



**ROOTED IN
COMMUNITY**

Rooted in Community Policy Packet Board of Directors



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Policy Title:	Program Statement Policy & Procedure		
Section:		Policy #:	TMHB, CHB, PHB 12302
Issued By:	Director	Effective Date:	4/30/2025
Board Approval:	4/30/2025	Latest Revision:	4/30/2025
Federal/State Regulation(s):	CWL-PUB-11, Licensing Rules for Child Placing Agencies Rule 302		

Policy:

Rooted in Community (RIC) is a non-profit organization amplifying voices of youth, families, and adults who have experienced harm. We believe that our communities already hold the key to safety, wellness and health. Focus will be on empowering participants to make informed choices and navigating their own path toward well-being, with support that respects their autonomy and personal journey. We serve and support the needs of Michigan families and children without regard to age, gender(s), identity, marital status, national origin, citizenship status, disability, genetic information, veteran status, lifestyle, cultural or ethnic background, religious beliefs or absence of, and social or economic status.

Our Mission Statement: ✨

Building strong, connected communities that prioritize safety, wellness, and health to improve the lives of individuals and families.

Our Vision Statement: ✨

To foster a future where every individual, regardless of background, is empowered to heal, thrive, and contribute to a community rooted in safety, wellness, and respect for all.

Our Core Values: ✨

- Community Strength: We recognize that communities possess the inherent power to create safety, wellness, and health, and we work to amplify their voices and capacity for healing.
- Holistic Well-Being: We focus on the whole person—mental, emotional, physical, and social health—believing that all aspects of well-being are interconnected.
- Collaboration: We believe in the power of partnership and community collaboration to create sustainable change and provide comprehensive support.
- Healing and Resilience: We support individuals in overcoming harm, recognizing the strength and resilience within each person, and promoting long-term healing.
- Justice and Equity: We advocate for equal opportunities and access to resources, addressing the needs of individuals and families. We actively identify and counter inequities within our organization and externally in our communities. We recognize inaction perpetuates racism, sexism, ableism, and other forms of discrimination.

Types of Foster Care Provided: 🌱

RIC will provide foster care services to youth who have been removed from their home through intervention by Child Protective Services. Trial reunification and after-care services will be provided to youth and families after youth are recommended to return home. Ongoing supervision for youth in Independent Living placements as well as youth electing to participate in the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care program will also be provided.

Ages and Characteristics of Children Served: 🌱

RIC will provide case management of foster care to all youth within the foster care program between the ages of newborn through age 21. Characteristics will include those youth who have experienced trauma, have diagnosis of mental health or physical health conditions, behavioral challenges, youth with identified attachment challenges, and/or youth with substance abuse concerns.

Types of Services Provided: 🌱

- Children:
 - Safe and stable placements within the least restrictive environment.
 - Referrals to mental health.
 - Educational support, examples include tuition assistance review, tutoring referrals, IEP and 504 planning needs and advocacy.
 - Physical health monitoring: primary care, dental, vision, specialist appointments.
 - Transitional support, examples include between placements, extended family visitations, return home, goal status changes, into independence.
 - Emergency after hours and holiday contact process.
- Parents:
 - Referrals to mental health and wellness not limited to but including as needed: family violence, managing stress, historical trauma, substance use.
 - Employment search assistance.
 - Treatment plan development (with engagement from parents).
 - Family time supervision at least weekly.
 - Connection to community support.
 - Supports that assist in stability to parent youth.
 - Transportation support.
 - Financial planning.
 - Benefits application assistance, examples: housing, food benefits, health insurance, car repair/transportation, debt and past due bills assistance.
 - Parenting supports and education.
 - Reunification funding for home set up during return home and childcare application assistance upon reunification.
 - Trial reunification case management until court case closure.
 - Additional check-in support after case closure is available upon agreement with family and RIC.
 - Emergency after hours and holiday contact process.
- Relatives:
 - Connection to relative youth in care.
 - Assessment for placement.
 - Family visitation.
 - Training regarding the needs of youth in care.
 - Placement subsidy provided through the State of Michigan.
 - Benefits application assistance, examples: childcare and WIC.
 - Transition support with role changes to primary caregiver and boundary setting.
 - Home preparation prior to and ongoing through placement, assistance available on a case-by-case basis for meeting Family Incentive Grant funding needs.
 - Assigned licensing worker for relatives with placement for check-ins and support.
 - Engagement and understanding within child welfare processes, court proceedings and holistic child welfare meetings.
 - Emergency after hours and holiday contact process.
- Foster Families:
 - Home study assessments.
 - Training regarding the needs of youth in care.
 - Support within medical, educational, transportation.

- Supports in community support, connections and relationships.
 - Placement subsidy provided through the State of Michigan.
 - Engagement and understanding within child welfare processes, court proceedings and holistic child welfare meetings.
 - Assigned licensing worker for check-ins and support.
 - Home preparation prior to license approval, some assistance available on a case-by-case basis for meeting Family Incentive Grant funding.
 - Transitional and grief support within placement changes.
 - Benefits application assistance, examples childcare, WIC.
 - Training opportunities for substitute caregivers and other natural supports.
 - Emergency after hours and holiday contact process.
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Geographical area covered: 🌐

RIC is committed to providing care in our local community. Research has been proven that when agency team members and participants share common communities, the quality of services and tailored treatment planning improves because it fosters a deeper understanding of the participants' needs, challenges, and cultural context, leading to more relevant and effective interventions, increased trust, and better collaboration between the agency and the community at large. Key reasoning for this is cultural competency, community insight, trust, and rapport.

This reasoning supports that RIC will cover counties in West Michigan; with the understanding that youth who are permanent court wards may be placed in this region although having originally been removed and lived in other areas of the state.

Policy Title:	Behavior Support Policy		
Section:	Caregivers	Policy #:	CHB, PHB: 12313
Issued By:	Director	Effective Date:	4/30/2025
Board Approval:	4/30/2025	Latest Revision:	4/30/2025
Federal/State Regulation(s):	Licensing Rules for Child Placing Agencies		

Purpose: Rooted in Community is committed to ensuring that all behavioral practices are safe, respectful, trauma-informed, and developmentally appropriate. This policy outlines the expectations for discipline within caregiver homes, incorporating evidence-based practices and regulatory requirements to protect the emotional and physical well-being of each youth.

I. Guiding Principles for Behavior Support

All behavior support methods used in Rooted in Community foster homes must be:

- **Positive** – Focused on teaching, modeling, and reinforcing desired behaviors.
- **Consistent** – Grounded in predictable routines and expectations.
- **Compassionate** – Sensitive to the unique trauma history, developmental stage, and needs of each child.
- **Developmentally Appropriate** – Tailored to cognitive, emotional, and social abilities.

Behavior support must **promote**:

- **Self-regulation**
- **Self-esteem**
- **Independence**

II. Evidence-Based Approach: Trust-Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI®)

Rooted in Community promotes the use of TBRI® and other evidence-based practices that are specifically designed for children who have experienced trauma, abuse, neglect, or disruptions in attachment.

Key TBRI® strategies include:

- **Connection before correction** – Prioritizing relationship-building as a foundation for behavioral change.
- **Empowered environment** – Meeting the child's physical and emotional needs (e.g., hydration, sensory input, choice).
- **Mindful discipline** – Correcting behavior with empathy, using scripts and consistent, respectful language.

Caregivers are trained to:

- Respond with **curiosity**, not control
- Recognize behavior as **communication** of underlying needs
- Practice **co-regulation** to help youth return to a calm state
- Use **re-do's**, **compromises**, and **choices** to teach social and emotional skills

III. Prohibited Behavior Management Practices

Rooted in Community strictly prohibits the use of any behavior management method that includes:

(a) Physical or Harmful Interventions

- Corporal punishment (e.g., spanking, hitting, slapping)
- Any type of **restraint**, including:
 - Physical

- Mechanical
- Chemical
- Use of noxious substances

(b) Seclusion or Confinement

- Locking or isolating a child in a room, closet, or confined space

(c) Withholding Basic Needs

- Denial of:
 - Food
 - Clothing
 - Rest
 - Toilet use
 - Entry to the foster home

(d) Psychological or Emotional Harm

- Mental or emotional cruelty
- Verbal abuse
- Ridicule or humiliation
- Threats or yelling
- Negative or discriminatory references to:
 - The child
 - The child's family
 - The child's SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression)

(e) Restricting Family Connections

- Denying the foster child visits or communication with family, unless required by court order or safety concerns documented by the agency.

(f) Withholding Services

- Denial of necessary:
 - Educational services
 - Medical care
 - Mental health treatment
 - Social work support

IV. Emergency Intervention 🚨

A foster parent may intervene physically **only in situations where it is necessary to prevent immediate harm** to the child or another person. These **life-saving interventions** must:

- Be the least restrictive option available
- Be followed by notification to the assigned caseworker
- Be documented by the agency in accordance with policy and licensing requirements

V. Training and Monitoring 🌱

Rooted in Community will:

- Provide initial and ongoing **training** to caregivers in trauma-informed practices, including TBRI® principles.
- Monitor the use of behavior support strategies during home visits and regular check-ins.
- Document any incidents of emergency intervention or concerns regarding behavior management practices.

VI. Reporting Violations 📋

Any suspected use of prohibited discipline or behavior management techniques must be reported immediately to the youth's assigned worker and Rooted in Community. Violations may result in a corrective action plan, removal of the child, suspension of placements, or revocation of licensure.

Examples of behavior and TBRI principles used within the caregiver response: 

Scenario 1: “You’re Not My Real Parent!”

Behavior: Verbal outburst and defiance.

TBRI® Response:

- “You’re right, I’m not your parent. And I’m so glad I get to care for you right now.”
- Offer choices: "Homework now or in 10 minutes with a snack?"
- Reconnect later with compassion.

Scenario 2: Sneaking or Hoarding Food

Behavior: Stealing or hiding snacks.

TBRI® Response:

- Maintain predictable meal/snack routines.
- Empower: "Would you like your own snack basket?"
- Reassure: "You will always have food here."

Scenario 3: Withdrawn and Isolated

Behavior: Silence, hiding, or social withdrawal.

TBRI® Response:

- Respect space while offering presence.
- Use calming activities (coloring, music, quiet play).
- Build connection through shared, pressure-free tasks.

Scenario 4: Physical Aggression

Behavior: Throwing or hitting.

TBRI® Response:

- Block harm safely: "I won't let you hurt anyone."
- Offer scripts: "Gentle hands. Let's try again."
- Practice re-dos to reinforce positive behavior.

Scenario 5: Lying About Obvious Actions

Behavior: Denial or dishonesty out of fear.

TBRI® Response:

- Stay calm: "You don't have to be scared."
- Emphasize safety: "We all make mistakes."
- Create a re-do moment: "Let's try telling the truth together."

TBRI® Key Tools

- Connection Before Correction
- Empowerment Through Choice
- Re-Dos & Practice
- Co-Regulation and Calm Voice

Policy Title:	Caregiver Training Policy		
Section:	Caregivers	Policy #:	CHB: 12312
Issued By:	Director	Effective Date:	4/30/2025
Board Approval:	4/30/2025	Latest Revision:	4/30/2025
Federal/State Regulation(s):	Licensing Rules for Child Placing Agencies		

Purpose: Rooted in Community is committed to equipping foster parents with the knowledge, tools, and ongoing support necessary to care for children in foster care. This policy outlines mandatory pre-licensure and annual training requirements for all foster caregivers, as defined by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and applicable licensing rules.

I. Pre-Licensure Training Requirements: 🌱

1. Minimum Training Hours, DCWL

Each individual named on a foster home license must complete no fewer than 12 hours of training prior to a recommendation for licensure. The training program shall:

- Be tailored to the individual needs of each prospective foster parent.
- Include no more than 3 hours of orientation as part of the 12-hour minimum.

2. GROW Training Requirement, MDHHS

In accordance with State of Michigan guidelines, completion of the GROW training for foster and adoptive parents is mandatory before a recommendation for foster care licensure or approval for adoption may be made.

- GROW is a state-approved, free training that must be completed and counts towards the orientation and training hours noted above.
- GROW is typically held virtual and is between 20-25 hours total.

II. Required Training Content Areas: 🧠

Pre-licensure training must comprehensively cover the following areas:

- a. Characteristics and needs of children placed in foster care
- b. Safe sleep practices for infants
- c. Effective parenting strategies
- d. Calming and soothing supports for children, including sensory modulation and de-escalation techniques
- e. The importance of the child's biological parents and relatives
- f. Concurrent planning for reunification and permanence
- g. The role and responsibilities of the agency
- h. Emergency procedures, first aid, and fire safety
- i. Preparing youth for permanency and independence
- j. The role of the court and the lawyer guardian ad litem in permanency planning
- k. Application of the reasonable and prudent parent standard
- l. Firearm storage and safety practices
- m. The unique needs of foster children related to:
 - Culture
 - Race and ethnicity
 - Religion and spirituality
 - Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE)
- n. Human trafficking awareness and prevention.
- o. Trauma-informed parenting, including understanding the impact of discipline and trauma history.

III. Annual Ongoing Training Requirements: 🧑

1. Each foster parent on the license must complete at least 6 hours of approved training annually.
2. Training topics should reflect evolving caregiver needs.
3. An on-going training plan provides for the following:
 - Reasonable and Prudent Parenting
 - Characteristics and needs of children who may be placed into the home.
 - Safe sleep practices
 - Effective parenting
 - Behavior management, including de-escalation techniques
 - Importance of the foster child's parents and relatives
 - Concurrent planning
 - Role of the agency
 - Emergency procedures, universal precautions, and fire safety
 - Preparation of the foster child for permanence and independence.
 - The role of the court and lawyer guardian ad litem in permanency planning.
 - Unique needs of foster children based on individual identities related to culture, race and ethnicity, religion and spirituality, and SOGIE.
 - Human Trafficking
 - Trauma informed parenting, including the effects of discipline in the household.

Other training opportunities can be obtained in a variety of ways which can include:

- Classroom or virtual settings offered by our agency or another professional agency.
- Training offered in the community on relevant topics.
- Workshops or conferences.
- Expert training tailored to the needs of a specific child.
- Review of written material, online classes or recorded material that is determined to be relevant to fostering.

**Training plans may be subject to change to maintain compliance with the DCWL standards.

IV. First Aid & CPR Certification 🚑

At least one adult household member must have and maintain current certification in First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

- Acceptable providers include the American Heart Association, American Red Cross, or another institution approved by the department, list can be provided by foster home licensor.

V. Documentation of Training 📄

Rooted in Community shall document all training hours completed by foster parents, including:

- Date and title of training
- Content area(s) covered
- Duration of the training
- Trainer or organization providing the training
- Proof of CPR/First Aid certification (if applicable)


This documentation will be maintained in each caregiver home licensing file and made available for review during audits or re-licensure.

Enforcement and Compliance 🏠

Failure to meet training requirements may result in delayed licensure, placement holds, or revocation of licensure in accordance with licensing rule violations. Foster parents are encouraged to maintain regular communication with their licensing worker to ensure compliance and receive support.

Policy Title:	Communication Policy		
Section:	Caregivers and Participants	Policy #:	CHB, PHB: 12315
Issued By:	Director	Effective Date:	4/30/2025
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Federal/State Regulation(s):	Licensing Rules for Child Placing Agencies		

Purpose: Rooted in Community, believes that preserving relationships is not only a legal right but a critical component of healing and resilience for youth in foster care.

 Research has shown that maintaining contact with family and natural supports contributes to:

- Improved emotional regulation and mental health
- Greater placement stability and fewer disruptions
- Stronger identity development
- Smoother reunification or permanency planning

Youth who maintain connections with their family, culture, and community show higher self-esteem, a greater sense of belonging, and stronger long-term outcomes—including academic achievement and social functioning.

Policy:

I. Youth Rights to Communication. All youth in foster care have the right to: 

- Maintain communication with family members (biological parents, siblings, grandparents, relatives) unless restricted by court order or documented safety concerns.
- Stay in touch with friends, mentors, and chosen supports.
- Have their preferences respected in how and when they communicate.
- Use phone, mail, messaging apps, video calls, and in-person visits, based on their age and developmental level.
- Participate in planning and decision-making regarding their personal connections.
- Youth may send and receive mail without anyone opening or reading it unless there are serious concerns regarding the youth's safety.
 - In such instances, prior approval from the GAL is required.
 - If mail is opened, a copy will be placed in the child's case file.
 - When letter-writing is identified as a therapeutic intervention in the child's treatment plan, the agency will provide the child with necessary supplies (envelopes, stamps).
- Youth may make and take phone calls with time, frequency, and contact with persons determined through collaboration between service providers, child's parents, the child, foster parents, and the foster care worker during Family Team Meetings.
 - Reasonable household rules regarding phone calls, texting, and social media use will be established in collaboration with caregivers and the agency.

II. Agency and Caregiver Responsibilities Foster caregivers and agency staff are required to:

- Facilitate consistent and compassionate support for contact, contained in the child's case plan.
- Ensure that communication is youth-centered, culturally sensitive, and trauma-informed.
- Never restrict contact as a form of punishment, behavior control, or personal judgment.
- Respect the child's right to privacy when engaging in personal conversations, as appropriate.
- Document and communicate any observed impacts, positive or concerning, to the child's assigned worker.

III. Individualized Communication Planning Rooted in Community uses trauma-informed and evidence-based planning to determine the most beneficial and safe methods of maintaining relationships. Each child's communication plan will:

- Reflect the child's stated preferences and emotional needs.
- Align with their court-ordered treatment plan.
- Include input from the child's therapist, legal guardian, and support team.
- Be reviewed and updated regularly to meet the child's evolving needs.

IV. When Communication May Be Limited ⚖️

Communication with family or others may only be restricted when:

- Required by court order.
- A documented safety risk is identified by the agency.

Any restriction must be:

- Time-limited and clearly documented.
- Reviewed regularly with the child's team.
- Communicated to the youth with empathy and support.

V. Prohibited Practices The following are strictly prohibited: 🚫

- Denying contact with family or supports as a form of punishment or behavior management.
- Blocking communication based on a caregiver's personal beliefs.
- Preventing youth from communicating in their preferred language or method.
- Discouraging or shaming a child for wanting to connect with someone important to them.

Closing Commitment 🌱

Rooted in Community upholds every child's right to belong, to stay connected, and to be heard. Every communication plan is not just a logistical tool—it is a lifeline to identity, safety, and healing.

Policy Title:	Education Policy		
Section:	Caregivers	Policy #:	CHB: 12409
Issued By:	Director	Effective Date:	4/30/2025
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Federal/State Regulation(s):	Licensing Rules for Child Placing Agencies		

Purpose: To ensure that every school-aged child in foster care is promptly enrolled in an appropriate educational setting and receives the necessary support services to thrive academically, in compliance with Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) policies and federal laws.

Definitions to know: 🧐

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): contains several provisions specific to children in homeless situations. IDEA defines homeless children to include any children or youth considered homeless under McKinney-Vento- individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (includes foster youth within the first 6 months of any placement).

McKinney-Vento Act: a student receiving special education who is homeless must remain in the school of origin, unless it is not in the student's best interests, or it is against the parent's/guardian's/unaccompanied youth's wishes. Often, the best interest determination will weigh in favor of keeping a special education student in the same school, because changing schools and educational programs can be particularly detrimental to students with special needs. However, there may be circumstances in which changing schools is in the student's best interest; for example, if the distance is such that the commute would be more detrimental than changing schools.

Policy:

School Enrollment 🏡

- **Timely Enrollment:** Children must be enrolled and attending school within **five school days** of initial placement or any subsequent placement change, including placements in child caring institutions (CCIs) or emergency settings. mdhhs-pres-prod.michigan.gov
- **Documentation:** Enrollment should proceed even if typical documentation (e.g., birth certificates, immunization records) is unavailable, ensuring no delay in the child's education.

Educational Stability 📚

- **School of Origin:** In alignment with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), efforts should be made to keep the child in their school of origin unless it is not in their best interest.
- **Transportation:** When remaining in the school of origin is in the child's best interest, transportation must be arranged to facilitate attendance.
 - LEAs (Local Education Agency) must provide transportation to the school of origin upon request. This is true regardless of the services the student receives, including special education and related services.

Special Education Services 🌟

- **Individualized Education Program (IEP):** For children with existing IEPs, coordination with the new school district's special education team is essential to ensure continuity of services.
- **Evaluation Requests:** If a child is suspected of having a disability, caregivers or case workers can request an evaluation in writing to the school's special education coordinator.

McKinney-Vento Act Compliance 🏠

- **Immediate Enrollment:** Children in foster care are entitled to immediate enrollment in school, even without standard enrollment documents.
- **Liaison Support:** Each school district has a designated McKinney-Vento liaison responsible for assisting with enrollment, transportation, and access to educational services.

Collaboration with School Staff 🤝

To advocate effectively for the child's educational needs, the following school personnel should be engaged:

- **Foster Care Liaison:** Coordinates between the child welfare agency and the school to support the child's education.
- **Special Education Coordinator:** Oversees evaluations and the implementation of IEPs.
- **McKinney-Vento Liaison:** Ensures compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act, facilitating services for students experiencing homelessness or in foster care.

Documentation and Monitoring 📄

- **Case Service Plan:** All educational arrangements, including school enrollment and special services, must be documented in the child's case service plan.
- **Ongoing Monitoring:** The agency is responsible for monitoring the provision of educational services to ensure the child's needs are being met effectively.

Resources and Contacts 📞

- **MDHHS Foster Care Education Consultant:** For additional support, contact the consultant at (517) 241-6972 or via email at RossiA@michigan.gov.
- **Student Advocacy Center of Michigan:** Provides educational advocacy and support services. Visit studentadvocacycenter.org for more information.

This policy ensures that children in foster care receive uninterrupted and appropriate educational services, fostering their academic growth and stability.

Policy Title:	Employee Hiring Policy & Procedure		
Section:	Human Resources	Policy #:	TMHB: 12212
Issued By:	Director	Effective Date:	4/30/2025
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Federal/State Regulation(s):	Licensing Rules for Child Placing Agencies		

Policy Statement: Rooted West Michigan is committed to ensuring that all staff members, volunteers, and contractors meet the highest standards of qualification and integrity to provide exceptional care and support to the children and families we serve.

Purpose: RIC is a non-profit organization amplifying voices of youth, families, and adults who have experienced harm. We employ dedicated people who believe in our mission and values. We hire without regard to age (over 18), gender(s), identity, marital status, national origin, citizenship status, disability, genetic information, veteran status, lifestyle, cultural or ethnic background, religious beliefs or absence of, and social or economic status.

Detailed job descriptions are available and provided to roles accepted by employees upon hire and when updated as well as contained within the employee's file.

General Requirements

- All team members who have ongoing contact with children or parents must possess the necessary ability, experience, education, and training to fulfill their assigned duties effectively.
- Team members must be of responsible character, suitable, and able to meet the needs of the children and families served by the agency.
- Resume and transcripts will be provided to the agency before starting date.
- Three unrelated references will be contacted via email or phone before the starting date.
- Completed application for employment at Rooted in Community.
- Training logs and performance documentation will be maintained in employee files.

Criminal Background Checks

- Any individual who has unsupervised contact with children must not have been convicted of:
 - Child abuse or neglect.
 - A felony involving harm or threatened harm to an individual within the 10 years immediately preceding the date of hire.
- Individuals listed on the central registry as perpetrators of child abuse or child neglect are ineligible for employment if their responsibilities include unsupervised contact with children.

Volunteers and Contractors

- Volunteers and contractors who are listed on the central registry as perpetrators of child abuse or child neglect may not have unsupervised contact with children.

Substance Screening

Rooted in Community is committed to maintaining a safe and drug-free workplace. All offers of employment are contingent upon the successful completion of a pre-employment drug screen. Any positive test result that is not verified as lawful use of a prescription medication will result in the rescission of the offer of employment.

- This includes, but is not limited to, positive results for cocaine, barbiturates, methamphetamine, morphine, or oxycodone. Candidates will have the opportunity to provide proof of any lawful prescriptions prior to any employment decision being finalized.

Training Period and Benefits Eligibility ✓

At Rooted in Community, new team members begin their journey with a dedicated training period designed to provide the knowledge, tools, and support needed for long-term success.

- During this initial training phase, which will last no more than 8 weeks, team members may receive a training rate of pay that is below the standard entry level.
- Health insurance benefits will become available upon successful completion of the training period and transition into regular employment status.
- This approach allows new team members to focus fully on learning and growing into their roles while preparing for long-term opportunities within the agency.
- Team members who are hired with required trainings in place, will not have a training period and will be immediately enrolled into regular employment status.

Staff Responsibilities ✨

Chief Administrator Responsibilities and Agency Director:

Rooted West Michigan shall designate a chief administrator responsible for the day-to-day operations of the agency and ensuring compliance with all applicable rules and regulations.

- Demonstrating administrative capability to operate the child-placing agency and provide the level of care stipulated in the application.
- Overseeing the on-site, day-to-day operations of the institution and ensuring compliance with applicable rules.
- Conducting a written assessment at least annually to verify compliance with all applicable provisions.
- Assessing all disrupted and unplanned removals of children from foster homes, independent living, and adoptive homes to identify systemic trends and patterns.
- Developing and implementing a written plan within six months to correct any noncompliance identified and address causes of disrupted and unplanned removals.

Child Welfare Supervisor Responsibilities

- Provide supervision at least twice monthly in a private setting to no more than 5 direct reports.
- Review, provide corrections and approval reports and assessments in compliance with DHHS guidelines and policy.
- Provide performance reviews and performance management duties.
- Assist in ongoing development of agency policies and procedures to ensure the highest standards of care and service are delivered.
- Case management responsibilities may be needed if supervising less than 5 direct reports.

Foster Care Case Manager Responsibilities

- Placing and supervising children in out-of-home care.
- Social service workers shall work directly with the children, their families, and other relevant individuals and be primarily responsible for the development, implementation, and review of service plans for the children and their families.
- Facilitating services and parenting time for children for purposes of reunification.

Foster Home Licensor Responsibilities

- Assessing and certifying private family homes for licensure and supervising the homes.
- Assessing relative and fictive kin placements for safe and stable placements of youth in foster care.
- Assist in placement searches for youth in the least restrictive most family like setting.

- Participate in creation and implementation of Adoptive and Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention plans yearly and ongoing.
- Training development for caregiving families.
- Attend and assist in planning local recruitment and retention events.

Social Service Aide Responsibilities

- A social service aide may provide clearly defined support functions for administrative, foster care and foster home licensure responsibilities.
 - Transportation for youth and families.
 - Supervising scheduled family time.
 - Substance use screenings as court ordered.
 - Uploading and internal auditing documentation.
- Social Service Aide Responsibilities may not have responsibility for any of the following:
 - Case planning.
 - Selecting placements.
 - Foster home certification.
 - Conducting foster care and licensing case contacts for purposes of foster care or adoption case planning, or licensing certification contracts.
 - Conducting adoptive family evaluations.

Record Keeping

- Each team member will have a employee file maintained in a secure electronic manner, that prohibits unauthorized access. Records will be protected from destruction and damage. Each record will be separated by individual team members and in a uniform fashion. All personnel records will contain at least the following:
 - Name
 - Verification of education
 - Work history
 - Three unrelated references
 - Job description for current position.
 - Orientation and training records.
 - Written evaluation of performance within a 6-month probationary period from the date of assumption of duties.
 - Written evaluation of performance each year after probationary period.
 - Documentation from the Department that the person has not been named in a central registry case as the perpetrator of child abuse or neglect in Michigan or any state where the person lived in the 5 years preceding hire.
 - Record of convictions other than minor traffic violations
 - If a conviction(s) exists the Chief Administrator or their designee shall complete a written evaluation of the convictions that addresses the nature of the conviction, the length of time since the conviction, and the relationship of the conviction to regulated activity.
 - A written statement from the employee regarding any convictions.

Compliance and Review

Rooted West Michigan shall conduct regular reviews and updates of hiring policies and operational procedures to ensure adherence to regulatory requirements and best practices in child welfare services.

Policy Title:	Employee Orientation and Training Policy & Procedure		
Section:	Human Resources	Policy #:	TMHB 12209
Issued By:	Director	Effective Date:	4/30/2025
Board Approval:	4/30/2025	Latest Revision:	4/30/2025
Federal/State Regulation(s):	Licensing Rules for Child Placing Agencies		

Policy Statement: Rooted West Michigan shall ensure and document the following orientation and training requirements for all social service workers and supervisors.

Purpose: RIC ensures that all team members are provided with the tools and resources to excel at their position. Orientation to the programming and agency mission and values is provided before job duties are assigned. Ongoing training is offered and may be expected due to performance.

Orientation

- Each social service worker and supervisor shall receive a minimum of 16 hours of orientation after initial appointment and before assuming assigned duties.
- Onboarding and orientation checklist will be completed and retained in the employee file.

Initial and Annual Training

- Orientation: Each new team member will receive at least 16 hours of orientation before case management and assigned duties are assumed.
- Each social service worker and supervisor shall receive a minimum of 15 hours of training related to their position within the first year of assignment.
- Each social service worker and supervisor shall receive a minimum of 15 hours of planned training related to their position annually thereafter.
- All team members are required to complete CPR and First Aid training and obtain certification within six (6) months of their hire date. This ensures that staff are prepared to respond to medical emergencies and provide immediate support when needed.
- In response to the growing epidemic of overdoses, all team members will receive training in the use of Narcan (naloxone), a life-saving medication that can reverse opioid overdoses.
 - Narcan will be provided to staff to carry while on duty, and team members are expected to be prepared to use it when necessary, to promote health and safety in the community.

Training Topics

- Orientation and training for team members shall include, but not be limited to:
 - Characteristics and needs of children and families served by the agency, including trauma-informed parenting, human trafficking, systemic racism, diversity, equity and inclusion, and SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression) training.
 - Requirements of applicable statutes relating to the services provided by the agency, such as Michigan Child Protection Law.
 - Expectations for facilitating, working with & supervising the care of children and families.
 - Agency expectations for working with caregivers.
 - Best practice and new evidence-based case management methods.
 - Supervising the care and safety of youth served by the agency.
 - Expectations for developing initial and updated service plans for children and families.
 - Use of motivational interview skills
 - All agency policies and procedures, along with reviews of each handbook.
 - Local resources and connections within the community.

Policy Title:	File Management and Privacy of Records Policy & Procedure		
Section:	Human Resources	Policy #:	CHB, PHB, TMHB: 12213
Issued By:	Director	Effective Date:	4/30/2025
Board Approval:	4/30/2025	Latest Revision:	4/30/2025
Federal/State Regulation(s):	Licensing Rules for Child Placing Agencies		

Policy Statement: Rooted in Community shall ensure approved systems for storage of record keeping for participants and team members is used.

Purpose: RIC recognizes the vulnerable and private nature of records that are accessed during case management services and employment. Security and privacy is prioritized.

Participant Records:

Participant records will be maintained on the State of Michigan's Child Welfare System which is accessed through the Database Security Application (DSA).

Any records kept by the agency outside of the State's system will be maintained on an agency subscribed system that is compliant with privacy laws such as HIPPA, ISO 27001 and GDPR. They will be protected against destruction and damage and kept in uniform fashion.

Any physical documentation needed to be transported for an approved reason such as obtaining signatures or to court hearings, will be kept securely by the team member and returned to the RIC office as soon as possible. Any missing forms or documents will result in an internal investigation and possible discipline.

The subscribed system will be able to be accessed by employees with agency accounts while connected to devices on the internet. This allows for accessibility to work however, due to this, team members need to be extremely mindful and private while accessing participant files outside of the local office. All access shall be private and secure. While working in the community or at home, steps to ensure privacy are expected to be taken.

Steps include but are not limited to:

- Working from a private room without family or community members present.
- Not accepting calls, video calls or joining meetings in public spaces.
- While accessing participant information on a device, it is turned away from others view-including reflections in windows or mirrors.
- If working within a participant's home, ensure that visitors are not within listening distance and are not participating in private case management discussions unless a release of information has been signed.

Team Member Records:

Team member records will be maintained on an agency subscribed system that is compliant with privacy laws such as HIPPA, ISO 27001 and GDPR. They will be protected against destruction and damage and kept in uniform fashion.

The personnel record of each team member must contain all the following information before employment may occur:

- (a) Name.
- (b) Verification of education.

- (c) Work history.
- (d) Three references obtained from people who are unrelated to the staff person.
- (e) A record of any convictions other than minor traffic violations from either of the following:
- (f) If the employee
 - (i) The Michigan state police, tribal police, or the equivalent state or Canadian provincial law enforcement agency where the person usually resides.
 - (ii) An entity accessing either Michigan state police records or equivalent state or Canadian provincial law enforcement agency where the person usually resides.
- (g) If the employee has criminal convictions, the chief administrator or their designee shall complete a written evaluation of the convictions that addresses the nature of the conviction, the length of time since the conviction, and the relationship of the conviction to regulated activity.
- (h) A written statement from the employee regarding any convictions.
- (i) Documentation from the department that the person has not been named in a central registry case as the perpetrator of child abuse or neglect in Michigan or in any state where the person lived in the 5 years preceding hire.

The team member record must contain both of the following:

- A written evaluation of a staff member's performance within a probationary period or not later than 6 months after the staff member assumes his or her current responsibilities.
- After the initial evaluation, a written evaluation must be conducted every 12 months.
- A copy of the job description for the staff member's current position.
- An agency shall maintain an orientation and training record for staff members.

Compliance and Review

Rooted West Michigan shall conduct regular reviews and updates of record management policies and operational procedures to ensure adherence to regulatory requirements and best practices in child welfare services.

Policy Title:	Grievance Handling and Compliance		
Section:	Leadership & Governance	Policy #:	TMHB, CHB, PHB: 12210
Issued By:	Director	Effective Date:	4/30/2025
Board Approval:	4/30/2025	Latest Revision:	4/30/2025
Federal/State Regulation(s):	Federal False Claims Act (1863), Michigan Medicaid False Claims Act (1977), Anti- Kickback Statue, Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA), Balanced Budget Act (1996), Deficit Reduction Act (Medicaid Integrity Program) (2006)		

Policy Statement:

Rooted In Community is dedicated to maintaining excellence and integrity in support of its mission, all aspects of agency operations, and professional conduct. Compliance means meeting all requirements that govern the agency's business, including laws, rules, regulations, contract requirements and internal policies and procedures.

Purpose:

The RIC Corporate Compliance Program is intended to provide reasonable assurance that the agency complies with federal, state, and local laws and regulations, adheres to contractual obligations, and enacts programs intended to prevent, detect, and report known or suspected allegations of misrepresentation, unsafe practices, discrimination, waste, fraud, or abuse. Grievances will be promptly reviewed with a resolution. This is accomplished through defined agency policies and procedures.


Procedure:

If there is an allegation of abuse or neglect of a participant, the agency will immediately contact Michigan's Central Intake at **1-855-444-3911**.

Any team member who has allegations of abuse or neglect towards participants will immediately be placed on administrative leave without pay. If the allegations are resolved and found to be untrue, missed pay will be provided within a week of return to duties. While on leave, a team member may not discuss the allegations or review with any other team member or stakeholder of RIC. They are not to have contact with any participants.

All team members receive initial and ongoing Corporate Compliance-related trainings, including but not limited to content related to the following:

- Whistleblower's Protection Act
- Standards of Ethical Conduct
- Compliance Reporting

Quality & Compliance are reviewed during monthly team meetings. 

Areas of deficit are met with actional steps to ensure compliance is achieved.

1. The agency maintains compliance reporting tools which all coworkers and other stakeholders may use to report suspected compliance-related issues.
 - RIC investigates allegations of compliance-related issues through a 3rd party Human Resources contractor.
 - These are maintained in electronic files on the agency's server program.
2. All areas of compliance related issues are addressed in quarterly site reviews and the annual Risk and Compliance Assessment. Reviews are maintained in the compliance file storage

system within RIC.

3. Upper management participates in compliance-related investigations, as appropriate, and is responsible for the development and oversight of identified corrective actions.
4. Corrective action plans are reviewed as part of the internal site risk review process, which is conducted at least quarterly for each program site. All CAPs are contained within the compliance file storage system within RIC.

The Corporate Compliance Program is reviewed annually by the Director, and an annual Risk and Compliance Report is submitted for review to the RIC Board of Directors.

The annual Risk and Compliance Report is provided for public review on the agency's website with the public board meeting minutes as well as contained in the compliance file storage system for RIC.

Compliance related decisions that are anticipated to affect program locations, coworkers, or persons served shall be communicated as appropriate to relevant referral and/or funding sources (i.e., MDHHS.) in accordance with the referral/funding source's required reporting method.

Filing a Compliance or Grievance Complaint:

A report must be made in good faith. A team member who knowingly makes a false or bad faith complaint will be subject to discipline and/or legal action. The agency will gather information that is fact based, unbiased and leads to a clear conclusion which will be contained within a compliance and grievance report which will include methods used to investigate, dates, and supporting documentation. Reviews shall be completed within 10 business days of the receipt of information. Extensions are granted for incidents requiring further documentation and review.

Methods used to gather information may include interviewing team members, participants, community members, review of written evidence including but not limited to email, messages, reports, police reports, review of agency technology, and on-site inspection.





A participant or community member can submit a grievance or compliance complaint at any time. All complaints will be reviewed by the identified Chief Administrator. Complaints, the review and the findings will be contained within the compliance file storage system within RIC. All parties identified within the complaint will be notified of a summary and outcome of the review within 30 days of the conclusion of the review.

It is encouraged that all complaints are addressed first with the identified person. If a resolution is not obtained, an upper-level manager can become involved to determine if a resolution can be reached. This process is not required, and any individual is able to immediately submit a complaint through the methods below.

Any individual can also contact the Division of Child Welfare Licensing (DCWL) or the Office of Child Advocate.

Specify the allegations clearly and concisely.

- Identify the location to which your report relates.
- Identify positions or persons engaged in the incident, including titles
- Review what specifically occurred.
- Identify the time and duration of the incident.
- Provide the known policy or contract that is in violation.

Agency On Site 	Public Internet 	Email 	Phone 
Fill out the suggestion form located at the physical agency address. This method is reviewed for submissions weekly.	From web accessible device, go to https://rootedwestmichigan.org/contact submit communication.	Email the RIC Intake at info@RootedMi.org . This email inbox is accessible to the Director and Board of Director Chair.	Call and speak to the Director of RIC or leave a voicemail on the agency main line: 231-766-1965.

DCWL Compliant: <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/doing-business/licensing/child-welfare/child-placing/contact-us/online-complaint-form-division-of-child-welfare-licensing>

Office of Child Advocate: https://www.michigan.gov/oca/req_advocacy

Policy Title:	Medical and Dental Care Policy		
Section:	Caregivers	Policy #:	CHB, PHB: 12413
Issued By:	Director	Effective Date:	4/30/2025
Board Approval:	4/30/2025	Latest Revision:	4/30/2025
Federal/State Regulation(s):	Licensing Rules for Child Placing Agencies		

Purpose: To ensure that all children placed through Rooted in Community receive timely, comprehensive, and continuous medical and dental care, in accordance with Michigan's foster care health requirements. All children in foster care are automatically eligible for Medicaid. Your case worker is responsible for setting up medical coverage.

Caregivers may not contact Medicaid on behalf of the child in care.

Policy:

Any bills received by caregivers for physical, mental or dental care should be submitted to the case worker as soon as possible to assist in ensuring proper coverage and payment for services through Medicaid.

Each caseworker can contact the DHHS Health Liaison Officer (HLO) for assistance in working with Medicaid and to request cards.

A consent to routine, non-surgical medical care and emergency medical treatment card will be issued for each youth in care to the caregivers immediately at placement. This has the youth's Medicaid number and allows for caregivers to take youth to medical appointments.

When an appointment is made for a youth in care, the case worker needs to be alerted as soon as possible. Parents of the youth are encouraged to attend medical appointments, and the caseworker will let them know of the appointment date and time.

Caregivers do not sign as the designee payee for medical consent for youth in care. The biological parent retains the right to consent to medical care. For cases of consenting to routine payment, the agency caseworker can sign for the agency to be the consenting party.

Routine Medical Care

Initial Examination

- Every child entering foster care must receive a comprehensive medical examination, including behavioral/mental health and trauma screening, within 30 calendar days of placement, regardless of the date of the last physical examination.

Periodic Examinations:

- Children under 3 years: Follow the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) schedule as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Children aged 3 to 20 years: Require a medical examination every 14 months.

Emergency Medical, Surgical, and Dental Care:

- Caregivers must seek immediate medical attention in emergencies and notify the agency promptly.
- Consent for routine and emergency medical treatment is provided through the DHS-3762 form.

Immunizations 🌿

- Children must be up to date with immunizations as required by Section 5111 of the Public Health Code (MCL 333.5111).
 - If a youth is not up to date on their immunizations, the medical team will work to create a catch-up schedule.
 - While not required, it is strongly recommended that youth in care receive the influenza and COVID-19 vaccines.
 - A waiver signed by the legal parent, accompanied by certification from the local health department regarding education on vaccine risks and benefits, is sufficient unless overridden by a court order.
 - If documentation is unavailable, immunizations must commence within 30 calendar days of placement.
-

Dental Care 🦷

- Children aged 1 year and older must have a dental examination within 90 calendar days of placement, unless they had an exam within the 3 months prior to placement and documentation is verified.
 - Children under 1 year must have an initial dental exam within 3 months of their first birthday.
 - Re-examinations are required every 6 months, unless a greater frequency is indicated.
 - All dental treatment such as cavity treatment and oral health treatments must be followed.
 - Orthodontics are very rarely approved for funding. If a youth in care requires orthodontic care, your caseworker will help determine the steps to seek approval.
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Medical Passport 📄

- A medical passport, containing the child's medical history, immunization records, and other pertinent health information, shall be developed and maintained.
- All medical and dental care received by the child must be documented and maintained in the child's case file.
- The agency is responsible for ensuring that records are current and complete, facilitating continuity of care.
- This passport must accompany the child to all placements and be updated regularly.

Policy Title:	Ongoing Recruitment and Retention Plan		
Section:	Caregivers	Policy #:	TMHB, CHB: 12304
Issued By:	Director	Effective Date:	4/30/2025
Board Approval:	4/30/2025	Latest Revision:	4/30/2025
Federal/State Regulation(s):	Licensing Rules for Child Placing Agencies		

Ongoing Recruitment and Retention Plan

I. Objectives

- Increase the number of licensed foster caregivers.
- Enhance diversity among caregivers to reflect the community's demographics. RIC is committed to cultural competency in recruitment, retention and placement decisions. We work to ensure that youth are placed in homes that understand and respect their cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
- Engage foster youth and current caregivers in recruitment efforts.
- Host an open house event within the first month to initiate community involvement.

II. Recruitment Strategies

Rooted in Community emphasizes collaboration with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and other community partners. By working together, we ensure a coordinated and comprehensive approach in developing and implementing the Annual Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention Plan.

1. Targeted Outreach

- **Community Engagement:** Collaborate with local organizations, non-profit groups, and community centers to reach potential caregivers and supporters.
- **Cultural Competency:** Develop materials and training that address cultural, racial, and socioeconomic diversity to attract a broad range of caregivers.
- **Data-Driven Approach:** Utilize demographic data to identify underrepresented groups and tailor recruitment efforts accordingly.

2. Messaging and Communication

- **Narrative Sharing:** Highlight stories from current foster youth and caregivers to provide authentic insights into the fostering experience.
- **Digital Platforms:** Leverage social media, email campaigns, and the agency's website to disseminate information and success stories.
- **Consistent Branding:** Ensure all materials convey a unified message emphasizing the impact and importance of foster caregiving.

3. Support and Retention

Caregivers play a critical role in the well-being of children in care. We prioritize recognition and appreciation efforts, such as caregivers' appreciation events, awards, and incentives, to promote morale and retention. Assurance of timely licensing and report submission, access to resources, and ongoing communication with caregivers is a priority.

- **Mentorship Programs:** Pair new caregivers with experienced mentors for guidance and support.

- **Resource Provision:** Offer training to equip caregivers with the necessary skills to provide individualized care, counseling, and respite care to strategically address caregiver needs and reduce burnout. Additionally, we maintain a transparent grievance process to ensure that caregivers' concerns are addressed promptly and fairly.
 - **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement regular check-ins and surveys to gather caregiver input and make necessary adjustments.
-

III. Open House Event (Within two months of launch) 🏠

Purpose:

- Introduce the agency and its mission to the community.
- Provide information on the foster care system and the role of caregivers.
- Facilitate direct interaction between potential caregivers, current caregivers, and foster youth.

Activities:

- **Informational Sessions:** Presentations on the foster care process, requirements, and support systems.
- **Panel Discussions:** Current caregivers and foster youth share their experiences and answer questions.
- **Resource Booths:** Stations providing materials on training, licensing, and support services.
- **Interactive Workshops:** Activities simulating caregiving scenarios to provide hands-on understanding.

Promotion:

- **Community Outreach:** Flyers, local newspaper ads, and announcements in community centers and places of worship.
 - **Digital Marketing:** Social media campaigns and email invitations to targeted demographics.
 - **Partnerships:** Collaborate with local businesses and organizations to co-host or sponsor the event.
-

IV. Ongoing Engagement of Foster Youth and Caregivers

We recognize the value of involving current and past caregivers, participants and youth in recruitment and retention efforts. Their lived experiences help build trust, credibility, and dispel stigmas associated with child welfare programs and their participants.

Youth Involvement: 🧒

- **Ambassador Program:** Train interested foster youth to represent the agency at events and share their stories.
- **Feedback Forums:** Regular meetings where youth can provide input on agency practices and recruitment strategies.

Caregiver and Participant Participation: 🧑

- **Advisory Feedback:** Include caregivers in decision-making processes related to recruitment and retention.
- **Peer Support Groups:** Facilitate regular gatherings for caregivers to share experiences and advice.
- **Recognition Programs:** Acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of caregivers through awards and public appreciation.

Policy Title:	Religion and Spirituality Policy		
Section:	Caregivers	Policy #:	PHB, CHB: 12314
Issued By:	Director	Effective Date:	4/30/2025
Board Approval:	4/30/2025	Latest Revision:	4/30/2025
Federal/State Regulation(s):	Licensing Rules for Child Placing Agencies		

Purpose: Rooted in Community honors and upholds the inherent dignity, autonomy, and personal beliefs of every youth we serve. This policy ensures that foster children are provided the freedom to explore, practice, or abstain from any religious or spiritual traditions, in accordance with their own beliefs and preferences.

Foster Youth Rights 🏠

Rooted in Community complies with all applicable child welfare regulations and licensing rules, including the requirement that:

1. Foster children have the right to:
 - Participating or choosing not to participate in religious or spiritual instruction
 - Engage or choose not to engage in religious or spiritual practices
 - Attend or choose not to attend religious or spiritual services
2. Foster children shall not be:
 - Required to attend any religious or spiritual services
 - Forced to follow specific religious or spiritual doctrine
 - Denied opportunities to explore their own cultural or spiritual identity
 - Punished, ridiculed, or restricted for expressing beliefs or declining to do so
3. Continuity of Religious Practice
 - If a child previously participated in specific religious or spiritual practices with their biological family or prior caregiver, they must be provided with a reasonable opportunity to continue practicing that faith, unless doing so poses a documented risk to their health, safety, or well-being.
 - No youth shall be forced to abandon their previous religious or spiritual practices, nor be encouraged to convert or change faith traditions unless requested by the youth themselves.

II. Caregiver Responsibilities ⚖️

Caregivers and Team Members are expected to:

- Respect and support the foster youth's personal choice regarding religion and spirituality
- Provide neutral space that does not promote one belief system over another
- Avoid using religious practices or ideologies such as discipline, persuasion, or control mechanisms
- Note that youth in care cannot be baptized without parental consent.
- Support the youth's continuation in their religious or spiritual tradition upon placement
 - Communicate respectfully with youth about their beliefs and provide transportation or access to attend services or events, as appropriate.

Caregivers may continue their own faith practices but must not impose those practices on the child or interfere with the child's freedom of belief or non-belief.

III. Cultural and Spiritual Identity 🧘

Rooted in Community recognizes that religion and spirituality may be deeply tied to a youth's:

- Cultural heritage
- Community traditions
- Family values
- Personal healing journey

Youth are encouraged to explore identity in ways that feel safe and empowering. If a child expresses interest in practicing their beliefs, Rooted in Community will assist in identifying safe and appropriate avenues to do so, including arrangements for transportation and support for participation.

IV. Documentation and Advocacy 📌

The child's religious or spiritual preferences will be discussed during intake and may be documented in the child's case file to ensure consistency across placements. Any conflicts or concerns regarding religious freedom will be addressed in partnership with the child, caregiver, and case team, with the child's voice centered in the decision-making process.

V. Commitment to Inclusion 🌐

Rooted in Community is proudly inclusive of all religious, spiritual, agnostic, and atheist worldviews.

We are committed to creating spaces where:

- All youth, caregivers, donors, and participants feel safe to express or not express their beliefs
- Caregivers model respect and curiosity rather than judgment
- Diverse traditions and practices are honored without coercion

Religions with presence within West Michigan include but are not limited to:

- Christianity (Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, Non-Denominational, Seventh-Day Adventist, Mormon, Amish, Mennonite, Anabaptist, Jehovah's Witness, Christian Scientist)
- Jewish
- Indigenous Spiritualist
- Islamic Centers
- Peyotism
- Bahá'í
- Buddhist
- Humanists
- Unitarian Universalists
- Center for Inquiry
- Sikhs
- TST members
- Pagan
- Spiritual/non-religious
- Atheist
- Agnostic

Policy Title:	Unusual Incidents and Emergencies Policy		
Section:	Caregivers and Participants	Policy #:	PHB, CHB: 12322
Issued By:	Director	Effective Date:	4/30/2025
Board Approval:	4/30/2025	Latest Revision:	4/30/2025
Federal/State Regulation(s):	Licensing Rules for Child Placing Agencies		

Purpose: Rooted in Community is committed to child safety, transparency, and timely communication. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that critical and sensitive events affecting foster youth are reported immediately and appropriately, so that children receive the care, protection, and support they need in a timely manner.

Definition: An unusual incident is any serious or unexpected event involving a foster child or someone in the foster home that could impact the child's health, safety, or legal status.

Policy:

Foster parents must **immediately** contact Rooted in Community (by phone or emergency line) upon learning of any of the following:

Incident Type 🚨

Death of a foster child

Attempted or unauthorized removal

A foster child is missing or has run away

Child treated in emergency room or hospitalized

What to Do Immediately 📞

Call the caseworker and supervisor

Contact the caseworker and 911

Notify local law enforcement and the agency

Call caseworker

Immediate notification allows the agency to initiate safety planning, provide support, and comply with state reporting requirements.

What Must Be Reported Within 24 Hours ⌚

The following incidents must be reported to the agency within **24 hours** of caregiver awareness:

Incident Type ⚠️

- A foster child has contact with law enforcement (arrest, questioning, detention)
- A foster child discloses or is discovered to be pregnant
- Incidences of child-on-child sexual or physical abuse
- Law enforcement contact with anyone in the home due to a criminal investigation

These events should be documented in the child's case file, and the assigned worker will determine if further action, such as safety planning, medical follow-up, or legal notification, is needed.

How to Report an Unusual Incident 📄

1. Call or text the assigned foster care worker. If after hours, call and leave a message, follow up with text to both caseworker and supervisor.
2. Provide the following info:
 - Child's full name
 - Date, time, and nature of incident
 - Actions taken (medical care, police called, etc.)
 - Names of others involved
3. Follow up with written documentation within 24 hours unless directed otherwise.

Support You'll Receive 🧑🏻

After an incident is reported, Rooted in Community will:

- Work with you to ensure the youth is safe and emotionally supported.
 - Communicate with legal guardians, medical professionals, or law enforcement as needed.
 - Help create or revise a safety plan or supervision plan, if necessary.
 - Connection with resources such as crisis debriefing, mental health referrals, or additional respite support.
-

Emergency Preparedness Summary 🚨

As a Rooted in Community caregiver, you play a vital role in protecting youth during emergencies. All foster homes must visibly post simple, clear plans that with copies that are contained within the caregiver file, to respond to the following situations:

1. Fire 🔥

- Know two ways out of every room.
- Practice and talk about fire drills regularly.
- Keep working smoke detectors on every level of the home and outside of bedroom doors.
- Have a meeting spot outside where everyone will go.

2. Tornado 🌪️

- Identify a safe spot in your home, such as a basement or interior room with no windows.
- Keep emergency supplies nearby (flashlight, water, radio).
- Teach youth what to do if a tornado warning is issued.

3. Serious Accident or Injury 🚑

- Call 911 for life-threatening injuries.
- Ensure that everyone knows the homes address and how to access emergency services phone number.
- Provide first aid until help arrives.
- Notify Rooted in Community caseworker.
- Document what happened and how it was handled.

4. Epidemic or Health Emergency 🦠

- Follow the local health department and CDC guidelines.
 - Maintain proper hygiene practices in the home.
 - Notify the agency of any outbreak or exposure.
 - Support youth with appropriate age information and care.
-