Little City’s
Center for Family and Community Based Services
Foster Care and Adoption Program

2017 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan

PURPOSE:

- This booklet is a resource for you
- Outlines mutual Rights and Responsibilities
- Developed from IL Foster Parent Law Rule 340

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, or SUGGESTIONS?
- Contact Katherine Oglesby:
  (773) 916-4091 or koglesby@littlecity.org
2017 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
Rule 340
FOSTER PARENT CODE

LITTLE CITY
Main Office
1760 West Algonquin Road
Palatine, IL 60067

Chicago Office
(Administrative Site for the Foster Care/Adoption Program)
700 N. Sacramento Blvd, Ste. 201
Chicago, IL 60612
Little City’s
2017 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan

Foster Parent & Staff
Receipt / Input / Development

Signature Page

1 Delivery method chosen by foster family:
   a. Email __________
   b. Web Pickup __________
   c. Paper Copy __________

2 Foster Family Name ____________________________

3 Signature Confirming Receipt ____________________________

4 Date ____________________________

5 Approval
   a. I/We approve of this Plan in total __________
   b. I/We do not approve of this Plan __________
   c. I/We suggest the following changes be made: __________
      ___________________________________________________________________
      ___________________________________________________________________
      ___________________________________________________________________

6 Signature/Date of Staff Delivering:
________________________________________________________________________
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Little City Foundation (LCF) received a rating of “Acceptable” for our 2016 Foster Parent Implementation Plan. Little City was pleased with the strengths of the plan noted by the Advisory Council.

**Foster Parent Involvement:**
This last year has been positive for Foster Parent involvement with the development of this 2017 Implementation Plan, as will be evident throughout the plan. In January 2016, we had a total of 19 foster parents who reviewed the current plan and discussed input into the 2017 plan. Out of that group, we were able to form a Foster Parent Advisory Committee to meet quarterly with at least five foster parents participating quarterly. We met in January, April, July and September. Their input into the plan and new initiatives set forth by the agency have been invaluable to the agency. All Foster Parents were provided an opportunity to review the nearly finalized draft of the 2017 plan for comment and feedback was incorporated into the plan’s final version.

**Direct Service Staff Involvement:**
Staff are trained on the Foster Parent Implementation Plan in January and July. Staff are invited to attend the Implementation Advisory meetings as well, and some staff participated. Little City’s management team reinforces Little City’s commitment to ensuring foster parents’ rights and responsibilities in supervision and meetings at the team and department level. Their input, along with our foster parents’, are included in the 2017 plan.

**Deficiencies/Suggestions for Improvement for Little City 2016 Plan:**
1. The DCFS Lending Library has been discontinued, so please remove all references to it:  
   **This information has been removed.**
2. Workers enroll foster parents in training for the year. This does not seem like a mutual assessment for training needs:  
   **Please see Right #2 for clarification and updates to training enrollment.**
3. Describe caseworker training re: information sharing in Narrative # 7. 
   **Highlighted in the Narrative for #7**
4. Describe how case workers are held accountable for notifying foster parents of upcoming court hearing in Narrative #12 
   **Updated; see Narrative #12.**
5. Strengthen the description of 14 day notice in written form 
   **Updated; see Narrative #11**
6. Address all of the specific trainings required in Rule 340, i.e. confidentiality, court, service appeal, etc. 
   **Updated; See Narrative #2**
7. Narrative #23(8) needs to be strengthen with more details about early identification of risk of placement disruption and placement stabilization. 
   **Updated; See Narrative #23.**
Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedures:
Little City Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure was developed in conjunction with our Foster Parent Advisory Council Members and Staff. Program’s Grievance Procedure is reviewed during our Pre-Service Training and on-going in our Foster Parent Implementation Plan Trainings & Advisory Councils. All Little City Foster Parents have access to the procedure through the Little City website (https://www.littlecity.org/programs/children/foster/policies/), and hard copies are provided to all foster parents upon placement of a child into one’s home within Child Files that is reviewed by the licensing worker.

List of Revised Rights Narratives:
This year, Little City revised all of our Rights Narratives (#1-#15) to incorporate all of the feedback and input from our Foster Parent Advisory Council, Training Committee, and Staff. Revisions were also made in response to Federal, DCFS and/or LCF policy and/or procedural changes, as applicable, as well. All revisions are notated by being bolded.

List of Revised Responsibilities Narratives:
This year, Little City revised all of our Responsibilities Narratives (#1-#17) to incorporate all of the feedback and input from our Foster Parent Advisory Council, Training Committee, and Staff. Revisions were also made in response to Federal, DCFS and/or LCF policy and/or procedural changes, as applicable, as well. All revisions are notated by being bolded.
# FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS

Your rights are dictated by Illinois Law, Rule 340 found

http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/089/089003400c00600r.html

## YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td><strong>Dignity, Respect and Consideration:</strong> Be treated with dignity, respect and consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td><strong>Training:</strong> Be provided Pre-Service and on-going training to meet needs and improve skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td><strong>Support:</strong> Be informed on how to contact the placement agency for assistance and access to support services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td><strong>On-Time Financial Reimbursement:</strong> Receive timely financial reimbursement for care included in the service plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td><strong>A Placement Plan:</strong> Be provided with information about the agency’s plan for placement that includes supporting family relationships and cultural heritage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td><strong>Fair, Timely and Impartial Investigations:</strong> Be provided fair, timely and impartial investigations, including mediation and/or administrative review and explanations of decisions concerning licensing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td><strong>Information About Children:</strong> Receive additional and necessary information relevant to the child’s care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td><strong>Information Required by Acts of Law from DCFS</strong> Be given information concerning the child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td><strong>Be Included in Team Meetings:</strong> Be notified of scheduled meetings concerning the child and decisions made concerning the child. To have input concerning the plan of services for the child and to communicate with other professionals who work with the child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td><strong>Disclosure of Information:</strong> To have any information the caseworker has about the child and his family that pertains to the child’s needs and care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td><strong>Written Notice of Placement Changes:</strong> Receive written notice of any plans to end placement, along with the reason and appeal information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td><strong>Appear at Court:</strong> Receive timely notification and invitations to attend of court hearings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td><strong>Placement Option for Children Re-entering Care:</strong> Be considered as a placement option for foster children formerly in their care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td><strong>Timely Access to Service Appeal System:</strong> Foster parents have the right to have access to an agency or DCFS’ appeals process without retaliation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td><strong>Call the Foster Parent Hotline:</strong> Be informed of the Foster Parent Hotline and information on reporting staff misconduct.</td>
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</table>
**RIGHT #1: DIGNITY, RESPECT & CONSIDERATION**

Foster parents have the right to be treated with dignity, respect, and consideration. They are professional members of the child welfare team.

The mission and values statements of Little City Foundation’s (LCF) Foster Care and Adoption Program reflect inclusion and engagement of foster parents as key members of the treatment team.

Little City’s Foster Parent Advisory Group provided feedback that it is important to them to receive timely notification of staffings and/or case-related changes; receive prompt returned calls; and received advance requests for scheduling of home visits and/or notification of changes to a prescheduled visit, all as elements of demonstrating respect and consideration of them as valued members of the treatment team. Foster parents remarked that overall case managers, therapists, and supervisors are very respectful and responsive to their needs, and it was noted that the comments of concern were related to specific individuals. Program heard this feedback, but noted the feedback as important for all staff even if the comments were directed at a few.

In response, program has imparted the importance of engaging foster parents as valued treatment team members in team meetings and supervision, with noted improvement and feedback from supervisors and foster parents. Program also increased communications to foster parents through e-mail, text and mail to ensure information was received in a timely manner. Program information, like training opportunities and more, are regularly posted on agency’s Facebook page for timely dissemination as well. Supervisors attend CFTMs to ensure all program-and case-related information is shared.

Little City’s Treatment Philosophy defines the foster parent relationship with the child as being the key change agent in the child’s treatment and life. Little City has expanded upon our treatment philosophy by introducing a new theoretical approach, Collaborative Problem Solving, that furthers foster parent inclusion as key team members in ensuring child well-being. The key concept to this approach is “Kids do well if they can” and “Families do well if they can.”

Foster Parents are invited and encouraged to participate in all aspects of care and planning for the youth in their care, including Court hearings; Administrative Case Reviews (ACR); Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTMs); education and school-related meetings; medical-related intervention and care; and child- and family-therapy (LCF provides weekly, in-home therapy to children and their foster families) during home visits (which occur 3x/month for specialized cases, which make-up a majority of the cases served by Little City), during CFTMs, and through weekly check-ins via phone, text, and/or e-mail, as foster parents are vital members of the youth’s treatment team.

Foster parents who submitted comments in response to the distribution of the 2016 plan, and/or who participated in the development of the 2017 plan, and/or who answered our annual satisfaction survey did not report any level of dissatisfaction with their inclusion as team members. In fact, Little City’s program and program staff attained a 92% overall satisfaction rate with more than half of foster parents responding to our annual survey.

Many foster parent comments in both the general narrative and in the employee recognition section indicated that foster families are very pleased with the level of communication between themselves and the program.
Supervisors and Licensing & Support Supervisor conduct random phone calls, regular home visits, licensing visits, and participate in CFTMs to the families on their case workers’ caseloads to inquire about services, offer consideration for foster parents when coordinating services and visits, and provide timely follow up on any issues. Concerns are addressed with workers during supervision and reflected in annual performance evaluations.

Home visits are conducted three times a month and CTFMs quarterly by program child welfare specialists. These regular contacts provide an opportunity for foster parents to partner with staff, management and collaterals to share information. Little City has created a detailed home visit checklist and CFTM guide for case managers to use to ensure comprehensive care is being provided to the children in our program and to ultimately ensure the safety, well-being and permanency of those served.

Little City recognizes the outstanding work our foster parents do by sharing stories in our quarterly newsletter, on our website (https://www.littlecity.org/foster) on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/LittleCityFosterCare), on Twitter (https://twitter.com/LCF FosterCare), and through sharing our YouTube videos (3 minute version: https://youtu.be/dZPGcFh9T3E, 1 minute version: https://youtu.be/z-szQbUrmIQ). We provide our foster parents the platform to shine by co-training LCF pre-service and on-going foster parent trainings. The Keeping It Real course of LCF pre-service is fully led by foster parents to provide a real insight into foster parenting from foster parents’ perspectives. Little City also regularly includes foster parents in our recruitment efforts. Four (4) Foster Parents aided agency in actively recruiting new families in a community recruitment event, Call to Action: Foster Our Teens! hosted at Kennedy King College on 10/22/2016.
Foster parents have the right to be provided training both pre-service and ongoing training to ensure they have all the tools they need to meet the needs of children in their care, as well as their own needs.

Little City’s Foster Care and Adoption Program serves children with special needs, including intellectual, developmental, and emotional/behavioral disabilities in our specialized foster care program and siblings of these minors in our traditional foster care program. Given the higher level of need of our program participants, LCF provides tailored pre-service and on-going trainings specific to the clients we serve, consistent with procedures, and in compliance with the DCFS’ required 16 annual training hours a year for specialized foster parents (see training attachment.) Training evaluation forms specifically noted satisfaction with the program’s trainers and offered courses.

In FY16, Little City hosted over 64 hours of training for our foster parents. We are projecting to host near that amount this year as well. We have increased the availability of on-line trainings through Infinitie and we have located and shared e-trainings with our foster parents from community partners, including DCFS.

Little City’s 2017 Training was developed in collaboration with foster parents who served as members of our Foster Parent Advisory Committee, Training Committee, and in a direct response to feedback received on evaluations, surveys, and during visits about needed trainings. The 2017 Training Curriculum incorporated more trainings to provide foster parents with more “tools for their toolbox” in working with youth’s challenging behaviors. A key component of this tool box is the development and utilization of Individual Crisis Management Plans (ICMP) adapted from the Trauma Crisis Intervention (TCI) model. There are also more tools related to addressing trauma using the Evidence-Based Intervention Model of Collaborative Problem-Solving techniques. Little City also developed a comprehensive Psychotropic Medication Manual distributed to all foster parents, with formal training being added to 2017 Pre-Service and on-going monthly trainings.

Little City’s pre-service training consists of six (6), 2-hour training sessions hosted consecutively on Saturdays or Tuesday/Thursday evenings. Little City Pre Service Training reviews Confidentiality, Court, and Service Appeal in our Pre Service Policies & Procedures training. Little City hosts our pre-service training quarterly in January, April, July and October. Additional sessions are hosted based upon need. Foster parents are also required to complete, CPR Training, CPI: Non Violent Crisis Intervention Training and 10 volunteer hours with children within our specialized foster care and adoption program prior to licensure.

LCF offers monthly training that we refer to as “Training Tuesdays” the second Tuesday of every month at a minimum. Program hosts training at our Chicago office and in the southern suburb of Dolton IL to host evening training sessions and make them more accessible for a majority of our parents. These increased training offerings have resulted in increased monthly participation. Little City sends out a letter at the end of the year with our New Year training calendar. Little City provides each family with training topics that they may be interested in based on the type of child(ren) they have placed, or want placed, in their care. Little City licensing workers are tasked with contacting their foster parents to assess training needs and desires, and then enroll them in applicable trainings.

All foster parents are required to complete DCFS’ 9-Module, 27-hour PRIDE training as a prerequisite to becoming a licensed foster parent. Little City ensures enrollment in PRIDE training, liaises with the DCFS trainers, and incorporates what is learned in our comprehensive home study assessments.
Little City also hosts DCFS-sponsored on-going trainings. Little City has provided our foster parents with information to access their DCFS VTC Training accounts in order to complete their annual training requirements (16 hours per year for specialized foster parents.)

https://www.dcfstraining.org/vtc/home/home.action
**RIGHT #3: SUPPORT**

Foster parents have the right to be well supported in their efforts to be excellent parents to special needs children.

Little City’s foster parents remarked in the trainings, Foster Parent Advisory Meetings, and Satisfaction Survey that overall, they feel supported by Little City’s team of staff including licensing, case management, therapist, and supervisory staff. Following an initiative led by Little City’s Foster Parent Advisory Committee, foster parent support groups are being hosted quarterly beginning in January 2017. Foster parents have volunteered to host these meetings for foster parents in their home along with a potluck.

Little City staff is available to foster parents and the youth in their care 24/7, per our detailed Emergency Contact Procedure. Foster parents receive crisis management training through our pre-service and on-going trainings, and written information and resources are provided to foster parents upon the placement of a child in the Child Files. **Little City has implemented a new On Call system effective 10/31/2016.** Case Managers are no longer on call 24/7 during the week for their own cases. The agency has moved to a week long on call staff rotation and case manager and therapist are assigned for one entire week Monday to Monday. Supervisory staff are available for back-up support. This information has been sent out to all foster parents via e-mail, and regular mail, and will be distributed with this finalized plan. Little City’s on-call number is (847) 358-5510. Foster parents are to call this number after business hours to be connected to an on-call staff.

Little City provides comprehensive home- and community-based wraparound services to the clients and their families in our care. Services may include mentoring, tutoring, respite, weekly in-home clinical support (individual and foster parent/child therapy), intensive case management (3x/month home visits), Family Stabilization Specialist support services, transportation and the like. Case managers support our foster parents by making sure that the child’s needs are being met in the community, at school, and in healthcare. Little City helps identify and select resources, plan meetings and advocate as needed. Little City completes quarterly CFTMs, with the bi-annual meetings being to review and update the child’s Service Plan and visitation plans to ensure appropriate service array, and mutual agreement to those services and plans for the child.

If a child in Little City’s traditional foster care program, or placed within a relative foster home, requires placement stabilization or is experiencing a crisis, IPS (formerly SOC) services may be utilized. IPS uses a wraparound model to ensure support a child and his/her family. Examples of services IPS may be able to provide include individual, family and group therapy; mentoring and tutoring; support groups for foster parents; case and school management; and advocacy. Little City refers youth to IPS when mutually-identified by the treatment team.

Children served within Little City’s specialized foster care program are eligible for paid respite through the agency. The agency supports informal respite by connecting foster parents with one another through a foster parent mentoring and support program. During this last year we have been able to continue to explore ways in which to expand and formalize our respite program to include internal foster parent support during the 2016 year. **Little City has also contracts with an intensive mentoring program.**

Foster parents are regularly provided information about support services available to them in trainings, via print notices, through social media channels, and during in-person contacts with agency staff, and via distribution of this plan. Information about Little City’s supportive services are communicated upon placement and reviewed
in CFTMs. Foster parents may request supportive services for the child and/or him/herself at any time by contacting program staff.

**Support Services are tailored to each individual child and family’s needs:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All cases receive:</th>
<th>Additional supports, by need:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intensive, in-home case management services including at least 3x/month in-person contact with children and their caregivers. Additional monthly contacts are made to collaterals on the case.</td>
<td>Mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 hour/7 day a week crisis support</td>
<td>Tutoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service coordination for child’s special needs</td>
<td>Recreational programming, including art and sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational advocacy. <strong>LCF has an on-staff Educational Advocate.</strong></td>
<td>Medical coordination and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly stipend that includes transportation assistance</td>
<td>Family Stabilization Specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court advocacy for each child</td>
<td>Respite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly training and support groups</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment and service planning including ICAP, Vineland, CANS, CERAP, IA, Service Plans, Ansell-Casey</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical services (therapy) for behavioral, emotional, and/or developmental challenges. LCF’s clinical team provides home-based clinical services that are developmentally, behaviorally, and play-based using evidence-based approaches. Services include individual and foster parent-child family therapy weekly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition Planning</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Adoption and Guardianship Assistance</td>
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</table>
RIGHT #4: TIMELY FINANCIAL REIMBURSEMENT

Foster parents have the right to receive timely financial reimbursement commensurate with the care needs of the child as specified in the service plan.

Foster Parents will be reimbursed on a daily basis for each night that a youth lives in their home. Payments are directly deposited, or sent by mail, monthly. Payments are made on the 15th of each month. If the 15th of the month falls on a weekend, payments are made the Friday before.

Little City subcontracts with DCFS as a purchase of service (POS) agency to provide care to children within four (4) different foster care contracts:

1) Traditional Contract: Youth served on Little City’s traditional contract have experienced abuse and/or neglect and may have some behavioral, emotional, or other special needs, but not at the level requiring the specialized services and supports of a child served in our specialized program. Foster parents are paid the traditional rate based upon the child’s age (see Table below.) All of the children served on Little City’s traditional contract are siblings to a child served on Little City’s specialized contract. Traditional children receive a minimum of once monthly home visits. They may also engage in supportive services that include therapy, educational supports, or medication management.

2) Specialized Contract: Youth served on Little City’s specialized contract (95% of program participants) have complex, multi-faceted documented specialized needs; primary among those needs is being diagnosed with an intellectual, developmental, and/or emotional/behavioral disability. Specialized children require intensive service provision and coordination, supervision and care to promote their well-being. Foster parents are paid the specialized rate (see Table below.) A child’s case must be heard before a multidisciplinary team of professionals at a CIPP meeting convened at DCFS and moderated by a neutral party (a DCFS staff) in order to be classified as “specialized” and thus, receive the specialized rate. Youth with special needs receive more intensive supports as outlined in Narrative #3 above.

3) Adolescent Specialized Contract: Children served on Little City’s Adolescent Specialized Contract must be at least 11 years old and exhibit moderate to severe adjustment, behavioral, emotional or developmental needs requiring intensive supports and services in order to maintain the minor in a foster home placement. Children served on this contract have often stepped-down from a residential placement setting and require rigorous supervision and support to maintain placement in foster care. Foster parents are paid the adolescent specialized rate (see Table below.) Adolescent youth receive intensive wrap-around services as outlined in Narrative #3 above.

4) Home of Relative Contract/ Fictive Kin: Children residing within unlicensed homes of relatives or fictive kin are reimbursed on a monthly basis by DCFS (approximately $300/month/child.) If a child has been determined by the treatment team to need additional supportive services the family can receive Difficulty of Care rate as long as they have an application for licensure pending on the DCFS system. Little City assumes reimbursement of these homes once they become licensed per contract the youth qualifies for as outlined above.
If at any time, you feel that a child is incorrectly classified, we will work with you and DCFS to rectify this right away.

Traditional Board Payment Rates: *(these rates are consistent with those tendered by DCFS)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child’s Age</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Board</th>
<th>Clothing</th>
<th>Allowance</th>
<th>Daily Per Diem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-11 months</td>
<td>$418</td>
<td>$366</td>
<td>$39.00</td>
<td>$13.00</td>
<td>$13.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 4 years</td>
<td>$426</td>
<td>$368</td>
<td>$44.00</td>
<td>$14.00</td>
<td>$14.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 8 years</td>
<td>$445</td>
<td>$371</td>
<td>$59.00</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td>$14.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 – 11 years</td>
<td>$472</td>
<td>$379</td>
<td>$68.00</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
<td>$15.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Years &amp; Over</td>
<td>$511</td>
<td>$389</td>
<td>$77.00</td>
<td>$45.00</td>
<td>$16.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specialized Board Payment Rates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contract</th>
<th>Daily Board Rate + Daily Transportation Stipend=(Total Board Payment/Day) = Averaged Monthly Board Payment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Adolescent Specialized Contract | $37.32 + $6.18 = ($43.50/day) = $1323.13/averaged monthly board payment
*Foster parents receive additional support services, including intensive respite* |
| Specialized Contract    | $37.32 + $6.18 = ($43.50/day) = $1323.13/averaged monthly board payment                               |

Funds Paid To, and/or In Support of Youth:

The traditional payment rate breaks down the allotment of *minimum* funds to be set aside monthly based a child’s age in the areas of clothing and allowance. Funds provided for the care of a youth are not designed or intended to cover all costs of a youth’s care; rather, to offer additional financial support to supplement one’s own financial resources. Youth served on Little City’s specialized contracts receive a significant amount of additional funding to support needed resources, services, and items for the youth.

Some foster parents have reported that they pay a youth in their care $125 a month to cover the funds owed for allowance and clothing. Other parents reported providing their youth with a prepaid gift card with allowance funds on it for purchase of goods/items at the youth’s discretion. Program provides allowance logs to track the disbursement of funds per procedure. Program also completes Clothing Inventories twice yearly, at a minimum, to ensure youth has adequate clothing.

Program recommends disbursing funds to youth after an assessment of their ability to manage their funds. Foster parents are also encouraged to assist youth in establishing saving accounts. The graduates from the Financial Literacy Class now have bank accounts, and many other youth in program do as well.

Teenage youth need to learn skills to be more independent. Aligned with this is taking public transportation to/from school and/or work. Little City pays foster parents $.6.18/day, or $185 in a 30-day month, in support of the youth’s transportation. As such, the Foster Parent Advisory Committee Members supported the recommendation that foster parents purchase youth a monthly bus pass. Many foster
parents reported benefits of doing this with the youth in their care. Extra funds to support a youth’s graduation from High School are available per the DCFS schedule of payments.

Teenage youth in care are eligible for additional funds and resources as outlined in DCFS’s “Get GOAL’D” Handbook available on DCFS’s website.

- Some of these include life skills and vocational training; employment incentive funds; college scholarships; and more!
- All youth who are scheduled to attain independence upon turning 21 years of age are eligible for a onetime payment of $1,200.00 upon emancipation if the youth has successfully completed the Countdown to 21 protocol per DCFS procedure. Little City staff engages the youth and their foster family in the process to ensure payment.

Agency Payment for Additional Supportive Services:

1. **Respite:** Little City offers additional financial reimbursement for respite services. Little City offers a minimum of 15 hours a month of paid respite to foster parents serving children on LCF’s adolescent and specialized contracts. Respite is reviewed quarterly and based upon the needs of the child and family.

2. **Sibling and Parent-Child Visitation:** Little City strives to maintain and strengthen family relationships. LCF reimburses foster parents for their supervision of sibling visits at the rate of $25/hour up to $100/month plus a maximum of $50/month for mileage traveled between the foster family home and the visit site (so a total of $150/month is available!) Travel reimbursement is calculated at the agency’s mileage reimbursement rate, $0.54/mile. Documentation for the supervision of sibling visitation and transportation must accompany the request for reimbursement; the agency requests receipt of these on a monthly basis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sibling Reimbursement</th>
<th>Sibling Visit Reimbursement Paid on a Monthly Basis to any foster parent responsible for transporting (regardless of being the host of the sibling visit:)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid on a Monthly Basis to the Host of the Visit:</td>
<td>$25/Hour up to $100/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$0.54 cents a mile to/from the foster parent home to the visit site up to $50 total for the month</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3. **Birth Parent Reunification Support Payments:** Foster parents and biological parents must mutually agree to participate in the family reunification project, and timely reimbursement requires monthly submission of the Special Service Fee Log. Biological parent reunification visits are reimbursed according to the Family Reunification Support Special Service Fee Log (CFS 1042-L) schedule, which is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Payment</th>
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(4) Transportation Support: Little City reimburses foster parents for transporting their children to and from school, doctor visits, social activities, etcetera. For each calendar day, they are reimbursed $6.18 for transportation, which is included monthly in the board payment. It is expected that foster parents provide transportation for clients in their care to/from visits and other appointments such as parent child visits, sibling visits, medical appointments and required meetings such as CIPP's. Little City reserves the right to reduce or eliminate the transportation stipend if transportation, or arrangements for transportation, are not provided by the foster family. Little City staff will transport clients to/from visits and other appointments when mutually agreed upon between the staff member and the foster parent. The foster parent(s)’ transportation stipend will not be reduced in these instances.

Per agreement from LCF’s Foster Parent Advisory Council, clients who self-transport to and from school and required appointments must be provided a bus card, or Little City will deduct the cost from their transportation stipend to fund the purchase of a bus card.

(5) Extra Funds to Support Youth Stepping-Down from Residential Placement Settings:

a. Placement Enhancement: DCFS will provide foster parents extra funds when taking a child from residential placement into their homes. These families will receive a stipend of $175.00 per child per month in addition to their specialized payment rate, for up to one year after that youth has stepped down from residential placement. This funding is paid directly to the foster parent from Little City and included within the monthly board payment. The youth will also qualify for additional wraparound service supports.

b. Foster Parents who take residential step down placements are also able to receive funding up to $300 for costs incurred when visiting the youth and for their participation in staffings for the youth and outings.

(6) Administrative Rule 13: Foster Parent Damage Reimbursement Program:

In conjunction with DCFS Administrative Rule 13, Little City will assist and support foster parents in attaining reimbursement for property damage and other domains as covered in the Rule. In short, any time a youth in care causes damage to a foster home or foster parent’s property, the foster parent must collect three quotes from three separate vendors with cost estimates and run those through Little City/DCFS before initiating the work for consideration for reimbursement.

Procedure for Resolving Payment Problems:
If there are any questions or concerns regarding payment, foster parents may contact the Administrative Assistant at 773-265-1539 (Main #) or 773-916-4061 (Direct #) who will investigate the inquiry with Accounting. The Assistant will respond to the foster parent within 24-hours of how and when the matter is to be resolved. If, after following these methods, there are still unresolved issues, the foster parent is encouraged to call the Director, Emily Rawsky, directly at (773) 916-4087. Foster parents may file a grievance or service appeal according to the grievance procedure (See Right #14) if these channels have not sufficiently resolved the issue.
RIGHT #5: A PLACEMENT PLAN

Foster parents have the right to be provided a clear, written understanding of a placement agency's plan concerning the placement of a child in the foster parent’s home. Inherent in this right is the responsibility to support activities that will promote the child’s right to relationships with his or her birth family and cultural heritage.

Little City primarily seeks to place children in the homes of relatives or with siblings if possible. Placement within a child’s community of origin, and/or within a home of similar cultural, ethnic, racial, religious background as the child is sought-out as a primary placement resource. We also seek placements with families who are understanding of a child’s sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (SOGIE). In instances when this cannot occur, Little City educates the foster parents about the child’s SOGIE and cultural, ethnic, racial, religious background and ensures the family can accommodate those needs before proceeding with placement. Adherence to this expectation is reviewed during bi-annual licensing visits. Little City’s “Cultural Sensitivity” training further addresses these areas.

In FY16, Little City expanded out Fictive Kin and Family-Finding efforts by creating procedures and formally training staff on the new procedures and expectations around family engagement. Little City successfully maintained a youth who had disrupted from her placement in our program through fictive kin engagement and licensure. Program is actively striving to ensure more success stories like this story this year.

Little City regularly discusses and trains staff and foster parents about the importance of engaging with biological parents, siblings, extended family members, and maintaining contact with other people who the child identifies as important in his/her life from our initial engagement with the family and throughout the life of the case. Little City educates families about reunification and sibling visits, including the foster parents’ role in the process, and resources available to them (including additional financial support – see Right #4.) Case Managers and therapists use Life books as tools for engaging the youth and his/her foster family in an on-going discussion about important connections, and then taking action to make those connections. Program has increased use of Skype and Face Time to facilitate contact with family.

Little City seeks to ensure that foster parents have all the necessary information needed to make sound placement decisions, as the agency views placements into our foster homes as long-term commitments. Foster parents are provided with information about the child verbally on the phone to determine interest in placement. If interested, the agency develops a transition plan that involves sharing information in writing and developing on-going visitation between the family and the child to assess fit. If all pre-placement visits go well, a staffing occurs to determine a transition date into the home. This year, Little City has expanded our use of the Youth Pre-Matching Questionnaire, Foster Parent Questionnaire, and Household Agreement as tools to assess fitness for matching, and to prepare both the youth and the foster family for a prospective placement. These tools are used in conjunction with a youth’s residential team if s/he is stepping-down from residential, in addition to youths transitioning into program from other settings and within program as well. Program has noted success using these forms, with five (5) successful residential step-downs in FY16 and a projected 10 for FY17.

Foster parents aid in the development of the child’s Integrative Assessment (IA), the child’s Service Plan, visitation plans, and permanency planning by engaging with the case manager during 3x/month home visits, quarterly CFTMs, ACRs, and Court. Little City seeks the input of foster parents in the above mentioned areas by treating them as valued members of the treatment team, and recognizing that they are essential in planning
for the care of youths in their care. LCF ensures this by eliciting their input as to service provisions they see as important for the stability of the child in their care and inquiring about the adjustment to and progress in their home during home visits, quarterly child and family team meetings, and at ACR and Court. The case manager and supervisor review and discuss the current IA, Service Plan, visitation plans, and permanency planning with the foster parent and then mutually-agree upon the goals for the updated plans. Foster parents receive copies of all mutually-agreed plans in writing. The child’s permanency goal, and any recommendations to amend the goal, are discussed as part of this planning process. LCF does not make recommendations to amend a child’s permanency goal without consulting foster parents first. LCF always inquires with foster parents if they would be interested in being a long-term placement option for a child if the goal was amended from return home to adoption, guardianship and/or independence as appropriate based upon the child’s needs.

Little City serves youth with special needs including intellectual, developmental, and emotional/behavioral disabilities, most of whom are between the ages of 12-21. We have also noted a change to the referrals received by program from DCFS to being more complex, high-need youth stepping-down from residential, in shelters or hospital settings, or having longer lengths of stay in foster care with multiple placement disruptions and service needs. In response, Little City has expanded our pre-matching and placement procedures (as described above) and our training to staff foster parents in support of our youth’s successful attainment of skills necessary for successful independence and transition to adulthood. Specifically, program uses the following to promote skill-building for independence:

- Ansell-Casey to assess youth’s strengths and needs
- Financial Literacy Training: We trained four (4) trainers in FY16 and successfully had two graduates from our course. We collaborated with a foster parent in order to host this training in her home. She was engaged in the curriculum as well, in order to enforce skill-building for her child. Program is offering several sessions for eligible youth this year, as well.
- Comprehensive Assessment for Independence using the Youth in Transition team meeting outline, mutually developed with youth, foster parent, and youth’s professional team, which then drives service planning.
- Team participation and engagement in D-CIPPs
- Program takes active steps to transition youth to DHS services (as eligible per their intellectual/developmental disability) by collaborating with DCFS per procedure; enrolling youth on the Illinois’ PUNS list; attaining an updated psychological and medical; ensuring Social Security benefits; and more as required by procedure beginning at age 17.5.

Little City has a robust DHS program that serves adults. We have successfully transferred several youth from our DCFS foster care program to our DHS Home-Based Supports program, which allows youths to remain in their same (foster) home after attaining independence at age 21. This ability to provide our youths with continuity of care has resulted in improved well-being outcomes.

This year, Little City developed a Placement Disruption Checklist for use to ensure all of a youth’s belongings are sent clean in a nice storage container or suitcase with him/her when moving to a new home. Program also initiated a luggage drive in order to provide youth in care with necessary luggage to store their belongings.
RIGHT #6: LICENSING INVESTIGATIONS

Foster parents have the right to be provided a fair, timely, and impartial investigation of alleged violations concerning the foster parent’s licensure, including the right to request mediation and an administrative review and explanation of the decisions made concerning the investigation and/or foster home license.

This year, Little City spent ample time discussing this right in the Foster Parent Implementation Training and Advisory Councils. Foster Parents reported

The purpose of a licensing investigation is to assess whether there has been any violation to 402 licensing standards or the Child Care Act within an agency-licensed foster home facility. Licensing investigations do not assess for abuse or neglect.

Licensing investigations are based on allegations made by a complaint. Complaints may come from a variety of sources including direct observation from agency staff visiting the home. Complaints are also sometimes routed to the agency through the State Central Register (SCR) when a Hotline call has been made against the home. Little City receives SCR notices in writing via the mail and conducts a concurrent licensing investigation in these instances (more information below.) After a complaint is received in the licensing department, the licensing supervisor reviews the complaint and assigns it to the licensing representative. The licensing supervisor and licensing representative meet to review the allegations and create a plan of action regarding the investigation.

All licensing investigations are conducted under the auspice that the information presented is an allegation. The licensing staff will conduct a thorough, non-partial investigation per DCFS policy and procedure (as detailed here.)

Licensing staff are responsible for conducting non-judgmental, objective investigations into the allegations, which includes interviewing all parties within the foster home, the reporter, and any collaterals that may provide useful information into the investigation. An unannounced home visit to the foster home is conducted within 2 business days of receiving the complaint in the licensing department to notify the parent of the licensing violations noted in the report. Licensing workers are responsible for explaining the investigation procedure with the foster parents, and documenting their investigative assessments on the CFS 596 series of forms.

Foster parents are informed of confidentiality related to licensing investigations, and their right to have an advocate present, at the initial unannounced home visit. Foster parents consent or decline the right to an advocate by signing the Right to an Advocate (CFS 596-29) form. If the foster parent requests the presence of an advocate, who is any person of the foster parent’s choosing, the interview component of the licensing investigation may be delayed up to 4 hours; however, licensing workers have the right to investigate the premises of the home to ensure there are no environmental risks to any children in placement or household members.
There are two types of licensing investigations depending on the nature of the allegations:

1. **Stand-alone investigations**: Stand-alone investigations are when violations to 402 licensing rules are alleged, and

2. **Concurrent investigations**: Concurrent allegations are when Little City’s licensing department and DCFS Department of Child Protection (DCP) investigate allegations at the same time because there has been a report of abuse or neglect within the foster home made to the DCFS Hotline.

Investigations require completion within 30 days per DCFS rule; however, a 30-day extension may be granted by the licensing supervisor if needed to gather all information and complete interviews necessary for a fair and impartial investigation. The supervisor reviews the investigation within 5 days. The licensing worker is responsible for notifying the foster parent of the findings of the investigation within five days after receiving supervisory approval. The outcome of the licensing investigation is communicated to the foster parent in writing via a letter and verbally over the phone. The Guardian Ad Litem of any children in placement is notified via 596-L letter when any concurrent investigations occur and caseworkers are always notified of the investigation results.

All completed licensing investigations are sent to Little City’s Agencies and Institutions (A&I) Representative at DCFS for review. A&I has 7 days to review in investigation. If the investigation meets the Procedure 383 standards for licensing investigations, the A&I representative approves the investigation and its findings and the investigation is maintained within the licensing file. If the A&I Representative finds any errors to the investigation, Little City’s licensing team is responsible for correcting those errors, which may involve additional interviews, visits to the home, and collection of documents.

**Licensing investigations will yield one of two results:**

1. **Substantiated.** A substantiated violation means that the licensing team found violations to 402 and/or the Child Care Act within the home as alleged, or as observed/assessed during their home visits and interviews. The family is notified via phone and in writing, and a Corrective Action Plan is developed to correct the cited violations per procedure. The licensing representative will notify the family of any substantiated findings in writing via the 596-04 letter; this letter offers the foster parent the opportunity for an informal review of the investigation findings with the licensing supervisor.

2. **Unsubstantiated.**

The agency also develops a Corrective Action Plan and reviews this with the foster parent in order to correct any violations noted within the investigation. Foster parents must sign the corrective plan as indication that the corrective action plan has been reviewed with them. Foster parents typically have 30 days to correct any violations. The agency conducts regular unannounced home visits while a Corrective Plan is pending. If a foster family fails to correct the violations as noted on the Corrective Plan, the agency may begin to enforce further licensing actions that may include placing the home on hold for future placements or revocation of the license. The GAL’s office may also elect to place a home on hold status as a result of a licensing investigation. In these instances, Little City must submit a formal request to remove the GAL Hold from the home to DCFS’s A&I team for review. These requests include the full licensing investigation packet, supporting documentation, and an agency recommendation letter.

Foster parents may seek recourse to licensing investigations by requesting a supervisory review, filing a grievance, or appealing the findings.
A supervisory review should be arranged when:

- The foster parent disagrees with the alleged violations
- The foster parent disagrees with the finding of a licensing investigation
- The licensing supervisor believes a review would help resolve any outstanding issues related to the investigation.

Foster parents have the right to mediation of alleged licensing violations. They also have the right to request an administrative review. They may employ both of these, neither, or only one at their choosing if they feel it would help to yield the fairest result of the investigation. Foster parents may also file a grievance with the agency per Little City’s Grievance Policy (Attachment G; also see Right #14.)

Licensing Complaints and Grievance Procedures are reviewed with all foster parents during pre-service training. Grievance forms and a copy of the Service Appeal and What you Need to Know about Child Abuse or Neglect Investigation brochures are shared during an investigation and during foster parent pre-service. Policies are reviewed throughout the year during home visits and CFTMs. Staff is also trained on the policies during their orientation and ongoing at staff meetings. Should there be a complaint concerning a foster parent’s license, the foster parent will be informed again of their rights at that time.
RIGHT #7: INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDREN

Foster parents have the right at any time during which a child is placed with the foster parent to receive additional or necessary information that is relative to the care of the child.

During the Foster Parent Implementation Plan Trainings and Advisory Council Meetings conducted this year, some foster parents remarked that they did not receive timely information about a child in writing pertaining to a child in their care. These incidences were determined to be exceptional cases following a crisis, nevertheless, program responded by training all case management staff on expectations in this domain and conducting intake/disruption internal staffings to ensure transfer of information in a timely fashion. Overall, foster parents noted satisfaction with the amount of information received on behalf of the youth in their homes.

Prospective foster parents have the right to all critical information about a child when making the decision to accept a child’s placement into the home. Little City has developed several tools to monitor and track that a child’s background information has been shared with the child’s foster parent.

- Prior to placement, licensing and intake staff complete Little City’s Family Needs Assessment (FNA) and Child Caregiver Matching Tool.

- Upon placement, LCF’s Intake & Recruitment Coordinator, licensing staff and case management staff review LCF’s Child File and Placement Paperwork with the foster parent. The Child File and placement paperwork includes a copies of placement verification documentation (906, Placement Clearance, Placement letters;) emergency contact information and procedures; background information about the child; and the child’s portion of the IA, Service Plan and Visitation plan (if pre-established upon accepting the case); day care and respite information; life book resources; Health Works passport; Little City’s on-call schedule and staff phone list; and information about grievance, service appeal and other foster parent-specific rights/procedures.

- On-going, the case manager and supervisor share all relevant information as it becomes available, but all background information is provided verbally and in-writing at a minimum on a quarterly basis at CFTMs. Case management staff receive training in information sharing through weekly supervision and monthly case management team meetings.

Little City's internal continuous quality improvement (CQI) processes monitors obtaining, sharing, and maintaining information and case records on all youth served within the program through SACWIS and case file reviews. On-going compliance is monitored through our electronic “dashboard” critical document tracking tool that is used in weekly supervision with case management staff.
RIGHT #8: INFORMATION REQUIRED BY ACTS OF
DCFS LAW

Foster parents have the right to be given information concerning a child from the Department as required under Section 5 of the Children and Family Services Act and from a child welfare agency as required under Section 7.49 (c-5) of the Child Care Act of 1969.

Foster parents must absolutely be provided essential information on behalf of youth in their care in order to provide the youth with essential services, support, and to understand his/her background. Little City’s procedures for how we share information pre-placement and after placement was detailed in Narrative #7, but is further expanded upon here. Foster parents overall remarked that they received necessary and sufficient information in a timely manner. They also stated that they had sufficient information pre-placement in order to make a good decision about whether to accept a child for placement into their homes in both emergency and planned placement situations.

Little City staff receives training on the importance of sharing all appropriate information with the caregiver, including and how and when this information is to be shared. Information shared includes case history; placement history; social/behavioral/developmental/medical/educational information; and the child’s portion of the IA, Service Plan, and Visitation Plans. All available background information about the child is provided prior to and/or upon placement within the LCF Family Needs Assessment, placement paperwork, Child Caregiver Matching Tool, Child File, and within the supporting assessments and documentation provided. All available information is shared with foster parents regardless if a child is accepted for placement in planned, unplanned and/or emergency bases.

Little City provides information about youth on an on-going basis, both verbally and in-writing. Case managers are responsible for providing information as it becomes available during their 3x/month home visits. Little City ensures quarterly CFTM meetings, that are never convened without the foster parent(s), and provides foster parents written copies of the minutes reflecting discussion of the above areas and mutual agreement upon service planning. Foster parents are invited and encouraged to attend bi-annual ACRs and Court hearings; if foster parents are unable to attend, LCF staff provides verbal reports on the outcomes of the meetings.

Staff are trained on their responsibility to provide the child’s information on an on-going basis upon hire, on-going in supervision, and continuously through participation in DCFS and LCF-mandated trainings. Little City supervisors are able to track their case workers responsibility by reviewing case notes and identifying information distribution in supervision as well as internal staffing with therapeutic team members, during the quarterly child and family team meetings. These areas ensure that as case workers become informed of any additional information that it is shared with the foster parents. Little City also requires that case workers complete their SACWIS when they submit their mileage on a bi-weekly basis. This is another way that we ensure case worker accountability. Any amendments to policy are communicated electronically and hard-copy through the distribution of updated policies, which are reviewed by management staff in the twice monthly case management team meetings.
RIGHT #9: BE INCLUDED IN TEAM MEETINGS

Be notified of scheduled meetings concerning the child and decisions made concerning the child. To have input concerning the plan of services for the child and to communicate with other professionals who work with the child.

Foster parents are invited to be present and to participate and provide input at court hearings, Administrative Case Reviews (ACR), quarterly Child and Family Team Meetings, Education meetings; and Multidisciplinary team meetings; the right to be informed of the decisions made by the court or LCF concerning the child; and the right to communicate with other professionals who work with the foster child within the context of the team, including therapists, physicians, and teachers.

Little City values foster parents as key members of the treatment team; as such we ensure that all foster parents are invited and encouraged to participate in all treatment planning for youth in their care. As the primary caregivers of the youth served in LCF's program, foster parents offer a wealth of information about the youth and his/her needs that is essential to effective treatment planning. Therefore, Little City ensures timely notification of the dates and times of all court hearings, agency staffing’s, CFTMs, ACRs, school meetings, and other meetings convened on behalf of a child by phone and in-person during 3x/monthly home visits. Written notification is provided via mailed letter or e-mail, or when staff provides CFTM minutes that are inclusive of all case planning and treatment information pertaining to the child.

The GAL’s office also sends written notification of all court hearings to foster parents and DCFS sends out invitations to foster parents for participation in the ACR staffing.

Case management and supervisory staff explain the purpose of the meetings and invite and encourage foster parent participation. If a foster parent is unable to attend in person, staff will work with the foster parent to call-in to the meeting, or to provide information prior to the meeting/court hearing to determine if there is information that the foster parent would like presented. Mutually-agreed upon decisions made by team members are provided in writing after meetings and reflected within documentation completed by case managers such as the IA, Service Plan, CANS, Visitation Plans, CFTM minutes and case notes.
RIGHT #10: DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

Foster parents have the right to be given, in a timely and consistent manner, any information a case worker has regarding the child and the child’s family which is pertinent to the care and needs of the child and to the making of a permanency plan for the child.

When families are approached about a specific placement, all available behavioral and emotional concerns, educational accommodations, case goals, visitation arrangements, and any other child-specific information is shared verbally and in-writing with the family before placement is made in order for the family to assess fitness of the placement. Agency shares written copies of all essential information upon placement as well. Confidential information specific to the birth family’s background is not shared unless that information has an impact on the child’s care, and consent is given. Agency procedures and the types of information shared has been extensively detailed in Narrative #7 and #8. Foster parents have remarked that they received sufficient information on behalf of the youth in their care.

Little City’s Family Needs Assessment, Child and Caregiver Matching Tool, Placement Paperwork and the Child File are reviewed and provided to foster parents prior to and upon placement. The child’s portion of the Integrated Assessment (IA) and Service Plan, if available, are reviewed and provided upon placement, and foster parents are engaged in the treatment planning process throughout the life of the case. It is through the CFTM, ACR, Court and additional service planning processes that foster parents are informed about the permanency plan for a child.

Little City encourages birth parent and foster parent collaboration (and we provide reimbursement per DCFS Reunification Reimbursement schedule), per the foster parents' mutual agreement to engage in this process. Little City provides training about engaging with birth families throughout the year (see Training attachment.) Additionally, Little City always asks our foster parents if they are desirous of maintaining permanency for a child through adoption or guardianship (if eligible), if reunification is no longer possible. If the foster family is not desirous of meeting the court-set permanency goal for a child, Little City maintains the placement until a permanent placement is identified. Little City values relationships and seeks to maintain them in pursuit of the child's well-being and stability.
RIGHT #11: PLACEMENT DISRUPTIONS

Receive written notice of any plans to end placement, along with the reason, and appeal information.

Little City strives to ensure continued placement stabilization within our foster care program. We have achieved a 85-90+% placement stability rate in 2016 by ensuring a thorough foster parent licensing and training process including conducting thorough home studies; having pre-placement and transition plans; reviewing the child’s CANS, IA and other background information prior to and on-going throughout placement; providing essential services and crisis support, and rigorously monitoring the case upon placement. However, Little City understands that circumstances may still arise resulting in a placement disruption per foster parent request and/or via the agency providing written notice (this latter instance is an uncommon agency practice.)

There are two types of disruptions:

(1) Planned: Planned Disruptions occur when a caregiver gives a 30-day written notice on placement to Little City or when the agency makes a determination to move a child to another home to achieve the child’s permanency goal (An example of this is when a child moves from a foster home into the care of their birth parents to achieve their permanency goal of return home.). Little City asks for a 30-day notice on placement due to the specialized needs of youth served in program. Little City attempts to move the child as soon as possible to ensure the child’s best interests and to honor the foster parents’ desires. In all possible circumstances, Little City attempts to move children when notice is received by following a mutually-agreed upon transition plan into a new home. However, program fully recognizes that certain circumstances warrant immediate placement moves and program responds to foster parent’s desires in this instances. Emergency moves are handled more on an exceptional basis versus a typical procedural basis.

(2) Unplanned. Unplanned Disruptions occur when a child was assessed to be at immediate risk of harm and requires immediate removal to protect his/her safety. Licensing Investigations occur in response to these reports and there is a possibility of a Child Abuse/Neglect Investigation by DCFS’ Division of Child Protection in applicable cases. These types of disruptions are also exceptional and uncommon within program.

When Little City makes a determination to move a youth in an unplanned way, Little City will give the foster parent a 14 Day Notice of Change (CFS 151-B) any time the agency makes the determination to move a child from a foster care placement for unplanned reasons. **Foster parents have a right to appeal this decision. Prior to any issuance of a 14 day notice Little City Director, Supervisor, Case Manager, and if applicable the Therapist shall meet with the Foster Parent to discuss concerns and give the foster parent a chance to correct the concerns. Should there be no change to the concerns the 14 day notice will be given.** Little City provides foster parent with documentation about the appeal process upon issuance of a 14 Day Notice. Additionally, LCF must send a notice to DCFS Clinical Placement Review Team and they will conduct a staffing within 10 days of receiving the notice. If it is determined that a foster child is at imminent risk of harm in a foster home or if there is a court order, the child will be removed immediately from that home and written notice may be waived.

Foster parents may also elect to file a service appeal. The service appeal process is a two-step process, mediation and an administrative fair hearing. Foster parents may file a service appeal when they are in disagreement with actions or decisions taken by Little City under the following circumstances:
• When decisions are made that directly affect you, such as payments to you for the child in your care for whom DCFS is legally responsible
• When decisions are made about services, such as day care, medical, educational, or psychological services, for the benefit of the child for whom the Department is legally responsible
• Agency failure to provide services as specified in the service plan for the benefit of the child.
• A change in the child’s substitute care placement

Foster parents must request a service appeal within 10 days from receiving notice on a decision or action by Little City, which may result in stopping Little City from acting on its decision until such a time that the case has completed the service appeal process.

Written requests for a service appeal are sent to:
   Administrative Hearings Unit
   DCFS
   State of Illinois Center
   160 N. LaSalle St, 6th Floor
   Chicago, IL  60601

Anytime a placement disrupts, Little City promotes on-going contact and communication between the foster parent and minor by facilitating visitation and phone calls. With consent from the foster parents, Little City will provide the previous foster parent(s)’ information to the new foster parent(s) in order for them to use one another for babysitting and/or respite. Additionally, in the event of planned disruptions, Little City develops a transition calendar for the youth to transition out of one foster parent home into another home. This allows for the foster parents to share information about the child and how to best meet his/her needs.

Foster parents receive training on transitions during Little City pre service training and as a part of the ongoing training offered (See attached training schedule.)

RIGHT #12: NOTIFICATION & ATTENDANCE AT COURT HEARINGS

Foster parents have the right to receive timely notification of court hearings.

Little City’s Foster Parent Advisory Council noted timely notification of court hearings. Notification was provided verbally in home visits and in-writing through e-mail and in CFTM minutes. Little City assures accountability for case managers informing foster parents about upcoming court hearing by providing supervision to case managers and attending CFTMs. Case managers document in the progress notes when notification is given to foster parents. Foster parents are provided with the date, time, location and purpose of the hearing in CFTM minutes. Copies of the biannual Integrated Assessment also indicate the dates of upcoming ACRs, court hearings, and concerns/progress related to the case that will be presented during these meetings. Foster parents are invited to attend the hearings and to report about the child’s safety and well-being. They are especially encouraged to be present and heard during the following: change of goal or best interest hearings, trials and termination. Many foster parents remarked that attendance at Court hearings was a challenge due to the hearings being during the weekday hours when they are working. In instances when foster parents cannot attend, case managers provide an update post-Court via phone or in-person shortly after the hearing.

Little City provides a full explanation of the juvenile court process as part of the licensing process and ongoing through training. Court is discussed at the Foster Parent Implementation Plan Trainings and Advisory Council Meetings. Foster parents are given a copy of the LCF Foster Parent Handbook, which covers explanations of administrative case reviews, service plans, and the role of foster parents in the court process. Court training is a component of LCF's Pre-Service Training as part of our Working as a Team training.
RIGHT #13: CONSIDERATION AS A PLACEMENT OPTION FOR FOSTER CHILDREN FORMERLY IN CARE

Foster parents have the right to be considered as a placement option for foster children formerly in their care.

This year, Little City successfully returned a youth who was removed from a specialized foster home and stepped-up to residential back into the foster home after he successfully completed his treatment. Little City has also improved our engagement with foster parents who have youth stepped-up to residential in efforts to achieve a similar outcome for that youth when s/he is ready to be discharged to a less restrictive environment (such as a foster home). Program has noted increased foster parent engagement with the child, even if s/he does not return to the former foster home. This is a positive outcome for the youth, as s/he has added sustained relationships, social connections and support in his/her life.

Foster parents have the right to be considered as placement options for children formerly in their care. As such, Little City accesses a child’s past placement information by reviewing the minor’s placement information in SACWIS, requesting a copy of the CM-07 screen from DCFS, and/or by liaising with Little City’s licensing department to ensure foster parents are contacted about their desire to accept the placement.

Little City makes all placement determinations considering the child’s best interests, with preserving, promoting and maintaining relationships (including relationships with foster parents) as paramount among them. Best interest of the child includes a consideration of attachment; cultural, ethnic, religious, racial, economic and other demographic considerations; service needs; the child’s desires; permanency goal; and so on. Case management staff liaise with the child’s treatment team including his/her GAL, licensing staff, supervisor, therapist, biological family members, foster parents, and/or other members of the child’s team to determine best interest considerations related to potential placement options for the minor. Upon determination, then the case manager, supervisor or licensing staff should contact possible foster care placement homes.
RIGHT #14: BE INFORMED ABOUT FILING AN APPEAL WITHOUT RETALIATION

Foster parents have the right to have access to an agency or DCFS’ appeals process without retaliation.

Little City values, honors and respects our foster parents. Just the same, there will be times when LCF may make decisions that a foster family may not agree with, and there will definitely be times when we make mistakes. Little City informs and trains all foster parents about their appeal rights in pre-service and on-going trainings, and this domain is discussed in the Foster Parent Advisory Council Meetings. Written materials are provided in the Foster Parent Handbooks and Child Files upon the placement of a child. Each parent receives a copy of this plan, and the plan is always available on LCF’s website, for review as well.

Little City’s Internal Grievance or Appeal Process:
Foster parents can bring any complaint to our staff and receive fair treatment and a considerate response to the issue anytime by calling 773-265-1539. Sometimes, it is easier or more meaningful to write down what the problem is, and for that purpose we have a grievance form (See Attachment G). LCF will assign any grievances and begin investigating within one business day. Little City treats all grievances as confidential; therefore, the information shared is respected and action plans are mutually-agreed upon by relevant parties requiring inclusion to resolve the complaint. Foster parents will not be subject to any form of retaliation for filing a complaint. Little City values our foster parents’ voices and wants to honor you, while we also recognize that disagreements may occur, we are committed to coming to a mutually-agreed upon solution.

Little City fully discloses and trains foster parents on the appeal procedures during LCF pre-service training and by providing grievance and appeal information in written form via LCF’s Foster Parent Handbook, Child Files, and through distribution of this plan.

External DCFS Service Appeal Process:
Foster parents can contact the DCFS Advocacy Office at 800-232-3798 for assistance. Foster parents may file a Service Appeal with DCFS when they may have a difference of opinion than the case manager, the managing agency, and/or DCFS regarding an agency or DCFS decision or action on the child’s case in your care.

The Service Appeal process is a two-step process and involves mediation and an administrative fair hearing. Both of these meetings provide foster parents an opportunity to share their opinions about what is in the child’s best interest regarding his/her care with the hopes of creating a plan to resolve the issue(s). Little City disseminates information about DCFS’ Service Appeal process in our pre-service training, brochures are available at the office and provided within the child files. The appeals process is also outlined on our website: https://www.littlecity.org/programs/children/foster/policies/

Foster parents may appeal the agency’s decision by contacting the following:
  DCFS Administrative Hearings Unit
  State of Illinois Center
  160 N. LaSalle St, 6th Floor
  Chicago, IL  60601
  (312) 814-5540

All appeals must be in writing, and must include:
- Your name
- Your address
- Your phone number
- The reason(s) for the appeal

DCFS’s website has useful information about service appeals:
http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/089/089003370000300r.html

Foster parents are to be treated with dignity and respect when filing a service appeal. If a foster parent feels they are being retaliated against, they should report this to the caseworker’s supervisor, program manager, and/or director. The Office of Affirmative Action can be contacted in cases of alleged discrimination.
RIGHT #15: CALL THE FOSTER PARENT HOTLINE

Foster parents have the right to be informed of the Foster Parent Hotline and information on reporting staff misconduct.

Foster parents may elect to call the foster parent hotline, or file a complaint with the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), if they believe a Little City or Department employee, service provider or contractor may have violated their rights, or the rights of the children in their care. Examples include acts of abuse or neglect against a child, breaches of confidentiality, and the likes.

During the pre-service training, foster parents are informed about the Foster Parent Hotline and the Office of Inspector General. Little City will incorporate this information during our ongoing training and as handouts. The phone numbers are also listed in the Foster Parent Handbook given to families by DCFS at the time of licensure and listed on the DCFS website. Foster Parent Hotline and OIG brochures are available at the Little City office. Foster parents are periodically reminded of the services of these programs in the newsletter and postings will be added to Little City’s website. In addition, any foster parent can contact any staff within the agency that will provide them with the phone numbers without any fear of retribution for exercising their rights.

Here is a DCFS link for the Office of Inspector General: https://www.illinois.gov/dcfs/aboutus/OIG/Pages/com_communications_inspector.aspx

Foster Parent Hotline:
# 1-800-232-3798 or
#1-217-524-2029
FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Your responsibilities are dictated by Illinois Law, Rule 340
http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/089/089003400c00600r.html

YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO:

1. **Communicate with Child's Team:** Openly communicate and share information about the child with the child welfare team.

2. **Respect Confidentiality:** Respect the confidentiality of information about foster children and their families.

3. **Be An Advocate:** Advocate for children in their care.

4. **Treat Child and Birth Family with Dignity and Respect:** Treat children in their care and their families with dignity, respect and consideration.

5. **Recognize Your Own Strengths, Limitations and Need for Support:** Recognize their own strengths, limitations and support needs when considering placement of a child.

6. **Team with Other Foster Parents / Support Groups:** Be aware of the benefits of relying on and affiliating with other foster parents and foster parent groups in improving the quality of care.

7. **Assess Need for and Obtain Training:** Assess their on-going individual training needs and take action to meet those needs.

8. **Placement Stabilization:** Develop and implement strategies to prevent placement disruptions, and to provide support if preventative strategies fail and disruption occurs.

9. **Acknowledge and Minimize Stress:** Know the impact that foster parenting has on individuals and the family and minimize associated stressors.

10. **Promote the Foster Parenting Experience:** Know the rewards and benefits of foster parenting and promote the experience in a positive way.

11. **Know Everyone's Roles, Rights and Responsibilities:** Know the roles, rights and responsibilities of foster parents, other child welfare professionals, and the child and his/her family.

12. **Serve as a Mandated Reporter:** Know their role as a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse/neglect. Know the policy regarding allegations against foster parents.

13. **Know and Actively Participate in Administrative Case Reviews, Service Planning and Court:** Understand the purpose of, and participate in, ACRs, service planning and court processes, according to their designated role.

14. **Know Appeal Process:** Know the child welfare agency’s appeal procedure for foster parents and their rights.

15. **Maintain Good Records:** Maintain accurate and relevant records regarding the child’s progress and history and follow agency procedures and regulations.

16. **Share Information:** Share information about the child’s adjustment with a subsequent caregiver, whether it is the parent or another substitute caregiver.

17. **Support & Encourage Cultural Identity:** Respect and maintain a child’s cultural needs and support relationships with his own family.
RESPONSIBILITY #1: COMMUNICATION

Foster parents have the responsibility to openly communicate and share information about child (ren) in your care with other members of the child welfare team.

As a foster parent, you are a key member of the treatment team for the child in your care. As such, it is important to proactively communicate and recognize how other team members can help you and the child in your care succeed. Little City values the information and knowledge that our foster parents provide to us. LCF listens to what is communicated and provides follow-up.

Little City Foster Parents discussed the importance of language, and how they prefer to not call a youth in their care a “foster” child, but rather “my child.” The group discussed the importance of inclusive and engaging terms. Also discussed was the new law change aligned with the importance of language and changing the term “ward of the State” to “youth in care” - because words matter. The foster parents were in support of this positive change.

Little City Foster Parents also discussed the need to be informed by agency when there are staff changes i.e. case manager or therapist, a head of transition so that they can effectively communicate with the youth in their care about the transition. Program agreed wholeheartedly. Program staff notify families of their departure directly in planned circumstances; in unplanned circumstances such as a position elimination or termination, the supervisor is required to communicate the change. The agency will send out written communication in the event of position eliminations.

Foster parents reported preferring to receive information via text, phone, or e-mail, with letters being the least preferred method. Agency discussed their procedures for information sharing and foster parents agreed that they received agency communication timely, and that communication was multifaceted.

Learning to work as a team is key to having open communication. On-going training provides specific information about the type of information to share, and all of the avenues in which to share it. Teamwork training is also offered several times throughout the calendar year and is co-trained with a foster parent. (See Training attachment.)

Little City Foundation also provides a written contract that is signed upon placement of a child and updated annually. The placement contract communicates to the foster parent Little City Foundation’s expectations for working together as a team to meet the needs of the child and family. Bi-annual licensing and monitoring visits reviews the expectation to communicate openly as a team member.
RESPONSIBILITY #2: RESPECT CONFIDENTIALITY

Foster parents have the responsibility to respect the confidentiality of information concerning foster children and their families and act appropriately within applicable confidentiality laws and regulations.

Foster parents remarked on the importance of confidentiality in the Advisory Council meetings. It is clear to program that foster parents understand the concept of confidentiality and the importance of maintaining it. Foster parents noted that they typically share information when advocating for services on behalf of a youth in their care, which is absolutely appropriate.

It is important that foster parents recognize that, as members of the foster care team, they are bound by the rule of confidentiality. In order to inform foster parents of this responsibility the Statement of Confidentiality is reviewed during the pre-service training and foster parent are asked to sign the statement for maintenance within the licensing file. The statement includes information regarding the need to maintain confidentiality and the method by which information should be shared with relevant professionals when necessary to service provision.

Prospective foster parents are informed in orientation that members of the foster care staff may share sensitive, personal information regarding the child, his or her history, reason for coming into care, and progress of the birth family with foster parents. It is at this time, that foster parents are introduced to the concept of confidentiality. As families are licensed, the licensing worker will review the confidentiality agreement and they sign a copy of the agreement which is then placed in their licensing file. Confidentiality is also discussed during DCFS’ Pride Training and by Little City during Pre Service Training. The LCF Foster Parent Handbook further provides guidelines for sharing confidential information and keeping records regarding the child and the biological family confidential. Little City’s licensing staff discusses confidentiality with foster parents as required by Licensing Standard: “Section 402.24 Confidentiality of Information,” during their initial licensing visits, every six months during monitoring visits, and at renewal. Confidentiality is also reviewed when a staff member feels it is appropriate to the situation.

The staff is educated on this information during monthly supervision, department and team meetings. Staff review and sign an acknowledgement of reading the Child Welfare Professionals Code of Ethics (that includes confidentiality expectations) and sign a confidentiality statement for their personnel files.
RESPONSIBILITY #3: BE AN ADVOCATE

A primary responsibility of foster parents is to advocate for the children in your care.

It was evident to program staff from the Foster Parent Implementation Trainings and Advisory Committee Meetings that Little City’s foster parents are staunch advocates for the youth in their care. They are truly committed, caring and concerned for the youth’s well-being, and collaborate with the youth’s treatment team to ensure the youth’s needs are met.

As key members of a child’s treatment team, foster parents receive information and training on how to best advocate for the child(ren) in their care. LCF’s pre-service and on-going foster parent training, the LCF Foster Parent Handbook, placement paperwork and the Child File all provide information specifically on advocacy in the domains of education, court, ACRs, medical, and the likes. For example, LCF’s placement contract outlines the foster parent’s responsibility to advocate for the child in their care in medical and educational settings and outlines that advocacy also includes maintaining their knowledge of the foster child’s culture, religious beliefs, family situation and mental health/health needs. Foster parents sign the agreement at the time of placement and annually thereafter.

Foster parents are valued members of the child’s treatment team, and as such, they are invited and asked to participate in team meetings related to the child in his/her care. These meetings include ACRs, CIPPs, Court hearings, CFTMs, educational meetings, and more. Case managers notify and invite foster parents to meetings by telephone, e-mail and in-person during 3x/monthly home visits. Case managers document in their progress notes when notification is given to foster parents. Foster parents are also provided with the date, time, location and purpose of the meeting in CFTM minutes and by invitation letters sent by GALs. Copies of the biannual Integrated Assessment and Service Plans also indicate the dates of upcoming ACRs, court hearings, and concerns/progress related to the case that will be presented during these meetings. Foster parents are invited to attend the hearings and to report about the child’s safety and well-being. If foster parents are unable to attend in person, LCF makes accommodations for a telephone call-in, or gathers information to share verbally or in-writing at the meetings.

Foster parents are further informed that through the service appeal process they can advocate for the needs of the child in their care that they do not believe are being addressed. Little City keeps service appeal brochures in the office and provides them to all families as part of our pre-service training within the LCF Foster Parent Handbook. Families also have access to the Advocacy Office phone number through the LCF Foster Parent Handbook or by calling the agency.
RESPONSIBILITY #4: TREAT OTHERS WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT

Foster parents have the responsibility to treat children in their care, their birth families, and members of the child’s treatment team with dignity, respect and consideration.

Foster Parents commented that they felt like they were treated with dignity and respect overall by program staff. This was also evident in the returned Satisfaction Surveys. Foster parents noted that open and responsive communication, inclusiveness, and respecting their time and schedules were key tenets of this domain.

Foster Parents also talked at length about the importance of discussing a child’s biological family, and engaging with biological parents, with respect. Foster parents talked about how they use life books, share pictures, Face Time or Skype, have discussions around visits (and occasionally host parent-child visits), and more. Foster parents all agreed that providing food and engaging in customs aligned with the child’s background and/or familial preference was key to the youth’s adjustment in their home. Program was pleased with the level of openness, acceptance and support our foster parents provided in this domain.

Little City discusses this responsibility in our pre-service and on-going monthly foster parent trainings (see attachment.) Several of our trainings specifically address the expectation that foster parents will treat children in their care, their birth families, and members of the child’s treatment team with dignity, respect and consideration. DCFS’ PRIDE and on-going trainings address this responsibility as well. The responsibility to treat children in their care, their birth families, and members of the child’s treatment team with dignity, respect and consideration is reviewed during the foster family licensing process and on-going through licensing visits, home visits and CFTMs.

Case management staff and his/her supervisor are responsible for ensuring children, their birth families, and members of the child’s treatment team are treated with dignity, respect and consideration. Adherence to this should be documented within SACWIS case notes, which are monitored on a monthly basis by supervisors and quality assurance staff, and within CFTM minutes, IAs, Service Plans, and/or Court reports as applicable/appropriate.

Concerns related to this area should be addressed directly by the case worker with the foster parent during a home visit. The case manager may solicit the assistance of his/her supervisor if violating this criterion was an on-going issue, and/or report the concern to licensing. Little City is desirous of resolving all concerns in a timely, respectful manner by following appropriate policies and procedures.
RESPONSIBILITY #5: RECOGNIZE YOUR OWN STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS AND NEED FOR SUPPORT

Foster parents have the responsibility to recognize your own individual and familial strengths and limitations when deciding whether to accept a child into your home; and the responsibility to recognize your own support needs and utilize appropriate supports in providing care for foster children.

This domain was discussed at length with foster parents this year during the Foster Parent Implementation Trainings and Advisory Council Meetings. Foster parents commented that they agreed whole-heartedly with recognizing one’s own strengths, limitations, and needs for support as key to providing good care to one’s self, a youth in care, and one’s own family. The staff and foster parents talked about different scenarios when recognition of these areas came into play, and discussed solutions. The team agreed upon the importance of saying “No”

Little City’s on-going mutual assessment method related to assessing familial strengths and needs involves the following:

The licensing and home study process comprehensively assesses each family’s strengths and needs as a foster parent. Part of this process is to discuss and assess the foster parents’ strengths in determining the best possible match for the placement of a child in the home using the Child Caregiver Matching Tool and conducting extensive interviews. Extensive discussion about what the foster parent learned in DCFS’ PRIDE training, Little City’s Pre-service training, and through their 10 hours of hands-on volunteering within our foster care program with youth currently served is also used to guide placement decisions and determine training needs. The Family Development Specialist speaks to every member of the home (including children) to determine that the entire family is supportive of fostering. Any information obtained from individual family members is discussed with the applicants prior to licensure.

During the licensing and home study assessment process, the potential outcomes of the mutual assessment process include:

- LCF and the foster family make a mutual decision to select the family into the program as a licensed foster parent;
- LCF and the family make a mutual decision to select the family out of the program (LCF will refer the foster family to another agency better matched with their placement desires and individual desires);

After receiving a license to become a foster parent, Little City’s licensing staff monitors the home within 60 days of issuing a license, and every six months thereafter at a minimum. During these contacts, Little City’s Licensing Representative reviews completed trainings and discuss recommendations for future trainings. Little City enrolls foster parents into 16 hours of annual training at the agency based upon the mutual assessment of needs. **Little City trainings are open to all foster parents. Little City licensing workers are tasked with contacting their foster homes to enroll them in training for the year based on the foster parent’s feedback and interest in training being offered.**

Child and Family Team meetings are held quarterly to discuss the child’s needs and family’s ability to meet those needs. Additional trainings are identified in these meetings with the foster parent and added as tasks to the service plan if necessary. Little City helps foster parents secure these trainings outside of the agency if not being offered internally.
Little City engages foster parents in discussions of their natural support networks including family, friends, church, or other support systems during the home study process and on-going in CFTMs and home visits. Case management and licensing staff provide support resources like a support group, LCF’s foster parent to foster parent mentoring support, or direct a parent to a foster parent advisory board or other resource if deemed helpful by the family.

Little City also offers foster parents an array of individualized support services to meet the needs of the child and his/her foster family. Little City provides weekly, in-home therapy; respite services; mentoring; and other services as identified by the child’s treatment team to support the foster parent. Therapists provide training, in-home therapy support and 24/7 on-call support. Respite is also provided to provide foster parents with a break in order to maintain a high quality of care for children in placement. Little City also provides mentoring opportunities to offer foster parents a break while providing therapeutic opportunities for the child.

Following an initiative led by Little City’s Foster Parent Advisory Committee, foster parent support groups are being hosted quarterly beginning in January 2017. Foster parents have volunteered to host these meetings for foster parents in their home along with a potluck.

Additional support groups available to foster parents, and regularly shared with Little City’s foster parents for their involvement are here:

- Statewide Foster Parent Advisory Council
- Circle of Parents, 5440 S. Racine, contact: Stacey Saffold, #773.419.4660
- Cook Central DCFS Regional Foster Care Advisory Council, DCFS 1701 First Ave, Maywood, IL, Contact Denise Spires, #773.338.6739
- Cook North DCFS Regional Foster Care Advisory Council, DCFS Office 1911 S Indiana Ave, Chicago, IL, Contact Edith Cruz #773.653.6851
- Cook South and South Suburban Regional DCFS Foster Parent Advisory Council, Contact Angela Barber, #773.371.6444
- New Beginning Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, 10436 S. Wallace, Fernwood Park, IL, Contact Regina & Gladys Boyd, #708-385-6263
- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Training and Support Group, 3843 W. 63rd St., Chicago, IL, Contact Bryana Fishman #773.884.2200
RESPONSIBILITY #6: TEAM WITH OTHER FOSTER PARENTS

Foster parents have the responsibility to be aware of the benefits of relying on and affiliating with other parents and foster parents—and/or foster parent associations—in improving the quality of care and service to children and families.

Little City’s Foster Parent Advisory Council recommended having Foster Parent Support Groups. These Groups are scheduled for 2017 in the homes of foster parents who volunteered. There will be a potluck-style meal and time to relate, share, connect, and relax!

Training also provides our foster parents with an opportunity to network and connect. We continue to offer monthly trainings (aka “Training Tuesdays”) at our Chicago office and Dolton site. Little City’s “Keeping It Real” training is fully led by foster parents to provide real life experiences of foster parenting to prospective families (see Training attachment for more information.)

Little City also sponsors two engagement, recognition, and networking events each year: our Annual Picnic (June) and Annual Holiday Party (December). Foster parents also connect through Little City’s Foster Care Facebook page where stories, resources, and information is shared.

Little City encourages our families to begin cluster support groups in their area with other local foster parents by facilitating a Foster Parent to Foster Parent Mentoring Network. Agency staff is willing to come to these meetings to facilitate discussions if requested. To date, several foster parents utilize each other for support and respite, but there are no formal support group meetings. Foster parents are also encouraged to seek out support from other families by joining support groups.

Foster Care Associations, Advisory Councils and Useful Resource Links:
http://www.state.il.us/ddfs/l_links.shtml Resources for support were notated in Narrative #6 above.
RESPONSIBILITY #7: PARTICIPATE IN ONGOING TRAINING

Foster parents have the responsibility to assess individual, ongoing training needs and to take action to meet those needs.

In FY16, Little City hosted over 64 hours of training for our foster parents. We are projecting to host near that amount this year as well. We have increased the availability of on-line trainings through Infinitec and we have located and shared e-trainings with our foster parents from community partners, including DCFS.

Little City’s 2017 Training was developed in collaboration with foster parents who served as members of our Advisory and Training Committees, and in a direct response to feedback received on evaluations, surveys, and during visits about needed trainings. The 2017 Training Curriculum incorporated more trainings to provide foster parents with more “tools for their toolbox” in working with youth’s challenging behaviors. A key component of this tool box is the development and utilization of Individual Crisis Management Plans (ICMP) adapted from the Trauma Crisis Intervention (TCI) model. There are also more tools related to addressing trauma using the Evidence-Based Intervention Model of Collaborative Problem-Solving techniques. Little City also developed a comprehensive Psychotropic Medication Manual distributed to all foster parents, with formal training being added to 2017 Pre-Service and on-going monthly trainings.

Families are informed of DCFS’s Virtual Training Center and their ability to register for an account. The Virtual Training Center allows families to register themselves for training and to take online trainings as well. The agency provides other relevant community-based training information to families via mass mailings and posting information on our social media channels. **Little City is excited about the prospective of Quality Parenting Initiative offerings in 2017.**
RESPONSIBILITY #8: PLACEMENT STABILIZATION

Placement stabilization includes the responsibility to develop and assist in implementation strategies to prevent placement disruptions and recognize the traumatic impact of placement disruptions on a foster child and all members of the foster family.

Little City staff and foster parents share a mutual responsibility to ensure the stability of a child in placement by assessing the child’s safety and well-being needs on an on-going basis. At the forefront, Little City ensures careful assessment of the foster parent’s strengths and desire for placements to ensure a careful match. Prior to placement and on-going throughout placement, the child’s case management team is responsible for sharing information related to the child and his/her emotional/behavioral/mental health needs with the foster parent, just as the foster parent is responsible for sharing their assessment of the child’s on-going needs, during CFTMs and home visits. Foster parents are expected to engage with a child’s in-home therapist in order to best understand the child’s needs and how to meet those needs. **Little City has also put into practice the need for each youth to have an Individual Crisis Management Plan. The plan provides foster parents with tools and information about the child in their care and how to identify triggers that lead to crisis. The ICMP when utilized in conjunction with other supports, helps the team to identify potential placement disruptions with the family and stabilize placement for the youth.** Little City convenes team meetings immediately upon becoming aware of potential placement disruptions. Team members that may include case managers, therapists and foster parents will develop mutually agreed upon action plans to monitor and address a child’s care needs in the home environment to prevent disruption.

Little City offers placement stabilization services internally by offering a 24/7 on-call system that includes access to the case management team, therapists, and supervisors. Little City’s specialized foster care program offers individualized stabilization services based upon the needs of the child and his/her family that may include increased visits by the case manager, program therapist, family stabilization specialist, and/or mentor; increased respite including weekend respite with other foster parents; and team meetings. Little City’s on-call staff will work alongside the foster parent in the event of a crisis, including a placement disruption. Staff will aid in calling SASS, the police or alerting other professionals if needed to stabilize a crisis.

**IPS services are available to those foster families serving minors on Little City’s traditional contract. The IPS agency can provide stabilization services for 60-90 days depending on case need.**

Little City trains foster parents about stabilization services available to them in our pre-service training and in ongoing trainings. Information is also provided in the LCF Foster Parent Handbook and Child Files and placement paperwork provided upon the placement of a child into the home.

If preventative measures fail and a placement disrupts, Little City will work with the foster parent to develop a transition plan (if immediate removal is not required due to a child’s safety risk) or discuss the ways to best support the minor once s/he leaves the foster parent home. Little City’s “Transitions” training specifically addresses how to manage an array of transitions for youth in care, including moving into a new foster home and leaving a foster home.
RESPONSIBILITY #9: UNDERSTAND THE FAMILY IMPACT of FOSTER PARENTING

Foster parents have the responsibility to assess the impact foster parenting has on individuals and family relationships; and the responsibility to work to minimize, as much as possible, any stress that results from foster parenting.

Foster parents and staff discussed this domain as tied to Responsibility #5, Recognizing one’s own strengths, limitations and need for support at length, as a detailed above in #5.

From the initial contact between potential foster parents and Little City, foster parents are apprised of the significant requirements of fostering children with intellectual, developmental and/or emotional/behavioral disabilities and the impact this has on one’s own family system. As part of LCF’s licensing process, pre-service training and ongoing training, foster parents are made aware of the impact fostering will have on the foster family, in terms of time, energy and levels of stress and/or frustration. Possible and observed stressors, and tactics to minimize stress, are a component of our pre-service and on-going trainings. These areas are further assessed during the home study assessment process. The on-going impact of foster parenting on family relationships is assessed through bi-annual licensing visits, 3x/month home visits, 1x/week in-home therapy sessions, quarterly CFTMs, bi-annual Court and ACR hearings, and at monthly LCF trainings. If a need for further support is identified, Little City convenes a team meeting including the foster parent/family and devises an appropriate intervention plan.

Little City makes every effort to minimize stress associated with foster parenting by providing support and support services as outlined in Narrative #3 (Rights) and Narrative #5, #6 (Responsibilities.) Support services are increased or adjusted in times of crisis or instability to offer our foster parents and their families added support and to minimize stress.

If a family wishes to take a voluntary break from fostering, the family has the option to place themselves on hold in two ways: (1) Verbally notifying the agency of their desire to be “on hold,” which will result in being removed from the list of homes LCF is actively matching for placement with, and (2) By electing into “Inactive Status,” which entails working with LCF’s licensing representative to complete needed sign-off forms that are maintained in the licensing file.

In both circumstances, the agency will continue to engage with the family. Of note, families who are not actively fostering or seeking a placement will need to maintain their training hours in order to be eligible for renewal of their license and for future placements. Foster families may choose to reengage in the fostering experience at any time.
RESPONSIBILITY #10: PROMOTE THE FOSTER PARENTING EXPERIENCE

Foster parents have the responsibility to know the rewards and benefits to children, parents, families and society that come from foster parenting and promote the foster parenting experience in a positive way.

Little City believes that the most effective recruitment tool that we have is our current foster parents. Little City has successfully engaged an increased number of our currently licensed foster parents (approximately 76) and in FY16, we licensed 10 new homes. We are continuing to successfully sustain and grow our pool of foster parents through these ways:

- We asked our foster parents during our Quarterly Foster Parent Advisory Committee Meetings their ideas to recruit families. The staff team was pleased to hear that unanimously, all of the participating foster parents reported that they positively promote foster parenting experience with those who inquire and those with whom they come in contact with. Our foster parents stated that they spread the word through “word of mouth” but they “keep it real” about what it is really like to be a foster parent – meaning they share both the good experiences and the challenges.

- Little City had four families attend a recruitment event, Call to Action: Foster OUR Teens! On 10/22/16 in order to positively promote their experience while “keeping it real” with prospective families.

- Our foster families co-trained pre-service trainings for new foster parents and some on-going trainings.

- Our foster parents are leading our Foster Parent Support Group initiative in 2017.

- We have a mentoring program that connects new foster parents to call on experienced foster parents with questions or troubles or just for support.

- Little City has implemented a quarterly raffle to incentivize foster parents referring friends and family to attend Orientation. For every referred family that attends an Orientation each quarter, the current foster parent receives one chance at winning a $50 gift card. We have also implemented a $500 referral bonus to a foster parent who refers someone who becomes licensed and maintains their first placement for 90 days. We have successfully paid out these bonuses a few times this year.

- Program generates a Quarterly Newsletter where Recruitment initiatives are shared, families highlighted, and gift card and bonus winners are announced. Regular e-mails will also highlight foster parent success stories.


- Foster Care Facebook page (with 6,582 “Likes” as of 11/8/16!) https://www.facebook.com/LittleCityFosterCare shares success stories from our program, resources for foster parents, all of our training information, and special events, including recruitment opportunities like our orientation sessions;
• Little City created a Twitter account that currently has 146 followers as of 11/8/16 (https://twitter.com/LCFFosterCare).

• Instagram has been created with a video “I am a Foster Parent” videos (http://instagram.com/littlecityfostercare)

• In FY14, Little City created a 3 minute and 1 minute video along with our foster families and youth highlighting the benefits of fostering. The video was shared with all our foster families and our networks, and it is currently hosted on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZPGcHf9T3E and continuously on our website. We have provided our foster families with DVDs to view and share, and we pass out DVDs at recruitment events; This video is also used as a part of our orientation curriculum held monthly, and is frequently featured on our social media outlets.

• Little City utilized the localization service offered by AdoptUSKids and the AdCouncil, created a localized “You don’t have to be perfect to be a perfect parent” adoption commercial. It is currently available on YouTube (at https://youtu.be/OV2i48scRqg) and is frequently featured on our social media.

Little City has made a significant investment in recruiting new families, with continuously engaging our current families as key to that strategy. We are so appreciative of our current foster parent’s teamwork in this domain! We have seen the rewards of our investment through increased referrals of prospective foster parents from our currently licensed families who become licensed foster parents.
RESPONSIBILITY #11: KNOW THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES of CHILD WELFARE TEAM MEMBERS

Foster parents have the responsibility to know the role, rights and responsibilities of foster parents, other child welfare professionals, the child, and the child’s birth family.

Foster parents communicated a clear understanding of staff roles in the 2016 Foster Parent Implementation Plan Trainings and Committee Meetings.

Foster parents are provided with experiences that help them identify the roles, rights, and responsibilities for themselves and other professionals working with them from their first contact with the agency. Foster parents are provided with program procedures in the LCF Foster Parent Handbook, co-training opportunities (specifically the “Working as a Team and Keeping It Real Trainings - See attachments), the Little City placement contract; and print and social media updates. All of these materials speak to the roles, rights and responsibilities of those fostering.

Quarterly CFTMs with the child’s treatment team provides a review of team member roles and responsibilities regarding the care of the child. This allows everyone involved an opportunity to meet as a team and work collectively on goals. Foster parents are also invited and encourage to participate in ACRs, Court, court family conferences, mediations, CIPPs, educational meetings, and other staffings pertaining to the care of the child.

Little City includes foster parents as members of the management team in a multitude of ways including:

- Foster parent feedback is also solicited by conducting yearly satisfaction surveys. The outcomes from these surveys are used to improve the services provided by Little City’s foster care program.
- Foster parents are also invited to be members of Little City’s Foster Parent Advisory Committee, who aids in the development of our annual Foster Parent Implementation Plan. The committee includes staff from all levels of the agency.
- Foster parents are invited to co-train trainings with our therapy and case management team members.
- Foster parents and team members from all levels within the organization participate in our annual holiday party and summer picnic.
RESPONSIBILITY #12: SERVE AS A MANDATED REPORTER

Foster parents have the responsibility to know and, as necessary, serve as a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act.

As a foster parent, you are a MANDATED REPORTER. Foster parents are required by law to report any abuse or neglect. This includes reporting any suspicions of abuse or neglect, even if one is unsure that the action was abuse or neglect. Foster parents must also report any failures of others to report abuse or neglect of which they have knowledge.

Little City’s mandated reporter procedure is as follows: Upon witnessing, gaining knowledge of, or suspecting a case of abuse or neglect, including sexual acting-out and/or abuse, the foster parent will immediately report the information to the DCFS hotline by calling 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873) and then to his/her case manager or their supervisor. The report will be made verbally and documented in writing. The written report must contain information from the hotline call, including the date, time, and name of the contact person on the hotline. The case manager or supervisor will notify the Director of Foster Care and Adoption of the program. The Director of Foster Care and Adoption will insure that DCFS is informed and all the proper paperwork is completed. If necessary, an investigation will be conducted by Little City and/or DCFS. When the investigation has been completed, the foster parents will be notified that action has been taken. In the event that the foster parent suspects Little City staff of abuse or neglect, the foster parent should contact the Director of the Foster Care Program, who will ensure that an investigation is conducted and that DCFS is informed.

LCF provides Mandated Reporter training during pre-service and on-going through in-class sessions at the agency or via DCFS’ online training www.dcfstraining.org Foster parents are asked to sign an "Acknowledgment of Mandated Status Reporter” (CANTS 22) indicating their understanding and agreement with the rules of mandated reporting. This form is updated per initial licensing and renewal cycles.

Foster families who have had abuse/neglect allegations made against them are informed by the worker or the therapist that a call has been made to the hotline and the allegation made about the home. During pre-service training, families are informed of the possibility that a child may make an allegation of abuse or neglect about a family member that per mandated reporter responsibilities the agency/foster parent must report and the procedures for managing these reports. In addition, the LCF Foster Parent Handbook offers a section for foster parents about their rights if they are a subject of an abuse/neglect investigation. Foster children in the home who can be maintained through the investigation with a safety plan will remain in the home as long as the agency and DCP (if call is accepted) determine that the children’s safety can be maintained through the documented plan.
RESPONSIBILITY #13: ADMINISTRATIVE CASE REVIEWS AND COURT HEARINGS

Foster parents need to know the purpose of administrative case reviews (ACR), client service plans and court processes, as well as any filing or time requirements associated with those proceedings; and have the responsibility to actively participate in the foster parent’s designated role in these proceedings.

Foster parents reported understanding the purpose of ACRs and Court, but having difficulty attending these proceedings regularly due to them occurring during typical business hours when many foster parents working. Little City makes accommodations by providing call-in options and/or soliciting their feedback to incorporate into reports to the Court and case file.

Little City staff explains the purpose of ACR and Court Hearings in trainings and during visits and CFTMs to promote engagement and attendance. The LCF Foster Parent Handbook provided during LCF pre-service further details the ACR and Court processes.

Case managers inform foster parents of upcoming court dates and ACRs at 3x/month home visits and at quarterly CFTMs. Case managers invite foster parents to attend and explain the purpose of the court date, especially the permanency goal. The foster parents’ role within the ACR and Court hearings is also discussed. Continuous attendance by foster parents gives a better understanding of how the ACR and Court process work. Foster parents are interviewed during home visits and their information, concerns, strengths and areas for improvement are added into the biannual Integrated Assessment and Service Plan.

Foster parents are provided with the date, time, location and purpose of the hearing in CFTM minutes. The GAL also sends-out invitations and calls prior to court hearings to promote attendance. It is also during those meeting to report about the child’s safety and well-being. Foster Parents are encouraged to be present and heard during the following: change of goal or best interest hearings, trials and termination. In instances when foster parents cannot attend the hearing, the case manager will brief the caregivers about how the hearing went, and next steps.
RESPONSIBILITY #14: KNOW APPEALS

Foster parents have the responsibility to know the child welfare agency’s appeal procedure for foster parents and their rights.

This year, Little City did not have any families file an appeal.

Foster parents are informed of their rights during the licensure period by reviewing and signing off on the “Foster Parents’ Rights Statement,” which is maintained in their licensing file and within the LCF Foster Parent Handbook. LCF provides pre-service and on-going training related to foster parents’ rights. LCF also provides parents with the Foster Parent Implementation Plans annually that includes foster parents’ rights (the plan is also maintained at https://www.littlecity.org/programs/children/foster/policies/ year-round.)

Little City’s Internal Appeals Process entails the following:
Foster parents are welcomed to bring any complaint to any LCF staff member at any time by calling (773) 265-1539 during business hours or (847) 358-5510 to be connected to an on-call staff after hours, or by filling-out the Grievance Form in writing (see Attachment G.) Foster parents are provided with LCF’s staff phone list that includes cell phone contact numbers for utilization at any time.

Foster parents will receive fair treatment and considerate response to the complaint. We will assign any grievances and begin investigating within 1 business day. Little City treats all grievances as confidential; therefore, the information shared is respected and action plans are mutually-agreed upon by relevant parties requiring inclusion to resolve the complaint. Foster parents will not be subject to any form of retaliation for filing a complaint. Little City values our foster parents’ voices and wants to honor you, while we also recognize that disagreements may occur, we are committed to coming to a mutually-agreed upon solution. If at any time a foster parent feels that Little City has not resolved their concern, the foster parent may file a service appeal with DCFS or call the Foster Parent Advocacy Office. Little City provides DCFS Appeal procedures in the LCF Foster Parent Handbook during pre-service training; upon placement in the Child Files; and maintains copies of the brochures at the office.
RESPONSIBILITY #15: KEEP GOOD RECORDS

Foster parents have the responsibility to maintain accurate and relevant records, regarding the child's medication, medical visits, history and progress, along with the responsibility to follow the procedures for record keeping.

Foster parents acknowledged the importance of maintaining good records as a tool to advocating and supporting the youth in their care. Parents shared various ways and means that they kept records, such as having a designated binder or filing cabinet, and the ways/means for distributing the information to the youth’s team, such as scan/email; fax; during visits; mail; and more. It is clear that Little City’s foster parents do an excellent job in this domain.

Little City reviews and trains all foster parents on their responsibility to maintain records relevant to the youth in their care during our ongoing, pre-service training and licensure process. Foster parents are provided a LCF Foster Parent Handbook that further details the type of information to be maintained. Upon placement, foster parents are issued a Child File that provides a place to maintain all records, with section dividers by content area (ex: school, medical, behavioral, visitation, service planning, etc.) Little City’s Foster Parent Placement Contract is also reviewed and signed-off on upon the placement of a child into a foster home that states the foster parent is responsible for maintaining all records for a child. Licensing Standard Section 402.26 “Records to be maintained” is reviewed with foster parents during the initial licensure, at renewals, and at six month monitoring visits.

The records to be maintained by the foster family shall include:

- The name and date of birth of the child, the legal guardian of the child, religion of the child, and arrangements for education of the child;
- The name, address, and telephone number of the child’s physician, guardian, and supervising agency;
- The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of person to contact in case of emergency, including the names of persons to whom the child may be released;
- A record and/or receipts for distribution of allowance and clothing funds;
- A record of the emergency evacuation plan and quarterly rehearsals;
- The CFS 592 Overnight Visit Arrangements, kept for the duration of the visit;
- The CFS 432 Consent for Out of State Travel or Extended Trips;
- Completed medical, dental, vision, hearing and other specialty appointments; immunizations the child has received; any physical problems, limitations, or allergies the child has; any current recommendations for special medical care; log of medication prescribed and given; and all medical-related consents.
- Copies of child’s school records: report card, disciplinary notices, progress reports, meeting notices, Individualized Education Plan
- Copies of evaluations completed (psychological, psychiatric, developmental, etc.)
- Records of completed foster parent training and all relevant 402 documentation
- Sibling and Biological Parent visitation forms
RESPONSIBILITY #16: SHARE INFORMATION

Foster parents have the responsibility to share information, through the child welfare team, with the subsequent caregiver (whether the child's parent or another substitute caregiver) regarding the child's adjustments in the foster parent's home.

Foster parents and staff discussed this domain, and mutually agreed that sharing information is essential to ensuring the well-being of the youth in their care. Foster parents talked about sharing information with case managers during visits, in a crisis via phone or after-hours; with therapists during their weekly in-home visits; with support staff during their visits; and with supervisors and other team members during CFTMs, licensing visits, and the likes.

Little City staff meet with a foster parent to discuss the child’s needs related to placement considerations. Staff uses LCF forms to gather information pertaining to the child's needs, culture, schedule, likes and dislikes, services, triggers for negative behavioral interactions, and so on. The Child File and life book are also expected to follow the child to any subsequent placement and contains the foster parent’s notes regarding the child’s special needs.

The pre-placement visits also serve as a time for the caregivers and staff to discuss the child’s adjustment. Staff therapists are also involved at this time, as necessary, to assess or share information regarding the child’s adjustment. We have a placement checklist to ensure all the required tasks and paperwork are completed at placement. Little City also has a thirty-day staffing after the placement to assess the placement and child’s adjustment that includes the former foster caregiver.

Families who transition a child for a more permanent placement or for families who did not have concerns regarding care of the children are encouraged to remain a support in the child’s life and for the new foster family. The agency counsels the foster family after the child has moved on ways the family can remain involved in the child’s life (respite provider, phone calls, etc.)

Little City trains foster parents on the importance of sharing information and being an active member of the child’s treatment team during the “Working as a Team, Foster Parent Implementation Plan “ and “Keeping It Real: Foster Parenting from a Foster Parents’ Perspective” trainings of our pre-service. The importance of sharing information is reiterated at home visits and CFTMs on an ongoing basis.
2017 FOSTER PARENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
Proof of Ongoing Training

Little City training calendars:

1. Little City’s 2017 Foster Parent Pre-Service Training Flyer
2. Little City’s 2017 Foster Parent Pre-Service Course Descriptions
3. Little City’s 2017 Monthly Foster Parent Training Calendar
4. Little City’s 2016/2017 Monthly Foster Parent Training Course Descriptions
Please join us for

Pre-Service Training

April 18, 2017 6:00PM to 8:00PM
Foster Parent Policy & Procedures

April 20, 2017 6:00PM to 8:00PM
Intro to DD

April 25, 2017 6:00PM to 8:00PM
Clinical Interventions

April 27, 2017 6:00PM to 8:00PM
Transitions & Family Ties

May 2, 2017 6:00PM to 8:00PM
Working as a Team

May 4, 2017 6:00PM to 8:00PM
Keeping It Real: Foster Parenting from a Foster Parents’ Perspective

2nd Saturday of every month 10a-5p
CPR & First Aid

4th Saturday of every month 9a-5p
CPI

Call Katherine Oglesby at (773) 916-4091 to register.
Trainings will be held at
Little City Foundation
Large Conference Room
700 N. Sacramento, Suite 201
Chicago, IL 60612

Parking Available in the Parking Lot

*Pre Service is offered Quarterly, January, April July & October
2016/2017
Foster Parent Pre-Service Training
Description of Courses

Little City Policies and Procedures/LCF Foster Parent Handbook:
- Little City reviews all foster care procedures with applicable sign-off forms for their licensing file; reviews foster parent rights and responsibilities and provides applicable sign-off and the foster parent implementation plan; and provides the LCF Foster Parent Handbook for on-going reference of all program procedures.
- Includes records, court, ACR, service appeal, etc. information.
- Homework provided and reviewed after the session. (*A 2014 addition)
- Pre-Service Training Manual materials updated (*A 2014 addition)

Introduction of Developmental Disabilities (aka Populations Training)
- Provides an introduction to the children and youth served within Little City’s foster care and adoption program: children with intellectual and developmental disabilities between the ages of 0-21 years from a variety of backgrounds.
- Homework provided and reviewed after the session. (*A 2014 addition)
- Pre-Service Training Manual materials updated (*A 2014 addition)

Clinical Interventions
- Introduces Collaborative Problem concept of “Kids [and families] do well if they can.”
- Stresses relationships – especially those with foster parents – as key to treating trauma and promoting healing and growth
- Discusses ways to manage different behaviors exhibited by children in your home, includes reward charts, effective discipline, toilet training, sensory integration.
- Discusses the clinical interventions and approaches utilized by Little City’s therapy team, including PECS, Sensory Integration, DIR, TEACCH, play therapy, and others in our individual and family therapies.
- Homework provided and reviewed after the session. (*A 2014 addition)
- Pre-Service Training Manual materials updated (*A 2014 addition)

Working as a Team (consolidated to include Family Ties/Lifebooks); (Co-Trained with Foster Parents)
- Reviews roles and responsibilities of all team members, including foster parents, in promoting child well-being and permanency through development and maintenance of relationships and use of a lifebook.
- Detailed discussion of reunification procedures
- How to advocate in court, at ACRs, and team meetings
Transitions Training* (added for 2014; Co-Trained)
Focus of this training is on helping foster parents navigate how to welcome a child into your home, and aid a child to leave your home due to returning home, transitioning to adult services, or moving to an adoptive placement. Placement disruptions will also be discussed. (*This training has been added to LCF’s Pre-Service curriculum as well)
  - Homework provided and reviewed after the session. (*A 2014 addition)
  - Pre-Service Training Manual materials updated (*A 2014 addition)

Keeping it Real: Foster Parenting from Foster Parents’ Perspective (Trained by Foster Parent(s)/a Foster Parent Panel)
Provides an opportunity for foster parent panel to share information about their experiences, especially around receiving a placement, managing crises, advocacy, the foster parents’ role as a treatment team member, transitions the youth experiences, resources for foster parents, support networks; encourages Q&A.


2017 Foster Parent
Training Tuesdays

Trainings are offered the 2nd Tuesday of every month

11am-1pm Little City 700 N. Sacramento Chicago
6pm –8pm 15015 Grant St. Dolton IL.

Training Credits Provided

January 10 Psychotropic Medications
February 14 Proactive Strategies to Prevent Crisis I
March 14 Proactive Strategies to prevent crisis II
April 11 Transitions (Updated)
May 9 Trauma Training
June 13 Relationship and Resilience
July 12 NO LITTLE CITY TRAINING
July 15 Educational Advocacy / IEP Training

(A 6-hour training on a Saturday, 9am-3:30pm)

August 8 Working as a Team
September 12 Behavioral Techniques
October 10 Cultural Diversity / Life Books
November 11 Adoption & Family Focused Supports

(A 3-hour training on a Saturday, 9a-12 Noon)

December OFF – Holidays

Foster Parent Advisory Committee:
4th Thursday in January, April, July and September Locations TBA

Additional Monthly Trainings by RSVP only
CPR& First Aid: 2nd Saturday of every month 9a-3p
CPI: 4th Saturday of every month 9a-5p

RSVP for Trainings:
Jacqueline Torres (773) 916-4061 JTorres@littlecity.org
Behavioral Techniques

- Discusses ways to manage different behaviors exhibited by children in your home, includes reward charts, effective discipline, toilet training, sensory integration. Discuss the clinical interventions and approaches utilized by Little City’s therapy team, including PECS, Sensory Integration, DIR, TEACCH, play therapy, and others.
- Homework provided and reviewed after the session. (*A 2014 addition)
- Pre-Service Training Manual materials updated (*A 2014 addition)

Teaming to Address Trauma

- Discusses roles and responsibilities of the child’s treatment team related to the child’s experience of loss and trauma. Discuss attachment/PTSD/anger management; impact of placement disruptions. Stresses the relationship as the key to intervention.
- Homework provided and reviewed after the session. (*A 2014 addition)
- Pre-Service Training Manual materials updated (*A 2014 addition)

Trauma Training Series (Co-Trained with Foster Parents)

10-Hour intensive training course that provides an in-depth history on trauma and effective trauma intervention strategies with youth in care. Stresses the relationship as the key to intervention. Attendees must commit to attending all 5 training sessions.
- Homework provided and reviewed after the session. (*A 2014 addition)

Educational Advocacy

Discuss graduation preparation, Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), summer school enrollment and activities (ie: camp); school enrollment, school supply reimbursement, school calendar, special services available in schools; and High School Academic Plans.

Relationships and Resilience (*A 2014 Addition)

Introduces the concept of “kids [and families] do well if they can” and stresses the importance of relationships – especially those with foster parents – in healing trauma and fostering resilience.
- Homework provided and reviewed after the session. (*A 2014 addition)

Collaborative Problem Solving

Introduction to Little City’s expanded Treatment Philosophy and how using Collaborative Problem Solving with youth in care will aid in promoting prosocial behaviors while healing trauma and strengthening relationships with caregivers.
- Homework provided and reviewed after the session. (*A 2014 addition)

Dealing with Transitions (Foster Parent Co-Trained)

Focus of this training is on helping foster parents navigate how to welcome a child into your home, and aid a child to leave your home due to returning home, transitioning to adult services, or moving to an adoptive placement. Placement disruptions will also be discussed. (*This training has been added to LCF’s Pre-Service curriculum as well)
- Homework provided and reviewed after the session. (*A 2014 addition)
- Pre-Service Training Manual materials updated (*A 2014 addition)
Cultural Sensitivity Training
Discuss different cultural influences on parenting, self-awareness, and cultural competency. Discuss how to meet the needs of children in your care if they are different than your own. Topics covered include racial, cultural, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, and others.
  * Homework provided and reviewed after the session. (*A 2014 addition)

Adoption & Family Focused Training (Facilitated by an Adoption Attorney & Family Advocates) (*This training has been expanded upon for 2014 from 2 to 5 hours with an increased focus on supports post-adoption or guardianship).
Discuss the foster care conversion adoption process, the adoption subsidy, and what services and supports children and their adoptive families are eligible for prior to and post-adoption. Provide information on free post-adoption supports and plans.

DCFS – DHS Transitions Training (Facilitated by External Expert) (*A 2014 addition)
A cross-training of foster parents and staff about the steps involved in transitioning youth from Little City’s DCFS foster care program into DHS-funded services, including information about Little City’s DHS Home-Based Supports program.

Autism I (* 2015 addition)
This training will serve as a primer on autism and will respond to the following questions
  * What is autism?
  * What is the cause of autism?
  * What are the characteristics of autism?
  * What does the “autism spectrum” look like?
  * What are common challenges for a child with autism at home and in the community?
  * What does the future look like for a person with autism?

This training is designed to improve the participant’s capacity for addressing the challenges of autism at home and in the community and will cover the following topics:
Strategies and tools for improving: Regulation, Sensory processing, Communication, Executive functioning, Social skills, Behavior intervention tips and techniques.

Psychotropic Medication: (*2016 Addition)
Training will cover Medication 101 Guide. Words to know, Types of Medications, Missed Doses, Dosage Changes, and Discontinuing Medication. Training will cover monitoring effects of medication, managing side effects such as sleep and appetite problems. Keeping track of medications and completing medication logs.

Proactive Strategies to Prevent Crisis I & II (* 2016 Addition)
Review the common challenges for youth with developmental disabilities and Behavioral concerns.
Learn a variety of techniques designed to help identify triggers for the youth. That will improve Foster Parent and youth ability to minimize crisis.
Introduce and complete Crisis management plans for youth in care.
PURPOSE:
The purpose is to provide a formal procedure for children, parents, guardians, and foster/pre-adoptive parents
to state their grievances, appeal decisions or submit complaints. This policy also provides a time line for Little
City Foundation staff to respond and to provide formal procedures to appeal as desired.

SCOPE
This policy applies to all individuals and/or the parent, guardian, foster parent/adoptive parent of children
receiving services through the ChildBridge Center for Group Home Living and Center for Family and
Community Family Based Services.

POLICY:
It is the policy of Little City Foundation to provide individuals receiving services and/or the parents, guardians,
foster parents/adoptive parents of children receiving services through the applicable programs with the
opportunity to file a grievance, appeal a decision or submit a complaint related to a disagreement concerning
service provision. This policy will be shared with all parties at the time of intake into the Program and reviewed
annually with the review of the Client Rights Policy.

Any individual who files a grievance, appeals a decision, or submit complaints has the right to be free from acts
of harassment and retaliation by any other party and will not experience an interruption in service provision when
exercising the right to file a grievance, appeal or a complaint. Little City Foundation will respond to all grievances
or complaints as outlined in this procedure.

Little City Foundation will respond to all grievances, complaints, or appeals in an appropriate time frame, and
will keep a log of all such complaints.

PROCEDURE

1. Upon initial contact from the individual or his/her parent, guardian, foster/adoptive parent
   regarding the subject of complaint or grievance, the assigned Therapist, Case Coordinator,
   CWS or Case Manager will attempt to solve the problem without the need for further action.
   This discussion will be documented in the child’s file.
2. If the issue is not addressed to the satisfaction of the complaining party, a formal grievance to address the complaint can be made. Individuals receiving Foster Care Services have a specific form which has been provided at initial licensure, upon the placement of a child, and annually via issuance of the foster parent policy guide. The form is also posted online. The individual will notify, in writing, the Social Work Supervisor of the wish to file a grievance, appeal or complaint. Individuals wishing to file a grievance who receive home based services or group home services can submit in writing to the immediate supervisor of the wish to file a grievance, appeal or complaint. The notification must be signed dated and must contain a description of the issue needing resolution. If needed, the Therapist, Case Coordinator, CWS or Case Manager will provide assistance in writing the notification.

3. Once the written grievance is received by the immediate supervisor who will schedule a meeting within two days with the individual(s) who filed a grievance and will attempt to resolve the situation through discussion and document in writing the process and results. All parties involved will sign off on the documentation and receive copies for their record.

4. Failure to resolve the issue with a meeting will prompt an investigation which will be initiated immediately. The immediate supervisor will consult with the next level supervisor to determine who will conduct the investigation into the grievance, complaint, or appeal.

5. The investigation into the grievance, complaint, or appeal will be finalized within 10 business days of the immediate supervisor’s notification. The original complaint and resolution will be sent, in writing, to the party initiating the grievance, complaint or appeal and to the agency’s DCFS regional licensing office or licensing representative if applicable.

6. If extenuating circumstances exist which require additional time for resolution, an interim report will be submitted to the grieving party and carbon copied to any external parties that may be informed of the issue at the 10 day point. The interim report shall include the reason for the delay and an estimated date of completion of the investigation and response.

7. If the situation has not been resolved successfully, the matter will be brought to the program’s director. The program’s director and Director of Regulatory Relations and Compliance will review all relevant information and reply in writing within 10 working days.

8. If the situation was not resolved to the grieving party satisfaction, the individual may contact:
   a. The Department of Children and Family Services’ Administrative Hearings Unit, State of Illinois Center, 100 North LaSalle Street, 6th Floor, Chicago, IL, 60601, (312)814-5540, to file a Service Appeal. DCFS has published specific guidelines as to which issues may or may not be appealed.
   b. The Department of Human Services Network Facilitator

The resolutions of all complaints will be reported to the Executive Director and will include copies of the written complaint and the written response.

A separate grievance procedure applies for issues pertaining to accessibility to, confidentiality of, and disclosure of an individual’s personal healthcare information. Any concerns regarding accessibility to or disclosure or confidentiality of personal health care information should be addressed in writing to the LCF HIPAA Privacy office at 1760 W. Algonquin Rd., Palatine, IL 60067.
## Foster Care/Adoption Program
### Grievance Form

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Submit completed forms by:
- Mailing it to 700 N. Sacramento Blvd., Suite 201, Chicago IL 60612
- Faxing it to 773-826-9117
- Giving it to your caseworker or their supervisor in person
- Filling it out online and emailing it to Senior Family Development Specialist, Katherine Oglesby at: koglesby@littlecity.org
- Bringing it to the office in person
- Requesting a meeting with the child’s treatment team, or supervisor, program manager, director, or licensing staff
2016 FOSTER PARENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Grievances filed during the past year

Little City did not receive any comments from the public about our 2016 Foster Parent Implementation Plan. Little City’s plan was publically available on our website at https://www.littlecity.org/programs/children/foster/policies/ and via publication.