

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





- 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 childplacing 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

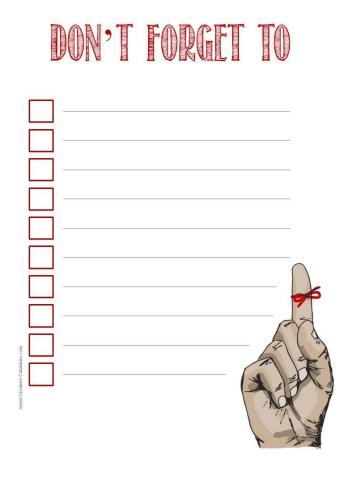


Documents & Notifications, continued

- 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



- 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



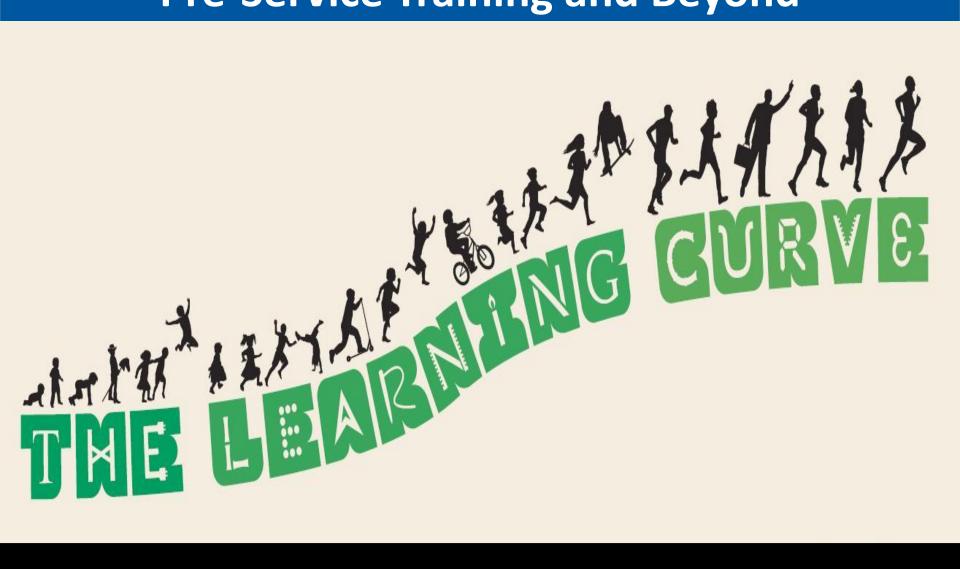
Pre-Service Training and Beyond

 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)

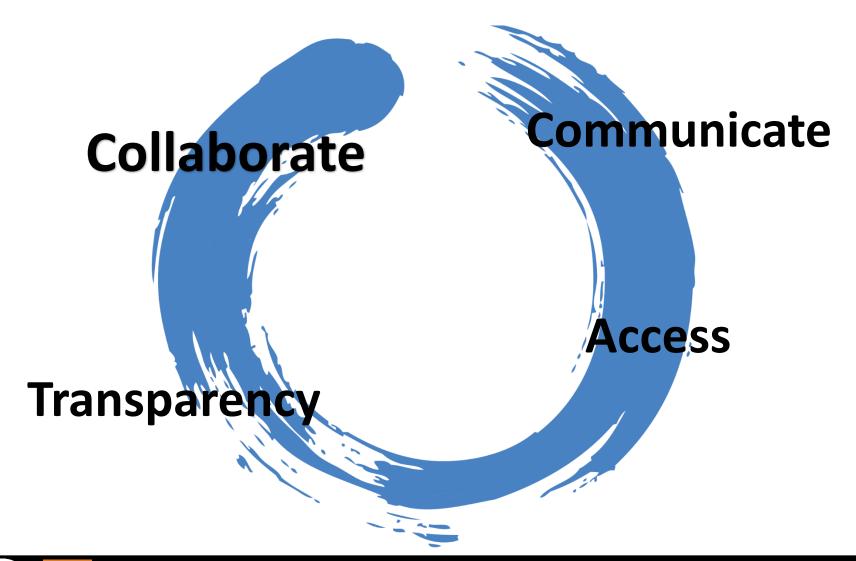




Pre-Service Training and Beyond



§ 63.2-902





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
- 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 traumainformed 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

