

FOSTER PARENT BILL OF RIGHTS (FPBR)

The Foster Parents' Bill of Rights, Act No. 2004-257, was enacted by the Legislature of Alabama. The following rights have been established and the Department of Human Resources shall ensure that each foster parent be afforded the following rights:

- (1).The right to be treated with dignity, respect, trust, value, and consideration as a primary provider of foster care and a member of the professional team caring for foster children.
- (2).The right to receive information concerning the rights enumerated in this act.
- (3).The right to a concise written explanation of their role as foster parents in partnership with children and their families, the department, and other providers, the role of the department, and the rights and role of the members of the birth family of a child in foster care. The birth family's rights/roles and responsibilities are defined and should be shared with the birth family and the foster parents to ensure expectations. Refer to the "Rights/Roles and Responsibilities of the Birth Family of a Child in Foster Care" located in the forms section.
- (4).The right to training and support for the purpose of improving skills in providing daily care and meeting the needs of the child in foster care.
- (5).The right to training, consultation, and assistance in evaluating, identifying, and accessing services to meet their needs related to their role as foster care providers. This includes, but is not limited to, all foster care policies, the Foster Parent Handbook, Foster Family Homes Minimum Standards, the Therapeutic Foster Care Manual, and a mediation process.
- (6).The right to provide input to the department in identifying the types of resources and services that would meet the needs of children currently in their care and of their families, and advocate for the same without threat of reprisal.
- (7).The right to information concerning behavioral problems, health history, educational status, cultural and family background, and other issues relative to the child which are known to the department at the time the child is placed in foster care prior to the child's placement with a foster parent or parents. When the department learns such information after placement, the department shall make that information available to the foster parent as soon as practicable.
- (8). The right to a written explanation of the plan concerning the placement of a child in the foster parent's home. For emergency placements where time does not allow prior preparation of the explanation, the department shall provide such explanation within 72 hours. Prior to placement, the department shall allow the foster parent to review a written summary of information concerning the child, including, but not limited to, assessments, evaluations, and case plans, and allow the foster parent to assist in determining whether they can meet the needs of the placement for the prospective foster family. For emergency placements where time does not allow prior review of the information, the department shall provide the information within 72 hours of placement. Confidential information shall be kept confidential by the foster parents, except as determined through the ISP process to promote the health and welfare of the child. Refer to the Form Section for the "Foster Parents Written Explanation Regarding Placement." If a county desires to use it's own form all the required information must be included. Counties should make two copies of the placement information form, a signed copy for the child's DHR record and a copy for the foster parents to keep.
- (9).The right to a staff person representing the department on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for the purpose of aiding the foster parent in receiving departmental assistance.
- (10).The right to fair and equitable board payments based on a system of daily board rates and other financial reimbursement as specified in a plan adopted by the department after consultation with foster parents, subject to the availability of funds.
- (11).The right to accept or refuse placement within their home, or to request, upon reasonable notice to the department, the removal of a child from their home for good cause without threat of reprisal for acting on such good cause.

- (12). The right to information about scheduled meetings and appointments concerning the foster child and permission for the foster parent to actively participate in and provide input to be used by the Individualized Service Plan team in the case planning and decision-making process regarding the child in foster care, including, but not limited to, individual service planning meetings, foster care reviews, individual educational planning meetings, and medical appointments.
- (13). The right to request that a volunteer advocate be present at all meetings with the department, including, but not limited to, individualized service planning, administrative hearings, the grievance/mediation process, the adoption process, and the allegation process where the foster parent is present. All communications received by the volunteer advocate shall be in strict confidence.
- (14). The right to notice and a right to be heard, including timely information concerning all court hearings. This notification may include, but is not limited to, notice of the date and time of the court hearing, the name of the judge or hearing officer assigned to the case, the guardian ad litem, the location of the hearing, and the court docket number. The notification shall be made upon receipt of this information by the department. Although not a party to the case, the foster parent may attend court hearings at the discretion of the judge.
- (15). The right to communication with professionals who work with the foster child, including, but not limited to, therapists, physicians, and teachers who work directly with the child.
- (16). The right to communicate with the child's birth family, other foster parents of the child, and prospective and finalized adoptive parents of the child with Individualized Service Plan Team approval and without the threat of reprisal.
- (17). The right to necessary information on an ongoing basis which is relevant to the care of the child, including timely information on changes in the case plan or termination of the placement and reasons for the changes or termination of placement to the foster parent except in the instances of immediate response of child protective service.
- (18). The right to first consideration as the resource for a child in a foster parent's home after post TPR and all relatives have been explored.
- (19). The right to a period of respite upon the request of a foster parent. The foster parent shall provide reasonable notice of a request for respite.
- (20). The right to information, in person and in writing, of any allegations of maltreatment of children in the home of the foster parent alleged to have been perpetrated by a member of the foster parent's household, the process for disposition of these allegations, and any review process for reports of indicated child abuse and neglect upon receipt of the allegations. A written notification of any report in which a finding is not indicated on the county level shall be provided to a foster parent within five days of the findings.
- (21). The right to copies of all information relative to their family and services contained in the personal foster home record.
- (22). The right to mediation procedures that may be developed and adopted by the department and the Alabama Foster and Adoptive Parent Association Board. The foster parent may request mediation in accordance with any mediation policy adopted by the department and the Alabama Foster and Adoptive Parent Association Board without threat of reprisal.
- (23). The right to appeal the revocation of a foster family home by the department in accordance with any appeal procedure adopted by the department and the Alabama Foster and Adoptive Parent Association Board without threat of reprisal.

There is no provision in the FPBR that allows the Department to release written information to foster parents about the parents of children in care. No personal information about the parent should be included on the written summary provided to the foster parents. The Department has no authority to release Social Security numbers of the parents of children in care on the written information form or otherwise. The whereabouts of the parents may be included to the extent that it is of value to placing the child. Information about the parents will be shared/covered during the ISP.