



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES



Foster Parent Bill of Rights

All foster parents, including kinship foster parents, have the following rights regarding collaboration, communication, access, and transparency:

1. To be regarded as the primary caregiver of a child placed in foster care and to be treated with dignity, respect, trust, value, and consideration, including the local department giving due consideration to the foster parent's family values, traditions, and beliefs;
2. To receive copies of all documents related to the foster parent, the foster parent's family, and ongoing services provided to the foster home;
3. To be considered part of the foster care team and to be able to contribute input regarding the child's permanency plan and receive copies of the plan;
4. To be provided all reasonably ascertainable background, medical, and psychological records of the child prior to placement, at the initial placement, or at any time during the placement of a child in foster care;
5. To be provided all information relevant to the child's foster care services as allowed by federal and state law;
6. To be notified of court hearings and scheduled meetings;
7. To be informed of decisions made by the court, local board, or licensed child-placing agency concerning the child's foster care services;
8. To be able to communicate, to the extent permitted under federal and state law, with professionals who work directly with the child in foster care, including therapists, physicians, and teachers;
9. To be informed in a timely manner of changes to the child's case plan or the termination of the child's placement;
10. To be afforded the same rights as outlined in the Foster Care Placement Agreement and the Code of Ethics and Mutual Responsibilities;
11. To be provided with approved or eligible reimbursements for costs associated with foster care services in a timely manner;
12. To be provided with a method to contact the local board or licensed child-placing agency for assistance 24 hours a day and seven days a week; and
13. To receive a timely response from the local department of social services regarding whether or not information may be provided to requests for information regarding the child's progress after leaving foster care.

Foster Parent Signature

Date

Foster Parent Signature

Date



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Foster Parent Dispute Resolution Process

Foster parents have a right to file a complaint regarding alleged violations of the regulations governing collaboration, communication, access, and transparency between the local boards, the licensed child-placing agencies, and the foster parents. (From Foster Care Guidance 17.11.1) When filing such a complaint, foster parents must follow the following steps:

1. The foster parent shall contact the service worker assigned to the foster home within 10 business days and provide a detailed description of the conduct constituting the alleged violation of the regulations governing collaboration, communication, access, and transparency between the local boards, the licensed child placing agencies, and the foster parents and attempt to resolve the dispute.
2. The service worker shall respond within five business days and explain any corrective action to be taken in response to the foster parent's complaint.
3. If the foster parent and service worker are unable to resolve the complaint informally, the foster parent may file a written complaint through the dispute resolution process with the local board's foster care supervisor or assigned designee.
 - The written complaint shall include a detailed description of the conduct constituting the alleged violation of the regulations governing collaboration, communication, access, and transparency between the local boards, the licensed child-placing agencies, and the foster parents and a copy of the service worker's response.
 - The written complaint shall be sent to the supervisor and must be received by the supervisor within 10 business days of the foster parent receiving the service worker's response.
4. The foster care supervisor or assigned designee shall respond to the complaint in writing within five business days setting forth all findings regarding the alleged violation and any corrective action taken.
5. If the foster parent disagrees with the findings or corrective actions proposed by the foster care supervisor or assigned designee, the foster parent may appeal the decision to the local director by filing a written notice of appeal.
 - The notice of appeal shall include a detailed description of the conduct constituting the alleged violation of the regulations governing collaboration, communication, access, and transparency between the local boards, the licensed child-placing agencies, and the foster parents and a copy of the foster care supervisor or assigned designee's findings or recommendations.
 - The notice of appeal shall be sent to the local director and must be received by the local director within 10 business days of the foster parent receiving the supervisor's response.
6. The local director shall hold a meeting between all parties within seven business days to gather any information necessary to determine (i) the validity of the alleged violation of the regulations governing collaboration, communication, access, and transparency between the local boards, the licensed child-placing agencies, and the foster parents and (ii) the appropriateness of any recommendations for corrective action made by the family services specialist and foster care supervisor or assigned designee.
7. A summary of the meeting shall be documented in writing by the service worker after approval by the foster care supervisor or assigned designee.
8. Following such meeting and documentation, the local director shall issue to all parties written findings and, when applicable, recommendations for corrective actions.

This dispute resolution process does not apply to a complaint related to the denial or failure of a local board to act upon an individual's claim for benefits. Complaints related to a claim for benefits shall be appealable pursuant to 42 USC § 671(a)(12) and 22VAC40-201-115.