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FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS:

1) The right to be treated with dignity, respect, and consideration as a professional member of the child welfare team.

The staff at Shelter, Inc. considers foster parents to be of paramount importance to the welfare of foster children. The foster parents will be treated with the dignity, respect and consideration given to each member of the child welfare system. Shelter, Inc. staff demonstrates our respect for foster parents in the following ways:

- Foster parents are kept informed of program and staff changes (for example, when the assigned Child Welfare Specialist changes)
- Office telephone systems are easy to navigate and Child Welfare Specialists can be reached directly or through the secretary. When necessary, foster parents are given staff's cell phone numbers.
- Home and family visits are scheduled with foster parents as far in advance as possible and with consideration for the foster parent's schedule. Foster parents are made aware that unannounced home visits may be conducted in accordance with DCFS Rules and Procedure when needed to assess licensing compliance and/or safety issues.
- Foster parents are contacted as soon as possible when the Child Welfare Specialist needs to cancel or change appointments or when they will be late for an appointment.
- Child Welfare Specialist address foster parents by "Mr., Mrs., Ms" unless they are given permission to do otherwise.
- Foster parents' accomplishments with their birth children, their lives and work experience are recognized, valued, and utilized.
- All agency staff is expected to respond to foster parent requests, questions and needs as they arise.
- The Child Welfare Specialist is expected to routinely ask the foster parents questions to elicit how they are adjusting to the presence of the child in their home, how it is affecting the family, and other questions that are designed to elicit their needs.
- As indicated, the supervisor develops performance goals for annual evaluations for the Child Welfare Specialist
- The Licensing Specialist maintains an up-to-date mailing list so agency communications go to all foster parents. Foster parents who prefer email are contacted electronically.

- Shelter, Inc. considers all foster home applicants regardless of race, culture, marital status, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation.

2) *The right to be provided standardized pre-service training and appropriate ongoing training to meet the mutually assessed needs to improve the foster parents' skills.*

- Shelter, Inc. requires all appropriate applicants requesting to be traditional foster parents participate and complete the Foster Pride/Adopt Pride training. The Licensing Specialist notifies foster parents of the DCFS requirements for training. The Licensing Specialist refers foster parent applicants to the nine session PRIDE training.
- Relative caregivers, who are seeking to be licensed, are required to attend the six hour Pre-Service Foster Parent training for related caregivers. The training may be taken in the classroom or the relative caregivers can view the DVD. The classroom training is the preferred training for related caregivers. They are also encouraged to attend the complete Foster Pride/Adopt training.
- Relative caregivers who are interested in accepting non-relative children into their homes must complete the full Foster Pride/Adopt training.
- Child Welfare Specialist and foster parents mutually assess their training needs and parenting skills. These are discussed during home visits and in the Child and Family Team Meetings with regards to meeting the developmental level and emotional needs of children in care. Shelter, Inc. Clinical director will discuss parenting skills issues with foster parents as needed.
- Foster Parents are always paired with the Child Welfare Specialist on their child(ren)'s case and can seek information and training from them. When desired, foster parents can be uniquely paired with a staff member for a "co-training" approach, the model used in Pride training, to learning about fostering and the needs of their foster child.
- For those children who are in therapy, their counselors are a source of guidance and training of parenting skills with foster parents.
- Shelter, Inc. offers in-service training seminars three times per year, in January, April and October. These seminars are offered free of charge for our foster parents. Topics in 2014 were "Eating Disorders in Children and Adolescents" on 1/24/14, "Impact of Domestic Violence on Children and Adolescents: Implications for Treatment" on 4/25/14, and "Self-Injury: Identification, Assessment and Intervention" on 10/24/14.
- Shelter, Inc. licensing specialist informs foster parents of the DCFS In-Service module classes and on-line trainings during semi-annual home visits and as needed.
- Shelter Inc. licensing specialist informs foster parents of professional seminars/trainings offered through community agencies. In 2014 Foster parents were notified of the

Adoption Learning Partners on-line training courses offered free to foster parents. In addition, foster parents were notified of the Illinois Foster and Adoptive Parent Association Conference, Chicago State University “Restoring Community: Healing, Hard Work and Hope” Symposium, the Chicago Public Schools Parent Café, DCFS Parent Café on “Conversations to Keep Your Family Strong”, the IDHS 2014 FASD Conference, and a website for resources for IEP’s and Behavior Issues.

- Foster parents and Child Welfare Specialists are surveyed annually to determine the areas in which additional training is necessary. The surveys were modified to also ask what each group perceives to be the mutual and co-training needs. The results were reviewed by the quality assurance team in conjunction with the Foster Care Supervisor and Associate Director.
- Shelter, Inc. provides Traditional foster care and Home of Relative foster care. Training is commensurate with those levels of foster care. Shelter, Inc. does not provide Specialized Foster Care. In special instances, Shelter approves and refers foster parents to parent skill training when a child presents special challenges that are beyond the immediate knowledge level of the foster parent.
- Shelter, Inc. utilizes social media, the agency website and emails, to alert foster parents of training opportunities. Foster parents have an interest in obtaining relevant information and at their suggestion, relevant educational material and links are included in the Shelter’s website.

3) *The right to be informed as to how to contact the appropriate child placement agency in order to receive information and assistance to access supportive services for children in their care.*

- At the time of licensing, the foster parents are given the Advocacy Office brochure, The Office of the Inspector General and Foster Parent Hotline brochure, and a Support Reference list with important contact telephone numbers. This list includes the telephone numbers to various support services with a brief description of each service’s purpose. These include, Shelter, Inc. 24 hours emergency number 847-590-6190, Adoption Information Center of Illinois, DCFS Advocacy Office, DCFS Appeals Unit, Abuse/Neglect Hotline, Crisis/Behavioral/Mental Health, DCFS General Information, Dental/Medical Care. Annually thereafter, the foster parents are given the Support Reference list.
- At the time of child’s placement, the foster parents are informed the Child Welfare Specialist name and the supervisor’s name and telephone number. The foster parent is

given information regarding the services the child is currently receiving, including the service provider's name, phone number and address.

- The procedure for reaching the Child Welfare Specialist will be reviewed at the time of placement and during monthly home visits. Shelter, Inc.'s 24 hour telephone number 847-590-6190 is reviewed with foster parents, including how to reach the on-call worker or administrator for emergencies.

4) *The right to receive timely financial reimbursement commensurate with the care needs of the child as specified in the service plan.*

- Shelter, Inc. mails the licensed traditional and relative board checks to foster parents on the second Wednesday of the following month of care. The current board rate is made known to foster parents at the time of training and placement. Foster parents will be informed of any changes in the board rate.
- The Executive Director and Associate Director receive copies of the payment to assure compliance and prevent any problems.
- Non-licensed Home of Relative caregivers receive the Standard of Need funds, which are paid to them directly by DCFS and they should contact DCFS for assistance at 800-525-0499.
- Other payments, such as non-recurring expenses (i.g. educational expenses, recreation, socialization, summer camps, etc.) are reimbursed to the foster parents. Payment will be made upon presentation of receipts or an invoice attached to a payment request form signed by the service provider, foster parent, and Child Welfare Specialist.
- Reimbursements for non-recurring expenses are typically issued two weeks from the time the receipt is presented. Foster parents are to contact the Child Welfare Specialist or Foster Care Supervisor if they have not received a payment check within that time. If they are not available, the foster parent can contact the business office at 847-255-8060 to determine the status of their payment. The Child Welfare Specialist, Foster Care Supervisor and Shelter, Inc. Administration will assist to remedy any problems and issue the reimbursement within two business days unless additional documentation is needed.
- Reunification funding is provided, but each request requires pre-approval from DCFS.
- Day care payments are made directly through DCFS once the day care facility is approved by Shelter, Inc. and DCFS.
- If a foster child is determined to be a Specialized level of care, the child's case must be transferred to an agency with a Specialized contract. If the foster parents opt to keep the child in their home, they must take any additional training required by the Specialized agency. The foster parents may maintain their license through Shelter, Inc. if they choose. The Specialized agency will make the board payment to the foster parent.

5) *The right to be provided a clear, written understanding of a placement agency's plan concerning the placement of a child in their home. Inherent in this policy is the responsibility to support activities that will promote the child's rights to relationships with his own family and cultural heritage.*

- As members of the child welfare team, the foster parents are advised of Shelter, Inc.'s plan for the child(ren) placed in their home as it affects the child(ren).
- The Child Welfare Specialist works collaborative with foster parents to develop the service plan for the foster child. Child Welfare Specialist keep foster parents informed via telephone, text, letter, regularly scheduled home visits to any changes in the case plan and the permanency goal. Foster parents are encouraged to participate in Child and Family Team Meetings and the ACR's.
- The importance of maintaining familial relationships and supporting cultural heritage is stressed during licensing orientation, home study, pre-service trainings, in-service trainings, and through the Child Welfare Specialists contacts.
- The issue of relationships with the biological families is addressed during the Child and Family Team meetings. Foster parents are encouraged to develop a supportive and effective working relationship with the biological parents, while respecting their right to privacy and the level of involvement that they prefer to have.
- Foster parents are included in or consulted about the scheduling of the visits with biological parents and are made aware of how the visit with biological parents and siblings went. Foster parents are encouraged to give the Child Welfare Specialist feedback about the visits based on the child's subsequent behavior and verbalizations.
- Foster parents are required to complete the visitation records for parent visits and sibling visits supervised by the foster parents, including the date, time, and length of each visit.
- The Child Welfare Specialist has ongoing discussions with the foster parents which include reunification planning and reunification funding available through DCFS.

6) The right to be provided a fair, timely, and impartial investigation of the licensing complaint issues and be provided the opportunity to have a person of their choosing present during the investigation and due process: the right be provided the opportunity to request and receive medication and/or an administrative review of decisions which affect licensing parameters; and the right to have decisions concerning a licensing corrective plan specifically explained and tied to the licensing standards violation.

- A licensing complaint may come from DCFS, private agency staff, a service provider, a school, or may result from a hotline call. It is a report of a violation of licensing standard or a law and may include allegations of abuse or neglect. Licensing complaint information is confidential and the identity of the individual making the complaint is not disclosed. During investigations, the foster home must be placed on “hold” status with the DCFS Placement Clearance Desk.
- Within two days of receiving the complaint, Shelter Inc.’s Licensing Specialist will begin the investigation. All persons relevant to the investigation will be interviewed: e.g. foster parent, child reported, witness, etc. The Child Welfare Specialist and the Guardian Ad Litem are informed of the licensing complaint.
- Foster parents have the right to have a person of their choice present during the investigation and due process as a witness or advocate.
- If a licensing complaint indicates a potential risk or safety concerns for the children in care, the Child Welfare Specialist, in consultation with their supervisor and the Licensing Specialist, will apply the Child Endangerment Risk Assessment in order to determine risk or safety concerns. In the case of risk, a child protective plan will be put into place in order to prevent harm to the child(ren). In the case of safety concerns, a clinical staffing will be held including the Child Welfare Specialist, Supervisor, and the Clinical Director of Shelter, Inc. before a decision to remove the child from the placement. The child(ren) may be removed from the home until the safety and viability of the home is assured. The GAL is notified.
- The license investigation should be completed within 30 days of the complaint, but may be extended another 30 days if needed. A final determination as to whether or not a violation occurred must be made within 15 days of the completed investigation. Within 5 days of the finding the foster parent will be mailed a certified letter outlining the findings. The letter also contains information about the foster parent’s right to appeal negative results by requesting a supervisory review within 10 days of the letter’s postmark. The Review is attended by the Licensing Specialist, Supervisor, and the foster parent. The foster parent may bring a person of their choosing or an attorney to the review.

- If the determination is overturned the complaint is closed. If it is not overturned or the foster parent does not request a supervisory review, a corrective action plan will be developed with the foster parents for the substantiated violations. Specific violations will be listed with what actions will occur to correct them. Each action will have a deadline for completion. After the date, the Licensing Specialist may make an unannounced visit to determine whether or not the violations have been corrected.
- Failure to correct violations may result in Shelter, Inc. seeking to revoke or to refuse to renew the foster home license and/or the removal of the child(ren) from the home. Shelter, Inc. will send a letter to the foster parents explaining the planned enforcement action. This letter details the nature of the licensing violations and the possibility of requesting a hearing through DCFS, Division of Licensing and Certification. Specific instructions on the timeline for the appeal, whom to contact and how to contact the appropriate authority is contained in the letter.
- Shelter, Inc.'s Child Welfare Specialist and/or Licensing Specialist will provide direct assistance to the foster parent, upon request, when they intend to seek either Mediation or and Administrative review. If this course of action is chosen, the DCFS official will set a date for the hearing. Shelter, Inc. will be represented by the Licensing Specialist and licensing supervisor.
- Foster parents have the right to be provided the opportunity to request and receive mediation and/or administrative review of decisions that affect licensing parameters and they have the right to have decisions concerning a licensing corrective action plan specifically explained and related to the violation.

7) *The right, at any time during which a child is placed with the foster parents, to receive additional or necessary information that is relevant to the care of the child.*

- Shelter, Inc. will inform the foster parents of all information known about the child that is relevant to the care of the child, including information regarding the services in place for the child. Throughout placement, the Child Welfare Specialist will give the foster parent all additional and necessary information affecting the care of the child.
- Foster parents are encouraged by the Child Welfare Specialist to attend Child and Family Team meetings, ACR's, and court regarding the child placed in their home in order to keep the foster parents informed of the child's needs and the progress towards permanency. While providing information to the foster parents, the Child Welfare Specialist will disclose all necessary information to the foster parents without violating the confidentiality rights of the biological parents.

- Child Welfare Specialist are trained in their Foundations class and through supervision with the Foster Care Supervisor on information to disclose to foster parents and confidentiality, so they will understand the limits of information that can be disclosed. The Child Welfare Specialist is accountable to keep foster parents informed of events impacting the case. This is accomplished through weekly supervision with the Foster Care Supervisor and contact with the Clinical Director.
- The Child Welfare Specialist is required to obtain consent to release information to receive such documents as psychological or medical documents.

8) *The right to be given information concerning the child from the Department.*

- Foster parents are provided with all known information pertinent to the care of the child and needs of the children regarding the children and the children's families. Staff is trained to share the necessary information during new staff training. The Child Welfare Specialist will provide the following information:
 - The medical history of the child, including known medical problems or communicable diseases, information concerning the immunization status of the child and insurance and medical card information.
 - The mental health history of the child(ren) and ongoing mental health issues/concerns
 - A copy of the Asthma Action Plan, if applicable
 - The educational history of the child, including the special educational needs and a copy of the child's individual educational plan (IEP), Individual Family Service Plans (IFSP) when the child is receiving special education services or 504 Educational Special Needs Plan, if applicable.
 - A copy of the child's portion of the client service plan including any visitation arrangements and all amendments or revisions: case history of the child, including how the child came into care; the child's legal status; the permanency goal for the child, a history of the child's previous placements; and reasons for placement changes, excluding information that identifies or reveals the location of any previous foster or relative caretaker home.
 - Other relevant background information of the child, including any prior criminal history; information about any behavior problems including fire setting, perpetuation of sexual abuse, destructive behavior and substance abuse habits, and likes and dislikes, etc.
 - The preferred/familiar routines of the child(ren) for bedtimes, stories, favorite toys and stuffed animals, etc.

- When this information is not immediately available, the Child Welfare Specialist will report it verbally as soon as it is known and provide written follow up as indicated. If foster parents request further information, Shelter, Inc. makes every effort to seek out and provide the information. The disclosure is documented in the case record and shared with the child's Guardian Ad Litem.
- Trainings to reinforce compliance and discuss changes in policies or procedures are scheduled for both staff and foster parents as needed. The importance of sharing new information as soon as possible is stressed.
- Information sharing is reviewed by the Supervisor through a review of the contact notes written by the Child Welfare Specialist. Contacts include home visits, telephone calls, court hearings, Child and Family Team Meetings, etc. Child and Family Team meetings are documented by the Clinical Director.
- Foster parents are given clear explanation of the limits of disclosure to essential information for the purpose of understanding the children's needs. The responsibility to protect the confidentiality rights of the children's families in the course of such disclosure is explained. The responsibility extends to the foster families in maintaining confidentiality of information. Shelter, Inc. encourages foster parents and birth parents to communicate openly and regularly, foster parents to learn more information about the child's needs directly from the birth parents. This foster parent alliance enhances the foster parent's knowledge regarding the child's needs.
- In addition, the Child Section of the Integrated Assessment process includes the foster parents in many of the initial interviews regarding the child and is intended to get more initial information about the child's needs so that appropriate interventions are designed from the outset of the case. The results of this assessment, or social history, are shared with the foster parents to fullest extent possible.
- The Child Welfare Specialist is accountable to provide the information known at the time of the placement and to update the information as part of regular contacts with the foster parents. Staff should use their supervisor for consultation if unsure about what information should be disclosed. Failure to disclose appropriate information would be dealt with in supervision. If failure was due to lack of knowledge, the staff person would be asked to complete additional training on this topic. If the failure to disclose was blatant or purposeful, the matter would be dealt with through the supervision and staff performance evaluation process and/or disciplinary procedures of the agency.

9) The right to be notified of scheduled meetings and staffings concerning the foster child in order to actively participate in the case planning and decision making process regarding the child in their care, including individual service planning staffings, administrative case reviews, interdisciplinary staffings, and individual education planning meetings; the right to be informed of decisions made by the court or the agency concerning the child; the right to have their input on the plan of services for a child given full consideration in the same manner as information presented by any other professional on the team; 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.

- Shelter, Inc. encourages foster parents to play an active and comprehensive role in the child's life. Foster parents are important advocates for the child and should participate in the decision-making process. Foster parents are integral parts of the child welfare team and they are notified and encouraged to attend all scheduled events pertaining to the child in placement.
- Foster parents will be informed by phone or in writing of all court hearings, administrative case reviews, staffings, school or other meetings regarding a child in their care, and will be invited to attend and asked for their input into case planning.
- Foster Parent input is given full consideration. The scheduling of staffings with the agency's control will take the foster parents' schedules into consideration.
- If foster parents are unable to attend a meeting, the Child Welfare Specialist informs them with three working days of any relevant findings or decision. Foster parents are encouraged to keep in close contact with all Child and Family Team members including any professionals providing services to a child in their care including physicians, counselors, teachers, and recreational staff advocating for children.

10) The right to be provided, in a timely and consistent manners, with any information a Child Welfare Specialist has regarding the child and the child's family which is pertinent to the case of the child and the needs of the child and the making of a permanency plan for the child. Disclosure of information concerning a child's family shall be limited to that information which is essential for understanding the needs of and providing care to the child in order to protect the rights of the child's family. When a positive relationship exists between the foster parents and the child's family, the child's family may consent to disclosure of additional information.

- Shelter, Inc. verbally and in writing, shares information with the foster parents before the placement is made, if possible, if not as soon as possible after the placement. This includes:
 - Basic personal information about the child(ren)
 - What was the cause of the case coming into the child welfare system
 - Placement history
 - Permanency goal
 - Location of biological parents, siblings, and/or significant other
 - Visitation plan
 - Educational status, history and needs: IEP, 504 Special Needs Plan
 - Special medical, mental health, and/or behavioral needs, potential risks
 - Services required
 - Religious information
 - 906 Placement form and medical card
 - Behavioral/Social information
 - Other information deemed necessary to provide the best possible care for the child(ren)
- The Child Welfare Specialist and the foster parents share ongoing information as it becomes known.
- Foster parents are told if information they are requesting can't be disclosed because it is unknown or because it is confidential or otherwise protected. Disclosure of information concerning a child's family shall be limited to that information that is essential for meeting the needs of the child in order to protect the rights of the biological family.
- Foster parents are encouraged to develop a positive working relationship with the biological parents and the child's family. This may result in the biological parents consenting to disclose additional information.
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11) The right to be given reasonable written notice of any change in a child's plan or plans to terminate the placement of the child with the foster parent and of the reasons for the change or termination in placement. Such notice should only be waived in cases of a court order or when the child is determined to be at imminent risk of harm.

- In accordance with DCFS' policies and procedures, Shelter, Inc. will notify foster parents of any changes in the child's plan in general and regarding termination of a placement, in particular, in writing and 14 days before the effective date of change. A Notice of Change of Placement includes the nature of the decision, the reason for the decision, the effective date, and information about the foster parent's right to appeal the decision.

- Such 14 day notice is waived only in cases of a court order or when the child is determined to be at imminent risk of harm. If the agency judges the child to be in imminent risk of harm, the child can be removed from the foster home immediately. A Notice of Change of Placement is given to the foster parents.
- Foster parents have the right to appeal a change in the child's placement except for placements with the biological parent or sibling, placements for purposes of adoption as ordered by the Court or return to the person with whom the child lived prior to entering into substitute care(reunification). Foster parents may be able to delay a change of placement by requesting an emergency review or filing an appeal within 10 days of receiving written notice of intent to change the child's placement.
- The Child Welfare Specialist and/or the Licensing Specialist will provide assistance to file an appeal upon request.
- If the Foster parents disagree with the change of placement, they may request a Clinical Placement Review by calling immediately 866-225-1431 or faxing a request for a review to the DCFS Clinical Placement Review Team within 3 days of this notice. Fax number 800-733-3308.
- A foster parent may requests a service appeal. Written requests for a service appeal are sent to:

Administrative Hearing Unit
 Department of Children and Family Services
 406 E. Monroe St.
 Springfield, IL 62701
 217-782-6625

12) The right to be notified in a timely and complete manner of all court hearings including the date and time of the court hearing, the name of the judge, or the hearing officer hearing the case, the location of the court proceedings, and the court docket number of the case and the right to intervene in court proceedings or to seek mandamus under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987.

- During the pre-service training, perspective Foster Parents will learn about the Juvenile court process and its participants. Foster Parents will receive additional information about the child welfare system from their Child Welfare Specialist and through Shelter's on-going in-service trainings.
- Shelter, Inc. child Welfare Specialists will notify Foster Parents of any court hearings regarding a child in their care by phone or in writing, and further inform Foster Parents

of their right to be heard. The notice will include the date and time of the proceeding, the location of court, the court calendar, judge's name and nature of the hearing. Shelter, Inc. encourages Foster Parents to attend hearings whenever possible to serve as advocates for the child.

- This notification is documented in the case record and the Foster Care Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that notification of Foster Parents occurs.

13) The right to be considered as a placement option when a foster child who was formerly placed with the foster parents is to be reentered into foster care when such placement would be consistent with the best interest of the child and other children in the home.

- Providing continuity of care and minimizing disruption to the child are of primary concern as a child re-enters the system.
- Shelter, Inc. facilitates the placement or is notified of re-entry, the previous foster parents is the first option when the foster parents have space and when such placement would be consistent with the best interest of the child and other children in the home.
- Information regarding previous past placements and foster parents is maintained in the child's file through transfer and closing summaries such as 906 documents and is accessible to the Child Welfare Specialists.
- The Child Welfare Specialist considers the situations of both the child and the child's previous foster parents to determine whether or not the child re-entering the placement would be appropriate.
- When possible, placement options are staffed with Foster Care Supervisor, Clinical Director and Licensing Specialist to confer on best interest regarding placement decisions.
- Possible exceptions are significant changes in the home that affect the family's ability to care for the child. These might include the foster home being filled to capacity, one of the children involved has behaviors or mental health needs that preclude other children being placed in the home, etc.
- This consideration is complicated by the current DCFS Rule requiring the agency to respond within one hour of receiving the potential referral from DCFS, informing DCFS if we have a foster family who are willing to accept the child(ren).

14) The right to have timely access to the existing appeals process with the child placement agency. The assertion of the right to appeal will be free from acts of harassment and retaliation.

- Foster Parents are encouraged to follow through by informing the Child Welfare Specialist, the Supervisor, then the Associate Director when they have a concern, unmet need or are dissatisfied. If the concern is not satisfied with the Child Welfare Specialist, the foster Parent should then contact the Foster Care Supervisor to resolve the concern. If the concern is still not resolved, the foster parent should contact Shelter's Associate Director.
- The Foster Parent also has the option to utilize Shelter's Grievance Procedure or the DCFS Service Appeal Procedure. Shelter's Foster Parent Grievance Procedure is developed in accordance with the DCFS Foster Care Complaint Policy form and is subject to review and approval by Shelter's DCFS Licensing Representative.
- The Service Appeal process and the Grievance Procedure are presented during licensing and distributed annually to Foster Parents.
- The Foster Parent may also contact the DCFS Advocacy Office and this information is made available.
- Decisions are communicated in writing to all parties concerned, including Foster Parents and all parties are informed of their appeal rights.
- Once resolved, the Foster Care Supervisor makes periodic contact with the Foster Parent to ensure the Foster Parent is being treated fairly and appropriately. The Supervisor will also follow up with the Child Welfare Specialist to ensure there is no conflict of interest, harassment, retaliation or questionable service delivery.
- Per Shelter's policy, there is zero tolerance for any retaliation or harassment by Shelter staff.

15) The right to be informed of the Foster Parent Hotline established under this Act and all of the rights accorded to foster parents concerning reports of the misconduct by Department employees, service providers, or contractors, confidential handling of those reports, and investigation by the Inspector General.

- At the pre-service training, a listing of phone numbers will be presented to each prospective foster parent, including the Advocacy Office for children and Family Service, the Inspector General's office and the Bureau of Quality Assurance. A list of support numbers is enclosed in the back of the new "Foster Family Handbook" sent to new Foster Parents after completion of the licensing process by DCFS. Shelter, Inc. sends this list to Foster Parents yearly. The Foster Parent Hotline is 1-800-722-9124.

FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

1) The responsibility to openly communicate and share information about the child with other members of the child welfare team.

- Foster Parents are trained on the type of information that must be shared with Shelter, Inc., as well as the importance of sharing information during monthly home visits and regular telephone contact with Child Welfare Specialist.
- Foster Parents are responsible for sharing general information with the Child Welfare Specialist: including: medical updates, results from exams, grades from school any behavioral/emotional issues
- Foster Parents are expected to communicate fully with the Licensing Specialist at her bi-annual home visits.
- Foster Parents are also responsible for communication of unusual incidents immediately. They are trained to contact their Child Welfare Specialist or to call the agency at 847-590-6190. After business hours this line (847-590-6190) is linked to an answering service. Shelter staff should respond within one hour. Critical incidents include, but are not limited to:
 - Any abuse or neglect of a child
 - Any injury requiring medical attention
 - Runaway or missing child (call 911 before contacting Shelter)
 - Possession of a weapon
 - Alcohol or drug use
 - Physically or sexually aggressive behavior
 - Pregnant or parenting youth
 - Suicide threat or attempt (call 911 before contacting Shelter)
 - Destruction of property
 - Trips to a hospital emergency room or hospitalization
 - Missed medication nor medication refusal
 - School suspension or expulsion
 - Criminal arrest or conviction of a child or foster parent
 - Curfew violation

In addition, Foster Parents are expected to keep the Child Welfare Specialist informed about:

- Medication Logs
- Dental, vision and hearing exams
- Visits by biological parents and contacts with them
- Visits with siblings
- Medical action plans
- Educational report cards and progress reports

2) 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 receive confidentiality training during pre-service education. They sign confidentiality agreements during the licensing orientation.
 - Foster Parents are educated that information about child(ren) and their birth parents cannot be shared with relatives, neighbors, friends, or other parents - including other foster parents. This information is share with Foster Parents for the purpose of enabling them to provide proper care and understanding.
 - At the licensing and at licensing renewal, Shelter’s Licensing Specialist and the assigned Child Welfare Specialist provide additional information to foster parents regarding the “do’s and don’ts” of confidentiality. This is done to facilitate sensitization to the importance of the child in their care and his/her biological parents
 - Periodic training of foster care staff is conducted in team meetings, individual supervision and, as applicable, with Foster Parents.
 - Changes in the law pertaining to confidentiality are made available to foster parents via mail or in –person contact.

3) The responsibility to advocate for children in your care.

Shelter, Inc. Foster Parents are the primary caretakers of the child(ren) . Child Welfare Specialists continually encourage Foster Parents to advocate for their child and help to identify areas of need. As the primary caretakers, foster parents often have the most intimate and useful information about the child(ren)'s personal needs (such as physical, emotional, educational etc.)

SHARING INFORMATION /PARTICIPATING IN STAFFINGS

- It is the Foster Parent's responsibility to share relevant information with the agency so that on-going needs of a child can be met. The agency will also be checking with schools, therapists, etc to obtain information on the children's needs and progress.
- Foster Parents are routinely encouraged by Child Welfare Specialists to attend court and participate in staffings (i.e. ACR, Child and Family Team Meetings) in order to share and learn information relative to caring for the child(ren) in their care. Routine communication also helps in maintaining a stable placement.

REQUESTING ADDITIONAL SERVICES

- If a Foster Parent believes that a child in his/her care needs more services than are being provided, s/he is expected to contact the Child Welfare Specialist. If more services are needed, the Child Welfare Specialist will staff the case with the Foster Care Supervisor and Clinical Director. If indicated, the local System of Care(SOC) agency will be contacted to help provide in-home services. If other services are indicated, (i.e. therapies, recreational activities) these will also be arranged.

SERVICE APPEAL

- If the Foster Parents are not satisfied with the services they and/or a child in their care are receiving, they are reminded by the Child Welfare Specialist and or the Foster Care Supervisor of their right to file a service appeal. A service appeal brochure is provided to foster parents initially and upon renewal of license. Training in appeal procedures is also provided through the Child Welfare Specialist and Licensing Specialist.

COURT TRAINING

- Court training is provided at PRIDE, and an overview of the court process is included in the Foster Parent Handbook. Additionally, court training is provided through the Child Welfare Specialist on an on-going case by case basis as each case differs in its court involvement.

EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY TRAINING

- Education Advocacy Training is offered after the Foster PRIDE/Adopt training. This is coordinated through the Licensing Specialist. All licensed foster parents are expected to complete this training. Unlicensed HMR Foster Parents are encouraged to complete Educational Advocacy Training.

4) *The responsibility to treat children in the Foster Parents' care and the children's families with dignity, respect and consideration.*

Foster Parents learn during pre-service and on-going training about the effects of their own behavior on children in their care. The need for dignity, respect and consideration among all parties is stressed at all times.

- The Child Welfare Specialist is expected to observe Foster Parent interactions with their children on an on-going basis. As part of the monitoring process, the Child Welfare Specialist will encourage the Foster Parents and child(ren) to articulate their needs in order to identify and meet these needs.
- The Child Welfare Specialist will provide necessary information, within the limits of confidentiality and support, if it is observed that the foster parents are experiencing distress, confusion or anger regarding the child's or biological parents' words or deeds. Counseling referrals will be made when needed.
- Foster Parents are encouraged to maintain close contact with the child's therapist or other service providers. Foster Parents are to participate in the child's services as recommended by the provider, or as determined needed by the Foster Parent.
- Any perception of indignity, disrespect or lack of consideration will be discussed immediately with the Foster Parent and the Foster Parents' needs will be assessed to provide them with the training and/or support needed to re-claim any lost dignity, respect or consideration.
- Foster Parents are trained that approved telephone contact, sibling visits or parent-child visits are not to be used as discipline for a child's misbehavior. If the Foster Parents have a concern about the effect these contacts are having on the child, they are encouraged to express these concerns to the Child Welfare Specialist as soon as possible. Then, the team can convene to decide what kinds of supports, if any, are necessary to ensure productive interactions between the child, his foster parents and his biological parents.

- The Child Welfare Specialist or Supervisor will notify Foster Parents of changes or cancellations to the visitation schedule. Foster Parents are expected to inform the child(ren) in their care of cancelled or rescheduled visits with biological parents and/or siblings.

5) The responsibility to recognize the Foster Parent’s own individual and familial strengths and limitations when deciding whether to accept a child into care; and the responsibility to recognize the Foster Parents’ own support needs and utilize appropriate supports in providing care for foster children.

EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

- The identification of new traditional foster placements is made by the DCFS Case Assignment Unit based on the address of the child’s biological parent and/or school. Foster Parents provide specific information regarding the age range, gender and number of children they are willing to foster, and if they agree to support the reunification of the child with his family, if that is the permanency goal. This information is updated on the Shelter, Inc. Foster Home Availability Database list that is submitted to DCFS.
- Although Shelter, Inc. typically receives minimal information regarding the referred child from the Case Assignment Unit, Shelter, Inc. will share available information about the child(ren) with the prospective Foster Parents, who will then make the choice whether to accept the child(ren).
- Mutual assessment and decisions about a placement and how well it might work for a specific child or children are made based on all of the available information and Foster Parents are given the choice to accept or deny a placement. Shelter’s Licensing Specialist is trained to help families consider their family dynamics, strengths, weaknesses and resources. Foster Adopt PRIDE pre-service training provides exercises in self-awareness.

ONGOING MUTUAL ASSESSMENT –POST LICENSURE

- Post licensures, Foster Parents are directed to training possibilities and/or resources for support.
- When needed, foster children are referred to counseling, mentoring, System of Care and other services which are available to them within their community. Information is provided by the Child Welfare Specialist as well as the Licensing Specialist.

- Ongoing Mutual Assessment and training also occur at quarterly Child and Family Team Meetings. At these meetings, Foster Parent feedback is solicited and ideas and feedback are given to support the child.
- The Licensing Specialist conducts bi-annual visits during which she assesses needs and strengths and helps to find ways to meet needs (including support and trainings) and to recognize and commend strengths.

6) The responsibility to be aware of the benefits of relying on and affiliating with other Foster Parents and Foster Parent Associations in improving the quality of care and service to children and families.

- New Foster Parents may be teamed with experienced Foster Parents to form a supportive or mentoring relationship.
- The use of support groups for parents is encouraged and facilitated. Foster Parents are referred to national Foster Parent groups, the National Foster Parent Association (www.nfpainc.org) Foster Club (www.fosterclub.org) and DCFS Foster Care Advisory Council.
- The Licensing Specialist encourages foster parents to speak publicly of the benefits of foster parenting during the bi-annual home visits.
- In-service trainings also provide an atmosphere of camaraderie and mutual support among Shelter, Inc.'s Foster Parents.
- Each licensed home receives the official Foster Parent newsletters, "Fostering Illinois" and "Foster Parent Advocate" and Foster Parents are encouraged to attend statewide meetings.
- Several times throughout the year, Shelter, Inc. holds social events to bring its Foster Parents and their families together. These include a 5K run/walk and a holiday party. An announcement letter is sent to each Foster Parent informing them of the time and location of the event and the name and phone number of the contact person and Child Welfare Specialists remind Foster Parents of these events during regular contacts with them.
- As suggested by some parents, links to training opportunities are posted on the Shelter, Inc. web site. Social media such as Facebook and email may also be used to link Foster Parents with other Foster Parents. Foster Parents' needs for training are elicited by surveys, compliance visits with the Licensing Specialist and regular visits to the foster home by the Child Welfare Specialist. The Licensing Specialist meets with Shelter, Inc. Community Education Coordinator to review the results of the foster parent surveys on training suggestions.

7) The responsibility to assess your ongoing individual training needs and take action to meet those needs.

- On a yearly basis, the Shelter, Inc. Licensing Specialist provides Foster Parents with an assessment/questionnaire. The questionnaire is targeted towards rating on-going in-service trainings and encouraging requests for future trainings.
- On an individual basis, training needs assessments are made by Child Welfare Specialists and the Foster Care Supervisor to address specific problems being faced by Shelter, Inc. Foster Parents.
- Foster Parents are notified of Foster Parent trainings and conferences on a local, state, and national level.
- Additionally, Shelter conducts at least 3-4 trainings per year for the community on topics of interest in the field as they related to children. Foster Parents are invited to attend these trainings at no cost.
- Foster Parents are also given information about the DCFS Lending Library, the schedule of Module classes and DCFS on-line Module training courses through the DCFS Virtual Training Center (VTC) www.dcfstraining.org

8) The responsibility to develop and assist in the implementation of strategies to prevent placement disruptions recognizing the traumatic impact of placement disruptions on foster child and all members of the foster family and to provide emotional support for the foster children and members of the foster family should preventative strategies fail and placement disruption occur.

- Placement changes and disruptions can be traumatic for the child in care as well as for foster family members. It is an agency priority to maintain stability in our foster homes. The maintenance of stability requires the sharing of information and concerns on an ongoing basis.

SHARING INFORMATION

- As primary caregivers, Foster Parents are asked to share as much information as possible about the child(ren)'s functioning in the home (ie. behaviors, eating and sleeping habits).

- Starting early in placement, foster parents are encouraged to talk honestly and openly with the assigned Child Welfare Specialist about any concerns or problems related to a child in placement.
- The Child Welfare Specialist will also be seeking information from schools, therapies, etc to gather information on the child(ren)'s overall functioning and needs.
- The Child Welfare Specialist will use monthly home visits to ask questions designed to elicit Foster Parent thoughts, perceptions and needs in order to support their care for the child.
- When need is identified, the Child Welfare Specialist will check in more frequently and offer support.

OPTIONS FOR INTERVENTIONS

- Foster Parents should know that the first option when there are problems is to seek help through the Child Welfare Specialist, who can then engage the treatment/foster care team. Foster Parents' unique insight into the child(ren)'s daily behaviors and moods is vital in forming a stabilization plan.
- When there are identified problems in the placement, the team (comprised of the Foster Parent, Child Welfare Specialist, Clinical Director, service providers, etc) will convene and work out an Action Plan that will pro-actively support stability and include all applicable services and supports for the child and /or Foster Parents (such as therapies, behavioral contracts, etc).
- When the need is identified, Systems of Care (S.O.C.) services will be requested to help stabilize placement. S.O.C services are contracted through a local agency which provides in-home consultation and counseling to address the child's behaviors and needs. Services are continued until behaviors and disruptions are stabilized. The foster parent is directly involved in the services, as well as in the decision making process of how long/often the services should continue.

UNFORSEEN CRISIS

- Should an unforeseen or unexpected event or crisis occur, when there had been no identified problem, Foster Parents are expected to activate this team through their Child Welfare Specialist. Foster parents are informed of emergency contact numbers - including the agency's on-call 24 hour number 847-590-6190 and /or the Child Welfare Specialist's cell phone.

- The Child Welfare Specialist will enact the team who will work to stabilize placement with services, trainings and/or further support before moving to terminate placement. Services may consist of individual therapy, family therapy, System of Care (S.O.C.), Parent Coaching, SASS services, or other supports that may be deemed appropriate and helpful.
- Services available to Foster Parents are discussed in PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE Training. Foster Parents notify the Child Welfare Specialist of their needs and Child Welfare Specialist then locates services.
- Shelter, Inc. holds Foster Parent training throughout the year to make Foster Parents cognizant of ways to identify a problem before it becomes a crisis and how to seek the help they need.

9) The responsibility to know the impact foster parenting has on individuals and family relationships, and endeavor to minimize, as much as possible, any stress that results from foster parenting.

- Shelter, Inc.'s Foster Parents are encouraged to discuss familial concerns regarding fostering as they occur with the Child Welfare Specialist and/or Foster Care Supervisor.
- The Child Welfare Specialist asks questions of family members and Foster Parents that encourage them to talk about their experiences with having a child in a foster home and how it is impacting them.
- During pre-service training and the home study, foster families learn there are many adjustments and accommodations needed by all family members in order to be comfortable with a foster child/sibling living in the home. The Child Welfare Specialist reiterates these issues during visits and Child and Family Team Meetings to help the family successfully manage the processes and stresses that are associated with foster parenting and having a child in a foster home.
- Confidential family counseling services are available to our foster families to help minimize the adjustments and potential stress to the family.
- If other Foster Parents are available, respite care may be provided, if a short-term "vacation" will return equilibrium to an otherwise stressed situation.
- If a circumstance arises in which a Foster Parent wishes to put a "voluntary hold" on their license due to a personal situation, Shelter, Inc. will respect the Foster Parents' wishes and work with them to place foster children in the home at a future time when the foster parents indicate they are ready to proceed with a placement. Shelter Inc. will not place a child in the home until the family is ready to move forward.

10) *The responsibilities to know the rewards and benefits to children, parents, and society that come from foster parenting and promote the foster parenting experience in a positive way.*

- Shelter, Inc. recognizes and rejoices in the work of our Foster Parents at annual events such as picnics, organized outings and a Holiday party.
- Foster Parents understand the rewards and benefits to children, parents and families as they are encouraged to provide the nurturing and protection to the children in their care.
- Foster Parents are significant in the process of helping the child attain well-being, which includes meeting developmental milestones, being physically and mentally healthy and supporting the children's permanency goal.
- When Foster Parents are able to see biological families become stronger, they are encouraged to actively partner with the child's parents in order to help the family be reunited.
- If reunification is no longer an option, then the Foster Parents see rewards in adoption or helping the youth to achieve independence.
- Regardless of the outcome, foster parents understand they have a positive impact on the lives of the child in their care, and they can establish the potential to be an on-going source of support for the child.

11) *The responsibility to know the roles, rights, and responsibilities of foster parents, other professionals in the child welfare system, the child, and the child's own family.*

- Starting with Pride/Adopt Pride training and continuing with ongoing trainings, Foster Parents are thoroughly informed about the roles and responsibilities of the various members of the child welfare team and the Juvenile Court process.
- The roles and responsibilities of all participants in the child welfare system are reiterated in child and Family Team Meetings, ACRs and Court hearings.
- Foster Parents are encourage to attend child and Family Team Meetings, ACRs and Court hearings to share their input as the primary care givers for the child(ren).
- Shelter, Inc. maintains as open door policy for Foster Parents to raise concerns, discuss issues that arise, grieve decisions, etc. As a result, most issues raised are addressed and resolved with satisfaction without having to resort to formal procedures.

- If a child is in counseling or other services, the Foster Parents is consulted about any behavioral issues with the child(ren) and should be actively involved in the therapy process.
- At Child and Family Team Meetings and other staffings the Foster Parents are included in discussion of the issues pertaining to the child and the permanency goal for the child(ren). The meetings might include service providers, attorneys, family members and SOC staff.
- If the Foster Parent wishes to participate, but cannot attend meetings in person, they are able to participate via telephone.
- All staff are trained extensively on the child welfare system.
- Shelter provides co-training opportunities for Child Welfare Specialists and Foster Parents through Shelter's Community Education Program to assist Foster Parents in understanding the system and participating as equal members of the child welfare team as well as topics related to children with special needs.
- A flow chart with descriptions of the various court proceedings and the progression of types of hearings through the life of a child's case is included in the Foster Parent Handbook.
- Shelter, Inc. believes that it is imperative that Foster Parents understand the roles, rights and responsibilities of all the professionals in the child welfare system. Speakers from all areas of the Juvenile Court System are scheduled as needed to address our Foster Parents.
- Foster Parents are encouraged to include birth parents and the Child Welfare Specialist in medical, educational, and counseling sessions and they may choose to include birth parents in birthday parties and other family occasions. These contacts with the birth parents can be very helpful in dispelling erroneous notions about both the foster family and the birth family. Foster Parents are encouraged to mentor birth parents who are willing to receive it.

12) *The responsibility to know and, as necessary, fulfill their responsibility to serve as mandate reporters of suspected child abuse/neglect under the Abuse and Neglected Child Reporting Act; and to know the child welfare agency's policy regarding allegations that Foster Parents have committed child abuse or neglect and applicable Administrative Rule and Procedures governing investigations.*

- Foster Parents are trained by the Licensing Specialist and during pre-service training on their role as mandated reporters and the responsibilities that go along with being a mandated reporter. Foster Parents sign an Acknowledgment of Mandated Reporter

Status stating that they are mandated reporters of any abuse or neglect they might observe.

- Foster Parents are informed during Pride Training of their responsibilities as mandated reporters. Important texts on the requirements of PRIDE book, Foster Family Handbook, a Preparing For Success booklet are distributed to each foster family at pre-service training. Foster Parents are informed that Shelter, Inc's ability to deal with allegations of child abuse or neglect against a licensed foster parent internally are very limited and that, typically the DCFS Division of Child Protection has to be involved as the investigative agency. DCFS procedures cover service appeals, the appeal process of indicted child abuse/neglect, the process for appealing licensing investigation findings or license revocations, etc.
- Ongoing training regarding Mandated Reporting may occur at Child and Family Team Meetings and through the Child Welfare Specialist through the course of case management.
- Foster Parents are also informed of the responsibilities of caring for foster children who have been designated as Sexually Problematic Youth, as it pertains to protecting children already in their home. A safety plan is made for children who are sexually problematic, and foster parents who accept a sexually aggressive child into their home are responsible for carrying out that plan. Trainings about Sexually Problematic Youth are provided either through Shelter, Inc. or through other POS agencies. The Licensing Specialist makes foster parents aware of the trainings and encourages them to participate.
- Foster Parents receive a copy of Preparing For Success: A Guide For Parents Who Adopt Sexually Abused Children during PRIDE training. If allegations of abuse or neglect are made against Foster Parents, Shelter, Inc provides training to Foster Parents on what they should expect if they are ever accused of abuse or neglect – specifically on right and appeal rights.
- Additional training is now provided to explain the difference between licensing investigations and DCP investigations, what Foster Parents can expect if they become involved, and how such incidents are resolved. Foster Parents are advised of their right to have someone of their choosing at any interview, of the multiple appeal processes available and how they can get assistance in any appeal from Shelter, Inc, even if the appeal is of a Shelter, Inc. decision.

13) *The responsibility to know and receive training regarding the purpose of administrative case reviews, client service plans, and court processes, as well as any filing or time requirement associated with these proceedings, and actively participate in their designated role in these proceedings.*

- Foster Parents should take an active role in permanency planning through court hearings, Integrated Assessments, quarterly Child and Family Team Meetings and other case related meetings. The importance of their participation is stressed during initial training, and reiterated by the Child Welfare Specialist on an ongoing basis.
- Administrative Case Reviews are convened every six months. Prior to the review, the Child Welfare Specialist is required to review the plan with the Foster Parent, provide the date and time of the review, assist with transportation and, if necessary, they are encouraged to participate via conference call.
- Foster Parents are individually trained on an ongoing basis through the life of the case by the Child Welfare Specialist and Licensing Specialist. The workers will explain the current status of the case and any changes which may occur during the different court phases, or based on the differing needs of the child(ren).
- The Child Welfare Specialist and /or Licensing Specialist will always provide more training if needed or requested. If they are unable to participate in person or by phone, they should follow-up with the Child Welfare Specialist as to the results of any of these meetings.

14) *The responsibility to know the child welfare agency's appeal procedure for Foster Parents and the rights of Foster Parents under the procedure.*

- In addition to Shelter's Foster Care Complaint Policy (Grievance Procedure), Shelter maintains an open door policy for Foster Parents to raise concerns, discuss issues that arise, grieve decisions, etc. As a result, most issues raised are addressed and resolved with satisfaction without having to resort to formal procedures.
- The open door policy follows the agency's chain of command and includes the child welfare Specialist, the Foster Care Supervisor Gina Ciulla, Associate Director, Tom Eagan and Shelter's Chief Executive Officer Patricia Beck.
- Additionally, Foster Parents can contact the DCFS Advocacy Office [880-232-3798](tel:880-232-3798) and Shelter's Performance Monitor. The Monitor's number will be provided upon request. Any effort by Shelter staff to withhold contact information should be reported for disciplinary action.
- In order to avoid any conflict of interest, Foster Parents or Supervisors may seek assistance from DCFS staff or other advocates.

- Written procedures regarding Shelter’s Grievance Procedure are provided to all Foster Parents at the time of licensing and annually thereafter. The Foster Care Complaint Policy consists of the specific steps and timelines defined in DCFS Rule 401, and any changes have to be approved by DCFS Licensing.
- The rights of Foster Parents are spelled out in the Foster Care Implementation Plan which is provided annually and for which Foster Parent feedback and participation is routinely requested.

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15) The responsibility to know and understand the importance of maintaining accurate and relevant records regarding the child’s history and progress and be aware of and follow the procedures and regulations of the child welfare agency with which they are licensed or affiliated.

- The Child Welfare Specialist provides Foster Parents with a child record folder at the time a child is placed in the home. A list is inserted explaining in detail what should be included in the folder, where in the folder it should be kept and in what order. This is also explained and trained to the Foster Parent by the Child Welfare Specialist on an individual basis. Child Welfare specialists occasionally check these files and answer Foster Parents’ questions about them.
- Maintaining a “Child Record Folder” during the time a child is in placement is an important contribution to the child’s history. Integral components of the folder include medical, school, physical reports, the service plan/visit plan and noteworthy events in the life of the child(ren).
- Foster Pride/Adopt Pride training provides written information on the importance of maintaining a child’s folder, as well as written information on the regulations and expectations for maintaining information This information is also provided in the licensing rules which are provided at time of licensure. Foster Parents may refer to their PRIDE manual for reminders about the information to be kept.
- The records are monitored by Child Welfare Specialists and the Licensing Specialist during visits and when questions arise.

16) The responsibility to share information through the child welfare team regarding the child's adjustment in their home with the subsequent care giver, whether the child's parent or another substitute care giver.

- As the Foster Parent is the primary caregiver for the child(ren), Shelter , Inc. looks to the Foster Parent to provide relevant information about a child in their care during the time of placement and after the placement has ended.
- Training on ongoing communication is offered by the Licensing Specialist and Clinical Director.
- Whether the child returns to his/her family of origin or is placed in another foster home or long-term facility, the cooperation of the Foster Parents in sharing information will enhance the ongoing care of the child(ren).
- The Foster Parents are informed they must share the information with the Child Welfare Specialist. The Child Welfare Specialists are trained on this by the Shelter, Inc. Foster Care Supervisor. Foster Parents are educated about this responsibility by the Licensing Specialist. The Child Welfare Specialists are then able to discuss this with Foster Parents on an ongoing basis.

17) The responsibility to provide care and services which are respectful of and responsive to the child's cultural s and are supportive of the relationship between the child and his/her family; recognize the increased importance of maintaining a child's cultural identity when the race or culture of the foster family differs from that of the foster child and take action to address these issues.

- Shelter, Inc. is fortunate to have a multi-ethnic group of Foster Parent, who by regular contact with each other, develop a good understanding of various cultural and ethnic differences.
- To enhance this naturally occurring process, the staff is responsible for assisting Foster Parents in understanding the potential complications in cross-cultural placements in order to avoid difficulties that may occur.
- The Foster Parents must face issues of self-awareness in the context of the child's cultural needs, particularly when the placement occurs in a home of differing cultural background. Likewise, the child must be helped to feel comfortable and secure in a cross-cultural environment.
- When a culturally diverse placement is made, the Foster Parents and the Child Welfare Specialist work closely to obtain the necessary level of understanding and sensitivity to support and maintain the heritage of the child.

- Shelter, Inc. will provide additional education to foster families regarding cultural diversity through specialized training.
- Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE and Foster Pride in-service training offers a specific training to Foster Parents who provide foster care to children of a different culture or race from that of the foster family. The Licensing Specialist makes these trainings known to foster parents and encourages them to attend.
- If Foster Parents become aware of other training they want to attend on this topic, Shelter, Inc. would be willing to pay the fee for them to attend.

