



South Carolina

FOSTER PARENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

South Carolina Foster Parent Bill of Rights

Persons who provide foster care services to children who have been committed to the custody of the state shall be considered a primary partner and member of a professional team caring for foster children.

This bill of rights was developed by the South Carolina Foster Parent Association in cooperation with South Carolina Department of Social Services and was accepted as policy in September 2011. This bill of rights shall be given full consideration when future SCDSS policies regarding foster care and adoptive placement are developed.

Foster parents shall have the following rights:

- ✓ The right to be treated with consideration, dignity, respect, trust and value.
- ✓ The right to a concise written explanation of their role as foster parents in partnership with children and their families, the department, and other providers, the role of the department, and the rights and role of the members of the birth family of a child in foster care.
- ✓ The right to training about the role of foster parents as members of the care and permanency team of foster children.
- ✓ The right not to be discriminated against on the basis of religion, race, color, creed, gender, marital status, national origin, age, or physical handicap.
- ✓ The right to continue with foster family values and beliefs, so long as the values and beliefs of the foster child and the birth family are not infringed upon and consideration is given to the special needs of children who have experienced trauma and separation from their families.
- ✓ This shall include the right to exercise parental authority within the limits of policies, procedures, and other directions of the SCDSS and within the limits of the laws of the State of South Carolina.
- ✓ The right to training and support for the purpose of improving skills in providing daily care and meeting the needs of the child in foster care.

- ✓ The right to be informed of available support services and to receive assistance in accessing those services.
- ✓ The right to receive information from SCDSS on how to reach personnel 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
The right to receive timely financial reimbursement according to the agreement between the foster parents and SCDSS from funds appropriated by the General Assembly and to be notified of any costs or expenses for which the foster parent may be eligible for reimbursement.
- ✓ The right to information at the time of placement and on an ongoing basis concerning behavioral problems, health history, educational status, cultural and family background, and other issues related to the care of the child which are known to the department.
- ✓ The right to accept or refuse placement of a child in the foster home or to request, upon reasonable notice, the removal of a child from the foster home when the foster parent feels unable to meet the needs of the child; and to have SCDSS work with the foster parent to identify children whose needs can be met in the home.
- ✓ The right to receive any information through SCDSS regarding the number of times a foster child has been moved and the reasons therefor; and to receive the names and phone numbers of the previous foster parents if the previous foster parents have authorized such release and as allowable under state and federal law.

- ✓ The right to be informed of available support services and to receive assistance in accessing those services.
- ✓ The right to receive information from SCDSS on how to reach personnel 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
The right to receive timely financial reimbursement according to the agreement between the foster parents and SCDSS from funds appropriated by the General Assembly and to be notified of any costs or expenses for which the foster parent may be eligible for reimbursement.
- ✓ The right to information at the time of placement and on an ongoing basis concerning behavioral problems, health history, educational status, cultural and family background, and other issues related to the care of the child which are known to the department.
- ✓ The right to accept or refuse placement of a child in the foster home or to request, upon reasonable notice, the removal of a child from the foster home when the foster parent feels unable to meet the needs of the child; and to have SCDSS work with the foster parent to identify children whose needs can be met in the home.
- ✓ The right to receive any information through SCDSS regarding the number of times a foster child has been moved and the reasons therefor; and to receive the names and phone numbers of the previous foster parents if the previous foster parents have authorized such release and as allowable under state and federal law.

- ✓ The right to communicate with professionals who work with the foster child, including, but not limited to, therapists, physicians, and teachers who work directly with the child.
- ✓ The right to communicate with the child's birth family, other foster parents of the child, and finalized adoptive parents of the child with SCDSS approval and without the threat of reprisal when all parties agree.
- ✓ The right to necessary information on an ongoing basis which is relevant to the care of the child, including timely information on changes in the case plan or termination of the placement and reasons for the changes or termination of placement to the foster parent except in the instances of immediate response of child protective service or court order.
- ✓ The right to notice of any hearing or review, and an opportunity to be heard, where the case plan or permanency of the child is an issue, including periodic reviews held by the court or by the Foster Care Review Board. Notice shall be in advance, in writing by SCDSS or the court and shall include timely information regarding the hearing.
- ✓ The right to be considered, when appropriate, as a preferential non-relative placement option when a child who was formerly placed with the foster parents has reentered the foster care system.

- ✓ The right to first consideration, when appropriate, as a non-relative permanent parent of parents for a child who, after 6 months of placement in the foster home, is released for adoption.
- ✓ The right to be provided a fair and timely resolution of complaints concerning the operation of a foster home. The right to an explanation of a corrective action plan or policy violation relating to foster parents.
- ✓ The right to a period of respite upon the request of a foster parent based on SCDSS policy and procedures and state funding for respite care.
- ✓ The right to be heard when a foster parent believes that their rights have been violated. This shall be resolved at the County Director level and/or the level of SCDSS Director of Child Welfare.

This bill of rights shall be given full consideration when SCDSS policies regarding foster care and adoptive placement are developed.

09/2011

Resources:

South Carolina Foster Parent Association

PO Box 39, Elgin, SC 29045

803.865.2020

www.SCFPA.com

*Heartfelt Calling - Statewide Foster/Resource
and Adoptive Parent Recruitment*

888.828.3555

www.HeartfeltCalling.org

*Local County Foster Parent Associations -
Information for local county foster parent
associations may be found on the SCFPA
website. Click the "Directory" tab and go to
"Local County Presidents" page to find your
county.*



South Carolina
foster parent
Association

Post Office Box 39

Elgin, South Carolina 29045

803.865.2020

• www.SCFPA.com