

**FOSTER PARENTS SOCIETY
OF ONTARIO**

(FPSO PROVINCIAL INITIATIVE)

FOSTER PARENT BILL OF RIGHTS

Draft #3 September 2009

Foundational Statements:

For the purposes of this document “Foster Families” will be defined as by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

“foster care” means the provision of residential care to a child, by and in the home of a person who,

(a) receives compensation for caring for the child, except under the *Ontario Works Act, 1997*, the *Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997* or the *Family Benefits Act*

(b) is not the child’s parent or a person with whom the child has been placed for adoption under Part VII,

“foster home” and “foster parent” have corresponding meanings

- This document is to honour the Foster Parent’s role in providing a safe and nurturing environment for children in care.
- Foster Parents are integral to the development and wellbeing of the children placed in their homes.
- Foster Parents are vital members of the Professional Team, not only parenting the child to be a valuable member of society, but also supporting the goal of permanency.
- Children in care are afforded both rights and responsibilities; this is paramount to their safety and value. However, respect for the Foster Parents rights and responsibilities are equally vital to the successful functioning of the home.
- Mutual respect and appreciation of each member of the professional team is what will bring value to the team (definition of team, Together Encompassing All Members)

RIGHTS:

ALL FOSTER PARENTS SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

TEAM MEMBER

- Be respected as a member of the professional team with clearly defined roles in the provision of care, as well as, a collaborative working relationship with the agency and its staff.
- Be recognized by staff for your knowledge, skills and contributions as a care provider.
- Access the policies and procedures developed and implemented by the agency.
- Request and receive the status of their foster home at any time.
- Receive verbal discussion from the agency concerning any information to be recorded in their file
- Have regular contact with their resource worker.
- Pre-service and in-service training that is formally planned, organized and delivered.
- Appeal a decision implemented by the local CAS.
- Voice a formal complaint concerning the services received without fear of reprisal.
- A formal response within 24 hours.
- Have any meetings scheduled encompassing the foster parents schedule.
- Have timely notification of all meetings.
- To be notified as soon as possible regarding the cancellation or rescheduling of a meeting.

ALL FOSTER PARENTS SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

DOCUMENTATION

- A copy of a foster parent hand book.
- Access to their own foster parent file.
- Copies of their annual reviews.
- A copy of the request for placement document.
- Copies of plans of care for each child placed in their home.
- Copies of all assessments regarding the child, including medical, and psychological.
- Copies of service agreements for their home.
- A foster parent identification card.
- Correction of any inaccuracies in any of the above documents.

ALL FOSTER PARENTS SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

SCHOOL

- Participate in IEP, IPRC and other school related educational meetings for each child placed in their home.
- Agency support for a foster child under suspension or expulsion.

ALL FOSTER PARENTS SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

WORKING WITH THE CHILD

- Refuse a placement not deemed suitable without recrimination.
- Have a child removed at any time with appropriate justification and within reasonable time.
- Establish reasonable guidelines regarding the age, gender, and behaviors of a foster child placed in their home.
- Consideration as the first choice for placement when a former foster child returns to care.
- Consideration as the first choice for placement when an existing foster child resides within the foster home, and a sibling comes into care.
- Maintain the day-to-day management of their homes, in areas of boundaries, house rules, and structure subject to the policies of the agency and the Child and Family Services Act.
- Complete disclosure, and documentation of, the child's history including psychological, medical, social history, emotional, behavioral, educational, and physical prior to and throughout placement.
- Participate in the planning, development and assessment reviews and action plans for each child in their home.
- Participate in "placement disruption" meetings.
- Ensure adequate Medical and/ or clinical referrals for a foster child within a reasonable time frame by the agency.
- Request pre-placement visits prior to a child's arrival; may include multiple visits and/ or overnight stay.
- Provide input concerning visitation schedules and concerns.
- Communicate directly with clinical professionals who work with the children, such as counselors and therapists.

ALL FOSTER PARENTS SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

THE FUTURE OF THE CHILD

- Care for a foster child without the pressure of adopting.
- Continue caring for a child without the pressure of committing to a guardianship agreement
- A continuation of foster placement for a child to be considered as a permanency option
- To request financial support to ensure successful adoption of a foster child living in the home, if and when, adoption is deemed the most suitable option for the child.
- Be considered as adoptive parents or legal custodians for a foster child who is, or has been, in their care.
- Ten day notice of a child being removed from their foster home if a foster child is Crown Ward
- Receive notice before court proceedings, be represented by a solicitor and have the opportunity to make a submission to the court if a child has been in their home for more than six months.

ALL FOSTER PARENTS SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

THE FOSTERING FAMILY

- Written notification if the agency chooses to close their home.
- Due respect for the continuation and maintenance of their own families.
- Protection of their identity and/ or confidential family information withheld from the foster child's family as required.
- Be free of mistreatment or abuse from the child, the biological family, adoptive family, out-of-care kinship family, agency personnel, or any support/professional service providers.
- Identify designated areas in their home as family use that include foster children and private use that exclude children; example, home office, bedroom spaces, sauna's, storage areas
- Their personal lives and family affairs respected and held as confidential.
- Have biological and adopted children be granted the same level of rights the foster children in their home.
- The continuation of their own family values and beliefs, while also honouring the values and beliefs of the foster child.
- Adequate support to ensure the safety of foster parents and their families when dealing with a child with at risk behaviours.
- **Have unverified investigations, and all documentation pertaining to those investigations, expunged from their foster home files held by the local CAS after a period of five years.**

ALL FOSTER PARENTS SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

EQUIPMENT

- Car seats provided by the agency for all children requiring them.
- The agency replacing household items damaged by children placed in their home.

ALL FOSTER PARENTS SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

COMPENSATION

- Be fairly compensated for travel/transportation of a child within reasonable distances.
- Be compensated by the agency in a timely and fair manner for child related damages.
- Timely compensation and reimbursement of cost for the care provided to a child placed in their homes.

ALL FOSTER PARENTS SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

SUPPORTS

- Advocate for another foster family without fearing incrimination.
- Support from a Foster Parent Association representative.
- Call upon an advocate/communicator.
- Emergency relief, as well as, planned relief/respice from fostering.
- Receive services, competency training and/ or other learning opportunities from the agency to enhance their growth and development as foster parents.
- Become a member Foster Parent Association/Foster Family Association and the Foster Parent Association of Ontario
- Be a member of the Legal Defense Fund.