**Foster Parent Bill of Rights**

**(Grievable Issues-Grievance Policy)**

Under section 49-5-281 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, foster parents have thefollowing rights, which are subject to the grievance procedures outlined in this policy.

1. The right to be treated by the Division of Family and Children Services of the Departmentof Human Resources and other partners in the care of abused children with dignity,respect, and trust as a primary provider of foster care and a member of the professionalteam caring for foster children;

2. The right not to be discriminated against on the basis of religion, race, color, creed,gender, marital status, national origin, age, or physical handicap;

3. The right to continue with his or her own family values and beliefs, so long as the valuesand beliefs of the foster child and the birth family are not infringed upon and considerationis given to the special needs of children who have experienced trauma and separationfrom their families. This shall include the right to exercise parental authority within thelimits of policies, procedures, and other directions of the Division of Family and ChildrenServices and within the limits of the laws of the State of Georgia;

4. The right to receive both standardized pre-service training, including training in Division ofFamily and Children Services policies and procedures and appropriate ongoing training, bythe placing agency at appropriate intervals to meet mutually assessed needs of the childand to improve foster parents´ skills and to apprise foster parents of any changes inpolicies and procedures of the Division of Family and Children Services and any changes inapplicable law;

5. The right to be apprised of information, laws, and guidelines on the obligations,responsibilities, and opportunities of foster parenting and to be kept informed of anychanges in laws, policies, and procedures regarding foster parenting by the placing agencyin a timely manner and at least annually;

6. The right to receive timely financial reimbursement according to the agreement betweenthe foster parents and the placing agency and to be notified of any costs or expenses forwhich a foster parent affiliated with the placing agency may be eligible for reimbursement.

7. The right to receive information from the placing agency on how to receive services andreach personnel 24 hours per day, seven days per week;

8. The right prior to the placement of a child to be notified by the placing agency of anyissues relative to the child that may jeopardize the health and safety of the foster familyor the child or alter the manner in which foster care should be administered;

9. The right to discuss information regarding the child with the placing agency prior toplacement. The Division of Family and Children Services will provide such information as itbecomes available as allowable under state and federal laws;

10. The right to refuse placement of a child in the foster home or to request, upon reasonablenotice, the removal of a child from the foster home without fear of reprisal or any adverseaffect on being assigned any future foster or adoptive placements by the placing agency;

11. The right to receive any information through the placing agency regarding the number oftimes a foster child has been moved and the reasons therefore; and to receive the namesand phone numbers of the previous foster parents if the previous foster parents haveauthorized such release and as allowable under state and federal law;

12. The right, at any time during which a child is placed with the foster parent, to receive fromthe placing agency any and all additional pertinent information relevant to the care of thechild;

13. The right to be provided with a written copy of the individual treatment and service planconcerning the child in the foster parent’s home and to discuss such plan with the casemanager, as well as reasonable notification of any changes to that plan;

14. The right to participate in the planning of visitation with the child and the child’s biologicalfamily with the foster parents recognizing that visitation with his or her biological family isimportant to the child;

15. The right to participate in the case planning and decision-making process with theDivision of Family and Children Services regarding the child as provided in Code Section15-11-58;

16. The right to provide input concerning the plan of services for the child and to have thatinput considered by the department;

17. The right to communicate for the purpose of participating in the case of the foster childwith other professionals who work with such child within the context of the professionalteam, including, but not limited to, therapists, physicians, and teachers, as allowableunder state and federal law;

18. The right to be notified in advance, in writing, by the Division of Family and ChildrenServices or the court of any hearing or review where the case plan or permanency of thechild is an issue, including periodic reviews held by the court or by the Judicial CitizenReview Panel, hearings following revocation of the license of an agency which haspermanent custody of a child, permanency hearings, and motions to extend custody, inaccordance with Code Section 15-11-58;

19. The right to be considered, where appropriate, and in accordance with the policies andprocedures of the placing agency, as a preferential placement option when a child whowas formerly placed with the foster parents has reentered the foster care system;

20. The right to be considered, where appropriate, as the first choice as a permanent parentor parents for a child who, after 12 months of placement in the foster home, is releasedfor adoption or permanent foster care;

21. The right to be provided a fair and timely investigation of complaints concerning theoperation of a foster home;

22. The right to an explanation of a corrective action plan or policy violation relating to fosterparents; and

23. The right, to the extent allowed under state and federal law, to have an advocate presentat all portions of investigations of abuse and neglect at which an accused foster parent ispresent. Child abuse and neglect investigations shall be investigated pursuant to Divisionof Family and Children Services policies and procedures, and any removal of a foster childshall be conducted pursuant to those policies and procedures. The Division of Family andChildren Services will permit volunteers with the Adoptive and Foster Parent Association ofGeorgia and the Georgia Association of Homes and Services for Children to be educatedconcerning the procedures relevant to investigations of alleged abuse and neglect and therights of accused foster parents. After such training, a volunteer will be permitted to serveas an advocate for an accused foster parent. All communication received by the advocatein this capacity shall be strictly confidential.

*I acknowledge I have read and received a copy of the Foster Parent Bill of Rights.*

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| Foster Parent/Date | Foster Parent/Date  |