



Hearts & Homes
for Youth

Therapeutic Foster Care

FOSTER PARENT HANDBOOK

Revised November of 2019

The purpose of this handbook is to provide foster parents a clear reference document outlining the policies, procedures, and expectations of a HHY foster parent. A copy of this handbook is given to all foster parents and in turn the foster parents sign an affidavit of receipt. From time to time supplementary handouts and memorandums are issued for inclusion in this handbook.

HEARTS & HOMES FOR YOUTH, INC.
THERAPEUTIC FOSTER PARENT HANDBOOK
Table of Contents

100	Introduction.....	1
200	Agency and Program Mission.....	2
300	Therapeutic Foster Care Program Description.....	3
400	HHY Foster Parent Contract.....	6
500	Policies and Procedures Governing the Contractual Agreements with HHY Foster Parents	
501	Equal Opportunity Non-Discrimination Policy Statement	9
502	Foster Family Selection Criteria	10
503	The Licensing Process	12
504	Application Fee.....	13
505	Personnel File	13
506	Training.....	13
507	Confidentiality	14
508	Homeowners Insurance/Damage Policy	14
509	Required Telephone and Internet Service.....	17
510	Transportation.....	17
511	Special Safety Precautions: Alcohol, Medicine, Poisonous Chemicals.....	18
512	Children's Records	18
513	Monthly Behavior Logs	18
514	Meetings.....	18
515	Payments to Foster Homes: Board and Difficulty of Care	19
	-Board Payments and Use	19
516	Children's Allowances, Savings Accounts and Clothing Purchases	20
	□ □ Intensity Levels of Care.....	22
517	Medical Services to Children.....	24
	□ Medical Emergencies.....	24
518	Emergency Services & Incident Reporting.....	24
519	Religion and Culture.....	25
520	Dress, Hygiene and Grooming.....	26
521	Visitation and Communication	27
522	Overnight or Long Distance Trips	27
523	Discipline	27
524	Children's Grievance Procedure.....	28
525	Child Abuse and Neglect	29
526	Respite Policy	31
527	Day Care	33
528	Firearms	33
600	Foster Parent Annual Recertification.....	33
650	Non Compliance and Additional Supports	33
700	Suspension and Revocation of Foster Parent License.....	34

800 Foster Parent Grievance Procedure..... 36

900 Foster Parent Responsibilities..... 37

AFFIDAVIT OF RECEIPT AND UNDERSTANDING.....41

TABLES OF APPENDICES
(Forms, Charts, Worksheets)

Monthly Behavior Log..... A

Medication Record.....B

Health Visit ReportC

AWOL Policy D

Hearts & Homes For Youth, Inc. (HHY) defines the role of foster parents as they relate to the requirements for foster care. As a foster parent, you will be an important part of the treatment team. Therefore, it is important that the role you will play in the child's treatment be spelled out as clearly as possible.

Therapeutic foster care is teamwork for the benefit of the child. This is a difficult goal considering the type of children we place in foster homes. The typical foster child has problems dealing with relationships, resents authority, has low self-esteem, has had multiple placements, and desires a relationship with his/her natural family that is often impossible. Understanding this, HHY will help you to deal with the child's presenting problem(s) and to develop and implement an appropriate behavior plan for your child.

A therapeutic foster parent should be able to provide supplemental, temporary care for the child. This involves providing an environment in which the child progresses mentally, physically, emotionally, and socially. The desired outcome of our program is twofold: that children are provided with a nurturing environment where they have the opportunity to heal and that they are prepared for independence. Some youth will transition to independence from your home and others will be reunified with their families before that time. In order to fulfill this goal, the therapeutic foster parent must work with children and parents to heal the relationships among birth parents, siblings, other family members, peers, and significant others.

It is abundantly clear that foster parents occupy a unique and critical position. There will be demands made of your time and you will experience an intensity of involvement exceeding that which is normally experienced in other situations. Foster parents must be reliable, take initiative, and have integrity. The children and adolescents with whom we work have generally had far too few positive adult figures with whom to identify. Foster parents must, in words and actions, provide a positive example for HHY children. You must be concerned with your personal appearance, your language, and the attitudes which you project regarding the agency and the clients.

THE AGENCY'S MISSION STATEMENT

Vision...

We create a nurturing environment in which young people are protected and heal from abuse and neglect and are provided with the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential.

Mission...

We empower young survivors of abuse, neglect, and trauma with support, advocacy, and counseling to prepare them to make positive life decisions and become independent adults

THE MISSION OF THERAPEUTIC FOSTER CARE

The mission of our therapeutic foster care program is to provide a healing environment for youth that will allow them thrive in their homes, communities, and schools as they prepare for transition, whether it's to self-sufficiency at age twenty-one or reunification with their family of origin.

FAMILY TIES FOSTER CARE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Program Definition:

HHY's Therapeutic Foster Care is a family and community based program for youths whose needs require intensive care and treatment outside of their own homes. HHY's program provides comprehensive, individual services implemented by a team of professionals and trained families. Treatment plans are designed to enable youths to live successfully in family and community settings.

HHY's Therapeutic Foster Care Program includes the following components:

- * Professional foster parents who are required to complete 25 hours of pre-service training, 4 hours of mother baby training, and a minimum of 20 ongoing training hours per licensing year.
- * One Social Worker for every ten youths in treatment care.
- * Frequent calls and bi-weekly home visits by the Social Worker.
- * Individualized Treatment Plans (Success Plans) with quarterly reviews.
- * Community based weekly therapy with licensed mental health clinicians.
- * Emergency after hours crisis intervention.
- * Respite care.
- * Provision for medical care, education, recreation.
- * Preparation for each youth for return to natural family, adoption and/or independent living.

Admissions Criteria:

Department of Social Services Youths, Age Range: 0-21

Department of Juvenile Justice Youth, Age Range: 0-21

Youths exhibiting the following behaviors are *not* eligible:

- * A primary diagnosis of alcoholism, drug addictions or severe brain damage,
- * A severe cognitive deficits, and/or assaultive antisocial behavior which represents a high risk to others, including gross sexual misconduct, and endangers his/her own or someone else's life or safety.

The most frequent presenting problems are:

- Depression
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Difficulties with Authority/ Oppositional Defiant Disorder
- Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Learning Disabilities
- Sexual acting out
- Lying, cheating, stealing
- Eating disorders
- Enuresis, encopresis
- Nightmares
- School problems
- Anger and self-control issues
- Issues with motivation and self-regulation
- Behavior problems
- Impulsivity
- Attachment disorders

Referral Process

Referrals are accepted from local Departments of Social Services, Department of Juvenile Justice, and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Required materials: family and social history, health records, records of immunization, medical assistance card or insurance policy number, psychological or psychiatric report within one year, and updated school records.

Child Placement Procedure:

1. Referral packets received by Foster Care Program;
2. Potential match is made - information on youth shared with foster parents;
3. Foster youth visits with the family in the family's home for an interview along with DSS and HHY staff;
4. When appropriate and feasible, successive day and overnight visits are scheduled with the family;
5. Youth, foster family/HHY, and DSS agree to the placement,
6. Placement occurs.

This is an ideal process and is sometimes altered to help facilitate a youth dire need for placement into your home.

Please keep in mind that payments do not occur until the following month of placement, discuss with the social worker a plan for ensuring that the youth has the items that they will need for the first few weeks of placement in your home.

Services to Biological Parents

HHY Therapeutic Foster Care Program offers the following services to a youth's biological family, as appropriate:

- * Coordination with DSS for access to documentation and invites to meetings.
- * Assistance with visits and supervision with birth family members, when deemed appropriate.
- * Phone access to the youth so that they may call home or receive collect calls.

HEARTS & HOMES FOR YOUTH, INC
Foster Care Programs

Foster Parent Agreement

Date: _____

Foster Parent Name/s: _____

I agree to adhere to the following conditions of care as indicated in the following foster parent agreement:

1. I pledge that I will serve as a licensed therapeutic foster parent for HHY for a minimum of six months.
2. I understand and agree that I can only hold 1 (one) foster care license, at any given time nor can I run an in-home day care or take in boarders.
3. I will keep all information on the child placed in my home confidential.
4. I will provide parental supervision and guidance appropriate to meet the child's age and developmental level. Plans for appropriate supervision will be developed with assigned clinical social worker. In the event the child is out of my care of other activities, I shall know there whereabouts.
5. I will provide daily essentials, including a nutritionally balanced diet adequate for child's growth and development, adequate shelter, clothing appropriate for the season, bedding, individual linens, toothbrushes, combs and other toiletries.
6. I will be sensitive to and respect the child's needs, tastes, and values, and support the child's religious beliefs and cultural customs.
7. I will not discriminate against a child regarding race, gender, sexual orientation, and religious beliefs.
8. I will establish clear expectations for and limits on behavior. I will use MANDT training techniques to de-escalate and understand and deal with negative behavior in a positive way, and reward positive behavior. I will not use any form of discipline that has not been approved by HHY, Inc. I will not lock my child out of the home. I will provide my child with a key to the home.
9. I will appropriately baby-proof the home, if youth under age 5 are residing in my home. I will ensure to include at minimum, baby locks on cabinets with sharp objects or chemicals, covers on all electrical outlets, screened barriers around fireplaces, radiators, and portable space heaters, safety gates at the top and bottom of stairways with two or more steps, and will ensure all alcoholic beverages, medications, poisonous chemicals, and sharp objects are up high or in

locked cabinets. Additional measures may be necessary and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

10. I will not expose the child to any illicit drugs, tobacco, or alcohol abuse.
11. I will submit in a timely manner all the required documentation including medication logs, behavioral logs, children health records, and report cards.
12. I understand the foster parents are required to carry homeowners or renters insurance to defray any possible costs occurred as a result of property damage caused by a foster child in care. I understand that if I choose not to have insurance I am responsible for all costs of property. I also understand that I am responsible for meeting the deductible insurance costs of any non-covered items.
13. I understand if there is damage to my home besides the regular wear and tear of having a foster child in the home and it is not appropriate for an insurance claim, such as breakage, scuffed paint, or minor repairs, and I want financial reimbursement, I must do the following:
 - a. Inform my clinical social worker both verbally and in writing of any loss or damages caused by the foster child. Establish child's responsibility (with assistance of case manger), and have the damaged property inspected by case manger.
 - b. Request for reimbursement within 30 days of the discovery of actual loss or damages caused by foster child.
14. I will provide or arrange for safe appropriate transportation to all required medical, dental, school, and therapy appointments as well as, social and cultural events.
15. I will attend treatment plan meetings, educational meetings, court reviews, therapy sessions, and other meetings as requested by the agency.
16. I will promptly notify HHY of changes within the foster family, such as: medical emergencies, illness, changes of household members, overnight trips and any child grievance.
17. I will respect the foster child's birth family, assist the agency in maintaining and improving his/her relationship with the birth family, and communicate information about birth family to clinical social worker.
18. I will cooperatively attend all ongoing trainings as required to keep my foster parent license.
19. I understand that upon child's termination or departure of my care, I will surrender to HHY all property, possessions, and monies belonging to the child. I understand that any misuse of child's money or withholding of personal property could result in legal action against me and/or withholding of my final foster parent payment.

- 20. I will report any incidents of suspected physical or abuse or neglect according to prescribed procedures.
- 21. I will cooperatively arrange respites with other foster parents and adhere to respite requirements.
- 22. In the event I can no longer fulfill my role as a foster parent, I must give at least two weeks written notice before terminating placement.
- 23. I understand that my licensure expires 1 year from the date of this assigned agreement and I will need to sign another foster parent agreement at that time to continue with licensure.

The agency agrees to adhere to the following conditions of support for Foster Families:

- 1. Will provide the foster family with a reimbursement that is financially commensurate with the care needs of the child as specified in the treatment plan. Payment will be made a monthly basis following the month of service.
- 2. Will treat all foster parents with dignity, respect, and consideration as a professional member of the agency's child treatment team, and
- 3. A pledge to inform the foster parent of the date, time, and location of Child reviews and resulting appropriate recommendations, providing information to assist a foster parent without disclosing confidential information.

I have read and understand the conditions of the foster parent agreement. I understand that failure to comply with the above regulations shall result in a corrective action that may include the withholding of my difficulty of care payment or fines, removal of the child from my home and/or termination as a foster parent from Hearts & Homes for Youth, Inc. I understand that any expenses incurred as a result of my failure to comply with HHY program regulations will be my responsibility.

Foster Parent Signature : _____ Date: _____
 Foster Parent Signature : _____ Date: _____
 HHY Signature : _____ Date: _____

CC: Foster Parent File

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES GOVERNING THE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS
WITH HHY FOSTER PARENTS**

501

**EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT**

It is the policy of Hearts & Homes For Youth, Inc. to ensure equal opportunity to all individuals regardless of race, color, national origin, religious or political beliefs, age, marital status, handicap, or sex.

This policy applies to all personnel actions to include hiring, promotion, assignment of duties, and training. Likewise, it pertains to the provision of all departmental services and programs to those persons who receive our assistance.

Anyone believing he or she has been discriminated against may file a complaint or grievance with the CEO, phone number (301) 589-8444, or you may contact the Equal Opportunity Office at the Department of Human Resources, 1123 North Eutaw Street, Baltimore, MD 21201, phone number (410) 383-5646.

Additionally, any person or organization concerned with the organization's general treatment or degree of accessibility to specific populations should contact the office of the CEO. We invite any constructive suggestions for the improvement of our services and administrative practices.

502

**HEARTS & HOMES FOR YOUTH, INC.
THERAPEUTIC FOSTER CARE PROGRAM**

Foster Family Selection Criteria

All families possess a variety of strengths and abilities. Hearts & Homes For Youth, Inc. Therapeutic Foster Care Program selects parents from a pool of applicants who are interested in becoming professional foster parents. Foster parents must both possess particular abilities which meet the complex needs of the children in our program and be willing to increase these abilities through required HHY trainings.

HHY seeks mature individuals who are committed to the challenging task of helping an emotionally and/or behaviorally disturbed child adjust to a family and community. HHY foster parents must work cooperatively with agency social work staff, therapists, schools, local departments of social services, and biological family in a team approach to treat children in their homes. In this context, foster parents

must provide a therapeutic environment in which a child's basic physical and emotional needs are met and enriched. Foster parents are active in all aspects of the child's life (education, health care, recreation) and are asked to respect lifestyles and beliefs which are different from their own.

Foster children often feel a sense of loss and self blame for having to leave their natural family for placement in foster care. They present difficult behaviors. Foster parents must be able to understand this grief and loss and positively manage difficult behaviors as well as promote a child's self esteem.

Foster parents must be able to establish clear expectations and limits; structure a child's experiences positively and supervise his/her behavior; and help a foster child cope with feelings of anger, stress, depression, and anxiety. They, therefore, must handle these feelings appropriately themselves.

HHY actively seeks mature people who possess good communication, listening and problem-solving skills. We seek people who are honest, motivated, energetic, and flexible yet capable of maintaining firm, consistent, realistic expectations for foster children. Foster children often have had few positive adult role models and so foster parents are called upon to be good examples.

The Code of Maryland Regulations establishes clear restrictions and requirements for licensing foster parents. A description of the licensing process for foster parents is provided at the initial orientation session.

502 FOSTER PARENT SELECTION CRITERIA

REQUIREMENTS OF A FOSTER HOME:

1. Each child must have a separate bed and adequate space for the storage of clothes and belongings.
2. Boys and girls may not sleep in the same room. There can be a difference of no more than five years between two children sharing a room.
3. The home must have adequate living space and meet housekeeping and safety standards to pass fire and health department inspections.
4. The home must have a working telephone with long distance service.
5. The foster parent(s) must possess a car with seat belts. Exceptions can be made when reviewed prior with the Program Administrator.
6. A home must be located in a neighborhood that is physically safe.

REQUIREMENTS OF FOSTER PARENTS:

1. Individuals who are 21 years of age or older and possess valid driver license.
2. Individuals with a background free of violent or abusive crime or any crime against a child.
3. Individuals who are in good health and physically capable for caring for children.
4. Individuals whose incomes are sufficient to meet their own financial needs.
5. Individuals who are not foster parents for another agency and who do not provide adult or child daycare or take in boarders.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FOSTER PARENTS:

1. Individuals who are emotionally strong and able to model consistency, honesty, self-regulation, and healthy communication for a young person.
2. Individuals who have the time to parent providing family activities, daily one on one time, being available for meetings that pertain to the youth, and ensuring needed medical visits are completed.
3. Individuals who demonstrate an ability to work as a member of a team and within a chain of command.
4. Individuals who respect lifestyles and beliefs which are different from their own and are open to working with birth families.
5. Individuals who are able to manage difficult behaviors positively by using versatile disciplinary methods.
6. Individuals who possess good communication, listening and problem-solving skills.
7. Individuals who capable of maintaining firm, consistent, realistic expectations for foster children.
8. Individuals who demonstrate an ability to establish and use a support system and the capability to share themselves and their families with others.
10. Individuals who are patient and comfortable with a changing environment, and willing to accommodate to meet the needs of the young people in their care understanding that change is often a lifelong process.
11. Individuals that have an open mind and are receptive to feedback.

503 THE LICENSING PROCESS

All Hearts & Homes For Youth, Inc. foster parents and adult caregivers living in the foster home must complete the licensing process prior to becoming foster parents. Foster parents must meet the requirements mandated by the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) for Child Placement Agencies. The basic steps foster parents need to complete for licensing are:

1. Attendance at a HHY foster care orientation. An overview of foster parenting, a description of foster children and the requirements of licensing are reviewed.
2. An application, including references and a non-refundable \$45 processing fee.
3. A home study, fingerprinting, notarized consent for a child protective services background check and child support clearance. (*1)
4. A public health and fire department inspection that is consistent with the foster parent's county of residence regulations outlining these guidelines.
5. Submission of several items of paperwork including verification of employment or stable income, auto insurance, homeowners insurance and driver's license.
6. Attendance at all pre-placement trainings (25 hours). *The Parent Resources for Information Development and Education (PRIDE) Curriculum is utilized to provide the initial and ongoing training for potential foster parents.*
7. It is a legal requirement that the health of foster parents be such that it does not endanger the health of the child in placement. Each member of the foster home will be required to submit a physical and proof of a negative PPD test prior to licensing and at two year intervals.

It is the responsibility of the foster parent applicant to compile all of the necessary paperwork; however, the Family Ties Staff will assist as needed in obtaining the documents.

*1 All household members over the age of eighteen shall be subject to an FBI criminal background investigation and a state police clearance in compliance with Family Law article 5-560-5-568. HHY will not hire or continue to employ persons who have been charged or convicted of any violent crime that reflects a disregard for human life and safety.

*2 A written statement of a doctor of medicine (licensed to practice in the State or employed by or acting as an agent of the State, or a political subdivision thereof) certifying that the physician has examined the individual and found nothing in his or her general physical and emotional condition which would endanger the health of the children, and that the examination included an analysis of the result of a tuberculin test or chest x-ray administered by the certifying physician or any other person at his or her request according to local health department policy. Any known health problems will be re-evaluated at whatever intervals are suggested by the

physician.

504 APPLICATION FEE

Each prospective foster family is required to pay a one time, non-refundable application fee of \$45.00 to defray the processing costs. Checks are made payable to Hearts & Homes For Youth, Inc. and should accompany the foster parent application and questionnaire.

505 PERSONNEL FILE

All foster parent personnel documentation will be kept confidential in a locked foster parent file. Contents of the foster parent file will be released only with the foster parents' permission except when required for inspection for licensing or by court order. The foster parent file will include a record of all licensing materials, contracts, reassessments of the home, trainings attended, funds disbursed, correspondence and ongoing case notes and is maintained by the agency even after inactivity.

506 TRAINING

The State of Maryland requires that therapeutic foster parents attend training in order to keep licensure current. Training is designed to help you facilitate a healing home environment for the youth placed in your home as well as to provide you with support.

Applicants are required to attend twenty-five (25) hours of pre-placement training. Each licensed foster parent in a household must complete a minimum of 20 hours of ongoing training per licensing year.

Examples of training topics include:

- a. The history and goals of foster care; Roles and relationships in foster care between agency personnel, foster parents, the child's birth parent, and the child; Grief and Loss; Attachment and Bonding, Effects of Child Abuse and Neglect, Cultural Competence
- b. Child Development, Attachment and Brain Development, Understanding and Managing Difficult Behaviors, Self-Awareness, Self-Esteem, Therapeutic Parenting, Sexuality
- c. Mental health diagnosis and treatments, Depression, Anxiety Disorders, Substance Abuse and Risks, Complex Trauma
- d. Confidentiality, Health and Safety, Program Policies and Procedures, Engaging the Foster Parents children and extended family
- f. *CPR/First Aid

HHY follows the American Red Cross standards for completion of CPR annually and First Aid every three years. HHY may, at times, provide opportunities for certification. Foster parents can also receive credit for attending pre-approved outside trainings which are relevant to foster parenting.

The foster parent file reflects foster care trainings offered, those attended, and the total number of training hours accumulated. **Since there are more than 20 hours of training offered annually, there is ample opportunity to complete the training requirement. Also, foster parents are able to obtain their hours through various modalities including online and through training packets. However, ten of the twenty hours must be in person.**

507 CONFIDENTIALITY

Foster parents are required to keep all client information confidential. To discuss any foster child with anyone except HHY staff or anyone to whom staff refers the foster parent(s) to is against the law. Such talk is detrimental to the child's development as it could prejudice others against him/her. If a question should arise concerning the matter of confidentiality you should seek guidance from the social worker or the Program Administrator.

508 HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE/DAMAGE POLICY

Foster parents must carry homeowners insurance to defray any possible costs occurred as a result of property damage caused by a foster child in care. If a foster parent is renting their home we strongly recommend that you obtain renters insurance. Property damage includes breakage, missing items or defacement of property. If foster parents do not have said insurance, then foster parents are responsible for all costs for damages. Foster parents are responsible for meeting deductible insurance costs and any non-covered items.

HHY has established Damage Policy Guidelines for damages caused by a foster child:

The goal of these guidelines is:

1. To provide a mechanism to ascertain whether a youth is responsible for certain losses or damages,
2. To assist the youth in accepting responsibility for their actions, and
3. To insure that foster parents do not have to shoulder the burden for extraordinary financial losses due to a foster child's behavior.

This policy is designed for situations involving more than normal wear and tear in a foster parent

home. Consequently, it is not expected that you will make a claim to cover every occurrence of breakage, scuffed paint, or minor repairs. If damage by the foster child is suspected, the following protocol will be employed:

1. Inform your social worker, both verbally and in writing (use Behavior Logs), of any loss or damages possibly caused by the youth. Establish the youth's responsibility (with the assistance of your social worker). Damaged property should be inspected by the Social worker.
2. Requests for reimbursement need to be received within 30 days of the discovery of the actual loss or damage. This is particularly crucial if the youth leaves the foster home, as the youths' savings accounts with Hearts & Homes For Youth, Inc. are closed after 30 days, with the money following the youth to their next placement.
3. The Social worker will consult with the Program Administrator to determine if reimbursement is appropriate.
4. If damages are determined to be in excess of normal wear and tear, the foster parent must obtain a written estimate for repairs or replacement. For stolen items, copies of original receipts or credit card bills are very helpful.
5. The foster parent, Social worker and youth will establish a written plan determining who will pay for the loss or damage and the schedule of payments. Unless the situation is an emergency, no reimbursement will be made if there was not prior approval by the Assistant Program Director or Program Administrator for the reimbursement.
6. In certain situations involving minimal damages, the youth may be required to pay from his/her allowance or job earnings, over a specified amount of time. The social worker will assist with the development of a plan for timely reimbursement.
7. If the loss or damage exceeds all monies in the youth's account, the agency's CEO will need to be consulted. Claims can be made with the State of Maryland Liability Insurance for losses caused to others or their property outside the foster home.

Circular Letter SSA #90-10 FOSTER CARE LIABILITY INSURANCE

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to clarify the liability insurance coverage for foster parents, describe the provisions of the policy and explain the process of initiating and processing claims.

II. BACKGROUND

The Social Services Administration must provide, by law, (Family Law 5-529) liability insurance for "foster parents who care for children under foster parent programs." According to the State statute the liability insurance must provide coverage for:

1. bodily injury and property damage caused by the foster child to persons or property other than the foster parent or his property;
2. actions against the foster parents by the natural parents for any accident to the foster child.

III. DESCRIPTION OF COVERAGE

The State provides insurance up to the limits and within the terms of its policy for claims of bodily injury, property damage and personal injury sustained by foster parents, other residents of the foster home, and third parties, which arise out of an act of a foster child. Excluded from coverage are damage to automobiles owned or operated by foster parents, and claims that are covered by other insurance.

The State also provides insurance for claims brought against the foster parent by the natural parents of a foster child due to the foster child's injury. Excluded from coverage are actions for alienation of affection or loss of society, intentional or unlawful acts of foster parents, claims that are covered by other insurance, and injuries sustained by a foster child while participating in an athletic event.

The deduction under this policy is \$2,500, which will be paid by DHR/SSA.

Note

(I) the above is not a complete summary of the coverage and exclusions; (ii) only close examination of the policy itself will reveal whether a particular claim is or is not covered; and (iii) nothing in this circular letter creates any rights or obligations beyond those established in the extant insurance policy.

When in doubt foster parents should file a claim; DHR/SSA and the insurance company will determine if the claim is covered by the policy.

The insurance company has the right and duty to defend any lawsuits seeking damages and has the authority to investigate and settle any claim or lawsuit.

IV. PROCESS FOR FOSTER CARE LIABILITY INSURANCE CLAIMS

The foster parent should report the incident to their LDSS caseworker. It is important that there be prompt reporting of all claims. The insurance company may deny claims not incurred and reported within one year of the date of the accident. The caseworker shall investigate the claim by interviewing the claimant (who may be a foster parent or third party), by interviewing the

foster child (if possible) to determine if the child caused the damage, and by inspecting the alleged damage in order to complete the report. The caseworker shall then send the referral to the SSA Insurance Coordinator at 311 West Saratoga Street, Room 526; Baltimore, Maryland 21201. The referral should include:

- (a) An incident report (DHR/SSA 875) (Attachment A);
- (b) One original estimate for the damages written on a vendor's stationery or invoice.

The SSA Insurance Coordinator shall review the material for appropriateness and completeness. If the claim is less than \$2,500 a Release Form will be sent (Attachment B) to the caseworker to have signed and notarized by the claimant. The form should then be returned to the SSA Insurance Coordinator.

If the claim exceeds \$2,500.00 a cover letter will be prepared by the SSA Insurance Coordinator and a copy of all material sent to the insurance agent who in turn will have an adjuster assigned. The adjuster's report will be submitted to the insurance company. If the claim is covered, the insurance company will issue a check to the claimant.

Once all referral material is completed, the claimant should be receiving a check within 6 to 8 weeks for claims under \$2,500. Claims over \$2,500 require additional time and would take longer.

509 REQUIRED TELEPHONE AND INTERNET SERVICE

All foster parents are required to maintain telephone service with a long distance carrier at their place of residence and to notify their Social worker of any changes to their numbers, both at work and at home. Foster parents are also required to have the internet.

HHY strongly recommends that foster parents notify their local phone company to block the use of commercial toll telephone phone calls. Examples include: phone sex lines and psychic readings. HHY will not be held liable for the reimbursement for these types of calls.

510 TRANSPORTATION

Foster parents must have a safe motor vehicle available which is sufficient to meet the needs of foster children. All vehicles used to transport children must be in compliance with appropriate motor vehicle laws of the State. Foster children will be transported only by persons possessing a valid driver's license and adequate insurance coverage. Safety belts must be used. Foster children under 12 years old should be transported in the back seat. Foster children under 8 years old should be transported in appropriate sized car seats that meet state regulations.

511 SPECIAL SAFETY PRECAUTIONS - ALCOHOL, MEDICINE, POISONOUS

CHEMICALS

Foster children must not be exposed to drugs or excessive use of alcohol. Medicine and poisonous chemicals must be locked and inaccessible to children. Alcoholic beverages must be stored out of reach of children.

For some HHY children, it will be necessary to determine with the social worker on a case by case basis if other special safety precautions are necessary, i.e., locking knives, sharp objects, etc.

First aid supplies must be easily accessible. Emergency telephone numbers must be posted.

512 CHILDREN'S RECORDS

Foster parents must keep a record of each foster child admitted to their home. The record must contain vital descriptive and medical material, an ongoing record of behavior, care provided, funds received, and how funds are managed. The required forms for keeping such records are provided by the HHY social worker at the time a child is placed.

513 MONTHLY BEHAVIOR LOGS

Foster parents are required to keep a weekly objective written record of each foster child's behavior. It should be objective and list problematic and/or positive behaviors and any discipline or rewards given. Foster parents also need to complete the other requested information on the weekly Behavior Logs (i.e., allowance, days or missed school, respite information). The behavior logs should be reviewed with your social worker during a home visit. This behavior record is very important as it provides a clear record of observations which can be assessed over time. Information foster parents provide is essential for progress reviews and updating treatment goals.

514 MEETINGS

It is essential that foster parents attend meetings pertaining to the child's placement, development and issues. Foster parents are required to attend all meetings pertaining to the foster child placed in their home. Examples of these meetings include all pre-placement meetings, quarterly treatment plan reviews, quarterly progress reviews, meetings with the HHY Social worker, court reviews, school meetings, foster parent training and other special meetings or counseling sessions as necessary.

515 PAYMENTS TO FOSTER HOMES

Board Payments -

This breakdown will be used for all youth including TFC and Damamli- TFC. Board payments are provided to foster parents for the basic costs of caring for a foster child. This includes food, utilities, phone, clothing, education, travel and allowance. The following breakdown serves as a rough estimate and guide of the breakdown of the Board Payment.

Item	Annual	Monthly
Food and Personal Needs	\$3,240	\$270
- Includes personal hygiene products, toothpaste, shampoo, detergent, grooming, bedding, over the counter medication.		
Utilities	\$1,140	\$95
- Clients share of electric, heat, water, phone, internet		
Client Cell Phone*	\$480	\$40
Recreation	\$660	\$55
- Outings, Gifts for special occasions		
Clothing Allowance	\$1,080	\$90
Education	\$360	\$30
- School Supplies, Extracurricular activities		
Transportation	\$840	\$70
- Gas and bus pass		
Allowance**	\$1440	\$120
Savings (directly deposited)	\$960	\$80
Total	\$10,200	\$850

Hearts and Homes encourages each of our parents to aid their youth in learning budgeting skills. To further develop budgeting and independent living skills, Hearts and Homes requests that foster parents provide youth their funds at a minimum of twice a month. Once a youth is 17 years old they should be assisted in budgeting the funds allotted for allowance, cellphone, and clothing (as developmentally appropriate).

Damamli parents receive \$300 for the care of the youth in their home infant child. These funds may be used by the parents to purchase supplies or given to the young lady to purchase supplies with the review of a budget and supervision.

* If a youth does not have a cell phone when first entering the home, it is the foster parent’s responsibility to assist the youth with getting a phone within the first 2 months. This includes providing \$60 towards the purchase of a phone and \$40 towards the bill each month.

Difficulty of Care- payments are provided to parents as a means of compensating them for the professional care they provide to the children placed in their homes and any extra expenses they may incur by having a behaviorally or emotionally disturbed child in their home. The payment will vary depending on the intensity level of care required by the child. The payment is made on monthly basis; is not taxable; and can be made via direct deposit or expedited check. When a foster child is out of the foster home for 4 or more days, HHY will deduct the per diem rate from the monthly payment. This will not affect your Board payment, which you will receive as long as a child is placed in your home.

All foster care payments are non-taxable (as per IRS Publication 17, page 79).

516 CHILDREN'S ALLOWANCES, SAVINGS ACCOUNTS AND CLOTHING PURCHASES

A certain portion of the Board payment is allocated for both the personal allowance and the clothing allowance for the child:

Clothing inventory will be conducted quarterly to ensure that youth have adequate clothing, parents are encouraged to save receipts for clothing purchases. When a youth turns seventeen the foster parent is encouraged to provide the youth with the clothing allowance directly.

The child's allowance is for his/her personal use and is not to be given in lieu of lunch money, clothing allowance, and other items that are to be covered with the board payment. The allowance amount for a youth is \$120. Upon entering the home, the allowance disbursement will be discussed with youth, foster parent, and social worker. If allowance is withheld for any reason the remaining funds must be placed in a separate savings account for the youth. A print out of summary for the account should be provided at the time of the success plan (every three months).

The foster parent should document the distribution of allowance on the Monthly Behavior Log for review by the social worker. This worksheet must be turned in to the social worker on a monthly basis.

SAVINGS

A certain amount of the Board payment is also designated for the child's savings. This money will be automatically deducted from the board amount and directly deposited into an agency managed savings account on the child's behalf. The reserve and savings funds go into this account. The reserve fund is for emergency situations involving the child. All uses of these funds must be approved by the Program Administrator.

For Christmas/Holidays - A foster child, with prior approval from their Social worker, may use some of their savings account funds to purchase holiday gifts. The maximum deduction will be \$50.

INTENSITY LEVELS OF CARE

Intensity levels are means to determine the level if need and services that a youth may need to be successful in your home. This is assessment is made based on a variety of factors All youth enter HHY's Foster Care Program on Level 3 and on a case by case basis, the agency will determine of the youth's level needs to be upgraded.

I. Youth Behavior/Mental Health

Level 3- Youth on Level 3 may have experienced/be experiencing:

- Extended length of time in foster care
- Some placement disruptions due to behavior or extreme emotional needs.
- Some drug or alcohol use
- Resolving phase of mental illness.
- Behaving younger than their biological age (Bio age \neq Psychological age)
- Lying/Stealing/Defiance/Lack of Motivation/Issues with self-control and self-regulation
- Varying levels of social skills
- Recreational/educational programs are needed but are able to attend community programs

Foster Parent Tasks

- Bi-weekly meetings with social worker requiring foster parent presence
- Need for transportation provided to appointments, monthly family visits, etc.
- Youth can be left alone to play in home and with others for short periods of time. May require flexible work schedule.
- Behavior management techniques needed to improve some behaviors.
- Provide all documentation to Case Manager.

Case Manager Tasks

- Home visits bi-weekly, but more frequently if needed.
- 3 month Service Plan cycle.
- Evolving Permanency Planning needs.
- Case manager sometimes transports youth.
- Case manager assists in locating many services

Payment

- Board payment - \$850/835 month*
- Difficulty of Care payment - \$625/ month*

*monthly amounts will vary slightly depending on the number of days in the month

Level 4- Youth on Level 3 may have experienced/be experiencing:

- Frequent, severe crises such as aggression, fire setting, hurting animals, sexual acting out, or extreme verbal abuse.
- Needs frequent physical restraints.
- Frequent self-injurious behavior such as suicide attempts, chronic running away.
- Many placement disruptions due to behavior.
- Frequent drug and alcohol abuse.
- Acute phase of mental illness.
- Coming from an institutional setting.
- Inability to attach.
- Physical illness or disabilities, such as insulin dependent diabetes or HIV+.
- Chronic lying, stealing, gang activity, lack of conscience or remorse.
- Extremely poor hygiene.
- No social skills training.
- Doing very poorly in school, often truant, or school refusal. In non-public special educational setting.
- Needs significant intervention for medication management by psychiatrist.
- Medical needs are extreme in nature or require extensive appointments
- Youth needs intensive supervision for after school, such as therapeutic camps or ongoing tutoring. Not stable in day care

Foster Parent Tasks

- Very high frequency of case meetings with schools, therapists, doctors, etc.
- Very high transportation provided for appointments, birth family visits, etc.
- Frequent crisis interventions in the home and in the community, use of restraints.
- Very close supervision needed, even in the home. May require stay-at-home parent or flexible work schedule.
- Youth is physically exhausting due to activity level or crisis interventions.
- Youth requires extensive behavior management techniques and redirection.
- Provide all documentation to Social worker.

Social worker Tasks

- Home visits at a minimum of twice a month but often more frequently needed.
- Less than 3 month Service Plan cycle.
- Many extra, or emergency case meetings.
- Intense Permanency Planning needs, including reunification work, TPR and adoption tasks, or conflicts with DSS.
- Social worker often transports youth.
- Daily or frequent crisis calls, pager use.
- High social worker involvement in finding and maintaining many services. Many unmet needs.

Payment

- Board payment - \$850/835 month.*
- Difficulty of Care payment - \$800/ month.*

*monthly amounts will vary slightly depending on the number of days in the month

517 MEDICAL SERVICES TO CHILDREN

All HHY children must receive annual medical, annual vision, and bi-annual dental examinations and any corresponding health care recommended as a result of those examinations. Physician's accepting Medical Assistance must be used.

Under no circumstances is prescription medicine to be given or withheld without permission from the prescribing physician. Medication administration procedures must be strictly followed.

Should a need for specific medical treatment arise, the social worker should be notified prior to treatment or as soon as possible in the case of a medical emergency.

Medical record keeping will encompass any and all facts pertaining to doctor visitations, hospitalizations, physicals and the distribution of medications. All doses of medication that are missed must be reported to the social worker and documented on the Medication Record. Non-prescription medications such as but not limited to Tylenol, Advil, Tums, and Vitamins must be documented on the Medication Record. All medical records must be given to the Social worker in a timely manner.

Foster parents are expected to provide transportation the annual medical, annual vision, and bi-annual dental examinations. Documentation of these visits should be completed on a Health Passport Form and returned to the social worker promptly.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

A medical emergency is any illness, accident or other health problem which poses an immediate threat to a child's life or future health. Any incident involving shock, excessive loss of blood, poisoning, high fever, severe vomiting or diarrhea, respiratory or cardiac failure, broken bones or any other potentially serious symptom or condition is deemed to be a medical emergency. When a medical emergency is declared, these actions are to be taken:

1. If necessary the ambulance is called at 911. Tell the person who takes the call that you have a medical emergency and need an ambulance.
2. Ride to the hospital with the child.
3. Once the situation is under control, all appropriate persons are to be phoned. An Incident Report on all medical emergencies must be filed by the social worker.

518 EMERGENCY SERVICES AND INCIDENT REPORTING

Emergency services are provided to HHY children and foster parents 24 hours daily. These services are provided for serious problems that require immediate assistance, consultation or notice to HHY.

The following problems constitute a crisis situation and warrant immediate notification to your

Social worker who will produce an incident report:

Any arrest of a child or incident that results in legal action or involvement by the police; any accident or injury to the child; any allegation by a child or adult of physical injury, sexual assault, or threat of bodily injury from any source; any time the child is away from home or school without permission or has not returned home at the designated time/AWOL; any complaints from school or neighbors about behavior of the child; any discovery of drugs, alcohol, weapons, or other illegal, dangerous material in possession of the child; any physical restraint or physical intervention with a child; and any emergency situation that might change the child's living situation.

IF THERE IS AN EMERGENCY

1. During business hours contact your social worker or his/her supervisor at the HHY Burtonsville office (301) 679-1401. If you cannot reach him/her at the office use the on call phone (instructions below).
2. After hours, weekends and holidays use the pager system (instructions below).

In the unlikely event that you cannot reach your social worker after trying the phone number listed above and the pager system, and you have an emergency which might lead to harm to yourself, the child, or others call the police by using 911.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF THE HHY ON-CALL SYSTEM

- Step 1: Dial phone number from a touch tone phone **410-908-4893**.
- Step 2 : Leave a message if no one answers with the following information:
1. Date and Time of call
 2. Your Name
 3. Childs Name
 4. Incident being reported
 5. Location of child, yourself at the time of the call
 6. A number to return the call to
- Step 3 : Wait for the Social worker to call. Please give a reasonable amount of response time. If there is not a response within 15 minutes, please place the call again. Human or technical errors could cause delays in transmission.

519 RELIGION AND CULTURE

HHY does not have a particular religious orientation or an association with any particular cultural or ethnic group. The agency attempts to support children in continuing participation in accustomed religious practices and cultural and community events.

If a child wishes to attend a religious or cultural event, foster parents should support the child's decision to attend. Under no circumstances should a staff member or foster parent proselytize a youth to a certain religious affiliation. Whenever possible a staff member or foster parent of similar faith or ethnic background accompanies the children attending a particular event. If it is not possible to arrange transportation to a religious service, that church or temple, mosque should be called to see if someone in the church, temple or mosque could assist with transportation to their services, in coordination with social worker and a DSS representative.

Foster parents should make an attempt to hold ethnic events featuring foods, music and decoration from various cultures. Children, parents and community members from that culture participate in preparations for this event, whenever possible.

520 DRESS, HYGIENE AND GROOMING

HHY believes that teaching children good habits of dress, grooming and hygiene is an important function of child care.

Upon entry into HHY, the assigned social worker will complete a clothing inventory for the youth entering your home to ensure that they have at least the minimum amount of clothing required for a youth in foster care. If the youth does not meet clothing minimums, at the request of the foster parent, HHY will advance the parent a portion of their next stipend payment to purchase these items.

The agency recognizes that styles of dress and grooming depend on race, culture and personal taste. We also realize that some children are likely to choose a mode of physical appearance which would result in immediate negative identification in the community. Foster parents are expected to act as role models in this regard. Children are required to be clean and properly groomed. Clothing must be clean, in good repair, and appropriate to the occasion.

The agency is aware that some children may not know the hygiene and grooming practices appropriate to their age and sex. Foster parents must teach children such practices and are expected to spend one-on-one time with children to provide this instruction and supervision. A daily routine should be developed that allows supervision of dental and personal hygiene.

521 VISITATION AND COMMUNICATION

General - HHY recognizes that communications with others is a basic right. The agency does not limit a child's communications unless there is a clear danger from a specific source. Any such limitation can be made only with appropriate approval. Limitations must be recorded in the Weekly Behavior Log.

Mail - Children are allowed to receive mail unopened and unread. Any suspicion of contraband is reported to the Post Office. Children are informed of this policy.

Telephone - Children are allowed to make or receive telephone calls at reasonable hours. On line monitoring of phone calls is only permitted with DSS consent or a court order.

Foster parents are responsible for blocking entertainment numbers i.e., 976#'s and/or toll calls from their home phone line(s). HHY is not responsible for fees resulting from such calls.

Internet - Foster parents must provide internet access and appropriate supervision for foster children while they are using the internet.

Visits - Children may have guests subject to prior approval. Children are allowed to visit family and other approved persons in accordance with their individual treatment plans and court orders. Such visits should not be limited as a punitive measure.

522 OVERNIGHT OR LONG DISTANCE TRIPS WITH FOSTER CHILDREN

Any trips which are more than 50 miles, involve an overnight stay, or are out of the state of Maryland must be approved by the social worker in advance of the trip. The social worker will notify the appropriate referring agency. The following must be taken along on the trip: MA card, medical release form and fact sheet containing the parent/guardian(s) telephone number, description of the child and any pertinent medical facts such as allergies, medications, etc. The Social worker must be given a phone number where you can be reached in case of an emergency.

REASONABLE & PRUDENT PARENTING

For youth in foster care, it is important to instill a sense of "normalcy" and to avoid the social stigma often attached to children for being in foster care. "Normalcy" is ensuring a child's range of experiences while in foster care are typical of the range of experiences of any child of the same age.

The following activities are examples of some age/developmentally appropriate cultural, social, enrichment, and/or extracurricular activities:

- Ability to participate in an after school activity.
- Ability to stay overnight at a friend's house.
- Ability to date when it's age appropriate.
- Ability to participate in holiday and historical observances

Foster parents are to exercise due diligence in using their discretion when allowing youth to participate in the aforementioned activities. They must have an initial meeting at the residence or place of activity, maintain communication with the adults involved, and keep a record of addresses and contact information.

523 DISCIPLINE

1. HHY is required by State regulations to have and follow clearly defined policies and procedures regarding the discipline of children. These are available to staff, foster parents, referral sources, the child and the child's parent or legal guardian.
2. Discipline shall be individualized to fit the needs of the child. The methods of appropriate discipline shall be developed with the treatment team members. Continuing assistance will be provided to foster parents in maintaining these methods.
3. Safeguards in the Administration of Discipline.
 - a. When children break rules or behave inappropriately, the response of the foster parent must be consistent and therapeutic. Any restrictions must be employed in conjunction with positive behavior programs which reinforce 1) appropriate behavior, 2) intervals during which inappropriate behavior has not occurred and 3) exploration of reasons for inappropriate behavior and educating children on alternative appropriate behavior. It is important to remember to allow time for children to "release steam" and to vent their anger or frustration in a constructive manner. Remember, we often have to teach them appropriate ways of dealing with their feelings through our words and in our actions.
 - b. Only foster parents or other caregivers responsible to the substitute parent, approved by the agency, and known to the children, shall discipline children.
 - c. Physical holding as a form of restraint shall be used only to the degree necessary to protect the child from injury to self or others.

4. PROHIBITED PUNISHMENTS

- a. Corporal punishment which includes physical hitting or any type of physical punishment inflicted in any manner upon the body may not be used.
- b. Physical exercise such as running laps or performing pushups may not be used.
- c. Requiring or forcing the child to take an uncomfortable position such as squatting, bending, or repeated physical movements shall not be used.
- d. Children may not be:

- e. Subject to verbal remarks which belittle or ridicule them or their families.
- f. Denied emotional response as punishment.
- g. Denied meals, clothing, bedding, sleep, mail or visits with their families as punishment.
- h. A child at any age may not be shaken.
- I. Children in foster care may not be placed in a locked room.
- j. Mechanical or chemical restraints may not be used.

524 CHILDREN'S GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

HHY is responsive to the complaints of children. A child may make a grievance at any time. Children are informed of the procedure during their first day of orientation.

A child may file a grievance with any staff member. The staff member is required to file a written report of the grievance with their direct supervisor. Such a report must be filed whenever, in the staff member's judgment, the child makes a complaint which should be considered a grievance, even though the child does not explicitly request that a grievance be filed. Any alleged deviation on the part of a foster parent from agency policies on the care, treatment, or management of children must be regarded as a grievance by any staff member hearing such allegation. If there is suspicion of abuse or neglect, the staff member must also report to the state office responsible for investigation.

The supervisor immediately investigates any grievance, talking to all parties concerned. Then determine what action should be taken, if any, and conduct an interview to inform the concerned parties. The grievance report, including a brief summary of the action taken, is maintained in the child's file.

The agency realizes that this policy may result in the filing of unfounded grievances. For this reason, grievances are considered allegations until the truth can be determined.

525 CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

(A) As a part of the Licensing Process, all foster parents receive written material and a verbal explanation of the Child Abuse and Neglect Law in Maryland. Parents are required to sign a Statement of Understanding Abuse and Neglect Laws which is kept in the personnel file.

(B) The following procedures have been established to govern the reporting of any incident or suspected incident of child abuse and neglect:

1. All staff members of child care agencies shall immediately report all suspected cases of child abuse and/or child neglect to the agency administrator or his/her designee, and to the local Department of Social Services or the appropriate law enforcement agency (State Police or County Police). It is HHY's preference that reports are made to the local Department of Social Services.
2. Agency administrators should actively encourage their staff members to notify the administration and the local department of social services or law enforcement agency of any case of suspected abuse or neglect. Agency administrators should not, however, through action or policy, prohibit anonymous reporting.
3. All staff members should cooperate fully with any investigation of a suspected case of child abuse or neglect.
4. When a staff member is required to provide testimony on a suspected case of child abuse or neglect in a court of law, that staff member should be permitted to do so without loss of pay, sick leave, annual leave or other benefits.

ABUSE: Any "physical injury or injuries sustained by a child as a result of cruel or inhumane treatment or as a result of malicious act or acts by any parent, adoptive parent or other person who has the permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a minor child."

OR

"Any sexual abuse of a child, whether physical injuries are sustained or not."

OR

Any mental injury meaning any observable, identifiable and substantial impairment of a child's mental or psychological ability to function.

SEXUAL ABUSE: "Any act or acts involving sexual molestation or exploitation, including but not limited to incest, rape, or sexual offense in any degree, sodomy or unnatural or perverted sexual practices on a child by any parent, adoptive parent or other person who has the permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a minor child."

NEGLECT: When a child "has suffered or is suffering significant physical or mental harm or injury as a result of conditions created by the absence of his parents, guardian, or custodian, or by the failure of that person to give proper care and attention to the child and his problems. However, a child may not be considered to be neglected solely because he is receiving nonmedical remedial care and Treatment recognized by State Law in lieu of medical Treatment."

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please direct them to your social worker.

526 RESPITE POLICY

1. **STAFF NEEDS TO BE INFORMED AT LEAST 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE WHEN A CHILD IS TO GO ON RESPITE.**

We need to know where our children are at all times. This is the same expectation as when you take a child away on a trip. We need to know where the child is going and for how long they'll be gone. Notification of the respite is the responsibility of the full time parent.

2. **UNLESS AN EMERGENCY ARISES, A DEFINITIVE END DATE FOR THE RESPITE SHOULD BE SET IN ADVANCE.**

It is important for staff to know where the child is at all times and the child has a right to know when the full time parent will be returning. This will avoid anxiety on the part of the children, as well as miscommunications between the full-time and respite parents. It will also assist in ensuring more timely reimbursements.

3. **EXCEPT IN EMERGENCIES, ANY ADDITIONAL OR EXTENDED RESPITES MUST BE APPROVED BY THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR IN ADVANCE.**

Respite is provided by HHY to allow both parents and youth an opportunity for a break. Respite parents are allotted 2 days of respite per month (24 days of respite per year). Any respite over 24 days per year will be deducted from the foster parent's monthly board payment at a rate of \$50 per night. These additional respite days must be approved in advance. *Saving up respites, on purpose, for long trips is not appropriate.*

4. **RESPITE IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY BETWEEN THE FULL-TIME AND RESPITE PARENT.**

Full-time and respite parents are expected to share in the transportation. Both full-time and respite parents should make sure the child is sent with medications, allowance, toiletries, MA Card, homework, proper clothing, and any important information, including emergency phone numbers.

5. RESPITE PAYMENTS ARE NOT PROCESSED UNTIL AFTER THE SERVICE HAS BEEN COMPLETED.

This may mean a delay in reimbursement as related to the bookkeeping checkwrite schedule.

Failure to comply with these procedures and expectations may result in disciplinary action and/or lack of payments to both full-time and/or respite parents.

RESPITE POLICY ADDENDUM

6. EXCEPT IN EMERGENCIES, WHENEVER A CHILD IS TO BE LEFT OVERNIGHT WITH SOMEBODY OTHER THAN THE FOSTER PARENT, STAFF MUST BE CONSULTED AND THE ARRANGEMENT MUST BE APPROVED BY THE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR AND THE DSS WORKER WELL IN ADVANCE

As a rule, our children should not be left overnight with unlicensed individuals. There are times when this may be necessary and we can allow it depending on the circumstances (please refer to reasonable & prudent parenting policy). We must always know where our children are and who is caring for them. At no time can a child be left overnight with an individual who is less than 21 years of age. When a child is left with anybody, foster parents should make sure the caregiver has medications, MA card, emergency numbers, etc. and any other important information. This information should include the case manager's name and number and the emergency pager number.

As a licensed foster parent, it is important that you designate an adult over the age of 21 as your backup person. Your backup person is someone who in your absence can provide supervision of your foster youth for a short period of time. Your backup person will need to complete both a FBI/Maryland background check and a Child Protective Services (CPS) clearance.

527 DAYCARE

As a rule, our children should have adult supervision (21 years or older) at all times provided by licensed individuals. If our children need before and/or after school supervision it is the responsibility of the foster parent, with the assistance of the social worker to find a licensed day care provider in their neighborhood. It is not the responsibility of HHY to provide additional funding for the provision of day care services. However, it is appropriate for the foster parent to use the Recreation and Education allocation of the Board Payment and their Difficulty of Care Payment for day care needs.

529 FIRE ARMS

A firearm checklist will be completed annually to ensure that all firearms are stored properly. All firearms and ammunition must be stored, unloaded, with a trigger lock in a locked container. Ammunition should be stored elsewhere. Any keys giving access to the firearm(s) or ammunition must be inaccessible to children. Loaded firearms are not to be kept in the home unless required because a state, federal, or local law enforcement officer lives in the household. In such cases, the firearms should be stored in accordance to state, federal, and local law enforcement officer's safety procedures.

600 FOSTER PARENT ANNUAL RECERTIFICATION PROCESS

Each year, your foster parent license is required to be renewed. The renewal process includes a foster parent evaluation completed by the agency, a self-evaluation completed by the foster parent(s), a physical inspection of the home and a recertification meeting.

650 NON COMPLIANCE OR NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

In the event that a foster parent has:

- Failed to fulfil their duties as outlined on the foster parent contract
- Is having difficulty implementing the practices of therapeutic parenting
- Been referred for additional support around a specific area by the social worker or self-requested
- Given reason for a concern regarding parenting, safety, or supervision

The following interventions will be utilized (not in successive order):

- Meeting with Program Administrator and/or Assistant Program Director
- Required Attendance to Specific Trainings
- The Creation of an Action Plan (May include increased visits, written report of compliance, family or individual therapy)

- Documentation in foster parent file

The following outcomes may take place after interventions:

- Revisiting Placement Considerations
- Respite only
- Consideration of Non-Renewal of License or Contingent Renewal

700 SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION OF FOSTER PARENT LICENSE

Hearts & Homes For Youth, Inc. as an agency which licenses foster homes for dependent children must ensure that HHY foster homes meet the requirements for licensure as set forth by Maryland law. Our belief is that the intent of Maryland law is to protect the children for whom the State is legally responsible. Therefore, HHY has established the following procedures to govern the suspension or revocation of a foster home license in the event that a home has been found to be out of compliance with Maryland law.

1. HHY may suspend the license of an approved foster home for a violation of applicable regulations for a period not exceeding 60 days. The following apply:
 - a. At least 20 days in advance of a planned suspension, HHY shall give the foster parent:
 - (1) Notice of intended action;
 - (2) A statement of the specific regulation violated; and
 - (3) A statement describing the grievance procedure of HHY.
 - b. When a license is suspended, HHY may not place any new children with the foster parent. The foster parent may retain the children already in care only if the suspension was caused by a violation of regulations that does not threaten the health or safety of the children in care, and HHY agrees that the reason for the suspension can be corrected within 60 days from the date of the suspension.
 - c. HHY shall remove the children in care to another caregiver within 45 days of the date of suspension, if the reason for the suspension cannot be corrected within 60 days.
 - d. HHY shall restore or revoke a suspended license before the end of the suspension period.
2. HHY may revoke the license of an approved foster home for a violation of regulations. The following apply:
 - a. At least 20 days before the planned revocation, HHY shall send the foster parent:

1. Notice of intended action,
 2. A statement of the specific regulation violated, and
 3. A statement describing the grievance procedure of HHY.
- b. When a license is revoked HHY shall, within 30 days, complete the removal of the children in care.

EXPIRED PHYSICAL/TB LICENSE SUSPENSION

Per COMAR policy, HHY is required to immediately suspend the license of any foster parent when their physical/TB or the physical/TB of anyone in their household expires.

700 EMERGENCY SUSPENSION/REVOCAION OF FOSTER CARE LICENSE

3. HHY may suspend or revoke the license of an approved foster home immediately, without giving the 20 days notice, upon a finding that this action is required to protect the health, safety, or welfare of the children in the foster home or of the general public. The following apply:
 - a. If HHY finds evidence of gross incompetence, misconduct in operating the home, neglect or abuse of children in care, or other conditions which pose an immediate threat to their health and safety, HHY shall remove the children upon delivery of a written notice that the license is being suspended or revoked immediately to protect the health, safety, or welfare of the children or the general public. The notice shall include the specific regulation violated and a description of HHY's grievance procedure.
 - b. Once revoked on an emergency basis, HHY may not restore the license unless HHY decides the causes for the revocation have been remedied.
4. All correspondence will be included in the foster parent case file and will be handled with confidentiality.
5. If your foster parent license is suspended, Difficulty of Care payment can be withheld until the first pay period after the foster parent returns to compliance with licensing standards.

GRIEVANCES ON AGENCY DECISION

1. A person aggrieved by a decision of HHY has the right to use the grievance procedure provided by HHY.

- 2.If the foster parent files a grievance before the end of an allowed notice period (1) and (2), above, the foster parent may retain the children in care until HHY's decision on the grievance.

800 FOSTER PARENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A foster parent at his/her request may obtain a formal review of dissatisfaction through discussion with his/her immediate supervisor and higher supervisors when necessary. The CEO may request counsel of the Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors and will inform the Chair of the Personnel Committee of any remarkable personnel actions.

1. A foster parent dissatisfied with some aspect of his/her association with HHY should present, in writing, the matter to his/her immediate supervisor (social worker).
2. An appointment must be scheduled between the foster parent and his/her social worker within two working days upon receipt of the written grievance. During this meeting all aspects of the foster parent's grievance must be considered, discussed, and whenever possible, a solution to the grievance should be negotiated.
3. Within one week the social worker must provide a written report of this meeting's outcome to the Program Administrator. In the event that agreement concerning the problem is not reached during this initial meeting, the social worker is responsible for contacting the Program Director within one week and providing him/her with the written report of the first meeting. This process is to continue in the same manner up to the level of the CEO.

If a grievance is referred to the CEO, a final decision will be rendered at this level and may involve counsel from the Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors.

A written summary of the various steps and outcomes involved in any grievance referred above the level of the case manager must be written by highest level supervisor involved, copies of this summary are to be given to the foster parent involved and are placed in the foster parent's file.

900 FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

INTRODUCTION

A Therapeutic Foster Parent should be able to provide supplemental, temporary care for the child. This involves providing an environment in which the child progresses mentally, physically, emotionally, and socially. The Foster Parent should keep in mind that the first goal of foster care is to reunite families whenever possible. In order to fulfill this goal, the Foster Parent must work with children and parents to heal the relationships among birth parents, siblings, other family members, peers, and significant others.

RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE FOSTER CHILD

1. Provide custodial (food, clothing, shelter) care and supervision twenty-four hours a day.
2. Provide medical care:
 - a. Take the child to and from appointments, unless other arrangements have been made;
 - b. See that the child receives necessary medical treatment and preventive health care;
 - c. Whenever the child needs medical attention, notify the worker before treatment is given, unless it is an emergency situation that requires immediate medical attention;
 - d. Provide worker with documentation of all medical care, including medications given.
3. Provide access to education:
 - a. Enroll the child in school;
 - b. Ensure that the child attends school;
 - c. Talk to the teacher(s) and principal at the time of enrollment and anytime the school or foster parent feels it is necessary;
 - d. Attend school conferences;
 - e. Keep the social worker informed concerning the child's school progress.

4. Promote personal hygiene:
 - a. Help the child learn good hygiene habits
 - b. Model good hygiene habits for the child
5. Abstain from abuse:
 - a. Physical
 - b. Verbal/Emotional/Mental
 - c. Sexual
6. Improve the child's self-image:
 - a. Listen to the child
 - b. Communicate with the child
 - c. Show affection for the child:
 1. Physically, when appropriate
 2. Verbally
 - d. Encourage the child to express emotions
 - e. Accept the child's emotions and different habits as much as possible, without disrupting the families own culture.
7. Maintain records:
 - a. School records:
 1. Teacher(s) names
 2. School papers
 3. School reports and grades

7. Maintain records (con't)

b. Medical records:

1. Medical Treatment and Health Passports:

- a. History
- b. Purpose of Treatment
- c. Provided by whom
- d. When provided

2. Medication Record

c. Personal records:

1. Birth parents:

- a. Names
- b. Addresses and phone numbers
- c. Documented visits

2. Child:

- a. History
- b. Social security card and Medical Assistance card
- c. Birth certificate
- d. Court orders

RESPONSIBILITIES TO BIRTH PARENTS

1. Visitation:
 - a. Contract with birth parents for visitation times
 - b. Encourage visitation:
 1. Phone
 2. Letters
 3. Visits
 4. Transportation
2. Be supportive and respectful of birth families

RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE AGENCY

1. Participate in the development of and follow the treatment plan for the child
2. Participate in monthly trainings
3. Participating in weekly home visits and be available for phone calls
4. Call case worker in an emergency, or if there are concerns or questions
5. Maintain agency records:
 - a. Weekly Behavior Logs
 - b. Foster parent contact logs
 - c. Clothing Receipts
 - d. School records

AFFIDAVIT OF RECEIPT AND UNDERSTANDING

I have read, understand and accept all of the Hearts & Homes For Youth, Inc. policies and standards in the Foster Parent Handbook dated January 2017. I have had the policies explained to me.

SIGNATURES	DATE
Foster Parent:	
Foster Parent:	
HHY Staff:	