

Spero Family Services
Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan
2024

FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS

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

Spero Family Services believes foster parents are the principle change agents in the lives of the children served in the Family-Supported Adolescent, Specialized, and Traditional Foster Care Program. Furthermore, it is the belief of the agency that all interactions related to foster care and to the child welfare system are reflected by a mutual understanding of respect, dignity, and consideration.

- Spero Family Services involves foster parents in the decision-making process of any placement in their home. This is completed by having the foster parents initially read the referral packet that has already been screened by the Licensing Specialist and the program supervisor. Foster parents are involved in pre-placement visits in the community and their home and invited to attend all transition staffings prior to placement. After placement, foster parents are continually involved by attending Administrative Case Reviews, court proceedings, clinical staffings and Child and Family Team Meetings.
- Spero Family Services recognizes foster parents as part of the child welfare team. Foster parents are invited to participate in all Child and Family Team meetings scheduled for their foster child's case. Foster parents are encouraged to utilize the CFTM to gain assistance in assessing the child's behavior or other challenges that arise. A CFTM agenda/outline is included in the foster parent handbook which all foster parents receive after obtaining the foster home license.
- Spero Family Services promptly responds to requests for assistance from foster parents, including a 24-hour on-call system for crises and emergencies. Spero Family Services staff will return foster parents' calls within a 24-hour period of a message being left (non-emergency) & within 15 minutes to the on-call staff (after hours). Phone calls are returned within the same business day if staff are available to do so. If staff are out of the office more than 2 days, staff members will leave a message on their email and leave a phone message so foster parents know who else to contact.
- Spero Family Services staff provide monthly in-service support meetings for foster parents. Foster parents have a designated time during the support meetings to provide recommendations, helpful information and training to the staff and other foster parents.

- Spero Family Services staff provide training, including trauma informed training, and invite foster parents as co-facilitators in training sessions to capitalize on the experiences, skills, and knowledge of foster parents. Opportunities for co-facilitation include but are not limited to, prudent parenting, trauma informed parenting, educational advocacy, psychotropic medication management, juvenile court processes, adoption and guardianship processes, mental health issues and/or self-care.
- Spero Family Services shows appreciation and recognition for the commitment of our foster parents through recognition at support meetings, yearly highlights in the Spero Newsletter and an annual foster parent appreciation activity.
- Spero Family Services conducts an annual satisfaction survey, completed by foster parents. The survey is designed to allow foster parents to share their feedback and recommendations/suggestions regarding agency services.
- Foster parents are encouraged to notify the program supervisor if they feel that they are not being heard as a contributing member of the team. All concerns raised by foster parents are staffed internally and result in a phone call or letter by the supervisor within one week.
- Agency staff are held accountable for treating foster parents with dignity and respect through monthly supervision and the foster parent appeals process.
- New staff receive training on the important role foster parents play on the child welfare team. All new staff complete DCFS Foundations training. At the beginning of their employment, new foster care staff receive a copy of the annual Implementation Plan.

(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.

Spero Family Services believes education and on-going training are critical to the success of our program. Training for foster parents is a planned, systematic means by which they are prepared to provide care for youth with difficult behaviors prior to having children placed in their homes and to improve their skills through a continual process of learning as they provide in-home placement services. Training shall be consistent with the program's treatment philosophy and methods and shall equip foster parents to carry out their responsibilities of the treatment process.

- All foster parents receive DCFS Pre-Service PRIDE training which includes Educational Advocacy.
- All foster parents receive Spero Family Services training specific to program expectations and operations, including documentation, crisis / on-call procedures, Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, Cultural Diversity, First Aid/CPR and Mandated Reporter. In addition, other foster care agencies are encouraged to present information at the monthly support meetings. Foster Parents also have accounts

through the Learning and Development Center (LDC) where they can register for numerous trainings.

- Spero Family Services solicits input at each monthly support meeting from foster parents of their needs and requests for training. Each agenda of the support meeting gives foster parents the opportunity to network and to ask for additional training topics. Following each meeting, foster parents are encouraged to complete a survey to gauge their satisfaction with that month's training topic.
- Spero Family Services encourages active involvement of foster parents in training and monthly support meetings. Each month during the support meeting, there is round table discussion to draw on input from staff and other foster parents.
- Spero Family Services has a Lead Foster Parent, whose role is to provide support and mentoring to all foster parents. The Lead Foster Parent, chosen by the administration team, is available to work closely with new foster parents to review program procedures and provide support. The Lead Foster Parent can identify specific training that would be beneficial to foster parents in parenting the child/children in their home. The Lead Foster Parent is expected to act as a liaison between foster parents and foster care staff when necessary.
- Spero Family Services provides yearly training courses to foster parents (i.e., Therapeutic Crisis Intervention) and encourages participation in trainings that are conducted by the agency's professional training department.
- Spero Family Services utilizes professional expertise from other Spero Family Services programs and collaborations with external agencies to provide training.
- Spero Family Services provides information to foster parents about DCFS training and a variety of learning opportunities available which can be done through the LDC.
- Spero Family Services implements CARE through Cornell University. The CARE framework addresses 6 principles including Trauma Informed, Relationship Based, Family Involved, Developmentally Focused, Ecologically Oriented, and Competency Centered. Foster parents are educated on the CARE model in congruence with agency practices.
- In addition, foster parents are encouraged to utilize the DCFS Learning and Development (LDC) to register and track their training hours. Foster parents can view their transcripts through the password-protected secure website.
- If training is needed by a foster parent or staff person and the topic is not being offered by one of the methods named above, the agency will locate a professional or knowledgeable person to conduct training in the office.
- Spero Family Services' Licensing Specialist will make an annual training schedule. Foster parents are asked to give input for future training during the November Foster Parent Support Meeting and the finalized training calendar is dispersed during the

December Foster Parent Support Meeting. The calendar is also sent to each foster parent via e-mail and an additional hard copy may be provided by the case manager, therapist, license specialist or supervisor, if necessary. Foster parents and staff are given the opportunity to co-train courses together throughout the calendar year.

(3) The right to be informed as to how to contact the appropriate child placement agency in order to receive information and assistance to access supportive services for children in the foster parent's care.

Foster parents receive an on-call schedule created by the Foster Care Supervisor on a two-month cycle. This schedule provides non-emergency contact numbers for all program staff, contact numbers for all program foster parents and emergency contact numbers (for evening/weekends/holiday) for on-call staff, including the Child Welfare Director. Foster parents are provided with procedures to follow in the event of an emergency. The on-call staff is available 24/7 for foster parents.

- Foster parents are provided with a list of resources for support, information, and emergency numbers. This list is provided to the foster parents through the Foster Parent Handbook that is distributed once per year. Resources include the following:
 - SASS (Screening, Assessment & Support Services)
 - Medical Consent Hotline
 - Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline
 - Medical Card Hotline
 - DCFS Child Intake and Recovery Unit (CIRU)
 - National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)

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

The foster parent is compensated by Spero Family Services as provided in the Professional Foster Parent Agreement which outlines the duties and responsibilities of the foster parent and rate of pay per day. The rate per day is determined by IL DCFS and includes the foster parents' room and board as well as allowances for each youth. Daily rates are subject to change based off the contract between IL DCFS and Spero Family Services each fiscal year. Spero Family Services has an adolescent, specialized and traditional/HMR contract, therefore foster parents receive a flat rate per day, per youth. Payment will be made twice a month and shall occur on the 15th and 30th day of each month. The payment period will begin on the first day the child is placed in the home and will end on the day the child leaves the home. The Spero Family Services accounting department processes foster care board payments on the Tuesday of the week payment is due. The Spero Family Services program supervisor submits the request for board payments no later than the Monday of the week that payment is due. If payment is due on a Monday or Tuesday, the program supervisor will submit the request for payment to the accounting department the week prior. The program supervisor provides timely assessment and tuple of care by utilizing CFS

906 and Excel. The Excel document is broken down by contract and is designed to calculate board payment and allowance rates based off the daily rates and number of days a child was placed in each respective foster home. If payment dates are affected by bank closures due to holidays, etc., the foster parents will be notified of this delay by the Licensing Specialist. Direct deposit is available to the foster parents.

- The following is a monthly break-out of how certain portions of the monthly reimbursement should be utilized:
 - a) Adolescent and specialized youth will receive monthly allowances as outlined in the DCFS contract. The allowance rates for adolescent and specialized youth for a 30-day month are as follows:
 - a. For adolescent and specialized youth, \$135.30 will be used to provide the foster youth with a combination of personal allowance (\$50.40) and clothing expenses (\$84.90).
 - b) Traditional youth in a licensed home will receive monthly allowances as outlined in the DCFS contract. These rates are based off the youth's age category. The allowance rates for traditional youth for a 30-day month are as follows:
 - a. For traditional youth aged 0-11 months, \$69.00 will be used to provide the foster youth with a combination of personal allowance (\$19.00) and clothing expenses (\$50.00).
 - b. For traditional youth aged 1-4 years, \$75.00 will be used to provide the foster youth with a combination of personal allowance (\$20.00) and clothing expenses (\$55.00).
 - c. For traditional youth aged 5-8 years, \$89.00 will be used to provide the foster youth with a combination of personal allowance (\$21.00) and clothing expenses (\$68.00).
 - d. For traditional youth aged 9-11 years, \$119.00 will be used to provide the foster youth with a combination of personal allowance (\$35.00) and clothing expenses (\$84.00).
 - e. For traditional youth aged 12 years and over, \$152.00 will be used to provide the foster youth with a combination of personal allowance (\$62.00) and clothing expenses (\$90.00).
 - c) An average of up to \$300 will be used for other child related expenses such as personal care and hygiene items, groceries, non-waivable school fees, extra clothing costs (as needed), community program and activity fees, recreational costs, or other expenses which are common and typical in the care of an adolescent. This can include camps attended by the youth.

- d) The remaining amount is intended to cover any other expenses incurred by the foster parent in the care of the child(ren) in their home and to fulfill the duties and responsibilities listed in section 2 and 3 hereof.
- Foster parents have an additional \$100 included in their board payments for adolescent and specialized contracted foster youth recreational activities. Only recreational expenses directly incurred by, or fees/materials specifically for the foster youth are approved. Any funds not used by the youth for recreational activities are to be put into a savings account with the youth's name on it. Foster parents will be required to submit a tracking sheet with receipts attached to document recreational purchases and deposits and withdrawals from the youth's savings accounts. In the Foster Parent Handbook, there is a list of possible recreation activities.
 - Foster parents can provide respite care for a youth not placed in their home and are reimbursed for providing respite. Foster parents requesting respite care are responsible for paying the foster parent providing respite at a rate of \$34.00 per day. The agency will provide and pay for up to 3 days of respite at a rate of \$34.00 per day for each foster family per youth, per year. If the foster parent wishes for the agency to pay for up to 3 days of respite, it must be requested in advance.
 - At the time of licensure, foster parents are provided with the Board Payment Agreement, which they are asked to sign acknowledging an understanding of the board rate and payment schedule. A copy of this is provided to the foster parent. If there are problems and/or concerns with payments, foster parents are to notify the Foster Care Program Supervisor who will work with the Accounting Department to resolve the issue/concern. If the Program Supervisor is unable to resolve the issue, then the Child Welfare Director is notified of the situation for resolution.

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

During the pre-placement process, foster parents are made aware of the permanency goal and the specific situation of the child regarding family contact and of any extended family connections that need to be respected and continued. This information includes any known mental health, behavioral, medical, educational, or psychological needs. This information is provided verbally to the foster parent prior to placement. Spero Family Services Foster Parents are strongly encouraged to attend ACRs, Child and Family Team meetings and court proceedings with any youth placed in their home; therefore, they receive information of any changes in the service plan or permanency goal. In the event the foster parent is not present, the assigned case manager is responsible for notifying the foster parent of service plan changes, visitation plan changes and/or permanency goal changes. Foster parents are notified during the monthly home

visit(s), via phone, and/or during Child and Family Team meetings of up-coming court hearings, ACRs, and visitation changes to ensure they have a verbal notification of the meetings.

- Foster parents actively participate in the review and implementation of client service plan objectives for the youth during individual meetings with the case manager. This input includes the planning and implementation of the child(ren)'s visitation plan as well as the exchange of interaction between the foster child(ren)'s birth family and the foster parent. Spero Family Services also uses the Child and Family Team meeting to formulate the service plan. Foster parents are provided with a copy of the child's initial service plan and subsequent service plans within 5 business days of the Administrative Case Review.
- Spero Family Services foster parents are involved in the visitation plan and communication with the child's birth family when applicable. Spero Family Services foster parents are encouraged to transport the youth to the birth family visits, supervise the visitation accordingly and document/report observations of the visit to the case manager. Foster parent's input in the plan for visitation with the birth family is solicited.
- Appropriateness and best interest in foster parent involvement in family visitation will be determined during the quarterly Child and Family Team meeting, supervision, and ongoing communication with the foster family. If it is deemed to be in the best interest of the case that a foster parent does not participate in supervision of visitation with the child's birth family, Spero Family Services case aide may supervise visitation when available to do so.
- Foster parents are encouraged to preserve the cultural heritage of youth by respecting religious beliefs and traditions, supporting and participating in familial traditions, strengthening family ties, cooking meals, and respecting clothing and music choices. The foster parent's responsibility in promoting the youth's right to family relationships and cultural heritage is taught within multiple principles of the CARE model.
- If the plan is to remove a child from the foster placement, the foster parent receives a written Notice of Decision to Remove an Unrelated Child or Notice of Placement Change from the case manager that includes their appeal rights and/or right to a clinical review. All decisions to remove a child, and each Notice of Placement Change and Notice of Decision to Remove an Unrelated Child are reviewed and approved by the supervisor and Child Welfare Director.

(6) The right to be provided a fair, timely, and impartial investigation of complaints concerning the foster parent's licensure, to be provided the opportunity to have a person of the foster parent's choosing present during the investigation, and to be provided due process during the investigation; the right to be provided the opportunity to request and receive mediation or an administrative review of decisions that affect licensing parameters, or both mediation and an administrative review; and the right to have decisions concerning a licensing corrective action plan specifically explained and tied to the licensing standards violated.

All foster parents receive a copy of the IL Department of Children and Family Services policy concerning Investigations of Complaints and Service Appeals during the orientation meeting with the Program Administrator and/or Licensing Specialist. This policy includes the agency's

investigation of alleged licensing violations; how information is disseminated to foster parents and the foster parent's right to choose an individual or representative to be present during the investigation.

Spero Family Services will complete licensing investigations within the timeframes required by IDCFS policy & procedure. They can be agency only investigations or concurrent investigations with IDCFS.

Program procedures are as follows:

1. Within 24 hours of receiving an allegation of violation of standard/rule against a licensed home, the Licensing Specialist makes an in-person visit to the foster home to inform the licensed home of the exact standard alleged to have been violated, explain the investigative process and answer questions the family may have. At that time, foster parents are advised that they may have another person present during the investigation and are given up to 4 hours to locate someone to be present. If they choose not to have another person present, the foster parent signs an IL-DCFS document acknowledging they do not wish to have another person present, at which time, interviews with persons in the home begin.
2. The Licensing Specialist completes the investigative process within 30 business days (unless an extension is needed and requested), which includes in person interviews with all members of the foster home and ascertains whether a violation has, indeed occurred.
 - a. If it has been determined that a licensing standard/rule had been violated, a certified letter is sent to the foster home citing the standard/rule violated and the agency's plan to correct the violation.
 - i. A corrective action plan or support plan is written, shared with the foster home in a face-to-face meeting and implemented.
 - ii. Follow-up on the corrective action plan occurs no less than ninety (90) days with the monitoring of the home occurring weekly if deemed necessary, to ensure that the safety and well-being of the child is secure.
 - iii. If a foster parent disagrees with a negative finding and/or corrective action plan, the foster parent has 10 business days to appeal the licensing decision, by submitting a written notice to the Foster Care Program Supervisor and/or Licensing Specialist.
 - b. If it has been determined that no licensing standard/rule had been violated, a certified letter is sent to the foster home informing the foster home of said determination.

(7) The right, at any time during which a child is placed with the foster parent, to receive additional or necessary information that is relevant to the care of the child. (7.5) The right to be given information concerning a child (i) from the Department as required under subsection (u) of Section 5 of the Children and Family Services Act and (ii) from a child welfare agency as required under subsection (c-5) of Section 7.4 of the Child Care Act of 1969.

Spero Family Services will provide foster parents with any additional or necessary information that is relevant to the care of the child(ren) in the home.

- Spero Family Services case managers share current and historical information to foster parents about the child(ren) placed in their home. All case managers are required to complete DCFS Foundations training prior to being assigned cases – which includes training on the type of child specific information that must be provided to foster parents.
 - In addition, the importance of sharing child specific information with the foster parent and accountability to ensure this is done is covered by the foster care Program Supervisor during individual supervision sessions with the case manager.
- The case manager will see specialized and adolescent youth foster youth three times per month, with at least two of these contacts occurring in the foster home. Traditional youth in an unlicensed HMR placement are seen two times per month in the home and traditional youth in a licensed home are seen one time per month in the home. The case manager is expected to meet with the foster parents to provide and/or obtain relevant information pertaining to the foster youth during this time.
- Foster parents are invited to participate in quarterly Child and Family Team meetings for each youth in their home, at which time any pertinent information regarding the youth is discussed and shared with the child welfare team. This meeting addresses several facets of the youth's care and service plan (i.e., life skills, education, medical, mental health, vocational, etc.).

(8) The right to be given information concerning a child from the Department as required under Section 5 (u) of the Children and Family Services Act and from a child welfare agency as required under Section 7.4 (c-5) of the Child Care Act of 1969. [20 ICLS 520/1-15].

Spero Family Services believes that working in the best interest of the child means that everyone working with the child is informed of pertinent information and foster parents have a right to all information regarding a child placed in their home or a prospective placement. The Spero Family Services case manager is responsible for providing all relevant materials to the foster parent about a child placed in their home. Examples of relevant materials include but are not limited to: youth's section of the service plan, any supervision plans, IEP's/504's, 906, medical/psychotropic consents, any probation/parole/legal, and visitation plans.

The Foster Care Supervisor is responsible for holding case managers accountable to provide pertinent information to the foster parent. This level of accountability is addressed during individual supervision with the case manager, through supervisor review of the case file and documented on the supervision plan with the Program Supervisor.

- To ensure case manager accountability, Spero Family Services staff follow DCFS Policy and Procedure per sharing of information.
- All Spero Family Services case managers participate in DCFS Foundations training where they receive training on DCFS policy and procedures regarding sharing of information with foster parents.

- Any new DCFS policies and procedures are communicated to workers through direct communication and/or training by DCFS, which includes follow-up monitoring and guidance from the Foster Care Supervisor.

(9) The right to be notified of scheduled meetings and staffings concerning the foster child in order to actively participate in the case planning and decision-making process regarding the child, including individual service planning meetings, administrative case reviews, interdisciplinary staffings, and individual educational planning meetings; the right to be informed of decisions made by the courts or the child welfare agency concerning the child; the right to provide input concerning the plan of services for the child and to have that input given full consideration in the same manner as information presented by any other professional on the team; and the right to communicate with other professionals who work with the foster child within the context of the team, including therapists, physicians, and teachers.

- DCFS notifies foster parents by mail about pertinent Administrative Case reviews (ACRs). As a backup to the DCFS notification, case managers notify foster parents during in person visitation and/or by phone to ensure they have been notified and encourage them to attend. During the monthly home visit, upcoming scheduled appointments and meetings are reviewed with the foster parents.
- Spero Family Services case manager will notify foster parents of any meetings, court hearings, and/or staffings about the child(ren) in their home via in person communication or by phone.
- Case managers include foster parents in case planning for youth placed in their home through their attendance at meetings directly related to the youth.
- Spero Family Services foster parents are encouraged to attend all meetings and/or staffings about their child including court proceedings, ACRs, Child & Family Team meetings, IEP meetings, CIPPs and/or other clinical meetings.
- In the event the foster parent is not present, the assigned case manager is responsible for notifying the foster parent of service plan changes, visitation plan changes and/or permanency goal changes within 48 business hours. Foster parents are notified by phone and/or during the monthly home visit of upcoming court hearings, ACR's, and visitation changes to ensure they have a verbal notification of the meetings.
- The Program Supervisor is available to foster parents to discuss any concerns with case management and obtaining all necessary information for the care of the youth in their home. The program supervisor meets monthly with case managers to ensure communication between case managers and foster parents is ongoing. This is documented in SACWIS case notes.
- Spero Family Services therapist conducts a bi-annual clinical staffing on the individual treatment plan for all youth receiving therapy through the Spero Family Services foster care program. The therapist contacts the foster parent to ensure they are informed of the staffing dates and times. If the foster parent is unable to attend the clinical staffing review, a copy will be provided to the foster parent by the next therapy session.

- Case managers provide the foster parents with the names, addresses and phone numbers of all professionals from whom the foster youth receive services i.e.: GAL, Probation Officer, etc. Foster parents are encouraged to become involved with the professionals who work with the foster youth and to provide information received from other professionals to the case manager in a timely manner. Case notes are completed by staff and foster parents to hold all accountable for sharing of information.
- Foster parents attend most meetings for their youth. In the instance that the foster parent is not in attendance, the case manager will notify the foster parent of any decisions made by phone, email or in person.

(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 that information that is essential for understanding the needs of and providing care to the child in order to protect the rights of the child's family. When a positive relationship exists between the foster parent and the child's family, the child's family may consent to disclosure of additional information.

Spero Family Services understands the importance of providing foster parents with consistent information related to the child(ren) in their care, to ensure appropriate services and care is provided to the child.

- Spero Family Services will provide full disclosure of information to the foster parent regarding the child placed in their home – this disclosure occurs prior to placement, during pre-placement visits, at the time of placement, and through the duration of the placement. This information is generally provided in writing, CFS 600-4, and/or verbally and includes:
 - Medical history – including known medical problems or communicable diseases, immunization status, current medications – including psychotropic medication, healthcare provider, and medical card information.
 - Educational history – including any special education needs, Individual Education Plan (IEP), or any other applicable educational information.
 - Child history – including child section of the service plan, visitation arrangements, case history of the child including how the child came into care, the child's legal status, the permanency goal for the child, history of previous placements and reasons for placement changes – excluding identity or location of previous foster and/or relative home, psychological evaluation including diagnosis, psychiatrist monitoring psychotropic medication, any other information pertinent to the child including specific behaviors (i.e. criminal history, destructive behaviors, substance abuse history) and child's hobbies, interests, likes and dislikes.
- On-going sharing of information about the child is very important between Spero Family Services staff and the foster parent. Foster parents, case managers and other members

of the professional team write case notes on the foster child, which is another means of communicating significant and relevant information about the child and the family.

- Spero Family Services case managers visit the foster home at least two times per month for specialized and adolescent youth and traditional youth in an unlicensed HMR placement, and one time per month for traditional youth, at which time they will communicate with the foster parent about any new information regarding the child.
- Spero Family Services foster parents received PRIDE training and additional training from Spero Family Services about confidentiality issues as it relates to information that may/may not be shared about the child.
- Information is provided at the time of placement with the CFS 600-4, Sharing Information with the Caregiver: that is signed by case manager and foster parent.
- Foster parents are routinely provided with the child's portion of the client service plan and attend Administrative Case Reviews, where the information is reviewed.
- Information is given of a court hearing that was not attended by the foster parent.

(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.

Spero Family Services will follow DCFS protocol for written notice of any changes in the youth's service plan or placement.

- In the event DCFS or Spero Family Services determines that a child should be removed from a licensed foster home, a written 14-day notice of removal is sent to the foster parent. The written DCFS Notice of Decision and Notice of Placement Change is mailed to the foster parents explaining why the decision to change placement is being made.
- A copy of the service appeal process and the emergency review process is included in the letter to the foster parent.
 - Foster parents are reminded that an emergency review allows DCFS to make a temporary decision based on a concern that imminent risk of harm may come to a child while their case is in the service appeal process.
 - Foster Parents are reminded that they can request an emergency review within 10 days from receiving the notice of decision in which they may be able to stop DCFS from acting on its decision until their case has proceed through the service appeal process (if the child is not at imminent risk).
 - Foster Parents may request a service appeal in writing within 45 days of receiving the notice of decision. The letter is sent to the IL DCFS Administrative Hearings Unit.
- Spero Family Services foster care supervisor, and the licensing specialist are available to assist the foster parent by answering questions that may arise as a result of this change.

(12) The right to be notified in a timely and complete manner of all court hearings, including notice of the date and time of the court hearing, the location of the hearing, and the court docket number of the case; and the right to intervene in court proceedings or to seek

mandamus under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987.

- Spero Family Services case manager will notify foster parents in person, by phone or in writing of all court dates for the child placed in their home.
- Spero Family Services and PRIDE training educates the foster parent on their supportive role for the foster child during court appearances and the importance of advocating for the best interest of the child by providing the court with information about the child's well-being and placement. Their roles, responsibilities, and rights as specified by the Juvenile Courts Act are reviewed with them at that time. Court and Service Appeals training are included in Spero Family Services' Annual Foster Parent Training Schedule.
- Accountability to ensure case managers are notifying the foster parent of court hearings is addressed in the monthly multi-disciplinary staffing for the child (which foster parents are invited to participate) and supervision by the program supervisor to ensure this responsibility is being met.
- Foster parents notify the program supervisor if they are not receiving notice of court hearings.

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

Spero Family Services will support placement being consistent with the best interest of the child and will support the foster parents right to be considered for placement when a foster child who was formerly placed with the foster parent re-enters foster care.

- When possible, Spero Family Services will use SACWIS to review the child's prior foster care placements and case documentation. Spero Family Services will obtain directly from the youth, through an interview, their reason for re-entering DCFS. This will be documented in a case note.
- If the review of prior placements and case documentation suggests placement with the prior foster parent is in the best interest of child, Spero Family Services will contact the foster parent to determine if the caregiver has the capacity to receive the child and to determine if the caregiver agrees to having the child placed in the foster home.

(14) The right to have timely access to the child placement agency's existing appeals process and the right to be free from acts of harassment and retaliation by any other party when exercising the right to appeal.

Spero Family Services strives to provide the best working conditions for foster parents.

- Spero Family Services encourages an open atmosphere in which problems, complaints, suggestions and/or questions receive a timely response from the Foster Care Supervisor.
- If a foster parent is dissatisfied with the services provided and/or a decision made, they have the right to have their complaint and/or problem addressed through the grievance procedure that begins with the Foster Care Supervisor and progresses through the

organization's chain of command with the Spero Family Services' President/CEO having the final decision in unresolved grievances.

- No foster parent will be treated unjustly for voicing a complaint with Spero Family Services in a reasonable manner or for using the grievance process. If a foster parent is dissatisfied with the services provided or a decision made, they have the right and are encouraged to grieve their concerns without interference or fear of retaliation by any staff member.
- Foster parents are protected by Spero Family Services' Whistleblower Procedure and Protection policy. A foster parent who in good faith reports a violation of applicable policies, procedures, requirements, and/or law shall be protected from any form of retaliation.
- Foster parents should immediately report any circumstances of perceived retaliation to the DCFS Advocacy Office, Spero Family Services' Foster Care Supervisor, Child Welfare Director, and/or Director of Quality.
- Spero Family Services provides training to foster parents on the organization's internal grievance procedure and external DCFS appeal systems. This is done through the Foster Parent Training Schedule.
 - Spero Family Services provides foster parents with contact information for: DCFS Administrative Hearings Unit, Advocacy Office, and the Office of Affirmative Action and receive a copy of the Grievance and Service Appeal with the initial licensing packet.

(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.

Spero Family Services foster parents receive training during PRIDE and from Spero Family Services about the Foster Parent Hotline, including contact information. Training and contact information about the Office of Inspector General is also provided to Spero Family Services foster parents.

- Spero Family Services foster parents can reach the Office of Inspector General by calling 1-800-722-9124 (Monday – Friday 8:30am – 5:00pm). The on-call schedule for Spero Family Services includes contact information for the DCFS Foster Parent Advocacy Office and the DCFS Foster Parent Helpline. Foster parents receive annual Mandated Reporter training.

FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

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

The importance of open communication between foster parents and Spero Family Services foster care staff is emphasized during PRIDE training, during orientation to the Spero Family Services Foster Care program, and on an on-going basis. Specific to the importance of communication, Spero Family Services foster parents receive training prior to placement of a youth in their home on their responsibility to:

- Document daily case notes, medication logs, and allowance logs. This documentation is to be turned in to the case managers by the 10th day of the following month.
- Be available to the caseworker to discuss any issues related to foster youth.
- Communicate any concerns about their ability to handle and/or care for specific behaviors.
- Communicate all pertinent information to Spero Family Services case manager (i.e., problematic and/or concerning behavior, medication issues, school issues, violation of court orders, etc.)
- The CFS 600-4 is also used to document and provide full disclosure about the child's special needs as well as the appropriateness of the home and the foster parent's ability to care for the child based on the child's need.
- Foster parents learn the roles of all members of the child and family team during PRIDE training and which members should be included when there is information regarding the child that needs to be shared. The Foster Parent Handbook is given after the foster parent is licensed. This information is also available on the Foster Parent Agreement which is signed before any youth is placed in the home.

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

Upon being licensed by Spero Family Services or acceptance of the transfer of license, foster parents are required to sign a statement regarding confidentiality of information. Training regarding confidentiality is required for our foster parents and for all employees of Spero Family Services. This training is completed during monthly support meetings and documented on CFS 574.

Any breach of confidentiality is examined and if determined to be breached is enforced by agency policy and procedure and in accordance with Illinois' Department of Children and Family Services – IL Part 402 Section 402.24 Confidentiality of Information. All laws and regulations specific to confidentiality to include Rule 431 - Confidentiality of Personal Information of Persons Served by the Department of Children and Family Services is given to the foster parents to be placed in the foster parent handbook.

Spero Family Services trains foster parents to:

- Keep confidential information pertaining to youth in their home in a file in a secure location.
- Only discuss issues of confidentiality with the caseworker and/or program supervisor.
- Not share personal information about a youth's case unless they have consent to do so.

- Have a clear understanding of what information can be shared with others (i.e., teachers, doctors, community providers).

At any point that there are concerns of confidentiality being violated, Spero Family Services will address the issue immediately with the foster parent and provide additional training/monitoring as determined. During semi-annual monitoring visits, the Licensing Specialist reviews DCFS policy on confidentiality with each foster parent and provides additional information when necessary.

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

The importance of advocacy and the responsibility of the foster parents to advocate for the child(ren) in their care is addressed by Spero Family Services during orientation of new foster parents and in on-going discussions and trainings with foster parents.

- As noted in their Spero Family Services Service Agreement, foster parents are encouraged to attend and participate in all meetings that pertain to their foster youth. This includes staffings, educational meetings (i.e., parent-teacher conferences, IEP meetings), ACRs, and court hearings.
- During PRIDE training, our foster parents receive 6 hours of Educational Advocacy training, court training and service appeal training. These trainings are available as refreshers and documented on the CFS 574.
- Spero Family Services will provide additional training and/or resources in these areas when it is determined there is a need and/or when requested by a foster parent. This training will be made available at regular monthly Support Meetings.

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

During PRIDE training, Spero Family Services foster parents receive training on a copy of “Youth Rights and Responsibilities” policy, as well as DCFS’ “Client Rights” policy. Both documents are in the Foster Parent Handbook. In PRIDE training and on-going Spero Family Services training, our foster parents are trained to understand how treating their foster child with dignity and respect provides children with a sense of value and self-respect.

- Spero Family Services case managers visit the foster home a minimum of two times per month for specialized, adolescent, and unlicensed HMR homes, and one time per month for traditional youth in licensed homes. The purpose of the visit is to ensure the safety and well-being of the foster child and to monitor that the youth and youth’s family is being treated with dignity, respect, and consideration. The case manager also meets with the foster parent to address any concerns within the foster home.
- Spero Family Services therapist can visit the foster home based upon a clinical decision.
- Any concerns about a foster child not being treated with dignity, respect and consideration will be addressed with the foster parent by Spero Family Services foster care staff through a Child and Family Team meeting in an effort to provide feedback and

suggestions for enhancing the relationship between the foster parents, family and the child.

- Spero Family Services monthly support meetings with foster parents are used to dialogue with foster parents about ways to enhance relationship building with foster children.
- Spero Family Services has added mental health components called Mental Health Snapshots to the foster parent monthly support meetings to better acquaint foster parents with mental health issues and how to assist the youth in the home. An example of a Mental Health Snapshot is: Positive Behavior Support.

(5) The responsibility to recognize the foster parent's own individual and familial strengths and limitations when deciding whether to accept a child into care; and the responsibility to recognize the foster parent's own support needs and utilize appropriate supports in providing care for foster children.

The assessment of a foster family's strengths, limitations and needs begins during the licensing process, (i.e., strengths, weaknesses, preferences, support system, dynamics of the homes, character references, etc.) during pre-placement process and on-going after placement.

- When assessing a prospective child in the foster home, Spero Family Services staff and foster parents will mutually assess the foster parent's supports that can be provided and supports needed to care for the prospective child.
- Spero Family Services staff have on-going communication (monthly home visits, phone, counseling appointments, and Child and Family Team meetings) to support the parent and identify additional support/needs of the foster parent.
- Spero Family Services staff will provide additional training when parents have specific needs or concerns. This is completed through ongoing assessment via the monthly support meetings as well as the yearly training plan.

(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.

Spero Family Services facilitates a monthly support meeting that at least one parent from each foster home is encouraged to attend.

- The monthly support meeting provides education and training to foster parents. In addition, there is time set aside during each meeting to encourage networking among foster parents. This provides an opportunity for foster parents to get feedback or suggestions from each other based on similar experiences with a particular situation, behavior, etc.
- The Lead Foster Parent is available to all the foster parents for added support or assistance when needed.
- Spero Family Services foster parents are provided with contact information for all current foster parents, so they can contact one another for support.

Spero Family Services provides information to foster parents about statewide foster parent associations, including the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council and Illinois Adoption Advisory Council; however, it continues to be noted that participation in the association is challenging because the location of meetings is typically not held in the southern region of the state.

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

Spero Family Services staff and our foster parents have a responsibility to assess the foster parent's on-going training needs and help meet those needs. The assessment process begins prior to licensing the foster home and continues through the duration of the foster home being licensed.

- Spero Family Services will utilize an open forum in the monthly support meeting to solicit training needs and/or requests from foster parents.
- Spero Family Services conducts on-going foster parent training needs assessment identified through staff contact with foster parents (i.e., case manager and Licensing Specialist visits to the home), case supervision (between case manager and the Program Supervisor), and licensing monitoring visits.
- Spero Family Services Lead Foster Parent is a resource for additional support and training to foster parents.
- Spero Family Services will provide a training component to the monthly support meeting and encourages co-facilitation with a foster parent.
- Spero Family Services staff will notify foster parents of DCFS trainings and encourage attendance when the topic is pertinent to the specialized population we are serving or beneficial to our foster parents.
- Spero Family Services will provide trauma-based training annually. Examples include DCFS trauma informed care trainings, CARE through Cornell University, The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) curriculum, etc.

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

DCFS's design of the Adolescent Foster Care and Specialized Foster Care programs was intended to stop the pattern of children moving from foster home to foster home. Available research demonstrates that foster children suffer greatly when their lives are marked by instability, disruptions, and frequent changes in their foster home placement. Each time this occurs, the child is left to cope with another failed relationship and forced to make new caregiver attachments and begin over again with a new school and community. As a result, foster children with numerous placement changes have a much lower rate of success regarding their transition into adulthood. Adolescent Foster Care Programs in Illinois were created so that adequate support was available to ensure placement stability. Placement stability is the number one factor

for foster children in making positive changes in their behavior and development and leads directly to successful outcomes for the youth as they move toward independence.

It is understood by the foster parent that removal of a foster child from a home is considered an extremely significant and detrimental occurrence and should only occur when absolutely necessary. When safety is not a factor in the removal of a child from a foster home, the decision to remove must be mutually agreed upon by both the agency and the foster parent. THE REMOVAL OF A CHILD FROM A FOSTER HOME IS ALWAYS A LAST RESORT.

- Spero Family Services staff and the foster parent will maintain frequent and open communication to ensure early identification of a child(ren) at risk of disruption or causing a disruption in the foster home. This is done when Spero Family Services staff visit the foster home, during caseworker supervision, Child and Family Team meetings, and any time there is a problem and/or concern. Family counseling for the foster family can be provided by Spero Family Services.
- Spero Family Services staff will work with the foster parent to identify and implement supportive strategies to prevent placement disruption. Strategies include, but are not limited to, child and family team meetings, increased therapy for youth, foster family or biological family, lead foster parent support, respite, and foster parent 24-hour access to on-call staff and SASS services.
- Spero Family Services foster parents are encouraged to maintain contact and participate in hospitalizations and/or residential services in order to maintain a relationship with the foster youth, increasing the likelihood that the youth may be able to return to the same placement upon discharge. During disruption, Spero Family Services continues communication with the foster family concerning the child.

Note: It is our understanding that DCFS System of Care services are not available.

(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.

Spero Family Services recognizes that fostering can be a very rewarding experience. However, the demands of parenting can also be stressful at times. Spero Family Services is committed to helping our foster parents recognize and manage their stress effectively.

- Spero Family Services will provide training to recognize/minimize stress – individually and/or group. This will be available through Spero Family Services staff or through outside sources, depending on the needs of the family.
- Spero Family Services Lead Foster Parent is available to meet with foster parents who may be experiencing stress. This can be initiated by Spero Family Services staff or by the foster parent.
- Voluntary holds methods are explained to foster parents; however, Spero Family Services typically does not have homes that are officially placed on “voluntary hold.” Instead, Spero Family Services foster parents have the ability at any time to request no other placements in their home when needed. For example, a foster parent who has recently

received a new placement will generally not be considered for subsequent placement for 2-4 months, given the acuity of the clients placed in the program.

- Spero Family Services encourages foster parents to network with other foster parents for support. Foster Parents also have the option to contact Spero Counseling and Wellness Center which is the outpatient counseling program of Spero Family Services.
- Foster parents can provide respite care for a youth not placed in their home and are reimbursed for providing respite. The agency will provide and pay for up to 3 days of respite for each foster family per child, per year. If the foster parent wishes for the agency to pay for up to 3 days of respite it must be requested in advance.
- Spero Family Services will provide foster parents with information on relevant training opportunities related to stress management.
- Spero Family Services training curriculum has a self-care component added during monthly Foster Parent Support meetings.
- Upon request, foster parents will be given 3 counseling sessions through Spero Counseling and Wellness Center to address any needs within the family. After 3 sessions, therapy will be provided as clinically directed.

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

Spero Family Services is proud of the work our foster parents do to care for children entrusted in our care and encourage our foster parents to share their experiences with others. Spero Family Services believes that our foster parents' personal stories and experiences are the best recruitment tools to encourage other people in the community to consider fostering.

- Spero Family Services promotes the rewards and benefits of foster parenting through various media outlets (i.e., agency website, Facebook page, agency materials/publications, social media, radio, and newspaper).
- Foster parents are honored in May with a potluck dinner. During the Christmas season, there is a cookie exchange with staff and foster parents.
- Spero Family Services foster parents are invited to attend all agency events.
- Spero Family Services provides coaching and training to foster parents regarding public relations and the agency protocol for media contact which is listed in the Foster Parent Handbook.
- Spero Family Services includes foster parents in recruitment activities (i.e., church meetings, radio and video advertisements) to recognize their work and to give foster parents an opportunity to share their own experiences.

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

Foster parents are introduced to the roles of each member of the child welfare team during PRIDE training. Spero Family Services also provides training to foster parents about the Spero Family

Services organizational structure (chain of command) and the respective roles of members of the agency (i.e., administration, accounting) and the foster care team (i.e., program supervisor, case manager, therapist, case aide, adoption specialist, licensing specialist, and family finding specialist).

- Spero Family Services foster care staff are encouraged to attend the monthly foster parent support meetings and training sessions with foster parents. Staff and foster parents have the opportunity to co-facilitate selected trainings during the support meetings.
- Spero Family Services foster parents participate in child and family team meetings, ACRs, and court hearings.
- Foster parents have access to all levels of management within the agency.
- Spero Family Services executives (i.e., President/CEO, Child Welfare Director, and Clinical Director) are invited to attend the foster parent support meetings. Foster parents are encouraged to ask questions and/or provide feedback about the program and the organization to executive staff. This can be accomplished through appointments set up with administration.
- Spero Family Services has a specific training regarding rights and responsibilities for foster parents.
- Foster parents sign the Foster Care Service Agreement which lists in detail the duties of the 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 agency's policy regarding allegations that foster parents have committed child abuse or neglect and applicable administrative rules and procedures governing investigations of those allegations.

Foster Parents are provided training on their role as a mandated reporter; required by law to report any suspected child abuse and/or neglect. Spero Family Services offers a variety of opportunities for Foster Parents to know their responsibility as a mandated reporter such as online classes through Spero Family Services, PRIDE training and other training opportunities as listed below.

- During PRIDE training, foster parents are trained on their role and responsibilities as a mandated reporter. Contact information for the DCFS Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-25-ABUSE) is provided in the foster parent handbook.
During PRIDE training, foster parents are trained on the investigation process when a complaint/allegation against a foster home is received. Spero Family Services provides training on this process as needed and provides foster parents with their options if they disagree with the finding of an investigation.
- Spero Family Services provides annual refresher training on mandated reporter responsibilities which is documented on the CFS 574. Contact information for the DCFS Child Abuse Hotline is provided to foster parents on the on-call emergency contact list.

(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 parent's designated role in these proceedings.

Spero Family Services is committed to working together as a team for the permanency planning and success of our foster youth. Spero Family Services believes our foster parents play a critical role in the team and their involvement in ACRs, court hearings and client service plan reviews is very important. The foster parent's perspective on the child's adjustment to daily life is critical to the implementation and review of the service plan.

- Foster parents receive training on the purpose of the permanency process and their responsibility to be actively involved. Notifications, through letters and/or emails, are sent to parents regarding any and all proceedings. All team members have input into the proceedings before filing. This is accomplished through team meetings.
- Spero Family Services provides training to foster parents on expectations about their active participation in all meetings and hearings that pertain to their foster child's permanency and service planning.
- Spero Family Services foster parents actively participate in all activities for their foster child: particularly ACRs, court hearings, Child and Family Team meetings, clinical staffings, and educational meetings.

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

Spero Family Services provides training to all foster parents on our appeal procedure and foster parent's rights under this procedure. The grievance procedure has been incorporated into the Foster Parent Handbook. The grievance procedure is reviewed with the foster parent prior to a youth placed in the home.

Spero Family Services strives to provide quality service to the children and families we serve and to provide the best working conditions for our foster parents. Spero Family Services encourages an open and honest atmosphere in which problems, complaints, suggestions and/or questions receive a timely response from the Foster Care Supervisor. If a foster parent is dissatisfied with the services provided and/or a decision made, they have the right to have their complaint and/or problem addressed through the process listed below. No foster parent will be treated unjustly for voicing a complaint with Spero Family Services in a reasonable manner or for using the grievance process.

A grievance is defined as concern, complaint or unresolved disagreement between Spero Family Services and a foster parent.

Foster parents have a right to grieve any disagreement with Spero Family Services' implementation of Foster Parent Law. If a foster parent is dissatisfied with the services provided or a decision made, they have the right and are encouraged to grieve their concerns without

interference or fear of retaliation by any staff member. **Retaliation is prohibited.** Any circumstances of perceived retaliation should immediately be reported to:

DCFS Advocacy Office: 217-524-2029 or 800-232-3798 dcfs.advocacy@illinois.gov

DCFS Foster Parent Helpline: 866-368-5204

DCFS.StatewideFosterCareAdvisoryCouncil@illinois.gov

While it is expected that each member of the Foster Care staff and each Foster Parent take responsibility for open, direct communication and problem-solving, the following is the procedure for expressing and resolving concerns when routine methods have not been successful.

Submitting a Grievance

If the foster parent has attempted to resolve an issue informally through the persons involved and did not come to a mutually agreeable resolution, the foster parent should complete and submit the **Foster Parent Law Grievance form** and submit to the agency for review and investigation.

Procedure:

Step 1 – Foster Care Supervisor

The foster parent should first discuss his/her concern with the Foster Care Supervisor either verbally or in writing. A foster parent may initiate Step 1 of the grievance procedure online at www.sperofs.org/contact/. If a grievance is filed verbally, the foster parent must inform the supervisor of his/her concern and advise the supervisor that this constitutes Step 1 of the grievance procedure. All grievances must be presented at Step 1 no later than ten (10) working days from the date of the event that resulted in the concern. The Foster Care Supervisor shall respond to the foster parent within ten (10) working days from when the grievance is presented to the supervisor. If the oral grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the foster parent and the supervisor, the foster parent may pursue the grievance by requesting that it be moved to Step 2.

Step 2 – Child Welfare Director

If the conflict or concern is between the foster parent and the Foster Care Supervisor, the foster parent may request a meeting with the Child Welfare Director and the Foster Care Supervisor to try to resolve the complaint/issue.

In the event the grievance is not resolved in Step 1, the foster parent may request a meeting with the Child Welfare Director to try to resolve the complaint/issue, within five (5) working days from the receipt of the answer of the Foster Care Supervisor in Step 1. Within ten (10) working days of meeting with the foster parent, the Child Welfare Director will provide the foster parent with a response to the grievance.

Step 3 – President/CEO

In the event the grievance is not resolved in Step 2, the foster parent may present their grievance in written form to the President/CEO, within five (5) working days from the receipt of the response from the Child Welfare Director in Step 2. The President/CEO may exercise either of the following options:

- After receiving the written grievance, he/she will schedule a meeting with the foster parent to resolve the issue.
- If the President/CEO does not schedule a meeting with the foster parent, he/she will provide the foster parent with a written response within fifteen (15) working days of receiving the written grievance.
- The decision of the President/CEO is final.

A foster parent may withdraw their grievance at any step of the procedure by notifying the Foster Care Supervisor, Child Welfare Director, or the President/CEO. If a foster parent does not follow the grievance procedure, including time frames, the grievance will be considered withdrawn.

Copies of all grievance related materials, including but not limited to the outcome of the grievance, will be maintained by the Spero Family Services' Director of Quality.

The Spero Family Services' Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure was developed with foster parent input.

The Spero Family Services foster parent grievance procedure cannot be used to address issues that are covered by the service appeal process, appeal process for indicated cases of child abuse/neglect, or the process for appealing licensing investigation findings or license revocations.

(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.

During PRIDE training and Spero Family Services orientation, foster parents are trained about the importance of record keeping pertaining to the foster child and the expectations regarding what documentation is required by DCFS and Spero Family Services.

- Spero Family Services Licensing Representative and the Lead Foster Parent provide training to all new foster parents on record keeping – including storage of confidential information, types of documentation required, review of documentation forms and timeframes for its completion. Documentation expectations are included in the Foster Parent Handbook.
- Spero Family Services will provide additional training/monitoring when there are problems/concerns with record keeping.
- Spero Family Services Lead Foster Parent will provide individual training on record keeping when a foster parent requests assistance or if a problem/concern is noted.
- During all licensing monitoring visits, the Licensing Specialist requests to see all documentation logs in the foster home to review for accuracy and completeness.
- Spero Family Services provides each foster home with a folder to store/transport foster parent records.

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

Spero Family Services staff and foster parents are provided training on the importance of sharing information with each other regarding the child's adjustment in the foster home. This responsibility is discussed routinely during case manager visits to the foster home, during the monthly foster parent support meeting, and during any meeting/staffing pertaining to the foster child.

- Spero Family Services supervisory personnel train staff and foster parents on the type of information that should be shared, and the timeliness of sharing information (i.e. high risk/unsafe behaviors reported immediately) and documentation on medication logs, and daily case notes on the child in the home (which would include information about school, social activities, behavior, family involvement).

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

Spero Family Services is committed to ensuring the cultural needs of our foster youth are met. Spero Family Services recognizes that one's cultural and family history, cultural identity, community and neighborhood support, religious and spiritual beliefs are an essential part of the planning process for our foster youth.

- Cultural diversity training is provided to foster parents during PRIDE. It is also on the annual Foster Parent Training Schedule.

- Spero Family Services will identify internal and external resources outside the agency and in the community that a foster parent may need to meet the child's specific cultural needs.
- Foster parents are encouraged to meet the cultural needs of the children in their home by learning about the family's culture, respecting religious beliefs and traditions, supporting, and participating in familial traditions, strengthening family ties, cooking meals, and respecting clothing and music choices.
- The foster parent's responsibility in promoting the youth's right to family relationships and cultural heritage is taught within multiple principles of the CARE model.
- Module 7, which encompasses Cultural Diversity, from the PRIDE training is also available through DCFS and the LDC site.