I. AUTHORITY	The Director of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA or Agency) adopts this policy to be consistent with the Agency's mission and all applicable federal and District of Columbia laws, rules, and regulations, including but not limited to the federal Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA) of 1974 and its implementing regulations; the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008; Titles 4 and 16 of the DC Official Code; provisions in Title 29, Chapter 60, of the DC Municipal Regulations (DCMR); and the Implementation and Exit Plan (I&EP) in *LaShawn A. v. Gray.*
II. APPLICABILITY	All CFSA staff and contracted agency personnel.
III. RATIONALE	The Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) partners with trained and licensed foster, kinship, and pre-adoptive parents (henceforth collectively referred to as "resource parents") to provide care, housing, and support for children who are served by the District's foster care system. Although contractual agreements for resource parents may differ between private agencies and CFSA, all resource parents follow the same comprehensive and uniform guidelines and procedures. Further, CFSA provides policy guidance for resource parents to actively participate as team members alongside CFSA employees and the birth parents in the effort to help children achieve successful permanency outcomes. The relationship between CFSA and its resource parents requires mutual trust and respect, cooperative planning, and team-based strategies for shortening the length of time a child stays in foster care. Accordingly, CFSA and its contracted agency partners are committed to ensuring both capacity and access to quality services and resources to support the efforts of all resource parents. *Note: The term "CFSA employees" include CFSA-contracted agency personnel. References to "children" include infants and youth.*
IV. POLICY	It is the policy of the Child and Family Services Agency to actively team with resource parents for the general care, safety, permanence, and well-being of children in the District's foster care system. The Agency is committed to providing quality training and service support to CFSA resource parents for this purpose. Further, the Agency protects the selection of resource parents in compliance with all federal and District anti-discrimination laws. In turn, CFSA resource parents should make full use of all available services and supportive networks in order to fulfill their responsibility to provide quality

	care for the children in their homes. This policy outlines the procedures, roles, responsibilities, and expectations for CFSA employees so that CFSA can function as a teaming unit with resource parents for the sake of the children and families being served by the District.
V. CONTENTS	**A.** Application Process **B.** Training **C.** Licensing **D.** Teaming **E.** Placement **F.** Payments **G.** Record-Keeping **H.** Responding to Concerns
VI. ATTACHMENTS	**A.** Placement Passport Packet **B.** Code of Ethics for Resource Parents (National Foster Parent Association) **C.** Resource Parent Agreement
VII. PROCEDURES	**Procedure A: Application Process** CFSA welcomes prospective resource parents who fulfill eligibility requirements, i.e., compliance with Chapter 60 of the DC Municipal Regulations (DCMR) for the District resource parents and, for resource parents living in the state of Maryland, the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR). Resource parents can be of any race, creed, or origin. They can be married or single, and with or without children at home. CFSA protects the right of the resource parent to maintain their individual family values and traditions. The Agency seeks resource parents who enjoy children and who like to parent, who value family relationships, and who recognize that foster services supplement but do not replace the birth family relationship. A safe, stable, supportive, and permanent family-based home is the ultimate goal for all children in care. 1. The relationship between the District's child welfare system and a prospective resource parent begins when an applicant first contacts either a CFSA or private agency recruiter. a. As the first point of contact, CFSA and private agency recruiters shall maintain District customer service standards, including timely responses to inquiries (i.e., responding to voice messages and emails within 24 hours or one business day). b. The CFSA or private agency recruiter shall have a thorough discussion with the prospective resource parent regarding applicable eligibility requirements for foster parenting (*per the regulations of the applicable jurisdiction, see # 2 below*). c. The recruiter shall make the initial determination as to the applicant's eligibility and guide the applicant accordingly. d. Recruiters shall provide eligible applicants with timely information for participation in upcoming orientation sessions. e. All recruiters are expected to offer professional, friendly, and responsive guidance for applicants.

2. Pursuant to District regulations, individuals who are interested in being District resource parents must meet the following criteria:
   a. Be at least 21 years old.
   b. Live in the District (excluding kin or adoptive parents) *or be referred to a private placing agency if residing outside of the District*.
   c. Pass criminal background checks and CPR clearances. *Note: all members of the household age 18 and older must pass FBI, police, and Child Protection Register (CPR) checks. For more details on CPR checks, please refer to CFSA's Child Protection Register Policy.*
   d. Be willing to complete all licensing requirements, including pre-service and in-service training, background checks, and a home study within the 150-day mandated time frame. *Note: under certain circumstances, kinship caregivers may be temporarily licensed while completing full licensure requirements. See CFSA's Quick Reference Guide: Temporary Licensing of Foster Homes for Kin*, CFSA's *Administrative Issuance CFSA-08-4 Emergency Kinship Placements in Maryland*, and CFSA's *Policy on Temporary Licensing of Foster Homes for Kin*.
   e. Be able to financially support their household independent of any remuneration for serving as a resource parent.
   f. Have enough space in their home or apartment for children to sleep separately from adults and for all children in care over age five to sleep separately from other children.
      i. Children under 18 months may sleep in the same room with an adult.
      ii. Although there may be consideration on a case-by-case basis for certain space issues, there are no exceptions for children in care over age five sleeping with children of the opposite sex.
   g. Be in good physical and mental health, as recommended by a physician.
   h. Have the commitment, time, and ability to provide quality care, guidance, and support to children, including support of their permanency goals.
   i. Be willing to function as a member of the child's planning and permanency team alongside other stakeholders, including but not limited to the child's birth parents, CFSA employees, guardians *ad litem* (GALs), and attorneys.
   j. Provide both professional and personal character references.
3. In order to explain training procedures and to provide resource parents with an optimal training experience, applicants should attend a resource parent orientation session (either through CFSA or a private agency) prior to signing up for pre-service training. *Note: kinship parents are encouraged but not required to attend orientation*.

Procedure B: Training

CFSA and its private agency partners are committed to providing free, quality pre-service training along with opportunities to improve skills through in-service training and training for therapeutic and specialized needs of all children in care. Training shall include an intensive curriculum with a focus on the skill sets necessary for the conscientious care of children who have been abused and/or neglected. Training shall also promote the basic tenets of the Agency's Practice Model, positive teaming relationships between the resource parent, the birth parents, the children in care, the CFSA or private agency social worker, and other vested stakeholders (*for more information on CFSA's teaming principles, see Procedure D below*).

1. Pursuant to District regulations, resource parents shall complete a minimum of 30 hours of pre-service training as part of licensure and adoption approval requirements.
    a. CFSA and private agency training staff shall provide a professional, respectful, and thorough pre-service and in-service training experience for all resource parents.
    b. CFSA shall inform prospective resource parents of the Agency's expectation for a respectful commitment to the training process, including timely arrival to training sessions, active participation in discussions and activities, thoughtful consideration for the diversity amongst other attendees, and compliance with all training and licensing requirements.
    c. Trainers shall encourage prospective resource parents to take the Agency's free, online mandated reporter training at http://dc.mandatedreporter.org.
2. Pre-service training curricula provided by CFSA's Child Welfare Training Academy (CWTA) and/or private agencies shall adhere to nationally-recognized training modalities, e.g., the Child Welfare Institute's training model, *Partnering for Safety and Permanence: Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (PS-MAPP)* or the Child Welfare League of America's *Parents' Resources Information, Development, and Education (PRIDE)*, or others.
3. Pursuant to District regulations, all licensed resource parents shall complete 30 hours of in-service training within a two-year time span for maintaining current licensure requirements (*see Procedure C: Licensing)*.
    a. Annual in-service training, whether provided by CFSA, CFSA's private contractors, or by other resources (e.g., the Resource Parent Training Coalition, or similar community organizations), shall specifically address the unique needs of children in care, as well as the pertinent needs of resource parents who must provide quality care and protection of children.
    b. In-service training opportunities shall reinforce pre-service training skill sets, and may include but are not limited to the following topic areas:
        i. Effective communication

ii. Loss and attachment

iii. Strength-based, age-specific behavior management (including de-escalation)

iv. Family health and wellness, including universal precautions

v. Specialized foster care

vi. Special education referrals

vii. Promoting educational success

viii. Sensitivity training (e.g., cultural diversity, gender identification)

ix. Partnerships with birth families

x. Emergency preparedness

xi. Financial management for resource parents

4. In the event of inclement weather or other emergency closings for the District of Columbia, CWTA pre-service and in-service trainers shall notify all resource parents of cancellations.

Procedure C: Licensing

The CFSA Family Licensing Division (or its successor) shall be responsible for assisting resource parents through the licensing process, and being available to provide any necessary guidance, support, and/or other facilitation required or requested. CFSA pre-service trainers shall encourage resource parents to actively and conscientiously complete the licensing process, and to inform the trainers if there are any obstacles or concerns.

1. The CFSA and private agency pre-service training staff shall thoroughly explain all basic licensing requirements, including any differences between licensing requirements in the District and other jurisdictions (e.g., Maryland), to prospective resource parents. *Note: CFSA pre-service trainers are also responsible for completion of a prospective resource parent's home study*.
2. The assigned pre-service trainer shall provide the prospective resource parent with access to the applicable regulations, i.e., Title 29 DCMR Chapter 60 (either in hard copy or by referral to the CFSA website) for District resource parents or the relevant sections of COMAR for Maryland resource parents.
   a. All pre-service trainers shall provide and discuss with resource parents the legal requirements and responsibilities outlined in the respective jurisdictions.
   b. CFSA's Family Resources Division (under Community Services) shall provide all prospective resource parents with the *CFSA Adoptive, Foster, and Kinship Parent Reference Manual,* and encourage them to thoroughly read and discuss the document with their pre-service trainers if there are any questions.
   c. CFSA and private agency pre-service trainers shall encourage all prospective resource parents to ask questions or convey concerns.

3. The pre-service trainer shall review with the prospective resource parent any forms, documents, and/or procedures necessary for successful completion of the licensing process.

4. All pre-service trainers shall incorporate cultural sensitivity, professionalism, and timeliness when scheduling and conducting home assessments and clinical interviews for licensing prospective resource parents.

    a. CFSA shall encourage prospective resource parents to fully engage with the home study and assessment process, and to discuss any concerns or potential barriers with the pre-service trainer. *Reminder: the resource family has the right to request and read the home study results.*

    b. Pre-service training staff shall make every effort to work closely with the prospective resource parent to mitigate any obstacles to licensure that arise from the home study.

5. Pursuant to District regulations, prospective resource parents must complete First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training as part of the licensing process.

    a. CFSA's CWTA currently provides First Aid and CPR training (adult and infant) at no cost to resource parents.

    b. It is the resource parent's responsibility to ensure that CPR and First Aid certification stays current. *Note: a lapse in certification may hinder the re-licensing process.*

6. By law, all resource family household members over the age of 18 years must complete criminal background clearances.

    a. Household members include non-resident extended family members (e.g., a close family friend) and "back-up resources" (e.g., respite caregiver) who care for the children when the resource parent is unavailable (e.g., if the resource parent is still at work when child finishes school in the afternoon).

    b. If the adult household member has resided, worked, or attended school inside or outside of the District at any time in the past five years, the criminal background check shall include a Metropolitan Police Department check and/or the applicable state's law enforcement agency.

    c. In the event that a resource parent or a family member residing in the resource home has lived abroad, the Family Licensing Division shall consult the Office of the General Counsel for clearance procedures from the foreign jurisdiction.

7. Pursuant to District regulations, all currently licensed resource parents who wish to continue serving children and youth in the District's child welfare system must be re-licensed according to the rules and regulations of their respective jurisdictions. *Note: the District re-licenses resource parents every two years; Maryland re-licenses annually. If a resource parent is not re-licensed appropriately, CFSA shall not place*

additional children in the resource home and/or may revoke or suspend their license depending upon the circumstances.

a. The Family Licensing Division shall facilitate a successful re-licensing process by notifying both CFSA and private agency contract monitors 150 days prior to the annual renewal date that resource parents need to begin relicensing procedures.

b. Monitors shall contact resource parents and notify them when their license is about to expire and that they should begin the re-licensure process if they wish to be re-licensed.

c. Monitors shall remind resource parents of the importance of a timely re-licensing process so as to avoid any lapse in licensure that might threaten a child or youth's current placement.

8. All licensed resource parents are encouraged to adhere to the National Foster Parent Association Code of Ethics (see attached)

Procedure D: Teaming

Teaming with resource parents is an overarching practice standard for all CFSA employees making decisions about safety, permanence, and well-being for children. Recognized and valued as members of the professional child welfare team, resource parents are to be treated with dignity, trust, respect, and consideration, regardless of diversity and/or culture. All team members for a child shall actively collaborate to shorten the length of time a child is in care and to achieve the child's permanency goal – either through reunification, adoption, guardianship or legal custody.

1. In addition to the resource parent, the child's team shall include but not be limited to the following participants:

   a. Age-appropriate child

   b. Child's birth family

   c. Individuals who are identified by the family as important to the child's emotional and overall well-being as well as the reunification or other identified permanency goal

   d. Representatives from other CFSA administrations

   e. External partners (e.g., a representative from the child's school or daycare, social worker from Healthy Families and Thriving Communities Collaboratives)

   f. Court-appointed stakeholders (e.g., guardian *ad litem*).

2. Communication and information sharing are key vehicles for developing and sustaining a teaming partnership. CFSA employees and CFSA resource parents shall actively communicate and share information with one another as often as needed.

   a. All information sharing shall be timely, professional, respectful, and accurate, incorporating an attitude of respect, encouragement, and strength-based role modeling.

   b. In support of courteous communications, CFSA shall respond to

resource parents and also encourage resource parents to respond within 24 hours when receiving voicemail or email messages from one another.

c. CFSA employees are expected to share the following information with resource parents to ensure the safety, nurturing, and protection of children in foster care:

   i. Initial information from the Placement Passport Packet (*see Procedure E: Placement, and Attachment A)*, including the reason the child is in foster care, medical and educational records, Medicaid card, special needs, etc.

   ii. Any information related to a child's case plan, permanency goal, progress, therapy, diagnosis, etc. that can support a resource parent's ability to care for the child or youth.

   iii. Ongoing and up-to-date information related to changes in Agency structure, service agreements, federal and/or District laws, rules, regulations, policy, and/or procedures directly impacting the foster care program.

   iv. How to access supportive services, including but not limited to respite care, day care, transportation assistance, community resources, educational services, mental health crisis services, resource parent support groups, etc.

   v. Updated information relating to payment criteria for support of the child in care, e.g., board and care payments, clothing allowances, and any supplemental expenditures made to meet the child's needs.

   vi. Information related to court dates and permanency hearings, as well as any other information that might help a resource parent to navigate the judicial system as needed for the best interest of the child.

   vii. Specific expectations for resource parent responsibilities, including transporting children to school and to doctor's appointments, engaging in a child's extracurricular and school activities, and performing other daily care-giving responsibilities of a parental substitute.

d. Resource parents are expected to share the following information with CFSA to ensure that the needs of children in foster care are being met:

   i. All required record-keeping information as outlined in *Procedure G* below.

   ii. Any service concerns or suggestions that will enhance the resource parent's ability to provide quality care for the child in their home.

   iii. Any concerns or unusual change related to a child's behavior, development, therapy, health or non-routine care, educational progress, safety and/or well-being.

   iv. Any information regarding mental health treatments that would

not have otherwise been shared with the social worker and that may help to ensure the treatment needs of the child or youth.

v. Any plans for travel, including overnight stays and/or trips of more than 100 miles (*see Administrative Issuance CFSA-06-3 Overnight Stays, and CFSA Quick Reference Guide: Travel with Resource Parents*).

vi. Any changes in the resource parent's status that may impact the child in their care, including but not limited to changes in residence, marital status, etc.

vii. Any changes that impact the resource parent's licensing status, including but not limited to finances, ability to pay utilities, health, employment, additional members of the household, any recent criminal charges or investigations, etc. *Note: unemployment shall not be the sole cause for removal of a child from a resource home*.

3. CFSA shall solicit and encourage active resource parent participation (keeping in mind the resource parent's work schedule as well as the age-appropriate child's school schedule) in the development and implementation of case plans, structured progress and/or judicial reviews, as well as participation in team meetings.

4. Resource parents in the District of Columbia shall be partnered with a resource parent support worker according to the teaming roles and responsibilities outlined in the *Adoptive, Foster, and Kinship Parent Reference Manual* (available through the Community Services' Family Resources Division).

5. Whenever necessary and appropriate, CFSA shall serve as a liaison and/or facilitator between a resource parent and external team members, including but not limited to the Collaboratives, the District's Family Court, other governmental agencies, and service providers.

6. CFSA shall provide as many opportunities as appropriate (with differing schedules kept in mind) for resource parents to actively participate in the establishment of policies and/or procedures that directly impact the resource parent's ability to function as a caregiver for children in the District's child welfare system.

7. CFSA shall be available and receptive to any concerns, suggestions, and/or recommendations provided by resource parents.

8. CFSA employees shall actively function as role models, liaisons and/or facilitators to promote a positive, teaming relationship between resource parents and birth parents, including but not limited to the following strategies:

   a. Discussing, planning, and/or strategizing a tailored approach to the teaming partnership between the resource parent and the birth parent.

   b. Providing any necessary support, service, and/or training to resource parents to promote teaming with birth parents.

9. Whenever possible and in alignment with the case plan and the Agency's

basic tenet of teaming as part of CFSA's Practice Model, CFSA shall encourage resource parents to proactively develop a teaming partnership with the birth parents, including but not limited to the following strategies:

a. Fully supporting the permanency goal identified in the case plan.

b. Reinforcing the child's relationship with the birth family, including but not limited to the following activities:

   i. Ensuring daily or weekly communications via phone or email between the child and his or her parents (as appropriate), and if applicable, between the child and his or her siblings.

   ii. Facilitating visitations according to the case plan or court orders.

   iii. Including birth parents in other activities that support the birth family relationship, e.g., school events.

c. Offering support to birth parents when necessary and appropriate, including sharing information about the child and role modeling positive parenting skills.

10. Whenever possible and appropriate, CFSA employees shall include and encourage resource parents to include service providers as an important part of the teaming process.

    a. Resource parents shall actively team with service providers (when appropriate) to ensure the service needs are being met for the child and/or the resource parent.

    b. If there are issues or concerns regarding service providers, resource parents shall follow the protocol outlined in *Procedure I* of this policy

    c. Whenever possible and appropriate, CFSA shall include resource parents in the planning, scheduling, and assessing of services that directly impact the ability of the resource parent to care for the child, as well as impacting the child's adjustment to foster care and progress towards permanency.

Procedure E: Placement

Placement of a child in an unfamiliar home requires thoughtful reassurance to children that they are in a safe, stable, and protected environment that will not easily be disrupted. Most importantly, resource parents are carefully trained to anticipate both initial and unforeseen challenges when a child is placed in their home. Even still, the actual experience of placement may not always compare with the expectation. It is incumbent upon CFSA to ensure that resource parents are endowed with the confidence and skill sets necessary to nurture a child's particular needs as well as to support the child's permanency goals when accepting a placement in their home.

1. Whenever possible, CFSA shall strive to offer opportunities for resource parents to have a child placed in their home.

   a. CFSA shall ensure that resource parents are fully prepared, including training and licensure, for receiving a child.

b. To the best of the Agency's ability, all resource parents shall be matched with children for whom the resource parent is well-suited to care and well-trained to provide for the child's particular needs.

c. Resource parents who are not offered the opportunity for placement in a timely manner can seek assistance by utilizing the Agency's chain of command or by calling the CFSA Ombudsman's office (*see Procedure H: Handling Concerns*).

2. CFSA shall protect the following rights of resource parents prior to or at the time of placement:

   a. To review written information related to the medical, educational, psychological, and social history of the child being considered for placement.

   b. To consult with the social worker whether the resource home would be the proper placement for the child.

   c. To refuse placement within the resource parents' home, or to request the removal of a child from their home in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy without fear of reprisal, i.e., placement resources shall not be "penalized" for placement disruptions.

   d. To participate in decision-making, case-planning, and permanency planning for the child in care.

   e. To receive documentation that identifies the name and contact information for the Guardian ad Litem (GAL), social worker, private agency monitor, educational advocate, and birth parents for each child in their care.

   f. To receive a Placement Passport Packet at the time of placement, which includes the items as identified in Procedure G: Record Keeping, # 1 below.

   g. To be considered as the priority placement option (when appropriate, based on the circumstances) when there is a significant relationship with the child or when the resource parent previously provided care for a child who has re-entered foster care, or when a child becomes available for adoption.

3. CFSA employees and resource parents shall team together to make every effort to avoid placement disruptions, and to creatively and collaboratively work together to preemptively address any circumstances that could potentially result in a placement disruption.

   a. CFSA shall encourage resource parents to immediately contact the assigned social worker and/or resource parent support worker (without fear of reprisal) at the first sign of any concerns regarding a child placed in their home.

   b. CFSA shall provide resource parents and children in care with necessary supportive services to avoid placement disruption.

   c. If appropriate to the circumstances, the social worker shall schedule a team meeting at a time and place that ensures attendance by the

resource parent to discuss the placement issues.

i. Resource parents shall be invited and urged to attend team meetings related to placement concerns.

ii. If a placement disruption is determined unavoidable and clinically determined to be in the best interest of the child after a child's team meeting has discussed all options, the resource parents shall be supported to ensure a streamlined transition to the best of their abilities.

4. The following rights of resource parents shall be protected during the course of placement:

   a. Access to professional support 24 hours/day, 7 days/week to address medical, mental health, or other emergency situations related to the child in care.

   b. To receive, at least 10 days in advance, formal notification for all administrative and court review hearings, including the date, time, location, name of judge or hearing officer, and docket number of the case.

   c. To participate fully in court proceedings, in accordance with DC law.

   d. To receive a copy of the court's plan for the child, including a copy of the social worker's report, at least five days prior to the court hearing.

   e. If the resource parent was unable to attend a court hearing or team meeting, s/he shall receive timely information of all decisions made by the courts or child welfare agency regarding the child.

   f. To receive notification of and actively participate in family team meetings, treatment team meetings, educational team meetings, and any other meetings that would help the resource parent to serve the needs of the child.

   g. To communicate directly with and receive reports from professionals working with the child, including therapists, teachers, physicians, and other health care personnel.

   h. To receive supportive services in a timely manner, including but not limited to mental health intervention and services, respite care, and assistance with transportation for family therapy and medical visits.

5. If either CFSA or a resource parent requests or determines that a removal of a child from the resource home is necessary, at least 10 business days notice in writing shall be given respectively. *Note: no child should be removed while awaiting a placement fair hearing unless there is an emergency or safety issue*.

   a. CFSA shall inform the resource parent(s) in writing the reasons for the child's removal from the resource home.

   b. Exemptions from the 10-day notice requirement shall be pursued on a case-by-case basis, including but not limited to the following situations:

i. A child presents an imminent danger to him or herself or others in the home.

ii. A resource parent has blatantly failed to ensure licensing status, or failed to fulfill his or her contracted responsibilities for the care of a child.

c. In the event of an emergency removal, CFSA shall attempt to provide notice to the resource parent as soon as possible but no later than 24 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) prior to the placement change.

d. CFSA shall make every effort to accommodate the needs of the resource parent during the placement change while still maintaining the best interests of the child or youth.

e. In the event that a resource parent disagrees with the Agency's decision to remove a child, the resource parent shall has the right to appeal in accordance with the Agency's *Quick Reference Guide on Fair Hearings for Foster Home Placement Changes*.

Procedure F: Payments

When placement occurs, CFSA shall determine and provide foster care payments sufficient to cover the costs of room and board for each CFSA child living in the resource home.

1. CFSA shall be responsible for ensuring that foster care payments are distributed to resource parents in a reliable and timely fashion such that the ongoing and quality care expected for all children currently placed in a resource home is not interrupted.

   a. The District government shall send foster care payments to resource parents at the end of each month.

   b. In the event that a resource parent has not received a monthly payment by the 10th day of the following month, the resource parent should immediately contact the assigned CFSA resource parent support worker.

      i. The resource parent support worker shall check FACES.net to determine whether all of the placement information (including the resource parent's address, child's name, and placement date) has been entered into the database.

      ii. The resource parent support worker shall also contact one or more of the following individuals to confirm the accuracy of the placement information and enter any corrections accordingly:

         a) Assigned social worker

         b) Placement Services

         c) Fiscal Operations

   c. CFSA shall inform resource parents that it is important to immediately notify the resource parent support worker if an overpayment for foster care services has been received. *Note: resource parents are not authorized to utilize funds from any overpayment without prior*

approval from CFSA.

i. The resource parent support worker shall immediately contact the CFSA Accounts Payable Supervisor in the Agency's Fiscal Operations Administration for reconciliation or pro-rating of the payment discrepancy.

ii. CFSA reserves the right to hold resource parents legally responsible for misuse of overpayments, or misuse of any other payments made to the resource parent for a child in the District's welfare system.

iii. Resource parents have the right to appeal decisions made by the Agency in regards to the amount of foster care payments (*see the Fair Hearings Policy*).

2. CFSA shall ensure that resource parents receive timely reimbursements and up-to-date information on procedures for reimbursements for medical and other reimbursable expenses. Monthly foster care payments and Medicaid insurance shall cover expenses for a child in care, including but not be limited to coverage for the following expenses:

   a. Medical and dental care

   b. Clothing that meets the following criteria:

      i. Clean

      ii. Good condition (i.e., new or gently used)

      iii. Well-fitting

      iv. Seasonally appropriate

      v. Age and gender appropriate

      vi. Appropriate to the child's individual needs

   c. Allowances

      i. CFSA shall provide resource parents with guidance to ensure that allowances provided to age-appropriate children in their care are reasonable and commensurate with allowances of other children of the same age. *Note: CFSA recommends that resource parents try to avoid differences in allowance amounts between their own biological children and the children in their care*.

      ii. Older youth shall be involved (as appropriate) in decisions related to allocation of their allowance and monthly foster care payments.

   d. School expenses

      i. For youth graduating from high school, expenses shall be paid in accordance with *Administrative Issuance CFSA-08-3 Graduation Expenses*.

      ii. Federal funds may cover the cost of college tuition for all qualified District youth in the foster care system. *Note: social workers shall encourage youth to apply for federal and state*

grants on their own, in addition to applying through CFSA's Office of Youth Empowerment.

e. Day care

f. Counseling

g. Mentoring

h. Tutoring

3. Resource parents should manage monthly foster care payments in a conscientious manner and avoid requesting reimbursements related to unnecessary miscellaneous or extraneous expenses.

4. CFSA shall review all foster care payments on an annual basis, including room and board rates, monthly expense allowances, and/or miscellaneous reimbursements (e.g., transportation costs to and from administrative reviews, etc.).

   a. CFSA shall reserve the right to adjust or maintain board rates and other payment amounts in accordance with current economic factors. *Reminder: resource parents may have the right to appeal in accordance with the Agency's Fair Hearings Policy*.

   b. At the beginning of each fiscal year, CFSA shall adjust the board rates for foster and adoptive homes to equal the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) annual adjustment so that rates are maintained in a manner consistent with USDA standards.

5. Subsidy payment rates for adoptive parents and permanent guardians are determined differently than foster care payments. *For more information on guardianship subsidies, see the Agency's policy on Permanent Guardian Subsidy*.

6. In the event that a child is absent from a placement for an extended period of time, CFSA shall continue (or discontinue) to provide board rate payments to a resource parent based on the guidelines provided in the *Administrative Issuance CFSA-08-12 Bed Hold Payments*.

   - In addition to the guidelines set forth in the administrative issuance CFSA-08-12, CFSA shall continue to provide board rates for a youth residing away at college if the resource parent, youth, and social worker agree that returning to the resource home on vacations or weekends is best suited for the needs of the youth. The resource parent shall be responsible for ensuring payment for a youth's transportation to and from college, as well as providing a monthly allowance to assist with incidentals.

Procedure G: Record Keeping

Social workers shall conscientiously maintain the records of the child for whom they are obligated and encourage resource parents to do the same. It is crucial for CFSA social workers to keep accurate and appropriately filed documents in the child's individual case record. CFSA shall also encourage resource parents to keep accurate school and medical records, in addition to

documentation of extracurricular activities. These records shall be kept inside the child's Placement Passport Packet (see *Attachment A*), which is designed to serve as a "passport" for the child as he or she moves through the system of care.

1. CFSA shall be responsible for providing the following items to the resource parent through the Placement Passport Packet:
    a. "Receipt of Passport" form for the resource parent or provider
    b. Resource Parent Agreement (within 30 days of placement) for signature (*Note: this agreement must be signed for each individual placement occurrence*.)
    c. Child summary, including social, family, and placement history, with reason(s) for disruption
    d. Child's photograph
    e. Copy of child's birth certificate
    f. Copy of child's Social Security card
    g. Child's Medicaid card (*for more information on applying for a Medicaid card, see CFSA's Quick Reference Guide: Medicaid Card*)
    h. Court order and any other relevant legal documents
    i. Child's Immunization record
    j. Health (medical, physical and mental) screening forms (from HHAC)
    k. Case plan, including visitation plan
    l. Copy of individual education plan (IEP), if applicable
    m. Daycare, school, and/or camp information
    n. Clothing check list
    o. Specific instructions for administration of medications (*Note: Social workers are forbidden from administering any medication. Only designated CFSA nurse practitioners or the resource parent upon placement may administer medications. Age-appropriate children may also self-administer.*)
    p. Specific needs of the child, including but not limited to the following areas:
        i. Dietary restrictions
        ii. Cultural or religious requirements
        iii. Special interests
        iv. Social interactions
    q. Any additional information related to the child's medical status (i.e., physical, mental, and emotional health), in addition to any educational and/or behavioral issues
    r. Documentation that identifies the name and contact information for the Guardian ad Litem (GAL), social worker, private agency monitor, educational advocate (if applicable), and birth parents for each child

in their care

2. The resource parent shall sign the Passport Packet receipt form and return it to the CFSA social worker placing the child.
   - The CFSA social worker shall return the receipt to CFSA and file it in the child's case record.
3. CFSA shall request resource parents to enter the following information in the Placement Packet so that it is consistently kept current:
   a. report cards
   b. overnight forms
   c. updates (with additions from the assigned social worker), including developmental milestones, achievements, awards, etc.
   d. noted concerns of a non-emergency nature, including interventions which have been helpful to the child or youth

Note: for more information on the Placement Passport Packet, contact the Office of Placement Services.

4. CFSA shall encourage and team with the resource parent to ensure that children have "life books" to help identify events in the child's life during the period of the child's stay in care, as well as milestones of the child's prior to foster care.
5. CFSA shall keep neat, orderly, and up-to-date records and encourage resource parents to do the same so that all records can easily be shared with and understood by any other social worker or resource parent.

Procedure H: Responding to Concerns

CFSA highly values the contribution of resource parents for the care of children placed in out-of-home care. Therefore, the Agency is committed to maintaining positive working partnerships and will respond to any concerns with respect and a sense of urgency. In support of this commitment, CFSA provides several vehicles for responding to resource parent concerns that have not been addressed directly by the social worker or the chain of command. These include the appeal of certain decisions through the Office of Fair Hearings and Appeals, as well as the opportunity to contact the Office of the Ombudsman. Located within the Office of the Director, the Ombudsman conducts independent reviews of concerns regarding Agency policies and practices raised by resource parents (including foster, kinship, and adoptive parents), youth in care, birth families, the public, community organizations and/or other interested individuals. The Ombudsman is a dedicated position for facilitating resolution of highly complex issues that are not otherwise resolved within Agency administrations.

1. Resource parents are strongly encouraged to address any issues or concerns with their support worker or, as appropriate, the child's assigned social worker, as soon as the issue or concern arises.
   a. The social worker shall make every effort to resolve concerns of the resource parent through social worker facilitation.
   b. If the situation is unresolved after discussion, the social worker shall

	consult with his or her immediate supervisor to address the issue or concern. 2. In the event that a resource parent does not feel that a concern has been adequately addressed through the response of a support worker, social worker, or managerial chain of command, the resource parent may contact the Agency's Ombudsman through the main number of the Agency. a. Depending upon the identified concern, the Ombudsman shall conduct a fact-finding review and analysis of the identified concern to determine whether the Agency has violated any law, policy, standard of practice or procedure, or whether the Agency has unreasonably exercised its authority. b. The Ombudsman shall work with all parties involved to provide support and technical assistance for mediation and alternate dispute resolution as appropriate. c. Under more serious or complex circumstances, the Ombudsman shall elevate the identified concerns to the Agency Director and, if necessary, additional members of the senior management team for final resolution. 3. In the event that the Ombudsman believes that the issue at hand should be addressed through a fair hearing, s/he shall direct the resource parent to contact CFSA's Office of Fair Hearings and Appeals.

ATTACHMENT A

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency

PASSPORT PACKET

THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS FOLDER IS CONFIDENTIAL. ONLY THOSE AUTHORIZED BY THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA MAY HAVE ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION.

IF YOU ARE NOT AN AUTHORIZED PERSON,
PLEASE RETURN THIS FOLDER TO:

THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY
400 6TH ST. SW
WASHINGTON, DC 20024

INTRODUCTION

This Information Packet is designed to be an interactive set of documents to be regularly used and reviewed by social workers, resource providers and foster home monitors. The goal is to enhance the communication among those charged with the responsibility of providing quality, comprehensive care to a child who is a ward of the District of Columbia.

This set of documents represents the “passport” for a child moving through the system of care. This Passport should be in the possession of the person charged with the child’s care. These documents are confidential and should be treated in a manner that will maintain the privacy of the child.

Different persons involved in the child’s life will have different responsibilities for completing and maintaining this information. These individual responsibilities are outlined in the following pages.

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Resource Provider Responsibilities

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   B. Immunization Record
   C. Medicaid Card
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   A. Overnight Permission Slips
   B. Day Care
   C. Camps
VI. History
VII. Noted Concerns
VIII. Resources

CPS Social Worker

The following elements should be completed in the Passport Packet by the investigating social worker:

1. Photo of the child with a written physical description on the back;
2. Child Summary
3. Medical Screening Form; and
4. Clothing Voucher

This information should be placed in the Passport Packet and given to the resource provider when the child is placed. The investigating social worker is responsible for completing the Placement Information in FACES within 48 hours or by the time the FTM occurs and the case is transferred. The completed Placement Form should be added to the Passport Packet on the initial home visit which should occur within seven (7) days of the case transfer.

When the child is placed, the assigned resource provider should complete the “Receipt” acknowledging that the Passport Packet was received when the child was placed. The person who placed the child is responsible for returning the “Receipt” to the Agency and placing it in a designated point of collection.

Ongoing Social Worker

The ongoing social worker assigned to the child will be responsible for providing the following information to the resource provider to be included in the Passport Packet:

1. Placement Form (can be printed from FACES)
2. Copy of birth certificate
3. Copy of social security card
4. Copy of immunization history
5. Medicaid card
6. Copy of court orders
7. Visitation plan
8. Copy of (IEP) Individual Education Plan
9. Copy of medical reports
10. Daycare/camp information

These documents should be added to, and updated, during each monthly visit with the resource provider. The Social Worker and the resource provider should jointly complete a notation in the "History" section noting milestones or events that have occurred since the last visit to the home. The Social Worker should also review any notations made by the resource provider in the "Noted Concerns" section. This is an interactive set of documents which should be reviewed during every home visit with the resource provider. As information becomes available to the social worker, copies should be made and included in the Placement Packet.

When there is a change in placement, the Passport Packet should accompany the child. For each placement, a new Child Summary should be completed with updated information regarding the prior placement. In addition, a signed "Receipt" should be completed at the placement and returned to the Agency and submitted to the designated point of collection for each particular Administration.

Resource Provider

Resource providers are responsible for the following components of the Passport Packet:

1. Report cards
2. Overnight forms
3. History (completed with social worker)
4. Noted concerns

The resource provider should add materials to the Passport Packet as they become available from the child's school, medical provider, etc. The "History" section should be completed with the social worker at the monthly home visit with the resource provider. Developmental milestones and special events or achievements should be noted in this section as well.

The "Noted Concerns" section provides a place for the resource provider to note concerns to be addressed with the social worker. These include non-emergency types of observations or behaviors which may emerge as a concern but not require immediate attention. It would also be helpful to include interventions which appeared to be helpful for the child.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Document	Date Placed In Packet
Photo of Child	_____
Physical Description	(Written on Back)
Child Summary	_____
Placement Form	_____
Clothing Voucher	_____
Birth Certificate	_____
Social Security Card	_____
Visitation Plan	_____
Other	
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

II. COURT DOCUMENTS

Assigned GAL _____
(Tel. #) _____

DC Judge _____

Court Orders

Document	Date Placed In Packet

III. EDUCATION

School _____
Grade _____
Educational Advocate _____
(Tel. #) _____

Document	Date Placed In Packet
IEP	_____
Report Card	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____
Other	
_____	_____
_____	_____

IV. MEDICAL

Medical Provider _____ Contact #_____

Mental Health Provider_____

_____

_____

_____

Document	Date Placed In Packet
Immunization Record	_____
Medicaid Card	_____
Screening Form	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____
Medical Report	
_____	_____
_____	_____

V. ACTIVITIES

Document	Date Placed In Packet
Overnight Permission	_____
Day Care	
_____	_____
_____	_____
Camps	
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
Other	
_____	_____
_____	_____

VI. HISTORY

This section is to be completed by the resource provider and social worker during the home visit. Please note developmental milestones and significant events in the child's life so the child can maintain a history of his/her development.

VII. NOTED CONCERNS

This section is to be completed by the resource provider. Please note any behavioral concerns or developmental concerns as well as any interventions and parenting tips that have been observed to be effective with this child. These are issues which are to be discussed with the social worker but may not merit a telephone call to the social worker at the time it occurred.

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ATTACHMENT B

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency

Code of Ethics for Resource Parents

May 2007

Preamble

The mission of the National Foster Parent Association (NFPA) is to support foster parents in achieving safety, well-being, and permanency for the infants, children, and youth in their care commensurate with the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act passed in 1980, and the Adoptions and Safe Families Act passed in 1997. The Code of Ethics for Foster Parents begins by emphasizing that family foster care is an integral component of the child welfare system which:

- Recognizes the rights of children and youth to safe, nurturing relationships, intended to last a lifetime;
- Assists parents to regain custody or make alternative plans, intended to be permanent, for their children and youth;
- Emphasizes the developmental needs of children and youth
- Provides each child or youth with a foster parent and social worker who have the skills to support the child or youth's safety, developmental, and permanency needs, and provide foster parents and social workers with the supports necessary to develop and use these skills;
- Designs family foster care as a part of a comprehensive, coordinated, inter-disciplinary service delivery system;
- Provides legal representation to ensure timely and skillful responses to case plans involving court proceedings;
- Collects, analyzes, and disseminates accurate and relevant data about children, youth, and their families leading to informed policies, programs, and practices; and
- Supports family foster care – and all child welfare services – with effective and accountable leadership in city halls, governors' offices, national organizations, the judiciary, the federal government, Congress, and the White House (National Commission on Family Foster Care, 1991, p. 5).

Historical Perspective and Definitions

The Code of Ethics for foster parents is based on the definition of family foster care established by the 1991 National Commission on Family Foster Care, sponsored by the Child Welfare League of America and the National Foster Parent Association. It reframed the historical term, "foster family care" to "family

foster care," to emphasize the importance of family. This is based on the premise established by the first White House Conference on Children in 1909 (Rycus & Hughes, 1998) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in *1997* that children need and have the right to a family life *Family foster care*: An essential child welfare service option for children and parents who must live apart while maintaining legal and, usually, affectional ties. When children and parents must be separated because of the tragedy of physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, maltreatment, or special circumstances, family foster care provides a planned, goal-directed service in which the care of children and youth takes place in the home of an agency-approved family. The value of family foster care is that it can respond to the unique, individual needs of infants, children, youth, and their families through the strength of family living, and through family and community supports. The goal of family foster care is to provide opportunities for healing, growth, and development, leading to healthier infants, children, and youth, and families, with safe and nurturing relationships intended to be permanent (National Commission on Family Foster Care, 1991, p. 6).

Foster Parent: NFPA definition: Includes those providing kinship, guardianship, resource and family foster/adoptive care.

Statement of Purpose

The Code of Ethics is a public statement by the National Foster Parent Association that sets clear expectations and principles to articulate basic values and to guide practice. Family foster care is a public trust that requires foster parents, with essential supports from their agencies, to be dedicated to service for the welfare of the children in their care. Each foster parent has an obligation to maintain and improve the practice of fostering, constantly to examine, use and increase the knowledge upon which fostering is based, and to perform the service of fostering with dignity, integrity, and competence.

Principles

Successful family foster parenting includes competencies in the following domains:

Principle 1: ***Providing a safe and secure environment***

Principle 2: ***Providing a loving, nurturing, stable family care environment.***

Principle 3: ***Modeling healthy family living to help children, youth, and families learn and practice skills for safe and supportive relationships.***

Principle 4: ***Providing positive guidance that promotes self-respect while respecting culture, ethnicity, and Agency policy.***

Principle 5: ***Promoting and supporting positive relationships among children, youth, and their families to the fullest possible extent.***

Principle 6: ***Meeting physical and mental health care needs.***

Principle 7: ***Promoting educational attainment and success***

Principle 8: ***Promoting social and emotional development***

Principle 9: ***Supporting permanency plans***

Principle 10: ***Growing as a foster parent - skill development and role clarification; participation in training, professional or skill development, and foster parent support organizations and associations.***

Principle 11: ***Arranging activities to meet the child's individual recreational, cultural, and spiritual needs.***

Principle 12: ***Preparing children and youth for self-sufficient and responsible adult lives.***

Principle 13: ***Meeting and maintaining all licensing or approval requirements.***

Principle 14: ***Advocating for resources to meet the unique needs of the children and youth in their care (National Commission on Family Foster Care, 1991, p. 17).***

Principle 15: Collaborating with other foster parents and the child welfare team, building trust and respecting confidentiality.

Principle 16: Promoting decisions that are in the best interest of the child/youth, promoting safety, well-being, and permanence.

Principle 17: Supporting relationships between children and youth and their families.

Principle 18: Working as a team member.

Context

A Code of Ethics for Foster Parents must be viewed within the context of the service delivery system in which individual foster parents are affiliated. Foster parents recognize that while they have the solemn responsibility for the 24-hour care of the children placed with them, their abilities and resources are influenced by caseworkers, the role reciprocals. The National Foster Parent Association urges social work professionals to view the Code of Ethics for Foster Parents within the Code of Ethics for Social Workers, promulgated by the National Association of Social Workers: competence, dignity, integrity, importance of human relationships, service, and social justice (National Association of Social Workers, 1996, p. 1).

References

National Commission on Family Foster Care. (1991). *A blueprint for fostering infants, children, and youths in the 1990's.* Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.

National Association of Social Workers. (1996). *NASW Code of Ethics.* Washington, DC.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency

Resource Parent Agreement

April 2011

Agency Responsibilities:

1. Provide all available placement information including special supervision needs if applicable
2. Involve foster parents as partners in case and service planning
3. Assist Foster parents in advocating for all service needs for the child (e.g. school, medical)
4. Consider foster parents schedule whenever possible, while making appointments for child
5. All removals of children from foster parent's home will be done according to law.
6. Provide 24 hour crisis services – Tool kit in handbook
7. Ensure timely and accurate stipends/reimbursements
8. Provide respite services
9. Assist with transportation when extenuating circumstances make it necessary
10. Provide procedures for foster parents to request emergency removals for safety/crisis reasons
11. Provide clear process, procedures, and supportive services to prevent placement disruptions (Procedure B – RRP policy)
12. Provide quality, relevant, and competency based in-service training, including training on policy updates
13. Provide internal grievance process and information about appeal/fair hearing processes for placement changes, investigations, and service delivery
14. Provide clear guidance and information around emergency preparedness
15. Approve requests for travel and other activities within ____ days
16. Work with foster parents to develop permanency options and consider foster parents as potential options
17. Notify foster parents about court and administrative reviews
18. Feedback and transparency about concerns and usage of a foster parent's home

Shared Responsibilities:

1. Mutual respect
2. Planning towards permanency
3. Open lines of communication
4. Adherence to Practice Model

Resource Parent Responsibilities:

1. Follow policy requirements of foster parents (Procedure C, RRP policy).
2. Informing the agency about unusual incidents (including arrests, charges, and investigations).
3. Follow confidentiality policy.
4. Maintain a current license, including completion of 30 hours of in-service training over the course of two years, notifying the agency of any household changes, and maintaining relevant insurance such as auto insurance.
5. Follow appropriate medication procedures (procedure K, RRP policy).
6. Support a positive relationship with the child's birth family.
7. Participate as part of the child's team.
8. Foster for only one agency at a time.
9. Have a back-up person.
10. Follow policy on overnight visits.
11. Follow the procedures to request the removal of a child.
12. Provide child specific supervision.
13. Support the child in practicing his/her own faith.
14. Have an emergency disaster plan.
15. Notify the agency when going out of town.
16. Provide transportation for the child as outlined in CFSA policy.

_____ _____

Social Worker Date

Agency Name

_____ _____

Resource Parent Date