



# Morris County Foster Parents Association

## Resource Family Agreement – *A breakdown of responsibilities and expectations*

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When a family becomes approved as a resource family, the resource family parents are required to sign a "Resource Family Agreement" that details the responsibilities of DYFS and the resource family parents. It is also signed by a DYFS Resource Family Support Worker and Resource Family Support Supervisor. The following summarizes the agreement as it is currently presented to families (as of October 2010):

### **DYFS RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Division of Youth and Family Services (hereafter referred to as DYFS), in order to assist resource family parents in caring for the children placed with them, is responsible for the following:

- providing sufficient and appropriate information regarding the child and his/her birth family, to enable the resource family parents to meet the child's needs and be aware of potential (foreseeable) problems;
- assigning a Case Manager who will visit the resource family home regularly (monthly) to provide information regarding the child, help meet the child's needs, and make referrals for services required for the child's health, care, development and welfare;
- paying the current board rate for each child placed with the resource family parents;
- completing the Resource Family Assessment with the resource family parent(s) after a child has been placed, to assess the child's needs and estimate the average amount of time and effort needed to care for the child, to effectively adjust the board rate, as appropriate, based on that assessment;
- ensuring that each child has enough clothing upon placement, paying the initial clothing allowance for a basic wardrobe, if necessary; and paying the current clothing allowance based on the child's age;
- ensuring payment through the use of Medicaid managed care vendors and/or Medicaid managed care rates, for necessary medical, dental, mental/behavioral health, and/or specialized treatment for each child placed, and obtaining proper authorization for such treatment, when necessary;
- arranging for mental/behavioral health services and advocating for special education services, as may be needed by each child;
- providing access to emergency services through the State Central Registry (SCR), on a 24-hour, 7 days per week basis by calling 1-877-652-2873 or 1800-792-8610 when the DYFS local office is not open;
- establishing a visitation plan for the child with his/her birth family, when appropriate, in consultation with the resource family parents;
- establishing a permanent plan for each child, including the estimated length of placement;
- informing and including the resource family parents in the development of the permanent plan, when appropriate;
- acknowledging that the resource family parents may be unwilling or unable to continue care for a particular child; respecting and discussing requests by the resource family parents to move the child; making a decision regarding the need for placement elsewhere within five (5) work days of the request; and, when the decision is to move the child, making the move within fifteen (15) work days of the resource family parents' original request to move the child;
- helping the resource family parents to prepare each child for leaving the resource family home; and to support and prepare the child for a transition home, with a relative, or into another placement;
- completing a child safety assessment periodically for each child placed in the home;
- completing an annual, and/or three-year renewal, on-site inspection of the resource family home through the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Office of Licensing, who then informs the resource family parents of the results, in writing.



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### FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The resource family parents, in order to meet the needs of each child placed with them, are responsible for the following:

- treating each child placed as a member of the family, for example, by including each child in family events and activities;
- providing each child with a comfortable home, a well-balanced diet, and adequate clothing, and using the clothing allowance appropriately for the intended child;
- giving each child a home life that will meet his/her need to feel accepted, guided and secure;
- disciplining each child without the use of physical (corporal) punishment; the resource family parent shall not discipline by slapping, spanking, hitting, or using any form of discipline that causes or could result in physical harm, pain or injury;
- disciplining each child without the use of ridicule, threats, rejection, or other words or actions that are emotionally damaging;
- participating in family engagement (family team meetings);
- encouraging the relationship between the child and his/her birth family when appropriate to the case plan; cooperating with the arrangements made by DYFS for visits and contacts between the child and his/her birth family; and notifying DYFS immediately of any unplanned contacts with the child's family;
- supporting each child's cultural, ethnic and religious background and sexual orientation;
- keeping DYFS informed about each child through telephone calls, letters and regular visits with the DYFS Worker;
- ensuring that the DYFS Worker and the child have opportunities to visit alone;
- taking each child to participating Medicaid providers;
- arranging for and transporting the child to routine medical, dental, mental/behavioral health and eye care appointments;
- obtaining DYFS consent for emergency medical treatment, when necessary, and providing consent only when DYFS cannot be contacted, according to the policies and procedures of DYFS;
- participating in necessary activities and treatment programs for each child, such as routine school conferences, programs and events; signing school permission slips and report cards; being involved in medical or psychological therapy programs, etc.;
- participating in Child Placement Review Board Reviews and Permanency Hearings, and/or submitting information to the Review Board and the court, when requested;
- participating in and/or submitting information to the DYFS Regional Placement Conference regarding the child;
- recognizing the responsibility of DYFS for making permanent plans for each child placed, including the termination of placement, when appropriate; cooperating with DYFS' plans and not making your own plans for the child's future;
- notifying DYFS immediately of any serious illness, injury or accident involving the child, or of any important change in the child's behavior, health or condition;
- notifying DYFS of, and requesting assistance with, any problems regarding care of the child;
- obtaining approval from DYFS before taking the child on extended visits, out of state, or on vacation for more than 3 days away from the resource family home;
- caring for no more than 6 children, including the resource family parents' birth, adopted, step or any other children; caring for no more than 4 children in placement; caring for no more than 4 children under 6 years of age; caring for no more than 2 children under 2 years of age; and no more than 2 children over 2 years of age who are non-ambulatory (unable to walk) without the approval of DYFS (18-21 year olds under DYFS supervision are included in the count);
- notifying DYFS of the placement of other children in the household by another agency or individual;
- notifying DYFS of any change or anticipated change in address, telephone number, marital/civil union status, or the number of people in the household (including any person who resides in the home either full-time or part-time);
- notifying DYFS of any serious illness, injury or change in your health or that of a household member;



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- complying with the established payment system through DYFS, completing and submitting any forms within established timeframes, as may be required;
- refusing payment of any kind for the child's care other than from DYFS, or with the approval of DYFS;
- not spending money on the child without prior approval from DYFS, if reimbursement by DYFS is expected;
- notifying DYFS immediately if, for any reason, you are thinking of asking for the child's removal from the home; allowing DYFS up to five (5) work days to make a decision regarding the best plan for the child; and once a decision has been made to remove the child from the home, allowing DYFS up to fifteen (15) work days from the original request to find another placement for the child;
- assisting in preparing the child for any major changes in his/her living situation, including leaving the home;
- sending the child's clothing, toys, mementos, lifebook, photos and other personal belongings with the child when he/she leaves the home, and facilitating the transfer of funds from a child's bank account, if any, when the child leaves the home or becomes independent;
- maintaining DYFS client confidentiality according to agency policy and State law. Resource family parents may verbally share relevant social, medical, psychological, and/or educational information about their placed child with persons who are, or will be, providing care, treatment, or supervision of the child and who need the information to provide that care, treatment, or supervision. DYFS must give approval to share written reports about the child and his/her birth family with others;
- cooperating with the DYFS child safety assessment conducted periodically for each child, as required by DYFS policy;
- cooperating with the annual and three-year renewal on-site inspection process conducted by the DCF Office of Licensing in accordance with the Resource Family Parent Licensing Act, N.J.S.A. 30:4C-278.3 et seq.