



Successful Youth • Strong Leaders • Safer Communities

## POLICY

**SUBJECT:** Foster Parent Guidelines  
**NUMBER:** CS-121-14  
**APPLICABLE TO:** Case Management Specialists and Case Management Specialists Supervisors Employees

**APPROVED:** \_\_\_\_\_/signature on original/\_\_\_\_\_

**Sam Abed, Secretary**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ 10/7/14 \_\_\_\_\_

### **I. POLICY**

The Department of Juvenile Services' (DJS) provides Foster Parents with the procedures and expectations for the placement of youth in the Foster Family Home. Foster parent(s) shall comply fully with departmental policies and procedures, which includes these Foster Parent Guidelines.

### **II. AUTHORITY**

A. Md. Code Ann., Hum. Svcs. Article, §9-203 and §9-204

### **III. DIRECTIVES/POLICIES RESCINDED**

A. None.

### **IV. FAILURE TO COMPLY**

Failure to comply with a Department's policy and procedures shall be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

### **V. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

Standard operating procedures have been developed.

**VI. REVISION HISTORY**

DESCRIPTION OF REVISION	DATE OF REVISION
New policy issued.	10/7/14

## PROCEDURES

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**SUBJECT:** Foster Parent Guidelines  
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Specialists Supervisors Employees

**APPROVED:** \_\_\_\_\_ /signature on original/

**Linda McWilliams, Deputy Secretary**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ 10/7/14

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I. **PROCEDURES**

Procedures for the Foster Parents upon placement of a youth in their home are provided in the attached Foster Parent Guidelines Manual.



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## DJS POLICY AND STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES Statement of Receipt and Acknowledgment of Review

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Specialists Supervisors Employees

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I have received and reviewed a copy (electronic or paper) of the above titled policy.

I understand that I will be held accountable for implementing this policy, procedures and guidelines even if I fail to sign this acknowledgment form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINTED NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

***THE ORIGINAL, SIGNED COPY SHALL BE PLACED IN YOUR CASE FILE.***

# DJS PLACEMENT UNIT

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## FOSTER CARE



## FOSTER PARENT GUIDELINES

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OCTOBER 2014

**DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE SERVICES  
FOSTER PARENT GUIDELINES**

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**DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE SERVICES  
FOSTER PARENT GUIDELINES**

**I. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

These guidelines provide Foster Parents with the procedures and expectations for the placement of youth in the Foster Family Home. Foster parent(s) shall comply fully with departmental policies and procedures, which includes these Foster Parent Guidelines.

**II. HEALTH CARE**

***Medical & Dental***

1. Foster parent(s) shall cooperate in the medical and dental care and planning for the foster youth, including the completion of a physical by a health care practitioner within the first 30 days of placement for DJS foster youth placed in the foster home.
2. Foster parent(s) shall arrange transportation for foster youth to all necessary medical and dental appointments and shall keep immunizations current for foster youth.
3. Foster parent(s) shall make medical and dental appointments and follow-up appointments as needed.
4. Foster parent(s) shall immediately report health problems to the Case Management Specialist (CMS) and should give advance notification, if possible, if treatment is needed. Foster Parents shall use the foster youth's Medical Assistance card and seek out health practitioners who accept the card.
5. Foster parents shall seek pre-approval from the Resource Supervisor or designee and/or Foster Care Coordinator (FCC) for medical or dental services not provided or covered by the foster youth's Medical Assistance except in the case of an emergency.

***Medication***

1. Foster parent(s) must responsibly handle all over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription medications for any household member including the foster youth. The foster parent shall ensure all OTC and prescription medications are kept in a place inaccessible to the youth.
2. Foster parent(s) shall be responsible for observing the dispensing and recording the exact amount of any medication prescribed for a youth by a health-care practitioner.
3. Foster parents shall seek pre-approval from the Resource Supervisor or designee and/or FCC for medication and pharmaceutical supplies not provided or covered by the foster youth's Medical Assistance except in the case of an emergency.
4. Foster parent(s) shall maintain a *Medication Log (Appendix 1)* for each DJS youth to document the foster youth's medication. By the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month, the foster parent(s) must submit the prior month's medication log to the youth's CMS.
5. Whenever possible, prescriptions must be purchased from a pharmacy that accepts Medical Assistance.
6. No foster youth shall be given prescription medication not specifically prescribed for him/her or any OTC medication that is contraindicated for the youth.

***Mental Health***

1. The foster parent shall cooperate in the planning of and transportation to mental health care.
2. The foster parent shall respond to any suicidal behavior immediately by contacting the appropriate medical professional for an assessment or treatment, including calling 911 or the emergency hotline at 1-800-422-0009 in Maryland or 1-800-273-8255 outside of Maryland, or ensuring the youth receives emergency medical care.
3. The foster parent shall report the incident to the CMS and FCC immediately.

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### **III. TREATMENT SERVICES**

#### ***Planning***

1. Foster parent(s) shall participate as part of the treatment team in the planning for foster youth in the home. The Department shall make all final decisions about the treatment service plan in consultation with the youth's treatment team.
2. Foster parent(s) shall work cooperatively with the Department staff as a treatment team member to implement a treatment service plan for each foster youth.
3. Whenever possible, foster parent(s) will attend Title IV-B reviews and school conferences.

#### ***Education***

Foster parent(s) shall participate in the educational process of foster youth.

1. Foster parent(s) shall enroll each foster youth in school within five (5) school days of the placement of the foster youth where this is part of the treatment and transition plans. Foster youth shall not be home-schooled.
2. Foster parent(s) shall participate in the best interest meeting where the selection and arrangement for an educational program that is appropriate for the foster youth's age and abilities is determined by DJS and representatives from the local school system.
3. Foster parent(s) shall attend parent/teacher conferences, as necessary, and be available to assist in dealing with educational problems as they arise, unless otherwise prescribed by the treatment plan.

#### ***Interaction with Youth's Family***

1. Foster parent(s) shall demonstrate respect for the foster youth's parent/guardian/custodian and participate in visitation planning. Foster Parents shall allow communication between the foster youth and the parent/guardian/custodian, by mail, electronic mail, and by telephone, in accordance with the foster youth's treatment service plan.
2. Foster parent(s) shall work closely with the DJS to develop the youth's transition plan by:
  - a. Assisting youth in preparing for visits with the parent/guardian/custodian(s);
  - b. Providing transportation to and from visits with the parent/guardian/custodian, if the parent/guardian/custodian is unable to provide transportation;
  - c. Encouraging and supporting communication between parent/guardian/custodian and youth; and
  - d. Communicating and consulting with parent/guardian/custodian regarding youth's behavior and needs.

### **IV. DAILY LIVING**

Foster parent(s) shall provide structure and daily activities designed to promote the individual, physical, social, intellectual, and emotional development of the foster youth in their home.

Foster parent(s) may ask foster youth to perform the same chores assigned to the foster parent's biological or adopted children. All care provided to foster youth should be consistent, as much as possible, with that provided to other family members. Foster parents shall include foster youth in family activities.



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***Board Rate***

Foster parents receive a monthly board rate for the care of the foster youth. The rate is established by DJS. The board rate is to be used to provide care for the foster youth. Foster parents are expected to use the board rate to provide the following:

1. Food (including formula);
2. Housing;
3. Utilities used by the foster youth in the home;
4. Over-the-counter medications;
5. Transportation and bus passes;
6. Fees for extracurricular activities;
7. Bedding;
8. Gifts for special occasions;
9. Toiletry and personal care items; and
10. Allowance

***Supervision***

1. The foster parent shall provide appropriate supervision for the foster youth to ensure that the safety, whereabouts, and activities of the foster youth are consistently monitored. It is imperative that appropriate supervision is provided.
2. The foster parent can arrange alternate supervision as approved by the Department in advance or as needed. Any adult providing supervision of a foster youth must have an acceptable driving record, arrest record and child protective service clearance.
3. The foster parent(s) must obtain approval from the DJS CMS for any overnight trips or vacations that include the foster youth.

***Discipline, Control and Punishment***

Corporal punishment methods are prohibited by the Department. Foster parent(s) shall teach and train each foster youth to develop responsibility and self-control and model appropriate behavior.

***Religious Beliefs and Ethnic Customs***

Foster parent(s) shall recognize, encourage and support the religious beliefs, ethnic customs and language of foster youth and their families. The foster family may wish to expose the foster youth to its religious beliefs and heritage, but may in no way force their beliefs on the foster youth or place any form of pressure on the youth to conform to the family's religious beliefs and ethnic customs (including mandatory attendance at religious services). No foster youth shall be subjected to derogatory remarks or jokes about his/her religious beliefs, ethnic background or language. Foster parent(s) will arrange transportation to religious services or ethnic events for a youth whose beliefs, customs and practices are different from their own.

***Food & Nutrition***

1. The foster youth must be provided with 3 well-balanced meals per day and one snack per day. The foster youth must be provided access to the same food as other family members, unless the youth has specific dietary restrictions.
2. Meal planning will be based on the four basic food groups: dairy, grains and cereals, meat, and fruits and vegetables.
3. Foster parent(s) will provide for any special dietary needs of a foster youth, as agreed upon with the Department.

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4. The family will generally eat the evening meal together.
5. Snacks provided will be nutritious.
6. Foster parent(s) will provide the foster youth with a bag lunch or lunch money on school days if free lunches are not provided by the school.

***Clothing & Personal Items***

**1. General**

Any item of clothing, personal hygiene or toys/electronics brought with the youth or purchased for the youth belong to the youth. These items may have been purchased by the biological or foster family (including extended family), donated or gifted. All clothing and personal hygiene products shall travel with the youth to each placement. Hand-me downs or thrift shop items shall not be the majority of the youth's wardrobe; the monthly clothing allowance allows foster parents to purchase new items for youth. All youth shall be permitted to select clothing that meets their own specific needs or ethnic or religious requirements, including pregnant, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning youth.

**2. Clothing**

On the day the youth enters the foster home, the DJS CMS shall inventory the clothing the youth brings with them, determine what clothing items the youth needs, and provide a copy of the inventory and the list of needed clothing to the foster parent(s). The CMS also shall provide the foster parent with a copy of the *Minimum Clothing and Personal Care Guidelines (See Appendix 2)*. The foster parent is responsible for purchasing those items necessary to complete the inventory of clothing. Foster parent(s) may request an initial one-time clothing allowance to purchase clothing items that the youth may need immediately. Funds must be requested in advance through the placing Resource Office.

Upon entering placement, the CMS may provide an initial one time allowance to the foster parent to assist with the purchase of clothing as follows:

- a. Infants to age 5 = \$60;
- b. Ages 6 to 11 = \$75;
- c. Ages 12 and up = \$100; and
- d. All additional clothing expense shall be deducted from the monthly board rate.

Clothing must be clean, well fitting, attractive, seasonal, appropriate to age and sex, and comparable to the community standards. The foster parent(s) shall ensure the youth's clothing is laundered as needed but at a minimum weekly.

The CMS shall ensure each foster child has a suitcase or large canvas bag in which to transport all clothing and personal items. Plastic trash bags are not acceptable under any circumstance. The suitcase or bag shall travel with the youth to each placement.

**3. Personal Items**

Foster parent(s) shall provide each foster youth with shampoo, soap, toothpaste, and other toilet articles including deodorant, toothbrush, hairbrush, comb, razor, and feminine hygiene products (for girls), with considerations given to the youth's personal brand preference.

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Foster youth shall be allowed to bring and acquire personal belongings. All personal clothing and belongings will be sent with the youth when they leave.

**4. 60 day review**

After the youth has been in placement for 60 days, the CMS shall review the youth's clothing inventory with the Foster Parent to determine if the youth's minimum clothing needs are being met. If these needs are not being met, the CMS shall establish a plan with the Foster Parent to meet the Monthly Clothing Guidelines in the next 90 calendar days.

***Spending Money / Allowances / Savings***

Each youth shall be given a minimum weekly allowance based on their age as listed below. These are minimum guidelines and may be increased depending on the youth's maturity, circumstances, and participation in the household chore activities. The foster parent shall consult with the CMS to determine the appropriate allowance amount above the minimum.

5 to 7 = \$2

8 to 11 = \$5

12 to 13 = \$10

14 to 16 = \$15

17 and above = \$20

This allowance may be associated with the fulfillment of certain tasks or chores. Allowance money is for the foster youth's personal use and lunch money, clothing allowance or items that would normally come out of the board rate, for example, toiletries or food, shall not be paid with the youth's weekly allowance. Foster Parents shall establish a savings account for the youth and encourage the youth to save.

***Recreation & Community***

Foster parent(s) shall help foster youth identify interests and seek activities in the home and the community that are directed at those interests. Foster parent(s) shall provide transportation to these activities.

Foster parent(s) shall provide opportunities for recreational activities and access to facilities, which are appropriate to the foster youth's age, abilities and interests.

Foster parent(s) shall encourage the foster youth to take part in community services and activities both with the foster family and on their own.

***Home Visits***

The CMS will not approve any overnight visits or day passes for any foster youth within the first 30 days of placement, except **in cases of emergency such as sickness or death of a member of the youth's family**. Youth may have weekly telephone contact with their family during this time. Visitation with the family may occur within the first 30 days as part of counseling or at DJS appointments.

The CMS may approve an overnight visit or day pass after the first 30 days; however, all home visits and day passes shall be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and may be approved depending on each youth's circumstance. Continued home visits are dependent on the youth's behavior while on home

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visit or day pass and their behavior when they return to the foster family home. Continued home visits also are dependent on the biological family's circumstances and behavior. Home visits may be suspended due to the youth's behavior in the foster home or during home visits. Approval must be granted for any visit lasting over 72 hours by the Foster Care Coordinator or Resource Supervisor or designee.

**V. SECURING DANGEROUS OR CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

Foster parent(s) shall keep all prescription medication, firearms or weapons, and any other potentially hazardous items in a secured, locked location inaccessible to any minors in the home, including the foster youth. Foster parent(s) also should keep all personal confidential items in a locked file or location.

**VI. FOSTER PARENT LEAVE**

***Medical Leave***

In instances where a foster or kinship parent becomes severely ill or requires major surgery or debilitating treatment and recovery is expected or projected beyond (more than) 30 days the foster care/kinship parent or designee must notify the Department in writing. The Department shall then assess whether the youth shall remain in the home.

***Respite Leave***

In instances where a foster or kinship parent requests respite leave, the foster care/kinship parent or designee must request the leave from the Department in writing. The Department shall then assess the need for respite.

**VII. INCIDENT REPORTING**

Foster parent(s) shall report events that result or may result in a major disruption to the foster home; significant harm to youth, household members or members of the community at large; or may have a negative impact on the youth, the foster family or the Department.

An applicant or foster parent shall report their arrest and/or arrest of any household member to the CMS and FCC. Continued use of the home will be reviewed by the Department of Juvenile Services.

The foster parent(s) shall report incidents according to the Department's *Incident Reporting –Private Residential Child Care Programs (Appendix 3)*. New foster parents will take the first available training provided by the Department on Incident Reporting. After receiving a copy of the policy, foster parent(s) will contact DJS foster staff for any necessary clarifications. Foster parents will sign and return a departmental receipt acknowledging their receipt and understanding of DJS' *Incident Reporting –Private Residential Child Care Programs* and Form. Foster parents shall fully comply with the Department's policy and procedures.

***Child Abuse and Neglect***

Child abuse and neglect of youth are prohibited by State law. If a foster parent is aware of any incident of abuse or neglect of the foster youth or child of the foster youth, the foster parent shall report the incident in compliance with the *DJS Reporting and Investigating Child Abuse Policy (Appendix 4.)*

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***Runaway or AWOL***

If the youth runs away or is unaccounted for more than one hour, the foster parent shall report the incident to the youth's Case Management Specialist (CMS) or Case Management Specialist Supervisor (CMSS) and if unable to notify the CMS or CMSS, then notify the local law enforcement.

***Suicide Behavior***

The foster parent shall respond to any suicidal behavior immediately by contacting the appropriate medical professional for an assessment or treatment, including calling 911 or the emergency hotline at 1-800-422-0009 in Maryland or 1-800-273-8255 outside of Maryland, or ensuring the youth receives emergency medical care.

**VIII. RECORDS**

Foster parent(s) shall keep basic records on all foster youth placed in their home. The records are to be kept in a locked file cabinet or safe, inaccessible to the foster youth, other youth and guests in the home or other family members. Upon request, the Department may provide a locked file cabinet or safe. Foster youth records and/or files are to be returned to the youth's CMS at the time of discharge.

1. Foster parent(s) will keep, at least, the following information on each foster youth:
  - a. Name of foster youth;
  - b. Age;
  - c. Race;
  - d. Home address;
  - e. Natural parent's name, address and telephone number;
  - f. DJS CMS name, address, work and home telephone numbers or emergency telephone numbers;
  - g. Foster youth's referral packet, including school and medical records;
  - h. Copy of foster youth's individual treatment service and transition plans;
  - i. Copy of foster youth's court order of commitment;
  - j. Copy of the youth's Certificate of Placement complete with date admitted and discharged from the foster home;
  - k. Brief description of any unusual incident that may occur, including medical emergencies and steps taken in those emergencies;
  - l. Medical Assistance Card number or medical insurance card number;
  - m. School reports; and
  - n. Names, phone numbers, and email addresses of the CMS and CMSS.

**IX. MONTHLY REPORTS**

Each month the Foster parents shall submit to the Department:

1. invoices and mileage reports to receive payment or reimbursement;
2. progress reports on each foster youth as determined by the Department; and
3. a DJS medication log for each youth as necessary.

**X. CONFIDENTIALITY**

The foster family shall treat personal information about a foster youth and his/her family in a confidential manner in accordance with the *DJS Confidentiality Policy (Appendix 5)*.

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1. Any/all records on foster youth maintained by the foster parent(s) shall be kept secure in a locked file cabinet or safe.
2. When asked information concerning the foster youth by anyone (including school personnel), the foster parent(s) shall ask why the information is needed and how it will be used. If the foster parent(s) thinks giving the information is not appropriate, they should refuse to give the information and request the person contact the DJS CMS.
3. Information requests for medical records including substance abuse assessments, clinical/mental health evaluations and educational testing, Individual Education Plans, etc. are to be referred to the DJS CMS.
4. The copying, distributing and/or interpreting of DJS records and/or files to another source is strictly prohibited without the Department of Juvenile Services' written permission.

**XI. APPENDIX**

1. Medication Log
2. Minimum Clothing and Personal Care Guidelines
3. DJS Incident Reporting Policy
4. DJS Reporting and Investigating Child Abuse Policy
5. DJS Confidentiality Policy

**DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE SERVICES  
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**APPENDIX 1 FOSTER CARE MEDICATION LOG**

**YOUTH NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DOB:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ASSIST#:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FOSTER HOME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MEDICATION:** 1. \_\_\_\_\_ Dosage: \_\_\_\_\_ Physician: \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Dosage \_\_\_\_\_ Physician: \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Dosage \_\_\_\_\_ Physician: \_\_\_\_\_

**MONTH/YEAR:** \_\_\_\_\_

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Med 1																
Med 2																
Med 3																

	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
Med 1																
Med 2																
Med 3																

**DOCUMENTATION CODES:**

- R-** Refused (youth refused to take medication as prescribed)
- S-** Successful (youth took meds as directed)
- F-** Forgot/Unable to Administer (Youth was unavailable to take meds at required time)
- HV-** Home visit; gave meds to parent to administer

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SUBMIT FORM MONTHLY**

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**APPENDIX 2**

<b>MINIMUM CLOTHING &amp; PERSONAL CARE GUIDELINES</b>	
BOYS	GIRLS
8 sets of underpants, 4 undershirt	8 sets of underpants, 4 bras, as needed
5 pairs of school pants or uniforms	2 dresses & 5 pairs of school pants or uniforms
5 sets of play clothes	3 sets of play clothes
1 pair of dress pants, shirt, tie & belt	1 dress or pants outfit suitable for a special event
6 shirts (not undershirts)	6 light sweaters/blouses/tops
8 pairs of socks	8 pairs of socks/stockings/tights, as appropriate
3 pairs of shoes: 1 pair of athletic/canvas shoes 1 pair of dress/non-canvas shoes 1 pair of everyday school shoes	3 pairs of shoes: 1 pair of athletic/canvas shoes 1 pair of dress/non-canvas shoes 1 pair of everyday school shoes
2 sets of sleepwear, 1 robe, & 1 pair of slippers	2 sets of sleepwear, 1 robe, & 1 pair of slippers
<b>SEASONAL WEAR</b>	
BOYS	GIRLS
1 winter coat	1 winter coat
1 light weight jacket	1 light weight jacket
1 pair of gloves & 1 hat	1 pair of gloves & 1 hat
1 pair of boots	1 pair of boots
rain gear/coat	rain gear/coat
5 sets of shorts and T-shirts	5 sets of shorts and T-shirts
1 pair of summer shoes/sandals	1 pair of summer shoes/sandals
<b>MINIMUM ITEMS FOR INFANTS – BIRTH TO 1 YEAR OLD</b>	
CLOTHING	EQUIPMENT
6 – 8 undershirts	2 - 4 receiving blankets
6 - 8 pajamas/sleepers	2 regular blankets
6 shirts	crib
8 pairs of socks	4 – 6 crib sheets
5 every-day outfits	1 stroller
2 dress-up outfits	1 car seat
2 sweaters	8 bibs
1 hat, scarf, & mittens	2 - 4 rattles/toys to stimulate infant
1 sun hat	
1 snow suit/winter coat	
1 pair shoes	
1 pair of winter footwear	