

## **Section I: Agency Systems, Laws, and Processes**

### **I.1. Understanding the requirements of Ch. DCF 56 to meet the basic needs of children in out-of-home care**

- A. The foster family demonstrates knowledge of Ch. DCF 56, Adm. Code, and its requirements for licensure to meet the basic needs of children in its care as measured by completion of CFS-787 Child Foster Care Licensing Checklist.
- B. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding the requirement that any exceptions for licensure must be approved by the licensing agency or the Department on a case-by-case basis.

### **I.2. Goals of the Child Welfare System—Safety and Permanence**

- A. The foster family has basic knowledge of the primary goal of child safety, and has a general understanding of the types of services necessary to achieve protection and permanence for abused or neglected children and their families; and understands that federal law (including the Adoption and Safe Families Act) impacts state law and procedures.
- B. The foster family has basic knowledge that reunification is the primary goal unless the child cannot be returned safely to the family of origin.
- C. The foster family has basic knowledge that the rights of Indian children, Indian families, and tribes are protected by the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA); that children may be Indian regardless of physical appearance; and that ICWA affects placement decisions of Indian children.
- D. The foster family has basic knowledge that reunification with the family of origin is most often the goal for children who are placed in out-of-home care, and that the majority of children who are in out-of-home placements are reunited with their families.
- E. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding options that may be used to achieve timely permanence for children when they cannot be safely reunited with their families.

### **I.3. Legal Processes/Laws**

- A. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding how children enter the foster care system and recognizes the differences between Children in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS), Juveniles in Need of Protection or Services (JIPS), and delinquent youth.
- B. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding definitions of various legal terms and procedures used in the child welfare system.
- C. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding the role of the court in determining that a child (or community) is not safe; is aware that to assure safety the child or youth must be placed in out-of-home care; and knows that the placement of the child in out-of-home care is reviewed by the court or an administrative panel every six months with input from the agency, the foster family, the child's family members, and other appropriate individuals.
- D. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding the requirement to "immediately notify the supervising agency if the licensee has reasonable cause to believe that a foster child has been abused or neglected, or has been threatened with abuse or neglect and it is likely that the foster child will be abused or neglected." [Ref. s. DCF 56.05(1)(c)6., Adm. Code]

### **I.4. All Parties' Rights—Legal**

- absolute and contingent rights
- children's rights
- parents' rights
- relatives' rights
- foster parents' rights
- awareness of rights and where to turn to get info
- right to privacy

- A. The foster family has basic knowledge of the rights to privacy and confidentiality retained by all parties.
- B. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding the child's parents' legal rights to their child.

- C. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding to what they may give consent for a foster child in their care and is aware of agency policy regarding school permission slips, medical waivers, haircuts, religious participation, body piercing, etc.
- D. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding its responsibility for health and dental checks for foster children placed in its care and that this may necessitate foster parent travel to the service provider.
- E. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding the rights of teens in their care to have access to reproductive health care services.
- F. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding the agency's right to make decisions about whether to place a particular child (or any child) with the foster family.
- G. The foster family has basic knowledge that it should accept for placement only those children whose needs it reasonably believes can be met in its home.

#### **I.5. Roles/Relationships/Responsibilities**

- A. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding its responsibility to cooperate with the agency and to keep the agency informed of each child's progress and problems. [Ref. s. DCF 56.05(1)(c)3., Adm. Code]
- B. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding the need for it to interact with a variety of professionals, both directly and indirectly.
- C. The foster family has basic knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of individuals within the agency and judicial system, including the social worker/case manager, foster care coordinator, guardian ad litem, judges, attorneys, parent aides, and mental health workers.
- D. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding the need for the child to have contact with his or her family. Some examples of contact could include phone, face-to-face visits, e-mail, letters, court appearances, therapy sessions, and planning meetings.
- E. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding its role and that of the agency in keeping children safe and achieving permanence.
- F. The foster family has basic knowledge of and knows how to access agency policy, procedures, and resources as they relate to any child in their care.

### **Section II: System Expectations of Foster Parents**

#### **II.1. Nurturing Care and Discipline**

- A. The foster family has substantial knowledge regarding the requirement to provide humane and nurturing care to each child placed in its home and displays a willingness to do so. [Ref. s. DCF 56.09(1)(a) to (n) and s. 56.09(5), Adm. Code]
- B. The foster family has substantial knowledge of the rules and restrictions regarding discipline. [Ref. s. 56.09(5)(a) to (i), Adm. Code]
- C. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding the rationale prohibiting physical punishment for children and youth.
- D. The foster family has basic knowledge of and self-awareness regarding its own parenting style/skill and knows that strategies it might use with its own children may not be permissible with children in out-of-home care.
- E. The foster family has basic knowledge that any disciplinary action taken by a member of the foster family or any other person serving as a substitute caregiver shall be aimed at encouraging foster children to understanding appropriate social behavior and must be appropriate to the child's age, development, and knowledge. [Ref. s. DCF 56.09(5)(a) to (g), Adm. Code]
- F. The foster family has basic knowledge of the appropriate goals of discipline and knows the importance of approaching discipline as an educational strategy to guide and promote healthy child development.
- G. The foster family has basic knowledge of the reasons children and youth may display inappropriate or undesirable behaviors.

- H. The foster family has basic knowledge of how a foster child's inappropriate behaviors may be influenced by his or her developmental level, past experiences, and the unique stresses associated with separation, placement, and maltreatment.
- I. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding the importance of selecting a discipline strategy based upon a child's age, developmental level, past experiences, and the situation.
- J. The foster family has basic knowledge of effective strategies that promote healthy development, attachment, and self-esteem, while concurrently managing children's behavior.
- K. The foster family has basic knowledge about policies regarding the use of restraint and self-protective actions and behaviors.
- L. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding when the social worker, case manager, or foster care coordinator should be called for guidance with behavior management for a child and understands that asking for that help is a positive action.
- M. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding how to document behaviors or incidents and the importance of keeping the case worker informed of behavioral concerns.

## **II.2. Transportation**

- A. The foster family has basic knowledge that any person transporting foster children on its behalf for any purpose must have a valid driver's license.
- B. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding the requirement that all children under 8 years of age must be transported in an approved child safety restraint, in compliance with state law.
- C. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding agency policy for transportation of foster children, including insurance and vehicle liability requirements, who may transport the child, and rules for travel outside of the state.

## **II.3. Maintaining Family Connectedness**

- A. The foster family has basic knowledge about the requirement to cooperate with the supervising agency to maintain relationships between foster children and their families (including siblings) and with the agency's efforts to implement plans for care, treatment, and permanent living arrangements. [Ref. s. DCF 56.05(1)(c)7., Adm. Code].
- B. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding the requirement that, with few exceptions, the address and contact information of the foster home will be disclosed to the child's family.
- C. The foster family has basic knowledge and acceptance of the reality that all families, including its own, have strengths and weaknesses.
- D. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding how its own perspective of birth families impacts the foster family's behavior and interactions with the child and his or her family.
- E. The foster family has basic knowledge of the destructive consequences to children and the reunification process of stereotyping birth families.
- F. The foster family has basic knowledge of the grief process of a birth parent whose children have entered out-of-home care.
- G. The foster family has basic knowledge of the grief process of a child placed in out-of-home care.
- H. The foster family has basic knowledge of the value of a child's positive feelings toward his or her own parents, siblings, and extended family members and supports maintaining the child's connectedness with family.
- I. The foster family has basic knowledge of the importance of involving the child's family in day-to-day decision-making and other activities to support reunification and recognizes the connection between this involvement and the stability and mental health of the child.
- J. The foster family has basic knowledge that various behaviors in foster children may be triggered by contact with his or her family members and that there are strategies for helping the child and foster parents effectively cope with these behaviors.

## **II.4 Confidentiality**

- A. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding confidentiality requirements and agrees to abide by those requirements.
- B. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding the benefit of informing others, prior to the placement of a child, that it is a foster family and that the foster family is bound by law not to discuss any child in its care with others.
- C. The foster family and all individuals in the household have basic knowledge regarding with whom they may discuss issues relating to the foster children in the home.
- D. The foster family and all individuals in the household, including all children, have basic knowledge regarding strategies for responding to questions that would breach confidentiality.
- E. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding strategies for helping foster children understand and protect their confidentiality.

## **II. 5. Keeping You and Your Foster Child Safe**

- A. The foster family demonstrates knowledge of the requirements of Ch. DCF 56, Adm. Code, regarding the safety needs of children placed in its care as measured by the completion of Form CFS-787 Child Foster Care Licensing Checklist. [Ref. s. DCF 56.08(1) to (12), Adm. Code]
- B. The foster family has basic knowledge of the need to maintain records of any child in its care.
- C. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding the supervision needs of foster children across all environments (e.g., home, school, community) and that foster children often require more supervision than their same-aged peers, especially upon initial placement.
- D. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding the need to establish appropriate boundaries for all family members, including foster children placed in its care.
- E. The foster family has basic knowledge of signs and symptoms of illness and contagious conditions and knows health, hygiene, and nutrition practices that prevent or reduce the likelihood of illness in children and teens.
- F. The foster family has basic knowledge of the procedures that are required if and when allegations of maltreatment are made against caregivers and knows how to obtain information and support during this process.

## **Section III: Information Needed by Foster Parents**

### **III.1. Culture (Knowledge)**

- A. The foster family has basic knowledge that all individuals and families are impacted by life experiences, gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexual identity, socio-economic status, and race, all of which shape the culture of each family.
- B. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding how one's own cultural perspective can affect the development of relationships with children and families from different cultural backgrounds.
- C. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding awareness of its own beliefs, values, and behaviors toward individuals of differing backgrounds, including but not limited to gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexual identity, socio-economic status, and race.
- D. The foster family has basic knowledge of the potential destructiveness of stereotyping of any individual or group, including but not limited to culture, race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexual identity, and socio-economic status.
- E. The foster family has basic knowledge of how culture, race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexual identity, and socio-economic background may affect the perceptions and reactions to the placement of foster children and their birth families.
- F. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding the importance of helping children in care maintain a healthy cultural identity and of incorporating elements of a child's cultural heritage into family practices.

- G. The foster family has basic knowledge that the physical care (e.g., diet, hair and skin care, dress) may be different for children from cultural backgrounds that are different from that of the foster family.
- H. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding awareness of its own ability and limitations to care for a child who may have a background or a sexual orientation different from their own and understands the need to discuss this with the social worker or case manager.

### **III.2. Child Development**

- A. The foster family has basic knowledge of the primary stages and milestones of normal physical, cognitive, social, sexual, and emotional development in children and youth and has basic knowledge of potential areas of developmental delay.
- B. The foster family has basic knowledge that emotional harm, physical and sexual abuse, and neglect each impact child development.
- C. The foster family has basic knowledge of the potentially negative effects of physical abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse on children's development and that the foster parents should report any concerns or observations related to the child's development to the child's case manager.
- D. The foster family has basic knowledge of some of the characteristics of children who have been sexually abused and knows what to do if a child discloses sexual or other types of abuse.
- E. The foster family has basic knowledge and awareness that sexual abuse is a complex problem for children and teens which impacts their individual development and that the caregiver needs additional ongoing resources and training to successfully care for these children and teens.

### **III.3. Grief/Loss and Separation**

- A. The foster family has basic knowledge about the effects of separation for the child and birth family and is aware of some strategies to help the child handle feelings of sadness, loss, anxiety, and anger.
- B. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding how a child's developmental level affects his or her knowledge of, and reactions to, out-of-home placement.
- C. The foster family has basic knowledge of emotional conflicts that can arise for a child during the placement process and how they may impact the child's behavior and interactions with others: divided loyalty, perceived abandonment or rejection, reactivation of feelings from previous separations, ambivalence about attachment, and ambivalence about permanency.
- D. The foster family has basic knowledge of the negative impact of multiple placements on a child's emotional, cognitive, and social development and behavior.

### **III.4. Effects of Fostering on Your Family**

- A. The foster family has basic knowledge of the potential effects on the care-giving family of fostering children and teens.
- B. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding the fact that many foster parents experience allegations of child maltreatment at some time during their licensure.

### **III.5. Reimbursement**

- A. The foster family has basic knowledge of the following information:
  - i. Foster care rate structure, reimbursement procedures, and clothing allowance brochure.
  - ii. Foster parent insurance brochure, including information on how to file a claim.
- B. The foster family has basic knowledge regarding how fostering has a financial impact on its family; that reimbursement may not cover all expenses for foster children; and that payments may be delayed for various reasons.