



**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES
Initial Foster Home Agreement**

The purpose of this Agreement by and between the Division of Children and Family Services, referred to as the Division, and _____, referred to as the Foster Parent(s), is to demonstrate the understanding and acceptance, by both parties, of the rights and responsibilities as explained during Pre-Service Training and listed in the Service Programs Policy Manual.

The above named foster parent(s) have been approved by the Division to provide Standard Planned-Term, Respite, Emergency, Specialized and/or Provisional Foster Care (mark all that apply) for number of children.

The family foster parents are willing to accept:

Sex:	Disability:	Age:	Sibling Group:	Number of Children (Non-Siblings) to be Placed in Home:
<input type="checkbox"/> male	<input type="checkbox"/> mental retardation	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 siblings	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
<input type="checkbox"/> female	<input type="checkbox"/> blind or visually impaired	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 siblings	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> deaf or hearing impaired	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-11 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 siblings	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
	<input type="checkbox"/> physically disabled	<input type="checkbox"/> 12-15 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 siblings	
	<input type="checkbox"/> emotionally disabled	<input type="checkbox"/> 16 years plus	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 or more	
	<input type="checkbox"/> learning disabled	<input type="checkbox"/> no preference	siblings	
	<input type="checkbox"/> medical condition			
	<input type="checkbox"/> HIV +/-AIDS			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>specify</i>)			
	<hr/>			
	<input type="checkbox"/> None			

I. Division Responsibilities and Expectations:

The Division shall notify the foster parent(s) prior to a placement of the pertinent information about the child and the birth/legal parent(s) including the reasons for placement, the projected length of stay, the board rate, the visitation plan, services case plan, and any special services. The Division will provide the foster parent(s) with a current Medi-Alert (CFS-362) and Foster Home Agreement Addendum (CFS-462A) at the time of placement.

The Family Service Worker will explain each child's services case plan and schedule of visitation to the foster parent at the time the children are placed in the home. The Family Service Worker will make weekly visits to the foster home to assess the quality of care being provided and to support foster parents in maintaining placements. The Family Service Worker must document and receive approval for less than weekly visitation. The Division will provide both initial and ongoing training for the foster parent(s). The Division and the foster parent(s) shall abide by this agreement at all times.

The Division shall include the foster parent(s) in the decision making process for any child placed in their care. The foster parent(s) shall be invited to attend pre-placement activities: staffings (a minimum of one every six months); and court proceedings. Their input will be requested in case planning as it relates to services for the child.

The Family Service Worker will give advance notice to the foster parents when the child is to be moved from the home.

Financial Arrangements:

The Division will provide the foster parents with a monthly board payment according to the established rate for the foster child receiving care. Clothing must be purchased and a spending allowance will be given the child from the board payment as specified. Medical expenses including prescription drugs are covered by the child's Medicaid card. In certain cases, transportation for medical expenses or other additional expenses can be reimbursed by the Division. Reimbursement will be approved on a case by case basis in keeping with standard divisional policies for such needs.

Foster Home Reevaluation:

The Division will reevaluate the home and family annually. This evaluation will include health physicals, discussion of the foster children characteristics acceptable to the home, the willingness of all members of the foster family to continue in the program, and continued compliance with all foster home standards. In addition, the Family Service Worker will complete the CFS-475 (Checklist for Compliance) quarterly in order to provide ongoing monitoring of the home.

II. Foster Parent(s) Responsibilities to the Foster Child

The foster parents shall comply with the intention of the foster care program to provide care and supervision on a level of excellence with normal family life for a child. However, the foster parents shall not make major decisions that have far reaching effects on the foster child's life, such as consents for surgery, military service, or marriage. Foster parent(s) shall recognize the intended temporariness of the placement and cooperate in every way with efforts to reunite the child with his/her family or otherwise provide for permanency.

Most importantly, the foster parent(s) will protect the child and his/her birth/legal family by keeping private matters, plans and decisions regarding the child and his/her family strictly confidential at all times. A good rule of thumb is "when in doubt, don't tell it." Foster parents shall assist in preparing the child and showing support for any move that must be made.

If the foster parent's religion differs from that of a foster child, the foster parent(s) should exhibit a knowledge and appreciation of the foster child's religious background. No attempt will be made to dissuade the foster child from his religious teachings or practices.

Services provided by foster parent(s) to the foster child include:

1. Providing daily care and supervision in keeping with a safe and nurturing family life style,
2. Maintaining daily medical needs/problems/events of foster children,
3. Keeping a scrapbook for the child to record developmental progress and special events,
4. Transporting for visits with birth/legal parents and to medical providers,
5. Keeping both health and progress records as specified by policy,
6. Speaking positively of the child's birth/legal family,
7. Working with DCFS to prepare the child and his/her family for termination of foster care; and
8. Attending school conferences involving children in their care.

Foster parents Responsibilities to the Division:

1. To be involved in and cooperate with the other team members in decision making activities, including pre-placement activities, staffings, court proceedings, and case planning, thereby assisting in effecting the child's return home or to a permanent placement.
2. To participate in educational and training programs designed to enhance ability to care for foster children, with each foster parent completing a minimum 15 hours of training annually.
3. To be aware of and share with the child's Family Service Worker the child's strengths, limitations, and emotional and behavioral problems in order for appropriate educational and supportive services to be provided.
4. To inform the Division if: a child runs away, child is arrested, child is involved in an accident in which he and/or another person is injured or property is damaged, a need for emergency medical services for the child arises, or they plan on taking the child on an overnight trip or leaving the state.
5. To inform the child's Family Service Worker of any misunderstanding, disagreements, problems, or grievances regarding the child or the Division in a timely manner.
6. To notify the Division of any pertinent conditions, problems, or changes in address, telephone number, household composition, or physical structure of the home. To inform the Division of any life stressors within the foster family which may affect the foster family's effectiveness as a foster family. Life stressors may include, but are not limited to: serious illness of a family member, divorce, death of a family member, and problems with the foster family's own birth/legal children.
7. To notify the Division if they wish to withdraw from participation in the program.

