## Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois
### 2019 Implementation Plan of Foster Parent Law

**Table of Contents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.</th>
<th>Introduction of the Implementation Plan</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Statement of Foster Parents Rights</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The Right to be Treated with Dignity and Respect</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The Right to be Given Standardized Pre-Service Training</td>
<td>5-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The Right to Have Child Placement Contact Information</td>
<td>8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The Right to Receive Timely Financial Reimbursement</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The Right to be Given a Clear Placement Plan in Writing</td>
<td>11-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The Right to a Fair, Timely, and Impartial Investigation</td>
<td>14-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>The Right to Receive Relevant Information Throughout Placement</td>
<td>18-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>The Right to be Given Information Concerning a Child</td>
<td>20-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>The Right to be Notified of Scheduled Meetings and Staffings</td>
<td>23-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>The Right to be Given Information in a Timely and Consistent Manner</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>The Right to be Given Reasonable Written Notice</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>The Right to be Notified of Court Hearings in a Timely Manner</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>The Right to be Considered as a Placement Option</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>The Right to be Informed of Foster Parent Hotline</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Statement of Foster Parent Responsibilities</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Responsibility to Openly Communicate</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Responsibility to Respect Confidentiality</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Responsibility to Advocate for Children</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Responsibility to Treat Children with Dignity</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Responsibility to Recognize Foster Parents Strengths</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Responsibility to be Aware of Benefits</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Responsibility to Assess Foster Parents Training Needs</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Responsibility to Implement Strategies</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Responsibility to Impact Foster Parenting</td>
<td>40-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Responsibility to Know the Rewards</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Responsibility to Know the Roles, Rights, and Responsibilities</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Responsibility to Fulfill Mandates</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Responsibility to Receive Training</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Responsibility to Know LCFS’ Appeal Process</td>
<td>46-47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Responsibility to Understand the Importance of Relevant Records</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Responsibility to Share Information</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Responsibility to Provide Care and Services</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 Implementation Plan Signature Page</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Frequently Used Acronyms</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LCFS Foster Parent Implementation Plan 2019
A. LUTHERAN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES OF ILLINOIS

2019 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
FOSTER PARENT LAW (Public Act 89/19)

This 2019 Implementation Plan was developed by foster parents and staff members of Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois (LCFS) in compliance with the Foster Parent Law. Licensing staff, direct service employees, foster parents, and management personnel were involved in this process. LCFS staff and foster parents reviewed the 2019 Plan. Comments and revisions obtained throughout the year were incorporated in the final Implementation Plan for 2019.

This Implementation Plan includes the full statement of each Foster Parent Rights and Responsibility, as they are articulated in the law and in DCFS Rule 340. Descriptions of the strategies by which LCFS partners with foster parents in implementing such rights and responsibilities are represented in this document.

Information about the Foster Parent Law is presented to all Agency child welfare staff members statewide. In addition, the Foster Parent Law itself and this implementation plan are reviewed with employees in smaller meetings. The implementation process includes reviewing LCFS' plan and the Foster Parent Law with each foster parent individually and in group meetings. Each foster parent signs a document that is placed in his/her case record, acknowledging the receipt of the information and understanding of his/her rights and responsibilities as a foster parent in the State of Illinois. Presentation and discussion of the Law and the Implementation Plan are integrated into the licensing process.

Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois is a social service human care ministry of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, and an incorporated not-for-profit approved 501 (3) social service agency. The Agency's corporate office is located at One Oakbrook Terrace Suite 501 Oakbrook Terrace, Il 60181. The Agency provides services throughout the state of Illinois.
B. STATEMENT OF FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS

The rights of each foster parent include, but are not limited to, the following as listed. Pursuant to each right, are LCFS' responses.

1. THE RIGHT TO BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY, RESPECT AND CONSIDERATION AS A PROFESSIONAL MEMBER OF THE CHILD WELFARE TEAM.

1. In January of every year, Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois conducts an annual meeting of stakeholders. Invitees to this meeting include board members, members of congregations, funding bodies, staff from all levels of the organization, consumers, foster parents, and other interested parties. Since child welfare services are critical for LCFS, the involvement of foster parents is highly valued.

2. The stakeholders are guided through a series of information gathering sessions designed to garner opinions, recommendations and a vision of what issues LCFS should address. This information feedback is integrated into LCFS' strategic and operational plans and advocacy efforts. A report of progress is given the following year at the annual meeting.

3. LCFS recognizes that foster parents are professional members of the child welfare team who are to be treated with the same dignity, respect, and consideration as other members of the team. LCFS strongly encourages the importance of our foster parents as valued members of the child welfare team. It is expected that all employees treat foster parents in a courteous and professional manner and include them as integral members of the team who work together to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being for children. 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 Specialists and Licensing Representatives, and foster parent conferences.

4. LCFS recognizes the special role of foster parents who provide the daily support, care, and supervision of children in foster care. Foster parents provide the foundation for the safety, well-being and permanence of the children in their care.

5. As part of its Continuous Quality Improvement processes, LCFS conducts annual surveys regarding service provisions. Surveys are given to clients and foster parents as part of the annual peer review process. Clients and foster parents are provided with a self addressed stamped envelope for its return. Clients and foster parents do not have to disclose their identity as a means to provide valuable input and their opinions to the Agency. Surveys are also provided to clients and foster parents at case closure. Through the survey process, foster parents have the ability to express any comments, concerns, or issues. 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, other structured meetings, license monitoring visits, or through other modes of communication. When issues arise, the Child Welfare Specialist and Supervisor work diligently to resolve the situation. If the issue cannot be rectified, the concern will be addressed as needed through the chain of command within LCFS organizational structure. Licensing Representatives are aware of the organizational structure and are able to assist and help advocate for the foster parents in this process.

LCFS Foster Parent Implementation Plan 2019
6. LCFS values the input of foster parents and makes sure to have regular communication with foster parents whether or not they have a placement. Foster parents are encouraged to regularly communicate with their Child Welfare Specialist and/or Licensing Representative throughout their time in working 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 a child/ren in their care. During the licensing assessment process, the Licensing Representative emphasizes their role in supporting and educating the foster parents and encourages them to voice any concerns that they may have without any prejudice.

7. Foster parent trainings are held on a regular basis at all LCFS sites/other training sites. Agency staff are encouraged to participate in trainings to help strengthen working relationships with foster parents and clients that we work with. Foster parents and Agency staff 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 for working with children and families.

8. The Organizational Development Department uses the customer service satisfaction surveys to gather information regarding the quality of service provisions to foster parents.

9. LCFS’ Vice President and Chief Program Officer meet with foster parents to gain feedback and input from them at the LCFS Annual Foster Parent Conference as well as at the annual Stakeholders meeting. This information is shared with the LCFS leadership team and is integrated into LCFS’ strategic and operational plans that may involve statewide trainings to all staff that engage with foster parents, children, and families.

10. 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 parties.

11. LCFS conducts training on diversity for all employees. This training was recommended by LCFS’ Inclusion Council whose mission is to model, advocate, and demonstrate attitude, principles, and actions that respect, value, and embrace the diversity that exists among all people.

12. LCFS believes that communication and expedient resolve to foster parent concerns are imperative to supporting the collaborative process of caring for children and families and ensuring that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect. Therefore, LCFS child welfare staff are expected to return phone calls and correspondence to foster parents in a timely manner. They are expected to keep foster parents informed of significant program/Agency changes, to ensure that foster parents have a voice, and to provide foster parents with the ability to share their thoughts and experiences with the Agency.
2. 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.

1. All unrelated foster parents are required to participate in mandated Pre-Service Training
which is currently 39 hours of PRIDE (Parent’s Resource for Information, Development, and
Education). Related and fictive kin foster parents complete 6 hours of PRIDE. Relative and
fictive kin foster parents may choose to either attend classroom or DVD Pride pre-service
training. Written worksheets are required to be completed by all prospective foster parents,
unrelated or related. The Licensing Representative can provide the worksheets and/or
assistance in completion of this. Ongoing PRIDE trainings are provided at designated sites
selected by the DCFS Office of Training.

2. Unrelated, related and fictive kin foster parents are encouraged to complete at least 4
hours of training annually for licensure. LCFS continues to develop a joint foster parent/staff
training program and calendar to help meet mutual needs. The curriculum is reviewed and
updated on an ongoing basis. Trainers include outside consultants and other professionals.
Training topics are derived from foster parent need and varies from LCFS sites.

3. The training schedules are available to foster parents throughout the calendar year and
are announced at meetings, licensing monitoring visits, and other training events. LCFS will
continue to evaluate the training plan and its ability to ensure that foster parents are
supported in their compliance with the training requirements of DCFS. LCFS will continue
to provide alternative training schedules (including day and evening hours) to accommodate
foster parents schedules.

4. Ongoing training events for foster parents are available throughout the state. Experienced
foster parents are utilized to model skills and provide real life examples to foster parents. In
addition, LCFS encourages foster parents to utilize in-person and on-line training
opportunities and supplemental learning activities in order to help them meet the needs of
the foster parents and for the children for whom they are caring. Trainings can provide
emotional support to foster parents as a way to increase their knowledge and skills to meet
the needs of the youth in care. Licensing Representatives, Child Welfare Specialists and
Supervisors can be utilized to model skills, support foster parents, and assist and offer
support to caregivers as needed. Licensing Representatives notify foster parents of the
supplemental and module trainings in their community through the foster parent newsletter,
selected mailings and by in-person licensing monitoring visits. Training credit forms are
available to foster parents to ensure appropriate credit for non-DCFS pre-approved trainings.
LCFS listens to the voiced and demonstrated needs of the foster parents. LCFS has
partnered with and is in the process of offering trauma training to all staff including
Counselors, Licensing Representatives, Child Welfare Specialists, Supervisors, Regional
Directors and foster parents. The training program consists of valuable tools and guidance
in helping caregivers understand children’s behaviors and understandings related to being
involved in child welfare. This training consists of 21 credit hours.

5. Each year the agency organizes a Foster Parent Conference. The conferences are based on
mutually identified training needs for foster parents and staff members. Foster parents are
given opportunities to be presenters at these conferences. These Foster Parent Conferences
have included regional meetings as well as statewide meetings.
6. The Licensing Representatives maintain training logs that are kept in each foster parent file. Information is sent to DCFS Training Office within 30 days of completion and entered on the foster parent individual transcripts. Licensing Representatives inform all foster parents of their ability to view their training transcript on the DCFS Virtual Training Center’s website.

7. All foster parents who provide care for youth in care that are approved for specialized care, are required to complete 16 hours of training per year. LCFS’ specialized foster care programs provide additional training to help foster parents gain the knowledge and skills to care for youth in care with more complex needs. LCFS may provide as needed individual trainings by the LCFS nurse or counseling staff to address specific medical and behavioral needs. LCFS also recommends and refers foster parents to external trainings, according to the assessed needs of the child.

8. A foster family home license is valid for 4 years. Each foster parent must complete a minimum of 16 hours of training in order to renew their foster care home license. Foster parents with an expanded capacity license are required to complete 9 additional clock hours of training per year. Foster parents with a specialized license are required to complete 12 additional clock hours of training per year. Licensing Representatives discuss training needs during compliance monitoring visits. Child Welfare Specialists and Counselors also discuss training needs with foster parents.

9. Foster parent trainings provide caregivers with the opportunity to share information, learn, and receive mutual support and assistance from one another.

10. Additional trainings are offered to foster parents on topics such as substance abuse exposure, adolescence, trauma, mental illness, and self care. Staff can also inform foster parents of various opportunities to assist with their training needs and desires.

11. LCFS encourages foster parents to engage in training opportunities through DCFS and community resources. Foster parents are able to obtain training hours through the reading of approved books, viewing approved videos or completing online trainings. LCFS also encourages foster parents to register with the Virtual Training Center (VTC) to complete online trainings. Documentation is submitted by the foster parent by completing the Foster Care Training Credit Approval Form within thirty (30) days of completion. All foster parents are encouraged to contact DCFS Foster Parent Registration Unit at 877-800-3393.

12. Foster parents can receive specialized and individualized training given a specific need. This is documented on the Foster Care Training Credit Approval Form. Availability of trainings are publicized in the Foster Parent Newsletter. Foster parents are able to obtain credits from training that they may receive from counselors, physicians, physical therapist, and other medical professionals with proper documentation.

13. Several training options are available to foster parents. Training options include a variety of topics related to the key competency areas of foster parenting including: educational advocacy, protecting and nurturing children, developmental needs and delays, supporting relationships between children and families, connecting children to safe and nurturing relationships, and working as a member of a professional team. LCFS offers
trainings per region and the trainings are highlighted in the LCFS Statewide newsletter and posted on the lcfs.org website.

14. Foster parents have advised LCFS of the need for childcare to be provided in order to ensure consistent and increased participation in trainings. LCFS often will have staff or approved volunteers serve in this role during trainings if available. LCFS encourages the use of self-paced, on-line trainings when they are not able to participate in live trainings due to childcare needs.
3. THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED AS TO HOW TO CONTACT THE APPROPRIATE CHILD PLACEMENT AGENCY IN ORDER TO RECEIVE INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE AND TO ACCESS SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER PARENT’S CARE.

1. The foster parents are provided with pertinent information during the licensing process and placement of children in order to access supportive services. This may include information on The Office of the Inspector General, DCFS Advocacy Office for Children and Families, Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure, LCFS Service Appeal Process, Substitute Care and Your Child Brochure, medication logs, behavioral logs, health passport, and the CPS 600-4 Sharing Information with the Caregiver form. Supportive services such as System of Care (SOC)/Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS), Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (CIPP), The Cares Line (SASS – Screening, Assessment, and Supportive Services), Child Abuse Hotline, Medical Card Replacement Hotline and the Medical Consent Line are also provided to foster parents. This information may also be provided during PRIDE Training. This information is provided during LCFS trainings and is reiterated during bi-annual licensing monitoring visits. The Child Welfare Specialist and Licensing Representative assist in the referral process for foster parents to access services. In order to prevent placement disruption, Child Welfare Specialists, Supervisors, and Licensing Representatives provide supports such as: after hour emergency phone calls and additional visits. The LCFS Appeal Process is highlighted in the Foster Parent Newsletter at least annually. Information on all other appeal processes is available and present at Agency offices.

2. Foster parents are able to contact their Child Welfare Specialist, Supervisor, Director, Licensing Representative, Licensing Supervisor or other staff by contacting their local office and/or the emergency number for each office. The emergency number for each local office is provided on the general voice mail message. The general numbers for each office are as follows:

- Addison (630) 543-5170
- Bellville - Metro East (618) 234-8904
- Chicago (773) 753-0600
- Decatur (217) 428-8380
- Joliet (815) 409-4440
- Kankakee (815) 929-1970
- Mt. Vernon (618) 242-3284
- Quincy (217) 214-2012
- Springfield (217) 523-4725

LCFS staff extensions are provided to foster parents and clients.

In case of an emergency, foster parents are able to utilize the on-call service during non-business hours. The on-call service immediately contacts an on-call staff member. The on-call staff member will return the call within 30 minutes to determine the emergency need. Foster parents have access to an after-hours emergency contact number for each office are as follows:
- Addison, Joliet and Kankakee (708) 237-6021
- Bellville - Metro East (618) 409-4092
- Chicago – (800) 673-6828
- Decatur (217) 972-4302
- Joliet (815) 409-4440
- Kankakee (815) 929-1970
- Mt. Vernon (618) 316-4119
- Quincy (217)
- Springfield (217) 502-9681

All foster parents have access to LCFS' after hour service. The numbers are printed periodically in the Foster Parent Newsletter. The LCFS statewide number (800-363-LCFS) is also provided and available to all foster parents.
4. THE RIGHT TO RECEIVE TIMELY FINANCIAL REIMBURSEMENT COMMENSURATE WITH THE CARE AND NEEDS OF THE CHILD AS SPECIFIED IN THE SERVICE PLAN.

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. Foster parents should allow up to seven (7) business days for delivery of the board check. At this time, LCFS does not offer direct deposit of board checks. Information has been included as attachment Component C-FY 18 Monthly Payment Rates & Schedule to detail payment commensurate to the type of care provided.

2. Children who are served in the LCFS Specialized Foster Care Programs are paid an increased rate as established by contract.

3. Children who are served in the LCFS Regenerations/RUR Programs are paid an increased rate as established by contract.

4. LCFS annually reviews its procedures (including DCFS procedures), regarding the reimbursement of transportation, school fees and school supplies, recreational and artistic endeavors, camp fees, graduation fees, tutoring costs and respite care. Requests for payment of these expenses are handled in an expeditious manner so that the child receives what he/she needs timely. When applicable, foster parents are asked to provide necessary receipts of services to be considered for reimbursement.

5. The Finance Department of LCFS ensures that payments are sent timely and that LCFS fulfills its contract payment and billing responsibilities.

6. If there are issues or concerns regarding board payments, foster parents are to contact their Child Welfare Specialist or Licensing Representative as the first step to resolving the problem. The Child Welfare Specialist or Supervisor will then contact the billing clerk to seek clarification and information. The Child Welfare Specialist or Supervisor will then contact the foster parent to achieve resolution. Problems with check arrival are currently managed by OPI (Outsource Partners International). LCFS requires ten (10) working days prior to the issuance of a replacement check and to stop payment on the initial check.

7. Training regarding the payment authorization process is given to all Child Welfare Specialist staff in order to ensure prompt and accurate payment to foster parents.

8. Title IV-E funds are available to cover special needs or events. These funds are for non-recurring expenditures, such as graduation expenses, camp, extra-curricular and recreational activities. LCFS Child Welfare Specialist provides foster parents with the policies and procedures for reimbursement.

9. LCFS provides foster parents with specific procedures and criteria for reimbursement for bed holds. LCFS foster parents must meet the specified criteria to be eligible for payments due to a bed hold. Staff and foster parents are informed of these supportive services and guidelines are provided.

LCFS Foster Parent Implementation Plan 2019
5. THE RIGHT TO BE PROVIDED A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF A PLACEMENT AGENCY'S PLAN IN WRITING 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.

1. It is the responsibility of the Child Welfare Specialist to provide the following information to the foster family: (1) the foster care placement payment authorization form commonly referred to as the “906” and (2) the temporary medical card. At the time of placement, or as soon thereafter, the foster parent is provided with the youth’s Health Passport and Initial Health Screener or current medical report and immunizations.

2. LCFS foster parents are provided with the 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 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. 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 also completed at any subsequent placement changes throughout the life of the child’s case. 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 600·4 after more information becomes available.

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. 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.

4. Child and Family Team Meetings are scheduled quarterly for all cases. Foster parents are considered part of the CFTM team 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 case. If the foster parent is unable to attend this meeting via in-person or by phone, the Child Welfare Specialist will follow-up with the foster parent to provide them an over view of what occurred at this meeting.

5. Visitation between the child and birth family requires the cooperation of the foster family. Visitation schedules are established in collaboration with the Agency, foster family, and birth parents. For new Cook County cases, the visitation plan may be established through mediation at Juvenile Court. If deemed appropriate by the Child Welfare Specialist and/or court, any communication between the birth parents and children that occurs in the foster home shall be monitored and supported 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.
6. Sibling visitation is required for all children who are not able to be placed in the same foster home while in DCFS care. 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 minimum four hours per month over two separate visits. This means that the four hour requirement cannot be met with only one visit. Sibling visitation can take place simultaneously with Parent/Child visits if all siblings are present. When the sibling visits requirement occurs during the weekly Parent/Child visitation, additional sibling visits are not required.

7. It is not a requirement for foster parents to supervise Parent/Child Visits; however, transportation of children to visits can be challenging if a Case Assistant is not available to provide transportation. If feasible, and if a Case Assistant is not available, the Agency requests the foster parents’ assistance in transporting the minors to and/or from Parent/Child Visits. The Agency finds that providing transportation to Parent/Child Visits helps build a supportive relationship between birth parents and foster parents while working towards the common goal of reunification. Frequency of Parent/Child Visits can be minimized or terminated completely due to safety concerns, court requirements, or changes in the permanency goal. If and/or when Parent/Child Visits are minimized or terminated altogether, Sibling Visit requirements may still be intact. It is at this point in time that Case Assistants may be removed from the case so as to utilize their support elsewhere. It then becomes essential for foster parents to assist the children in their care in maintaining their sibling relationships and continuing Sibling Visitation requirements. Foster parents may need to work with the sibling(s)’ foster parents to continue the Sibling Visitation Plan or establish a new one. It is within the realm of the foster parents’ responsibility to transport all youth in care to required Sibling Visits, counseling, medical/vision/hearing appointments, school, and other services as they would for any other child in their care.

8. An integrated assessment is developed on each youth in care which includes the necessary information about the child, the birth parents, and family background. For new cases, the integrated assessment is conducted 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. The Child Welfare Specialist reinforces the importance and need for confidentiality of this information.

9. It is best practice for foster parents to provide LCFS with a written 14 day notice when it is necessary for the youth in care to require a placement change. Whenever possible, foster parents are strongly encouraged to provide more notice. Additional time may allow for the preservation of the placement and prevent placement disruption by addressing concerns and implementing additional services to stabilize the placement. LCFS makes all efforts before disrupting a placement. If placement cannot be preserved, this will allow the Licensing Representative and Child Welfare Specialists to match the youth in care with an appropriate placement and prepare the child.

10. Upon placement and throughout the child’s time with the foster family, the Child Welfare Specialists will reiterate the foster parent’s responsibility to respect and promote the child’s relationship with his/her birth family and cultural heritage. When appropriate, 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. This is facilitated with the assistance of the LCFS Child Welfare Specialist. LCFS encourages foster parents to host, supervise and assist with sibling visits to maintain birth family relationships. Child Welfare Specialists are expected to provide information and support to the foster parents on working cooperatively with all members of a child’s birth family. Child Welfare Specialists are to assist foster parents with procedures for payment for hosting sibling visits. These important issues are also a part of LCFS’ joint training program involving child welfare agency staff and foster parents so that they may reach a common understanding in support of the child and his/her family of origin and cultural heritage.
6. THE RIGHT TO BE PROVIDED A FAIR, TIMELY, AND IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS CONCERNING THE FOSTER PARENT'S LICENSURE, TO BE PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE A PERSON OF THE FOSTER PARENT'S CHOOSING PRESENT DURING THE INVESTIGATION; THE RIGHT TO BE PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO REQUEST AND RECEIVE MEDIATION OR AN ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OF DECISIONS THAT AFFECT LICENSING PARAMETERS, OR BOTH MEDIATION AND AN ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW; AND THE RIGHT TO HAVE DECISIONS CONCERNING A LICENSING CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN SPECIFICALLY EXPLAINED AND THE LICENSING STANDARDS VIOLATED.

1. Within forty eight (48) hours 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 home. The Licensing Representative and/or DCFS Representative present the foster parent with 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. If additional time is needed to complete the investigation, the Licensing Representative can submit a written request to their Supervisor for an extension.

2. LCFS trains all staff 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. 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 also 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 (The Department of Children and Family Services).

3. Foster parents know that LCFS has the right to separately and individually interview the children and members of the household who are in the home during the investigation process. LCFS has the right to remove the children 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.
4. At any point during this investigative process, the foster parents have the right to have a person of their choice present during the interviews. An investigation may be postponed up to four (4) hours to allow for the arrival of the identified person if requested by the foster parent.

5. Once the licensing investigation is completed by the Licensing Representative, it is submitted to the Licensing Supervisor. The Licensing Supervisor has seven (7) days to approve the recommendations or return for further action. The Licensing Supervisor submits the completed licensing investigation to the DCFS Agency and Institution 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. 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. The Licensing Representative notifies the foster parent of the results of the licensing investigation and what, if any, actions are to be taken. Foster parents will receive written notification of the results and any recommendations. The letter 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.

7. Foster parents have the right to meet with a 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. 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.

8. 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 periodically with all foster parents.

9. 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 13.
10. LCFS staff and foster parents are provided information on the rights of foster parents during the investigatory process and the role of various staff members during this process.

**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 staff. 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. An investigation may be postponed up to four (4) hours to allow for the arrival of the identified person (s). 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 also 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.
7. THE RIGHT TO RECEIVE ADDITIONAL OR NECESSARY INFORMATION THROUGHOUT PLACEMENT THAT IS RELEVANT TO THE CARE OF THE CHILD.

1. LCFS believes that foster parents are integral members of the child welfare system team. As such, any information regarding the child in placement is shared with the foster family as a matter of practice. All members of the team know the importance of information and are eager to obtain it as soon as possible. A major frustration of all team members, including foster parents, is the lack of information at initial placement. Lutheran Child and Family Services, strives to gather all necessary information as quickly as possible in order to share this data with foster parents and thereby, encouraging informed decision making for children placed in their care. LCFS utilizes the CFS 418-J Checklist for Children at Initial Placement. 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. LCFS foster parents are also given the DCFS form CFS 600-04 which is entitled Sharing Information with Caregivers. This form is completed by the Child Welfare Specialist with as much information that is known at the time of initial placement. The CFS 600-4 verifies information the foster parent receives from the case worker 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. Emergency Placements. The CFS 600-4 is completed by the assigned worker at the initial placement and updated as additional information is gathered. This document is also completed at any subsequent placement changes throughout the life of the child's case. Foster parents receive a copy of this form and sign it as an acknowledgement of receipt of said information. LCFS trains Child Welfare Specialists how to obtain and share appropriate information.

2. Throughout the life of the case, the Child Welfare Specialist continues to share all available, pertinent information regarding the child with the foster family. Usually, this occurs during the Child Welfare Specialist 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 team members involved in the case. In addition, Child and Family Team Meetings regularly occur quarterly, or when a child is disrupting from their current placement. A Child and Family Team Meeting (CFT) 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 utilized to ensure a smooth transition.

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 this child. 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. The foster parents
are required to sign upon receiving documents. 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 caseworkers 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.

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 CWS members, 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.

5. Foster parents are required to keep a folder of all pertinent child records. The purpose of the folder is to keep necessary information about the child in an orderly and retrievable manner. 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.

6. Dissemination of information is shared by the Child Welfare Specialist and licensing staff members. The case management staff is responsible for child-specific information and telephone numbers. Licensing staff members are responsible for distribution of the appeal procedures and list of possible questions that could be asked at the time of initial placement. In addition, licensing staff checks the child’s folder during the six month monitoring visit.
8. THE RIGHT TO BE GIVEN INFORMATION CONCERNING A CHILD FROM THE
DEPARTMENT AS REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (U) OF SECTION 5 OF THE
CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT AND FROM A CHILD WELFARE AGENCY
AS REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (C-5) OF SECTION 7.4 OF THE CHILD CARE ACT
OF 1969.

(C-5) Whenever a licensed child welfare agency places a child in a licensed foster family home, the
agency shall provide the following to the caretaker:

(1) 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.

LCFS foster parents are also given the DCFS form 600-4, which is entitled Sharing
Information with Caregivers. The CPS 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.
600-4 is completed by the assigned worker at the initial placement and updated as additional
information is gathered. This document is also completed at any subsequent placement
changes throughout the life of the child’s case. Foster parents receive a copy of this form and
sign it as an acknowledgement of receipt of said information.

LCFS provides information on the child’s educational status, an Individual Educational Plan
(if applicable), medical card, current physical and dental 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 number
of placements that the youth in care has experienced and the reasons for disruptions.

(2) A copy of the child’s portion of the client service plan, including any visitation
arrangements and all amendments or revisions to it as related to the child.

Both the child specific and foster family 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.

(3) Information containing details of the child’s individualized educational plan when the
child is receiving special education services.

A copy of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is given to the foster family. 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.
(4) Any known social or behavioral information (including, but not limited to, criminal background, fire setting, perpetration of sexual abuse, destructive behavior, and substance abuse) necessary to care for and safeguard the child.

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 they understand the dynamics surrounding the child placed in their home. These dynamics may include behavior, educational performance, treatment, health, visitation with family members and court status. In addition, the information, which has been collected through an Integrated Assessment, is shared with the foster family.

LCFS may prepare a written summary of the information required by this subsection, which may be provided to the foster or prospective adoptive parent in advance of 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.

The Department shall adopt rules necessary for the implementation and regulation of the requirements of this subsection (c-5).

LCFS is committed to gathering all of the necessary child specific information as quickly as possible (no later than 30 days from the time of placement) so that we serve our foster parents. The initial Child and Family Team Meeting, which occurs within 35 days of the initial placement, is used for information sharing. Foster parents are encouraged to attend. Written documentation is obtained and is forwarded to the foster family. Written documentation should include physical examination, immunizations, school transfers and grades, IEP’s, child specific service plan, and visitation plan once developed.

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. Any vital information, which has been obtained, is given to the foster family immediately.

LCFS utilizes regular supervision between the Child Welfare Specialist 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.

Supervision notes are documented in SACWIS. These notes include the issues and concerns that were discussed as well as the supervisory direction and consultation. This includes what information needs to be shared with foster parents.

Moreover, the Regional Director holds regular supervisory conferences with their front-line Supervisors. During these conferences, contacts between foster parents and direct line staff 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.
9. THE RIGHT TO BE NOTIFIED OF SCHEDULED MEETINGS AND STAFFINGS CONCERNING THE FOSTER CHILD IN ORDER TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE CASE PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS REGARDING THE CHILD, INCLUDING INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLANNING MEETINGS; THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED OF DECISIONS MADE BY THE COURTS OR THE CHILD WELFARE AGENCY 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 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.

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, phone calls, in-person, and during home visits to attend such meetings to ensure they receive all pertinent information regarding the needs of the child. Their 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 the 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.

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.

3. If it becomes necessary to conduct a Clinical Intervention to Preserve Placement (CIPP) staffing on a child in placement, the caseworker completes a CIPP referral form which 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.

4. 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.

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.

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 at licensing monitoring visits.

7. LCFS reviews records quarterly as part of a 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.

8. Child Welfare Specialist’s 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.

9. It is the Child Welfare Specialist’s duty to inform the foster parent of the results of court hearings within 48 hours of a court hearing. In addition, 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 also be provided to the foster parent in writing.
10. THE RIGHT TO BE GIVEN IN A TIMELY AND CONSISTENT MANNER, ANY INFORMATION A CASE WORKER HAS REGARDING THE CHILD AND THE CHILD'S FAMILY WHICH IS PERTINENT TO THE CARE AND NEEDS OF THE CHILD AND TO THE MAKING OF A PERMANENCY PLAN FOR THE CHILD. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING THE CHILD'S FAMILY SHALL BE LIMITED TO THE 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.

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 placement matches. 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 medical, school, and basic case history, including: allegation, legal status, and permanency goal. Information sharing is a vital way to maintain the focus on meeting the needs of children and achieving positive outcomes on their behalf.

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 that is shared with them is to be shared only with those authorized to have the information as indicated in the confidentiality agreement signed at initial licensing and renewal.

3. The sharing of information regarding each child in placement allows for the foster parent to be well informed of the history of each child in their home. Therefore, it is encouraged to have caregivers speak to one another regarding any issues that presented themselves in previous homes. This full disclosure allows caregiver necessary information for providing permanency and the well-being of the child.

4. Foster parents are encouraged to ask questions they may have regarding the potential placement to ensure they are made aware of the information needed about the child. Questions regarding the child may ensure the foster parents are able to meet the specific needs of that child. Whenever possible pre-placement visits and/or Child and Family Team Meetings are encouraged prior to the placement of a child so that an informed decision is made as to whether the placement is appropriate.
11. THE RIGHT TO BE GIVEN REASONABLE WRITTEN NOTICE OF (i) ANY CHANGE IN A CHILD’S CASE PLAN (ii) PLANS TO TERMINATE THE PLACEMENT OF THE CHILD WITH THE FOSTER PARENT, AND (iii) THE REASONS FOR THE CHANGE OR TERMINATION IN PLACEMENT. THE NOTICE SHALL BE WAIVED ONLY IN CASES OF A COURT ORDER OR WHEN THE CHILD IS DETERMINED TO BE AT IMMINENT RISK OF HARM.

1. Foster parents are given a written notice of decision (CFS 151-B Notice of Change in Placement) in all situations where a decision has been made to terminate the current placement of the child. The CFS 151-B is to be provided within 14 days prior to the move, 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 which 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 the means to request a clinical placement review to express their opinions regarding the change in placement. (DCFS CPR# 1-800-225-1431). LCFS Child Welfare Specialist’s also provide the foster parents with the DCFS service appeal brochure.

2. If LCFS determines the 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.

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, the Agency is committed to comply with their request and to provide special support until a new placement can be identified.

4. LCFS’s appeal process is available throughout the year, and the process is highlighted in the Foster Parent Newsletter.

1. Information about court hearings, including the court dates and the nature of the court proceedings is provided to the foster parents by the caseworker and foster parents are encouraged to attend. Documentation of these discussions are documented on a case note and located in the case file.

2. Supervisors receive and review their workers' monthly schedules that include dates of court hearings and are responsible for monitoring their workers' compliance with this notification. During individual conferences, Supervisors are responsible for reviewing court dates and ensuring that caseworkers are encouraging foster parents’ participation. Discussion of court proceedings is covered in the quarterly child family team meeting (while respecting birth parent confidentiality). Once again, foster parents are encouraged to attend.

3. All foster parents are aware of their right to be heard during court proceedings. They are also informed that if their request to be heard is denied, they may file a “writ of mandamus” with an attorney’s assistance. This information is provided in the PRIDE training. Additional training in court procedures is available to foster parents and caseworkers. LCFS staff members are trained in the legal rights of foster parents.

4. LCFS makes training available to foster parents regarding their legal rights and the court hearing procedures so they will feel more comfortable in juvenile court settings.
13. THE RIGHT TO BE CONSIDERED AS A PLACEMENT OPTION WHEN A FOSTER CHILD, WHO WAS FORMERLY PLACED WITH THE FOSTER PARENT, RE-ENTERS FOSTER CARE IF THAT PLACEMENT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD AND OTHER CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER PARENT'S HOME.

1. As provided by Illinois law, foster parents who previously had a foster child in placement in their home, have priority consideration as a placement option unless such replacement is not considered consistent with the best interest of the child or that of other children in the foster home.

2. According to LCFS practice and procedure, previous foster parents are first considered as the placement option when a child re-enters out-of-home care. The child's previous placement is determined by review of case records on SACWIS. All children who have been served by LCFS are listed in SACWIS.

3. Child Welfare Specialist, Supervisors and licensing staff collaborate in making the best choice for a child's placement. This decision is based on the child's best interest, which includes but is not limited to, his age, needs, family situation, educational placement, family's home community and his permanency goal.

4. LCFS will also consider placement with a relative or sibling throughout the life of the case.
14. THE RIGHT TO HAVE ACCESS TO LCFS' APPEALS PROCESSES, AND THE RIGHT TO BE FREE FROM ACTS OF HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION BY ANY OTHER PARTY WHEN EXERCISING THE RIGHT TO APPEAL.

1. Foster parents have access to the LCFS appeal process including the Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure; the LCFS appeal process and the DCFS appeal process. The foster parent is informed by the Child Welfare Specialist or Licensing Representative of their right to appeal.

2. LCFS uses a two-tier grievance procedure. The first tier is a complaint. LCFS encourages foster parents to work out any complaints within the already established relationship between them and their case worker and, if necessary, his or her Supervisor. The second tier is a grievance. The grievance procedure is as follows:

1. When the outcome of the meeting between the foster parent and their Child Welfare Specialist and his or her Supervisor is not satisfactory, foster parents are encouraged to file a formal, written grievance with the Regional Program Director or Supervisor. The Child Welfare Specialist or Licensing Representative will provide the foster parent with contact information and a form to assist in filing a grievance should the foster parent request it. Foster parents are required to put the complaint in writing, should they wish to file a formal grievance. If a foster parent chooses not to put the complaint in writing, their caseworker will do it for them in order to have a copy for 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.

2. If the issue is not yet resolved, the grievance is moved to the LCFS Corporate Officer who has the administrative authority over the foster care program. The LCFS Corporate Officer will contact the foster parent to attempt to resolve the grievance.

3. If the foster parent's grievance remains unresolved, the issue is then moved to the Manager of Quality who will convene the Client Grievance Committee. The Committee will make a decision to communicate this decision to the foster parent within 30 calendar days of receiving the grievance.

4. If a foster parent is not satisfied with the decision of the Client Grievance Committee, they have 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 considered final.

5. If a foster parent does not agree with a decision made or action taken by DCFS pertaining to services, you 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

LCFS Foster Parent Implementation Plan 2019
placement of a child in your care, request an appeal within 10 days from the clinical placement decision.

6. All grievances that reach the second tier are tracked for quality improvement purposes. Non-identifying information is collected and sent to the Manager of Organizational and Staff Development to be aggregated and reported quarterly to the Risk Management Committee.

7. 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.

8. If the foster parent feels they are experiencing harassment or retaliation regarding their appeal, they have access to the immediate Supervisor and executive management. This issue is covered as part of the foster parent law training for caseworkers. 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.

9. Foster parents are informed of the appeal process at the time of initial licensure and during ongoing trainings. LCFS staff listens and documents the concerns and suggestions of the foster parents. LCFS staff reports the concerns and suggestions to LCFS Supervisors. LCFS staff, 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.

10. LCFS has procedures that are specifically related to grievances/appeals. This process was developed with the involvement of foster parents. All LCFS office sites have the grievance/appeal forms and a brochure on how to file a grievance available. In addition these items are provided to the foster parents during their initial paperwork.
15. THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED OF THE FOSTER PARENT HOTLINE ESTABLISHED UNDER SECTION 35.6 OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT AND ALL OF THE RIGHTS ACCORDED TO FOSTER PARENTS CONCERNING REPORTS OF MISCONDUCT BY DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES, SERVICE PROVIDERS, OR CONTRACTORS, CONFIDENTIAL HANDLING OF THOSE REPORTS, AND INVESTIGATION BY THE INSPECTOR GENERAL APPOINTED UNDER SECTION 35.5 OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT.

1. During the licensing process the Licensing Representative provides the foster parents with the number for the Office of the Inspector General, 1-800-722-9124 and the number for the DCFS Advocacy Office 800-232-3798 / 217-524-2029. The Foster Parent is 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. In the central region location, foster parents have access to a foster parent hotline and are given that contact information.
C. STATEMENT OF FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES
According to the Foster Parent Law, Foster Parents also have specific responsibilities as a member of the Child Welfare Team above and beyond daily care issues. Fulfilling the following responsibilities are of the utmost importance to the care and well-being of the children placed with them, and the Agency is committed to assisting Foster Parents in meeting their responsibilities.

1. THE RESPONSIBILITY TO OPENLY COMMUNICATE AND SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHILD WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CHILD WELFARE TEAM.

1. Foster parents are informed of their responsibility to share information about the child for whom they are caring. This expectation is discussed during PRIDE training as well as other ongoing training events. The entire child welfare team should be aware of the children's needs in order to act on their behalf.

2. The responsibility of active and open communication is encouraged between the Child Welfare Specialist, Licensing Representative, and foster parents. Foster parents are encouraged to offer their views and share them with the child welfare team on a regular basis. This can take place during home visits, child and family team meetings and any other time deemed necessary.

3. Foster parents understand that the confidential information they share with the Child Welfare Specialist will be documented in the case records of the child as well as in the foster parent licensing file, if appropriate.

4. Foster parents are instructed to document any behavioral changes they encounter and/or as reported by other individuals who have contact with the child. This can be done by completing the DCFS behavior log form. This documentation is very useful in advocating for any future services the child may need.

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 Child Welfare Specialist. For after hour emergencies, the foster parent is expected to call the on-call number. Foster parents are provided with the Agency's business and after-hours numbers by their Licensing Representative and the Child Welfare Specialist. This information is shared during the licensing process, as well as following placement of any youth in care into the home. Each LCFS office has their own after-hours number.

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.
2. THE RESPONSIBILITY TO RESPECT THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION CONCERNING FOSTER CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES AND ACT APPROPRIATELY WITHIN APPLICABLE CONFIDENTIALITY LAWS AND REGULATIONS.

1. During PRIDE training there is substantive discussion regarding the confidentiality and its importance. During the licensing process, foster parents sign the Confidentiality Form, acknowledging their understanding of the Confidentiality Act.

2. Child Welfare Specialist and licensing staff constantly reinforce the importance of confidentiality regarding children's personal and family information. The Agency can assist the foster parent in abiding by and maintaining confidentiality.

3. Each service site offers training that is provided by Agency staff and outside attorneys/experts regarding confidentiality and other legal issues that are important to foster parents. Moreover, the Child Welfare Code of Ethics is covered in training.

4. Copies of the Foster Parent Law DCFS Rule 331 pertaining to confidentiality, the Agency's Implementation Plan, Foster Parent Law Grievance forms, Foster Parent Law 340, Licensing Rule 402, the Agency's Appeal Process, and DCFS Appeal Processes are given to all licensed foster parents.
3. THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER PARENT’S CARE.

1. The Agency supports foster parents in their responsibility to care for and advocate for all foster children.

2. Foster parents are frequently the first to observe the needs and difficulties of the children in their care. LCFS encourages foster parents to advocate with the Agency and other providers to obtain the appropriate services so that the needs of the child are met. The Agency will assist them in this task by providing information and support and any additional needed services. Emergency staffings are also held as needed to address identified issues with pertinent staff.

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 training, foster parents are informed of the value and wealth of information that is disseminated in educational advocacy training and are encouraged to attend. They are provided with the training dates and locations. Foster parents, in collaboration with the Child Welfare Specialist, are in a better position to advocate for the educational needs of the youth in care. The Licensing Representative continues to encourage foster parents to participate in educational advocacy training scheduled in their area.

4. LCFS encourages foster parents to attend court hearings, participate in staffings, Child and Family Team Meetings, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR’s), Clinical Intervention Placement Preservation (CIPP) staffings, and conferences when appropriate and to advocate on behalf of the children in their care. The Foster parents are invited to the CIPP staffing by DCFS/LCFS. The Child Welfare Specialist is required to follow-up with the foster parent regarding the staffings. Foster parents are made aware of their responsibility to attend these meetings. They will receive notice requesting their attendance. Foster parents are encouraged to attend these staffings in-person. The Child Welfare Specialist will work with the foster parent to participate in these staffings via conference call if they are unable to attend in-person.

5. Several trainings are presented at the Foster Parents annual statewide conference regarding DCFS procedures. These trainings are held jointly with Agency staff members and foster parents for the purpose of achieving common knowledge and understanding. The more knowledgeable foster parents, the better they are to serve as advocates for children who are in their care.

6. LCFS employees and foster parents are encouraged to participate regularly in the training sessions provided by LCFS. LCFS provides the foster parents the ability to advocate for the child in their care by providing specialized training, including child specific medical training by LCFS nurse; behavior and trauma training by LCFS counseling staff and other trainings provided by Child Welfare Specialist and Licensing Representatives.
4. THE RESPONSIBILITY TO TREAT CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER PARENT'S CARE AND THE CHILDREN'S FAMILIES WITH DIGNITY, RESPECT, AND CONSIDERATION.

1. LCFS expects foster parents to treat youth in care and their families with dignity, respect, and consideration. This responsibility is discussed in the PRIDE training and ongoing training, ongoing training sessions, and in support meetings, along with 402 licensing standards.

2. It is important that foster parents understand the critical significance of primary relationships and the effects that separation from birth families has upon children regardless of the length of time the child has lived with his/her birth family.

3. LCFS monitors the foster parent's interaction with the youth in care and the birth family in order to support him/her to meet this responsibility. During the licensing process foster parents sign the corporal punishment form. The purpose of this form is to help foster parents understand that it is not appropriate to speak negatively about the child, their biological family, or utilize any type of corporal punishment, verbal abuse, or emotional abuse with the children. The appropriate treatment of youth in care and the importance of relationship with birth parents are continuously reinforced through the licensing process, work with the direct service employees, and ongoing training activities.

4. Topics which are covered in training sessions include the rights and responsibilities of birth parents, respect and understanding for the birth family, and the impact of separation from birth family has on children.

5. The Child Welfare Specialist engages foster parents in discussion regarding their youth in care’s relationship with his/her birth parents during their scheduled home visits. During their home visits with foster parents, the Child Welfare Specialist is to obtain information regarding the child’s daily life so that this information may be shared with the child’s birth family.

6. Foster parents are also encouraged to create a montage of life events (life book) for the youth in care. Foster parents are asked to share pictures of the children with their biological families and to invite them to celebrations as appropriate.

7. As a part of their role, foster parents are expected to support ongoing visitation, phone contact and other contact as appropriate with the biological families of the children and in accordance with any court orders in place. Foster parents are to ensure that they are supportive of the child’s relationship with their families despite the issues which brought them into the foster care system.
5. THE RESPONSIBILITY TO RECOGNIZE THE FOSTER PARENTS 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 YOUTH IN CARE.

1. Through PRIDE training and ongoing assessment of the foster parents, LCFS staff ensures that foster parents have realistic views of their individual and family strengths and limitations in dealing with youth in care.

2. As foster families work on behalf of children, it is the responsibility of LCFS to discuss their strengths and limitations, identify training opportunities that may strengthen their ability to care for children, and seek support systems and resources. Licensing Representative and the Child Welfare Specialist assists the foster parent in locating training and other resources to assist them in their role as foster parents. All support is targeted to assist the foster parents to assess the ongoing needs of the child and of their ability to serve that child.

3. The purpose of assessing the Foster Parent's strengths and limitations is to make an appropriate, well-matched placement that ensures stability in the lives of children. The Licensing Representative fills out an initial assessment form detailing the types of issues and behaviors that foster parents feel capable to handle on a day to day basis. The "Matching Tool" is also used to obtain a list of strengths and abilities possessed by the foster parents. In addition, with specialized cases there is a step down process that therapeutically assesses the matches between foster parents and children. These forms along with this process is used to obtain information about the foster parents in order to make a placement match based on ability and strengths of the family as well as the strengths and needs of the children. The ultimate goal is to ensure that each child receives the best care possible, to identify training needs, and to arrange for support.

4. Foster parents and LCFS staff are partners in ensuring that foster parents continue to develop their skills and awareness regarding the children in their care. LCFS requires training for foster parents as a valid method of expanding their talents, strengths, and skills.

5. An open dialogue with the foster parent, Child Welfare Specialist, and Licensing Representative assists in assessing strengths and limitations and enables the Agency to best utilize the talents of the foster parents.

6. Foster parents are expected to accept additional services if needed or recommended to enhance their ability to care for children.
6. THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BE AWARE OF THE BENEFITS OF RELYING ON AND AFFILIATING WITH OTHER FOSTER PARENTS AND FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATIONS IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CARE AND SERVICE TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

1. The Agency provides special events, including the annual region Foster Parent Conference and bi-annual statewide Foster Parent Conference; regular and ongoing training opportunities, in order that they may benefit from the experience of other Foster Parents including the opportunity to convey their own concerns. LCFS also conveys information by mail which keeps them informed of issues related to their care of foster children.

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 in order to share their experiences and to provide information.

3. The Agency arranges social events, such as holiday parties and picnics which offer opportunities on an informal basis for interaction with other foster parents.

4. The intent and applications of this Implementation Plan are a part of the Agency's bi-annual Statewide Foster Parent Conference and the annual Region Foster Parent Conference agendas. The Plan is given to all foster parents and distributed throughout the year to foster parents at trainings as well as reviewed during the six (6) month monitoring visits. The Implementation Plan is available at the regional and statewide conferences and is publicized in the Foster Parent Newsletter. The goal is to provide foster parents with as many opportunities as possible to discuss the Implementation Plan with staff and their peers in order to more clearly understand its intent and implications.

5. It is the foster parent's responsibility, as a team member, to participate in the Agency's conferences, trainings, special events, and advisory groups in order that they may continue to be well-informed, to acquire the support they need, and to share their skills and expertise with other foster parents.

6. LCFS foster parents receive Fostering in Illinois, flyers from the Illinois Foster Parent Association, and quarterly LCFS Newsletters and are encouraged to attend foster parent advocacy groups in their communities.

7. LCFS foster parents who attend the State of Illinois Foster Parent Conference are requested to share information with other foster parents at the next foster parent training session so that other foster parents are more informed of day-to-day service delivery procedures.
7. THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ASSESS THE FOSTER PARENT'S ONGOING INDIVIDUAL TRAINING NEEDS AND TAKE ACTION TO MEET THOSE NEEDS.

1. LCFS Foster Parents are responsible for participation in agency and independent training opportunities. They are expected to complete the agency requirements for training. They are encouraged to seek training opportunities in their own community. Foster parents are encouraged to express their specific needs for ongoing training with the Licensing Representatives, the Child Welfare Specialist, and at the Foster Parent trainings. The topic is included in the regularly scheduled foster parent meetings.

2. At the annual statewide Agency's conference and monthly trainings foster parents are encouraged to recommend topics for training that would be beneficial to them. Consultants are invited as needed to provide training to the foster parents.

3. Licensing Representative help foster parents acquire training materials on specific areas of need.

4. Foster Parents have access to DCFS training and materials through the DCFS Training Registration Unit and through the DCFS Virtual Training Website. The Virtual Training 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 Virtual Training Site can contact their Licensing Representative for assistance.
8. THE RESPONSIBILITIES TO DEVELOP AND ASSIST IN IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES TO PREVENT PLACEMENT DISRUPTIONS, RECOGNIZING THE TRAUMATIC IMPACT OF PLACEMENT DISRUPTIONS ON A FOSTER CHILD, AND ALL OF THE FOSTER FAMILY; AND THE RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE FOSTER CHILDREN AND MEMBERS OF THE FOSTER FAMILY IF PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES FAIL AND PLACEMENT DISRUPTIONS OCCUR.

1. Foster Parents, as a member of the Child Welfare Team, will work with other members of the team to minimize placement disruptions of the children in their care. The team will proactively refer a youth in care to the LCFS Clinical Team to include in the planning process of child placements and CIPP's as needed in order to receive recommendations for services and treatment that may prevent the child's removal. All team members should be notified when placement change does occur.

2. It is the Foster parent's responsibility to discuss with the Child Welfare Specialist any difficulties they are experiencing with the children in their care. Any and all available services will be provided to prevent the removal of children from their home.

3. Foster Parents are expected to work together with key community stakeholders such as the Screening Assessment and Support System (SASS), and System of Care (SOC)/Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS) to help prevent placement disruption. All foster parents are made aware of the 24 hour emergency number to access SASS/SOC/IPS services by calling the CARES (Community Access Referral and Evaluation and Support line at (1-800-345-9049). This number is provided to all foster parents by their Child Welfare Specialist and Licensing Representative.

4. DCFS SOC/IPS provides annual training to foster parents. Presentations about SASS and SOC/IPS services are provided to Child Welfare Specialist staff and foster parents.

5. LCFS encourages foster parent to give the Agency a written 14 day notice in the event a removal becomes necessary. Throughout the fourteen (14) day period, the foster parent will maintain placement of the children to the best of their ability. If additional time is needed to secure an appropriate placement, the Agency will work in conjunction with the foster parent to stabilize the placement until removal can occur.

6. 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. LCFS understands that such decisions need to be addressed promptly. 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 provide to assist the Foster Parent. If this is not possible, 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 foster parent and help prevent future disruptions.
9. THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE IMPACT FOSTER PARENTING HAS ON INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS; AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ENDEAVOR TO MINIMIZE, AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, ANY STRESS THAT RESULTS FROM FOSTER PARENTING.

1. LCFS encourages foster parents to learn about the impact that foster parenting may 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 training (Module Nine: Managing the Impact of Placement on Your Family), 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 Child Welfare Specialist 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.

2. Stress and coping related trainings occur in the LCFS foster parent training curriculum. Training on stress management, how to recognize it and how to apply stress management techniques are included in the training plan for foster parents and LCFS staff. 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 On-line Foster Parent Modules DVDs, the VTC (Virtual Training Center) 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.

3. LCFS staff 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 staff 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.

4. 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 Representative’s 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.

5. 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.

6. LCFS offers foster parents the ability to place their license on a voluntary hold. The Licensing Representative will review Non-Active Status procedures with foster parents. During the Non-Active Status period, foster parents can work with their Licensing
Representative and LCFS counseling staff to ensure that their needs and concerns are addressed.
10. THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE REWARDS AND BENEFITS TO CHILDREN, PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND SOCIETY THAT COME FROM FOSTER PARENTING AND TO PROMOTE THE FOSTER PARENT'S EXPERIENCE IN A POSITIVE WAY.

1. LCFS encourages foster parents to support the belief that effective and nurturing foster care can be 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. Foster Parents traveled to Springfield and lobbied in defense of foster parent services and advocated for the importance of these services to children in foster care. This proved to be a successful venture.

2. Lutheran Child and Family Services acknowledges that Foster Parents understand and appreciate the benefits of fostering. They are the best recruiters and are the most realistic advocates for the role.

3. LCFS honors all foster parents for displaying exceptional service to children at the Annual Foster Parent Conference and in the Agency's Foster Parent Newsletter.

4. The Marketing Department is willing to train staff and/or foster parents in the art of public speaking and how to be a positive representative of the Agency and an advocate for children.

5. The Licensing Unit 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.

6. Lutheran Child and Family Services foster parents are encouraged to attend and participate in the annual regional Foster Parent Conference and the bi-annual Statewide Foster Parent Conference. During the conferences, foster parents can meet other foster parents and share information to help in their roles as foster parents.
11. THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE ROLES, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FOSTER PARENTS, OTHER PROFESSIONALS IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM, AND THE YOUTH IN CARE’S OWN FAMILY.

1. Foster parents are required to learn the roles, rights and responsibilities of all parties, who are involved in the life of the child, by their attendance and active participation in ACR’s, CIPP, Child and Family Team meetings, trainings and juvenile court during the licensing process and during day to day interactions with the children in care. Based on their understanding of these roles, rights and responsibilities foster parents are able to be effective members of the child welfare team.

2. The “LCFS Foster Parent Role Description” is provided annually to foster parents in an effort to inform and re-educate them on their responsibilities.

3. The roles of each member of the Child Welfare Team are reviewed on a regular basis at quarterly Child and Family Team meetings and also depending on the region, at quarterly foster parent trainings and/or support groups. Child Welfare staff members are encouraged to attend and participate.

4. The “LCFS Foster Parent Role Description” is provided by the Foster Parent Recruiter/Representative during the initial licensure process and is printed annually in the Foster parents’ newsletter. In addition, this is reviewed annually with the foster parent. This description clearly explains what is expected in their role as an LCFS foster parent.

5. LCFS schedules regular staff meetings to discuss the roles, rights and responsibilities of the child welfare team. Additionally, the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan is reviewed during staff orientation for new employees.

6. LCFS encourages foster parents and Child Welfare Specialists to participate in the Agency trainings to support the team approach to achieving permanency. This provides the opportunity for foster parents and Child Welfare Specialists to be jointly trained and as such, enhances the effectiveness of the child welfare team.

7. LCFS encourages foster parents to contact the Child Welfare Specialists, Supervisors, Licensing Representatives, Regional Directors, Statewide Director, and the Vice President/Chief Operating Officer with concerns as it pertains to the child’s welfare, as well as for support and resources.

8. During May, LCFS sponsors a foster parent conferences. All levels of staff including the president/CEO are in attendance, participate and are available for discussion with foster parents.
12. THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW AND, AS NECESSARY, FULFILL THE FOSTER PARENT’S RESPONSIBILITY TO SERVE AS A MANDATED REPORTER OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT UNDER THE ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILD REPORTING ACT; AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE CHILD WELFARE’S AGENCY’S POLICY REGARDING ALLEGATIONS THAT FOSTER PARENTS HAVE COMMITTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT AND APPLICABLE ADMINISTRATION RULES AND PROCEDURES GOVERNING INVESTIGATIONS OF THOSE ALLEGATIONS.

1. Each foster parent is informed during the PRIDE training and licensing process of their responsibilities under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. At the initial training, 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. They are also given the Child Abuse Hotline phone number 1-800-25-ABUSE (22873.) Training regarding their mandated reporting responsibility is ongoing and occurs at quarterly meetings, in the newsletter and at semiannual monitoring visits. Foster parents are also informed of the DCFS Mandated Reporter Training which is available on the DCFS website.

2. Foster parents are required to sign the acknowledgement form which serves as a contract regarding their mandated reporter responsibilities. (Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status.)

3. Training involving what to do if allegations against foster parents are made and the rules and regulations regarding the investigation are addressed in PRIDE for traditional foster parents.

4. Discussions between foster parents and Licensing Representatives occur during the licensure process to inform the foster parents of the licensing investigation process.

5. LCFS will implement a yearly training for all foster parents regarding allegations/investigations against foster parents and the process of these investigations.
13. THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW AND RECEIVE TRAINING REGARDING THE PURPOSE OF ADMINISTRATIVE CASE REVIEWS, CLIENT SERVICE PLANS, AND COURT PROCESSES, AS WELL AS ANY FILING OR TIME REQUIREMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THOSE PROCEEDINGS: AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE FOSTER PARENTS DESIGNATED ROLE IN THESE PROCEEDINGS.

1. LCFS assumes the responsibility to provide and/or facilitate the provision of training regarding Administrative Case Reviews, client service plans, and the court process. Trainings incorporate relevant cultural issues to the topics presented. Foster parents are responsible for knowing these processes and for participating in these case activities. LCFS is responsible for training foster parents so they may confidently fulfill those duties.

2. LCFS foster parents are consistently encouraged to attend ACR’s, court hearings, Child and Family team meetings and integrated assessment processes. Child Welfare Specialists may provide one-on-one information to the foster parents before, during or after the ACR, child and family team meeting, integrated assessment or court hearings to help the foster parents fulfill their roles as foster parents. The foster parent’s insight and information on the foster child strengths, behaviors, and specific needs are crucial to making the service plans and permanency goals that are in the best interest of the youth in care.

3. When foster parents attend an Administrative Case Review, the purpose of the ACR is explained by the reviewer. The reviewer explains the process which enables the foster parents to be more knowledgeable about case reviews and enables them to participate more fully as a member of the child welfare team.

4. An annual article in the Foster Parent Newsletter addresses the foster parent and Child Welfare Specialist’s role at the ACR, court hearings, child and family team meetings, and integrated assessment processes to allow an understanding of other’s role and to be supportive in the common goal of the child’s well-being and permanency goal.
14. THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE CHILD WELFARE AGENCIES APPEAL PROCEDURE FOR FOSTER PARENTS AND THE RIGHTS OF FOSTER PARENTS UNDER THE PROCEDURE.

1. When presenting the LCFS and DCFS Appeal procedures (including Part 337 Service Appeal Process), LCFS staff members ensure that foster parents fully understand these processes and their rights. Specifically, foster parents are provided with the Foster Parent Bill of Rights, LCFS Rights and Responsibilities and the LCFS grievance procedure during the initial and licensing processes. The foster parents rights and responsibilities and grievance procedures are discussed with the foster parents at routine licensing monitoring visits. Furthermore, the Licensing Representative and/or Supervisor are available to foster parents to discuss the grievance and/or appeal process.

LCFS uses a two tier grievance procedure. The first tier is a complaint. LCFS encourages foster parents to work out any complaints within the already established relationship between them and the Child Welfare Specialist assigned to the youth in their care and, if necessary, his or her Supervisor. The second tier is the grievance. The grievance procedure is as follows:

1. When the outcome of the meeting between the foster parent and their Child Welfare Specialist and his or her Supervisor is not satisfactory, foster parents are encouraged to file a formal, written grievance with the Regional Program Director or Supervisor. The Child Welfare Specialist or Licensing Worker will provide the foster parent with the contact information and a form to assist you in filing a grievance should the foster parent request it. Foster parents are not required to put the complaint in writing should they wish to file a formal grievance. If the foster parent chooses not to put the complaint in writing, their Child Welfare Specialist will do it for them in order to have copy for 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.

2. If the issue is not resolved, the grievance is submitted to the LCFS Corporate Officer who has the administrative authority over the foster care program. The LCFS Corporate Officer will contact the foster parent to attempt to resolve the grievance.

3. If the foster parent’s grievance remains unresolved, the issue is submitted to the Manager of Quality who will convene the Client Grievance Committee. The Committee will make a decision and communicate the decision to the foster parent within 30 calendar days of receiving the grievance.

4. If a foster parent is not satisfied with the decision of the Client Grievance Committee, they have 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 considered final.

5. If you do not agree with the decision made or action taken by DCFS pertaining to service, you may do the following: Appeal within 10 days from receiving notice and 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 you do 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.

All grievances that reach the second tier are tracked for quality improvement purposes. Non-identifying information is collected and sent to the Manager of Organizational and Staff Development to be aggregated and reported quarterly to the Risk Management Committee.

2. Foster parents are expected to attend trainings on the LCFS appeal process, Foster Parent Law, and note pertinent articles in the Foster parent Newsletter and the DCFS Fostering in Illinois Newsletter. Some of these trainings will be jointly held with child welfare staff, and may utilize experts as trainers. Foster parents are reminded during the training programs and in licensing monitoring visits, that foster parents are an important part of the child welfare team and are a necessary resource for the Agency and for children and parents.

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 consists of 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. In some instances you may be able to get a temporary decision on some issues raised by you through an emergency review.
15. THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING ACCURATE AND RELEVANT RECORDS REGARDING THE CHILD’S HISTORY AND PROGRESS: AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BE AWARE OF AND FOLLOW THE PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS OF THE CHILD WELFARE AGENCY WITH WHICH THE FOSTER PARENT IS LICENSED OR AFFILIATED.

1. At the time of initial placement, LCFS provides the foster parent with a folder to maintain records for each child placed in their home. It is the foster parent’s responsibility to maintain all relevant information on the child in the child’s folder. The foster parent will present to the Child Welfare Specialist a complete child folder which will be sent to the new foster parent or the Agency when the child is returned home or moves to a new placement.

2. Training involving foster parents and Child Welfare Specialists regarding the contents of the child’s folder occurs in PRIDE and is part of the ongoing foster parent training. The foster parent also receives one-on-one training on what records are required to be kept and how to complete them thoroughly by the Child Welfare Specialist and Licensing Representative.

3. The foster parent will present to the Child Welfare Specialist the folder quarterly so that the CWS may review the folder for updated materials and acquire copies of needed documentation.

4. During the licensing process and on a continuous basis, the foster parent is informed in writing of LCFS’ procedures. The foster parent is encouraged to raise concerns, ask questions, and continue to improve their knowledge of these procedures as they relate to the youth in care.

5. Foster parents are required to complete the behavior, allowance and medications logs in order to document any unusual behaviors, allowances provided and/or medications administered. This information is to be documented accurately and shared with the Child Welfare Specialist.
16. THE RESPONSIBILITY TO SHARE INFORMATION THROUGH THE CHILD WELFARE TEAM WITH THE SUBSEQUENT CAREGIVER (WHETHER THE CHILD’S PARENT OR SUBSTITUTE CAREGIVER) REGARDING THE CHILD’S ADJUSTMENT IN THE FOSTER PARENTS HOME.

1. All foster parents and parties involved with the child (including Child Welfare Specialist, Licensing Representatives, Counselors, Case Assistants, etc.) are to share and fully disclose all pertinent information regarding the child’s adjustment in their home, including aggressive behaviors, triggers, mental health diagnosis, medications with any subsequent caregiver, as well as the child’s parent and other substitute caregivers. This disclosure of information (CFS600-4 Sharing Information with Caregivers) supports the child’s transition to the new living arrangements and enables good assessment of child’s progress and adjustment. The assigned CWS will discuss the child’s adjustment to the placement during monthly home visits and develop necessary interventions with the foster parent. The assigned CWS, child welfare team and the foster parents will hold Child and Family Team meetings quarterly to discuss placement issues and develop interventions.

2. Ongoing and open communication is expected between the Child Welfare Specialist, Licensing Representative, biological family members, foster parents and service providers. Foster parents are encouraged to offer their views and share them with the child welfare team on a regular basis during home visits, child and family team meetings, court hearings, ACR’s and any other time deemed necessary. Foster parents and parties involved with the child (including Child Welfare Specialist, Counselors, case assistance, Licensing Representatives, etc.) are expected to communicate to ensure information is shared accurately, timely and fairly, and in the best interest of the child.

3. All foster parents will receive training on how to effectively communicate with and provide full disclosure of information to the new foster parent or to the biological family to ensure a successful transition to new placement/reunification.

4. Foster parents will maintain records of children placed in their home. These records will be shared with subsequent foster parents and/or biological parents. Records to be maintained include: medical and educational reports, visitation plans, medication longs as well as name and numbers of service providers.
17. THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE CARE AND SERVICES THAT ARE RESPECTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE TO THE CHILD'S CULTURAL NEEDS AND ARE SUPPORTIVE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHILD AND HIS/HER OWN FAMILY; THE RESPONSIBILITY TO RECOGNIZE THE INCREASED IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING A CHILD'S CULTURAL IDENTITY WHEN THE RACE AND/OR CULTURE OF THE FOSTER FAMILY DIFFERS FROM THAT OF THE FOSTER CHILD; AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO THESE ISSUES.

1. It is the goal of all members of the child welfare team to be aware and supportive of the child’s ethic, cultural and religious heritage regardless of the orientation of any member of the child welfare team. It is also the goal of all members of the child welfare team to honor and respect the familial ties of the child and to encourage the child to know and understand his or her own history in a positive and yet realistic light in order to support the healthy physical and emotional growth of the child.

2. Culture and heritage training is provided through the initial PRIDE and on an ongoing individual basis in partnership with the CWS, foster parents and Licensing Representatives. In situations where the foster parent's and the child’s culture and heritage are different, special attention is paid to ensure there is cultural sensitivity and commitment on the part of the foster parent to maintain the child’s connection to his/her own culture.

3. Foster parents and LCFS staff are being recruited to be able to meet the cultural and language needs of the children being served. Foster parents are encouraged to meet the cultural needs of the children in their home and provide opportunities for them to participate in culturally sensitive activities.

4. LCFS encourages foster parents to support the birth family through involvement with family/sibling visits, sharing photos or cultural mementos. This provides both the foster and birth family with support for the children in care. Each can learn care giving ideas and exchange information that may include cultural traditions and/or birth family traditions. Foster parents that may be of a different race, ethnicity and/or culture may find a benefit in the opportunity to learn about the birth family’s traditions and values and help facilitate the child’s development. LCFS Child Welfare Specialists assist in the facilitation of exchanges between the foster and birth families.

In addition, foster parents are informed of external resources such as experts in the field throughout the State of Illinois.
LUTHERAN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES OF ILLINOIS

2019 Implementation Plan of Foster Parent Law

I, ____________________________, have reviewed the Implementation Plan of Foster Parent Law and agree to adhere to the document as it pertains to serving in the capacity of a foster parent for Lutheran Child & Family Services of Illinois.

Foster Parent: ____________________________________________________________

Foster Parent: ____________________________________________________________

Licensing Representative: ________________________________________________

Date: ___________________________
## Summary of Frequently Used Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACR</td>
<td>Administrative Case Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA/N</td>
<td>Child Abuse and Neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANS</td>
<td>Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths</td>
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<tr>
<td>CANTS</td>
<td>Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAPU</td>
<td>Case Assignment Placement Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARES</td>
<td>Community Access Referral Evaluation Support Line</td>
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<tr>
<td>CASA</td>
<td>Court Appointed Special Advocate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIPP</td>
<td>Clinical Intervention Placement Preservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COA</td>
<td>Council on Accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWS</td>
<td>Child Welfare Specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCFS</td>
<td>Department of Child and Family Services</td>
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<td>FHP</td>
<td>Foster Home Boarding – Private Agency</td>
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<td>FHS</td>
<td>Foster Home Specialized</td>
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<td>HPK</td>
<td>Home of Fictive Kin</td>
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<td>GAL</td>
<td>Guardian Ad Litem</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMR</td>
<td>Home of Relative (Foster Care)</td>
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<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>Integrated Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEP</td>
<td>Individualized Education Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAN</td>
<td>Child and Adolescent Local Area Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCFS</td>
<td>Lutheran Child and Family Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td>Purchase of Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRI</td>
<td>Preliminary Report of the Investigation</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRIDE</td>
<td>Parent’s Resource of Information Development and Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRT</td>
<td>Placement Review Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QA</td>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACWIS</td>
<td>Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System</td>
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<tr>
<td>SACY</td>
<td>Sexually Aggressive Children and Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SASS</td>
<td>Screening, Assessment, and Support Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC/IPS</td>
<td>System of Care/Intensive Placement Stabilization</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSF</td>
<td>Special Service Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UIR</td>
<td>Unusual Incident Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>VTC</td>
<td>Virtual Training Center</td>
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