



# Virginia Department of Social Services

*people helping people*

Foster Parent Bill of Rights Training

*January 5, 2022*

# Virginia Department of Social Services: Foster Parent Bill of Rights Training January 5, 2022 (2:00-3:00)



Intended participants for this training are licensed child-placing agencies authorized to provide foster care, short-term foster care or treatment foster care services, who also place children in the custody of local departments of social services in the homes of approved providers.

# VDSS Mission & Vision

## **Mission:**

To design and deliver high-quality human services that help Virginians achieve safety, independence and overall well-being.

## **Vision:**

A Commonwealth in which all Virginians have the resources and services they need to shape strong futures for themselves, their families and their communities.

# We're So Glad You're Here!

- ✓ Please keep your lines MUTED (both computer and phone)
- ✓ Use the CHAT box to interact with everyone
- ✓ Please type your name, email and agency in the chat

# AGENDA

- Kin First Virginia
- Foster Parent Bill of Rights
- Dispute Process
- Best Practices for Resource Family
- Open Discussion

# Kin First Virginia

- ✓ **Lead with a Kin First philosophy = Finding a way to YES!**
- ✓ **Have written policies and protocols that reflect equity for children with kin and recognize their unique circumstances**
- ✓ **Identify and engage kin at every step**
- ✓ **Perform our work with a sense of urgency- if entry into foster care is necessary, we make the first placement a kinship placement ALWAYS**
- ✓ **Make approving kinship foster parents a priority**
- ✓ **Build a strong community network to support kinship families**
- ✓ **Support permanent families for children**



# Relative/Fictive Kin Placements

If first placed with relative/fictive kin...

Will spend four fewer months in care

62% will not be moved to a different placement

96% will exit to permanency

98% will not age out of care

98% will not enter *Fostering Futures*



# Background on Rights & Disputes

**Before 2018, No formal or acknowledged rights for Foster Parents**

**2019 Emergency Legislation HB 2108 created Foster Parent Bill of Rights**

**2022 Permanent Legislation for Bill of Rights and Dispute Process:**

**2018 Dispute Process involved talking to LDSS, calling Constituent hotline or working with regional consultants**

**2019 Foster Care added Dispute Process to FC Guidance**



# Foster Parent Rights

**All foster parents, including kinship foster parents, have rights regarding collaboration, communication, access, and transparency.**

- To be regarded as the primary caregiver and treated with **dignity, respect, trust, value, and consideration**, including due consideration to the foster parent's family values, traditions, and beliefs
- To be considered **part of the foster care team** and to be **able to contribute input regarding the child's permanency plan** and receive copies of the plan
- To be able to **communicate with professionals who work directly with the child in foster care**
- To be **informed in a timely manner of changes** to the child's case plan or the termination of the child's placement
- To be afforded the same rights as outlined in the Foster Care Placement Agreement and the **Code of Ethics and Mutual Responsibilities**
- To be provided with a method to contact the local board or licensed child-placing agency for **assistance 24 hours a day and seven days a week**

# Documents & Notifications

- To receive copies of all documents related to the foster parent, the foster parent's family, and ongoing services provided to the foster home
- To be provided all reasonably ascertainable background, medical, and psychological records of the child prior to placement, at the initial placement, or at any time during the placement of a child in foster care
- To be provided all information relevant to the child's foster care services as allowed by federal and state law

# Documents & Notifications, continued

- To be notified of court hearings and scheduled meetings
- To be informed of decisions made by the court, local board, or licensed child-placing agency concerning the child's foster care services
- To receive a timely response from the local department of social services regarding whether or not information may be provided to requests for information regarding the child's progress after leaving foster care.

# Action items

DON'T FORGET TO

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

www.Creative-Children.com



- Review the Bill of Rights with previously approved foster parents and maintain a signed copy in the family file.
- Share the Bill of Rights with all future approved foster parents and maintain a signed copy in the family file.
- Discuss with DOLP staff internal processes and policies impacted.
- Assure all LCPA staff are aware of Foster Parent rights.

# Dispute Process

Foster parent & FSS

- Foster Parent contacts FSS with **10** days with detailed description of violation of Bill of Rights
- FSS responds within **5** days and explains corrective action to complaint

Supervisor

- If not resolved, foster parent files **written** complaint to supervisor within **10** days
- Supervisor responds within **5** days with findings and corrective action taken

LDSS Director

- If foster parent disagrees with supervisor, they appeal to local director with **written notice**
- Director **holds a meeting with all parties** within **7** days to gather information and determine validity of alleged violation of Bill of Rights and appropriateness of corrective action made
- Director issues to all parties **written** findings and recommendations for corrective actions

- Foster Parents can call 833-TELL 2FC (833-835-5232) to reach Virginia Division of Family Services for disputes

# Collective Thinking

**Is the role of Foster Parents more like a mechanic or a gardener?**



# Best Practices



# Pre-Service Training and Beyond

- Approval as a foster parent is based on careful assessment of provider requirements, including applicants participation in: orientation; and pre-service training (22VAC40-131.200.C); and pre-placement visitation (22VAC40-131-250)







# § 63.2-902

**Collaborate**

**Communicate**

**Access**

**Transparency**

# Families for Children, not Children for Families

## Expanding Foster Parent Profiles



1. Gather data on approved resource parents' **preferences/profiles**
2. Gather data on your LDSSs **placement needs for children in your care**
3. Reach out to your foster parents to **inform them of the identified needs** during that quarterly monitoring visit or during a check-in call
4. Have an open dialogue exchange with your families to see if they would be **willing to adjust or stretch their preferences/considerations to meet the need**. Ask them what has kept them from expanding their profile. Would additional training or supports made a difference to meet the needs of a broader range of children with confidence
5. **Provide the needed support and resources** to meet the children's needs for trauma-informed and successful outcomes

# Foster Parents as a Support NOT a Substitute



- Ice Breaker meetings
- Take Responsibility for “Setting the Stage”
- Regularly reinforce the goal of reunification with foster parents
- Establish concurrent goal of relative placement
- Build and maintain successful relationships with parents
- Stay true to the model, utilize family & support

# Retaining & Developing Foster Families

- Stay connected regularly during placements to **listen** to the challenges
- Offer resources and training treat foster parents with dignity, respect, trust, value, and consideration, and give due consideration to the foster parent's family values, traditions, and beliefs
- Encourage them and focus on **strengths and solutions**. Remind them that the **challenging behaviors are communication** and to look for the unmet need
- **Connect them with supports** including other experienced and effective foster parents. Augment foster families' abilities with training and support resources
- Listen to foster parents and **debrief after placements** to acknowledge successes and identify areas of growth so they can develop while they wait for the next youth to be placed with them



# Discussion



# YouTube Video Link

To view the presentation cut and paste the link below into your web browser

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXW6nBVbS8w>