication at every stage.

- c. If there is no resolution, the grievance is moved to the Vice President of Strategy & Organizational Excellence and LCFS' Privacy Officer who will convene a Client Grievance Committee. The Committee will review and vigorously discuss the concerns raised by the foster family. A decision is reached and a written communication is provided to the foster parent within 30 calendar days of receipt of the grievance. If necessary, grievances are escalated to the LCFS Corporate Officer, followed by the Vice President and, finally, to the President and CEO for a final review. The President and CEO respond **within 10 days**, ensuring a timely and final determination.
- d. If the issue remains unsatisfactory to a foster parent, he/she has the right to appeal to the President and CEO, in writing, within 30 days of receiving the decision from the Committee. The President and CEO will review the foster parent's appeal and respond within 30 days. This determination is final.
- e. All grievances that reach the second level of the process are tracked for quality improvement purposes. Non-identifying information is collected and sent to the Associate Vice President of Strategy & Organizational Excellence and LCFS' Privacy Officer to be aggregated and reported quarterly to the Risk Management Committee.
- f. If the foster parent feels they are experiencing harassment or retaliation regarding their appeal, they have access to the immediate supervisor and executive management CFT members. This issue is discussed during foster parent law training for child welfare CFT members. During the training, workers are made aware of LCFS' position regarding the treatment of foster parents who are involved in the appeal process. **All staff are required to treat foster parents with dignity and respect.** LCFS's commitment to quality improvement, all grievances reaching the second tier are tracked, with non-identifying data aggregated quarterly and reviewed by the Risk Management Committee to identify trends and address systemic concerns.
- g. Foster parents are informed of the appeal process at the time of initial licensure and during ongoing trainings. LCFS CFT listens and documents the concerns and suggestions of the foster parents. LCFS CFT reports issues, concerns, and suggestions to LCFS supervisors. LCFS CFT, supervisors and the foster parent will discuss the concerns and suggestions and determine the service needs of the foster parents. On a yearly basis, the LCFS team will review the appeal process and make suggestions that will better serve the foster parents. Foster parents are assured of protection from retaliation when exercising their right to appeal. LCFS emphasizes this policy during



Foster Parent Law training, requiring staff to treat foster parents with dignity and respect throughout the grievance process.

- h. This Service Appeal Process is a two-step process. When the issue is the removal or change of placement of a child the Service Appeal Process consists of a clinical placement review of the placement decision and a fair hearing. In all other cases the Service Appeal Process consists of mediation, which is optional, and a fair hearing. Foster parents are informed of the grievance process at the time of licensing, during trainings, and through ongoing communication, ensuring they have continuous access to this resource. LCFS reviews the grievance process annually, incorporating feedback from foster parents to improve its accessibility and responsiveness.
- i. If a foster parent does not agree with a decision made or action taken by DCFS pertaining to services, a foster parent may do the following:

Appeal within 10 days from receiving notice and the foster parent may be able to stop the Department from acting on its decision until such time that your case has proceeded through the Service Appeal Process. Request a service appeal in writing within 45 days from receiving notice of the decision or action intended to be taken by the Department. If the foster parent does not agree with the decision made in a clinical placement review regarding the change in placement of a child in your care, request an appeal within 10 days from the clinical placement decision.

15. The Right to be Informed of Foster Parent Hotline

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. [20ILCS 520/1-15].

- 15.1 During the licensing process the licensing representative provides the foster parents with the following numbers: (1) Office of the Inspector General - **1-800-722-9124** and (2) DCFS Advocacy Office - **800-232-3798 or 217-524-2029**. All foster parents are provided with brochures that describes the roles and functions of the DCFS Advocacy Office and the Inspector General's Office. The licensing representatives are available on an ongoing basis to answer any questions a foster parent may have. The Foster OIG brochures are available at all regional offices.



The Office of Inspector General (OIG) addresses and phone numbers are listed below:

2240 W. Ogden Avenue, 1st Floor
Chicago, IL 60612
(Toll Free) 800-722-9124
(Phone) 312-433-3000
(Fax) 312-433-3032

4 W. Old State Capitol Plaza
Springfield, IL 62701
(Toll Free) 800-722-9124
(Phone) 217-524-0074
(Fax) 217-557-8843



III. STATEMENT OF FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

According to Rule 340 www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/089/089003400c00600r.html foster parents have specific responsibilities as a member of the Child Welfare Team that goes above and beyond daily care of our youth in care (YIC). Fulfilling the following responsibilities are of the utmost importance to the care and well-being of youth who are in their care with the assistance and commitment of LCFS in fostering that relationship.

1. Responsibility to Openly Communicate

The Responsibility to Openly Communicate and Share Information About the Child with Other Members of the Child Welfare Team.

- 1.1 LCFS encourage effective communication between foster parents and the Child and Family Team(CFT) members. Team members typically include the Foster Parent, Youth in Care (YIC), Child Welfare Specialist (CWS), Licensing Representatives (LR), Therapist, biological parents, teachers, and other appropriate LCFS staff, i.e. Supervisor, Manager and Director. Positive interactions within the CFT is necessary to ensure the child's well-being, development, and successful placement.
- 1.2 The Foster Parent will receive a folder that will enclose a “Meet the Team” flyer which will include additional members of the team and their contact information. Foster parents are made aware of the importance and expectation to share information during the PRIDE REDESIGN training in becoming a Foster Parent. Open communication is encouraged throughout the life of a child’s case to better serve the needs of the youth in care.
- 1.3 Active and open communication is encouraged within the CFT. Foster parents are responsible for communicating regularly updates to CWS and being of the youth in care about the youth’s behavior, health, school progress, therapy, and all other relevant developments with the youth. This information is typically communicated during monthly visits with the CWS, during Administrative Case Reviews (ACR), phone calls, emails, and or written reports.

Foster parents are also encouraged to keep detailed records of all important communication, including meetings, phone calls, and decisions made. These records can be maintained in logs, notebooks, or journals and serve as a vital tool for tracking the progress of the child and documenting key events. Foster parents are encouraged to share relevant updates during Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM) meetings to ensure transparency and alignment among team members.



Licensing representatives can assist foster parents by providing guidance on best practices for record-keeping and offering templates or examples to help ensure comprehensive documentation. Additionally, licensing reps can periodically review records with foster parents to ensure compliance with licensing requirements and support effective communication.

Child welfare specialists (CWS) can reinforce this practice by encouraging foster parents to share their documentation during case reviews and CFT meetings. CWS can also collaborate with foster parents by using these records to address concerns, track trends in the child's care, and ensure that decisions made align with the child's best interests.

- 1.4 LCFS communicates with Foster Parents through the LCFS Foster Parent Quarterly newsletters, Quarterly Foster Parent Forums, Agency Website, Foster Parent Support Groups and Monthly trainings.

Foster parents are encouraged to offer their views and share them with the CWS on a regular basis. This may occur during home visits, child and family team meetings, six-month monitoring visits, counselling session and Administrative Case Reviews (ACR). Communication will include, but are not limited to the following: The Youth in Care (YIC) Medical, Immunization Dental, Vision, Therapy, reports. Educational records such as report cards, IEP's, 504 Plans, Progress Reports and Behavior in school. A change in behavior is expected to be communicated with the CFT.

Foster Parents are encouraged to be active in meetings regarding the youth in care by attending case planning, permanency planning, child and family team meetings and more.

- 1.5 Foster parents are responsible for reporting any incidents or circumstances which may affect the child's safety and well-being within twenty-four (24) hours to their assigned CWS. For after hour emergencies, the foster parent is expected to call the local office's on-call number which is provided in the LCFS Introduction Folder. Foster parents are provided with the Agency's business and after-hours phone numbers by their LR and CWS. This information is shared during the licensing process and after any placement of a child/youth with their family.

It is the responsibility of the child welfare specialist to document all shared information obtained from the foster parent. This information is documented in a SACWIS case note. It is the responsibility of the Licensing Representative for documenting any shared information from the foster parent as a case note. Relevant information is then also shared between licensing and case management when deemed necessary.



Fostering open, respectful, and consistent communication with the CFT, foster parents can help ensure that the child’s needs are met and that everyone involved is working toward the same goal—providing the best care possible while the youth is in care.

2. Responsibility to Respect Confidentiality

The Responsibility to Respect the Confidentiality of Information Concerning Foster Children and Their Families and Act Appropriately Within Applicable Confidentiality Laws and Regulations.

- 2.1 Lutheran Child and Family Services (LCFS) and foster parents are committed to upholding confidentiality as mandated by the **Confidentiality Act**. During **Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education (PRIDE REDESIGN)** training, participants engage in substantive discussions regarding the importance of confidentiality and its implications for foster care.

As part of the licensing process, foster parents are required to sign the **CFS 503-1 Confidentiality Agreement Form**, acknowledging their understanding of and commitment to adhering to the provisions of the Confidentiality Act. This form outlines their responsibilities in safeguarding sensitive information about the children in their care, as well as case-related details, ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards.

- 2.2 Child Welfare Specialist (CWS) and Licensing Representative (LR) reinforce the importance of confidentiality regarding children's personal and family information. Confidentiality is discussed with the foster parent during their six-month monitoring visits and during home visits with the child welfare specialist.

- 2.3 Lutheran Child and Family Services (LCFS) provides comprehensive training on HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) and confidentiality, in addition to the mandatory training programs required by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). These sessions ensure that foster parents fully understand their legal obligations and the importance of safeguarding sensitive information.

As part of the onboarding and support process, the assigned Licensing Representative (LR) provides foster parents with the following critical documents to promote transparency, compliance, and advocacy:

- The Foster Parent Law
- DCFS Rule 331, which specifically outlines confidentiality requirements
- The Agency's Implementation Plan
- The Foster Parent Law Grievance Forms
- The Foster Parent Law 340, detailing foster parents' rights and responsibilities
- Licensing Rule 402, covering licensing standards for foster homes
- The Agency's Appeal Process
- The DCFS Appeal Processes



These resources equip foster parents with the tools they need to navigate their roles effectively while maintaining confidentiality and adhering to all applicable regulations.

3. Responsibility to Advocate for Children

The Responsibility to Advocate for Children in The Foster Parent's Care.

- 3.1 LCFS supports foster parents in their responsibility to care for and advocate for all youth in care. The Child Family Team (CFT) will provide additional information on supports to assist in the advocacy for the safety and wellbeing of the YIC.
- 3.2 LCFS encourages foster parents to advocate with the Agency and other providers to obtain the appropriate services for the youth in their care. The Agency will assist foster parents in this task by providing information, support and any additional needed services.
- 3.3 Foster parents are required to attend six (6) hours of educational advocacy training so they are better able to represent the child's best interests in educational settings. During PRIDE REDESIGN training, foster parents are informed of the value and wealth of information that is disseminated in educational advocacy training.
- 3.4 LCFS encourages foster parents to be active members of the team by attending court hearings, administrative case reviews, child and family team meetings as well as any other meetings that relate to the youth in their care. Through this participation, foster parents are able to be advocates for the children for whom they are caring. Foster parents are made aware of their responsibility to attend these meetings and receive notice of these meetings requesting their attendance.
- 3.5 Trainings are presented at the Statewide Foster Parents Conferences regarding DCFS procedures. These trainings are held jointly with LCFS CFT members and foster parents for the purpose of achieving common knowledge and understanding. Trainings are also approved by DCFS via virtual and in-person to help foster parents on many topics to help them care for and understand the child's needs.
- 3.6 LCFS empowers foster parents to advocate effectively for the children in their care by offering a robust range of specialized training opportunities. These trainings are tailored to equip foster parents with the knowledge and skills needed to meet the unique needs of the children they serve. Key offerings include:
 - Child-Specific Medical Training conducted by LCFS nurses, ensuring foster parents are well-prepared to manage medical needs and understand treatment plans.



- Trauma and Behavior Training led by LCFS counseling professionals and members of the Child and Family Team (CFT), focusing on understanding trauma-informed care and effective behavior management strategies.

Additional training provided by Child Welfare Specialists (CWS) and Licensing Representatives, covering critical topics such as advocacy, compliance, and foster home requirements. Foster parents are also encouraged to explore a wide array of DCFS-approved trainings through the DCFS Learning and Development Center (LDC) website at <https://learning.dcfs.illinois.gov/en/index-por>

These trainings offer valuable resources on medical, behavioral, and trauma-related topics, further supporting foster parents in providing the best possible care for the children entrusted to them.

4. Responsibility to Treat Children with Dignity

The Responsibility to Treat Children in The Foster Parent's Care and The Children's Family with Dignity, Respect, and Consideration.

- 4.1 Lutheran Child and Family Services (LCFS) expects foster parents to treat youth in care and their families with dignity, respect, and consideration, fostering a supportive and inclusive environment. This critical responsibility is emphasized during PRIDE REDESIGN (Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education) training, reinforced through ongoing training sessions, and reiterated in support meetings and the Rule 402 Licensing Standards.

To help foster parents uphold this responsibility, LCFS provides a network of support, including individualized guidance from Child Welfare Specialists (CWS), access to trauma-informed care resources, and regular opportunities for skill-building through workshops and group discussions. These resources empower foster parents to meet this expectation with confidence and compassion.

- 4.2 Training is provided to Foster Parents as it is important that foster parents understand the critical significance of primary relationships and the effects that separation from birth families has upon YIC regardless of the length of time the youth has lived with his/her birth family. **LCFS Best Start for Families Program** <https://lcfs.org/program/best-start-for-families/> offers LCFS foster parents both in-person and virtual parenting support groups. These groups provide a space for foster parents to connect with others, share experiences, and discuss challenges and successes. Foster Parents will learn how building social-emotional skills can strengthen family relationships for both parents and children. Additionally, foster parents will receive a Children's Social/Emotional Activity Booklet and



a Caregiver Handbook to support their parenting journey. For more details, reference Right # 2.

- 4.3 Lutheran Child and Family Services (LCFS) closely monitors foster parents' interactions with youth in care and their birth families to ensure these relationships are positive, respectful, and supportive. This oversight helps foster parents meet their responsibilities and uphold the values of dignity and respect.

During the licensing process, foster parents are required to sign the CFS 452-1 Corporal Punishment Acknowledgement Form. The purpose of this form is to ensure foster parents understand that it is never appropriate to use corporal punishment, verbal abuse, or emotional abuse, or to speak negatively about the youth, their birth family, or siblings. These guidelines are critical in promoting a nurturing and supportive environment for the youth in care.

The importance of appropriate treatment of youth in care, as well as fostering and maintaining positive relationships with birth parents and siblings, is continuously reinforced throughout the licensing process. Additionally, these principles are supported and revisited through collaborative work with the Child and Family Team (CFT), which provides foster parents with direct service support, training, and ongoing guidance.

- 4.4 Foster parents are provided with training to ensure they are well-equipped to support youth in care and maintain respectful relationships with birth families. These trainings include:

- The Rights and Responsibilities of Birth Parents: Focusing on the legal and emotional significance of birth parents' roles and how foster parents can collaborate effectively with them.
- Respect and Understanding for the Birth Family: Emphasizing the importance of fostering empathy and promoting positive interactions between youth and their birth families.
- The Impact of Separation from Birth Family on Youth in Care: Highlighting the emotional and developmental challenges faced by youth due to separation and strategies to mitigate these impacts.

To reinforce these principles, foster parents are provided with the **Foster Parent Rights and Responsibilities Brochure and CFS 1050-52 Rights of Foster Parents Form**, along with other resources outlining their responsibilities. These materials serve as valuable references for fostering understanding and maintaining a child-focused approach in their care. Foster Parents can access these resources and register for courses through the LDC Public Access Portal at <https://learning.dcf.illinois.gov>.



4.5 The Child Welfare Specialist (CWS) plays a critical role in fostering meaningful connections between youth, their siblings, and their birth parents. The CWS actively engages foster parents in thoughtful discussions about these relationships, emphasizing the importance of maintaining and nurturing family bonds.

4.6 Foster parents are encouraged to create a **Life Book**, a personalized montage of significant life events, milestones, and memories for the youth in care. This valuable keepsake helps the child maintain a sense of identity and continuity, fostering positive self-esteem and emotional well-being.

Foster parents are also encouraged to share meaningful photographs of the youth with their birth families, promoting connection and inclusion. Whenever appropriate, foster parents are invited to involve birth families in celebrations such as birthdays, school achievements, and cultural events, reinforcing the child's relationships and sense of belonging within their family of origin. These efforts not only strengthen the child's emotional bonds but also support their journey of healing and reconciliation with their birth families.

4.7 As part of their role, foster parents are expected to actively support and facilitate ongoing visitation, telephone calls, and other appropriate forms of contact between the child and their birth family, in accordance with DCFS Rule 301.220 and the child's service plan. These interactions are vital to maintaining the child's emotional connections, promoting stability, and supporting reunification efforts whenever possible.

Foster parents must also demonstrate a supportive and respectful attitude toward the child's relationship with their birth family, regardless of the circumstances that led to the child's removal. This responsibility is grounded in the understanding that preserving these connections contributes to the child's overall well-being, sense of identity, and cultural heritage.

To assist foster parents in meeting this expectation, LCFS and DCFS provide ongoing training, resources, and guidance on how to navigate complex family dynamics while prioritizing the child's best interests. Foster parents are encouraged to consult with their Child and Family Team (CFT) to address any challenges and ensure all actions align with the child's permanency goals and emotional needs.



5. Responsibility to Recognize Foster Parents Strengths

The Responsibility to Recognize the Foster Parent's Own Individual and Familial Strengths and Limitations When Deciding Whether to Accept a Child into Care; And The Responsibility to Recognize the Foster Parent's Own Support Needs and Utilize Appropriate Supports in Providing Care for Foster Children.

5.1 Through Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education (PRIDE REDESIGN) training and ongoing assessments, Lutheran Child and Family Services (LCFS) ensures that foster parents develop a clear and realistic understanding of their individual and family strengths, as well as their limitations, in providing care for youth in foster care. The Child and Family Team (CFT), composed of key support professionals, plays a critical role in helping foster parents recognize and build upon these strengths while addressing areas for growth.

It is the responsibility of the Child Welfare Specialist (CWS) to engage foster parents in meaningful discussions about their abilities and challenges, identify targeted training opportunities to enhance their caregiving skills, and connect them with relevant support systems and resources. The Licensing Representative (LR) and CWS collaborate to provide foster parents with access to additional tools and services tailored to meet the unique needs of the children in their care, ensuring that foster parents are well-equipped to fulfill their responsibilities.

5.2 Foster parents are assessed by the Licensing Representative (LR) to facilitate a well-matched placement that promotes stability and success in the life of the Youth in Care (YIC). During the licensing process, the LR conducts an **Initial Assessment (CFS 590)**, which provides a detailed overview of the child's challenges, behaviors, interests, and strengths. This assessment ensures that the foster parent's skills and household environment align with the specific needs of the child.

To further support this process, the **Matching Tool (CFS 2017)** is used to comprehensively evaluate and document the foster parent's strengths, abilities, and capacity to meet the needs of the YIC. This structured approach enhances placement stability by ensuring compatibility and alignment between the child's requirements and the foster parent's capabilities.

This careful assessment process underscores the commitment of Lutheran Child and Family Services (LCFS) and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to prioritize the well-being and long-term success of youth in care.



- 5.3 An open dialogue with the foster parent, child welfare specialist, and licensing representative enables the assessment of strengths and limitations and allows the agency to best utilize the skills of the foster parent.
- 5.4 Additional trainings may be identified for foster parents to strengthen their ability to care for youth in care. Specialized foster parents are required to receive additional training annually, in addition to the DCFS training requirements for licensure renewal.

6. Responsibility to be Aware of Benefits

The Responsibility to Be Aware of the Benefits of the of Relying on and Affiliating with other Foster Parents and Foster Parent Associations to Improving the Quality of Care and Service to Children and Families.

- 6.1 LCFS coordinates events, such as annual regional Foster Parent Conferences, a Statewide Foster Parent Conference, as well as regular and ongoing training opportunities which allows foster parents to come together and build a connection with their peers. LCFS informs foster parents of these opportunities by mail, email, during in-person monitoring visits, agency website, through the foster parent quarterly newsletter and quarterly foster parent forums.
- 6.2 Foster parents are given the opportunity, during training sessions, to network with other foster parents to further provide support, increase knowledge base, and to improve skills. Foster parents are encouraged to write articles for the Foster Parent Newsletter, join committees, start Foster Parent Support groups, assist with providing trainings for Foster Parents and LCFS staff and co-host the quarterly foster parent forums, in order to share their experiences and provide information.
- 6.3 LCFS arranges social events, such as holiday parties and picnics which offer opportunities, on an informal basis, to interact with other foster parents. LCFS encourages foster parents to attend these events. Attendance can provide learning and networking opportunities and a forum to share skills and expertise with other foster parents.
- 6.4 LCFS foster parents receive Fostering in Illinois flyers from the Illinois Foster Parent Association (IFPA) and quarterly LCFS newsletters, keeping them informed about resources, events, and opportunities. Foster parents are encouraged to actively engage with foster parent advocacy groups in their communities to access additional support and advocacy resources.



LCFS encourages foster parents to connect with statewide foster parent advocacy, organizations such as the ones listed below:

Illinois Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (IL FAPA)

Phone: 217-753-3535

Website: <https://nfpacosa.org/illinois-foster-adoptive-parent-association/>

Provides advocacy, training, and resources for foster and adoptive parents across Illinois.

Illinois DCFS Advocacy Office for Children and Families

Phone: 800-232-3798

Email: dcfs.advocacy@illinois.gov

A resource for foster parents to address concerns or seek assistance related to foster care services.

LCFS Licensing Representatives (LRs) and Child Welfare Specialists actively encourage foster parents to engage with local and statewide foster care organizations and advisory groups. Foster parents are informed about organizations and resources available in their areas, emphasizing the benefits of connecting with a larger support network.

Foster parents are encouraged to participate in **Statewide and Regional Foster Care Advisory Council** meetings. For more information or to express interest in joining the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council, foster parents can contact the council via email at DCFS.StatewideAdvisoryBoardCoordinator@illinois.gov. Council meetings offer a platform for foster parents to stay informed about updates and revisions to policies that impact their caregiving responsibilities.

- 6.5 LCFS foster parents who attend the State of Illinois Foster Parent Conference are requested to share information with other foster parents at succeeding foster parent training sessions in efforts to inform others of day-to-day service delivery procedures.
- 6.6 LCFS offers monthly Foster Parent Support Group Meetings that are held virtually. These meetings allow our foster parents an additional avenue to connect with other foster parents and opportunities to discuss the challenges that they may endure. These meetings are offered in both Spanish and English.
- 6.7 LCFS has a partnership with Be Strong Families to offer monthly Parent Café meetings. These sessions are held in-person and virtually. Child care is often provided to the participants. These parent café meetings allow for LCFS foster parents to connect with foster parents from other local agencies.



7. Responsibility to Assess Foster parents Training Needs

The Responsibility to Assess the Foster Parent's Ongoing Individual Training Needs and Take Action to Meet Those Needs.

- 7.1 LCFS Foster parents are responsible for participating in agency and independent training opportunities. They are expected to complete the agency requirements for training. Foster parents are encouraged to seek training opportunities in their own community. Foster parents are encouraged to communicate their specific needs for ongoing training with licensing representatives, child welfare specialists, and at the foster parent trainings.
- 7.2 Foster parents are encouraged to recommend topics for training that would be beneficial to them. Foster parents are able to share these recommendations with their child welfare specialist, licensing representative or supervisor. In addition, these recommendations can be shared at agency events and training/support sessions. Consultants are invited as needed to provide training to foster parents.
- 7.3 Licensing representatives, as well as child welfare specialists, can assist foster parents in acquiring training materials on specific areas of need.
- 7.4 Foster parents have access to DCFS trainings and materials through the DCFS Training Registration Unit and through the DCFS Learning Development Center (LDC) Website. The LDC Site provides schedules for trainings and allows foster parents to monitor their training credits on an ongoing basis. Foster parents needing assistance with the DCFS Learning Development Center Site <https://learning.dcf.illinois.gov/en/index-por> can contact their licensing representative or the DCFS Training Unit at 877-800-3393.
- 7.5 LCFS offers, at minimum, one training opportunity each month to our foster parents. These monthly trainings are based on the need and ask of our Foster Parents.

8. Responsibility to Implement Strategies

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.

- 8.1 It is the foster parent's responsibility to discuss with the Child Welfare Specialist (CWS) any difficulties they are experiencing with the children in their care. The CWS will assist the foster parent with seeking any and all available services to prevent the removal of children from their home.



- 8.2 Foster parents are expected to work collaboratively with key community stakeholders, such as the Screening Assessment and Support System (SASS) and Intensive Placement Stabilization (Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS), to help prevent placement disruptions. To support this effort, foster parents are informed of the 24-hour emergency number to access Screening Assessment and Support Services (SASS)/Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS) services by calling the Community Access, Referral, Evaluation, and Support (Community Access, Referral, Evaluation, and Support (CARES) line at **800-345-9049 (CARES)**. This crucial information is provided by both their Child Welfare Specialist (CWS) and Licensing Representative (LR).
- 8.3 DCFS IPS provides annual training to foster parents. Presentations about SASS and IPS services are provided to child welfare CFT members and foster parents.
- 8.4 LCFS encourages foster parents to provide a written 14-day notice to the agency in the event that a removal becomes necessary. Throughout the fourteen (14) day period, the foster parent will maintain placement of the child to the best of their ability. If additional time is needed to secure an appropriate placement, the agency will work with the foster parent to stabilize the placement until removal can occur.
- 8.5 Upon receipt of a written 14-day notice from a foster parent, it is mandatory that a Staffing occur. The Staffing must be conducted promptly and before removal of the child. The purpose of the Staffing is to first determine if strategies can be put in place to stabilize and maintain the placement. Those involved in the Staffing will determine if there is anything LCFS can do to assist the foster parent. If this is not possible, the participants of the Staffing will determine what strategies to put in place to ensure a seamless transition to the new foster home in order to prevent future disruption. The Staffing assists LCFS in tracking the reasons behind placement disruption, to support the foster parents, and to help prevent future disruptions.

9. Responsibility to Impact Foster Parenting

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.

- 9.1 LCFS encourages foster parents to learn about the impact that fostering can have on individual family members and the family as a whole. This awareness and understanding begins during the licensing phase and continues throughout the foster parenting experience. During PRIDE REDESIGN training, foster parents are informed of the changes that will occur in their family. LCFS Licensing representatives provide on-going assessment during routine monitoring visits and at the time of license renewal. The CWS will work in conjunction with the Licensing representative to encourage training relevant to the needs



of the placed minor. Additional resources can be located and provided to the foster parents upon request.

- 9.2 LCFS offers training on stress management, how to identify it and how to apply stress management techniques are included in the training plan for foster parents and LCFS CFT. At the training sessions, foster parents are given the opportunity to discuss issues of concern and stress related issues. LCFS Licensing representatives encourage foster parents to utilize the on-going training resources available, including PRIDE REDESIGN On-line Foster Parent Modules DVDs, the DCFS DLC and Foster Parent Café offered by Be Strong Families. Licensing representatives, as well as the Child welfare specialist, can refer foster parents to LCFS counseling for any ongoing support that foster parents require.
- 9.3 LCFS provides training for foster parents caring for children who have experienced Trauma. This training discusses compassion fatigue and secondary traumatization.
- 9.4 LCFS encourages foster parents to communicate questions and concerns regarding their stress related to foster parenting in order to address the issues quickly and to allow LCFS to refer them to supportive services. LCFS Child welfare specialist, discuss stress and the impact of the child's placement during monthly home visits. LCFS Licensing representatives, review and discuss concerns during monitoring home visits. LCFS counseling and professional CFT are available to discuss the foster parent's need to relieve stress and identify specific individual needs for foster parents to help prevent placement disruption. Foster parents are encouraged to regularly communicate with their licensing representative for ongoing support and assistance.
- 9.5 Respite services are available according to the various foster care contract requirements. Procedures for respite services are reviewed annually for all foster care providers. Licensing representatives and the Child welfare specialist review respite procedures with foster parents during home visits to ensure foster parents are aware of respite services and how to access respite services.
- 9.6 Counseling for foster parents regarding issues that surface in their family related to child welfare is available through LCFS. LCFS foster parent can receive one-on-one and family counseling services to assist in developing techniques to lower stress and individual interventions that directly affect placement disruption, stress and the impact of fostering.
- 9.7 LCFS offers foster parents the ability to place their license on a voluntary hold. The licensing representative explains that the home will still be required to complete their biannual monitoring visits. During a voluntary hold, the homes will not be contacted for placement of youth.



10. Responsibility to Know the Rewards

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.

- 10.1 LCFS encourages foster parents to support the belief that effective and nurturing foster care is critical in the development of children who are separated from their families. The efforts of an effective foster parent on behalf of foster children contribute to the well-being of families, communities, and society in general. In prior years, foster parents have traveled to Springfield and lobbied in defense of foster parent services and advocated for the importance of these services to children in the foster care system. This proved to be a successful venture.
- 10.2 LCFS acknowledges that Foster parents are the best recruiters and advocates for the role.
- 10.3 LCFS honors all foster parents for displaying exceptional service to children. These accolades can occur at regional and statewide meetings as well as local appreciation events. In addition, this information is shared in LCFS Foster Parent Newsletter.
- 10.4 The LCFS Marketing Department is working with staff and foster parents in the art of public speaking and how to be a positive representative of the organization and an advocate for children. The LCFS Marketing and Development Department regularly interviews foster parents, adoptive parents and biological parents about their experiences with the agency. These interviews are then shared with team members of LCFS, on LCFS social media pages, with agency stakeholders and with the community.
- 10.5 The Licensing Department is responsible for informing foster parents of other foster parent organizations for additional resources that would broaden their skills, gain understanding and enjoy fellowship with other foster parents.
- 10.6 LCFS shares important information with our foster parents by mail, email and during in person visits to the foster parents home whenever possible. Foster parents are also provided with information for events and festivities such as Holiday Celebrations, focus groups, monthly trainings, and support groups. 2024 marked the 151st anniversary of LCFS serving children and families in Illinois, and our foster parents played a big part of that history and vital part of our future. LCFS focuses on celebrating and recognizing our dedicated foster parents annually and throughout the year because they are a key piece of the circle of support for the children and families we serve.

LCFS foster parents are encouraged to attend regional and statewide Foster Parent Conferences, trainings and support groups offered by the agency. During these events,



foster parents can meet other foster parents and share knowledge, skills and resources to help in their roles as foster parents. Online and virtual trainings and supports are available to foster parents as a means to connect, support and engage with other agency foster parents.

11. Responsibility to Know the Roles, Rights, and Responsibilities

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.

- 11.1 Foster parents are required to learn the roles, rights and responsibilities of all parties involved in the life of the child by their attendance and active participation in meetings such as administrative case reviews, child and family team meetings, trainings and juvenile court hearings. Based on their understanding of these roles, rights and responsibilities foster parents are able to be effective members of the child welfare team.
- 11.2 LCFS Foster Parent Role Description” is provided annually to foster parents in an effort to inform and re-education foster parents on their responsibilities. This description is provided to the foster parents by their assigned Licensing representative when they begin the licensure process and is reviewed semi-annually at their licensing compliance visits. Furthermore, this description may be reviewed with the foster parent(s) any time during the licensing process.
- 11.3 LCFS CWS provides Foster Parents with “Meet the Team” upon opening of a youth case. This flyer provides the Leadership Team in that Region, contact information and photo. The roles of each member of the Child Welfare Team are reviewed on a regular basis at quarterly Child and Family Team meetings as well as during foster parent trainings and/or support groups.
- 11.4 LCFS schedules regular Team meetings and discuss the roles, rights and responsibilities of the child welfare team.
- 11.5 LCFS encourages foster parents to follow the agency’s Organization chart if they have a concern or issue regarding the youth in their care or their interactions with the agency. The chain of command is the Child Welfare Specialist, CWS Supervisor, Program Manager (relevant for specific regions), Regional Director, Associate Vice President of Child Welfare, and then the Vice President/Chief Operating Officer. Foster parents are able to reach out to their assigned licensing representative, or front office support team of their local office, for assistance in contacting the correct individuals for any issues they may encounter.



- 11.6 If a foster parent has a concern or issue involving their assigned Licensing Representative, the proper chain of command would be the Licensing Representative, the Licensing Supervisor, Licensing Manager or the Associate Vice President of Child Welfare.

12. Responsibility to Fulfill Mandates

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 Rules and Procedures Governing Investigations of Those Allegations.

- 12.1 Each foster parent is informed during PRIDE REDESIGN training and the licensing process of their responsibilities under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. Foster parents are also provided with the DCFS Child Abuse Hotline phone number (800-25-ABUSE). Foster parents are provided training regarding their responsibilities as a mandated reporter. This is reviewed with them during their 6-month monitoring visits with their licensing representatives.
- 12.2 Foster parents are required to sign the Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status, CFS CANTS 22B, which serves as a contract regarding their mandated reporter responsibilities. This form is reviewed and signed at each licensing renewal.
- 12.3 During PRIDE REDESIGN, foster parents are given a written copy of the steps the Agency must take when a report of child abuse and/or neglect is received as it pertains to them and/or their household.
- 12.4 Foster Parents are provided with information from their licensing representative and during trainings regarding what they can expect if they are the subject of an abuse and/or neglect allegation by the Department.
- 12.5 During the licensure process and at the time of a DCFS Hotline report, the foster parent is advised of what they can expect to occur with the DCFS Hotline report and the concurrent Licensing Investigation that will occur on the household.

Foster parents are provided with information on external resources to support any cultural or ethnic differences between themselves and the children in their care. The child welfare specialist and licensing representative are available to connect foster parents with relevant community resources, such as cultural organizations, events, or language support services, ensuring the child’s cultural needs are consistently met.



13. Responsibility to Receive Training

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.

- 13.1 LCFS assumes the responsibility to provide and/or facilitate comprehensive training regarding Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), client service plans, and the court process, ensuring that foster parents understand the cultural and contextual relevance of these procedures. Foster parents are responsible for demonstrating familiarity with these processes and actively participating in case activities. LCFS is responsible for equipping foster parents with the knowledge and confidence needed to fulfill these duties effectively and to meet any associated filing or time requirements.
- 13.2 LCFS continuously encourages foster parents to attend ACR's court hearings, and Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM) and facilitates their active involvement by having CWS offer one-on-one guidance before, during, and after these meetings. This ensures that foster parents are expected to contribute their unique insights into the foster child's strengths, behaviors, and needs, which are essential for developing client service plans and permanency goals that prioritize the child's best interests.
- 13.3 When foster parents attend an ACR, the reviewer will clearly explain its purpose, equipping foster parents with essential knowledge for these case reviews. This clarity empowers foster parents to participate fully and effectively as important members of the child welfare team, ensuring they contribute meaningfully to discussions on the child's progress and care requirements.

14. Responsibility to Know Appeal Process

The Responsibility to Know the Child Welfare Agencies Appeal Procedure for Foster Parents and The Rights of Foster Parents Under the Procedure.

- 14.1 LCFS assumes responsibility for ensuring that foster parents fully understand the appeal and grievance procedures through comprehensive training on LCFS and DCFS appeal processes, including the Part 337 Service Appeal Process. Foster parents are provided with the Foster Parent Bill of Rights, LCFS Rights and Responsibilities and procedures are reviewed regularly with foster parents to reinforce understanding. Additionally, Licensing Representatives, Supervisors, and Child Welfare Specialist, are available to foster parents for ongoing support and clarification regarding the grievance or appeal process.



14.2 Grievance Procedure Overview

LCFS encourages foster parents to initially address any concerns directly with the assigned Child Welfare Specialist and, if needed their Supervisor. If unresolved, foster parents may proceed with a formal, written grievance to the Regional Program Director or Supervisor. The foster parent is not required to submit the complaint in writing; if preferred, the Child Welfare Specialist will document it to ensure accurate record-keeping. If the grievance remains unresolved, it is escalated to the LCFS Corporate Officer who will reach out to the foster parent to seek resolution.

Should the issue persist, it is then presented to the LCFS Grievance Committee who will review the grievance and communicate a decision within 30 calendar days.

In the event that the foster parent disagrees with the committee's decision, they may appeal in writing to the President and CEO within 7 days, with a response provided within 10 days as the final determination.

14.3 If a foster parent does not agree with the decision made or action taken by DCFS pertaining to service, the foster parent may do the following:

- a. Appeal within 10 days from receiving notice and may be able to stop the Department from acting on its decision until such time that the case has proceeded through the Service Appeal Process.
- b. Request a service appeal in writing within 45 days from receiving notice of the decision or action intended to be taken by the Department.
- c. If the foster parent does not agree with the decision made in a clinical placement review regarding the change in placement of a child in their care, they may request an appeal within 10 days from the clinical placement decision.
- d. All grievances that reach the second tier are tracked for quality improvement purposes. To support continuous improvement, LCFS integrates Performance Continuous Quality Improvement (PCQI) processes. This involves the regular collection and review of foster parent feedback on the grievance procedure, facilitating timely modifications and updates as needed to better serve foster parents and uphold best practices. Foster parents are asked to state their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the way the foster parent law violations were addressed, have an option for escalation and receive a consumer voice survey to share their experience post their grievance completion.



- e. Non-identifying information is collected and sent to the Director of Data and Information Services to be aggregated and reported quarterly to the Risk Management Committee.

15. Responsibility to Understand the Importance of Relevant Records

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.

- 15.1 At the time of initial placement, LCFS provides foster parent with a dedicated folder for each child in their care, outlining specific documentation requirements. Foster parents are responsible for accurately maintaining all relevant records in this folder, capturing the child’s history and progress. When a child moves to a new placement or returns home, the foster parent is expected to present a complete and up-to-date folder to the child welfare specialist to facilitate a smooth transition of information to the new caregiver or agency.
- 15.2 Foster parents receive initial training during PRIDE REDESIGN on the specific child records they are required to maintain. This training covers essential documentation practices, focusing on accuracy and thoroughness in record-keeping. Additionally, foster parents receive continuous support and guidance from their assigned Child Welfare Specialist (CWS) and Licensing Representative (LR), who provide ongoing training and resources to ensure compliance with documentation standards.
- 15.3 Foster parents are required to present the child’s folder quarterly to the CWS for review. This regular check-in ensures that all materials are current, accurate and complete, allowing the CWS to obtain copies of essential documentation and provide feedback to foster parents on any necessary updates or corrections.

During the licensing process and on on-going basis, foster parents are provided with written information detailing LCFS’s procedures and regulations. Foster parents are encouraged to seek clarification, ask questions, and provide feedback to strengthen their understanding of these procedures as they relate to the youth in their care. This open communication supports adherence to agency standards and promotes best practices in record management.

Foster parents are required to maintain up-to-date logs on the child’s behaviors and medication compliance, ensuring that any unusual behaviors or issues with medication intake are documented accurately. This information must be shared regularly with the CWS, who supplies these monthly logs to the foster parent. Accurate records are crucial in supporting the child’s ongoing care and addressing any health or behavioral concerns promptly.



16. Responsibility to Share Information

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 Parents Home.

- 16.1 All foster parents and members of the child welfare team, including the child welfare specialist, licensing representative counselor, and case aide are responsible for sharing all pertinent information regarding the child's adjustment into the foster home. This includes, but is not limited to, information on aggressive behaviors, triggers, mental health diagnoses, and medication details. Sharing this information with any subsequent caregiver and the child's biological parents helps support the child's transition to their new living environment and enables a thorough assessment of their progress and adjustment. The assigned CWS will discuss the child's adjustment and well-being during monthly home visits and collaborate with the foster parent to develop appropriate interventions. The child's behaviors and adjustment in their foster home placement are also regularly reviewed during quarterly Child and Family Team Meetings.
- 16.2 Ongoing and open communication is expected between the child welfare specialist, licensing representative, birth family members, foster parents and service providers. Foster parents are encouraged to actively share their insights with the child welfare team during home visits, Child and Family Team Meetings, court hearings, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR's), and other relevant times. All parties involved in the child's care are responsible for ensuring that information is shared accurately, promptly, and transparently, with the child's best interest as the primary focus.
- 16.3 All foster parents will be informed on effective communication techniques and the importance of full information disclosure when a child is transitioning to a new caregiver or reunifying with their biological family. This ensures that foster parents understand how to relay essential information to the new foster parent or biological family in a way that supports the child's successful transition.

Foster parents are responsible for maintaining comprehensive records for each build placed in their home, including medical and educational reports, visitation plans, medication and behavioral logs, and contact information for all service providers. These records are essential for continuity of care and should be shared with subsequent foster parents or birth parents to support the child's transition and provide new caregivers with a clear understanding of the child's needs.



17. Responsibility to Provide Care and Services

The Responsibility to Provide Care and Services That Are Respectful 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. [20 ILCS 520/1-20]

- 17.1 All members of the child welfare team share the responsibility to be mindful and supportive of the child’s ethnic, cultural, and religious heritage, regardless of their own orientations. Team members are dedicated to honoring the child’s familial ties and promoting a positive understanding of the child’s history and cultural identity. This approach supports the child’s healthy physical and emotional growth, fostering a strong positive self-identity and respect for their cultural background.
- 17.2 Culture and heritage training is provided through the initial PRIDE REDESIGN training. These trainings include 3 hours of supplemental LGBTQI+ training as well as training on the importance of sibling visitation/connectedness. In addition, LCFS focuses on promoting a Welcoming, Inclusive, Diverse and Equitable (W.I.D.E.) environment. When a foster parent’s culture differs from that of the child special attention is given to ensure cultural sensitivity and a commitment to preserving the child’s connection to their own heritage.
- 17.3 LCFS actively recruits foster parents who reflect the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the children served, supporting a more culturally inclusive environment. Foster parents are encouraged to meet the cultural needs of children in their homes and to involve them in culturally relevant activities. Cultural Competency training is offered as a module within PRIDE REDESIGN, and Licensing Representatives regularly refer foster parents to this training as needed to strengthen their understanding and skills in meeting the child’s cultural needs.
- 17.4 LCFS encourages foster parents to actively support birth family connections through involvement in family/sibling visits, sharing photos and/or cultural mementos. This engagement fosters a supportive environment that honors the child’s heritage and allows for an exchange of caregiving practices, cultural traditions, and values Foster parents from differing racial, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds are encouraged to learn about the birth family’s traditions, supporting the child’s cultural identity. LCFS CWS are available to assist with facilitating exchanges between foster and birth families as needed.



IV. SUMMARY OF FREQUENTLY USED ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
AAS	Adoption Achievement Specialist: Provides permanency assistance for LCFS foster parents seeking to adopt or provide guardianship, and birth parents and youth with reunification support.
ACR	Administrative Case Review: A periodic review of a child’s case plan and progress towards permanency.
BSFF	Best Start For Families: Provides parenting support classes for LCFS foster parents and birth parents.
CA/N	Child Abuse and Neglect: Reports or cases involving child maltreatment.
CANS	Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths: A tool used to assess the needs and strengths of children in foster care.
CANTS	Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System: DCFS’s database for tracking abuse/neglect cases.
CAPU	Case Assignment Placement Unit: The unit responsible for matching children with appropriate placements.
CARES	Community Access Referral Evaluation Support Line: A hotline providing support and referral services for children and families.
CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocate: A volunteer assigned by the court to represent the best interests of the child in court proceedings.
CBP	Community Based Partners: Organizations or providers working with DCFS to support children and families.
CIPP	Clinical Intervention Placement Preservation: Meetings to support placement stability when a child’s placement is at risk of disruption.
COA	Council on Accreditation: An accrediting body that ensures agencies meet standards for quality and accountability.
CWS	Child Welfare Specialist: The caseworker responsible for managing a child's case in the foster care system.



DCFS	Department of Child and Family Services: The state agency overseeing child welfare services.
FHP	Foster Home Boarding – Private Agency: Foster homes managed by private agencies for children in need of placement.
FHS	Foster Home Specialized: Foster homes providing specialized care for children with unique needs.
FRES	Family Resource and Engagement Specialist: Provide resources and support to LCFS foster parents, birth parents, and youth in care.
GAL	Guardian Ad Litem: An attorney or volunteer appointed by the court to advocate for a child’s best interests.
HFK	Home of Fictive Kin: Foster care placement with a close family friend or non-blood relative with an established relationship to the child.
HMR	Home of Relative (Foster Care): Placement with a relative to maintain family connections.
IA	Integrated Assessment: A comprehensive evaluation of the child’s needs and strengths upon entering foster care.
IEP	Individualized Education Plan: A customized educational plan for children with special needs.
LAN	Child and Adolescent Local Area Network: A network providing mental health and support services to youth in certain areas.
LCFS	Lutheran Child and Family Services: A child welfare agency providing foster care and other services.
LDC	Learning Development Center: A facility focused on child development and educational support.
OIG	Office of the Inspector General: Oversees investigations into misconduct or abuse within child welfare services.
PRI	Preliminary Report of the Investigation: Initial findings in an investigation of alleged abuse or neglect.



PRIDE REDESIGN	Parent's Resource of Information Development and Education: A training program for foster parents.
PRT	Placement Review Team: A team that reviews and makes recommendations on child placement issues.
QA	Quality Assurance: Ensures standards and policies are followed in service provision.
RKC	Relative and Kinship Caregiving: Training for relatives & fictive kin
SACWIS	Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System: A system used to track case management information for children in foster care.
SACY	Sexually Aggressive Children and Youth: Refers to youth with histories or risks of sexually aggressive behaviors.
SASS	Screening, Assessment, and Support Systems: A program providing crisis mental health services for children.
SOC/IPS	System of Care/Intensive Placement Stabilization: Services focused on stabilizing foster placements and providing support to maintain them.
SSF	Special Service Fee: Payments provided for services that meet special needs of foster children.
TPR	Termination of Parental Rights: A legal process by which a parent's rights to their child are permanently terminated.
TDM	Team Decision-Making: A collaborative meeting to discuss a child's placement and care needs, typically involving family and agency representatives.



V. 2025 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN SIGNATURE PAGE

**Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois
2025 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan**

I, _____,

(Print first and last name)

- Foster Parent
- LCFS Employee

(check all that apply)

- Participated in the development of the plan
- Reviewed
- Approved

The 2025 LCFS Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan

REGION:

- Bourbonnais
- O'Fallon
- Mt. Vernon
- Decatur
- Oakbrook
- Springfield
- Evergreen Park/Cook
- Joliet

(Signature or Electronic Signature)

(Date)