

Agreement Between Foster Parents and Placement Agency

In Minnesota, the local county/tribal social service agency is responsible for providing child welfare services. In many cases, the court system has oversight responsibilities for the provision of those services. When children are placed in foster care, it is important that the agency supervising a child's placement, the parent(s), and foster parents, work together to ensure that a child is safe, that they have permanency and stability in their living situation, and that their well-being needs are being met. To ensure these outcomes, parent(s), foster parents, and agencies share responsibility for the care of a child. All must work together to ensure that the standards and policies set forth by law, and by the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services, are understood and met. Parent(s), foster parents and the agency need to understand not only what is expected of them, but what they may expect of each other.

The foster parents may expect the agency to:

- Consider foster care a temporary living situation for a child. A child will be safely reunited with their parent(s) as soon as possible. If a child cannot return safely home to his or their parents, county/tribal social service staff will seek families, first considering relatives and kin, to permanently care for a child.
- Diligently search and consider a child's maternal and paternal relatives and kin to care for them. When a child is placed in a non-relative foster home, the agency will continue to search until a relative who can care for them is found, or continue the search for at least six months. If a child is not reunited with their parent(s), the agency will search and consider relatives again at the time of permanency decision making, unless the court relieves the agency of this responsibility.
- Place a child with their siblings. If siblings cannot be placed together safely, the agency must ensure that they have regular visitation and contact.
- Practice concurrent permanency planning, meaning that the agency is providing services to support reunification of a child with their parent(s), and at the same time planning for an alternative outcome, such as transfer of permanent legal and physical custody to a relative, or adoption.
- Conduct orientation sessions for foster parents that explain the respective roles of the agency, foster parents, and a child's family; explain concurrent permanency planning; and provide information about relevant laws and rules regarding responsibilities of the foster parent.
- Provide the foster parent with training opportunities.
- Help foster parents make informed decisions as to the suitability of their home to care for a particular child before placement, and provide them with the following information before placement, or as the information becomes available:
 - Provide all information about a child and their family that is pertinent to the foster parents' ability to effectively carry out their role
 - Describe a child's behaviors and needs
 - Describe the plan for a child, including such things as estimated length of placement, concurrent permanency goals, and the visitation plan that will preserve a child's family, cultural and community connections
 - Inform the foster parents that a decision not to take a particular child will not jeopardize either the continuance of their license, or consideration of their home for other children
 - Inform the foster parents of their role in supporting reunification efforts, preserving a child's connections and permanency planning.
- Make every effort to respect and support relative and kinship foster parents by understanding that they have a relationship with a child's parent(s) and extended family.
- Provide the same supports to relative foster parents as the agency provides to non-relative foster parents.
- Include foster parents in development and implementation of the out-of-home placement plan, incorporating services needed in the foster home to ensure a child's well-being, and supporting placement stability. Foster parents are to sign and be provided with a copy of the out-of-home placement plan.
- Send foster parents written notice of any administrative review and/or court hearings, and ensure that the foster parent is aware of their right to be heard.
- Help the foster parent(s) to address everyday needs of a child's growth and development. Assess and provide services to assist the foster parents with a child's significant needs.

- Visit a child monthly, with a majority of those visits to take place in the family foster home. These visits are to help foster parents address any problems they may be having, ensure that a child's needs are being met, including their need for routine or specialized medical care, and that they are attending school.
- Explain the importance of visitation in maintaining a child's bond with their parents and siblings, and how the foster parents' support of visitation can help preserve a child's connections and support permanency planning.
- Establish a visitation plan for a child and their parents and siblings that takes the foster parents' lifestyle and plans into consideration. The plan clearly sets out the schedule of visits so the parent(s), foster parents, and child can plan accordingly. The visitation plan is reviewed periodically.
- Help the foster parents to understand that visitation may affect a child's behavior, and assist them to develop strategies that will support a child to maintain relationships with their parent(s) and siblings.
- Inform foster parents about Minnesota's foster care basic and difficulty of care payment schedule. The agency will assess every child entering foster care for a difficulty of care payment, and provide the foster parent with the amount of the payment in writing, and how to request a fair hearing if they disagree with the difficulty of care rating.
- Provide the foster parents with a child's medical history, immunization record, history of significant illnesses, history of allergic reactions, or any other particular medical or dental needs they may have.
- Ensure that child's comprehensive health needs are met, including: physical, mental, chemical, developmental, dental, and visual health. The agency will ensure that a child's health needs are assessed and issues are appropriately addressed. This would include clear instructions to the foster parents about their role and responsibility to ensure a child's health needs are met while in their care.
- Include a child's parent(s) in the planning and treatment decisions, and provision of a child's health care and education, unless parental rights have been terminated or the court has restricted parents' involvement in planning and providing for their child's well-being.

Support placement stability.

- Assess foster parents concerns about parenting a child with additional strategies and/or support services to ensure the child's needs are safely met in the foster home.
- If a foster parent requests removal of a child from their home, prior to removal the foster parent and the agency will work together to determine if additional supports or services can maintain a child in the home. A foster child experiences an unplanned move only when the agency is concerned about a child's health or safety, or when all resources to support the placement stability have been exhausted.
- Unless the agency determines that there is an issue that affects a child's health or safety, agency staff will remove a child from the foster home within 45 days of the foster parents' request.
- Guide the foster parents in preparing for a child to leave their home. Help the foster family understand and deal with the effect of a child leaving their home, including guiding them in a discussion about how this placement experience will affect whether they choose to be a foster parent to another child.
- Engage the foster family in an ongoing discussion and evaluation about their role and responsibilities, and their need for support both during and after a child's placement.
- Provide foster parents with written and verbal opportunities to evaluate agency practices.
- Describe the state liability insurance coverage provided for all licensed child foster parents.

The agency may expect the foster parents to:

- Allow representatives of the supervising agency, or the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services, to visit their home for the purpose of foster care planning, placement and supervision.
- Accept for foster care placement only children who are placed by the supervising agency, or placed in connection with a plan approved by the supervising agency.
- Consider foster care a temporary living situation for a child. Recognize that the placing agency is responsible for making and carrying out the concurrent permanency plan for a child. This includes, but is not restricted to, searching for a child's relatives, planning for returning a child to their parent, or implementing an alternative permanent plan that transfers permanent legal and physical custody of a child to a relative, or places them in an adoptive home.

- Provide a child with a safe and healthy family life that promotes a child's development as a physically and mentally healthy person. This includes:
 - Providing for the basic needs of a child.
 - Including a child in the activities of daily family life as much as possible. Considering a child's age, their needs, and the provisions in the out-of-home placement plan, these activities would include eating meals with the family and participating in recreational activities.
 - Facilitating a child's school attendance.
 - Providing a child with timely access to basic, emergency, and specialized medical, mental health, and dental care and treatment by qualified professional.
 - Encouraging age-appropriate activities, exercise and recreation.
 - Explaining house-rules and telling the foster child about their expectations regarding behavior, treatment of others and household items.
 - Providing supervision in accordance with a child's age, needs, and the out-of-home placement plan. The foster parents must know the whereabouts of a foster child in their care.
 - Make every effort to increase their understanding of and respect for the religious, racial and cultural heritage of a child and their family.
- Actively cooperate and participate with a child's case manager and other appropriate professionals to develop and implement a child's out-of-home placement plan.
- Respect the importance of a child's birth family to them and make every effort, as recommended by the agency, to preserve a child's connections and relationship with their family. This can be accomplished by:
 - Respecting the importance of the out-of-home placement plan and comply with its requirements. A foster family must be willing to make adjustments to accommodate visitation.
 - Including a child's parent(s) in the planning and provision of their child's health care and education, as directed by the agency.
 - Acknowledging the effect of separation from family on a child, and the difficulties they may experience adjusting to a new environment.
- Make every effort to understand and be patient in addressing challenging behaviors of a child that result from separation and grieving.
- Report to the supervising agency any plan to move the family's residence, or any change in household membership.
- Report to the supervising agency any serious family illness, and any serious illness or accident involving a foster child.
- Comply with agency policies prohibiting corporal punishment, relying instead upon other constructive methods of discipline.
- Consult with the supervising agency, and obtain consent before taking a child out of the state or out of the foster home for longer than three nights.
- Maintain continuous contact with the supervising agency regarding matters significant to the adjustment and welfare of a child, including reporting behaviors, problematic or otherwise, that would help the agency understand a child's current emotional and behavioral state.
- Support placement stability for a child while they are in foster care. Seek consultation and direction from the placing agency if issues arise that cannot be resolved between the foster parents and the foster child. Prior to requesting the placing agency to remove a child from a foster parents' care, the foster parents shall assess with the agency if additional strategies or support services that can resolve the issues leading to the request for removal. When all resources have been exhausted, provide the agency with sufficient time (45, days if possible) to make an adequate plan for a child.
- Keep information about a child and their family confidential, and discuss only with appropriate agency staff members or other professionals designated by the agency.
- Ensure that the social worker and child have opportunities to meet alone.
- Participate in training and educational opportunities provided by the agency.

We understand the policies and practices and our respective roles. We agree to carry out our responsibilities and comply with the requirements contained in Minnesota Statutes and Rules at all times while providing foster care.

FOSTER PARENT

DATE

FOSTER PARENT

DATE

CHILD FOSTER CARE SOCIAL WORKER

DATE

DIRECTOR / SUPERVISOR

DATE

Attention. If you want free help translating this information, ask your worker or call the number below for your language.

ملاحظة: إذا أردت مساعدة مجانية في ترجمة هذه المعلومات، فاسأل مساعدك في مكتب الخدمة الاجتماعية أو اتصل على الرقم 1-800-358-0377.

កំណត់សំគាល់ បើអ្នកចង់បានជំនួយបកប្រែព័ត៌មាននេះដោយមិនគិតថ្លៃ សូមសួរអ្នកកាន់សំណុំរឿងរបស់អ្នក ឬ ទូរស័ព្ទទៅលេខ 1-888-468-3787 ។

Pažnja. Ako vam je potrebna besplatna pomoć za prevod ove informacije, pitajte vašeg radnika ili nazovite 1-888-234-3785.

Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, nug koj tus neeg lis dej num (worker) lossis hu 1-888-486-8377.

ໂປດຊາບ. ຖ້າຫາກທ່ານຕ້ອງການການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອໃນການແປຂໍ້ຄວາມດັ່ງກ່າວນີ້ຟຣີ, ຈົ່ງຖາມນຳພນັກງານຊ່ວຍວຽກຂອງທ່ານຫຼືໂທ 1-888-487-8251.

Hubaddhu. Yoo akka odeeffannoon kun sii hiikamu gargaarsa tolaa feeta ta'e, hojjataa kee gaafaddhu ykn lakkoofsa kana bilbili 1-888-234-3798.

Внимание: если вам нужна бесплатная помощь в переводе этой информации, обратитесь к своему социальному работнику или позвоните по следующему телефону: 1-888-562-5877.

Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la'aan ah, weydii hawl-wadeenkaaga ama wac lambarkan 1-888-547-8829.

Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, consulte a su trabajador o llame al 1-888-428-3438.

Chú Ý. Nénu quý vị cần dịch thông-tin này miễn phí, xin gọi nhân-viên xã-hội của quý vị hoặc gọi số 1-888-554-8759.

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This information is available in alternative formats to individuals with disabilities by calling your county worker. TTY users can call through Minnesota Relay at (800) 627-3529. For Speech-to-Speech, call (877) 627-3848. For additional assistance with legal rights and protections for equal access to human services programs, contact your agency's ADA coordinator.