

San Bernardino County Foster Parent's Bill of Rights:

The purpose of defining foster parent rights is to ensure that the best interests of the child are being served. This can best be achieved if foster parents know their participation as a team member is valued and that they can voice concerns with the child's social worker and/or involved department of children's services (DCS) staff regarding decisions affecting the child without fear of reprisal. Foster parents can participate as an effective team member only when they are assured access to information not restricted by confidentiality laws and regulations. Foster parent rights include, but are not limited to the following:

1. The right of the foster care provider to be treated with dignity respect and equal consideration as an essential professional member of a child welfare team.
2. The right to be given appropriate pre-service and outgoing education and support to enhance the foster parent's skills in meeting the mutually assessed special needs of the children in their foster care.
3. The right to view available existing relevant information concerning the child's placement . Foster parents shall be permitted to accept or refuse a placement within their home. DCS shall be given prior notice of at least seven days if removal of the child is requested by the foster parent unless it is agreed with DCS that less time is necessary.
4. The right to be informed of known available existing issues relevant to the child that may jeopardize the health and safety of the foster child or foster family or alter the manner in which foster care should be administered. Such information may include but is not limited to:
 - Behavioral issues which may affect the care and supervision of the child. This includes any know or suspected dangerous behaviors as listed on the DCS 156.1 PROPENSITY OF DANGEROUS BEHAVIORS
 - History of physical, medical, emotional, or sexual abuse
 - Special medical and/or behavioral needs of the child and identification of all current medications that have been prescribed for the child
 - Past and current infections and diseases relative to the placement, and
 - Educational and past existing medical records (e.g. immunizations).
5. The right to receive any relevant available information as agreed upon by the foster parent and social worker, concerning the number of times a child has been moved and the reason for the moves. The names and telephone numbers of the previous foster parents provided if the previous foster parents have authorized such release.
6. The right to be considered as a placement option when a child who was formerly placed with the foster parent is re-entered into foster care, if the placement is consistent with the best interest of the child and other children in the foster parents home.
7. The right to receive medical consents and insurance coverage information for the child upon placement or within 14 days of placement. To be provided reimbursement for DCS authorized and/or court approved medical or psychological expenses incurred or not covered by insurance or other resources.
8. The right to be informed of how to receive services and reach DCS personnel on a 24

hours a day, 7 days a week basis.

9. The right to be provided the portion of the case plan that describes the Department's plan considering the placement of the child in the foster parent's home. Inherent in this right is the foster parent's responsibility to support activities that will promote the child's right to have relationships with his/her birth family and cultural heritage.

10. The right to be given relevant information by DCS regarding the child and the child's family, that is pertinent to meeting the child's needs and developing the permanent plan for the child. In order to protect the rights of the child's family, disclosure of information regarding the child's family shall be limited to that which is relevant to the care of the child.

11. The right to be notified of designated meetings and staffing concerning the child in order to actively participate in the case planning and decision-making process regarding the child, including but not limited to:

- Interdisciplinary team staffing's
- Concurrent planning meetings

12. The right to be given reasonable notification of changes in the case plan. The right to provide input and communicate with other professional members of the team, concerning the plan of services for the child and to have that input given full consideration in the same manner as information presented by other professionals.

13. The right to be given a minimum of seven-calendar day's written notice for termination of the placement and reasons for the termination of placement. The foster parent has the right to accept a verbal notice instead of a written notice.

The exceptions to the seven-day notice will be:

- Child is physically or psychologically endangered
- Court orders removal
- Parents /guardians order the removal (for voluntary placements)
- Signed wavier from foster parents, or
- Removal is from interim placement directly into an adoptive placement

14. The right to receive written notice no earlier than 30 days nor later than 15 days preceding all status review court hearing for Dependant children. The notice is to include the date, time, location of the hearing, child's juvenile court number, and name of the judge or officer hearing the case. The right to be given a copy of the recommended findings and orders, name and phone number of the child's attorney, and the right to provide written input to court proceedings.

15. The right to receive consideration along with approved adoptive homes in the event that no one in the child's birth family is appropriate or desires to assume responsibility for the child.

16. The right to receive timely financial reimbursement commensurate with the special care needs of the child as specified in the case plan, as well as timely reimbursement for expenses for which the foster parent is eligible, according to TAD eligibility rules

17. The right to be provided a fair, timely, and impartial investigation of allegations or

complaints concerning the foster parent's licensure. The right to request to be provided the opportunity to have a support person of the foster parent's choosing present during the investigation. The right to be provided due process during the investigation and the right to request and receive DCS management review of decisions that affect licensing parameters.

18. The right to address significant concerns up to the chain of command, without fear of reprisal. After these steps, this may include the request of assigning a different social worker if there is an inability of the social worker and the foster parent to work together in the best interest of the child.