

# DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) **IMPORTANT FACTS FOR RESOURCE PARENTS**

As a new or seasoned resource parent, you've made an important choice to nurture a child who needs care and support. The District of Columbia's Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) thanks you and welcomes you to the world of caregiving for children who have been temporarily separated from their family and their homes. This *Important Facts* brochure is designed to provide information related to the most common questions asked by resource parents and to help you on your journey as a caregiver. Always feel free to contact your CFSA or private agency social worker or the support person at your agency.

## **Some of the information you'll receive in the child's *Placement Passport Packet***

- ◆ Letter to Resource Parents
- ◆ Stabilization Support Line Flyer
- ◆ Foster DC Kids App Flyer
- ◆ Important Contact Numbers
- ◆ Traveling with a Child in Your Care
- ◆ How to Select Back-Up Providers and Babysitters
- ◆ Child's Summary – Medications and Allergies
- ◆ Court Information and Documents
- ◆ Responsibilities of Social Workers (CPS and Ongoing)
- ◆ Responsibilities of Resource Parents



*The private agency or CFSA social worker will bring the Placement Passport Packet when the child arrives. Additional information should be added during placement as the Passport is a "living document" that represents the services and supports provided while in your care. Note: the Placement worker will also provide you with a one-page Placement Transition Information Exchange flyer with specific details about the individual child coming to your home!*

## **Within the first week of a child being placed in your home**

- ◆ Expect a "Welcome Call" from a private agency or CFSA worker within 24 hours.
- ◆ A medical screening must occur prior to placement. You may be invited to come to the screening, and this may be the first opportunity for you to meet the child.
- ◆ Every child must arrive with a "cleared-for-placement" form unless they are arriving from a hospital with discharge papers.
- ◆ You may be invited to attend a Family Team Meeting (FTM) at which time you may meet the birth parents as well.
- ◆ You should be invited to an "ice breaker" with the birth parent to learn more about the likes and dislikes of the child. This meeting is an excellent opportunity for both sets of parents to discuss ways that work best for them to communicate and share information on behalf of the children. If you are not invited to an ice-breaker, please ask your assigned social worker about it.
- ◆ Visitation will occur between the child and his or her parents and siblings, unless it is determined not to be in the child's best interest. Initially, visitation is often supervised by the private agency or CFSA social worker.



### Within the first 30 days and 90 days of placement

- ◆ The child's case plan must be finalized within the first 30 days. While the birth family, child, or youth should drive the case planning process, the resource parent is also a team member. You should be invited and make every effort to participate.
- ◆ A comprehensive medical evaluation must take place within 30 days of the child's initial entry into out-of-home care.
- ◆ After 90 days, a permanency hearing is held by the Family Court. You should receive automatic notification, but if you don't, please ask your assigned social worker about it. You should attend court hearings to fully participate in the child's path towards positive permanency (e.g., reunification with the family of origin, adoption, or legal guardianship). The permanency goal will be outlined in the initial case plan.

### Consent Forms

- ◆ Resource parents should refer to CFSA's policy *Right to Sign a Consent or Waiver of Liability* for complete details (coming October 2016).
- ◆ In general, appropriate consents include the following activities:
  - School-sponsored field trips and community outings
  - Participation in school sports
  - Girl Scout and Boy Scout camping over the weekend
  - Faith-based activities that are for part of the day or overnight local (less than 100 miles) and school overnight trips (up to 2 nights)

### Travel with Resource Parents

- ◆ Approval is required for trips outside of a 100-mile radius. Please see CFSA's policy on [Travel with Resource Parents](#).
- ◆ Resource parents are expected to utilize a *reasonable and prudent parenting standard* (i.e., careful but sensible decision-making) when determining travel for a child in foster care.

*For more details on the reasonable and prudent parenting standard, please see page 4.*

### Temporary supervision of children

- ◆ Pursuant to District law, resource parents and social workers should discuss the substitute care of each child in the home when the resource parent is absent on a regular basis (29 DCMR § 6002.1k). Please refer to CFSA's online policy, [Supervision of Children](#).

### Overnights

- ◆ An overnight stay at a friend's house is generally considered a normal extracurricular activity that is developmentally appropriate for most children based on their cognitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral capacities.
- ◆ Just as a biological parent gives approval for a child to participate in such an activity, a resource parent is empowered to give a child in foster care approval prior to participating in an overnight stay. For specific guidelines, please refer to CFSA's online policy, [Overnight Stays](#).

Need more information on all things fostering? Check out CFSA's website at [www.cfsa.dc.gov](http://www.cfsa.dc.gov) and click on [For Partners](#)

### **Please contact your assigned social worker or the support person at your agency if...**

- ◆ You have not received a Placement Passport Packet, there is insufficient information included, or you have any questions about the information that is included.
- ◆ The child arrives without proper clothing or necessary medications.
- ◆ There are questions regarding shared parenting, meetings, or visitation with the birth parent.
- ◆ More information is needed on court dates and attendance.
- ◆ There are concerns that the placement is not a good match for you or members of your household.
- ◆ You have questions regarding the child's trauma and behavior.
- ◆ You are interested in respite care.

### **What you should do if...**

- ◆ The child's behavior is threatening to self or others.  
*For any behavioral crisis, contact the Children and Adolescent Mobile Crisis Services (ChAMPS) at 202-481-1440. For ongoing concerns, contact your social worker to refer for permanent services.*
- ◆ You need assistance to talk through a tough situation after business hours (5 pm – 1 am) or on the weekend/holidays (9 am – 1 am).  
*Contact the Stabilization Support Line at 202-800-3040.*
- ◆ You have questions on education or well-being for the child in your care.  
*Please contact CFSA's Office of Well Being at 202-727-2269.*
- ◆ You have questions on medical, dental, or other health issues.  
*Please contact CFSA's Health Services Administration 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 202-498-8456.*
- ◆ You want information on services for a teenager in your care.  
*Please contact the Office of Youth Empowerment at 202-727-7500.*
- ◆ You need access to a supplemental nutrition program.  
*Mothers and fathers, legal guardians, and foster parents can enroll children ages 0-5 years into the District's Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program. Please contact your social worker or call the DC Department of Health at 202-442-9397.*
- ◆ You are unable to reach the social worker.  
*CFSA and private staff are required to return phone calls within 24 hours or the next business day. If you have difficulty contacting your assigned social worker, please contact the social worker's supervisor. Information for the chain of command is left on each social worker's voice mail. If you are unable to reach the social worker, then contact the assigned private agency worker or CFSA support worker. The contact information for all of these parties will be provided when the social worker first meets with you.*
- ◆ The child misses curfew or runs away.  
*During business hours, contact police and file a missing persons report, and then contact your social worker or the Hotline at 202-671-7233. After hours, contact police and file a missing persons report and then call the Hotline to provide the police report number and any details.*
- ◆ You need assistance with day care.  
*It is best to anticipate day care needs with the placement worker prior to placement, but if needs arise after placement, please contact the Office of Well Being at 202-727-2269, the private agency worker, or CFSA support worker.*
- ◆ The monthly subsidy check does not arrive.  
*Immediately contact the private agency or CFSA social worker.*
- ◆ You have concerns about your involvement with the case planning process.  
*Speak with your social worker or the supervisor. You may also request a team meeting if the situation is not resolved.*

## As a resource parent, am I responsible for...

- ◆ Enrolling the child in school?  
*In general, the social worker supports the parent in completing the school enrollment packet. In some districts, the resource parent is required to enroll the student rather than the social worker. Contact the social worker or the Office of Well Being at 202-727-2269 if you have questions.*
- ◆ Making and keeping medical, dental, or therapy appointments?  
*Ongoing appointments will initially be made by the social worker. After placement, resource parents are expected to make such appointments and provide transportation for the children living in their resource home.*
- ◆ Ensuring visitation between the child and his or her parents and siblings?  
*Resource parents are expected to do what they can to ensure visitation occurs as best as practical.*
- ◆ Informing the social worker about travel or vacation plans?  
*Please notify the social worker about any travel. Policy requires that travel outside of 100 miles be approved.*

## Resource Parent Mobile App

Resource parents often need to receive critical information quickly and efficiently. As a result, a “mobile application” was introduced in 2015 to make sure important information is as readily available as the touch of your phone. The "[Foster DC Kids](#)" app features the following identifying information on the child:

- ◆ Case information
- ◆ Visitation plans
- ◆ Medical information (with privacy settings)
- ◆ Alerts to court appointment dates
- ◆ Identification proving their foster parent status

*Resource parents can download the application on either Android or iPhone devices.*



## Reasonable and Prudent Parenting (RPP)

RPP standards require resource parents and congregate care staff to exercise a careful but sensible decision-making process that incorporates the following considerations:

1. Adequate information about the child so that an informed decision can be made, e.g., the child’s case plan or court orders.
2. The child’s best interest (based on the child, resource parent, and biological parent’s mutual understanding of the child’s needs). *Note: To the extent appropriate and practicable, the child’s biological parent should be included in the decision-making process.*
3. The child’s age, maturity, and developmental level, including mental and physical health, and any developmental challenges.
4. The child’s behavioral history and any associated concerns that might impact the child or others while participating in the activity (e.g., risk of abscondence or challenges to behavioral management).
5. Any potential risk to the child when participating in the proposed activity (e.g., safety of the activity’s location, timing of the activity, and appropriate supervision).
6. Age-appropriateness of the activity, including whether the activity is extracurricular, enrichment-focused, or social.
7. Whether or not the activity promotes normalcy, i.e., the child should experience activities similar to those of his and her peers.
8. The resource parent’s capacity to provide a nurturing and family-like setting that fosters the child’s emotional and developmental growth.