

Family Partnerships of Central Florida

PROCEDURE

Series:	Operating Procedures	COA: FKC 19 & 20 CFOP: 170-11
Procedure Name:	Foster Care Discipline and Behavior Management	
Procedure Number:	OP-1195	
Reviewed Date:	02/05/2020, 09/23/2021, 04/16/24	
Revision #/Date:	1/5/17	
Effective Date:	08/22/16	
Applicable to:	All Family Partnerships of Central Florida Family of Agencies (FPoCF) staff, licensed family foster homes and foster children being served	
<u>PURPOSE:</u>	To provide training to foster parents in the appropriate use of behavior management.	

PROCEDURE:

References 65C-45 F.A.C.

Attachments: Partnership Plan and Discipline Policy

When a foster care family is licensed, the family becomes a member of the professional team providing services and supports to children in out-of-home care. As part of the foster care family selection process, Family Partnerships of Central Florida through both its PRIDE pre-service training and Non-Abusive Psychological and Physical Intervention training makes every effort to clarify expectations in terms of providing quality care to children entrusted in our care.

This includes that premise that Foster Parents agree to abide by the standards for managing the behaviors of children in foster care with positive and effective discipline and its prohibition of corporal punishment.

A. General Information Regarding Discipline:

1. Foster parents receive the Family Partnerships of Central Florida Discipline Policy and Partnership Plan which outlines the boundaries of discipline including the prohibition of corporal punishment.
2. Foster parent training includes guidance on compliance with the discipline philosophy as well as consequences of failing to comply.
3. The Licensing Specialist works with foster parents to ensure they have the parenting skills necessary to successfully manage children who exhibit challenging behaviors.
4. Foster parents carry out all disciplinary actions. Foster parents may not delegate the responsibility of discipline to someone else and no child is permitted to discipline another child.

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As part of the licensing process, all potential foster parents sign a copy of the "Discipline Policy for the Department of Children and Families" indicating they have read and agree to abide by the provision before any child is placed in their home.

B. Discipline Procedures:

1. Foster parents use positive methods of discipline, including reinforcing acceptable behavior, verbal disapproval of the child's behavior and loss of privileges, grounding/restriction, and redirection. Foster parents may also assign chores as discipline, but not such that it would impact the health or safety of the child.
2. Foster parents will not allow children to be subjected to verbal abuse, derogatory remarks about themselves and family members or threats of removal from the home.
3. Foster parents will not subject children to cruel, severe, humiliating, or unusual punishment; for example, using soap to wash out the mouth, eating hot sauces or pepper, placing in hot water, kneeling on stones, etc.
4. Foster parents will not use corporal punishment of any kind.
5. Foster parents will not withhold meals, clothing, or shelter as a form of punishment.
6. Foster parents will not punish children for bedwetting or errors which occur during the toilet training process.
7. Foster parents will not deny a child contact, including mail, or visits with his family as punishment.
8. Children may be placed in their rooms for brief cooling off periods, known as time outs. Time outs are:
 - a. Used for "cooling off" - no more than ten (10) minutes without contact from foster parents for children aged six (6) and over; no more than five (5) minutes for children five (5) and under.
 - b. No more than two (2) ten (10) minute periods, without attempting another type of re-direction.
 - c. Do not deny children meals, clothing, sleep, health care, religious needs or foster parents' assistance.
 - d. Monitored by foster parents, with the foster parents meeting with the child after the time out has elapsed to evaluate the appropriateness of the child to rejoin normal activity.

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9. Loss of privileges may also be an effective means of redirection when a child is exhibiting inappropriate behavior. Loss of privileges will occur according to the following:
 - a. The child is clearly told what behavior is inappropriate.
 - b. The foster parents explain continued inappropriate behavior will result in defined consequence.
 - c. The child is given a brief time period to take self-corrective action.
 - d. The foster parents listen to any explanation the child has for the behavior and considers those before imposing the consequence.
10. All discipline methods are appropriate for the child based on the child's age and physical, emotional, developmental, and social capacity.

Annually, all foster parents are required to attend a revised Non-Abusive Psychological and Physical Intervention training refresher class to enhance positive interactions between the foster parents and youth. When issues arise that require a Certified Behavioral Analyst, a referral can be made for a bio-psycho-social assessment by contacting the Care Manager who will initiate the referral for the assessment to determine whether additional Behavior Management Interventions are needed.

The Mobile Response Team and Foster Parent Support Line through Brevard C.A.R.E.S. is available 24/7 for crisis intervention. It is an immediate crisis response and is available to all foster care families by calling 321-213-0315.

Any time a child poses a potential danger to themselves or others, 911 should be called for immediate emergency interventions and/or possible Baker Act. The foster care parent is responsible for notifying the Care Manager immediately once the child has been determined to be safe.

Should a child's behavior require additional support, the foster parent should notify their licensing specialist or BFP Intake and Placement for assistance.

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BY DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT AND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER:



PHILIP J. SCARPELLI
President and Chief Executive Officer
Family Partnerships of Central Florida

APPROVAL DATE: 04/17/2024