**CONFIDENTIALITY, DISCIPLINE, AND MANDATED REPORTING AGREEMENTS**

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| **CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT AND HIPAA NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES – FOSTER PARENTS** |

Because of the nature of selecting and providing care to children and youth, foster parents serving the Foster Care Program are asked to review confidential information about prospective placements. Foster parents hereby agree not to reveal, except as provided below, any of this confidential information, or anything about the persons or circumstances disclosed in the information. In addition, after a child or youth is placed with a family, no personal, private or confidential information will be shared except in instances where it is necessary for the treatment for the child/youth and releases of information have been secured as required. Foster parents will share important information about the child/youth’s functioning in the foster home with the referring agency staff working with the child, Foster Care Worker, DCF worker, birth parents, and other professionals to meet the treatment goals and the needs of the child/ youth.

Foster parents will be given and expected to maintain some material on the child/youth and birth parents. These will be provided by the Foster Care Worker. They will be placed in a 3 ring notebook. This notebook is to be kept in a secure place in the foster home. By secure, we mean that the notebook will be put away, out of plain sight, and not accessible to anyone in the household except the foster parents.

Material that contains information regarding the child/youth and birth parents will always be transported in a secure manner. It will be placed into something that can be closed or fastened such as an envelope, etc.

Upon discharge from the foster home, all information regarding the child/youth and birth parents will be returned to the foster care worker or referring agency staff. A child/youth’s discharge from the foster home does not relieve the foster parent from abiding by the practices spelled out in the this statement and foster parents still need to protect the confidentiality of the child/youth and birth parents even after discharge from their home

Additionally, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) prohibits the sharing of Protected Heath Information (PHI) in any form unless certain procedures are followed. PHI is Individually Identifiable Health Information (IIHI), oral or written (paper or electronic), which relates to past, present or future health (physical or mental) conditions, health care or payments. IIHI is any information that connects health data to a specific person, including, name, birth date, social security number, health insurance ID # and Medicare insurance ID #. It is a responsibility of foster parents to protect and safeguard PHI. HIPAA requires that client information be shared on a “need-to-know” basis only with other service providers involved in the children’s care and treatment. Information shared or obtained must be what is “minimally necessary” to provide the care and services to children. The wrongful release of confidential information may subject a care provider and sponsoring agency to fines, legal or other disciplinary action.

The Foster Care Program protects foster parent information in the same manner that foster children’s information if protected. We maintain all information collected from and about foster parents in a confidential manner.

Signatures below indicate an understanding and acceptance of the above conditions.

**DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES**

Discipline is an essential part of child rearing and when used positively it contributes to the healthy growth and development of a child and establishes positive patterns of behavior in preparation for adulthood. The objective of discipline is to promote behaviors beneficial to the child’s development and welfare and to change and/or eliminate behaviors, which are injurious to his or her well-being. Therefore, we encourage positive discipline as the most important aspect of child rearing practices for children and youth who are placed in the care of TFI Family Services, Inc.

The Foster Care Program believes that discipline is an integral part of healthy parent-child relationships. Although many have confused the concept of discipline with punishment, in the purest sense it really means “to teach.” Foster care staff makes the assumption that youth who misbehave have not been consistently taught proper behavior and self-control. We accept the challenge, as foster parents, of being the teachers of acceptable, responsible, situational behaviors. In order to accomplish this mission, foster parents use several strategies such as:

* Create and maintain a secure, safe, pleasant, nurturing, living and learning environment.
* Clearly define expectations. Repeat them frequently.
* Stop behavior immediately that is dangerous to self or others.
* Consequent undesirable behavior in a positive manner. Behavior falling outside of defined limits can be addressed in several ways depending upon the severity and situation.

There are laws that protect adults against actions, which many children must endure and suffer under the guise of discipline. Many children who are in the care of DCF have previously suffered too much physical pain, fear, humiliation, and emotional stress. We cannot perpetuate this when we assume the positive roles in our child-rearing practices of which positive discipline is an essential part. Therefore TFI Family Services, Inc. does not view as positive, acceptable discipline any action administered in a fashion, which may cause any child to suffer physical, psychological or emotional pain; any form of corporal punishment; use of aversive stimuli; withholding nutrition or hydration; forced exercise to eliminate behavior; punitive work assignment; punishment by peers; or group punishment/discipline for individuals. While the foregoing statement is not all-inclusive in terms of unacceptable forms of discipline, it does provide a guideline for the establishment of the following statement of policy.

It shall be the policy of TFI Family Services, Inc. that we not utilize or continue to utilize providers who use disciplinary acts which cause pain such as hitting, beatings, shaking, cursing, threatening, binding, closeting, prolonged isolation, denial of meals, and derogatory remarks about the child or his/her family.

Signatures below indicate agreement to abide by the above Discipline Policy.

**MANDATED REPORTING**

According to Kansas statute 38-1522, when certain persons have reason to suspect that a child has been injured as a result of physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect or sexual abuse, the person shall report the matter promptly to the Department for Children and Families (DCF) 1-800-922-5330.

As a provider for children that are in the care and custody of the State of Kansas you are now considered a mandated reporter. You agree to report any of the above-mentioned situations to DCF promptly and complete an incident report that shall be forwarded to the assigned case worker.

The process for reporting suspected abuse or neglect is:

1. You observe a situation that appears to be abusive/neglectful.
2. You promptly call your local DCF office or law enforcement if there is no answer at the local DCF office.
3. The call can be made without giving your name if you wish. All calls are kept confidential.
4. DCF and/or law enforcement will determine if an investigation is required.
5. When reporting an allegation, you may choose to make an anonymous report (not give the agency your name).

Persons who willfully and knowingly fail to report suspected abuse or neglect and/or who prevent or interfere with an investigation involving reported abuse and/or neglect may be subject to class B misdemeanor.

As a provider for a children placed in DCF custody, I, the undersigned agree to abide by the above Mandated Reporter Policy while providing services to any child/ren placed in my home by the Foster Care Program.

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Foster Parent Date

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Foster Parent Date

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Foster Care Worker Date