

AzDCS Expectations of Foster Parents

Summary

Foster parents provide a temporary home for a child (or children) who cannot live safely at home. Foster parents are not legal guardians. In most cases, the state of Arizona is the legal guardian. Foster parents provide a home for the child and ensure the child's daily living needs are met, including the child's physical, developmental, educational, and emotional growth.

Foster parents have some general, ongoing responsibilities:

- Cultivate the child's physical, developmental, educational, and emotional growth.
- Make the child available for required appointments and visits.
- Provide transportation for child per schedule agreed upon by foster parent and AzDCS.
- Initiate and maintain contact with siblings, including visits and phone calls.
- Work with AzDCS staff to achieve the case plan goal, including permanency planning.
- Engage in shared parenting, as appropriate and as specified in the case plan, which could include contact with the birth families, such as visitation, phone calls, letters, etc.
- Support case plan and transition plan, including supporting family reunification services, participating in transition planning, participating in permanency planning, and following the plans developed by the Child and Family Team and the AzDCS caseworker.
- Support and maintain relationships that are significant to the child, including (but not limited to) birth parent, grandparents, siblings and significant others.
- Provide the child with opportunities for social, academic and recreational involvement appropriate to the child's age, development, medical status, and interest.

Foster parents are expected to engage in positive discipline

Foster parents must agree to the AzDCS Discipline Policy, to administer age and developmentally appropriate discipline based on the child's life experiences and individuality of the child.

The administration of **discipline by foster parents shall *not* include any of the following:**

- verbal or physical threats
- verbal abuse
- disparaging remarks about the child's birth family
- deprivation of meals, clothing, shelter, bedding or sleep
- denial of visitation or communication with the child's birth family
- cruel, severe, or humiliating actions
- locking a child in a room or confined area
- use of mechanical restraints or physical restraints (unless specified in the child's case plan and the foster parent has been trained in the proper use of such restraints)

Foster parents are expected to participate in certain meetings, hearings, and activities:

- Attend juvenile court and Foster Care Review Board hearings.
- Participate as a service team member for the child including participation in case plan staffings, Team Decision Making meetings and Child and Family Teams.
- Participate and facilitate the assessment process by providing information about the child's physical health, educational functioning, adjustments to out-of-home care, behavioral adjustments.
- Follow through on services and training opportunities recommended by the AzDCS.

Foster parents are expected to document and report unusual occurrences, important life events, and household changes:

Complete an AzDCS **Significant Incident Report**, and fax, email or mail this report to the AzDCS caseworker for the following:

- Notify the AzDCS caseworker **within 2 hours** regarding circumstances that include:
 - death of a child
 - hospitalization
 - acute psychiatric care
 - alleged abuse
 - other emergency threatening the placement of the child
- Notify the AzDCS caseworker **within 48 hours** regarding circumstances that include:
 - serious illness
 - death of a caregiver
 - change in family composition
 - involvement with law enforcement

Communicate any information that may be pertinent in understanding stress on the family. This includes but is not limited to:

- change in or loss of employment
- budget
- relocation
- family members' health
- change in marital or relationship status

Provide AzDCS advance notice for household changes that must be pre-approved by AzDCS. Notice should be at the earliest possible date but at least two weeks before the following household changes:

- relocating to a new residence
- adding a new adult household member

Inform the AzDCS caseworker of any information, change, event, or contact that could be relevant in the caseworker's assessment of the child's safety. This applies to any person in the family's support system who may come into contact with the child. For example, if a family member has contact or involvement with law enforcement, then that should be reported.

Agree to let AzDCS know *in advance* of any absence from the state of Arizona and any extended trip within the State of Arizona. AzDCS must motion the court for permission to leave the country.

Foster parents have some responsibilities on a timeline:

Within 5 days of the child being placed into your home

The foster parent must enroll child into an appropriate school.

The foster parent should ask the AzDCS caseworker if there are any appointments scheduled (i.e. Child Family Team, medical/dental, visitation, medication reviews, counseling, sibling visits, court hearings, Foster Care Review Board Hearings, or Case Plan Staffings) as well as the date, time and location.

Within 30 days of the child being placed into your home

The foster parent must schedule and obtain a comprehensive **medical examination** by a physician as soon as possible but no later than within 30 days of placement. The medical examination must meet the Title XIX Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) for each child.

The foster parent must schedule a **dental examination** for each child age 1 year or older as soon as possible but no later than within 30 days of placement.

The foster parent must identify who will be the child's primary care physician, and notify CMDP within 30 days of placement.

Within 10 days of each medical, dental, or other examination

The foster parent must provide the results of medical, dental and other examinations to the AzDCS caseworker within ten (10) business days from the date of the examinations.

Every 6 months

The foster parent must schedule a **dental examination** for each child age 3 years or older every 6 months.

Every 12 months

The foster parent must schedule and obtain a comprehensive **medical examination** by the child's primary care physician every 12 months. The medical examination must meet the Title XIX Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) for each child.

When the child leaves the foster parent's home

Participate in transition planning with the Child and Family Team, and follow the transition plan to help the child transition smoothly from your home.

If the child is moving to another foster or adoptive home, provide the child's records, including the [Child's Case Record Notebook](#), to the new foster or adoptive parent.

Complete and include a copy of the [Child Information Guide](#) (AzDCS document FC-130) with the child's records. This document allows you to provide detailed information about the child to the next placement.

Foster parents are expected to maintain and securely store the records pertaining to the child

Maintain documentation for the child's educational, medical and personal records (including evaluations, medical logs, medication log, photographs, school work and assessments). The FIRST Commission recommends using the [Child's Case Record Notebook Organizer](#).

Provide the AzDCS caseworker with the updated and accurate information for the child's placement packet and one copy of the foster parent's child case records at the time of the child's discharge. (The copy of the foster parent's child's case record would consist of all the documents that are a part of the placement packet that the foster parent completes, including Life Books, medical and dental records, school records, etc.).

Foster parents are expected to maintain confidentiality

Respect the child's right to privacy and confidentiality by declining to release information to others unless expressly prior approved by the AzDCS. Agree to abide by the rules of confidentiality as outlined in the [Confidentiality Guidelines for DES Foster Parents](#). This includes not posting the child's picture or information about the child or their biological family on the Internet in any manner, including personal blogs and social media.

Foster parents are expected to follow Arizona law when leaving a child who is in foster care with short-term caregivers

Abide by Arizona state law when leaving a child who is currently in foster care with other caregivers (ARS §8-511):

If the child has developmental disabilities, is deemed medically fragile, or is currently in treatment/therapeutic foster care, then when leaving the child in the care of others, the foster parent must follow the alternate care plan that has been developed by the Child and Family Team and approved by AzDCS.

If the child does not meet the criteria listed in the paragraph above, then:

- The foster parent must use “reasonable judgement” in selecting an adult to provide care.
- In a nonemergency situation, the foster parent must notify the AzDCS caseworker *before* the care exceeds 24 hours in a nonemergency situation.
- In an emergency situation, the foster parent must notify the AzDCS caseworker *before* the care exceeds 72 hours.