



CAFAP is again submitting a Bill of Rights, but we have included Kinship Families in this year's bill. A copy of the bill follows:

Proposed Connecticut Foster and Kinship Parent Bill of Rights

This Foster and Kinship Parent Bill of Rights is intended as an educational and advocacy tool for any person who is licensed as a foster/kinship parent by the Connecticut Department of Children and Families ("DCF"). These proposed rights are listed in the Department of Children and Families policy, state statutes, and the Foster Parent Handbook, which is available on the DCF website. References are noted.

Foster/Kinship Parents are vital resources for the children of our state who have been removed from their home due to neglect or abuse. These rights should be part of ethical practice. A copy of the Foster/Kinship Parent Bill of Rights shall be given to all foster/kinship parents when a child is placed with the foster/kinship parent, and/or when the foster/kinship parent requests a copy.

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A Foster/Kinship Parent's rights include, but are not limited to, the following:

The Foster/Kinship Parent shall be a partner and team member with the child's social worker to ensure that each child receives the full spectrum of services provided and/or arranged by the Department of Children and Families. The Foster/Kinship Parents shall be part of the child's treatment team which includes the DCF social worker and supervisory staff, birth parents, educational, medical and mental health professionals and the child's attorney. (DCF Policy 36-55-1.3, DCF policy 36-55-1.5)

The Foster/Kinship Parent and the child's social worker shall be team members; some aspects of this relationship include: sharing information on an ongoing basis regarding the child's individual needs, family situation and adjustment to the foster home and encouraging the Foster/Kinship Parents to participate in the **total service planning process.** (DCF policy 36-55-1.3)

Foster/Kinship Parents shall be timely notified of all dispositional hearings, including permanency hearings and hearings on motions to revoke commitment. (DCF policy 46-3-5, CT General Statutes Section 46b-129(o))

Foster/Kinship Parents shall be provided with information, support, guidance and referrals to other professionals on the child's behalf; helping the foster/kinship family, when necessary, to identify and obtain services for the foster child, e.g. medical, educational. (DCF policy 36-55-1.3)

Foster/Kinship Parents shall receive open and timely responses to requests for information or services that are relevant to the care of the foster child. Foster/Kinship Parents should be given the regional on-call system and CARELINE numbers to be able to reach staff after normal hours. (DCF policy 33-14). Foster/Kinship Parents should be given the names and numbers of their office "chain of command" as mentioned in the Foster Parent Handbook, and updates should be given as positions change.

Foster/Kinship Parents who accept emergency placements shall be provided with information to meet the child's immediate needs within 24 hours, or 1 working day, of the time the child is placed. Information about the child that is not available at the time of placement must be provided **within thirty days** of the date of placement. (DCF Policy 36-55-1.3)

Any Foster/Kinship or prospective Adoptive Parent shall have access to and disclosure of records pertaining to a child or youth currently placed with the Foster/Kinship or prospective Adoptive Parent, or a child or youth considered for placement, which address social, medical, psychological or educational needs of the child or youth, provided that no information identifying the biological parent is disclosed without their permission. (CT Gen. Statute 17a-28)

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The Foster/Kinship Parent shall be provided with the DCF policy regarding the role and responsibilities of the Foster/Kinship Parent (DCF Policy 36-55-1.5). Any personal information given by Foster/Kinship Parents during the licensure process should be stored and handled carefully to protect their personal identity.

Foster/Kinship Parents shall be provided appropriate training and support to enhance their relevant skills and abilities. Foster/Kinship Parents must meet post-licensing training requirements. (DCF Policy 35-55-1.5)

The Foster/Kinship Parent's perspective on the child's adjustment to daily life is critical to the development and review of the service plan. Foster/Kinship Parents shall be provided the opportunity to express their concerns about the child's treatment plan as part of the team without criticism/retaliation, i.e. advocating for services, refusing to accept a child for placement, requesting removal of a child for good cause, or communicating with a child's former Foster Parents, birth parents. (Policy 36-55-1.5, Foster Parent Handbook)

Foster/Kinship Parents shall have the right for first consideration as a placement for a child who had previously been placed in their home, if appropriate, when that child reenters the system. Foster/Kinship Parents shall also be given first consideration as Adoptive Parents for a child who has lived with them for 12 months and becomes legally free for adoption.

The Foster/Kinship Parent shall contact the "Chain of Command" for problem resolution. If that does not resolve the grievance, the Foster/Kinship Parent shall be referred to the Problem Resolution Process. (Policy 41-25-25)

A copy of The Foster and Kinship Parent Bill of Rights shall be given to foster/kinship parents at the time of the placement of a child and/or if requested by the foster/kinship family.

Submitted to Children's Committee

October, 2015

We urge our foster parents and kinship families to contact your legislators and ask them to support this bill. I am including a list of the Children's Committee members. The Children's Committee will determine if the bill is referred to the floor of the legislature for a vote. Families can email, write or call the legislators of the Children's Committee to urge them to pass the bill out of committee, even if those legislators are not your specific legislators. The Children's Committee members are:

Children's Committee Members' Districts/emails

Co-Chair	Dante Bartolomeo	Meriden, Cheshire
Co-Chair	Diana S. Urban	Stonington, North Stonington

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Vice Chair	Beth Bye	West Hartford, Bloomfield
Vice Chair	John K. Hampton	Simsbury, West Simsbury
Ranking Member	Henri Martin	Bristol, Plainville Plymouth
Ranking Member	Noreen S. Kokoruda	Durham, Madison
Member	Mike Bocchino	Greenwich
Member	Juan R. Candelaria	New Haven
Member	Kelly J.S.Luxenberg	Manchester
Member	Kim Rose	Milford
Member	Pam Staneski	Orange
Member	Edwin Vargas	Hartford
Member	Melissa H. Ziobron	East Haddam

Email addresses

Senator Bartolomeo	website has email sign in
Rep. Urban	Diana.Urban@cga.ct.gov
Senator Bye	website has email sign in
Rep. Hampton	John.Hampton@cga.ct.gov
Senator Martin	Henri.Martin@cga.ct.gov
Rep. Kokoruda	Noreen.Kokoruda@housegop.ct.gov
Rep. Bocchino	Mike.Bocchino@housegop.ct.gov
Rep. Candelaria	Juan.candelaria@cga.ct.gov
Rep. Luxenberg	Kelly.Luxenberg@cga.ct.gov
Rep. Rose	Kim.Rose@cga.ct.gov
Rep. Staneski	Pam.Staneski@housegop.ct.gov
Rep. Vargas	Edwin.Vargas@cga.ct.gov
Rep. Ziobron	Melissa.Ziobron@housegop.ct.gov

If there are other legislative issues that you would like us to explore, please contact Carolyn Goodridge at the 860-258-3400. CAFAP continues to look into the issue of post-secondary tuition for those youth adopted prior to 2005; due to Connecticut's budget issues, we have not been able to introduce bills requiring fiscal costs.