



# **ENTITLEMENTS**

## **FOR**

# **FOSTER PARENTS**

October 2013

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Canadian Foster Family Association would like to thank the Alberta Foster Parent Association for allowing us to use their Foster Parents Entitlements document, as a guide in the preparation of this National document.

### CFFA ENTITLEMENTS COMMITTEE

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#### Relevant Documents:

- Alberta Foster Family Association [www.afpaonline.com](http://www.afpaonline.com)
- BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations [www.bcfosterparents.ca](http://www.bcfosterparents.ca)
- Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association [www.nlffa.ca](http://www.nlffa.ca)



## PREAMBLE

- WHEREAS Foster Parents provide nurturing homes enabling children to endure the hardship associated with separation and loss of family; and
- WHEREAS Foster Parents provide safe homes to these children, ensuring their mental, emotional and physical needs are met; and
- WHEREAS Foster Parents demonstrate patience and provide support to help these children and their families overcome life's difficulties; and
- WHEREAS By offering the services of one's family, Foster Parents commit to sacrifice and selflessness; and
- WHEREAS Foster parenting can make connections that are meant to last a lifetime; and
- WHEREAS Foster Parents' commitment to providing care to children is a professional contribution that should be recognized and appreciated; and
- WHEREAS Foster Parents, by assuming responsibility for the care of a child, endeavor to make all children aware of their familial, cultural, social and religious/spiritual heritage and recognizing their unique cultural backgrounds in an attempt to preserve the children's cultural identity.
- WHEREAS The inclusion of the ENTITLEMENTS FOR FOSTER PARENTS in the Safeguarding Manual will encourage Provinces/Territories wide uniformity in Foster Care across our nation.

Exceptions: none

## INTERPRETATION

### *In this document:*

"At risk behaviors" means...	"An assessment of behaviors that might reasonably be expected to present an imminent danger to the child and others"
"Child" means...	"A person under the age of majority"
"Child in care" means...	"A person who is in need of protective services"
"Compensation" means...	"Payment for goods, services, or loss"
"Court" means...	"The Provincial/Territorial Court, or in the case of an appeal from that Court, the Court of Queen's Bench or the Court of Appeal"
"Director" means...	"A person designated by the Minister as Director"
"Documentation" means...	"Any record of information in any form, inclusive of books, documents, maps, drawings, photographs, letters, vouchers and papers and any other information that is written, photographed, recorded or stored in any manner"
"File" means...	"Paper or electronic record"
"Foster Parent (s)" means...	"A person approved and/or licensed as a foster parent in the Provinces/Territories by a director. A foster parent can be a person with whom the child or youth is placed with having the approval of Ministry Management or Director. This includes bio families and significant persons to the child excluding the parent.
"Placement" means...	"An approved foster home in which a child is residing.
"Respite" means...	"The temporary placement of a child outside of the foster home or the provision of a person in the foster home for the purpose of providing short-term rest or relief to the foster parents or foster family"
"Case Plan for the care of the child" means ...	"A document, created by the care/child's team, that specifies the placement objectives and goals that strategizes how to accomplish these in order to met the best interest of the child
"Support services" means...	"Support services defined in policy to assist the foster family to maintain a stable placement for the child"

## ENTITLEMENTS

### **1. *Involvement In Decision Making*** (Subject to the laws of the Provinces/Territories)

- (1) Foster Parents are entitled to involvement as members of the decision making team, for the children in their care, and are entitled to actively participate in the decisions affecting the children in their care such as but not limited to case planning, conferences, reviews, and education planning.
- (2) Foster Parents are entitled to communicate directly with the professionals who work with the children in their care but not limited to such as teachers, counselors and therapists.

### **2. *Support***

- (1) Foster Parents are entitled to be treated as professionals with dignity, respect and consideration in the following matters:
  - a) Acceptance or refusal of a placement;
  - b) A request for the removal of a child from their home when all other efforts to sustain the placement have been unsuccessful;
  - c) The maintenance of the day-to-day management, structure and rules of their home subject to the policy of their Provinces/Territories;
  - d) The continuation of their own family values and beliefs, while the Foster Parents also honor the rights, values and beliefs of the child in care;
  - e) After all efforts have been exhausted to safely return the child to his or her parent, guardian or extended family consideration should be given to the Foster Parents whom the child has resided (in accordance to provincial/territorial policy)
  - f) To support continuity and stability of relationships, Foster Parents should be considered as a first choice for placement if a sibling of a child already in their home and it is safe to do so, comes into care; and
  - g) Adequate supports to ensure the safety and well being of all members of the child's care/family team (in accordance to provincial/territorial policy).



### **3. Information**

- (1) Foster Parents are entitled to information pertaining to their foster home and disclosure of available information of the children in their care, as permitted by present legislation such as the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and their Provincial Child and Youth Act in the following regard;
- a) A plan, for children placed in their home within timelines;
  - b) Access to written and/or oral recorded information regarding a potential placement (including but not limited to the child's birth family, cultural heritage, health history and behavioral needs). In the case of an emergency placement, the Foster Parent shall receive the information in a timely manner;
  - c) Timely notification of all meetings and case conferences that Foster Parents are permitted by policy to attend affecting a child in their home;
  - d) Prior, timely notification of all decisions pertaining to a child in their care;
  - e) Prior, timely notification of any court hearings, including the time and location of the hearing. The Foster Parents acknowledge that the Court may not permit them to attend court hearings;
  - f) Timely notice of changes made in the case plan for the care of a child in their home;
  - g) Timely updates on all significant information relevant to a child in their home;
  - h) Earliest possible notification and explanation for the termination of a placement;
  - i) A clear explanation as set out in the plan of care of the expectations for involvement with the child's birth family; and
  - j) Access to legislation, policy, procedures, protocols and documents pertaining to fostering, as well as all pertain fostering supportive agencies.



#### **4. Compensation**

- (1) Foster Parents are entitled to receive compensation to provide for the needs of the children in their care.
- (2) Foster Parents are entitled to reimbursement for the following expenses but not limited to, incurred as a direct result of fostering if in accordance with policy and in such amounts as permitted by policy:
  - a) The consideration of requests for compensation for willful damage by a foster child;
  - b) Pre-approved reimbursement of expenses incurred as a result of the death of a child in care; and
  - c) Pre-approval of expenses incurred for ongoing maintenance (i.e.: to bring the child's clothing up to a reasonable standard, graduation costs, driver training and recreation costs but not limited to).

#### **5. Foster Home Investigations**

- (1) Foster Parents are entitled to fair and equitable treatment in the event of conflicts, allegations and investigations, including closure, or suspension of the operation or licensing of their foster home, and is entitled to:
  - a) Insist that the recommended investigation process as set out in policy shall be adhered to;
  - b) Be advised in a timely manner, of the completion of the investigation, of any decision or recommendation together with any reasons, including decisions relating to foster home closures, suspensions or licensing; and
  - c) Be accompanied by an advocate at any and all meetings and proceedings during or following an investigation.