



Faster
are
Care
?
Questions

Important Foster Care Information:

Caseworker: _____ Phone: _____

Supervisor: _____ Phone: _____

SDA Manager: _____ Phone: _____

After hours phone number in case of an emergency:

Independent Living Facilitator (if applicable):

_____ Phone: _____

Central Office Foster Care Manager: _____

By signing below, I affirm that DHS has reviewed the contents of this pamphlet with me and I have had a chance to ask questions regarding the contents of the pamphlet.

Youth's signature _____

Date: _____

Caseworker's signature _____

Date: _____

Dept. of Human Services/Independent Living Program

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Phone: (503) 945-5910 Fax: (503) 945-6969

Web site: <http://www.scf.hr.state.or.us/ilp/index.htm>



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Coming Into Care

► WHAT WILL HAPPEN

NOW THAT I'M GOING INTO FOSTER CARE, WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN?

First, you will be assigned a caseworker, who is the person you will be working with while you are in foster care. Your caseworker has the duty to act in your best interest and to help you find a safe, permanent place to live as quickly as possible. You and your caseworker should start to talk right away about the reasons for your placement. Together you should decide what changes need to be made and set up a plan for making these changes. In some circumstances, you may also go to juvenile court to discuss your situation with a judge.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN CARE?

The length of time you will be in care will depend upon how quickly you and your family work with your caseworker to resolve the issues causing your placement. Everyone will be working hard to reunite you with your family if that is the agreed upon plan.

► COURT

WILL I HAVE TO GO TO COURT?

Whether you're in care because of problems in your family or because you are accused of a crime, or both, there will usually be a court hearing. If you've been accused of a crime, you will participate in the hearing. Otherwise, you and the caseworker will decide if you should attend the hearing. If you don't attend court, be sure your caseworker knows what you want to happen.

In the courtroom, the judge hears all the information about your case. It is the judge's job to make sure you and your family receive the services necessary to make the best plan for you.

WHAT IS A SHELTER HEARING?

This is a court hearing held within 24 hours of placement. After this hearing, the judge will decide if you should remain in foster care or be returned to your family. The caseworker or juvenile court counselor will file a petition. A petition is a legal paper which describes your situation to the judge.

WHAT IS AN ADJUDICATION OR FACT-FINDING HEARING?

If you or your parents do not agree with the concerns in the petition, a fact-finding hearing will be held so that the judge can determine if the concerns listed in the petition are true. Evidence can be presented by you, DHS child welfare and by your parents. After hearing the evidence, the judge will decide whether DHS has proved that its concerns are true.

If the judge finds that the concerns are not true, he may decide to return you to your family. If he finds the petition is true, a dispositional hearing will be held.

WHAT IS A DISPOSITIONAL HEARING?

If you've had a fact-finding hearing and the judge has placed you under court control, then the judge will hold a dispositional hearing. At this hearing the judge will decide if DHS child welfare should continue to work with you and your family. In many cases you will take part in the hearing and should truthfully answer any questions you are asked.

DO I NEED A LAWYER?

Rules about lawyers are different in every county. It is a good idea to have one who knows juvenile law if you are accused of a crime. If you can't afford to pay an attorney, tell your caseworker that you want a court appointed attorney.

WHY CAN'T THE ABUSER BE PUT IN JAIL SO I CAN STAY AT HOME?

The police and the courts, not DHS, have the power to decide if the abuser will go to jail. Often it takes a long time for the justice system to make a decision. While the decision is being made, your caseworker's job is to see that you are receiving good care. If the abuser remains at home, you may need to live somewhere else to remain protected.



▶ THE FOSTER HOME

DO I HAVE ANY SAY IN WHAT HAPPENS TO ME WHILE I AM IN FOSTER CARE?

It's very important that you take part in the planning for your future. Talk over your concerns and wishes with your family, caseworker and foster family. Don't be afraid to let them know your ideas and needs.

DO I HAVE A CHOICE ABOUT WHERE I LIVE? CAN I KEEP GOING TO MY OWN SCHOOL?

Your wishes will be taken into consideration in the selection of your foster home. Sometimes, however, there is not an available home in your neighborhood or school district, or your caseworker may feel it would be better for you to move to a new area for awhile.

WILL I HAVE A GOOD FOSTER HOME?

You will have a safe place to live with people who care about you. If you don't feel this is true about the foster home you're in, tell your caseworker immediately.



WILL THERE BE OTHER KIDS THERE?

There might be the foster parents' children and other foster kids. Some families only take one child at a time.

WILL I HAVE TO GO TO CHURCH WITH MY FOSTER PARENTS? CAN I CONTINUE TO GO TO MY OWN CHURCH?

It's important that you and your foster parents respect each other's religious beliefs. Talk to your caseworker about your feelings. Foster parents may ask you to attend their church, but you do have a choice about going. Talk to your caseworker about your feelings. If you attend a church already, every effort will be made so you can continue attending. If you have to move away, your caseworker or your foster parents can help you find a church of the same faith to attend.

CAN I TAKE MY PET DOG WITH ME?

Because foster homes are temporary, you usually cannot take your pets with you. If you're really worried about your pet, talk with your caseworker or foster parents. Visits with your family could allow for visits with your pets.



► FAMILY AND FRIENDS

WILL I BE ABLE TO SEE MY FAMILY?

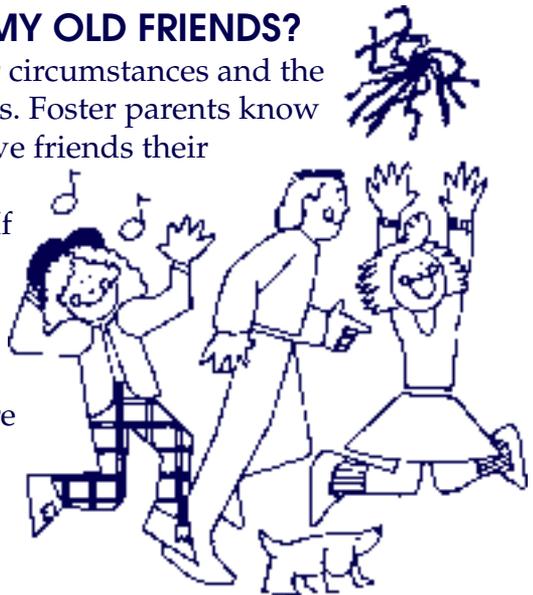
Yes, you will be able to see your family when it seems safe for you to do so. Visiting times will be set up so that you and your family can see one another. Let your caseworker know how you feel about visits. Together you can make a plan that meets your needs and those of your family.

DO I HAVE TO BE SEPARATED FROM MY BROTHERS OR SISTERS?

Ideally, brothers and sisters are placed together. It's important that you have contact with your family and that you help each other. Sometimes it's hard to find a home that can take a group of kids. If you have to be separated, tell your worker and foster parents how important it is for you to have time with your brothers and sisters. Help them find ways for you to get together.

WILL I BE ABLE TO SEE MY OLD FRIENDS?

This will depend upon your circumstances and the foster family's circumstances. Foster parents know it's important for kids to have friends their own age. Help them by talking about your friends. If possible, have your foster parents meet your friends. Like many parents, foster parents are interested in knowing with whom you are spending time.



► THE FOSTER FAMILY

WHAT DO WE CALL OUR FOSTER PARENTS?

You may use their first names, or call them mom and dad. If there are other kids in the foster home, you may want to follow their example. Do whatever makes you comfortable.

WHY DO FOSTER FAMILIES CARE SO MUCH WHEN WE'RE NOT EVEN THEIR KIDS?

Foster parents are people who see all children as valuable members of our society and want to help them have good lives. Some foster parents have had experiences in their own lives that make them more aware of what you are going through. Some foster parents may not understand how it feels to be in your place, but they will be interested in hearing your feelings.

WILL FOSTER PARENTS ACCEPT ME FOR WHO I AM AND WHAT I BELIEVE IN?

Most will try to accept you for who you are, just as you should try to accept them. If they feel that some of your beliefs could harm you or the family, your foster parents will try to help you understand and make changes. Just like people everywhere, some foster parents are very accepting while others are not.

IF MY FOSTER PARENTS WOULD LIKE TO KEEP ME LONGER INSTEAD OF HAVING ME MOVE IN WITH A RELATIVE, WOULD THAT BE POSSIBLE?

DHS' goal is to develop the best plan for you. A safe placement with a relative is usually better than being in an unrelated foster home, because kids can strengthen their attachment to their own family. If you have strong feelings about staying in your foster home, be sure to tell your caseworker and foster parents.

WHAT CAN I DO TO FEEL ACCEPTED INTO THE FOSTER FAMILY?

Feeling accepted does not always happen quickly. It helps if you are willing to listen, share, and cooperate with the foster family. Joining in family activities is one way to get to know the family better. In time you will probably feel more comfortable. It's possible you may not ever be completely at ease living in someone else's home. Do the best you can.

DO FOSTER PARENTS TREAT EVERYONE EQUALLY?

Most foster homes have some set rules that apply to everybody in the home. However, each child has special problems or needs that take individual time and attention. This may seem like unequal treatment to you, especially if you also want some extra attention. Let your foster parents know what you want and let them help you.

WILL THEY TRUST ME?

Most foster parents start with the general belief that they need to get to know the individual foster child before a lot of trust and freedom is given. More trust, freedom, and responsibility will be given as you earn it.

WILL I BE HIT WHILE IN FOSTER CARE?

Physical punishment is not accepted in foster homes. If you're in a home where there is physical discipline or abuse of any kind, you should report it immediately to your caseworker or another responsible adult.



► RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

HOW WILL I BE TREATED, AND WHAT RULES SHOULD I FOLLOW?

DHS expects that you will be treated with respect and honesty. Most foster homes have house rules that all family members must follow. Some even give kids the rules in writing. It might be hard, especially at first, to learn the rules of a new home. Be patient. Unacceptable forms of discipline include:

- Physical force or threat of physical force inflicted in any manner.
- Verbal abuse, including derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family.
- Denial of food, clothing, or shelter.
- Denial of visits, telephone, or mail contact with family.
- Assignment of extremely strenuous exercise or work.
- Punishment for bed wetting.
- Delegating or permitting punishment of a child by another child.
- Threat of removal from the foster home as punishment.
- Use of cold showers as punishment.
- Group discipline for misbehavior of one child.

IF I DON'T FOLLOW THE RULES, WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

Different foster parents have different ways of disciplining kids. Some may give extra chores or take away privileges. Others might ground you. Your foster parents can explain and discuss with you what their rules are and what the discipline will be for breaking the rules.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES?

Responsibilities depend on your age and the home you're in. For example, teens may be expected to make their beds, take clothes to the laundry room, help with the dishes, do their homework, and be home on time. Again, talk to your foster parents about what they want from you. Ask them for help if you don't understand their rules or requests.

▶ CONTACTING MY CASEWORKER

HOW OFTEN CAN I EXPECT TO SEE MY CASEWORKER?

DHS/SCF policy I-E.3(11)(d) (Substitute Care Placement Expectations) states that "The child's service worker shall make at least one face-to-face contact with the child every 30 days." If you wish, you may ask to see your caseworker without the foster parent being present.

HOW CAN I REACH MY CASEWORKER?

Your worker is generally available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sometimes the quickest way is by phone. If your caseworker is busy, you'll have to wait for your call to be returned. It's a good idea to write down the things you want to discuss with your worker. Then you can talk to him by phone or in person, or even send a letter.

If you can't get through to your worker, ask the office staff to locate another caseworker or supervisor.

During Care

► RULES

WHY CAN'T I GET A DRIVER'S LICENSE OR PERMIT?

Everyone knows it's really important to all teenagers to learn to drive and have a car. It's true, being in foster care makes doing this more difficult, but don't rule out the possibility. Some kids in care do get permits, take driver's education and learn to drive. Discuss this with your foster parents and caseworker.

WHY DO FOSTER PARENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO LOOK THROUGH THEIR FOSTER KIDS' ROOMS?

Foster parents have to be concerned for the safety of every member of the household. If they feel that there is a member who may be involved in an activity that could be harmful, they have the right to look through his or her room. This could be a joint effort, with the child present. If you believe your foster parents are looking through your room and you don't know why, ask them or your caseworker.



DO FOSTER PARENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO OPEN FOSTER CHILD'S MAIL?

Foster parents cannot legally open your mail. The Oregon Attorney General has written an opinion that says DHS child welfare has the authority to intercept mail addressed to children for whom it has guardianship. This authority may not be given to foster parents.



HOW IS THE MONEY THAT THE FOSTER PARENTS GET PAID FOR US SUPPOSED TO BE USED? IS ANY OF IT USED TO BUY CLOTHES? WHAT IF MY FOSTER PARENTS WON'T GIVE ME ANY MONEY?

The money received by foster parents is for room and board, which includes food, clothes, and housing. This doesn't mean you will get new clothes each month. Most families save some of the money for clothes and go shopping when something is needed. Part of the money is to be used for your allowance and daily items such as toothpaste, shampoo, and other personal effects. DHS child welfare has guidelines for how much allowance kids in care receive. Ask your caseworker to show you a copy of these guidelines.

Talk to your foster parents to see how the allowance system is set up in their home. If you disagree with the way the system is set up, talk with your foster parents and your caseworker.

CAN I GO ON DATES? CAN I GO TO SCHOOL DANCES OR MOVIES?

There are no set DHS rules about dating or social activities. Different foster homes have different rules. Decisions about your social activities will probably depend on your age, the age of the person you want to date, how responsible you are, and who your friends are. Also, there are the needs of each family to consider, such as transportation and work schedules.

► YOUR PARENTS

WHY DO SOME VISITS WITH PARENTS HAVE TO BE SUPERVISED?

There are a couple of reasons why visits are supervised. One is that some kids do not feel safe or would not be safe during the visit. Another reason is that by being there during a visit, the worker can help parents and children improve their communication. However, not all visits are supervised. If you want unsupervised visits, ask your caseworker.

HOW COME WE CAN'T PHONE OUR PARENTS DIRECTLY FROM WHERE WE'RE STAYING?

The type of contact you have with your parents, even phone calls, needs to be checked out with your caseworker and foster parents. Sometimes it's just a matter of money; long distance calls can add up! Ask your foster parents about their rules regarding phone calls. However, many kids do call their parents, brothers, sisters, and friends from the foster home. If you have been told that you can't, ask your caseworker to explain the reasons and find out how you can contact your family.

► PROBLEMS

IF I'M REALLY UNHAPPY WHERE I AM, CAN I BE MOVED?

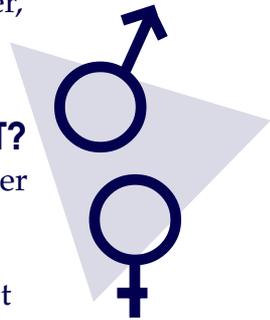
The reality is, we only have so many foster parents and it may be hard to find another placement for you. Ask your caseworker to meet with you individually to discuss your unhappiness. It is normal to have unhappy and angry feelings about your situation. Talk to your caseworker or foster parents about the unhappiness you are feeling. It may or may not be related to the foster home. If it is, moving is an option. However, sometimes it doesn't solve the problems. Moving from one home to another is such a drastic solution it should only be used when nothing else will work.

IF I WANT TO GET BIRTH CONTROL, WHO DO I SEE?

First you should talk to a counselor or another trusted adult. Birth control is available from the county Health Department or your doctor. If you're 14 or older, requests are confidential.

WHOM DO I TURN TO IF I'M PREGNANT?

You can talk to a counselor, teacher, parent, foster parent, friend, doctor, or caseworker. It is very important that you tell someone when you suspect you are pregnant so you can get prompt medical attention. Don't try to deal with it alone. There are many people who want to help you.



WHERE DO I GO FOR HELP IF I HAVE A DRUG PROBLEM?

Your caseworker or foster parent can help you get treatment for a drug problem. Don't be afraid to tell them. They will not punish you for asking for help. You could also try calling a drug help line to talk to someone. Check the phone book for a number in your area.

► COMMUNICATION, MOODS, AND EMOTIONS

HOW DO I LET MY FEELINGS BE KNOWN?

This is a good question, because letting your feelings be known is an important way of standing up for yourself. If you want your feelings to be known, you'll need to tell someone. You can express feelings in many ways; some helpful, some not. Talking clearly and directly about how you feel, without blaming others, is a good way to be listened to. If you find it hard to talk about your feelings, try writing them down and sharing them with a friend or your foster parents.

HOW DO I TALK TO MY FOSTER PARENTS AND HAVE THEM LISTEN TO ME?

It is necessary to let your foster parents know it's important to you and that you really want to talk. Foster parents are often busy people and sometimes it may seem as if they don't have time to talk to you. Ask your foster parents if they could set aside a time for you to talk. When you talk to them, speak honestly and let them know exactly how you are feeling. If they don't say what you want to hear, it doesn't mean they aren't listening. Good communication runs two ways, so listen as well as talk.

HOW DO I STAY OUT OF FIGHTS WHEN I'M SO ANGRY INSIDE?

Staying out of fights is especially hard when you're carrying a lot of anger around, so it's important to understand what you're angry about. Sometimes a friend or counselor can help you become aware of what causes your anger and show you ways to let it go without hurting others. There are many non-violent ways to let go of your anger, like going for a walk, talking to someone, exercising, or yelling in a closet.

ARE THERE PEOPLE WITH WHOM I CAN TALK ABOUT MY PROBLEMS?

Believe it or not, there are people who are interested and safe to talk to about problems. Here are some suggestions: speak to your caseworker, counselor, parent, foster parent, teacher, or best friend. If you try one person and that doesn't seem to work, find someone else. Ask around, but keep trying. It's important to everyone to have someone to talk to.

WHY DOES BEING IN FOSTER CARE UPSET MY EMOTIONS SO MUCH, AND HOW DO I LEARN TO LIVE WITH IT?

Moving away from family and everything you have become used to and moving in with strangers is a very big deal. It's going to affect your emotions, no doubt about it! Coping with change takes time. Stay in contact with people who are important to you, even though you're living in a new place. You might also learn how to rely on other people to help you, such as your new foster parents, counselor, minister, or a new friend at school. This is a very hard time for you; don't try to go it alone.

WILL BEING IN FOSTER CARE MAKE ME A DIFFERENT PERSON?

You will be the same person; you might, however, feel and behave differently because this is a new experience. It would not be unusual that being in foster care would change some of your ideas or ways of doing things.

AM I THE ONLY ONE EMBARRASSED TO BE IN FOSTER CARE?

At this time in your life it is hard to be different in any way from your friends. Some foster children are embarrassed to be in foster care. Just remember, being a foster child does not make you any better or worse than anyone else.



Where Do I Go From Here

► WHEN AND WHY

IF I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK TO MY REAL FAMILY, WHAT CAN I DO?

If you feel you have good reasons not to return home, talk to your caseworker. Together you may be able to work out a realistic alternative to moving back home. If you feel your interests are not being given fair consideration, you may be entitled to be represented by an attorney to argue your position before the court.

WHAT IS A CRB? HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

A Citizen Review Board is a group of volunteer citizens who are interested in the welfare of Oregon's children. The CRB reviews the case of each child in the care of DHS child welfare. The purpose of the review is to ensure that each plan leads to a safe, permanent home for every child; that services are appropriate; and that the plan is timely and follows all laws related to children.

AM I ALLOWED TO GO? HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN THEY ARE? HOW WILL I GET THERE?

Yes, you may go to CRB reviews. The first review occurs no more than six months after placement in foster care. After that, there is a review every six months until you leave foster care. You may ask that your caseworker call you and let you know when the CRB meeting is. Your caseworker or foster parents can help you get there.

WHAT IS THE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM?

The ILP was put into place to help you learn needed skills that will help you become successful working adults. Some of the life skills covered are banking, budgeting, cooking, apartment searching, educational goals, and employment. If you are currently in substitute care and are at least 14 years old, you are eligible for this program. You may remain eligible for this program to age 21 if you have had at least 180 days of substitute care after the age of 14.

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

Ask your DHS worker to refer you to the Independent Living Program provider serving your area. The provider will then contact you and set up a meeting time.



HOW CAN IT HELP ME?

The ILP has two housing programs – the Independent Living Subsidy Program (ILSP) and the Chafee Housing Program (CHP). The housing programs are designed for youth who are working toward social and financial independence. The goal is to provide an avenue whereby the older youth can work toward self-sufficiency through carefully

planned, graduated steps. The ILSP is designed for youth 16 years of age and older who are in DHS' custody, and the CHP is for former foster care youth who left the care and custody of DHS sometime after turning age 18 (eligibility ends at age 21). If you have questions about this program, be sure to ask your caseworker. More information about this program is located in in DHS/SCF policy I-B.2.3.5, or by visiting the ILP website at www.scf.hr.state.or.us/ilp/index.htm.

WHEN I TURN 18, WILL I BE ABLE TO MAKE MY OWN DECISION ABOUT WHERE I LIVE?

If you've finished high school, you will have the option of leaving DHS care at age 18. However, if you've been involved with law violations such as drug and alcohol abuse or running away, you may not be able to make this decision. You need to talk with your worker about your particular case. Legally, DHS must remain involved in the decision as long as you are a ward of the court. Remember, however, that even though you are no longer in the care and custody of DHS, you may request voluntary services to continue participating in the Independent Living Program and possibly access the Chafee Housing Program.

WHY DO I HAVE TO STAY IN FOSTER CARE UNTIL I'M 18 YEARS OLD OR OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL?

Kids don't always have to stay in foster care until they're 18 or out of high school. When you are placed in foster care, DHS takes on the responsibility for your care until you can return home, finish high school, or reach 18. The law does not allow a person under 18 years old to be on their own unless they've been legally emancipated.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE LEGALLY EMANCIPATED?

To be legally emancipated means that a person under the age of 18 is, **by a judicial decree**, recognized as an adult for the purposes of entering into contracts, establishing a residence, having the capacity to sue or be sued, and applying the criminal laws of the state. A decree of emancipation, however, does not affect any age qualification for purchasing alcohol and tobacco products or the requirements for obtaining a marriage license.

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO TO BE LEGALLY EMANCIPATED?

There are three ways to be emancipated.

- ✓ By reaching age 18 and having the court dismiss your wardship. At that point, DHS and the court will no longer be involved in planning your future.
- ✓ To be legally married.
- ✓ The third way is to seek early emancipation (before age 18) through the juvenile court by formally applying for emancipation status.

In general, you can ask to be emancipated if you are at least 16, have an income and a good place to live. Some judges also require a high school diploma or GED (General Education Development). There might be other requirements and expenses involved in emancipating early, such as having an attorney to help you in court and paying a court fee. Generally, the judge expects you to be living as a “responsible adult.” Ask your caseworker or juvenile counselor for information.

► WHEN YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN

WHO WILL HELP ME WHEN I GET OUT OF DHS CARE?

This is a good question to be asking now because this is a great time to be putting together a support system. A support system is a group of people you can count on to help you when you're on your own. Your system can include your foster parents, relatives, teachers, caseworker, Independent Living case manager, and friends. Also, you could include the many agencies and organizations in your community available to help you. Before leaving DHS care, ask your caseworker to work with you to make a list of people and agencies that could be a part of your support system. You may be able to come back to DHS until age 21 to receive ILP services. Even if you have not had any contact with the agency for a couple of years, you are eligible to receive ILP services if you had at least 180 days (6 months) of substitute care after the age of 14.

WILL I BE ABLE TO GO TO COLLEGE, AND CAN I GET FUNDING OR SCHOLARSHIPS?

Any child in DHS care has an excellent opportunity to receive help (money) to attend college. There are many grants, scholarships, and student loans available to you if you qualify. It's important to apply early, so ask your school counselor for help in finding scholarships and filling out the applications.

If you are enrolled in the Independent Living Program, your Independent Living facilitator will also be able to help you.



HOW DO I FIND A JOB?

If you are participating in the Independent Living Program, your Independent Living facilitator will help you find a job. The Oregon Employment Department or youth employment programs will also help you find a job. Check the want ads. Call businesses where you are interested in working. Ask people in your support system to help you.

ARE THERE ANY GROUPS THAT WILL TRAIN US FOR PARENTING?

Thinking about how to be a good parent is a smart idea. Many DHS branch offices contract with parent trainers who provide ongoing education and support groups for people who want to learn more about parenting. The Independent Living Program can also help you locate a resource for parenting skills. Your high school or community college may also have support groups and workshops for parents.

WILL I BE A NORMAL PERSON WHEN I GROW UP?

A person who is raised in foster care is just as “normal” as any other person. It is true that many kids in foster care have experienced considerable losses of all kinds, such as family, friends, and possessions. Many people with similar experiences have been able to move ahead with a greater appreciation for life. If this is a big worry for you, talk to a counselor or good friend about your feelings. If you are 16 or over, the Independent Living Program may be a resource for you. Here you will meet youth who have been through some of the same things you’ve experienced, and who have the same feelings you have.

About DHS Child Welfare

► ABOUT CASEWORKERS

WHAT IF I DON'T FEEL SUPPORTED BY MY CASEWORKER?

Changing caseworkers is a difficult process. Be specific in discussing the reasons why you do not feel supported by your caseworker. It is best to discuss this with your caseworker's supervisor. Just as your caseworker works with you and your family, it will be best if you can work with your caseworker. Talk to him about the problem. If that's hard for you – and it might be – discuss it with your parents or foster parents first. They might be able to help.

It would be understandable if you did not like your caseworker because they have been part of a very difficult time in your life. You might even feel they caused some of the bad things that have happened to you. Or it may be that you and your caseworker's personalities just clash. Either way, talk out your feelings. Many kids end up liking their caseworker even though they may have been angry with him at first.

WHAT IF I CAN'T RESOLVE MY PROBLEM WITH MY CASEWORKER OR THEIR SUPERVISOR?

You can meet with the child welfare program manager. During this informal meeting, you can tell the manager what you feel is wrong.

If you are still dissatisfied, you can write to the Service Delivery Area manager within 30 days after you talk to the branch manager. If you do not think that this appeal was fair, you have 30 days to write to the director of SCF to ask for a review of your complaint. You will then get a written decision from the director.

► PROCEDURE

HOW OFTEN ARE FOSTER HOMES CHECKED ON?

All homes are approved by DHS child welfare before you can be placed there. Foster homes are formally reviewed each year. In addition, your caseworker will be dropping by the home and talking with the family. If you are concerned about anything going on in the foster home, talk it over with your caseworker.

WHY DO CASEWORKERS ALWAYS TRY TO MAKE THINGS WORK OUT WITH OUR REAL PARENTS AND TRY TO PUT US BACK WITH THEM WHEN WE DON'T WANT TO GO?

Foster care is meant to be a temporary place for you to stay while your family is working on the troubles they are having. It is your caseworker's job to get you back with your family as soon as it is safe for you to be there.

Sometimes that happens before kids want it to happen. However, DHS believes it is your parents' responsibility to raise you when they can safely do so, and decisions about where you live are best left up to them.

HOW WILL DHS HELP GET KIDS REUNITED WITH THEIR FAMILIES?

Your caseworker will help you and your family look at what can be done to make your life at home better and safer. The caseworker's job is to help you and your family find ways to be successful in making changes needed to get you back home. Then he will refer you and the other members of your family to programs which will help each person make those changes.

WHAT IF MY QUESTION ISN'T ANSWERED IN THIS BOOK? HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION?

We knew we wouldn't be able to answer every question you have or give all the information you need while in foster care in one book. Getting answers to your questions is a big part of being responsible for yourself. Ask your foster parents, caseworker, or the caseworker's supervisor if you have more questions. If you have a lot of questions, write them down and schedule a time to go over them with your foster parents or caseworker .



Administrative Rules

➤ WHAT IS AN ADMINISTRATIVE RULE?

An Administrative Rule is “any agency directive, standard, regulation or statement of general applicability that implements, interprets or prescribes law or policy.” In other words, Administrative Rules state how DHS child welfare will follow the laws that apply to the agency.

ARE THERE SPECIFIC ADMINISTRATIVE RULES THAT APPLY TO FOSTER CARE?

Yes. Those Administrative Rules are printed on the following pages.

DECISIONS ON APPROVAL AND PLACEMENT

413-200-0307 (1) SOSCF has the responsibility to assess a family's appropriateness for relative care, foster care, and adoption. This assessment process involves both family members and the family's residence. To complete the assessment SOSCF employees gather information about the family, its parenting capabilities, and network of support. They also gather information about the safety and capacity of the residence.

(2) Although certified relative care and foster care families and approved adoptive families meet these safety standards, it is SOSCF's responsibility to exercise

its discretion and judgment and select the home in which to place a specific child.

(3) Foster Parent/Relative Caregiver who accept a child for placement from SOSCF may accept a child for relative care, foster care, or adoptive placement from any other source, with the written approval of the branch responsible for the caregiver's certificate of approval or adoption approval. The written approval must be obtained prior to accepting an additional child unless the placement is on an emergency basis such as weekends, holidays or evenings, where as in such cases the written approval must be obtained within two working days after the placement has occurred.

(4) Foster Parent/Relative Caregiver must not provide adult foster care, or day care without the prior written approval of the branch responsible for the caregiver's certificate of approval or adoption approval.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005

Stats. Implemented: ORS 418.005 - 418.640

PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF APPLICANTS AND FOSTER PARENT / RELATIVE CAREGIVERS

413-200-0308 (1) Applicants and Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers shall be responsible, stable, emotionally mature adults who exercise sound judgment.

(2) Applicants and Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must have the interest, motivation, and ability to nurture, support, and meet the mental, physical, and emotional needs of children in SOSCF custody.

(3) Applicants and Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must be willing to receive training, and have the ability to learn and use effective child-rearing practices, which will enable children in the custody of SOSCF to grow, develop, and build positive personal relationships and self esteem.

(4) Applicants and Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must demonstrate that they have the knowledge and understanding of positive non-punitive discipline and ways of helping children build positive personal relationships, self control and self esteem.

(5) Applicants and Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers shall respect the child's relationship with his/her birth family and siblings and be willing to work in partnership with the agency to attain the goals as listed in the case plan.

(6) Applicants and Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must have supportive ties with others who might support, comfort and advise them. Supportive ties include but are not limited to; family, friends, neighborhood contacts, churches, and community groups.

(7) Applicants and Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must demonstrate that they have lifestyles and personal habits free from abuse and/or misuse of alcohol or drugs.

(8) Applicants and Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers shall be at least 21 years or age, unless otherwise specified through OAR 413-070-0100 / 0260, Placement of Indian Children, SOSCF Policy I-E.2.1.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005

Stats. Implemented: ORS 418.005 - 418.640

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

413-200-0335 (1) Homes and Surrounding Property:

- (a) The home and surrounding property must be kept free of hazards to children's health and well being;
- (b) The home must have safe drinking water and an adequate source of safe water to be used for personal hygiene;
- (c) The home shall have a safe and properly maintained operational heating system;
- (d) Use of space heaters is limited to electric space heaters equipped with tip-over protection that are plugged directly into the wall. No extension cords are to be used with such heaters. No propane space heaters without approved venting and no kerosene space heaters are to be used in the home.
- (e) The Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must have a working telephone to contact emergency services if necessary and a telephone at which they may be reached.

(2) Exterior Environment:

- (a) Play areas and equipment must be safe and suitable for the children in care.
- (b) Swimming pools, wading pools, hot tubs and other water hazards must be inaccessible to children in care unless children are responsibly supervised.
- (c) Play equipment, swimming pools, and hot tubs must comply with local safety regulations and ordinances.
- (d) Outdoor tools and equipment, machinery, chemicals, flammable or combustibles shall be stored in a safe manner.
- (e) Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must

consider the child's age, special needs and capabilities when determining the safety of potential water hazards, outdoor play equipment, or other outdoor tools, chemicals, or potentially dangerous hazards.

(3) Interior Environment:

(a) Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers shall have the necessary equipment for the safe preparation, storage, serving, and cleanup of food.

(b) Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers shall store all medications, toxic cleaning materials, and poisonous chemicals in a way which prevents access to children.

(c) First aid supplies must be in an easily accessible place.

(d) Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must consider the age and special needs of children in care when considering household storage, and interior organization of the residence.

(4) Bedrooms:

(a) Sleeping arrangements for children in care must be safe and appropriate, based on the child's age, gender, special needs, behavior and history of abuse and neglect.

(b) Each child in care must have a safe and adequate bed in which to sleep.

(c) Bedrooms used by children in care must;

(A) Have windows that open from the inside and allow exit;

(B) Have two (2) unrestricted exits (doors, windows);

(C) Have any doors with locks on the inside be operable from the outside of the room and not have any locks on the outside of the door which are not operable from inside the room;

- (D) Have an operable smoke alarm.
- (d) Bedrooms in basements and above the second floor used by children in care must have safe and direct access to the ground.

(5) Animals:

- (a) The applicant's and caregiver's animals must be properly cared for and in compliance with local ordinances;
- (b) Access to potentially dangerous animals must be restricted for children in care;
- (c) Measures must be taken to keep the house and premises free of vermin;
- (d) Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must consider the child's age, special needs and capabilities when determining which animals are safe and appropriate as family pets.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005

Stats. Implemented: ORS 418.005 - 418.640

FIRE SAFETY

413-200-0341 (1) The home of Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must have at least one working smoke alarm on each floor of the home. In addition, there must be a working smoke alarm in each bedroom in which a child in care sleeps.

(2) Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must have and maintain at least one unexpired and operable fire extinguisher in the home. The approved fire extinguisher must be rated 2-A-10BC or higher.

(3) The home of a Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must have at least two unrestricted exits.

(4) Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must have a written home evacuation plan and must share it with each child at the time of placement and practice it at least once a year, to make sure all children understand the procedures.

(5) Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers with children who are not capable of understanding or participating in the evacuation plan (infants, physically limited, etc.) must include in their written home evacuation plan a plan for the safe exit of these children.

(6) Barred windows used for possible exit in case of fire must be fitted with operable quick release mechanisms.

● **Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005**

● **Stats. Implemented: ORS 418.005 - 418.640**

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● **TRANSPORTATION**

● **413-200-0345 (1)** Only licensed and insured drivers shall transport children in the custody of SOSCF in motor vehicles.

● (2) Children in care must use seat belts or age and size appropriate safety seats when being transported in motor vehicles. The seat belts and their usage must comply with Oregon State Law (ORS 811.205-225) concerning child safety restraints.

● **Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005**

● **Stats. Implemented: ORS 418.005 - 418.640**

HEALTH

413-200-0346 (1) Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must work with SOSCF and licensed medical providers to ensure the health care needs of the child are met.

(2) Medication Management

(a) Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must give children prescription medications only in accordance with a physician's prescription or authorization.

(b) Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must record the exact amount, date and time of any prescribed medication administered for a child in care, unless an adoption assistance agreement or permanent foster care agreement is in effect.

(c) Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must inform SOSCF within one working day of any psychotropic medications prescribed for a child in placement (refer to OAR 413-070-0400 / 0490, Psychotropic Medication Management, SOSCF Policy I-E.3.3.1).

(3) Smoking:

(a) Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must not provide tobacco products in any form to children under the age of 18 placed in their home. (It is unlawful for any person under 18 years of age to possess tobacco products in Oregon.)

(b) Children in the custody of SOSCF shall not be exposed to second hand smoke in the Foster Parent/Relative Caregiver's home or vehicle.

(4) Consents must be obtained in certain medical situations. For specific information on consents to medical procedures including HIV testing, refer to

OAR 413-040-0400/0450, SOSCF Policy I-B.5.1 and for birth control administration refer to OAR 413-060-0000/0030, SOSCF Policy I-D.3.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005

Stats. Implemented: ORS 418.005 - 418.640

DISCIPLINE

413-200-0347 (1) Applicants and Foster Parent/Relative

Caregivers must demonstrate an understanding of and a willingness to use positive discipline in ways to help a child build positive personal relationships, self control and self-esteem.

(2) Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must provide

- discipline, supervision and guidance and must not
- punish children in the custody of SOSCF. Prohibited
- punishments include but are not limited to:
 - (a) Use of any form of physical force or threatened use of any form of physical force upon the child;
 - (b) Verbal abuse, including derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family, that undermine a child's self-respect;
 - (c) Any derogatory remarks about the child / or the child's family's physical characteristic, skin color, culture, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, type of hair or traditions;
 - (d) Denial of visits, telephone, or mail contacts with family members, unless the denial is in accordance with the case plan;
 - (e) Assignment of extremely strenuous exercise or work;
 - (f) Use or threatened use of restraining devices;
 - (g) Punishment or discipline for bed-wetting or punishment or discipline related to toilet training;

- (h)** Directing a child or permitting a child to punish or discipline another child;
- (i)** Threat of removal from the relative care or foster care home as punishment;
- (j)** Use of shower as punishment;
- (k)** Group punishment for misbehavior of one child; and
- (l)** Denial of food, clothing, or shelter.

(3) Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must not subject any child to physical abuse, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect, emotional abuse, mental injury or threats of harm as defined in ORS 419B.005 and OAR 413-030-0120. Sexual abuse and sexual exploitation include all sexual acts defined in ORS Chapters 163 and 167.

(4) If Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers use time-out separation from others as a consequence for behavior, Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must provide the time-out in an unlocked, lighted, well-ventilated room of at least 50 square feet within hearing distance of a responsible adult. Foster Parent / Relative Caregivers may use time-out only for the purpose of a short break to allow the child to regain control. The Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must take into consideration the child's age and emotional development in setting the length of the time out.

(5) Only Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers or agency staff who have been trained to use holding techniques may use physical restraint, except in emergency situations, to prevent a child from inflicting immediate and serious harm upon himself/herself or others. Use of physical restraint on a child is

prohibited except under circumstances and conditions as defined in OAR 413-020-0200 / 0270. The Foster Parent/Relative Caregivers must report any use of a holding technique to the assigned case worker within 72 hours for case documentation.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005

Stats. Implemented: ORS 418.005 - 418.640

ALTERNATE CAREGIVERS

413-200-0371 (1) The approved Foster Parent/Relative Caregiver is responsible for determining and selecting safe and responsible temporary alternative caregivers. The Foster Parent/Relative Caregiver must take into consideration the child's age, special needs, attachment, individual behaviors, and the length of time that the child will be with the alternate caregiver.

(2) When the Foster Parent/Relative Caregiver arranges for informal care of the child(ren) in SOSCF custody for less than 24 hours, including an overnight arrangement, the Foster Parent/Relative Caregiver will assure that the responsible person will be capable of assuming child care responsibilities, and must be present at all times. The Foster Parent/Relative Caregiver still maintains back-up responsibility for the child. Examples of informal arrangements include but are not limited to: short term babysitting and sleep-overs with friends.

(3) When the Foster Parent/Relative Caregiver arranges for the child(ren) in SOSCF custody to participate in organized overnight activities provided by schools, churches, civic organizations, scouts, or similar groups the Foster Parent/Relative Caregiver will;

(a) request the sponsoring organizations to have

policies to assure adult leaders are safe and responsible people.

(b) notify SOSCF if the overnight activity is longer than 48 hours.

(4) When the Foster Parent/Relative Caregiver arranges for relief care services, the relief care provider must;

(a) be at least 18 years of age,

(b) have an approved Oregon criminal history check and;

(c) SOSCF background check (IIS).

(5) When the Foster Parent/Relative Caregiver will be separated from the child for 48 hours or longer, the Foster Parent/Relative Caregiver must notify SOSCF and the alternate caregiver must;

(a) be at least 18 years of age,

(b) have an approved Oregon criminal history check and;

(c) SOSCF background check (IIS).

(6) When a child in SOSCF custody is cared for by a child care provider or child care center the provider and/or center must be certified as required by the State Child Care Division. (ORS 657A.280).

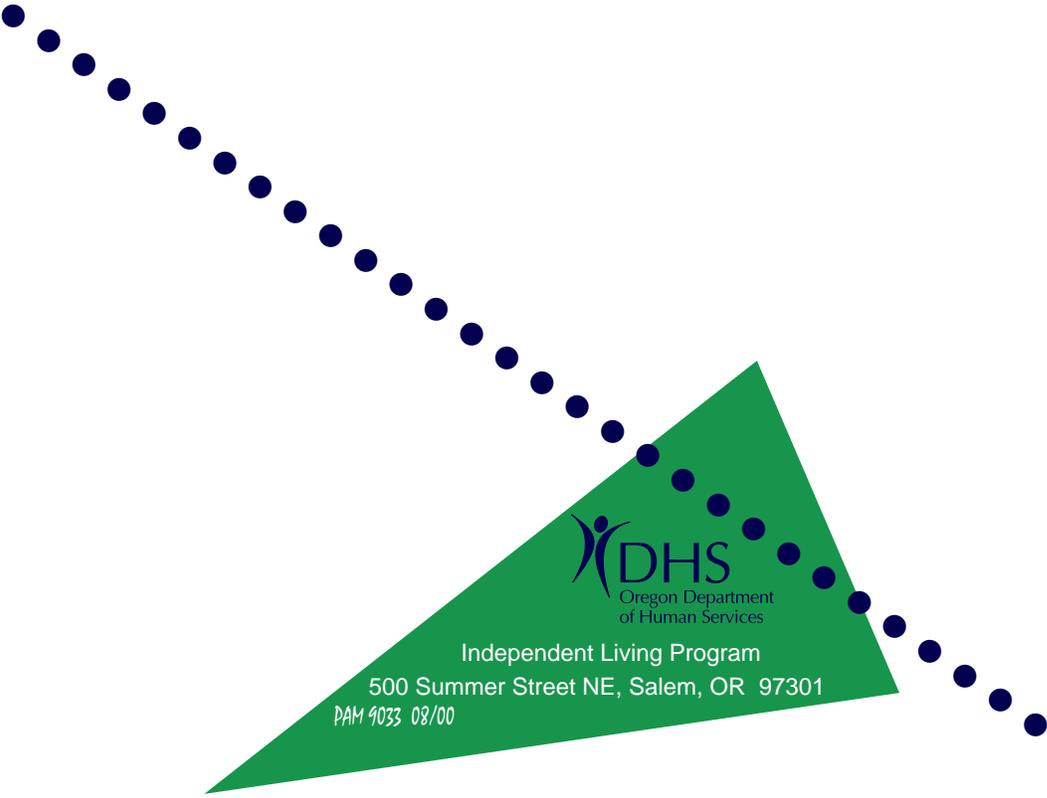
(7) Families with children with an adoption assistance agreement or permanent foster care agreement may develop an alternate caregiver plan with the SOSCF caseworker, so that notification does not have to take place each time an alternative caregiver is involved.

(8) When notifying SOSCF about alternate caregivers or overnight arrangements the notice must include: dates, name, address, and qualifications of alternate caregiver, and telephone number where the caregiver and alternate caregiver can be reached.

Statutory Authority: ORS 418.005

Stats. Implemented: ORS 418.005 - 418.640





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