



Creating *hope*. Changing *lives*. Challenging *all limits*.

**Little City's**  
*Center for Family and Community Based Services*  
**Foster Care and Adoption Program**

# 2020 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan

**PURPOSE:**

- This booklet is a resource for you
- Outlines mutual Rights and Responsibilities
- Developed from [IL Foster Parent Law](#) Rule 340

**QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, or SUGGESTIONS?**

- Contact Katherine Oglesby:  
(773) 916-4091 or [koglesby@littlecity.org](mailto:koglesby@littlecity.org)

**2020 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**  
**Rule 340**  
**FOSTER PARENT CODE**

**LITTLE CITY**  
**Main Office**  
**1760 West Algonquin Road**  
**Palatine, IL 60067**

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**Chicago, IL 60612**



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## Little City's 2020 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan

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### Foster Parent & Staff Receipt / Input / Development Signature Page

- 1 Delivery method chosen by foster family:
  - a. Email \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Web Pickup \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Paper Copy \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 2 Foster Family Name \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 3 Signature Confirming Receipt \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 4 Date \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 5 Approval
  - a. I/We approve of this Plan in total \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. I/We do not approve of this Plan \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. I/We suggest the following changes be made: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- 6 Signature/Date of Staff Delivering:  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Table of Contents

1. Annual Report
2. Foster Parent Rights and Responsibilities
  - A. Rights
  - B. Responsibilities
3. Attachments
  - a. Proof of Ongoing Training
  - b. Foster Parents who Reviewed and/or Revised this Plan
  - c. Foster Parent \*Signatures (scanned separate)/  
Emails of Endorsement
  - d. Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure
  - e. Grievances filed during the past year



**Foster Care**

## **Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan 2020 Annual Report**

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Little City Foundation (LCF) received a rating of “Acceptable” for our 2019 Foster Parent Implementation Plan. Little City was pleased with the strengths of the plan as noted by the Advisory Council.

**1. Provide a general description of the process used to obtain foster parent input into your plan review/revision.**

Little City Chicago – Foster Care & Adoption Program (FCAD) had 25% of our foster parents engage in the review and development of our Foster Parent Implementation Plan (FIP). The foster parents’ input, feedback, and discussions about their experiences with the agency were valuable in that the foster parents did not recommend any changes to the current plan. All Foster Parents were provided Little City’s Draft 2020 Foster Parent Implementation Plan for review, input and feedback; their comments and feedback was incorporated into the plan’s final version. LCF FCAD successfully started an online, voluntary and private and confidential Foster Parent Support/Advisory group as a forum for information and resource sharing, including our Foster Parent Implementation Plans.

**2. Summary of foster parent comments and the agency’s response to those comments:**

Little City received 2 comments from foster parents during the review period for the 2020 FIP: One foster parent commented that the plan overall maintains the integrity of Foster Parent Rights and Responsibilities.

All foster parents were thrilled with the 5% rate increase. But, those participating the FIP review and revision process noted that the new 5% increase for all foster parents should have a better breakdown on what funds are to be used to ensure that a youth in care needs are met. However, the addition of the proposed financial break down by the agency was reported as “not good.” It seemed to minimize foster parents’ efforts to ensure the needs of a child in their home are met by outlining funds for the foster parents and funds for the clients. There was also a concern that the new proposed breakdown has foster parents providing receipts for additional funds that they are spending out of the monthly stipend. As a result, the program did not roll-out the amended Contract Agreements, and maintained the agreements already in circulation.

Training was another area where we received comments to an assessment that we asked our foster parents to respond too. Feedback that we received from the assessment: foster parents were interested in child care for trainings. Some said that they would be open to attending trainings on Saturdays if they were longer in order to maximize their time. They are open to web based training.

Over the years, Little City has provided all LCF foster parents with over 200 hours of annual training, offered ongoing/monthly; however, over the last couple of years, we have noticed decline in participation from foster parents, even though we offer training two times on the second Tuesday of each month and trainings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays of every month.

**3. Describe the way direct service staff were involved in plan development and review.**

Little City staff participated in the 2020 Foster Parent Implementation Plan development throughout the year through the monthly submission of Licensing Questionnaires and on-going by sharing feedback verbally on interactions with foster parents that directly impacts revisions and improvements to our Foster

Parent Implementation Plan in trainings. All FCAD program staff participated in FIP review and revise meeting in January 2019 and September 2019 (see sign-in sheet attached). This year, feedback from our administrative, case management, clinical, licensing and intake teams was minimal. Staff was in agreement that we update Training Rights and On-Time Reimbursement Right to reflect changes.

**4. A summary of the agency's response to public comments**

Little City received no public comments regarding the Foster Parent Implementation Plan.

**5. A narrative describing the way foster parents are notified annually of the availability of their plan.**

Little City notifies foster parents of the Foster Parent Implementation Plan availability via our website, [www.littlecity.org/foster](http://www.littlecity.org/foster), and by mail at the end of the year.

During Little City January monthly training, we notify and distribute the current FIP to all participants. Our case management staff and licensing staff deliver Annual plans to all licensed foster parents. When new foster parents are in training Little City provide them with the Foster Parent Implementation Plan.

**6. List the needs/deficiencies identified in our 2019 plan and a description of ways revisions were incorporated in their current plan.**

Little City's Foster Parent Implementation Plan 2019 did not receive any suggestions for revision, nor were there any noted Deficiencies to the plan. We have worked over the last few years on our plan and were really excited to see that there no noted Deficiencies/ suggestions.

**7. A description of how the agency's procedures for addressing alleged violations of the Foster Parent Law, i.e.: the plan-related Grievance Procedure and how foster parents are notified that this procedure is available for their use.**

Little City FCAD program developed our own form to collect Grievances as they specifically relate to the program in our 2019 plan and we will continue the policy as it had been written. The policy and procedure are reviewed and revised as part of the Foster Parent Advisory Committee Meetings and within on-going trainings on the FIP. All new foster parents are trained on the FIP, including the Grievance Procedure, in Little City's Pre-Service Training (offered quarterly throughout the year to new and currently licensed foster parents.) Little City provides our Grievance Policy and Procedure along with the form within the Child Files provided upon the placement of a youth in a foster home. Little City's Grievance Procedure is posted on our foster care program website [www.littlecity.org/foster](http://www.littlecity.org/foster) as is our FIP that includes the procedure as well. The Grievance procedure and FIP is posted to LCF FCAD's online foster parent support group as well. Hard copies of the FIP are distributed every January.

**8. A list of all revised Rights narratives.**

**Right # 2 Training:**

*Foster parents have the right to be provided training - both pre-service and ongoing training - to ensure they have all the tools they need to meet the needs of children in their care, as well as their own needs.*

Revised to incorporate a more conducive training schedule for our families and update specific training

**Right #4 On-time Financial Reimbursement**

*Foster parents have the right to receive timely financial reimbursement commensurate with the care needs of the child as specified in the service plan.*

Foster Parents received 5% pay increase this standard will be revised to reflect that change. Agency is also providing foster parents with detailed payment print-outs monthly, a request of foster parents for years!

**Right # 7 Information about Children**

*Foster parents have the right - at any time during which a child is placed with the foster parent - to receive additional or necessary information that is relative to the care of the child.*

We are adding to the language to include, a more detailed information sharing as cases transition from foster care to adoption and or guardianship. This information shall be detailed with previous information provided in a concise format that resembles formatting of the subsidies.

**9. A list of all revised Responsibility narratives.**

None. None were recommended for revision by staff or foster parents. Similarly, staff remarked that our plan is clear, thorough and provides sufficient information to address each domain.

**10. If no revisions were made, please explain why.**

2020 FIP has revisions to reflect changes we are making to our Training for all foster parents and to reflect the 5% financial increase to all foster parents. We have added language to **Right # 7** to reflect comments received about receiving information regarding children as they transition from foster care to adoption/guardianship in their current foster home. We have enhanced and maintained language throughout the plan that has been crucial in implementing appropriate responses and guidelines for our foster parents as it relates to their Rights and Responsibilities as foster parents.

# FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS

Your rights are dictated by Illinois Law, Rule 340 found

<http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/089/089003400c00600r.html>

## YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

1. <b><u>Dignity, Respect and Consideration:</u></b> <i>Be treated with dignity, respect and consideration.</i>
2. <b><u>Training:</u></b> <i>Be provided Pre-Service and on-going training to meet needs and improve skills.</i>
3. <b><u>Support:</u></b> <i>Be informed on how to contact the placement agency for assistance and access to support services.</i>
4. <b><u>On-Time Financial Reimbursement:</u></b> <i>Receive timely financial reimbursement for care included in the service plan.</i>
5. <b><u>A Placement Plan:</u></b> <i>Be provided with information about the agency's plan for placement that includes supporting family relationships and cultural heritage.</i>
6. <b><u>Fair, Timely and Impartial Investigations:</u></b> <i>Be provided fair, timely and impartial investigations, including mediation and/or administrative review and explanations of decisions concerning licensing.</i>
7. <b><u>Information About Children:</u></b> <i>Receive additional and necessary information relevant to the child's care.</i>
8. <b><u>Information Required by Acts of Law from DCFS</u></b> <i>Be given information concerning the child.</i>
9. <b><u>Be Included in Team Meetings:</u></b> <i>Be notified of scheduled meetings concerning the child and decisions made concerning the child. To have input concerning the plan of services for the child and to communicate with other professionals who work with the child.</i>
10. <b><u>Disclosure of Information:</u></b> <i>To have any information the caseworker has about the child and his family that pertains to the child's needs and care.</i>
11. <b><u>Written Notice of Placement Changes:</u></b> <i>Receive written notice of any plans to end placement, along with the reason and appeal information.</i>
12. <b><u>Appear at Court:</u></b> <i>Receive timely notification and invitations to attend of court hearings.</i>
13. <b><u>Placement Option for Children Re-entering Care:</u></b> <i>Be considered as a placement option for foster children formerly in their care.</i>
14. <b><u>Timely Access to Service Appeal System:</u></b> <i>Foster parents have the right to have access to an agency or DCFS' appeals process without retaliation.</i>
15. <b><u>Call the Foster Parent Hotline:</u></b> <i>Be informed of the Foster Parent Hotline and information on reporting staff misconduct.</i>



## **RIGHT #1: DIGNITY, RESPECT & CONSIDERATION**

**Foster parents have the right to be treated with dignity, respect, and consideration. They are professional members of the child welfare team.**

- **LCF's Treatment Philosophy**
- **Continuous and inclusive communication**
- **Inclusion in all aspects of the child's care as critical members of the youth's team**
- **Foster Parent Recognition and Appreciation**

**The mission and values statements of Little City Foundation's (LCF) Foster Care and Adoption Program reflect inclusion and engagement of foster parents as key members of the treatment team.**

**Little City understands the importance of engaging foster parents as valued treatment team members in team meetings and supervision, with noted improvement and feedback from supervisors and foster parents.**

**Little City continues to communicate with our foster parents on many platforms including but not limited to e-mail, text and mail to ensure information was received in a timely manner. Program information, like training opportunities and more, are regularly posted on agency's Facebook page for timely dissemination as well. Supervisors attend CFTMs to ensure all program- and case-related information is shared.**

**Little City's Treatment Philosophy defines the *foster parent relationship* with the child as being *the key change agent* in the child's treatment and life. Little City has expanded upon our treatment philosophy by introducing a new theoretical approach, Collaborative Problem Solving, that furthers foster parent inclusion as key team members in ensuring child well-being. The key concept to this approach is "Kids do well if they can" and "Families do well if they can."**

**Foster Parents are invited and expected to participate in all aspects of care and planning for the youth in their care, including the following:** Court hearings; Administrative Case Reviews (ACR); Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs); education and school-related meetings; medical-related intervention and care; and child- and family-therapy (LCF provides weekly, in-home therapy to children and their foster families) during home visits (which occur 3x/month for specialized cases, which make-up a majority of the cases served by Little City), during CFTMs, and through weekly check-ins via phone, text, and/or e-mail, as foster parents are vital members of the youth's treatment team.

Foster parents who submitted comments in response to the distribution of the 2017 plan, and/or who participated in the development of the 2018 plan, and/or who answered our twice annually distributed satisfaction survey did not report any level of dissatisfaction with their inclusion as team members. In fact, Little City's program and program staff attained a 92% overall satisfaction rate with more than half of foster parents responding to our annual survey. Many foster parent comments in both the general narrative and in the employee recognition section indicated that foster families are very pleased with the level of communication between themselves and the program.

Supervisors and Licensing & Support Supervisor conduct random phone calls, regular home visits, licensing visits, and participate in CFTMs to the families on their case workers' caseloads to inquire about services, offer consideration for foster parents when coordinating services and visits, and provide timely follow up on any issues. Concerns are addressed with workers during supervision and reflected in annual performance evaluations.

Home visits are conducted three times a month and CTFMs quarterly by program child welfare specialists. These regular contacts provide an opportunity for foster parents to partner with staff, management and collaterals to share information. Little City has created a detailed home visit checklist and CFTM guide for case managers to use to ensure comprehensive care is being provided to the children in our program and to ultimately ensure the safety, well-being and permanency of those served.

**Little City recognizes the outstanding work our foster parents do through the following:**

- Sharing Success Stories in our quarterly newsletter; on our website <https://www.littlecity.org/foster>, Facebook page [www.facebook.com/LittleCityFosterCare](http://www.facebook.com/LittleCityFosterCare), on Twitter <https://twitter.com/LCFFosterCare>; and through sharing our YouTube videos (3 minute version: <https://youtu.be/dZPGcHf9T3E>, 1 minute version: <https://youtu.be/z-szQbUrmIQ>).
- We also provide our foster parents the platform to shine by co-training LCF pre-service and on-going foster parent trainings. The Keeping It Real course of LCF pre-service is fully led by foster parents to provide a real insight into foster parenting from foster parents' perspectives.
- Little City also regularly includes foster parents in our recruitment efforts.
- Little City awarded over \$1,500 in recruitment bonuses and gift cards to foster parents who referred prospective foster parents to Little City's informational orientation sessions and/or who became licensed as foster parents.
- In FY20, Little City is hosting an Annual Holiday Party (December 2019); Foster Parent Recognition and Appreciation (May 2020).

## **RIGHT #2: TRAINING**

**Foster parents have the right to be provided training - both pre-service and ongoing training - to ensure they have all the tools they need to meet the needs of children in their care, as well as their own needs.**

- **LCF-hosted Training for Foster Parents to attain required 16 CEUS/year including hosting a DCFS Educational Advocacy Training each year in July**
- **Mutual Training Needs Assessment and Training Plans**
- **DCFS- and Community-Based Linkages for Training**

Little City's Foster Care and Adoption Program serves children with special needs, including intellectual, developmental, and emotional/behavioral disabilities in our specialized foster care program and siblings of these minors in our traditional foster care program. Given the higher level of need of our program participants, LCF provides tailored pre-service and on-going trainings specific to the clients we serve, consistent with procedures, and in compliance with the DCFS' required 16 annual training hours a year for specialized foster parents (see training attachment.) Training evaluation forms specifically noted satisfaction with the program's trainers and offered courses. Little City also utilizes the Care Giver Matching Tool as well as home study as a way to assess training needs of new foster parents. In Pre Service Training our 'Keeping it Real' component is helpful when our Foster Parents host the training.

The 2017 Training Curriculum incorporated more trainings to provide foster parents with more "tools for their toolbox" in working with youth's challenging behaviors. A key component of this tool box is the development and utilization of Individual Crisis Management Plans (ICMP) adapted from the Trauma Crisis Intervention (TCI) model. There are also more tools related to addressing trauma using the Evidence-Based Intervention Model of Collaborative Problem-Solving techniques. Little City also developed a comprehensive Psychotropic Medication Manual distributed to all foster parents, with formal training being added to 2017 Pre-Service and on-going monthly trainings.

**In FY 19, Little City hosted over 200 hours of training for our foster parents. Little City hosts ongoing monthly training 2 times on our "Training Tuesdays" at 2 hours each. We hosted 2 pre service trainings for transferring foster parents, relatives/ fictive kin and new foster parents. We did not host the training for Educational Advocacy this year, but sent Foster parent s to participate through DCFS Sites. We did host 2 Specialty training this year on Autism. We also conduct CPR/First Aid and Crisis Prevention (CPI) every month.**

**Little City conducted a training needs assessment from foster parents to get a better understanding of their training wants and needs. It was determined through the assessment that foster parents experience barriers to training such as child care, time of training and locations of training. Foster parents suggested more web based training for those who are unable to come but a majority expressed that training held on a Saturday with more hours and child care would be more beneficial to getting them to training. The 2020 Training calendar was developed with input from staff and foster parents. Little City will work continuously with our families to provide them with training that is relevant and informative. Please see attached 2020 proposed training schedule.**

**Little City will continue to engage foster parents in getting our training to them in the most effective way possible.**

**FY18/19 Little City's pre-service training (3), 2-hour training sessions hosted consecutively on Saturdays or Tuesday/Thursday evenings. Little City developed a pre service training manual that will provide Foster Parents with a wealth of information. The new pre service will expand Foster Parent reading and working through homework throughout the licensing process as well as participation in Pre Service Training here at Little City.**

Little City pre-service trainings continue to be offered quarterly in January, April, July and October. Additional sessions are hosted based upon need. Foster parents are also required to complete, CPR Training, CPI: Non Violent Crisis Intervention Training and 10 volunteer hours with children within our specialized foster care and adoption program prior to licensure.

Little City sends out a letter at the end of the year with our New Year training calendar. Little City provides each family with training topics that they may be interested in based on the type of child(ren) they have placed, or want placed, in their care. Little City licensing workers are tasked with contacting their foster parents to assess training needs and desires, and then enroll them in applicable trainings.

All foster parents are required to complete **DCFS's 9-Module, 27- Plus an additional 12 hours of Supplemental pre service training** as a prerequisite to becoming a licensed foster parent. Little City ensures enrollment in PRIDE training, liaises with the DCFS trainers, and incorporates what is learned in our comprehensive home study assessments.

**Little City also hosts DCFS-sponsored on-going trainings. Little City has provided our foster parents with information to access their DCFS VTC Training accounts in order to complete their annual training requirements (16 hours per year for specialized foster parents.)**

**<https://www.dcfstraining.org/vtc/home/home.action>**

## **RIGHT #3: SUPPORT**

**Foster parents have the right to be well supported in their efforts to be excellent parents to children.**

- **24/7 Crisis Support**
- **Individualized, wraparound services tailored to each youth and family's needs**
- **Respite support**

**Little City's foster parents remarked in the trainings, Foster Parent Advisory Meetings, and Satisfaction Survey that overall, they feel supported by Little City's team of staff including licensing, case management, therapist, and supervisory staff. Following an initiative led by Little City's Foster Parent Advisory Committee, foster parent support groups were scheduled quarterly beginning in January 2017. Foster parents volunteered to host these meetings for foster parents in their home along with a potluck. Two meetings were successfully convened; however, the foster parents were unable to sustain the meetings on-going. Little City and foster parents mutually agree to discontinue LCF-sponsored and supported support groups in 2018; instead, LCF will refer foster parents to community supports as outlined herein in addition to connecting foster parents to LCF families through phone, in-person and email introductions. Little City has a Facebook Support group for Foster Parents. This is closed group by invitation only.**

**Little City staff is available to foster parents and the youth in their care 24/7, per our detailed Emergency Contact Procedure provided in pre-service and ongoing trainings and within the Child File upon the placement of a youth in the home, and as detailed herein.** Foster parents receive crisis management training through our pre-service and on-going trainings, and written information and resources are provided to foster parents upon the placement of a child in the Child Files. Little City has implemented a new On Call system effective 10/31/2016. Case Managers are no longer on call 24/7 during the week for their own cases. The agency has moved to a week long on call staff rotation and case manager and therapist are assigned for one entire week Monday to Monday. Supervisory staff are available for back-up support. This information has been sent out to all foster parents via e-mail, and regular mail, and will be distributed with this finalized plan. **Little City's on-call number is (847) 358-5510.** Foster parents are to call this number after business hours to be connected to an on-call staff.

**Little City provides comprehensive home- and community-based wraparound services to the clients and their families in our care.** Services may include the following:

- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- Respite
- Weekly in-home clinical support (individual and foster parent/child therapy)
- Intensive case management (3x/month home visits)
- Crisis Support
- Family Stabilization Specialist support services
- Transportation assistance
- Service Coordination and More!

Case managers support our foster parents by making sure that the child's needs are being met in the community, at school, and in healthcare. Little City helps identify and select resources, plan meetings and advocate as needed. Little City completes quarterly CFTMs, with the bi-annual meetings being to review and update the child's Service Plan and visitation plans to ensure appropriate service array, and mutual agreement to those services and plans for the child.

**If a child in Little City's traditional foster care program, or placed within a relative foster home, requires placement stabilization or is experiencing a crisis, IPS (formerly SOC) services may be utilized.** IPS uses

a wraparound model to ensure support a child and his/her family. Examples of services IPS may be able to provide include individual, family and group therapy; mentoring and tutoring; support groups for foster parents; case and school management; and advocacy. Little City refers youth to IPS when mutually-identified by the treatment team.

**Children served within Little City’s specialized foster care program are eligible for paid respite through the agency.** The agency supports informal respite by connecting foster parents with one another through a foster parent mentoring and support program. During this last year we have been able to continue to explore ways in which to expand and formalize our respite program to include internal foster parent support. Little City has also contracts with an intensive mentoring program. **Foster Parents are required to submit Respite form to the agency no later than the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month in order to receive respite payment.**

Foster parents are regularly provided information about support services available to them in trainings, via print notices, through social media channels, and during in-person contacts with agency staff, and via distribution of this plan. Information about Little City’s supportive services are communicated upon placement and reviewed in CFTMs. **Foster parents may request supportive services for the child and/or him/herself at any time by contacting program staff.**

**Support Services are tailored to each individual child and family’s needs:**

<b>All cases receive:</b>	<b>Additional supports, by need:</b>
Intensive, in-home case management services including at least 3x/month in-person contact with children and their caregivers. Additional monthly contacts are made to collaterals on the case.	Mentoring
24 hour/7 day a week crisis support	Tutoring
Service coordination for child’s special needs	Recreational programming, including art and sports
Educational advocacy.	Medical coordination and support
Monthly stipend that includes transportation assistance	Family Stabilization Specialists
Court advocacy for each child	
Monthly training at Little City	
Assessment and service planning including ICAP, Vineland, CANS, CERAP, IA, Service Plans, Ansell-Casey	
Clinical services (therapy) for behavioral, emotional, and/or developmental challenges. LCF’s clinical team provides home-based clinical services that are developmentally, behaviorally, and play-based using evidence-based approaches. Services include individual and foster parent-child family therapy weekly.	
Transition Planning	
Adoption and Guardianship Assistance	
Respite	

## **RIGHT #4: TIMELY FINANCIAL REIMBURSEMENT**

**Foster parents have the right to receive timely financial reimbursement commensurate with the care needs of the child as specified in the service plan.**

- **Description of LCF Contracts and Associated Daily Board Rates**
- **Additional Funds Available to Support Youth**
- **Funding Options for Teenagers in Placement**
- **Agency Payment for Additional Support Services**
- **Procedure for Resolving Reimbursement Issues**

**Foster Parents will be reimbursed on a daily basis for each night that a youth lives in their home. Payments are directly deposited, or sent by mail, monthly. Payments are made on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. If the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month falls on a weekend, payments are made on the Friday before.**

**Little City subcontracts with DCFS as a purchase of service (POS) agency to provide care to children within four (4) different foster care contracts:**

- 1) **Traditional Contract:** Youth served on Little City's traditional contract have experienced abuse and/or neglect and may have some behavioral, emotional, or other special needs, but not at the level requiring the specialized services and supports of a child served in our specialized program. **Foster parents are paid the traditional rate based upon the child's age as determined by DCFS (Little City follows DCFS payment schedule; See Table below.)** All of the children served on Little City's traditional contract are siblings to a child served on Little City's specialized contract. Traditional children receive a minimum of once monthly home visits. They may also engage in supportive services that include therapy, educational supports, or medication management.
- 2) **Specialized Contract:** Youth served on Little City's specialized contract (95% of program participants) have complex, multi-faceted documented specialized needs; primary among those needs is being diagnosed with an intellectual, developmental, and/or emotional/behavioral disability. Specialized children require intensive service provision and coordination, supervision and care to promote their well-being. **Foster parents are paid the specialized rate (see Table below.)** A child's case must be heard before a multidisciplinary team of professionals at a CIPP meeting convened at DCFS and moderated by a neutral party (a DCFS staff) in order to be classified as "specialized" and thus, receive the specialized rate. **Youth with special needs receive more intensive supports as outlined in Narrative #3 above.**
- 3) **Adolescent Specialized Contract:** Children served on Little City's Adolescent Specialized Contract must be at least 11 years old and exhibit moderate to severe adjustment, behavioral, emotional or developmental needs requiring intensive supports and services in order to maintain the minor in a foster home placement. Children served on this contract have often stepped-down from a residential placement setting and require rigorous supervision and support to maintain placement in foster care. **Foster parents are paid the adolescent specialized rate (see Table below.) Adolescent youth receive intensive wrap-around services as outlined in Narrative #3 above.**
- 4) **Home of Relative Contract/ Fictive Kin:** Children residing within unlicensed homes of relatives or fictive kin are reimbursed on a monthly basis by DCFS (approximately \$315/month/child.) **If a child has been determined by the treatment team to need additional supportive services the family can receive Difficulty of Care rate as long as they have an application for licensure pending on the DCFS system.** Little City assumes reimbursement of these homes once they become licensed per contract the youth qualifies for as outlined above.

If at any time, you feel that a child is incorrectly classified, we will work with you and DCFS to rectify this right away.

**Traditional Board Payment Rates:** (these rates are consistent with those tendered by DCFS). These rates reflect DCFS's 5% Rate Increase Effective July 1, 2019.

Age of Child	Age of Child	Board	Clothing	Allowance	Total Monthly Rate
0 – 11 mo	0 – 11 mo	\$384.00	\$41.00	\$ 14.00	\$ 439.00
1 – 4 years	1 – 4 years	\$386.00	\$46.00	\$ 15.00	\$447.00
5 – 8 years	5 – 8 years	\$390.00	\$61.00	\$16.00	\$467.00
9 – 11 years	9 – 11 years	\$398.00	\$71.00	\$27.00	\$496.00
12 and over	12 and over	\$408.00	\$81.00	\$48.00	\$537.00

**Specialized Board Payment Rates:**

Contract	Daily Board Rate + Daily Transportation Stipend=(Total Board Payment/Day) = Averaged Monthly Board Payment
<b>Adolescent Specialized Contract</b>	\$39.19+ \$6.49 = <b>(\$45.68/day)</b> = \$1416.08/averaged monthly board payment <i>Foster parents receive additional support services, including intensive respite</i>
<b>Specialized Contract</b>	\$39.19+ \$6.49 = <b>(\$45.68/day)</b> = \$1416.08/averaged monthly board payment

**\*Please note that on the contracts that are provided for the families there is a further breakdown on monthly funding.**

**Funds Paid To, and/or In Support of Youth:**

The traditional payment rate breaks down the allotment of minimum funds to be set aside monthly based a child's age in the areas of clothing and allowance. Funds provided for the care of a youth are not designed or intended to cover all costs of a youth's care; rather, to offer additional financial support to supplement one's own financial resources. Youth served on Little City's specialized contracts receive a significant amount of additional funding to support needed resources, services, and items for the youth.

Some foster parents have reported that they pay a youth in their care \$129 a month to cover the funds owed for allowance and clothing. Other parents reported providing their youth with a prepaid gift card with allowance funds on it for purchase of goods/items at the youth's discretion. Program provides allowance logs to track the disbursement of funds per procedure. Program also completes Clothing Inventories twice yearly, at a minimum, to ensure youth has adequate clothing.

Program recommends disbursing funds to youth after an assessment of their ability to manage their funds. Foster parents are also encouraged to assist youth in establishing saving accounts. The graduates from the Financial Literacy Class now have bank accounts, and many other youth in program do as well.

Teenage youth need to learn skills to be more independent. Aligned with this is taking public transportation to/from school and/or work. Little City pays foster parents \$.6.49/day, or \$194.70 in a 30-day month, in support of the youth's transportation. As such, the Foster Parent Advisory Committee Members supported the



recommendation that foster parents purchase youth a monthly bus pass. Many foster parents reported benefits of doing this with the youth in their care. Extra funds to support a youth’s graduation from High School are available per the DCFS schedule of payments.

Teenage youth in care are eligible for additional funds and resources as outlined in DCFS’s “Get GOAL’D” Handbook available on DCFS’s website.

- Some of these include life skills and vocational training; employment incentive funds; college scholarships; and more!
- All youth who are scheduled to attain independence upon turning 21 years of age are eligible for a onetime payment of \$1,200.00 upon emancipation if the youth has successfully completed the Countdown to 21 protocol per DCFS procedure. Little City staff engages the youth and their foster family in the process to ensure payment.

**Agency Payment for Additional Supportive Services:**

**(1) Respite:** Little City offers additional financial reimbursement for respite services. Little City offers a minimum of 15 hours a month of paid respite to foster parents serving children on LCF’s adolescent and specialized contracts. Respite is reviewed quarterly and based upon the needs of the child and family. Foster Parents are reimbursed when they submit their completed respite forms. **All reimbursement forms are due by the 5th of the month in order to get reimbursed. Late respite forms will not be reimbursed.**

**(2) Sibling and Parent-Child Visitation:** Little City strives to maintain and strengthen family relationships. LCF reimburses foster parents for their supervision of sibling visits at the rate of \$25/hour up to \$100/month plus a maximum of \$50/month for mileage traveled between the foster family home and the visit site (so a total of \$150/month is available!) Travel reimbursement is calculated at the agency’s mileage reimbursement rate. **Little City reimburses at the IRS rate and the current rate is \$0.58/mile as of this writing.** Documentation for the supervision of sibling visitation and transportation must accompany the request for reimbursement; the agency requests receipt of these on a monthly basis.

<p><b>Sibling Reimbursement Paid on a Monthly Basis to the <u>Host</u> of the Visit:</b> \$25/Hour up to \$100/month</p>	<p><b>Sibling Visit Reimbursement Paid on a Monthly Basis to any foster parent responsible for <u>transporting</u> (regardless of being the host of the sibling visit :)</b> <b>\$0.58 cents a mile to/from the foster parent home to the visit site up to \$50 total for the month. ( IRS rate)</b></p>
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**Foster Parents have the responsibility – and receive monthly funds - of ensuring the youth in their care come prepared for sibling, parent-child, school, and/or other community-based outings that an agency representative (CWS, FSS, Therapist, Supervisor, Licensing) may be assisting with by providing essential care items (diapers, food, snacks, medication, preferred toys). Expenses incurred by agency staff when youth come to prescheduled visits will be deducted from FP monthly board care stipends.**

**(3) Birth Parent Reunification Support Payments:** Foster parents and biological parents must mutually agree to participate in the family reunification project, and timely reimbursement requires monthly submission of the Special Service Fee Log. Biological parent reunification visits are reimbursed according to the Family Reunification Support Special Service Fee Log (CFS 1042-L) schedule, which is as follows:

Level 1	3 Activities	\$75
Level 2	6 Activities	\$150
Level 3	9 Activities	\$250
Level 4	12 Activities	\$400

**(4) Transportation Support:** Little City reimburses foster parents for transporting their children to and from school, doctor visits, social activities, etcetera. For each calendar day, they are reimbursed \$6.49 for transportation, which is included monthly in the board payment. It is expected that foster parents provide transportation for clients in their care to/from visits and other appointments such as parent child visits, sibling visits, medical appointments and required meetings such as CIPP's. Little City reserves the right to reduce or eliminate the transportation stipend if transportation, or arrangements for transportation, are not provided by the foster family. Little City staff will transport clients to/from visits and other appointments when mutually agreed upon between the staff member and the foster parent. The foster parent(s)' transportation stipend will not be reduced in these instances.

Per agreement from LCF's Foster Parent Advisory Council, clients who self-transport to and from school and required appointments must be provided a bus card, or Little City will deduct the cost from their transportation stipend to fund the purchase of a bus card.

**(5) Extra Funds to Support Youth Stepping-Down from Residential Placement Settings:**

- a. Placement Enhancement: DCFS will provide foster parents extra funds when taking a child from residential placement into their homes. These families will receive a stipend of \$175.00 per child per month in addition to their specialized payment rate, for up to one year after that youth has stepped down from residential placement. This funding is paid directly to the foster parent from Little City and included within the monthly board payment. The youth will also qualify for additional wraparound service supports.
- b. Foster Parents who take residential step down placements are also able to receive funding up to \$300 for costs incurred when visiting the youth and for their participation in staffing's for the youth and outings.

**(6) Administrative Rule 13: Foster Parent Damage Reimbursement Program:**

In conjunction with DCFS Administrative Rule 13, Little City will assist and support foster parents in attaining reimbursement for property damage and other domains as covered in the Rule. In short, any time a youth in care causes damage to a foster home or foster parent's property, the foster parent must collect three quotes from three separate vendors with cost estimates and run those through Little City/DCFS before initiating the work for consideration for reimbursement.

**(7) Little City will now be able to provide all foster parents upon request, a detailed print out of payments made to them on behalf of the youth in their care.**

**Procedure for Resolving Payment Problems:**

If there are any questions or concerns regarding payment, foster parents may contact the Administrative Assistant at 773-265-1539 (Main #) or 773-916-4061 (Direct #) who will investigate the inquiry with Accounting. The Assistant will respond to the foster parent within 24-hours of how and when the matter is to be resolved. If, after following these methods, there are still unresolved issues, the foster parent is encouraged to call the Director, Emily Rawsky, directly at (773) 916-4087. Foster parents may file a grievance or service appeal according to the grievance procedure (See Right #14) if these channels have not sufficiently resolved the issue.

## **RIGHT #5: A PLACEMENT PLAN**

**Foster parents have 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 responsibility to support activities that will promote the child's right to relationships with his or her birth family and cultural heritage.**

- **Connections and Ties to Biological Family – including Fictive Kin – and Respecting Diversity**
- **Life Books**
- **Matching and Placement Assessment Tools**
- **Ongoing Assessment Tools provided to Foster Parents to Ensure Placement Stability**

Little City primarily seeks to place children in the homes of relatives or with siblings if possible. Placement within a child's community of origin, and/or within a home of similar cultural, ethnic, racial, religious background as the child is sought-out as a primary placement resource. We also seek placements with families who are understanding of a child's sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (SOGIE). In instances when this cannot occur, Little City educates the foster parents about the child's SOGIE and cultural, ethnic, racial, religious background and ensures the family can accommodate those needs before proceeding with placement. Adherence to this expectation is reviewed during bi-annual licensing visits. Little City's "Cultural Sensitivity" training further addresses these areas.

Little City regularly discusses and trains staff and foster parents about the importance of engaging with biological parents, siblings, extended family members, and maintaining contact with other people who the child identifies as important in his/her life from our initial engagement with the family and throughout the life of the case. Little City educates families about reunification and sibling visits, including the foster parents' role in the process, and resources available to them (including additional financial support – see Right #4.) Case Managers and therapists use Life books as tools for engaging the youth and his/her foster family in an on-going discussion about important connections, and then taking action to make those connections. Program has increased use of Skype and Face Time to facilitate contact with family.

Little City seeks to ensure that foster parents have all the necessary information needed to make sound placement decisions, as the agency views placements into our foster homes as long-term commitments. Foster parents are provided with information about the child verbally on the phone to determine interest in placement. If interested, the agency develops a transition plan that involves sharing information in writing and developing on-going visitation between the family and the child to assess fit. If all pre-placement visits go well, a staffing occurs to determine a transition date into the home. Little City has expanded our use of the Youth Pre-Matching Questionnaire, Foster Parent Questionnaire, and Household Agreement as tools to assess fitness for matching, and to prepare both the youth and the foster family for a prospective placement. These tools are used in conjunction with a youth's residential team if s/he is stepping-down from residential, in addition to youths transitioning into program from other settings and within program as well.

Foster parents aid in the development of the child's Integrative Assessment (IA), the child's Service Plan, visitation plans, and permanency planning by engaging with the case manager during 3x/month home visits, quarterly CFTMs, ACRs, and Court. Little City seeks the input of foster parents in the above mentioned areas by treating them as valued members of the treatment team, and recognizing that they are essential in planning for the care of youths in their care. LCF ensures this by eliciting their input as to service provisions they see as important for the stability of the child in their care and inquiring about the adjustment to and progress in their home during home visits, quarterly child and family team meetings, and at ACR and Court. The case manager and supervisor review and discuss the current IA, Service Plan, visitation plans, and permanency planning with the foster parent and then mutually-agree upon the goals for the updated plans. Foster parents receive copies of all mutually-agreed plans in writing. The child's permanency goal, and any recommendations to amend the goal, are discussed as part of this planning process. LCF does not make recommendations to amend a child's permanency goal without consulting foster parents first. LCF always inquires with foster parents if they would

be interested in being a long-term placement option for a child if the goal was amended from return home to adoption, guardianship and/or independence as appropriate based upon the child's needs.

Little City serves youth with special needs including intellectual, developmental, and emotional/behavioral disabilities, most of whom are between the ages of 12-21. We have also noted a change to the referrals received by program from DCFS to being more complex, high-need youth stepping-down from residential, in shelters or hospital settings, or having longer lengths of stay in foster care with multiple placement disruptions and service needs. In response, Little City has expanded our pre-matching and placement procedures (as described above) and our training to staff foster parents in support of our youth's successful attainment of skills necessary for successful independence and transition to adulthood. Specifically, program uses the following to promote skill-building for independence:

- Ansell-Casey to assess youth's strengths and needs
- Financial Literacy Training: Little City continues to train all youth who can participate qualify and who can participate per their intellectual/developmental disability in financial literacy. FY19 one youth was trained.
- Comprehensive Assessment for Independence using the Youth in Transition team meeting outline, mutually developed with youth, foster parent, and youth's professional team, which then drives service planning.
- Team participation and engagement in D-CIPPs
- Program takes active steps to transition youth to DHS services (as eligible per their intellectual/developmental disability) by collaborating with DCFS per procedure; enrolling youth on the Illinois' PUNS list; attaining an updated psychological and medical; ensuring Social Security benefits; and more as required by procedure beginning at age 17.5.

Little City has a robust DHS program that serves adults. We have successfully transferred several youth from our DCFS foster care program to our DHS Home-Based Supports program, which allows youths to remain in their same (foster) home after attaining independence at age 21. This ability to provide our youths with continuity of care has resulted in improved well-being outcomes.

Little City has successfully implemented the use of the Placement Disruption Checklist (developed based on staff feedback and with foster parent agreement in FY17) for use to ensure all of a youth's belongings are sent clean in a nice storage container or suitcase with him/her when moving to a new home. Program also initiated a luggage drive in order to provide youth in care with necessary luggage to store their belongings.

## **RIGHT #6: LICENSING INVESTIGATIONS**

**Foster parents have the right to be provided a fair, timely, and impartial investigation of alleged violations concerning the foster parent's licensure, including the right to request mediation and an administrative review and explanation of the decisions made concerning the investigation and/or foster home license.**

- **Licensing Investigations Defined per DCFS/Child Care Act/402 Rule/Procedure**
- **Confidentiality and the Right to an Advocate in Licensing Investigations**
- **Two Types of Licensing Investigations, Defined.**
- **Outcomes and Next Steps after the Completion of a Licensing Investigation**

**This year, Little City spent ample time discussing this right in the Foster Parent Implementation Training and Advisory Councils. Foster parents remarked having an improved understanding for the purpose and outcomes of licensing investigations as a result.**

**The purpose of a licensing investigation is to assess whether there has been any violation to 402 licensing standards or the Child Care Act within an agency-licensed foster home facility. Licensing investigations do not assess for abuse or neglect.**

Licensing investigations are based on allegations made by a complaint. Complaints may come from a variety of sources including direct observation from agency staff visiting the home. Complaints are also sometimes routed to the agency through the State Central Register (SCR) when a Hotline call has been made against the home. Little City receives SCR notices in writing via the mail and conducts a concurrent licensing investigation in these instances (more information below.) After a complaint is received in the licensing department, the licensing supervisor reviews the complaint and assigns it to the licensing representative. The licensing supervisor and licensing representative meet to review the allegations and create a plan of action regarding the investigation.

**All licensing investigations are conducted under the auspice that the information presented is an allegation. The licensing staff will conduct a thorough, non-partial investigation per DCFS policy and procedure (as detailed here.)**

Licensing staff are responsible for conducting non-judgmental, objective investigations into the allegations, which includes interviewing all parties within the foster home, the reporter, and any collaterals that may provide useful information into the investigation. An unannounced home visit to the foster home is conducted within 2 business days of receiving the complaint in the licensing department to notify the parent of the licensing violations noted in the report. Licensing workers are responsible for explaining the investigation procedure with the foster parents, and documenting their investigative assessments on the CFS 596 series of forms.

Foster parents are informed of confidentiality related to licensing investigations, and their right to have an advocate present, at the initial unannounced home visit. Foster parents consent or decline the right to an advocate by signing the Right to an Advocate (CFS 596-29) form. If the foster parent requests the presence of an advocate, who is any person of the foster parent's choosing, the interview component of the licensing investigation may be delayed up to 4 hours; however, licensing workers have the right to investigate the premises of the home to ensure there are no environmental risks to any children in placement or household members.

**There are two types of licensing investigations depending on the nature of the allegations:**

- (1) Stand-alone investigations: Stand-alone investigations are when violations to 402 licensing rules are alleged, and
- (2) Concurrent investigations: Concurrent allegations are when Little City's licensing department and DCFS Department of Child Protection (DCP) investigate allegations at the same time because there has been a report of abuse or neglect within the foster home made to the DCFS Hotline.

Investigations require completion within 30 days per DCFS rule; however, a 30-day extension may be granted by the licensing supervisor if needed to gather all information and complete interviews necessary for a fair and impartial investigation. The supervisor reviews the investigation within 5 days. The licensing worker is responsible for notifying the foster parent of the findings of the investigation within five days after receiving supervisory approval. The outcome of the licensing investigation is communicated to the foster parent in writing via a letter and verbally over the phone. The Guardian Ad Litem of any children in placement is notified via 596-L letter when any concurrent investigations occur and caseworkers are always notified of the investigation results.

All completed licensing investigations are sent to Little City's Agencies and Institutions (A&I) Representative at DCFS for review. A & I has 7 days to review in investigation. If the investigation meets the Procedure 383 standards for licensing investigations, the A&I representative approves the investigation and its findings and the investigation is maintained within the licensing file. If the A&I Representative finds any errors to the investigation, Little City's licensing team is responsible for correcting those errors, which may involve additional interviews, visits to the home, and collection of documents.

**Licensing investigations will yield one of two results:**

- (1) Substantiated. A substantiated violation means that the licensing team found violations to 402 and/or the Child Care Act within the home as alleged, or as observed/assessed during their home visits and interviews. The family is notified via phone and in writing, and a Corrective Action Plan is developed to correct the cited violations per procedure. The licensing representative will notify the family of any substantiated findings in writing via the 596-04 letter; this letter offers the foster parent the opportunity for an informal review of the investigation findings with the licensing supervisor.
- (2) Unsubstantiated.

The agency also develops a Corrective Action Plan and reviews this with the foster parent in order to correct any violations noted within the investigation. Foster parents must sign the corrective plan as indication that the corrective action plan has been reviewed with them. Foster parents typically have 30 days to correct any violations. The agency conducts regular unannounced home visits while a Corrective Plan is pending. If a foster family fails to correct the violations as noted on the Corrective Plan, the agency may begin to enforce further licensing actions that may include placing the home on hold for future placements or revocation of the license.

**The GAL's office may also elect to place a home on hold status as a result of a licensing investigation. In these instances, Little City must submit a formal request to remove the GAL Hold from the home to DCFS's A&I team for review. These requests include the full licensing investigation packet, supporting documentation, and an agency recommendation letter.**

**Foster parents may seek recourse to licensing investigations by requesting a supervisory review, filing a grievance, or appealing the findings.**

1. A supervisory review should be arranged when:
  - The foster parent disagrees with the alleged violations
  - The foster parent disagrees with the finding of a licensing investigation
  - The licensing supervisor believes a review would help resolve any outstanding issues related to the investigation.
2. Foster parents have the right to mediation of alleged licensing violations. They also have the right to request an administrative review. They may employ both of these, neither, or only one at their choosing if they feel it would help to yield the fairest result of the investigation. Foster parents may also file a grievance with the agency per Little City's Grievance Policy (Attachment G; also see Right #14.)
3. Licensing Complaints and Grievance Procedures are reviewed with all foster parents during pre-service training. Grievance forms and a copy of the *Service Appeal* and *What you Need to Know about Child Abuse or Neglect Investigation* brochures are shared during an investigation and during foster parent pre-service. Policies are reviewed throughout the year during home visits and CFTMs. Staff is also trained on the policies during their orientation and ongoing at staff meetings. Should there be a complaint concerning a foster parent's license, the foster parent will be informed again of their rights at that time.

## RIGHT #7: INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDREN

Foster parents have the right - at any time during which a child is placed with the foster parent - to receive additional or necessary information that is relative to the care of the child.

- Critical Information Provided by Agency to Foster Parents Pre-Placement & Ongoing
- Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

**During the Foster Parent Implementation Plan review meetings**, one foster parent noted that they do not want redacted information about a child previous diagnosis. Child history in the form of how the adoption subsidy is written should be made available at the beginning of a placement. **Program responded by continuing training for all case management staff on expectations in this domain and conducting intake/disruption internal staffing's to ensure transfer of information in a timely fashion. Overall, foster parents noted satisfaction with the amount of information received on behalf of the youth in their homes.**

Foster parents asked that the agency provide additional information as a part of the child file, in particular the child's Birth Certificate and Social Security number. LCF will do our best to have information available within the first 60 days of placement as this information is not always readily accessible at the time of placement.

Prospective foster parents have the right to all critical information about a child when making the decision to accept a child's placement into the home. Little City has developed several tools to monitor and track that a child's background information has been shared with the child's foster parent.

- Prior to placement: licensing and intake staff complete Little City's Family Needs Assessment (FNA) and Child Caregiver Matching Tool.
- Upon placement: LCF's Intake & Recruitment Coordinator, licensing staff and case management staff review LCF's Child File and Placement Paperwork with the foster parent. The Child File and placement paperwork includes a copies of placement verification documentation (906, Placement Clearance, Placement letters;) emergency contact information and procedures; background information about the child; and the child's portion of the IA, Service Plan and Visitation plan (if pre-established upon accepting the case); day care and respite information; life book resources; Health Works passport; Little City's on-call schedule and staff phone list; and information about grievance, service appeal and other foster parent-specific rights/procedures. **Little City has a Therapy Service Agreement for each child that is referred to Little City Therapist. This document is provided to the family when there is an assessed need for the service.**
- On-going: the case manager and supervisor share all relevant information as it becomes available, but all background information is provided verbally and in-writing at a minimum on a quarterly basis at CFTMs. **Case management staff receive training in information sharing through weekly supervision and monthly case management team meetings.**
- Goal change: the case manager and supervisor will share information on a child whose goal has changed to adoption and or Subsidize Guardianship. This information shall be detailed with previous information provided in a concise format that resembles formatting of the subsidies.

**Little City's internal continuous quality improvement (CQI) processes monitors obtaining, sharing, and maintaining information and case records on all youth served within the program through SACWIS and case file reviews.** On-going compliance is monitored through our electronic "dashboard" critical document tracking tool that is used in weekly supervision with case management staff.



## **RIGHT #8: INFORMATION REQUIRED BY ACTS OF DCFS LAW**

**Foster parents have the right to be given information concerning a child from the Department as required under Section 5 of the Children and Family Services Act and from a child welfare agency as required under Section 7.4 9 (c-5) of the Child Care Act of 1969.**

- **Staff Training on How To and What To Share with Foster Parents Regarding the Youth in Care**
- **Procedures for the Sharing of Information with Foster Parents by Agency Staff**

Foster parents must absolutely be provided essential information on behalf of youth in their care in order to provide the youth with essential services, support, and to understand his/her background. Little City's procedures for how we share information pre-placement and after placement was detailed in Narrative #7, but is further expanded upon here. Foster parents overall remarked that they received necessary and sufficient information in a timely manner. They also stated that they had sufficient information pre-placement in order to make a good decision about whether to accept a child for placement into their homes in both emergency and planned placement situations.

Little City staff receives training on the importance of sharing all appropriate information with the caregiver, including and how and when this information is to be shared. Information shared includes case history; placement history; social/behavioral/developmental/medical/educational information; and the child's portion of the IA, Service Plan, and Visitation Plans. All available background information about the child is provided prior to and/or upon placement within the LCF Family Needs Assessment, placement paperwork, Child Caregiver Matching Tool, Child File, and within the supporting assessments and documentation provided. All available information is shared with foster parents regardless if a child is accepted for placement in planned, unplanned and/or emergency bases.

Little City provides information about youth on an on-going basis, both verbally and in-writing. Case managers are responsible for providing information as it becomes available during their 3x/month home visits. Little City ensures quarterly CFTM meetings, that are never convened without the foster parent(s), and provides foster parents written copies of the minutes reflecting discussion of the above areas and mutual agreement upon service planning. Foster parents are invited and encouraged to attend bi-annual ACRs and Court hearings; if foster parents are unable to attend, LCF staff provides verbal reports on the outcomes of the meetings.

Staff are trained on their responsibility to provide the child's information on an on-going basis upon hire, on-going in supervision, and continuously through participation in DCFS and LCF-mandated trainings. Little City supervisors are able to track their case workers responsibility by reviewing case notes and identifying information distribution in supervision as well as internal staffing with therapeutic team members, during the quarterly child and family team meetings. These areas ensure that as case workers become informed of any additional information that it is shared with the foster parents. Little City also requires that case workers complete their SACWIS when they submit their mileage on a bi weekly basis. This is another way that we ensure case worker accountability. Any amendments to policy are communicated electronically and hard-copy through the distribution of updated policies, which are reviewed by management staff in the twice monthly case management team meetings.

## **RIGHT #9: BE INCLUDED IN TEAM MEETINGS**

**Be notified of scheduled meetings concerning the child and decisions made concerning the child. To have input concerning the plan of services for the child and to communicate with other professionals who work with the child.**

- **Foster Parents as Critical Members of the Youth's Treatment Team**
- **Types of Meetings important for Foster Parents to Participate In:**
  - **Administrative Case Reviews (ACR)**
  - **Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTMs)**
  - **Court**
  - **School Meetings, and More!**

**Foster parents are invited and expected to be present and to participate to provide input at the following:**

- **Court hearings – Service and Permanency Plans are discussed and Reviewed**
- **Administrative Case Reviews (ACR) - Service and Permanency Plans are discussed and Reviewed**
- **Quarterly Child and Family Team Meeting (it is during the CFTM's that any changes in the service plan and permanency goals are discussed)**
- **Education meetings**
- **Multidisciplinary team meetings and more!**

Little City informs foster parents of their right to be informed of the decisions made by the court or LCF concerning the child; 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.

**Little City values *foster parents as key members of the treatment team*; as such we ensure that all foster parents are invited and encouraged to participate in *all* treatment planning for youth in their care. As the primary caregivers of the youth served in LCF's program, foster parents offer a wealth of information about the youth and his/her needs that is essential to effective treatment planning.** Therefore, Little City ensures timely notification of the dates and times of all court hearings, agency staffing's, CFTMs, ACRs, school meetings, and other meetings convened on behalf of a child by phone and in-person during 3x/monthly home visits. Written notification is provided via mailed letter or e-mail, or when staff provides CFTM minutes that are inclusive of all case planning and treatment information pertaining to the child. The GAL's office also sends written notification of all court hearings to foster parents and DCFS sends out invitations to foster parents for participation in the ACR staffing.

Case management and supervisory staff explain the purpose of the meetings and invite and encourage foster parent participation. If a foster parent is unable to attend in person, staff will work with the foster parent to call-in to the meeting, or to provide information prior to the meeting/court hearing to determine if there is information that the foster parent would like presented. Mutually-agreed upon decisions made by team members are provided in writing after meetings and reflected within documentation completed by case managers such as the IA, Service Plan, CANS, Visitation Plans, CFTM minutes and case notes.

## **RIGHT #10: DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION**

**Foster parents have 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.**

- **Pre-placement & On-going Information Sharing Procedures by Staff to Foster Parents**
- **Types of Information to Shared**
- **Building Connections, Engagement & Shared Parenting**

**When families are approached about a specific placement, all available behavioral and emotional concerns, educational accommodations, case goals, visitation arrangements, and any other child-specific information is shared verbally and in-writing with the family before placement is made in order for the family to assess fitness of the placement. Agency shares written copies of all essential information upon placement as well within the Child File. Confidential information specific to the birth family's background is not shared unless that information has an impact on the child's care, and consent is given. Agency procedures and the types of information shared has been extensively detailed in Narrative #7 and #8.**

Little City's Family Needs Assessment, Child and Caregiver Matching Tool, Placement Paperwork and the Child File are reviewed and provided to foster parents prior to and upon placement. The child's portion of the Integrated Assessment (IA) and Service Plan, if available, are reviewed and provided upon placement, and foster parents are engaged in the treatment planning process throughout the life of the case. It is through the CFTM, ACR, Court and additional service planning processes that foster parents are informed about the permanency plan for a child.

Little City encourages birth parent and foster parent collaboration (and we provide reimbursement per DCFS Reunification Reimbursement schedule), per the foster parents' mutual agreement to engage in this process. Little City provides training about engaging with birth families throughout the year (see Training attachment.) Additionally, Little City always asks our foster parents if they are desirous of maintaining permanency for a child through adoption or guardianship (if eligible), if reunification is no longer possible. If the foster family is not desirous of meeting the court-set permanency goal for a child, Little City maintains the placement until a permanent placement is identified. Little City values relationships and seeks to maintain them in pursuit of the child's well-being and stability.

### **Benefits of Shared Parenting in Support of Permanency**

- Empowers parents in their role as parents.
- Encourages parents to participate in identified activities.
- Caregivers are able to mentor parents in appropriate parenting practices.
- Parents support caregivers to ensure their children are well cared for.
- Children are able to maintain connections and have consistency in their lives.
- Creates partnership between parents and caregivers.
- If reunification is the goal, the lines of communication between the children, parents and caregiver can remain open, with continuing support and connection.
- If reunification is not possible, children can continue contact with parents.

**CFS 1042 L Family Reunification Support Special Service Fee Log - The Reunification Support Special Service Fee is available to caregivers of children whose families are making progress toward reunification.**

## **RIGHT #11: PLACEMENT DISRUPTIONS**

**Receive written notice of any plans to end placement, along with the reason, and appeal information.**

- **Agency Procedures to Attain 90% Placement Stabilization**
- **Placement Disruptions Defined (2 Types)**
- **Service Appeal Procedures**
- **Maintaining ongoing connections and procedures for Successful Transitions**

**Little City strives to ensure continued placement stabilization within our foster care program.** We have achieved a 85-90+% placement stability rate in 2019 by ensuring a thorough foster parent licensing and training process including conducting thorough home studies; having pre-placement and transition plans; reviewing the child's CANS, IA and other background information prior to and on-going throughout placement; providing essential services and crisis support, and rigorously monitoring the case upon placement. However, Little City understands that circumstances may still arise resulting in a placement disruption per foster parent request and/or via the agency providing written notice (this latter instance is an uncommon agency practice.)

**There are two types of disruptions:**

- (1) Planned: Planned Disruptions occur when a caregiver gives a 30-day written notice on placement to Little City or when the agency makes a determination to move a child to another home to achieve the child's permanency goal (An example of this is when a child moves from a foster home into the care of their birth parents to achieve their permanency goal of return home.). Little City asks for a 30-day notice on placement due to the specialized needs of youth served in program. Little City attempts to move the child as soon as possible to ensure the child's best interests and to honor the foster parents' desires. In all possible circumstances, Little City attempts to move children when notice is received by following a mutually-agreed upon transition plan into a new home. However, program fully recognizes that certain circumstances warrant immediate placement moves and program responds to foster parent's desires in this instances. Emergency moves are handled more on an exceptional basis versus a typical procedural basis.
- (2) Unplanned: Unplanned Disruptions occur when a child was assessed to be at immediate risk of harm and requires immediate removal to protect his/her safety. Licensing Investigations occur in response to these reports and there is a possibility of a Child Abuse/Neglect Investigation by DCFS' Division of Child Protection in applicable cases. These types of disruptions are also exceptional and uncommon within program.

When Little City makes a determination to move a youth in an unplanned way, Little City will give the foster parent a 14 Day Notice of Change (CFS 151-B) any time the agency makes the determination to move a child from a foster care placement for unplanned reasons. *Foster parents have a right to appeal this decision.* Prior to any issuance of a 14 day notice Little City Director, Supervisor, Case Manager, and if applicable the Therapist shall meet with the Foster Parent to discuss concerns and give the foster parent a chance to correct the concerns. Should there be no change to the concerns the 14 day notice will be given. Little City provides foster parent with documentation about the appeal process upon issuance of a 14 Day Notice. Additionally, LCF must send a notice to DCFS Clinical Placement Review Team and they will conduct a staffing within 10 days of receiving the notice. If it is determined that a foster child is at imminent risk of harm in a foster home or if there is a court order, the child will be removed immediately from that home and written notice may be waived.

**Foster parents may also elect to file a service appeal.** The service appeal process is a two-step process, mediation and an administrative fair hearing. Foster parents may file a service appeal when they are in disagreement with actions or decisions taken by Little City under the following circumstances:

- When decisions are made that directly affect you, such as payments to you for the child in your care for whom DCFS is legally responsible

- When decisions are made about services, such as day care, medical, educational, or psychological services, for the benefit of the child for whom the Department is legally responsible
- Agency failure to provide services as specified in the service plan for the benefit of the child.
- A change in the child's substitute care placement

Foster parents must request a service appeal within 10 days from receiving notice on a decision or action by Little City, which may result in stopping Little City from acting on its decision until such a time that the case has completed the service appeal process.

Written requests for a service appeal are sent to:

Administrative Hearings Unit  
DCFS  
17 N. State St 7<sup>th</sup> floor  
Chicago, IL 60601

**Anytime a placement disrupts, Little City promotes on-going contact and communication between the foster parent and minor by facilitating visitation and phone calls.** With consent from the foster parents, Little City will provide the previous foster parent(s)' information to the new foster parent(s) in order for them to use one another for babysitting and/or respite. Additionally, in the event of planned disruptions, Little City develops a transition calendar for the youth to transition out of one foster parent home into another home. This allows for the foster parents to share information about the child and how to best meet his/her needs.

**Foster parents receive training on transitions during Little City pre service training and as a part of the ongoing training offered (See attached training schedule.)**

## **RIGHT #12: NOTIFICATION & ATTENDANCE AT COURT HEARINGS**

**Foster parents have the right to receive timely notification of court hearings.**

- **Agency's Procedure for Notifying and Inviting Foster Parents to all Court Hearings as Critical Members of the Youth's Team**
- **Juvenile Court Process Information Sharing Procedure**

**Little City's Foster Parent Advisory Council noted that they received timely notification of court hearings. Notification was provided verbally in home visits and in-writing through e-mail and in CFTM minutes. Little City assures accountability for case managers informing foster parents about upcoming court hearing by providing supervision to case managers and attending CFTMs.** Case managers document in the progress notes when notification is given to foster parents. Foster parents are provided with the date, time, location and purpose of the hearing in CFTM minutes. Copies of the biannual Integrated Assessment also indicate the dates of upcoming ACRs, court hearings, and concerns/progress related to the case that will be presented during these meetings. Foster parents are invited to attend the hearings and to report about the child's safety and well-being. They are especially encouraged to be present and heard during the following: change of goal or best interest hearings, trials and termination. **Many foster parents remarked that attendance at Court hearings was a challenge due to the hearings being during the weekday hours when they are working. In instances when foster parents cannot attend, case managers provide an update post-Court via phone or in-person shortly after the hearing.**

**Little City provides a full explanation of the juvenile court process as part of the licensing process and ongoing through training. Court is discussed at the Foster Parent Implementation Plan Trainings and Advisory Council Meetings. Foster parents are given a copy of the LCF Foster Parent Handbook, which covers explanations of administrative case reviews, service plans, and the role of foster parents in the court process. Court training is a component of LCF's Pre-Service Training as part of our Working as a Team training.**

## **RIGHT #13: CONSIDERATION AS A PLACEMENT OPTION FOR FOSTER CHILDREN FORMERLY IN CARE**

Foster parents have the right to be considered as a placement option for foster children formerly in their care.

- Agency Procedures for Maintaining Connections
- Agency Procedures for Making Placement Decisions

**Little City has improved our engagement with foster parents who have youth stepped-up to residential in efforts to step that youth down to the same home when s/he is ready to be discharged to a less restrictive environment (such as a foster home). Program has noted increased foster parent engagement with the child, even if s/he does not return to the former foster home. This is a positive outcome for the youth, as s/he has added sustained relationships, social connections and support in his/her life.**

Foster parents have the right to be considered as placement options for children formerly in their care. As such, Little City accesses a child's past placement information by reviewing the minor's placement information in SACWIS, requesting a copy of the CM-07 screen from DCFS, and/or by liaising with Little City's licensing department to ensure foster parents are contacted about their desire to accept the placement.

**Little City makes all placement determinations considering the child's best interests, with preserving, promoting and maintaining relationships (including relationships with foster parents) as paramount among them.** Best interest of the child includes a consideration of attachment; cultural, ethnic, religious, racial, economic and other demographic considerations; service needs; the child's desires; permanency goal; and so on. Case management staff liaise with the child's treatment team including his/her GAL, licensing staff, supervisor, therapist, biological family members, foster parents, and/or other members of the child's team to determine best interest considerations related to potential placement options for the minor. Upon determination, then the case manager, supervisor or licensing staff should contact possible foster care placement homes.

## **RIGHT #14: BE INFORMED ABOUT FILING AN APPEAL WITHOUT RETALIATION**

**Foster parents have the right to have access to an agency or DCFS' appeals process without retaliation.**

- **LCF's Grievance Procedure**
- **DCFS Appeal Procedure**

**Little City values, honors and respects our foster parents.** Just the same, there will be times when LCF may make decisions that a foster family may not agree with, and there will definitely be times when we make mistakes. Little City informs and trains all foster parents about their appeal rights in pre-service and on-going trainings, and this domain is discussed in the Foster Parent Advisory Council Meetings. Written materials are provided in the Foster Parent Handbooks and Child Files upon the placement of a child. Each parent receives a copy of this plan, and the plan is always available on LCF's website, for review as well.

### **Little City's Internal Grievance or Appeal Process:**

Foster parents can bring any complaint to our staff and receive fair treatment and a considerate response to the issue anytime by calling 773-265-1539. Sometimes, it is easier or more meaningful to write down what the problem is, and for that purpose we have a grievance form (See Attachment G). LCF will assign any grievances and begin investigating within one business day. Little City treats all grievances as confidential; therefore, the information shared is respected and action plans are mutually-agreed upon by relevant parties requiring inclusion to resolve the complaint. Foster parents will not be subject to any form of retaliation for filing a complaint. Little City values our foster parents' voices and wants to honor you, while we also recognize that disagreements may occur, we are committed to coming to a mutually-agreed upon solution.

Little City fully discloses and trains foster parents on the appeal procedures during LCF pre-service training and by providing grievance and appeal information in written form via LCF's Foster Parent Handbook, Child Files, and through distribution of this plan.

### **External DCFS Service Appeal Process:**

Foster parents can contact the DCFS Advocacy Office at 800-232-3798 for assistance. Foster parents may file a Service Appeal with DCFS when they may have a difference of opinion than the case manager, the managing agency, and/or DCFS regarding an agency or DCFS decision or action on the child's case in your care.

The Service Appeal process is a two-step process and involves mediation and an administrative fair hearing. Both of these meetings provide foster parents an opportunity to share their opinions about what is in the child's best interest regarding his/her care with the hopes of creating a plan to resolve the issue(s). Little City disseminates information about DCFS' Service Appeal process in our pre-service training, brochures are available at the office and provided within the child files. The appeals process is also outlined on our website:

<https://www.littlecity.org/programs/children/foster/policies/>

Foster parents may appeal the agency's decision by contacting the following:

DCFS Administrative Hearings Unit  
17 N. State St. 7<sup>th</sup> Floor.  
Chicago, IL 60601  
(312) 814-5540



All appeals must be in writing, and must include:

- Your name
- Your address
- Your phone number
- The reason(s) for the appeal

DCFS's website has useful information about service appeals:

<http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/089/089003370000300r.html>

**Foster parents are to be treated with dignity and respect when filing a service appeal.** If a foster parent feels they are being retaliated against, they should report this to the caseworker's supervisor, program manager, and/or director. The Office of Affirmative Action can be contacted in cases of alleged discrimination.

## **RIGHT #15: CALL THE FOSTER PARENT HOTLINE**

**Foster parents have the right to be informed of the Foster Parent Hotline and information on reporting staff misconduct.**

- **OIG Complaints**
- **Foster Parent Hotline Advocacy Office**

Foster parents may elect to call the foster parent hotline, or file a complaint with the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), if they believe a Little City or Department employee, service provider or contractor may have violated their rights, or the rights of the children in their care. Examples include acts of abuse or neglect against a child, breaches of confidentiality, and the likes.

During the pre-service training, foster parents are informed about the Foster Parent Hotline and the Office of Inspector General. Little City will incorporate this information during our ongoing training and as handouts. The phone numbers are also listed in the Foster Parent Handbook given to families by DCFS at the time of licensure and listed on the DCFS website. Foster Parent Hotline and OIG brochures are available at the Little City office. Foster parents are periodically reminded of the services of these programs in the newsletter and postings will be added to Little City's website. In addition, any foster parent can contact any staff within the agency that will provide them with the phone numbers without any fear of retribution for exercising their rights.

**Here is a DCFS link for the Office of Inspector General:**

[https://www2.illinois.gov/dcf/aboutus/OIG/Pages/com\\_communications\\_inspector.aspx](https://www2.illinois.gov/dcf/aboutus/OIG/Pages/com_communications_inspector.aspx)

**Foster Parent Hotline:  
# 1-800-232-3798 or  
#1-217-524-2029**

# FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Your responsibilities are dictated by Illinois Law, Rule 340

<http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/089/089003400c00600r.html>

## YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO:

1. <b><u>Communicate with Child's Team:</u></b> <i>Openly communicate and share information about the child with the child welfare team.</i>
2. <b><u>Respect Confidentiality:</u></b> <i>Respect the confidentiality of information about foster children and their families.</i>
3. <b><u>Be An Advocate:</u></b> <i>Advocate for children in their care.</i>
4. <b><u>Treat Child and Birth Family with Dignity and Respect:</u></b> <i>Treat children in their care and their families with dignity, respect and consideration.</i>
5. <b><u>Recognize Your Own Strengths, Limitations and Need for Support:</u></b> <i>Recognize their own strengths, limitations and support needs when considering placement of a child.</i>
6. <b><u>Team with Other Foster Parents / Support Groups:</u></b> <i>Be aware of the benefits of relying on and affiliating with other foster parents and foster parent groups in improving the quality of care.</i>
7. <b><u>Assess Need for and Obtain Training:</u></b> <i>Assess their on-going individual training needs and take action to meet those needs.</i>
8. <b><u>Placement Stabilization:</u></b> <i>Develop and implement strategies to prevent placement disruptions, and to provide support if preventative strategies fail and disruption occurs.</i>
9. <b><u>Acknowledge and Minimize Stress:</u></b> <i>Know the impact that foster parenting has on individuals and the family and minimize associated stressors.</i>
10. <b><u>Promote the Foster Parenting Experience:</u></b> <i>Know the rewards and benefits of foster parenting and promote the experience in a positive way.</i>
11. <b><u>Know Everyone's Roles, Rights and Responsibilities:</u></b> <i>Know the roles, rights and responsibilities of foster parents, other child welfare professionals, and the child and his/her family.</i>
12. <b><u>Serve as a Mandated Reporter:</u></b> <i>Know their role as a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse/neglect. Know the policy regarding allegations against foster parents.</i>
13. <b><u>Know and Actively Participate in Administrative Case Reviews, Service Planning and Court:</u></b> <i>Understand the purpose of, and participate in, ACRs, service planning and court processes, according to their designated role.</i>
14. <b><u>Know Appeal Process:</u></b> <i>Know the child welfare agency's appeal procedure for foster parents and their rights.</i>
15. <b><u>Maintain Good Records:</u></b> <i>Maintain accurate and relevant records regarding the child's progress and history and follow agency procedures and regulations.</i>
16. <b><u>Share Information:</u></b> <i>Share information about the child's adjustment with a subsequent caregiver, whether it is the parent or another substitute caregiver.</i>
17. <b><u>Support &amp; Encourage Cultural Identity:</u></b> <i>Respect and maintain a child's cultural needs and support relationships with his own family.</i>

## **RESPONSIBILITY #1: COMMUNICATION**

**Foster parents have the responsibility to openly communicate and share information about child(ren) in your care with other members of the child welfare team.**

- **Proactive Communication**
- **The Importance of Words and Language**
- **Ways and Means, and Types of Communication**
- **Working as a Team**

**As a foster parent, you are a key member of the treatment team for the child in your care. As such, it is important to proactively communicate and recognize how other team members can help you and the child in your care succeed. Little City values the information and knowledge that our foster parents provide to us. LCF listens to what is communicated and provides follow-up.**

Little City Foster Parents discussed the importance of language, and how they prefer to not call a youth in their care a “foster” child, but rather “my child.” The group discussed the importance of inclusive and engaging terms. Also discussed was the new law change aligned with the importance of language and changing the term “ward of the State” to “youth in care” - because words matter. The foster parents were in support of this positive change.

Little City Foster Parents also discussed the need to be informed by agency when there are staff changes i.e. case manager or therapist, a head of transition so that they can effectively communicate with the youth in their care about the transition. Program agreed wholeheartedly. Program staff notify families of their departure directly in planned circumstances; in unplanned circumstances such as a position elimination or termination, the supervisor is required to communicate the change. The agency will send out written communication in the event of position eliminations.

Foster parents reported preferring to receive information via text, phone, or e-mail, with letters being the least preferred method. Agency discussed their procedures for information sharing and foster parents agreed that they received agency communication timely, and that communication was multifaceted.

Learning to work as a team is key to having open communication. On-going training provides specific information about the type of information to share, and all of the avenues in which to share it.

**Little City Foundation also provides a written contract that is signed upon placement of a child, including a Therapy Service Agreement Contract.** The placement contract communicates to the foster parent Little City Foundation’s expectations for working together as a team to meet the needs of the child and family. Bi-annual licensing and monitoring visits reviews the expectation to communicate openly as a team member.

## **RESPONSIBILITY #2: RESPECT CONFIDENTIALITY**

**Foster parents have the responsibility to respect the confidentiality of information concerning foster children and their families and act appropriately within applicable confidentiality laws and regulations.**

- **Confidentiality Defined**
- **Foster Parent Training and Resources on Confidentiality**
- **Staff Training on Confidentiality**

**Foster parents remarked on the importance of confidentiality in the Advisory Council meetings. It is clear to program that foster parents understand the concept of confidentiality and the importance of maintaining it. Foster parents noted that they typically share information when advocating for services on behalf of a youth in their care, which is absolutely appropriate.**

It is important that foster parents recognize that, as members of the foster care team, they are bound by the rule of confidentiality. In order to inform foster parents of this responsibility the Statement of Confidentiality is reviewed during the pre-service training and foster parent are asked to sign the statement for maintenance within the licensing file. The statement includes information regarding the need to maintain confidentiality and the method by which information should be shared with relevant professionals when necessary to service provision.

**Prospective foster parents are informed in orientation that members of the foster care staff may share sensitive, personal information regarding the child, his or her history, reason for coming into care, and progress of the birth family with foster parents. It is at this time, that foster parents are introduced to the concept of confidentiality. As families are licensed, the licensing worker will review the confidentiality agreement and they sign a copy of the agreement which is then placed in their licensing file.** Confidentiality is also discussed during DCFS' Pride Training and by Little City during Pre Service Training. The LCF Foster Parent Handbook further provides guidelines for sharing confidential information and keeping records regarding the child and the biological family confidential. Little City's licensing staff discusses confidentiality with foster parents as required by Licensing Standard: "Section 402.24 Confidentiality of Information," during their initial licensing visits, every six months during monitoring visits, and at renewal. Confidentiality is also reviewed when a staff member feels it is appropriate to the situation.

The staff is educated on this information during monthly supervision, department and team meetings. Staff review and sign an acknowledgement of reading the Child Welfare Professionals Code of Ethics (that includes confidentiality expectations) and sign a confidentiality statement for their personnel files.

## **RESPONSIBILITY #3: BE AN ADVOCATE**

**A primary responsibility of foster parents is to advocate for the children in your care.**

- **Foster Parents are Critical Advocates for Youth in Care**
- **Foster Parent Training on ways and means to Advocate**
- **Service Appeals**

It was evident to program staff from the Foster Parent Implementation Trainings and Advisory Committee Meetings that Little City's foster parents are staunch advocates for the youth in their care. They are truly committed, caring and concerned for the youth's well-being, and collaborate with the youth's treatment team to ensure the youth's needs are met.

**As key members of a child's treatment team, foster parents receive information and training on how to best advocate for the child(ren) in their care. As a part of the ongoing training we offer here at Little City we have partnered with DCFS to host Educational Advocacy Training at our office each year in July as a way to provide foster parents with additional tools for their tool box.**

**LCF's ongoing monthly training calendar LCF's pre-service and on-going foster parent training, the LCF Foster Parent Handbook, placement paperwork and the Child File all provide information specifically on advocacy in the domains of education, court, ACRs, medical, and the likes.** For example, LCF's placement contract outlines the foster parent's responsibility to advocate for the child in their care in medical and educational settings and outlines that advocacy also includes maintaining their knowledge of the foster child's culture, religious beliefs, family situation and mental health/health needs. Foster parents sign the agreement at the time of placement and annually thereafter.

Foster parents are valued members of the child's treatment team, and as such, they are invited and asked to participate in team meetings related to the child in his/her care. These meetings include ACRs, CIPPs, Court hearings, CFTMs, educational meetings, and more. Case managers notify and invite foster parents to meetings by telephone, e-mail and in-person during 3x/monthly home visits. Case managers document in their progress notes when notification is given to foster parents. Foster parents are also provided with the date, time, location and purpose of the meeting in CFTM minutes and by invitation letters sent by GALs. Copies of the biannual Integrated Assessment and Service Plans also indicate the dates of upcoming ACRs, court hearings, and concerns/progress related to the case that will be presented during these meetings. Foster parents are invited to attend the hearings and to report about the child's safety and well-being. If foster parents are unable to attend in person, LCF makes accommodations for a telephone call-in, or gathers information to share verbally or in-writing at the meetings.

**Foster parents are further informed that through the service appeal process they can advocate for the needs of the child in their care that they do not believe are being addressed.** Little City keeps service appeal brochures in the office and provides them to all families as part of our pre-service training within the LCF Foster Parent Handbook. Families also have access to the Advocacy Office phone number through the LCF Foster Parent Handbook or by calling the agency.

## **RESPONSIBILITY #4: TREAT OTHERS WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT**

**Foster parents have the responsibility to treat children in their care, their birth families, and members of the child's treatment team with dignity, respect and consideration.**

- **Shared Parenting**
- **Agency Staff Responsibility for Ensuring Dignity and Respect**
- **Grievance Procedure**

**Foster Parents commented that they felt like they were treated with dignity and respect overall by program staff. This was also evident in the returned Satisfaction Surveys. Foster parents noted that open and responsive communication, inclusiveness, and respecting their time and schedules were key tenets of this domain.**

Foster Parents also talked at length about the importance of discussing a child's biological family, and engaging with biological parents, with respect. Foster parents talked about how they use life books, share pictures, Face Time or Skype, have discussions around visits (and occasionally host parent-child visits), and more. Foster parents all agreed that providing food and engaging in customs aligned with the child's background and/or familial preference was key to the youth's adjustment in their home. Program was pleased with the level of openness, acceptance and support our foster parents provided in this domain.

**SHARED PARENTING: Little City staff are trained on parent engagement and the idea of shared parenting in order to enhance agency efforts towards reunification and immediate and extended family connections. Agency's New Employee Manual orients and trains all staff within 90 days of hire and ongoing in team meetings and supervision about the importance of family-centered and strengths-based practice. Agency uses the Strengthening Families Protective Factors as a common language in working with families. Foster Parents who have successfully helped a youth reunify and /or engage with their family of origin and agency case managers co-train trainings for prospective and licensed parents about this topic**

Little City discusses this responsibility in our pre-service and on-going monthly foster parent trainings (see attachment.) Several of our trainings specifically address the expectation that foster parents will treat children in their care, their birth families, and members of the child's treatment team with dignity, respect and consideration. DCFS' PRIDE and on-going trainings address this responsibility as well. The responsibility to treat children in their care, their birth families, and members of the child's treatment team with dignity, respect and consideration is reviewed during the foster family licensing process and on-going through licensing visits, home visits and CFTMs.

**Case management staff and his/her supervisor are responsible for ensuring children, their birth families, and members of the child's treatment team are treated with dignity, respect and consideration.**

Adherence to this should be documented within SACWIS case notes, which are monitored on a monthly basis by supervisors and quality assurance staff, and within CFTM minutes, IAs, Service Plans, and/or Court reports as applicable/appropriate.

**Concerns related to this area should be addressed directly by the case worker with the foster parent during a home visit.** The case manager may solicit the assistance of his/her supervisor if violating this criterion was an on-going issue, and/or report the concern to licensing. Little City is desirous of resolving all concerns in a timely, respectful manner by following appropriate policies and procedures.

## **RESPONSIBILITY #5: RECOGNIZE YOUR OWN STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS AND NEED FOR SUPPORT**

**Foster parents have the responsibility to recognize your own individual and familial strengths and limitations when deciding whether to accept a child into your home; and the responsibility to recognize your own support needs and utilize appropriate supports in providing care for foster children.**

- **Little City's On-going Mutual Assessment Process**
- **CFTMs and Licensing Visits and Support as On-going Assessment Tool**
- **Support Services**
- **Support Groups**

**This domain was discussed at length with foster parents this year during the Foster Parent Implementation Trainings and Advisory Council Meetings. Foster parents commented that they agreed whole-heartedly with recognizing one's own strengths, limitations, and needs for support as key to providing good care to one's self, a youth in care, and one's own family. The staff and foster parents talked about different scenarios when recognition of these areas came into play, and discussed solutions. The team agreed upon the importance of saying "No"**

**Little City's on-going mutual assessment method related to assessing familial strengths and needs involves the following:**

- **The licensing and home study process comprehensively assesses each family's strengths and needs as a foster parent. Part of this process is to discuss and assess the foster parents' strengths in determining the best possible match for the placement of a child in the home using the Child Caregiver Matching Tool and conducting extensive interviews. Extensive discussion about what the foster parent learned in DCFS' PRIDE training, Little City's Pre-service training, and through their 10 hours of hands-on volunteering within our foster care program with youth currently served is also used to guide placement decisions and determine training needs. The Family Development Specialist speaks to every member of the home (including children) to determine that the entire family is supportive of fostering. Any information obtained from individual family members is discussed with the applicants prior to licensure.**

**During the licensing and home study assessment process, the potential outcomes of the mutual assessment process include:**

- **LCF and the foster family make a mutual decision to select the family into the program as a licensed foster parent;**
- **LCF and the family make a mutual decision to select the family out of the program (LCF will refer the foster family to another agency better matched with their placement desires and individual desires);**

After receiving a license to become a foster parent, Little City's licensing staff monitors the home within 60 days of issuing a license, and every six months thereafter at a minimum. During these contacts, Little City's Licensing Representative reviews completed trainings and discuss recommendations for future trainings. Little City enrolls foster parents into 16 hours of annual training at the agency based upon the mutual assessment of needs. Little City trainings are open to all foster parents. Little City licensing workers are tasked with



contacting their foster homes to enroll them in training for the year based on the foster parent's feedback and interest in training being offered.

Child and Family Team meetings are held quarterly to discuss the child's needs and family's ability to meet those needs. Additional trainings are identified in these meetings with the foster parent and added as tasks to the service plan if necessary. Little City helps foster parents secure these trainings outside of the agency if not being offered internally.

Little City engages foster parents in discussions of their natural support networks including family, friends, church, or other support systems during the home study process and on-going in CFTMs and home visits. Case management and licensing staff provide support resources like a support group, LCF's foster parent to foster parent mentoring support, or direct a parent to a foster parent advisory board or other resource if deemed helpful by the family.

**Little City also offers foster parents an array of individualized support services to meet the needs of the child and his/her foster family.** Little City provides weekly, in-home therapy; respite services; mentoring; and other services as identified by the child's treatment team to support the foster parent. Therapists provide training, in-home therapy support and 24/7 on-call support. Respite is also provided to provide foster parents with a break in order to maintain a high quality of care for children in placement. Little City also provides mentoring opportunities to offer foster parents a break while providing therapeutic opportunities for the child.

**LCF connects foster parents to the support groups as outlined below, and we will connect foster parents with one another for support on-going through respite, phone, and the likes.**

**Additional support groups available to foster parents, and regularly shared with Little City's foster parents for their involvement are here:**

- Statewide Foster Parent Advisory Council
- Circle of Parents, 5440 S. Racine, contact: Stacey Saffold, #773.419.4660
- Cook Central DCFS Regional Foster Care Advisory Council, DCFS 1701 First Ave, Maywood, IL, Contact Denise Spires, #708.338.6739
- Cook North DCFS Regional Foster Care Advisory Council, DCFS Office 1911 S Indiana Ave, Chicago, IL, Contact Edith Cruz #773.653.6851
- Cook South and South Suburban Regional DCFS Foster Parent Advisory Council, Contact Angela Barber, #773.371.6444

## **RESPONSIBILITY #6: TEAM WITH OTHER FOSTER PARENTS**

**Foster parents have the responsibility to be aware of the benefits of relying on and affiliating with other parents and foster parents—and/or foster parent associations—in improving the quality of care and service to children and families.**

- **Opportunities for Connections with Other Foster Parents – Training, Appreciation, Recognition**
- **Foster Parent Advisory Councils – LCF and DCFS**

**Training provides our foster parents with an opportunity to network and connect.**

We continue to offer monthly trainings (aka “Training Tuesdays”) at our Chicago office and Dolton site. Little City’s “Keeping It Real” training is fully led by foster parents to provide real life experiences of foster parenting to prospective families (see Training attachment for more information.) **Please refer to FY20 Training schedule for new Training rollout.**

Little City also sponsors two engagement, recognition, and networking events each year: our Annual Picnic (June) and Annual Holiday Party (December). Foster parents also connect through Little City’s Foster Care Facebook page where stories, resources, and information is shared.

Little City encourages our families to begin cluster support groups in their area with other local foster parents by facilitating a Foster Parent to Foster Parent Mentoring Network. Agency staff is willing to come to these meetings to facilitate discussions if requested. To date, several foster parents utilize each other for support and respite, but there are no formal support group meetings. Foster parents are also encouraged to seek out support from other families by joining support groups.

**Foster Care Associations, Advisory Councils and Useful Resource Links:**  
<http://www.state.il.us/dcfs/links.html>

Resources for support were notated in Narrative #6 above.

## **RESPONSIBILITY #7: PARTICIPATE IN ONGOING TRAINING**

**Foster parents have the responsibility to assess individual, ongoing training needs and to take action to meet those needs.**

- **LCF Training**
- **DCFS and Community-Based Trainings**

**Little City conducts and hosts over 66 hours of training for our foster parents each year at our office and at a Southside location that better accommodates most families who live geographically south.** We have increased the availability of on-line trainings through Infinitec and we have located and shared e-trainings with our foster parents from community partners, including DCFS.

**Little City's 2020 Training was developed in collaboration with foster parents who served as members of our Advisory and Training Committees, and in a direct response to feedback received from Training Needs Assessment Survey conducted by Little City staff, on Training Evaluation Forms, monthly Licensing Questionnaires, and during visits about needed trainings.** The 2019/2020 Training Curriculum incorporated more trainings to provide foster parents with more "tools for their toolbox" in working with youth's challenging behaviors. A key component of this tool box is the development and utilization of Individual Crisis Management Plans (ICMP) adapted from the Trauma Crisis Intervention (TCI) model. There are also more tools related to addressing trauma using the Evidence-Based Intervention Model of Collaborative Problem-Solving techniques.

**See Attachment A for full list of Trainings in 2019 and 2020.**

**Families are informed of DCFS's Virtual Training Center and their ability to register for an account.**

The Virtual Training Center allows families to register themselves for training and to take online trainings as well. The agency provides other relevant community-based training information to families via mass mailings and posting information on our social media channels.

## **RESPONSIBILITY #8: PLACEMENT STABILIZATION**

**Placement stabilization includes the responsibility to develop and assist in implementation strategies to prevent placement disruptions and recognize the traumatic impact of placement disruptions on a foster child and all members of the foster family.**

- **Mutual Responsibility to Ensure Stable Placements**
- **Individual Crisis Management Plans (ICMP) and 24/7 On Call**
- **Transitioning Youth Effectively During a Disruption**

**Little City staff and foster parents share a mutual responsibility to ensure the stability of a child in placement by assessing the child's safety and well-being needs on an on-going basis.** At the forefront, Little City ensures careful assessment of the foster parent's strengths and desire for placements to ensure a careful match. Prior to placement and on-going throughout placement, the child's case management team is responsible for sharing information related to the child and his/her emotional/behavioral/mental health needs with the foster parent, just as the foster parent is responsible for sharing their assessment of the child's on-going needs, during CFTMs and home visits. Foster parents are expected to engage with a child's in-home therapist in order to best understand the child's needs and how to meet those needs.

**Little City has also put into practice the need for each youth to have an Individual Crisis Management Plan.** The plan provides foster parents with tools and information about the child in their care and how to identify triggers that lead to crisis. The ICMP when utilized in conjunction with other supports, helps the team to identify potential placement disruptions with the family and stabilize placement for the youth. Little City convenes team meetings immediately upon becoming aware of potential placement disruptions. Team members that may include case managers, therapists and foster parents will develop mutually agreed upon action plans to monitor and address a child's care needs in the home environment to prevent disruption.

**Little City offers placement stabilization services internally by offering a 24/7 on-call system that includes access to the case management team, therapists, and supervisors.** Little City's specialized foster care program offers individualized stabilization services based upon the needs of the child and his/her family that may include increased visits by the case manager, program therapist, family stabilization specialist, and/or mentor; increased respite including weekend respite with other foster parents; and team meetings. Little City's on-call staff will work alongside the foster parent in the event of a crisis, including a placement disruption. Staff will aid in calling SASS, the police or alerting other professionals if needed to stabilize a crisis.

IPS services are available to those foster families serving minors on Little City's traditional contract. The IPS agency can provide stabilization services for 60-90 days depending on case need.

Little City trains foster parents about stabilization services available to them in our pre-service training and in ongoing trainings. Information is also provided in the LCF Foster Parent Handbook and Child Files and placement paperwork provided upon the placement of a child into the home.

**If preventative measures fail and a placement disrupts, Little City will work with the foster parent to develop a transition plan (if immediate removal is not required due to a child's safety risk) or discuss the ways to best support the minor once s/he leaves the foster parent home.** Little City's "Transitions" training specifically addresses how to manage an array of transitions for youth in care, including moving into a new foster home and leaving a foster home.

## **RESPONSIBILITY #9: UNDERSTAND THE FAMILY IMPACT of FOSTER PARENTING**

Foster parents have the responsibility to assess the impact foster parenting has on individuals and family relationships; and the responsibility to work to minimize, as much as possible, any stress that results from foster parenting.

- **LCF Orientation, Training and Procedures for Relaying the Importance of this Domain**
- **Support Services – including Respite – to Support Foster Parents and Minimize Stress**

Foster parents and staff discussed this domain as tied to Responsibility #5, Recognizing one's own strengths, limitations and need for support at length, as a detailed above.

From the initial contact between potential foster parents and Little City, foster parents are apprised of the significant requirements of fostering children with intellectual, developmental and/or emotional/behavioral disabilities and the impact this has on one's own family system. As part of LCF's licensing process, pre-service training and ongoing training, foster parents are made aware of the impact fostering will have on the foster family, in terms of time, energy and levels of stress and/or frustration. Possible and observed stressors, and tactics to minimize stress, are a component of our pre-service and on-going trainings. These areas are further assessed during the home study assessment process. The on-going impact of foster parenting on family relationships is assessed through bi-annual licensing visits, 3x/month home visits, 1x/week in-home therapy sessions, quarterly CFTMs, bi-annual Court and ACR hearings, and at monthly LCF trainings. If a need for further support is identified, Little City convenes a team meeting including the foster parent/family and devises an appropriate intervention plan.

Little City makes every effort to minimize stress associated with foster parenting by providing support and support services as outlined in Narrative #3 (Rights) and Narrative #5, #6 (Responsibilities.) Support services are increased or adjusted in times of crisis or instability to offer our foster parents and their families' added support and to minimize stress.

- **Little City provides Respite support for families a minimum of 15 hours/month, plus added funds in support of more respite hours if needed. Little City will assist in locating another foster family to provide Respite as needed and when the families own Respite Provider is unavailable.**

**If a family wishes to take a voluntary break from fostering, the family has the option to place themselves on hold in two ways:**

1. Verbally notifying the agency of their desire to be "on hold," which will result in being removed from the list of homes LCF is actively matching for placement with
2. By electing into "Inactive Status," which entails working with LCF's licensing representative to complete needed sign-off forms that are maintained in the licensing file.

In both circumstances, the agency will continue to engage with the family. Of note, families who are not actively fostering or seeking a placement will need to maintain their training hours in order to be eligible for renewal of their license and for future placements. Foster families may choose to reengage in the fostering experience at any time.

## **RESPONSIBILITY #10: PROMOTE THE FOSTER PARENTING EXPERIENCE**

**Foster parents have the responsibility to know the rewards and benefits to children, parents, families and society that come from foster parenting and promote the foster parenting experience in a positive way.**

- **Current Foster Parents as Critical Recruiters**
- **Engagement Efforts with Foster Parents in Recruitment**
- **Retention and Recognition of Foster Parents by LCF**

**Little City believes that the most effective recruitment tool that we have is our current foster parents.**

Little City has successfully engaged an increased number of our currently licensed foster parents (approximately 60) and in FY19, we licensed 9 new homes. We are continuing to successfully sustain and grow our pool of foster parents through these ways:

- We asked our foster parents during our Quarterly Foster Parent Advisory Committee Meetings their ideas to recruit families. The staff team was pleased to hear that unanimously, all of the participating foster parents reported that they positively promote foster parenting experience with those who inquire and those with whom they come in contact with. Our foster parents stated that they spread the word through “word of mouth” but they “keep it real” about what it is really like to be a foster parent – meaning they share both the good experiences and the challenges.
- Families participated in two Family Events, our Picnic and Holiday Party.
- **In 2019, program hosted a Family Fun Event/Open House in April 2019; Foster Parent Recognition and Appreciation Banquet hosted by our community partner Faith United Methodist Church in May 2019 to recognize our Foster Parents for the great work that they do; August 2019 we hosted 2 community events Back 2 School Backpack Give away event, and also Back 2 School Skating event.**
- Foster Parents have volunteered to be a part of marketing and media materials distributed at the Holidays and quarterly as part of the agency’s strategic plan.
- Little City has developed a “big check” and takes a picture of the referring foster parent and the newly licensed foster parent every time a \$500 referral bonus is paid out. The photo is distributed on our website, Facebook page, and to foster parents via newsletter and email.
- Our foster families co-trained pre-service trainings for new foster parents and some on-going trainings.
- We have a mentoring program that connects new foster parents to call on experienced foster parents with questions or troubles or just for support.
- Little City has implemented a quarterly raffle to incentivize foster parents referring friends and family to attend Orientation. For every referred family that attends an Orientation each quarter, the current foster parent receives one chance at winning a \$50 gift card. We have also implemented a \$500 referral bonus to a foster parent who refers someone who becomes licensed and maintains their first placement for 90 days. **We have successfully paid out more than \$1,500 in bonuses this year.**
- Program generates a Quarterly Newsletter where Recruitment initiatives are shared, families highlighted, and gift card and bonus winners are announced. Regular e-mails will also highlight foster parent success stories.

- Disseminating foster care success stories on our foster care website <https://r57j-wkdd.accessdomain.com/category/success-stories/>
- Foster Care Facebook page (with more than 6,531 “Likes”) <https://www.facebook.com/LittleCityFosterCare> shares success stories from our program, resources for foster parents, all of our training information, and special events, including recruitment opportunities like our orientation sessions;
- Little City has a Twitter account with 146 followers (<https://twitter.com/LCFFosterCare>).
- Instagram has been created with a video “ I am a Foster Parent “ videos currently this account has 131 followers (<http://instagram.com/littlecityfostercare>)
- Little City created a 3 minute and 1 minute video along with our foster families and youth highlighting the benefits of fostering. The video was shared with all our foster families and our networks, and it is currently hosted on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZPGcHf9T3E> and continuously on our website. We have provided our foster families with DVDs to view and share, and we pass out DVDs at recruitment events; This video is also used as a part of our orientation curriculum held monthly, and is frequently featured on our social media outlets.
- Little City utilized the localization service offered by AdoptUSKids and the AdCouncil, created a localized “You don’t have to be perfect to be a perfect parent” adoption commercial. It is currently available on YouTube (at <https://youtu.be/OV2i48scRqg>) and is frequently featured on our social media.

**Little City has made a significant investment in recruiting new families, with continuously engaging our current families as key to that strategy. We are so appreciative of our current foster parent’s teamwork in this domain! We have seen the rewards of our investment through increased referrals of prospective foster parents from our currently licensed families who become licensed foster parents.**

## **RESPONSIBILITY #11: KNOW THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES of CHILD WELFARE TEAM MEMBERS**

Foster parents have the responsibility to know the role, rights and responsibilities of foster parents, other child welfare professionals, the child, and the child's birth family.

- **LCF Procedures to Ensure Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities**
  - CFTMs
  - **Critical Members of the Treatment Team**
  - **Satisfaction Surveys**
  - **Foster Parent Advisory Council**

**These materials speak to the roles, rights and responsibilities of those fostering and child welfare team members:** Foster parents are provided with program procedures in the LCF Foster Parent Handbook, co-training opportunities (**specifically the “Working as a Team” and “Keeping It Real” Trainings - See attachments**), the Little City placement contract; and print and social media updates.

**Quarterly CFTMs with the child's treatment team provides a review of team member roles and responsibilities regarding the care of the child.** This allows everyone involved an opportunity to meet as a team and work collectively on goals. Foster parents are also invited and encourage to participate in ACRs, Court, court family conferences, mediations, CIPPs, educational meetings, and other staffing's pertaining to the care of the child.

**Little City includes foster parents as members of the management team in a multitude of ways including:**

- Foster parent feedback is also solicited by conducting yearly satisfaction surveys. The outcomes from these surveys are used to improve the services provided by Little City's foster care program.
- Foster parents are also invited to be members of Little City's Foster Parent Advisory Committee, who aids in the development of our annual Foster Parent Implementation Plan. The committee includes staff from all levels of the agency.
- Foster parents are invited to co-train trainings with our therapy and case management team members.
- Foster parents and team members from all levels within the organization participate in our annual holiday party and summer picnic.



## **RESPONSIBILITY #12: SERVE AS A MANDATED REPORTER**

**Foster parents have the responsibility to know and, as necessary, serve as a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act.**

- **LCF Expectation and Procedure for Foster Parents Outlined**
- **Mandated Reporter Training**
- **Action Steps when a Hotline Call is Made**

As a foster parent, you are a **MANDATED REPORTER**. Foster parents are required by law to report any abuse or neglect. This includes reporting any suspicions of abuse or neglect, even if one is unsure that the action was abuse or neglect. Foster parents must also report any failures of others to report abuse or neglect of which they have knowledge.

**Little City's mandated reporter procedure is as follows:** Upon witnessing, gaining knowledge of, or suspecting a case of abuse or neglect, including sexual acting-out and/or abuse, the foster parent will immediately report the information to the DCFS hotline by calling **1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873)** and then to his/her case manager or their supervisor. The report will be made verbally and documented in writing. The written report must contain information from the hotline call, including the date, time, and name of the contact person on the hotline. The case manager or supervisor will notify the Director of Foster Care and Adoption of the program. The Director of Foster Care and Adoption will insure that DCFS is informed and all the proper paperwork is completed. If necessary, an investigation will be conducted by Little City and/or DCFS. When the investigation has been completed, the foster parents will be notified that action has been taken. In the event that the foster parent suspects Little City staff of abuse or neglect, the foster parent should contact the Director of the Foster Care Program, who will ensure that an investigation is conducted and that DCFS is informed.

LCF provides Mandated Reporter training during pre-service and on-going through in-class sessions at the agency or via DCFS' online training [www.dcfstraining.org](http://www.dcfstraining.org) Foster parents are asked to sign an "Acknowledgment of Mandated Status Reporter" (CANTS 22) indicating their understanding and agreement with the rules of mandated reporting. This form is updated per initial licensing and renewal cycles.

Foster families who have had abuse/neglect allegations made against them are informed by the worker or the therapist that a call has been made to the hotline and the allegation made about the home. During pre-service training, families are informed of the possibility that a child may make an allegation of abuse or neglect about a family member that per mandated reporter responsibilities the agency/foster parent must report and the procedures for managing these reports. In addition, the LCF Foster Parent Handbook offers a section for foster parents about their rights if they are a subject of an abuse/neglect investigation. Foster children in the home who can be maintained through the investigation with a safety plan will remain in the home as long as the agency and DCP (if call is accepted) determine that the children's safety can be maintained through the documented plan.

## **RESPONSIBILITY #13: ADMINISTRATIVE CASE REVIEWS AND COURT HEARINGS**

**Foster parents need to know the purpose of administrative case reviews (ACR), client service plans and court processes, as well as any filing or time requirements associated with those proceedings; and have the responsibility to actively participate in the foster parent's designated role in these proceedings.**

- **Training Provided to Foster Parents about Purpose of ACR and Court**
- **Information Sharing and CFTMs to Ensure Attendance at ACR and Court**

**Foster parents reported understanding the purpose of ACRs and Court, but having difficulty attending these proceedings regularly due to them occurring during typical business hours when many foster parents working. Little City makes accommodations by providing call-in options and/or soliciting their feedback to incorporate into reports to the Court and case file.**

**Little City staff explains the purpose of ACR and Court Hearings in these ways outlined below to promote engagement and attendance:**

- At trainings
- During 3x/month home visits
- At quarterly CFTMs (written minutes include ACR/Court date, time, location, and purpose)
- The LCF Foster Parent Handbook provided during LCF pre-service
- Foster parents are interviewed during home and licensing visits and their information, concerns, strengths and areas for improvement are added into the biannual Integrated Assessment and Service Plan.

## **RESPONSIBILITY #14: KNOW APPEALS**

**Foster parents have the responsibility to know the child welfare agency's appeal procedure for foster parents and their rights.**

- **LCF Appeal Procedures**
- **DCFS Appeal Procedures**

Foster parents are informed of their rights during the licensure period by reviewing and signing off on the "Foster Parents' Rights Statement," which is maintained in their licensing file and within the LCF Foster Parent Handbook. LCF provides pre-service and on-going training related to foster parents' rights. LCF also provides parents with the Foster Parent Implementation Plans annually that includes foster parents' rights (the plan is also maintained at <https://www.littlecity.org/programs/children/foster/policies/> year-round.)

### **Little City's Internal Appeals Process entails the following:**

Foster parents are welcomed to bring any complaint to any LCF staff member at any time by calling (773) 265-1539 during business hours or (847) 358-5510 to be connected to an on-call staff after hours, or by filling-out the Grievance Form in writing (see Attachment G.) Foster parents are provided with LCF's staff phone list that includes cell phone contact numbers for utilization at any time.

Foster parents will receive fair treatment and considerate response to the complaint. We will assign any grievances and begin investigating within 1 business day. Little City treats all grievances as confidential; therefore, the information shared is respected and action plans are mutually-agreed upon by relevant parties requiring inclusion to resolve the complaint. Foster parents will not be subject to any form of retaliation for filing a complaint. Little City values our foster parents' voices and wants to honor you, while we also recognize that disagreements may occur, we are committed to coming to a mutually-agreed upon solution.

**If at any time a foster parent feels that Little City has not resolved their concern, the foster parent may file a service appeal with DCFS or call the Foster Parent Advocacy Office (See Right #15).**

### **DCFS Appeals Procedures:**

Little City provides DCFS Appeal procedures in the LCF Foster Parent Handbook during pre-service training; upon placement in the Child Files; and maintains copies of the brochures at the office.

## **RESPONSIBILITY #15: KEEP GOOD RECORDS**

**Foster parents have the responsibility to maintain accurate and relevant records, regarding the child's medication, medical visits, history and progress, along with the responsibility to follow the procedures for record keeping.**

- **LCF provides Child Files to Maintain Good Records**
- **Details Regarding Types of Records to Maintain**

**Foster parents acknowledged the importance of maintaining good records as a tool to advocating and supporting the youth in their care. Parents shared various ways and means that they kept records, such as having a designated binder or filing cabinet, and the ways/means for distributing the information to the youth's team, such as scan/email; fax; during visits; mail; and more. It is clear that Little City's foster parents do an excellent job in this domain.**

Little City reviews and trains all foster parents on their responsibility to maintain records relevant to the youth in their care during our ongoing, pre-service training and licensure process. Foster parents are provided a LCF Foster Parent Handbook that further details the type of information to be maintained. **Upon placement, foster parents are issued a Child File that provides a place to maintain all records, with section dividers by content area (ex: school, medical, behavioral, visitation, service planning, etc.)** Little City's Foster Parent Placement Contract is also reviewed and signed-off on upon the placement of a child into a foster home that states the foster parent is responsible for maintaining all records for a child. Licensing Standard Section 402.26 "Records to be maintained" is reviewed with foster parents during the initial licensure, at renewals, and at six month monitoring visits.

### **The records to be maintained by the foster family shall include:**

- The name and date of birth of the child, the legal guardian of the child, religion of the child, and arrangements for education of the child;
- The name, address, and telephone number of the child's physician, guardian, and supervising agency;
- The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of person to contact in case of emergency, including the names of persons to whom the child may be released;
- A record and/or receipts for distribution of allowance and clothing funds;
- A record of the emergency evacuation plan and quarterly rehearsals;
- The CFS 592 Overnight Visit Arrangements, kept for the duration of the visit;
- The CFS 432 Consent for Out of State Travel or Extended Trips;
- Completed medical, dental, vision, hearing and other specialty appointments; immunizations the child has received; any physical problems, limitations, or allergies the child has; any current recommendations for special medical care; log of medication prescribed and given; and all medical-related consents.
- Copies of child's school records: report card, disciplinary notices, progress reports, meeting notices, Individualized Education Plan
- Copies of evaluations completed (psychological, psychiatric, developmental, etc.)
- Records of completed foster parent training and all relevant 402 documentation
- Sibling and Biological Parent visitation forms

**Foster Parent Responsibilities to the children they serve are to ensure that they receive annual physicals including updating immunizations as required by the state of Illinois, Dentals, Vision Screening, and Hearing. The importance of this well-being measure was acknowledged and recognized by DCFS, and is being monitored by DCFS monthly in 2019/2020; Little City tracks compliance monthly and provides reports.**

## **RESPONSIBILITY #16: SHARE INFORMATION**

**Foster parents have the responsibility to share information through the child welfare team with the subsequent caregiver (whether the child's parent or another substitute caregiver) regarding the child's adjustments in the foster parent's home.**

- **Sharing of Information Pre-Placement**
- **Sharing of Information Upon Placement and Ongoing During Placement**

**Foster parents and staff discussed this domain, and mutually agreed that sharing information is essential to ensuring the well-being of the youth in their care. Foster parents talked about sharing information with case managers during visits, in a crisis via phone or after-hours; with therapists during their weekly in-home visits; with support staff during their visits; and with supervisors and other team members during CFTMs, licensing visits, and the likes.**

Little City staff meet with a foster parent to discuss the child's needs related to placement considerations. Staff uses LCF forms to gather information pertaining to the child's needs, culture, schedule, likes and dislikes, services, triggers for negative behavioral interactions, and so on. The Child File and life book are also expected to follow the child to any subsequent placement and contains the foster parent's notes regarding the child's special needs.

The pre-placement visits also serve as a time for the caregivers and staff to discuss the child's adjustment. Staff therapists are also involved at this time, as necessary, to assess or share information regarding the child's adjustment. We have a placement checklist to ensure all the required tasks and paperwork are completed at placement. Little City also has a thirty-day staffing after the placement to assess the placement and child's adjustment that includes the former foster caregiver.

Families who transition a child for a more permanent placement or for families who did not have concerns regarding care of the children are encouraged to remain a support in the child's life and for the new foster family. The agency counsels the foster family after the child has moved on ways the family can remain involved in the child's life (respite provider, phone calls, etc.)

Little City trains foster parents on the importance of sharing information and being an active member of the child's treatment team during the "Working as a Team, Foster Parent Implementation Plan" and "Keeping It Real: Foster Parenting from a Foster Parents' Perspective" trainings of our pre-service. The importance of sharing information is reiterated at home visits and CFTMs on an ongoing basis.

## **RESPONSIBILITY #17: SUPPORT & ENCOURAGE CULTURAL IDENTITY**

**Foster parents have 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 birth 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.**

- **Training provided**
- **Lifebook's**
- **Procedure 302, Appendix K**

**Little City emphasizes the importance of cultural awareness to our foster parents throughout the licensure process and pre-service training, and throughout our subsequent on-going training program (see Training attachment.) Little City developed and implemented a "Cultural Sensitivity" training into our on-going training curriculum for foster parents. All agency staff received this training as well.**

During the pre-licensure period and on-going at 6-month licensing and monitoring visits, home visits, CFTMs, and once a placement has been identified, there is discussion about the family's cultural identity and how they will incorporate the cultures of a child that may be different than their own. Incorporating a child's culture into the home, or promoting culture through food, visiting museums, reading books, and/or attending community events to name a few, aid in bolstering one's sense of self. If a family needs additional information we have many tools and resources to help them understand how to support a child's ties to their family and culture. This learning and assessing process is ongoing throughout the entire placement.

**Foster parents are also trained on the importance of the foster child's life book as a tool for minimizing trauma and discussing culture, history and familial background.** A life book training is included in our pre-service curriculum and families attending the training are provided with a hands on training where they create pages from their life book to understand how the tool can be used in supporting the child's relationship to his/her family and history.

When a family expresses a need for a specific training on meeting the cultural needs of a child or if a staff member identifies a deficiency in the foster parent's knowledge of cultural issues relevant to the child, the agency will work with the family to find educated staff to conduct a hands on training with the family or find community resources to provide training.

### **Procedure 302, Appendix K**

**DCFS has expanded expectations, services and resources for youth in care, staff and foster parents pertaining to providing culturally sensitive services to youth in care who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and more. Little City was the first agency in the state of Illinois to attain our seal of recognition as being culturally competent in serving the LGBTQ+ community (of youth and foster parents) and we remain committed to this mission by ensuring appropriate policies and procedures, trainings, recruitment, and more.**



**Attachment 1**  
**2020 FOSTER PARENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**Proof of On-going Training**

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1. Pre Service is offered Quarterly: January, April, July & October
2. Ongoing Monthly Trainings (See 2019 Training Tuesday Calendar)
3. Proposed 2020 Pre Service and Ongoing Training Calendars

**2019 PRE-SERVICE TRAINING**

Please join us for

**Pre-Service Training**

**January 19, 2019 9:00AM to 12:00PM**

*Pre Service Review FIP/ Trauma  
Intro to DD & Clinical Interventions*

-

**February 2, 2019 9:00AM to 12:00PM**

*Transitions & Working as a Team  
Keeping it Real*

**2nd Saturday of every month 9a-5p**

*CPR & First Aid*

**4th Saturday of every month 9a-5p**

*CPI*

**Call Katherine Oglesby to (773) 916-4091 to register.**

Trainings will be held at  
Little City Foundation  
Large Conference Room  
700 N. Sacramento, Suite 201  
Chicago, IL 60612

Parking Available in the Parking Lot

# 2019 Foster Parent Training Tuesdays

**Trainings are offered the 2nd Tuesday of most Months**

**11am-1pm Little City 700 N. Sacramento Chicago  
6pm –8pm 15015 Grant St. Dolton IL.**

January 8	Foster Parent Implementation (FIP)-Rights/Meds 101
February 12	Trauma Training
March 12	Relationships and Resilience
April 9	Proactive Strategies to Prevent Crisis I
May 14	Proactive Strategies to Prevent Crisis II
June 11	Working with Family Dynamics
July 9	FIP (Responsibilities) / Medication 101
August 13	Life Skills & Activities of Daily Living (ADL) Training
September 11	CPI De-Escalation
October 9	FIP 2020
<i>November</i>	<i>OFF—NO LITTLE CITY TRAINING</i>
<i>December</i>	<i>OFF —HOLIDAYS</i>

## **Quarterly Pre-Service Trainings:**

**Pre-Service:** January, April, July and October (by RSVP only)

## **Additional Monthly Trainings by RSVP only**

**CPR& First Aid:** 2nd Saturday of every month 9a-3p

**CPI:** 4th Saturday of every month 9a-5p

## **RSVP for Trainings:**

Tijuana Spencer (773) 916-4063    TSpencer@littlecitcity.org



# 2020 PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

Please join us for

## **Pre-Service Training**

**January 18, 2020 9:00AM to 12:00PM**

*Pre Service Review FIP/ Trauma/Lifebooks  
Intro to DD & Clinical Interventions*

-

**February 1, 2020 9:00AM to 12:00PM**

*Transitions/ Working as a Team & Family Dynamics  
Keeping it Real*

**2nd Saturday of every month 9a-5p**

*CPR & First Aid*

**4th Saturday of every month 9a-5p**

*CPI*

**Call Katherine Oglesby to (773) 916-4091 to register.**

Trainings will be held at  
Little City Foundation  
Large Conference Room  
700 N. Sacramento, Suite 201  
Chicago, IL 60612

Parking Available in the Parking Lot

## **PROPOSED 2020 Training Saturday's**

January 11, 2020	Trauma & ARC Principle Training
March 14, 2020	Proactive Strategies I & II De Escalation
May 16, 2020	Relationships & Resilience Working with Family Dynamics
July 11, 2020	ADL & Transitions Training
September 12, 2020	Proactive Strategies I & II De-Escalation

### **Quarterly Pre-Service Trainings:**

January, April, July and October (by RSVP only)  
Subject to participation

**Monthly CPR & First Aid**—2nd Saturday of the months of Feb, Apr, June, Aug and Oct (by RSVP only)

**Monthly CPI Training**—4th Saturday of most Months (by RSVP only)

### **Special Sessions Training:**

What is Autism Spectrum Disorder Part I / Strategies and Interventions for Autism Spectrum Disorder Part II  
TBD

### **RSVP for Trainings:**

Tijuana Spencer / tspencer@littlecitcity.org & Beth Eckman / beckman @littlecitcity.org



**Attachment 2**  
**2020 FOSTER PARENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**List of Foster Parents and/or Signatures involved in Plan Review  
and Development**

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**SEE ATTACHMENT**



**Attachment 3**  
**2020 FOSTER PARENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**Foster Parent Endorsements of the 2020 Plan (see enclosed & attached)**



No grievances being presented or appealed will be reviewed by anyone directly involved in the action or decision.

If the individual is incapable of filing his/her own grievance and no guardian is available to assist, a person of the individual's choice will assist in preparing the grievance for either internal or external (state level) filing.

1. The grievance shall be presented in writing to the case manager or any similarly titled position. The case manager will review and investigate the grievance and draft a written response which must be approved by the supervisor prior to being given to the complainant. A written response will be provided to the complainant within ten working days. NOTE: If the case manager is part of the grievance proceed directly to number 2.
2. If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved, the complainant can submit a written grievance to the Director within ten working days following the receipt of the original response. The Director will schedule a meeting within two days with the individual(s) who filed a grievance and will attempt to resolve the situation through discussion and document in writing the process and results. All parties involved will sign off on the documentation and receive copies for their record.  
NOTE: If the Director is part of the grievance proceed to number 3.
3. If the complainant is not satisfied with the determination, he or she can submit the grievance in writing to the Chief Program Officer within ten working days following receipt of the response from the Director. The Chief Program Officer will conduct an objective thorough review and investigations of the grievance and provide a written response to the complainant within ten working days.
4. If extenuating circumstances exist which require additional time for resolution, an interim report will be submitted to the grieving party and carbon copied to any external parties that may be informed of the issue at the 10-day point. The interim report shall include the reason for the delay and an estimated date of completion of the investigation and response.
5. If the complainant is not satisfied with the determination, he or she can submit the grievance in writing to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will conduct an objective thorough review and investigation of the grievance and provide a written response to the complainant within ten working days. The Executive Director's decision regarding the grievance shall constitute a final administrative decision and shall be subject to review in accordance with the Administrative Review law (111. Rev. stat. 1987, ch. 110, per. 3-10, etc. seq. Dept. Mental Health).
6. If the complainant is not satisfied with the Executive Director's decision, certain decisions may be eligible for grievance from outside licensing entities such as DCFS and DHS (denial, reduction, suspension, termination of services). Refer to the Client's Rights policy distributed upon intake and annually for the contact information regarding DHS, and the Foster Parent Handbook available at the DCFS website for specific guidelines and directions for which issues may be appealed through DCFS.

The complainant has the right to be free from acts of harassment and retaliation by any other party when exercising the right to file a grievance, appeal a decision or submit a complaint.

Individuals, guardians and advocates may also file grievances with the agency's Human Rights Committee for violation of individual's rights or right's restrictions. Any grievance regarding a rights issue should be addressed to Little City Foundation Human Rights Committee 1760 W. Algonquin Rd., Palatine, IL 60067

A separate grievance procedure applies for issues pertaining to accessibility to, confidentiality of, and disclosure of an individual's personal healthcare information. Any concerns regarding accessibility to or disclosure or confidentiality of personal health care information should be addressed in writing to the LCF HIPAA Privacy office at 1760 W. Algonquin Rd., Palatine, IL 60067.

**Foster Care/Adoption Only:**

Individuals receiving Foster Care Services have a specific form which has been provided at initial licensure, upon the placement of a child, and annually via issuance of the foster parent policy guide. The form is also posted on-line. The individual will notify, in writing, the Social Work Supervisor of the wish to file a grievance, appeal or complaint.

<b>Foster Care/Adoption Program Grievance Form</b>	
Date of Grievance:	
Subject of Grievance:	
<b>What happened to cause you to be dissatisfied?</b>	
<b>How can we make this right?</b>	
Name:	
Phone Number:	
Email:	
	Submit completed forms by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mailing it to 700 N. Sacramento Blvd., Suite 201, Chicago IL 60612</li><li>• Faxing it to 773-826-9117</li><li>• Giving it to your caseworker or their supervisor in person</li><li>• Filling it out online and emailing it to Licensing &amp; Support Supervisor, Katherine Oglesby at: <a href="mailto:koglesby@littlecity.org">koglesby@littlecity.org</a></li><li>• Bringing it to the office in person</li><li>• Requesting a meeting with the child's treatment team, or supervisor, program manager, director, or licensing staff</li></ul>





## Attachment 5

### 2019 FOSTER PARENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

#### Grievances filed during the past year

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Little City did not receive any comments from the public about our 2019 Foster Parent Implementation Plan. Little City's plan was publically available on our website at <https://www.littlecity.org/programs/children/foster/policies/> and via publication.