

FOSTER AND KINSHIP PROVIDER POLICIES

Please read through all policies included in this packet. If there is any part that you do not understand or cannot agree with, please discuss that section or policy with your foster/kinship caseworker. Your initials following each policy and your signature at the end of this packet indicate that you understand all information contained in this packet and that you agree to abide by all policies included herein.

CHILDREN'S BILL OF RIGHTS

Every child is endowed with inherent rights. Because of the separation from their parents or other family members, whether temporary or long term, children in placement require special safeguards and care. Every child in kinship/foster care has the right:

1. Enjoy freedom of thought, conscious, cultural and ethnic practice and religion.
2. To have his/her opinions heard and considered in major decisions affecting his/her life
3. To have a reasonable degree of privacy.
4. To be nurtured by kinship/foster parents who have been selected to meet his/her individual needs, and to receive appropriate adult guidance, support, and supervision.
5. To be free from physical abuse, neglect and inhumane treatment. Every foster/kin child has the right to be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation.
6. To have medical care, adequate food, clothing, and clean and safe surroundings.
7. To receive help in overcoming difficulties in his/her emotional, physical, intellectual, social, and spiritual growth that may have resulted from earlier experiences.
8. To participate in an educational or training program that will maximize his/her potential and prepare him/her for a useful and productive life in accordance with existing law.
9. To communicate with significant others (parents, guardians, case managers, attorneys, therapists, doctors, religious advisors, and probations officers) with prior approval of the child's case manager.
10. To call law enforcement (911) if the child feels threatened or intimidated.

The following children's rights may be limited to reasonable periods during the day or restricted according to the written policies of the kinship/foster home or LCDHS to ensure the protection of the child, kinship/foster family, or staff from any unreasonable or unnecessary intrusions/disruptions and from health and safety hazards:

1. The right to have access to letter-writing material, including postage, and to have the foster/kin provider assist him/her if unable to write, prepare, or mail correspondence.
2. The right to have access to telephone to both make and receive calls in private.
3. The right to have convenient opportunities to meet with visitors.
4. The right to wear his/her own clothing, keep and use his/her own personal possessions, and keep and be allowed to spend a reasonable amount of his/her own money.
5. The right to receive and send sealed correspondence. No incoming or outgoing correspondence shall be opened, delayed, held, or censored by the provider unless said provider is authorized to do so by the child's case manager.
6. The right to have scheduled visitation with parents when court ordered or DHS approved.

Any restriction/limitation of the child's rights will be documented in writing in the child's placement binder.

Initialed by kinship/foster: Placement Provider _____ Placement Provider _____

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline is a means of teaching new behavior, providing structure and setting limits. It is a tool designed to direct and give children a sense of security and consistency in their lives. Discipline may include talking to child; praise for appropriate behaviors; diversion; separation; and withholding privileges. It is important that you clearly understand the Department's policy relative to discipline so that you can provide the best care possible for your foster/kin child.

1. This Department does not allow corporal punishment. No child may be punched, shaken, pinched, spanked, swatted, bitten, hair pulled, roughly handled or struck by an object by foster/kin parents or their relatives or anyone in the foster/kin home. Children may not be humiliated or frightened as a method to control actions.
2. Only foster/kin parents may discipline foster/kin children; children may not discipline other children. Group discipline is prohibited.
3. No child may be punished for lapses in toilet training, bed-wetting or soiling clothing.
4. Verbal abuse or derogatory remarks about the child, his/her family, his/her race, religion or cultural background shall not be used or permitted.
5. No child shall be force-fed. Deprivation of meals or snacks shall not be used as punishment, although scheduled meals/snacks may be provided individually.
6. Separation when used as discipline shall be brief and appropriate to the child's age and circumstances; the young child shall be within hearing of an adult in a safe, clean, lighted, well-ventilated room of at least 50 square feet. No child shall be isolated in a locked room, closet, bathroom or pantry.
7. Children are not to be denied communication (visitation or telephone) privileges with family, clergy, attorney or caseworker as a method of discipline.
8. Foster/Kin parents may not give schools permission to spank.
9. The following cruel/unusual discipline methods shall be prohibited: any discipline designed or likely to cause physical pain; physical exercising such as running laps, push-ups, carrying heavy rocks/bricks/lumber; requiring or forcing child to take an uncomfortable position for an extended period of time, such as squatting, bending, standing with nose to wall, holding hands over head, sitting in a cross-legged position on floor; requiring repeated physical movements when used solely as a means of punishment, cold showers are not permitted for discipline. Washing a child's mouth out with soap or using hot sauce or pepper (or other substance) on child's tongue is prohibited.
10. Assignment of physically strenuous or harsh work that could result in harm to the foster/kin child is not permitted.
11. Requiring the foster/kin child to remain silent for a period of time inconsistent with the child's age, developmental level, or medical condition is not permitted.
12. Denial of shelter, clothing or bedding is not permitted.
13. Withholding of emotional response or stimulation is not permitted.
14. Releasing noxious, toxic or unpleasant sprays, mists or aerosol substances in proximity to the child's face is not permitted. This includes the spraying of plain water to a child's face.
15. Denial of sleep or sending child to bed as punishment is not allowed but family may set individual bed times for children.
16. Use of physical or mechanical restraint is not permitted. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of handcuffs, shackles, straitjackets, posey vests, ankle and wrist restraints, craig beds, vail beds, hospital cribs, and chest restraints.
17. Denial of essential/basic program services solely for disciplinary purposes is prohibited.
18. The child's basic rights as listed on the Children's Rights Policy and Grievance Procedure form shall not be denied as a means of discipline.

Disregard of the above rules or any disciplinary measure resulting in emotional or physical injury or abuse to any child shall be grounds for revocation of certificate. It may result in criminal charges or a Facilities Investigation being filed against the foster/kin parents. If you have any questions about any type of discipline method **call your child's caseworker or your Foster Care/Kinship Caseworker.**

Initialed by kinship/foster: Placement Provider: _____ Placement provider: _____

DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Children's Code 19-1-103 (1) (A)(3) defines **neglect** as: Any case in which a child is in need of services because the child's parents, legal guardian or custodians fails to take the same action to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision that a prudent parent would take.

Children's Code 19-1-103 (1) (A) (I) defines **child abuse** as: Any case in which a child exhibits evidence of skin bruising, bleeding, malnutrition, failure to thrive, burns, fractures of any bones, subdural hematoma, soft tissue swelling, or death or either; such condition or death is not justifiably explained; the history given concerning such condition is a variance with the degree or type of such condition or death; or the circumstances indication that such condition may not be the product of an accidental occurrence.

Children's Code 19-1-103 (1) (a) (II) defines **sexual abuse** as: Any case in which a child is subject to unlawful sexual behavior as defined in 16-22-102 (9), C.R.S. Unlawful sexual behaviors include sexual assault, molestation, sexual exploitation, or prostitution.

I understand the definitions of Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Abuse.

Initials of kinship/foster: Placement Provider _____ Placement Provider _____

MANDATORY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Colorado Revised Statue 19-3-304 (1) requires any facility or agency that is licensed or certified by the county department to report to the county department or law enforcement agency when they have reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subject to abuse or neglect (as defined above).

Because I am a certified foster/kinship provider, I understand that I am considered a Mandated Reporter by law and I will contact the Larimer County department or law enforcement when I suspect a child has been abused and/or neglected.

If at any time a foster/kin provider reasonably suspects child abuse, it is the responsibility of that provider to report this suspicion to the Larimer County Department of Human Services. It is **NOT your role to investigate suspected abuse**-only to report it. Persons who make good faith report are immune from civil and criminal liability. Additionally, the law provides for the protection of the identity of the reporting party. A provider who fails to report suspected child abuse or neglect commits a Class 3 misdemeanor and will be punished as provided in Section 18-1-106, CRS. The provider could also be liable for damages "proximately caused thereby."

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KINSHIP/FOSTER PARENT CONFIDENTIALITY

As a kinship/foster parent for the Larimer County Department of Human Services, I acknowledge the confidential nature of my responsibilities in accordance with the Colorado Children’s Code (19-1-307). I understand that all information concerning current or prior placements of children is confidential. The use or disclosure of information obtained while providing kinship/foster care shall only be for the purpose of providing services to the placed children, or for completing documentation tasks as required. I am aware that the confidential requirements of the law provide for, at a minimum, my adherence to the following:

1. Reports of child abuse or neglect and the name and address of any child, family, or informant; or any other identifying information contained in such reports shall be confidential and shall not be public information.
2. Disclosure of the name and address of the child and family and other identifying information involved in such reports shall be permitted only when authorized by a court for good cause. Such disclosure shall not be prohibited when there is a death of a suspected victim of child abuse or neglect and the death becomes a matter of public record or the alleged juvenile offender is or was a victim of abuse or neglect or the suspected or alleged perpetrator becomes the subject of an arrest by a law enforcement agency or the subject of the filing of a formal charge by a law enforcement agency.
3. We understand that placed children may not be identified as “foster children” or “kinship children” in any media presentation or to the public in any way unless written permission is obtained.
4. Any person who violates these confidentiality requirements is guilty of a class 2 petty offense and, upon conviction thereof, could be punished by a fine.
5. Violation of these confidentiality requirements is a violation of the kinship/foster parent agreement with the Larimer County Department of Human Services. Breach of confidentiality will be dealt with as a certification violation and may result in a corrective action or revocation of the provider’s foster/kin certificate.

Initialed by kinship/foster: Placement provider _____ Placement Provider _____

GRIEVANCE POLICY

A grievance can be filed with LCDHS by a child in LCDHS’s legal custody, their biological parent or guardian, or a kinship or foster home by adhering to the following steps:

1. For a child to file a grievance, he/she should complete the grievance form in the child’s placement binder. A child in care will give this form to their caseworker and/or their kinship/foster care provider.
2. Before a kinship/foster parent files a grievance, it is important to attempt to rectify the situation by working with the child’s caseworker your foster/kin caseworker and the supervisors involved. Call the HUB 970-498-6990 if contact information is needed.
3. If the issue is still not resolved, you have a right to contact the Complaint Coordinator at (970) 498-6311 or email ebrittingham@larimer.org

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RELIGIOUS POLICY STATEMENT

The freedom of religion is one of the most basic of our “Rights” as Americans. The government may not invade this right except under the most extraordinary of circumstances. Because the children are court ordered into care, and because the Department of Human Services is an extension of the state government, the Bill of Rights applies to children in kinship/foster care. LCDHS has, therefore, instituted the following policy:

1. It is the child’s right to practice his/her traditional religious beliefs and spiritual beliefs, such as those of Native Americans. Foster/kin parents may not impose their religious beliefs upon kinship/foster children, but they are free to perform their traditional family practices. They may take a foster/kin child to their church, unless the child and/or his family objects.
2. If the child has been raised in a particular faith, a strong effort will be made by the kinship/foster parents and the case manager to keep the child involved in church services or other activities, unless there is concern for the child’s safety or doing so puts the child at risk. With the caseworker’s permission, a member of the child’s congregation can transport the child to church or related activities.
3. Other practices, such as prayer at meals or bedtime are very acceptable, but a placed child shall not be forced to participate in the practices. In the case of prayer at mealtime, if a child does not want to participate, he/she may be required to sit quietly while the rest of the family prays.
4. Unless the child’s family or caseworker has given permission, at no time shall a child be required to participate in any kind of religious instruction such as Sunday School or Bible study. If the child does not want to participate, he/she shall not be forced to do so.
5. If the foster/kin family’s religious beliefs do not permit certain secular or religious practices, such a Halloween or Christmas celebrations, the Department will attempt to help the provider devise a plan to accommodate the child’s right to participate in these practices if he/she or the child’s family wishes. Allowing the child to go to another home for these celebrations is one way to accommodate this request.

It is important to remember that inherent in our religious freedoms is the right not to practice any religion.

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AUTOMOBILE RESTRAINTS

Foster/kin parents must use appropriate car restraints whenever foster/kin children are being transported, as per Colorado State law. Children should never be allowed to be transported by any individual other than a foster parent unless that individual also provides appropriate restraints for the child and presents as sober and capable of safely handling an automobile, boat, or any other vehicle. For the most up-to-date State law please refer to www.carseatscolorado.com or contact **1-877-LUV-TOTS** (877-588-8687).

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EMERGENCY PROCEDURE AND EVACUATION POLICY

1. Every kinship/foster care home must be equipped with at least one 5 pound fire extinguisher or one of greater size.
2. Every floor of the kinship/foster home must have at least one smoke detector, and there must be a smoke detector located near each area of the home where bedrooms are located

3. Every kinship/foster home must have a documented fire escape plan and must conduct a fire drill each time a new child is placed into the home, or at least two per year when children are in placement in the home. Documentation of the escape plan and fire drills must be kept and provided to the foster/kin caseworker.
4. Each kinship/foster home provider must have a documented safety plan for tornadoes, floods, and other emergency situations that might arise. Documentation of the plan is to be shared with the foster/kin caseworker.
5. In the event of flood, only bottled water may be provided to kinship/foster children.
6. Flashlights are to be kept in the home and easily accessible to kinship/foster children for use in the event of power outages or other natural or man-made disasters.
7. Providers who live in remote areas that could experience wild fires are required to develop a safety plan that addresses how the family will respond to such situations.

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NATURAL DISASTER POLICY & PROCEDURE

Foster and kinship care providers who have children who have open cases through the Larimer County Department of Human Services living with them will travel out of state with those children only when they have first obtained written permission to do so from the child’s caseworker. In the event of emergency evacuation resulting from a natural disaster such as forest or mountain fire, flooding, earthquake, etc., or a terrorist attack, the result of which would be that the provider finds it necessary to leave an area under emergency conditions, the provider will contact DHS immediately upon arriving in a safe location. The provider will call our emergency hotline phone number, 970-498-6990 and provide the names of the children, their caseworkers, the location where they are, and a telephone number where they can be reached. They will provide any additional information as needed, such as emergency medical care being obtained. In the event that the hotline number cannot be reached, the provider will contact the Department of Human Services or local law enforcement in the location where they are staying and request that Department or agency notify Larimer County of their whereabouts.

Larimer Emergency Telephone Authority has implemented a new enhanced emergency notification system. This system allows us to CALL YOU to alert you to an emergency in your area. The system uses phone numbers in the 911 database. There is no cost to you for this service and the information you enter is protected. Go to <http://www.lcta911.org> to register.

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MEDICATION POLICY & PROCEDURE

Any medications, both prescription and nonprescription, for a foster/kin child shall be administered and stored in the following manner:

1. When a foster/kin child first goes into care, the family foster/kin provider shall request information regarding all medication the foster/kin child is currently taking.
2. All medication must be kept in a locked storage container, inaccessible to foster/kin children and stored according to pharmacy instructions.
3. All prescriptive medication shall be administered only upon the written prescription of a physician. The foster/kin provider shall also obtain written authorization from the prescribing physician to administer any non-prescriptive medication. All prescription information sheets (provided by the pharmacy) shall be kept in the child’s file.

4. All prescriptive medications must be stored in their original packaging from the pharmacy with all labels intact.
5. In an emergency situation, non-prescriptive medication may be administered on the verbal authorization of a physician. Written confirmation must then be obtained for the verbal authorization.
6. The foster/kin provider shall maintain for each foster/kin child a cumulative record of all medication, both prescriptive and non-prescriptive, dispensed to that child, including:
 - a. The name of the child.
 - b. The name and dosage of medication.
 - c. The time and date the medication was dispensed.
 - d. The name or initials of the person administering the medication.

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CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORTING

Within 24 hours of the occurrence of a critical incident at the foster home/facility, the foster home/facility shall call the CYF HUB 970-498-6990 and verbally report all critical incidents involving a child in care. The foster/kin provider shall also document the critical incident on “Injury, Accident, Illness or Fatality Report” located in the child’s placement binder and give it to his/her foster/kin caseworker. (The State Agency Letter with complete details regarding Critical Incidents is located in the child’s placement binder.)

Critical incidents are as follows:

1. Death of a child or foster/kin parent as a result of an accident, suicide, assault or any natural causes while in the home or elsewhere.
2. Suicide attempt by foster/kin child.
3. Injury to the child or a foster parent that requires emergency medical attention by a health care professional or admission to a hospital.
4. Any communicable illnesses (such as hepatitis, meningitis, mumps, TB, STD’s, dog/cat bites) of a child or foster parent that requires medical attention or admission to a hospital.
5. Any allegation of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect to a child.
6. Any fire that is responded to by the fire department.
7. Any major threat to the security of the foster home (such as a bomb threat, kidnapping, drive by shooting).
8. Any drug or alcohol related incident involving the child, foster parent that requires outside medical or emergency response.
9. Any felony theft or destruction of property by the child for which law enforcement is notified.
10. Any contact by a police or sheriff at the foster/kin home.

Upon receipt of the critical incident information, the HUB staff will forward the information to necessary personnel at the Department of Human Services.

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TRAMPOLINE REGULATIONS

LCDHS discourages the presence/use of trampolines in LCDHS kinship/foster homes. If one chooses to own a trampoline, it is recommended that the trampoline is equipped with a trampoline enclosure net.

Regardless of the presence of an enclosure net, if a kinship/foster care provider has a trampoline; the following stipulations must be followed according to Volume VII of the Colorado Children’s Code 7.708.22: *If there is a trampoline on the foster home property, safety issues regarding its use must be agreed upon with the foster parents and addressed in writing in the case file.*

The following are the safety precautions agreed upon between Larimer County DHS and the foster/kin provider:

1. Adult supervision is required while someone is jumping on the trampoline.
2. Follow guidelines required by the manufacturer of the trampoline.
3. Adequate padding (spring guards) must surround the trampoline’s edges.

Providers should understand that allowing a child to jump on a trampoline could result in liability against them if an injury were to occur. By signing this document, you are stipulating that you recognize and accept this responsibility.

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SWIMMING POOL, HOT TUB, SAUNA POLICY

LCDHS understands that some providers will have pools or other water related recreational equipment, or will take children to other locations where such equipment is located. When kinship/foster care providers are in the vicinity of such equipment the following requirements must be followed: All pools, hot tubs, or saunas must meet all health code requirements established by Larimer County and the State of Colorado for said equipment.

1. All pools, hot tubs, or saunas must be inaccessible to children whenever an adult is not present (locked and/or fenced away from access by the child).
2. Placed children may utilize the equipment only with adequate and CPR trained adult supervision present and immediately adjacent to the location of the child.

Initialed by kinship/foster: Placement Provider _____ Placement Provider _____

I understand that my initials following each policy contained within this packet and the presence of my signature below, verify that that I have read each policy, understand what is required of me by each policy, and agree to abide by all policy statements located herein.

Signature of Placement Provider

Date

Signature of Placement Provider

Date

Signature of Foster/Kinship Caseworker

Date

