

# UNIVERSAL FAMILY CONNECTION, INC.



## FOSTER PARENT LAW

### *Implementation Plan*

**2016**  
Calendar Year

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2016 UNIVERSAL FAMILY CONNECTION, INC.  
FOSTER PARENT LAW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2015 Annual Implementation Plan Report

Rights of Foster Parent

Responsibilities of Foster Parent

Attachments

Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure



## **Universal Family Connection, Inc. 2015 Annual Implementation Plan Report**

The Foster Parent Law continues to serve as a tool to involve foster parents in every aspect of the foster care experience. At Universal Family Connection, Inc. we treat our foster parents as an integral part of the agency as valued team members, not as clients or volunteers.

The Annual Implementation Plan Report for Program Year 2015 addressed the strengths and weaknesses as outlined in the letter received from Sarah Olson, Chairperson Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council. The following areas detail clear descriptions of agency results from the program year 2014 documentation. Some of the deficiencies that were identified and re-implemented were; including the foster parents when identifying their strengths and weaknesses. The agency accomplished this by providing evaluations after every foster parent training. It was suggested that training for the foster parent's be offered alongside staff. This is implemented by distributing yearly calendars along with monthly reminders of upcoming trainings throughout the year. The Licensing Coordinator is also a P.R.I.D.E. trainer and their goal is to enhance the staff as well as the foster parent's knowledge and to stay current on DCFS Policy and Procedures. This is just one way we continue to support the foster parent and treat them as part of the team. We focused more on the wellbeing of the agency's foster parents to ensure that their needs are being met so that can be more effective in meeting the needs of the children, i.e., respite, counseling, parent coaching, etc.

Meetings were held bi-monthly for three months as well as during the Foster Parent Advisory Board Meetings and monthly Manager's Meetings. Invitations for participation in the development of the plan were extended and accepted by the foster parents, mandatory of direct staff, and management. The team reviewed the final plan and approval was given by signature. The plan is discussed weekly at Foster Care team meetings and at the monthly manager's meeting.

The Foster Parent Implementation Plan was developed as a collaborative effort between foster parents, the community, and UFC staff. The plan provides the forum for feedback and improvement to better serve our children and their families. The Implementation Plan helps us as an agency to continue to learn, grow, and improve in many ways. UFC staff and its foster parents continue to make great strides toward the goals of creating, supporting and implementing the plan as a team.

Foster parents were given a copy of the revised Foster Parent Law at the monthly meeting when foster parent's pick up their board checks during the months of September and October. Each foster parent signed as proof they received the new plan. Those that did not receive the plan in person, a copy of the plan was mailed, emailed or the case manager took a copy of the plan to the foster parent's home during their monthly home visit. Additional copies of the Foster Parent Law are available in the corridor of the UFC building and on our agency website; ([www.ufcinc.org](http://www.ufcinc.org)).

By establishing and implementing this plan, it ensures quality daily service delivery through set laws and regulations for the protection of the child, foster parent, and service providers. Through clear, written descriptions of rights and responsibilities by the foster parent, case managers and agency, children are supported through the commitment of the entire child welfare team. We continue to host the annual Christmas Party/Toy Giveaway, Thanksgiving Turkey Basket Giveaway, and luncheon during Foster Parent Appreciation Month (May) to recognize the contribution of foster parents in the lives of the children served.

Attached is a general description of our team review and writing process. It identifies the methods used to incorporate public comments and identifies participants as foster parents, direct service staff and management.

Attached is UFC's Grievance Procedure. Foster parents were not only trained on the procedure, but their assistance and input was used when establishing the procedure. Grievance Procedure meetings were held, the foster parents reviewed the actual Grievance Procedure and approved the final draft. The final draft was distributed to each foster parent either when they picked up their monthly board payment or in person when the case manager conducted their monthly home visit. Those foster parents that do not have children in their homes were mailed a copy of the Grievance Procedure. The foster parents agreed to utilize members of the Foster Parent Advisory Council as advocates during the grievance process. Foster parents continue to be encouraged to utilize members of the council in assisting them in any grievance procedure. UFC continues to post the procedure in designated areas of the office.

The 2015 plan reflects changes suggested by the reviewers as it relates to developing the strategies for implementation. The input of the agency's Quality Assurance Team, the Foster Parent Advisory Council, the Board of Directors, the public and all of UFC's foster parents is an ongoing process in the annual revision of the plan.

Sections of the Plan that were most successfully implemented, was the increased participation in Foster Parent Trainings and After School Program. Membership of the Foster Parent Advisory Council and their inclusion and participation, as well as all foster parents in the decision making process has vastly improved.

There is also an increase in the attendance at the monthly foster parent training due to classes being offered on check distribution day and utilizing the foster parent's suggestions and input regarding topics for training. For those foster parents that work, digital training has been provided for them.

Each foster parent has an email address on file so that they can keep abreast of the changes within DCFS including training and other valuable resources. This agency also has a computer/resource room available specifically for foster parents to engage in on-line training as the Office of Training and Development is gearing more towards paperless and virtual training. Strategies for increased communication, training, and recruitment of foster parents through the utilization of the media continue to be very successful.

Our traditional foster parent recruitment efforts continue to be successful. The agency is part of the After Hours Rotation program and more foster parents are able to be utilized in this manner. Locating foster parents of a diverse ethnic background and the LGBT have become less challenging. UFC continues to utilize the media to meet this and other population as well as continuing to network with other agencies, community businesses, and faith based organizations. We continue our recruitment efforts through advertisement on CAN-TV, Channel 41 to better serve a diverse population. It is no longer a challenge to locate available Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE and In-Service training for foster parents. The Licensing Coordinator continues to be a DCFS P.R.I.D.E. Trainer and the agency is a designated training site for Foster Parent trainings. More locations have been added for the Chicago area and the DVD and Digital In-Service training has been added for ongoing training opportunities. There were no sections in the plans that were not implemented. To ensure that these changes are implemented and to overcome any obstacles faced by foster parents, the Executive Director, Director of Programs, case managers and Supervisors are all required to attend quarterly staff meetings and trainings, and contribute to the development and implementation of the Foster Parent Law implementation plan as well as training pertaining to local, state, and national laws affecting foster parents.

What continues to be most challenging is at the point of placement into a foster home, the receiving foster parent is not able to be given the detailed information regarding the child that is being placed in their home. With the Afterhours Rotation Protocol, the minor is placed in the foster home directly from their home of origin after having a complete medical exam. The necessary information such as behavior issues, current school and school behaviors, legal status, and information regarding birth parents is not known for days. This is something that is taught in P.R.I.D.E. training and is emphasized prior to accepting a placement. As the Licensing Coordinator and a P.R.I.D.E. trainer, it is an ongoing discussion with the foster parents within the agency and while training perspective foster parents that this information may not be readily available but as it is obtained, it will be relayed to the foster parent in timely manner.

In conclusion, the entire 2015 plan has been successfully implemented. Universal Family Connection believes that our foster parents play an integral part of the agency's success and we encourage ongoing success by continuing to involve the Foster Parents, Case Managers, and Administrators in the development and oversight of the plan. This gives a whole new meaning to the term, "teamwork." Universal Family Connection's foster parents and staff are looking forward to another year of providing quality service to our children and families.

# **FOSTER PARENT RIGHTS**

FOSTER CARE PROGRAM  
ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN  
HOUSE BILL 2227

**THE FOSTER PARENT BILL OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Universal Family Connection unconditionally endorses the advancement of foster parent rights and responsibilities as defined and enumerated in Illinois House Bill 2227- The Foster Parents Bill of Rights and Responsibilities. In accordance with HB2227, Universal Family Connection submits this implementation plan as confirmation of conformity with both the spirit and letter of this new law.

**The Rights of Foster Parents shall include:**

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

We recognize that foster parents are an integral part of the team serving children in foster care and are worthwhile individuals with valuable assets to contribute to our society and our agency. We are committed to ensuring that they are afforded all of the respect and consideration given any other professional team member. To ensure the respect and dignity of all foster parents as professional team members, foster parents are provided ongoing training (pre-service and in-services) to address the Foster Parent Law. Foster Parents are given written and verbal notice of court dates, ACR's, medical appointments, dental/vision appointments, and schedules of any Psychological or Counseling appointments as well as any meetings. Ideas and concerns are discussed with foster parents and after an agreement is reached, implemented.

Foster parents are encouraged to voice freely their ideas and concerns with licensing staff, case managers, and administrative staff at any given time, and not limited to, foster parent trainings, staffing, home visits, court hearings, and Administrative Case Reviews.

Foster parents are notified of changes in the Department as it relates to policy & procedure and receive those changes immediately verbally and in writing so as to make any adjustments. In addition, foster parents are encouraged to voice their opinion regarding policy changes and make other program input via the Foster Parent Advisory Council, which is designed to ensure foster parents have a forum to discuss their problems, along with the Foster Parent -Satisfaction Survey which is conducted semi-annually. Universal Family Connection, Inc. encourages open communication between foster parents, case managers, and all other professional members of the child welfare team. Moreover, treatment of foster parents is an ongoing focus of supervision and agency quality assurance. The Licensing Coordinator makes frequent impromptu calls to the foster parents to see if there are any concerns, questions or issues that may need to be addressed.

As professional members of the child welfare team, foster parents are given a copy of, trained on and encouraged to comply with Rule 402 and cooperatively carry out the service plan for the foster children.

Foster parents are urged to attend staffings at the child's school or at agency designated sites. Foster parents are encouraged to host team and family meetings in their homes and work with other team members to develop intervention, prevention, and preservation strategies to teach the foster children how to cope and relate in a functional family setting. All foster parents are given an organizational chart, and a job description fact sheet of staff who are a part of the Professional Team. Foster parents have 24 hour availability to assigned Case Managers pager or cell phone number. Case managers are required to return all phone calls within a 24 hour period.

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

Foster parents are provided ongoing standardized pre-service and in-service training per DCFS Rule 402. Twenty-seven (27) hours for Traditional Foster Parents and a minimum of six (6) hours for unlicensed relatives. Non related and related foster parents are given training materials through Universal Family Connection, Inc. This includes two (2) DVD's and The Department of Children and Family Services Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE Handbook (also in Spanish). For renewal purposes, Licensing Representatives and foster parents review the training schedule provided by The Department of Children and Family Services and determine the best time, date, and placed available for a foster parent to complete the training. Foster PRIDE digital in-service training modules are available for foster and adoptive caregivers on CD- Rom and online digital training when caregivers have training needs that cannot be met in a traditional classroom format. Foster parents are instructed on how to utilize the Virtual Training Center (VTC) so that they can have access to their training transcripts, classes that they are already registered for and to keep abreast of their training hours. Universal Family Connection also has six-hour training DVD's/tapes available on site for relative foster parents to watch at the office or in the privacy of their own homes. Foster parents are also informed and encouraged to utilize the Foster/Adoptive Parent Virtual Training Center ([www.dcfstraining.org](http://www.dcfstraining.org)) to obtain approved training credit for license renewal or just for further education on specific topics for self-directed training in parenting and family life. Our training program is designed to assist and support foster parents in their daily interactions with children in foster care and support relationships intended to last a lifetime. All Relative Foster Parents are required to complete all sessions of PRIDE or other DCFS approved trainings. UFC identifies an adoptive parent and a traditional Foster Parent as co-trainers when trainings occur. They have been very involved and insightful in providing an adoptive and a foster parent's perspective at our trainings. The Foster/Adoptive Parent along with agency staff contact new as well as existing Foster/Adoptive Parents regarding training schedules and topics discussed.



The Foster/Adoptive Parent survey's ideas for recommended trainings. In addition, they have been instrumental in providing UFC with knowledge in developing a foster parent-training curriculum over the past years.

Licensing representatives and foster parents complete ongoing mutual assessments during monitoring visits and at the conclusion of each training as needed to determine the training strengths, needs and challenges of a foster parent. The assessment tool is discussed with the foster parent to make suggestions regarding trainings available to them to improve their skills in specific training topics and to commensurate with the type of care being provided. Universal Family Connection encourages Foster Parents to obtain training materials through the Licensing Coordinator. Universal Family Connection also has a resource library that is accessible to Foster Parents to utilize a computer, check out books and videotapes for additional training. A current lending resource library list is provided to each foster parent from the Licensing Coordinator.

Quarterly or more, the Foster Parent Satisfaction Survey, Training Credit Approval form and The Survey to Assist with Development of Training is utilized as a mutual assessment tool for training needs.

Foster parents input and suggestions are encouraged and utilized when scheduling foster parent trainings. Working foster parents are accommodated with evening or Saturday trainings, referred to In-Service trainings at off-site locations, or to the digital in-service training modules. In-service trainings are provided quarterly or more to foster parents at the agency. Foster parents are sent a yearly calendar of training dates, topics and times. Foster parents are notified monthly by mail of any upcoming foster parent trainings. Foster parents are notified of any changes in the training schedule at least thirty (30) days in advance.

See attachments: 2016 UFC Foster Parent Training Schedule

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 the foster parents care.

The 24-hour Child Abuse and Neglect hotline number and the worker's pager and cellular phone number is given to foster parents for 24 hour, 7 days a week access. UFC also has a Crisis Hotline Number that is accessible 24-hours a day, seven days a week (866) 239-2724 for emergency support. There is also a TTY telephone number, (773) 881-7159 for the hearing impaired. The hotline and post Adoption/Guardianship number for foster parents is also given to all adoptive foster parents.

The established method for accessing support services is via in-person contact, telephone and written notice. Foster parents are provided with phone numbers for SOC (Systems of Care), SASS(Screening, Assessment, and Supportive Services), Staff numbers, Advocacy Office phone number, (800) 232-3798 and the local CARES(Crisis and Referral Entry Service) number in writing. The monthly on-call schedule is made available to the 24-hour crisis-intervention center, as well as the Licensing Coordinator's cell phone number.

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

During the placement process foster parents will be notified when they receive payment. Regular board payment occurs on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of each month for licensed foster parents. If the 22<sup>nd</sup> falls on a Saturday, the board check will be available for pick up on that Friday, if the 22<sup>nd</sup> falls on a Sunday, the board check will be available for pick up the following Monday. For foster parents receiving standard of need payment, it is based upon the date determined by the State of Illinois which occurs between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Unlicensed Foster Parents are provided with the telephone number to the Payment Unit in Springfield, Illinois to inquiry about their Standard of Need Board Check (1-800-525-0499, option #2). Licensed foster parents may pick up their checks at the UFC office or mailed if they wish. Unlicensed foster parents have their checks mailed directly from the State of Illinois in Springfield, Illinois.

Foster parents should discuss any purchases in advance with their case manager for approval of the expenditure. UFC will reimburse foster parents within 3 working days for expenses incurred with proper receipt for goods and services, which includes, but is not limited to:

- School supplies
- Gym shoes/gym fees/gym wear
- Recreational activities - basketball, baseball, camp
- Cultural enrichment activities and supplies
- School trips
- Respite on a case by case basis
- Replacement clothing not covered by the monthly clothing allowance
- Camp expenses
- Lessons in recreation or artistic endeavors (i.e., music lessons, dancing lessons, athletic instructions)
- Music instrument purchase or rental
- Membership fees and equipment for Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, YMCA, YWCA, etc.
- School transportation
- Tutoring
- Summer school fees
- Travel related to placement
- Medical expenses not covered by the Healthy Kids Program
- Interpreter/Translation Expenses

When it is determined that the child's systems of care assessment places him/her in a position for a higher care rate, they are referred to an agency with a specialized contract within 30 calendar days.

UFC will review all available documentation and conduct a financial hearing within 10 days with foster parents as a method of resolving payment problems.

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 right to relationships with his/her own family and cultural heritage.

Upon receipt of a new case and at subsequent meetings prior to ACR's and other major events, the foster parent is invited and encouraged to fully participate in developing the case plan for the child(ren). This includes medical, education, recreation, and counseling services. In the event there are changes in the case plan by the court or needs of the child(ren), the foster parent is notified immediately by a phone call and follow up written notification within 7 working days of the event.

The foster parent is consulted and encouraged to be involved in all aspects of visitation between siblings, and children and their biological parents. We recognize the foster parent's right not to be involved with the child's biological parents, if this creates a problem for them. Universal Family Connection, Inc. also supports and encourages the Family Reunification Support Special Service Fee reimbursement that is available to caregivers of children whose families are making progress toward reunification. The focus is on supporting the parenting activities in a family setting and encouraging the natural parent and the foster parent to work together as a team.

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

All UFC Licensing Representatives receive training on a yearly basis of licensing complaint issues according to Rule 402 Licensing Standards and Procedures 383, Licensing Enforcement. UFC provides notification of licensing complaints to foster parents within 24 hours by phone or face-to-face contact. Within seven business days of the complaint, a licensing investigation will begin with an unannounced visit to the foster home by a qualified licensing representative. The Licensing Representative goes to the home and informs the foster parent of the allegations and their rights. These allegations are then discussed openly and fairly with the foster parent. The Licensing Representative/Coordinator interviews all parties involved (including the children).

Once all the concerned parties have been interviewed, all related documents and data are collected and the foster parent is presented with the findings of the agency within 7 days. The foster parent is notified by telephone and in writing the outcome of the investigation. If further investigations are proven to be founded, the foster parent is informed of what the findings may lead to. If the safety of the child(ren) is involved and/or questionable, the child(ren) may be removed immediately.

If a licensing investigation pertains to the violation found in Rule 402 Licensing Standards, then the violations are cited on 597-C and signed by the foster parent and the Licensing Coordinator or Representative. A compliance date is given and the foster parent is advised how to achieve all compliance goals within a reasonable time agreed upon by both the Licensing Coordinator and the foster parent with the support and assistance of the agency staff.

The foster parent has the right to have a person of their choice with them during the licensing investigation as a witness or advocate, UFC informs and recommends the use of a foster parent advisory board member. If the person of choice is not present at that moment, foster parents have at least four hours to have them present. The witness/advocate must agree to DCFS rules of confidentiality. Any person who is a witness/advocate will not be notified of the outcome of the licensing investigation.

Foster parents have a right to appeal the results of investigations. The availability of such appellation and its process will be clearly explained to them in writing at the time findings are formally shared. Appeals will be responded to by the Department within 30 days. The Licensing Coordinator/Representative is to insure that the Foster Parent receives a copy of the Right to Appeal Brochure and all process procedures explained to them. Should the agency make a decision that is appealed, the UFC Licensing Coordinator/Representative provides the foster parent with information and assistance regarding the appeal process, time frames, and guidelines as outlined in the Foster Family Handbook within 10 days of the decision. The appeal process consists of an optional mediation between UFC staff person, supervisor and a neutral third party. If the foster parent chooses not to mediate, or if mediation is not successful, the foster parent may request a fair hearing through the Department of Children and Family Services.

The Licensing Representative inquires as to the technical assistance needed by the foster parent and assist's the foster parent in writing the appeal if necessary. The appeal is forwarded to the Department of Children and Family Services Administrative Hearing Unit within 45 days. The UFC Licensing Representative will also ensure that the foster parent is notified, in a timely manner, of the date, location and time of the Appeals Hearing and will also attend the hearing. UFC will follow any and all decisions recommended as a result of the Appeals Hearing. Foster parents who appeal decisions by the agency are not to be subjected to harassment or any form of retaliation by the agency or any of its staff. Foster parents have a right to be heard in the hearing.

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

All UFC case managers and supervisors are licensed child welfare workers. As a part of ongoing training process of all employees, ongoing training is required to ensure that the worker continues to provide timely and appropriate information in writing to the foster parent that is relevant to the care of the child(ren).

All staff meetings within the agency include updated information regarding new licensing practices and renewals of established guidelines.

These meetings train case managers and other staff on all information to be disclosed to the foster parents initially and are instructed to immediately respond with full and complete answers to any inquiries from the foster parent about the child(ren) in their care. Case managers are to show by written documentation, supervision and other service provisions, that they are forthcoming about information that will enable the foster parent to care for the child(ren). Case files are reviewed on a quarterly basis. Foster parents are randomly called to inquire about the services provided, and they are asked to complete a satisfaction survey as an accountability tool.

UFC case managers are held accountable for sharing all information with foster parents. Disciplinary action is taken, if these processes determine that services are not being provided.

8. The right to be given information concerning a child (i) from the Department as required under subsection (u) of Section 5 of the Children and Family Services Act and (ii) from a child welfare agency as required under subsection (c-5) of section 7.4 of the Child Care Act of 1969.

UFC case managers are held accountable for sharing all information with foster parents. Disciplinary action is taken, if these processes determine that services are not being provided. Case Managers are trained from the day they are hired regarding the Children and Family Services Act. Training is ongoing via mandatory Continuing Education hours and regular in-house trainings.

The information to be provided to the caregiver shall include:

- 1 Detailed information about the child's(ren's) education and health history, and copies of immunization records, including the status of the child, any known medical problems or communicable diseases, including insurance and medical care information;
- 2 The educational history of the child, including any special educational needs and details of the child's(ren's) individual education plan (IEP), Individual Family Service Plans (IFSP) when the child is receiving special education services or 504 Educational Special Needs Plan, if application or 504 Educational Special Needs Plan, if applicable;
- 3 A copy of the child's portion of the client service plan, including visitation arrangements, and all amendments or revisions as it relates to the child(ren); 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 reason(s) for placement changes, excluding any information that may reveal the location of any previous foster or relative care giver;

4 Other relevant background information of the child, including any prior criminal history; Any known social or behavioral information necessary to care for and safeguard the child(ren), including, but not limited to fire setting, perpetration of sexual abuse, destructive behavior, and substance abuse, the child's likes and dislikes, etc.

- In case of emergency placement, when all above information may not be readily available, the worker shall provide known information verbally and within 10 days of placement, provide the information described in subsection a. to the care giver in writing.
- In advance of placement, the caseworker may provide the foster parent or adoptive parent with a written summary of the information listed in subsection a.
- Within 10 working days after placement, the worker shall obtain from the perspective adoptive parent, foster parent or other caregiver, signed verification of receipt of the information described in subsection a. and forward a copy of the information to the child's Guardian Ad Litem.
- Supervisory review and approval is required prior to providing any information to the foster parents or perspective adoptive parents.

5. UFC case managers are held accountable for sharing all information with foster parents. The Case manager Supervisor follows up random calls to the foster parent to ensure that all pertinent information has been shared with the foster parent by the case manager. Foster parents are entitled to Full Disclosure when a child is placed in their home. Disciplinary action is taken, including a verbal warning, then a written warning, which could result in an Administrative Hearing if these processes determine that services are not being provided. Case Managers are responsible for completing the CFS 600-4 form- (Sharing Information With The Caregiver).

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 meetings, administrative case reviews, inter-disciplinary staffings, and individual educational planning meetings; the right to be informed of decisions made by the courts 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.

Foster parents are given a written notification as soon as the case manager is aware of all staffings, court, ACR, and visits requesting their attendance within a minimum of fourteen (14) days prior to scheduled date. All foster parents are encouraged to participate. A verbal reminder is made to the foster parent prior to the scheduled meeting/activity.

Case managers discuss in advance, with the foster parent, the pending recommendation and plan or reports being presented before the court. Foster parent input is crucial and strongly encouraged. In addition, foster parents have access to training in; a) appropriate intervention strategies b) communication techniques c) their rights in court d) effective discipline techniques e) stress management f) strengthening family relationships, and g) cultural competence.

Generally, foster parents have a broad and thorough sense of how a child(ren) in their care is functioning. In developing a case plan, their knowledge and understanding of a child is given primary consideration in making clinical and programmatic decisions regarding the child(ren).

UFC embraces foster parents as full professional team members. This is encouraged through meetings where social interaction, training and problem solving is a shared experience. Additionally, the results of all ACR's and Court processes are promptly shared with foster parents by caseworkers either in person or by phone within 24 hours of either proceeding that has occurred. This conversation is documented by caseworkers for supervision and quality assurance purposes. Conversations are followed by brief written updates as soon as possible and a copy of this correspondence is likewise included in the child's case file.

10. The right to be provided, in a timely and consistent manner, with any information a caseworker has regarding the child and the child's family which is pertinent to the care and needs of the child and to 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.

At the point of placement into a foster home, the receiving foster parent is given a brief outline of information that includes:

- Child's name, IDCFS ID# and birth date
- The name and cellular number of the UFC Case Manager, Supervisor and
- emergency contact number
- Current medical and dental information
- Current school status
- Any behavior issues
- Any pending counseling appointments
- Pending ACR and Court Hearing dates, times, and status
- Scheduled visitation, if any with natural parents and siblings
- Pertinent information regarding the child's family history that does not violate the minors right to confidentiality
- CFS 600-4 Form (Sharing Information With The Caregiver)

All children are placed with clothing, medical cards, and a medical examination report that is dated not more than 24 hours prior to the child's placement in the home.

All information that is relevant to the child's growth and development is always shared with their Foster parent during case planning meetings, home visits, court hearing, licensing reviews and all other staffings that relate to the well-being of the child in their care.

It is UFC's practice to pass along all information as soon as caseworkers become aware of it and also to never knowingly withhold information. This includes such data as previous placements, behavioral issues, history of sexual or physical abuse, fire-starting, health issues and educational performance. This is the case during the entire duration of the child's placement. Information is presented in written form with an accompanying opportunity for discussion. Foster parents are encouraged to maintain written material in the child's folder. Foster parents or relative caregivers may be able to participate in other processes involving the child's(ren's) family if the information being presented at the review is essential for understanding the needs of the child and caring for the child(ren). When a positive relationship exists between the foster parent or relative caregiver and the child's(ren's) family, they may consent to disclosure of additional information.

11. The right to be given reasonable written notice of any change in a child's case plan or of 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 be waived in cases of a court order or when the child is determined to be at imminent risk of harm.

All UFC foster parents are given a written notification (14-day notice) if a child is to be removed from their home on a non-emergency basis. In the event changes occur in a child's(ren's) case plan or placement, the case manager and Licensing Coordinator ensures that the changes are reviewed with the foster parent in a timely manner.

If a change in the placement is indicated, the foster parent receives a Notice of Decision (CFS-151) which clearly describes the reason(s) for the change along with a citation of the Rule/Procedure (if applicable). The foster parent is informed of their right to file an appeal for any Notice of Decision that they may disagree with for any reason. It is this agencies goal to work as a team with the foster parent to ensure that the removal of a child is done in a manner that is least disruptive to the child's physical, mental and emotional well-being while still respecting the foster parent and not violating their rights.

The major reasons for the removal of a child from a foster home are, but not limited to:

- Imminent risk.
- The need for psychiatric hospitalization.
- The child's placement in DOC or another correctional facility.
- The child needs to be placed in a specialized home or group setting.
- Medical/Education neglect.
- Expiration of a foster home license.
- Foster Parent's request for removal.



Service Appeal Brochures are made available at all Foster Parent in-service trainings, and located in the lobby of the agency. During Foster Parent trainings, Foster Parents are continually reminded of their right to file an appeal. The agency grievance policy (attached) also outlines the chain of command as an option for Foster Parents to use prior to filing a service appeal. The appeal process is discussed with the foster parent, and assistance is given to the foster parent to appeal the agency's decision. The exception would be in cases where it is court ordered or when the child(ren) is determined to be at imminent risk of harm, which is determined by completing a Child Endangerment Risk Assessment Protocol (CERAP).

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 proceeding, 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.

UFC gives notification written and or verbal of court dates to foster parents. Upon case manager receiving notification of court hearings, the date and time of the court hearing, the name of the judge or hearing officer hearing the case, absent last minute changes, the location of the court proceeding, the court docket number of the case is forwarded to the foster parent. Case workers document transmission of this vital information by noting conversations and phone calls in the child's file, placing dated copies of the material mailed or hand-delivered in the file, and noting the date of any mailing in the general agency outgoing mail log. Supervisors review this data and make it a part of on-going supervision and quality assurance.

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.

UFC reviews the prior placement history living arrangement in making subsequent placement decisions. A visit with the previous placement, review of record file, and where indicated, a pre-placement visit is to be utilized to determine the viability of any longer term placement. In those instances where the child's best interest of comfort, knowledge of home and community, and sense of "connectedness" are well-served, previous placements are given priority in making the subsequent placement.

The team consisting of the Director of Foster, Case Manager, Foster Care Supervisor, Licensing Representative, Licensing Supervisor, and the previous care giver review the prior placement as a possible home for the child.

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 retaliations.

Upon the agency making a decision that is to be appealed, the UFC Licensing Representative provides the foster parent with information regarding the appeal process, time frames, and guidelines as outlined in the Foster Family Handbook within 10 days of the decision. The appeal process consists of an optional mediation between UFC staff persons, supervisor and a neutral third party. If the foster parent chooses not to mediate, or if mediation is not successful, the foster parent may request a fair hearing through the Department of Children and Family Services. The Licensing Representative inquires as to the technical assistance needed by the foster parent and assists the foster parent in writing the appeal if necessary.

The appeal is forwarded to the Department of Children and Family Services Administrative Hearing Unit within 45 days. The UFC Licensing Representative also ensures that the foster parent is notified, in a timely manner, of the date, location and time of the Appeals Hearing and will also attend the hearing. UFC follows any and all decisions recommended as a result of the Appeals Hearing. Foster parents who appeal decisions by the agency are not subjected to harassment or any form of retaliation by the agency or any of its staff.

UFC adopts the policy as stipulated by the Department regarding non-retaliation by staff or others against foster parents pursuing their legal rights to appeal agency decisions.

When the foster parent requests a service appeal through the Department, UFC will provide the parent with the following information:

- DCFS service appeals brochure
- The Department's address and telephone number where the written appeal should be sent
- Timeframe for requesting an appeal
- UFC will help the foster parent(s) with writing the appeal if needed

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

Case managers provide foster parents with a written list of important phone numbers including the Foster Parent Hotline, the case manager's cellular number, and an emergency general number for the agency. Foster parents are provided a folder and encouraged to maintain the vital numbers in the folder in a secure place in the home where other important documents are kept.

Foster parents are also provided with information and phone numbers they may call in the event they have a complaint regarding agency performance or misconduct. These phone numbers include the DCFS Advocacy Office and the number of the Agency Performance

Team Liaison (APT). Included in this information is assurance to the foster parent that any report of misconduct by an agency staff person will be handled in a confidential manner as outlined in the Office of the Inspector General Investigations (OIG). Foster Parents are provided with ongoing training on what the OIG is and its process.

# **FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

## **The Responsibilities of Foster Parents shall include:**

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

Through P.R.I.D.E., on-going training and communication between foster parents and case managers, the foster parents continue to learn what is expected of them regarding the passing on of information, as it relates to the child(ren) and/or the family.

As a part of UFC's foster parent on-going training, our overall objective is to support a teamwork environment to increase communication between foster parents, staff and administrators.

2. The responsibility to respect the confidentiality of information concerning foster children and their families and act appropriately within applicable confidentiality laws and regulations.

Licensing Representatives are responsible for training foster parents on observing Section 402.24 Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes, which states that all personal or identifying information concerning a foster child(ren), including but not limited to, his/her background, his/her family, and the identity and location of all other persons or families with whom he/she has been, or will be placed, shall be treated as confidential by all persons involved with the child. Foster parents are given copies of this standard and additional copies can be located in the UFC corridor. Foster parents are encouraged to make no divulgence and to contact UFC staff whenever there is a question in their mind as to what is confidential or to whom information ought to be shared. As a reinforcement to insure that caregivers understand their responsibility to adhere to children and their families right to confidentiality, caregivers are asked to sign Universal Family Connection's Caregiver Agreement form. The form states that the foster parents understands and agrees to follow confidentiality laws and regulations.

Ongoing training is provided for the foster parents and staff regarding confidentiality and its importance.

3. The responsibility to advocate for children in their care.

The Licensing Worker is a PRIDE trainer and trains UFC's foster parents on becoming educational advocates as well as surrogate parents for the child(ren) in their care. All licensed foster parents, traditional or relative are required to complete Educational Advocacy training in order to renew their license. UFC licensing staff is responsible for registering licensed and unlicensed foster parents for Educational Advocacy training. In addition, UFC provides training on court procedures, education, service appeals, the 1-800-ABUSE hotline's purpose and procedure, and other ways to access services to assist them in advocating for the foster child(ren) in their care. We share with foster parents the brochure on Service Appeals provided by the Department.

Foster parents are notified of and encouraged to participate in staffings, ACR's, CIPP (Clinical Intervention Placement Preservation), Child and Family Team meeting, conferences and court hearings. In addition, foster parents are invited to and encouraged to attend all scheduled staffings, administrative case reviews, conferences and court hearings.

They are notified of the time, place and date of each event by mail and/or telephone. Care givers are trained and encouraged to exchange contact information including telephone numbers at meetings to act as advocates for each other and give support to newer foster parents.

4. The responsibility to treat children in their care and their families with dignity, respect and consideration.

The Licensing Coordinator provides the foster parents with written material such as the Families Forever Booklet, announcements, notifications regarding training, Foster Parent Support groups as well as other services that advocate for the children as well as the foster parent.

UFC's on-going training for foster parents, as a member of the child welfare team, includes emphasis on treating foster children and their birth family with dignity and respect, recognizing and responding to trauma. The case manager has a responsibility of setting the example in their day-to-day interaction with the foster parent, the child(ren), and the child's(ren's) birth family.

UFC also has on-going trainings with the foster parents and staff to empower them with the necessary competencies to protect and nurture the children, meet the children's developmental needs, support relationships between children and their families, and to connect the children to safe, nurturing relationships that are intended to last a lifetime.

This practice includes, but is not limited to, the inherent right of the child(ren) to be returned to his/her family unless parental rights have been terminated, to develop social relationships with family and peers, and the best opportunity to achieve his/her educational potential.

UFC's case managers are also provided ongoing training, which includes emphasis on treating foster children and their families with dignity and respect, properly responding to trauma and training on cultural sensitivity.

Caseworkers and Supervisors frequently meet with foster parents and discuss their relationship with all of the above as well as underscore the need for treating everyone with dignity and respect. These interactions are documented in the child's file for purposes of supervision and quality assurance.

5. The responsibility to recognize their own individual and familial strengths and limitations when deciding whether to accept a child in to care, recognize their own support needs, and utilize appropriate supports in providing care for foster children.

A part of the basic UFC orientation and training is to help foster parents identify their strengths, areas requiring additional resources, and methods of obtaining those resources. This is done by honest communication and ongoing interaction between the Foster Parent, Case Manager and Licensing Coordinator regarding what is needed to competently parent. This in turn leads to an individual, ongoing mutual assessment.

Prior to the placement of any child with a Universal Family Connection Family, the Licensing Coordinator, Director of Programs, Case Manager and Supervisor consider the following:

1. The foster parent's preference of foster children's specific sex (male or female), and the ages they prefer is considered.
2. The working hours and child care plan.
3. The availability of schools, medical facilities and other community facilities in proximity to the foster home.
4. The availability of support services in the foster home community.
5. The foster families' compliance with the rules and regulations of DCFS and Family Connection's policies.
6. Personal and family demands as well as the needs of the child and whether or not the foster parent can meet those needs.

UFC's ongoing mutual assessment includes, but is not limited to; training surveys, quality assurance questionnaires, and the Foster Home Licensing Assessment. Foster parents are provided with needs assessment tools to recognize their strengths as well as limitations. In-service trainings are scheduled according to the results of the assessment tool to meet each foster parent's needs. Based on information obtained from these methods, a training curriculum is developed and presented on a quarterly basis. Foster parents are supported and the case worker addresses their needs on an ongoing basis through communication with the foster parent and through regular monthly visits and bi-monthly visits for un-licensed relative placements.

The assessment includes but is not limited to; the number of child(ren) they are able to care for, physical and educational requirement of the child(ren) and whether they are willing to pursue permanency of the child(ren). The ongoing assessment helps in identifying the type of child best suited for a likely successful placement with that particular foster family. If UFC determines that a foster parent requires further training to strengthen themselves, additional training classes will be identified and the foster parent will be required to attend. All Foster Parents (relative and non-relative) are encouraged and invited to attend all in-service trainings.

Foster parents are also informed and trained on how to utilize the Foster/Adoptive Parenting Virtual Training Center ([www.dcfstraining.org](http://www.dcfstraining.org)) to obtain approved training credit for license renewal or just for further education on specific topics for self-directed training in parenting and family life.

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.

Through ongoing training, foster parents are encouraged to interact with other foster parents and participate in activities that promote foster parent supports including being a part of the Foster Parent Advisory Board. UFC has a mentoring program where when a new foster parent joins the UFC team, a more experienced foster parent is appointed to assist the newly licensed or struggling foster parent with feeling at ease and supported as he or she becomes more familiar with foster parenting. Foster parents are encouraged during foster parent trainings to network and communicate with each other in an effort to establish an effective support system.

A Foster Parent Directory has also been established with the foster parent's permission, to display their personal information such as email address and telephone number.

The UFC Licensing Coordinator provides the foster parents with registration to receive Publications that support improving the quality and care of services to children and families. These include Fostering Illinois, Illinois Foster Parent Association, National Foster Parenting Association and other publications. Additionally, there are informal support networks that are intra to UFC and facilitated by the agency. These groups meet in individual homes, develop a phone tree, and are fostered to a great extent by social functions conducted by the agency specifically for foster parents (such as the annual Foster Parent Appreciation luncheon, Thanksgiving Turkey Giveaway, annual Christmas Party and the Toy giveaway) as well as Foster Parent Trainings.

UFC's Foster Parents are encouraged to join boards and commissions which directly affect the development and care of children and families and to utilize community resources that sponsor and support family needs.

Foster parents are also informed, encouraged and trained on how to utilize the Foster/Adoptive Parenting Training website (<https://www.dcfstraining.org/vtc/home/home.action>) to obtain approved training credit for license renewal or just for further education on specific topics for self-directed training in parenting and family life. Foster Parents are invited to utilize the agency's computer resource room to complete any and all trainings related to enhancing their foster parent skills.



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

As noted above, a part of the basic UFC orientation and training is helping foster parents identify their strengths, areas requiring additional resources, and methods of obtaining those resources. This is done by honest communication and interaction by the Case Management staff during their monthly home visits and by the Licensing Representative during semi-annual monitoring visits and sporadic telephone calls regarding what is needed to meet the competencies as part of an integral team. This in turn leads to an ongoing mutual assessment. UFC's ongoing mutual assessment includes, but is not limited to; foster parent surveys, quality assurance questionnaires, and suggestions from the foster parent. If it is determined that the Foster Parent(s) have needs to be addressed, a meeting is held with the foster family and all other concerned parties to determine if and what the training needs are and an immediate referral is identified and made. Based on information obtained from these methods, a training curriculum is developed and presented on a quarterly basis. Supplementing training is offered through UFC, case workers' and the Licensing Coordinator consistently advise foster parents of other relevant training available in the community by either personal contact or via a foster parent newsletter.

A survey is conducted following each in-service training to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the foster parent. In addition, a needs assessment is conducted annually to ensure quality service provision. These needs assessments and surveys are utilized to address the individual needs of foster parents with case managers and the licensing staff having the primary responsibility for implementation of any action taken.

8. The responsibility to develop and assist in the implementation of strategies to prevent placement disruptions recognizing the traumatic impact of placement disruptions on a 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.

UFC believes that early identification of risk factors ultimately reduces disruptions. As a result, both caseworkers and foster parents are trained and encouraged to identify such issues. This training is conducted by experienced staff at orientation and is supplemented by supervision of caseworkers and mentoring of more experienced foster parents. The following is a list of key items that caseworkers and foster parents are instructed on through ongoing training:

- 1) close monitoring of school behavior
- 2) monitoring of school progress
- 3) signs of sudden changes in behavior in school
- 4) sudden changes in behavior at home
- 5) sudden changes in mood or appearance
- 6) intra-agency case staffings.
- 7) any major changes in the child's life domains (i.e., death or abuse)

UFC also conducts weekly clinical staffings on cases that are identified as at risk for placement disruption. UFC case managers, supervisors, clinicians, and foster parents are included in recommendations as a close monitoring method to insure that services are obtained to support and secure placements.

Support for the child(ren) and family members if preventative strategies fail includes, but is not limited to; 24 hour access to workers, family meetings, wrap around services through System of Care Providers, respite and placement stabilization services and more frequent home visits if needed. Foster parents are provided with a 24-hour placement stabilization hot line number and trained on how to access and utilize the service.

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.

Foster parents are trained to recognize signs of stress and other related signals. The focus will allow intervention strategies to be put in place before a crisis occurs. Support for foster parents under stress is utilized with TOTAL confidentiality ensured. Each foster parent is made aware of the availability of respite services, which is granted on a case by case basis. A team approach is utilized where the foster parent, case manager and supervisor come together to make the recommendation that respite is needed.

Counseling and other supports are available to foster parents to minimize stress, such as respite care if needed, clinical staffings, and in home family meetings. In addition, referrals are made to Systems of Care for placement stabilization and in home therapeutic counseling. UFC provides stress management training to foster parents as a part of the foster parent training curriculum.

Upon signing the Placement Clearance Agreement, foster parents are advised and trained that they hold the right to place their homes on voluntary hold with written notification.

A licensed foster parent for whatever reason without coercion from any agency representative has the right to be voluntarily placed in a Non-Active Status under the provisions of Section 402.7 of the Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes. A CFS 452-B Non-Active Status Request is completed by the Licensing Coordinator, signed by the foster parent, approved by the Licensing Supervisor and sent to the Placement Clearance Desk.

10. The responsibility 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.

UFC believes firmly in the value of foster parenting to the overall social fabric of the community. To assist in getting this message out, UFC has developed a speaker's bureau consisting of foster parents, caseworkers, and licensing staff. The speaker's bureau is of a volunteer nature and is available to any interested entity such as civic organizations, churches, schools, schools or social work, etc. Participants receive training in making the presentation and in use of multimedia; this training is conducted by either UFC public outreach staff or contracted professionals in the marketing community.

- Explore methods for improving media coverage for better public relations image of foster parents and foster parenting by working with the "Don't Write Me Off" campaign.
- Continue to work with businesses and the community for greater public support and recognition.
- Enhance field office/regional level plans that included activities and events that support and recognize the importance of foster parents as members of the child welfare team, including recognizing our foster parents during May's annual Foster Parent Appreciation Month.
- UFC continues to utilize Fund Raising Events that included a "Stop the Violence/Back to School Jam" hosted by WCCI-107.5, the Annual Thanksgiving Basket Distribution, and Annual Christmas Party/Toy giveaway, which accesses the local print and broadcast media.

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

Foster parents are selected to co-train on various topics two times a year. In an effort to train foster parents alongside staff, UFC offers 20 hours of in-house training per year. Foster parents are notified of their ability to take advantage of these training opportunities. As a member of the Child Welfare Team, foster parents are routinely invited and encouraged to participate in all meetings involving the children in their care. UFC's Foster Parent Advisory Council members are invited and encouraged to participate in the development and maintenance of agency policy and procedures. A representative of the Foster Parent Advisory Council is included to UFC's Board of Directors Meetings. The Council's input is considered very valuable and is utilized in areas of concern that best service the foster parent and children in their homes. In addition, UFC has reviewed advisory models to expand the role of foster parents into the greater operation of the agency. This definitely includes foster parent participation in mentoring and setting upon a quality assurance committee comprised of UFC staff, Board Members and Advisory Board. The Foster Parent Advisory Council meets four times a year at the UFC office or another convenient location where they have access to members of the Professional Team.

Foster parents are notified in writing and verbally of all staffings, including clinical and encouraged to participate.

The draft of the Foster Parent Law Implementation is worked on with foster parents during the September and October foster parent meeting. At this time, foster parent's provide their input in areas of concern relating to the care of children in their homes. The new Foster Parent Law is distributed and discussed with the foster parents at the January and February meetings. The Foster Parent Law is available for viewing and downloading on our Universal Family Connection website (<http://www.ufcinc.org>). Foster parents are also encouraged throughout the year to provide UFC with any suggestions they have for improving services for themselves, the children and their families.

Foster Parents are also given training regarding other members (lawyers, judges, case reviewers, etc.) of the Professional Team. The DCFS Foster Family Handbook is utilized to define the different members of the Professional Team as well as training on the court and ACR (Administrative Case Review) process.

To encourage peer relations, several experienced foster parents have been selected to co-facilitate the monthly foster parent meetings/trainings. The trainers of these meetings are composed of the foster parents, licensing department, and case management. The meetings are intended to inform/train staff as well as the foster parents. UFC staff are required to attend foster parent trainings when they are offered so that staff are always aware of their needs and accomplishments.

12. The responsibility to know and, as necessary, to fulfill their responsibility to serve as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse/neglect under the Abused 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 of such allegations.

Licensed foster parents receive during PRIDE, training on their mandated reporter responsibility. For unlicensed foster parents, UFC provides initial training on this same topic upon placement of a child and ongoing training is provided for both licensed and unlicensed foster parents at least semi-annually.

UFC train Foster Parents on SACY reporting responsibility as defined in the "Facing It", Sexual Abuse Among Children Manual.

UFC requires that ALL foster parents understand and sign a written agreement of acknowledgment as mandated reporters. Before this, the foster parents are fully advised of what the requisite events or information are that achieve the threshold of making a mandated report, included those specifically pertaining to SACY.

It is the responsibility and policy of UFC to report any suspected child abuse or neglect of children in the care of a foster parent and inform the foster parent of such action. All inquiries regarding allegations of child abuse or neglect against a foster parent are addressed in a timely manner, keeping in mind UFC's commitment to treating foster parents with dignity and respect and ensuring that the best interest and safety of the child(ren) is fully protected.

Upon training, it is the responsibility of the foster parent to understand UFC's policy to report any suspected child abuse or neglect of children in the care of a foster parent and inform the foster parent of such action. Ongoing training is provided to staff and foster parents regarding the Child Abuse Hotline Procedure and Procedure 383, Licensing Enforcement and its purpose.

#### Investigations

Case Managers and Licensing Representatives will respond in person, as well as in writing, within 24 hours to any allegations and take appropriate action, as needed.

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 requirements associated with these proceedings, and actively participate in their designated role in these proceedings.

Training emphasizes the importance of an active role by foster parents in planning for permanency goals through ACR's, client service planning and court processes. UFC has ongoing training, which includes the purpose of administrative case reviews, client service plans and processes, as well as any filing or time requirements associated with these proceedings. Foster parents are also trained on their roles as active team members and are encouraged to participate in these proceedings. In addition, foster parents are trained on the understanding of written notifications received regarding ACR's, client service planning, and court processes. Adoption, GAL, and States Attorneys have been included in the ongoing training process to explain their role and the court process to foster parents and staff.

14. The responsibility to know the child welfare agency's appeal procedure for foster parents and the rights of foster parents under the procedure.

The Licensing Coordinator/Licensing Representative is responsible for providing the foster parents with information regarding the Appeal Procedure, along with the Spanish translated version, when applicable. Foster parents can appeal when they do not agree with a decision made or an action taken by UFC. If needed, the Licensing worker will assist the foster parent with preparing the appeal requests, which must be received within ten days. The appeal process consists of an optional mediation between UFC staff person, supervisor and a neutral third party. If the foster parent chooses not to mediate, or if mediation is not successful, the foster parent may request a fair hearing through the Department of Children and Family Services. Case Managers and the Licensing Coordinator ensures that all appeals through the Department are received in writing within 30 days. Ongoing training is provided to staff and foster parents regarding Procedure 337, the Service Appeal Process and its purpose.

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.

UFC provides training regarding the responsibility and the importance of maintaining accurate and relevant records regarding the child's(ren's) history or progress. UFC issues a Foster Child Record Folder to all foster parents. A part of this training includes written instructions as well as an example of a "model" child's file that foster parents may compare their own respective files to. It is the agency's responsibility to fully disclose any and all background information regarding the child. Further, caseworkers will routinely review children's case files and follow DCFS and AP-5 guidelines of how to arrange information in the file.

Case Managers request records from previous care givers (if any) and ensure any records go with the child(ren) to subsequent care givers.

Case Managers resume total and complete use of the foster child "Record Folder." It is reviewed quarterly for completeness, and the case manager ensures that these records accompany the child(ren) to any subsequent care giver.

Foster parent files are reviewed on an annual basis. Monitoring visits are conducted by the Licensing Coordinator every six months to ensure that foster homes continue to be in compliance with 402 Licensing Standards.

UFC provides a locked file room that houses all licensed and unlicensed Foster Parent files. When foster parents either relinquish their license, voluntarily put their license on a "non-active status," their license expires, or they wish to transfer their license to another agency, Foster Parents confidentiality is respected and the file is properly transferred or archived.

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.

Case Managers and Supervisors facilitate Child Welfare Team meetings, face to face or telephone contact between the current and subsequent care givers as a means of encouraging the sharing of information regarding the child(ren).

Case managers are provided ongoing training to properly maintain case records. Foster Parents are trained in Pre-Service and In-Service the importance of sharing information among the professional team and keeping information on the child updated to follow the child to subsequent placements.

17. The responsibility to provide care and services which are respectful of and responsive to the child's cultural needs and are supportive of the relationship between the child and his/her own 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.

Universal Family Connection, Inc. and its foster parents have a strong commitment to ensuring that staff and other service providers are sensitive to the children's cultural background. If a child of a different cultural or ethnic background is placed in one of UFC's foster homes, the case manager will ensure that any identified home has the sensitivity to embrace the rights and needs of the children in their home. This is accomplished through full disclosure to the foster parent, with additional information shared regarding the child's ethnic and cultural background.

All foster parents are given a compiled list of all possible community resources regarding multi-cultural issues. UFC supports this effort by sharing its own wealthy resource directory. Further, as a part of the basic initial orientation and training, caseworkers and experienced foster parents are available for foster parents to consult as they develop their own unique training agenda regarding cultural awareness issues.

UFC certified training staff provide, as part of the on-going training, semi-annual sessions on cultural differences and cultural sensitivity for all staff and foster parents.

In addition, UFC provides on- going trainings to foster parents on the importance of family visitation, religious beliefs, social relationships, cultural competence, and working together as a professional team. The case manager assists the foster parent with information about outside cultural resources that fit the child's cultural heritage.

UFC is aware and in compliance with the Interethnic Placement Act (IEPA), Procedure 301.60. Additional information can be obtained from UFC's in house resource library and In-Service Training Module #7, "Promoting Children's Personal and Cultural Identity."

**Supporting Documents for Universal Family Connection, Inc. Foster Parent Law  
Implementation Plan 2016**

1. Universal Family Connection Inc. Foster Parent Training Schedule 2016
2. Proof of ongoing training
3. Names and signatures of foster parents involved in reviewing and revising the plan
4. Signatures of foster parents and staff that reviewed and approved final 2016 plan
5. Foster Parent Law Grievance Procedure
6. Copies of any Foster Parent Law grievances filed during the past year – N/A



**Universal Family Connection, Inc.  
Foster Parent Training Schedule 2016**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>
Friday, January 22, 2016	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Grievance Procedure
Tuesday, February 23, 2016	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	The OIG's office and 1-800-ABUSE Line protocol and procedure
Friday, April, 22, 2016	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Health Works of Illinois
Friday, May, 22, 2016	11:00 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.	<b>FOSTER PARENT APPRECIATION MONTH (Luncheon) Foster Parent Law Review – 2017</b>
Friday, July, 22, 2016	10:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.	Administrative Case Review and You
Monday, August 22, 2016	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Foster Parent Law- 2017 Implementation Review
Thursday, September, 22, 2016	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Foster Parent Law- 2017 Implementation Review- Foster Parent Advisory Council Meeting
Tuesday, November 22, 2016	10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	<b>Thanksgiving Basket Distribution-Foster Parent Advisory Council</b>
Thursday, December 22, 18, 2016	10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Annual Children's Christmas Toy Give-Away  <i>No Foster Parent Meeting</i>

**\*The above schedule is subject to change. Foster Parents will be notified by mail of any changes to the schedule.**

Universal Family Connection, Inc.  
 1350 West 103<sup>rd</sup> Street  
 Chicago, Illinois 60643


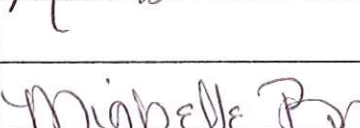
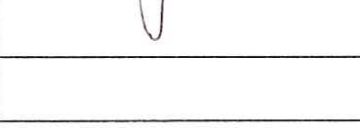
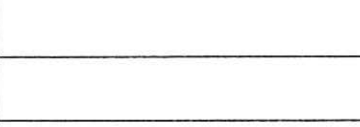
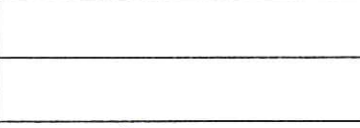
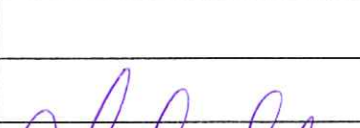
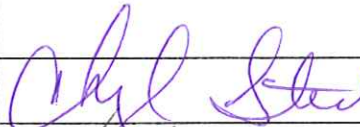
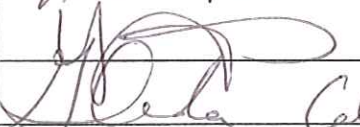
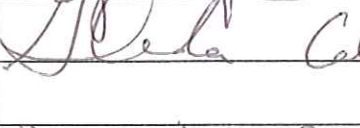
**FOSTER PARENT TRAINING**

402 LICENSING STANDARDS/SERVICES APPEAL PROCESS

May 22, 2015

NAME ( PLEASE PRINT)	SIGNATURE	TITLE
1. Michelle Brown	<i>Michelle Brown</i>	Foster Parent
2. Roger W. Chandler	<i>R.W. Chandler</i>	Foster Parent
3. Rose Chandler	<i>Rose Chandler</i>	Foster Parent
4. Gloria Harris	<i>Gloria Harris</i>	Foster Parent
5. CARRIE REDMON	<i>Carrie Redmon</i>	FOSTER PARENT
6. MARY A Jackson	<i>Mary A Jackson</i>	Foster parent
7. Leatha Melton	<i>Leatha Melton</i>	Foster Parent
8. April Hall	<i>April Hall</i>	Foster Parent
9. Patricia Fran	<i>Patricia Fran</i>	Foster parent
10. Pamela Robinson	<i>Pamela Robinson</i>	Foster Parent
11. Taisha Hubbard	<i>Taisha Hubbard</i>	Foster Parent
12. Anita Buford	<i>Anita Buford</i>	Foster Parent
13. Carolyn Rogers	<i>Carolyn Rogers</i>	Foster Parent
14. Glenda Collins	<i>Glenda Collins</i>	Foster Parent
15. Tangemica Baker	<i>Tangemica Baker</i>	Foster Parent
16. Todd R. Buckley	<i>Todd Buckley</i>	Foster Parent
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**Universal Family Connection, Inc.**  
**1350 West 103<sup>rd</sup> Street**  
**Chicago, Illinois 60643**  
**FOSTER PARENT TRAINING**  
**HEALTHWORKS OF ILLINOIS**  
**JULY 22, 2015**

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)	SIGNATURE	TITLE
1. NIKKI G HOUSTON		F.P.
2. Jeannette Callus		F.P.
3. Michelle Brown	Michelle Brown	F.P.
4. Carolyn Flournoy	Carolyn Flournoy	F.P.
5. MARY ANN JACKSON		F.P.
6. Toni Carter		F.P.
7. Leatha Melton		F.P.
8. Carrie Redman		F.P.
9. Patricia Frain		F.P.
10. Cheryl Steele	Cheryl Steele	F.P.
11. Vincent Price	Vincent Price	F.P.
12. Yvonne Jones		F.P.
13. Glenda Collins	Glenda Collins	
14. Bertha Smith		F.P.
15. Carolyn Thomas	Carolyn Thomas	Licensing Coord.
16. Taisha Hubbard	Taisha Hubbard	F.P.
17. Darnell Steele	Darnell Steele	Foster parent
18. Deborah Williams	Deborah Williams	F.P.
19. Carolyn Rogers	Carolyn Rogers	F.P.

Universal Family Connection, Inc.  
 1350 West 103<sup>rd</sup> Street  
 Chicago, Illinois 60643  
**FOSTER PARENT TRAINING**  
**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**  
**AUGUST 22, 2015**

NAME ( PLEASE PRINT)	SIGNATURE	TITLE
1. Carolyn Flounney	Carolyn Flounney	Foster Parent
2. Gloria Harris	Gloria Harris	Foster Parent
3. Anita Buford	Anita Buford	FP
4. Leatha Melton	Leatha Melton	FP
5. April Hall	April Hall	FP
6. Pamela H McClain	Pamela H McClain	Foster Parent
7. NIKKI GIOVANNI HUSTON	Nikki Giovanni Huston	FOSTER PARENT
8. Sandra Hardin	Sandra Hardin	Foster Parent
9. DORIS WILLIAMS	Doris Williams	FP
10. Mary A Jackson	Mary A Jackson	foster Parent
11. CARRIE REDMAN	Carrie Redman	Foster Parent
12. Beverly Springer	Beverly Springer	Foster Parent
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Universal Family Connection, Inc.  
 1350 West 103<sup>rd</sup> Street  
 Chicago, Illinois 60643  
**FOSTER PARENT TRAINING**  
 FOSTER PARENT LAW 2016 REVIEW  
**OCTOBER 22, 2015**

NAME ( PLEASE PRINT)	SIGNATURE	TITLE
1. Gloria Harris	Gloria Harris	meeting training
2. Michelle Brown	Michelle Brown	training
3. Doris Williams	Doris Williams	"
4. Anita Buford	Anita Buford	
5. Leah Melton	Leah Melton	
6. APRIL Hall	April Hall	
7. Nikki G Houston	NH	TRAINING
8. Carolyn Gerald	Carolyn Gerald	Training
9. Carrie Redman	Carrie Redman	Training
10. MARY A Jackson	Mary A Jackson	Training
11. Sandra Hardin	Sandra Hardin	Training
12. Pamela Hoskins McClain	Pamela H. McClain	Training
13. Carolyn Flourey	Carolyn Flourey	Training
14. Glenda Collins	Glenda Collins	Training
15. Beverly Springer	Beverly Springer	Training
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# UNIVERSAL FAMILY CONNECTION, INC.

"A healthy society is based on the family."

Lorraine R. Broyles, Ph.D.  
President/CEO

Audra M. Rowe, Ed.D., L.C.P.  
Executive Director

We as foster parents have reviewed and given final approval for the 2016 Foster Parent Law Implementation.

1. Kimberly Buford Foster Parent
2. Earline Carson Foster Parent
3. Sandra Husk
4. Christina Johnson - Foster Parent
5. Carolyn Rogers Foster Parent
6. Clinton Buford - Foster Parent
7. Cheyl Steel - Foster Parent
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The Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan for 2016 has been reviewed and approved by the following foster parents and staff members:

<u>Participant's Signature</u>	<u>Participant's Title</u>
1. <i>Leah Lytle</i>	Permanency Worker
2. <i>Sevely Springer</i>	Sevely Springer
3. <i>Carolyn Thomas</i>	Licensing Cor.
4. <i>Blay Ann</i>	Case manager
5. <i>Marian Bryant</i>	Program Director
6. <i>Carolyn Fleumer</i>	Foster parent.
7. <i>Michelle Brown</i>	Foster Parent
8. <i>Carie Redman</i>	Foster Parent
9. <i>Mary Jackson</i>	Foster Parent
10. <i>Shelby Collins</i>	Foster Parent
11. <i>Sandra Harsh</i>	Foster Parent
12. <i>Doris Walker</i>	
13. <i>Arlene</i>	FOSTER PARENT
14. <i>Janella Hoskins McClain</i>	Foster Parent
15. <i>April Hill</i>	Foster Parent
16. <i>Leatha Melton</i>	Foster Parent
17. <i>Clinton Buford</i>	FP
18. <i>Gloria Harris</i>	Foster Parent
19. <i>Vincent Price</i>	Foster Parent
20. <i>Barry</i>	Foster Parent

Participant's Signature

Participant's Title

- 21. Dan Stuba
- 22. Michelle Adent
- 23. Jeanette Callen
- 24. Wanda Townsend
- 25. Amanda Spumak
- 26. [Signature]
- 27. Lynne Watson
- 28. Angela Min
- 29. [Signature]
- 30. Bunby Bupal
- 31. Carline Carson
- 32. [Signature]
- 33. Alana Keed
- 34. Sheryl Woods
- 35. Patricia Vaughn
- 36. Suea S. Sterling
- 37. Alundra Thomas
- 38. [Signature]
- 39. Julia M. Rowe
- 40. \_\_\_\_\_

- Foster Parents
- foster Parent
- foster Parent
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- Foster Parent
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- FOSTER PARENT
- Foster Parent
- Foster Parent
- case manager
- Case Manager
- Educational Liaison
- Case Manager
- Case manager
- FC Supervisor
- case manager
- Executive Director
- \_\_\_\_\_





## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

### **POLICY:**

It is the policy of Universal Family Connection, Inc. to provide an arena for foster families who adopt to voice all their concerns when they feel their rights have been violated or if they wish to appeal a decision about a provision of service. A grievance is a difference between a foster parent and UFC with respect to the interpretation of application of, or compliance with adoption laws. "Grievance," as defined herein, shall not include disputes over pay rates. "This grievance process is to be used by foster parents only for grieving alleged violations of an adoption of a child(ren). It cannot be used to address issues that are covered by the services appeal process, the appeal process for indicating cases of child abuse/neglect, the process for appealing licensing investigation findings or license revocations, etc."

### **PURPOSE:**

To ensure that foster parents, foster children and their families are treated fairly, with respect and dignity. UFC recognizes its responsibility to review and make reasonable efforts to resolve foster parent grievances. To give Foster parents the right to file a grievance and be assured freedom from coercion, restraint or reta

## **PROCEDURE:**

Foster parents are encouraged first to discuss the problem/dispute with their case manager or the Program Supervisor. If the foster parent feels the problem/dispute has not been satisfactorily adjusted as a result of this discussion, the foster parent may request a review in accordance with the applicable grievance procedure. UFC's grievance procedure involves three steps:

1. Case Manger or Program Supervisor

A grievance is orally presented by you to your Case Manager, or Program Supervisor within ten (10) working days of the original cause for the grievance. Your Case Manager or Program Supervisor will respond orally within two (2) working days.

2. Grievance and Appeal request

Within three (3) working days of receiving the answer to Step 1, you may complete and submit a grievance appeal request to the Director of Foster Care in writing. The Director of Foster Care will review and investigate the facts of the grievance within (2) working days. The Director of Foster Care will submit a written reply to be kept on file to you stating the facts, upon which the decision is based, and advise you of your right to appeal further.

3. To institute further appeal, you may be given written notice within three (3) working days of Step 2 to the Executive Director that you wish to initiate the hearing panel. The Executive Director will arrange for the selection of Ad Hoc Committee of three (3) members of the management team. In addition, Foster Parent Advisory Council member(s) are recommended to be present. The Executive Director or President will serve impartially as non-voting chairman of the panel.

Most complaints will rarely evolve into a formal grievance. In most cases, informal handling of initial complaints are satisfied at the program level or at the next immediate supervisory level. It remains the complainant's choice to determine whether he or she wishes to have their complaint reviewed through the formal grievance process. In such cases, it will be necessary to maintain an effective means of tracking and documenting the required steps taken to resolve the grievances

The Child Welfare Administrator is responsible for maintaining each grievance filed through the Child Welfare programs. Reported outcomes of complaint investigations will be submitted in writing to the Department's regional licensing office of representative thereof within (10) ten business days of receipt of complaint. All grievances shall be given to the Board of Directors via the Executive Director for the review of patterns and specific problematic or unresolved issues.

If the complainant continues to be dissatisfied with the decision of the Executive Director, he/she may take the complaint through the Service Appeal Process of the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services or the IDCFS Advocacy Office for violation of the Foster Parent Law.