

Orientation Manual

Foster Care & Adoption Services



Families United Network, Inc.

Families United Network, Inc. Resource Family Orientation Manual

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

This orientation course is part of our ongoing service to help you become effective resource parents. Resource parents are foster, kin, and/or adoptive parents. After you complete this step, the required training, and meet the assessment requirements, you will be qualified to accept our children into your home.

We want to thank you for your commitment to helping children with special needs. Your decision to invite a child into your family shows that you truly understand the needs of our community.

Thank you, too, for choosing Families United Network, Inc. as your agency. In making this choice, you are joining other families who presently provide family-based foster care for more than 200 children in Pennsylvania. You have joined a team that has many years of experience in child welfare. The partnership between you and our staff will ensure that we all work together to promote the best interests of the children in our care.

This manual does not contain answers to all of the questions and concerns that come up in providing care to children. However, you will be working with one of Families United Network, Inc.'s program offices and you will be assigned to a specific case manager and supervisor. WHEN QUESTIONS COME UP, ASK THEM. You can help us best when you let us help you.

Thanks again for making a difference in the life of a child. We look forward to a long and happy working relationship.

History of Families United Network, Inc.

Families United Network, Inc. began operating on July 1, 1996 as a private foster care provider. The agency is a Pennsylvania non-profit corporation licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare as a voluntary child welfare agency.

The company began by servicing a small number of children from several counties spread across the state of Pennsylvania. Initially the agency provided foster care services in the central, western, and north central part of the state. In February of 1997, Families United Network, Inc. opened the doors to Ashler Manor, a residential facility for teenage girls. In 2005, Arborvale was opened as a supervised independent living program for boys in Millersville, PA. In 2006 a private adoption program was added.

Today, Families United Network, Inc. provides care to over four hundred children through foster care, adoption and residential services. There are five offices throughout Pennsylvania and three residential facilities. New programs are considered and developed regularly in order to strengthen our continuum of services to help children.

Mission Statement

Families United Network, Inc. is dedicated to strengthening families by providing children and youth with a safe, nurturing, community environment through a continuum of services, which focuses on reunification or permanency.

Chapter 2 - Families United Network, Inc. Philosophy

Families United Network, Inc. provides services to children. It is important to become familiar with the different philosophies and laws that directly affect the children in care. This chapter defines and explains the purpose of the agency and the concept of Family-Based Foster Care. The agency workers use the foundation of Choice Theory as well as Love and Logic practices in working with children and families. The Adoption Safe Family Act drives the foundation of why children enter and leave the child welfare system. This chapter also addresses the topic of cultural diversity and a family's motivation to work with special needs children.

A. The Basic Purposes of the Agency are:

1. To provide direct services to children and youth with special needs, using the method called Family Based Foster Care.
2. To develop improved methods of interventions and services to children, youth, and families.
3. To share experiences, insights and innovations with families for the purpose of improving services to children and youth.
4. To develop new programs for clients with other types of needs.
5. To aid in the matching process to offer permanency to our children.

B. The Concept of Family Based Foster Care:

The agency's clients are children and youth who are in the protective custody of county children and youth agencies or juvenile probation systems. They have been removed from their family homes, at least temporarily. The county agency has chosen to place the client in resource family care rather than in a more restrictive facility.

Families United Network, Inc.'s Family Based Foster Care program is a specialized form of family care intended for children and youth whose needs exceed the coping capacity of the traditional home. Families United Network, Inc. resource homes are used when a county agency cannot place a child in one of their own temporary care homes. A typical client may come to Families United Network, Inc. with a history of behavior and emotional problems and/or difficulties in school. There may be special medical needs or mental disabilities. The child may have been unable to get along in the home, and she or he may have suffered physical or sexual abuse or neglect.

Such children were often sent to group homes or institutions in the past that do not provide a family living experience. As a vital alternative, the resource family is specially selected and trained to deal with the child's special needs and to help the child grow in a family setting.

At Families United Network, Inc. the child or youth is understood as a developing person, forming personality and character in the process of growing up. Great faith is placed in the ability of a young person to move beyond past difficulties and develop a more successful way of living. Family Based Foster Care focuses on the development of the client in the present and the future.

Resource families do normal things in a special way. They develop close relationships with their children. They model the roles of parents, provider, homemaker, and citizen. They teach better modes of behavior. They provide help, guidance and discipline according to the child's need twenty-four hours a day. A resource family supports, corrects and tests the efforts of all its members and when there is a failure the family tries again. The function of the agency is to organize and support this process. Change takes place in and because of the family.

C. Choice Theory:

In his development of what we know as "Choice Theory", Dr. William Glasser promotes the concept that we should help our clients learn about making good choices. His work is a fundamental part of the agency philosophy and service method. Choice Theory can be drawn on by professional staff, resource parents, and clients. It explains behavior, provides support and serves as a common language within the agency.

Choice theory says that all behavior is an attempt to meet needs. All people's basic, intrinsic needs are rooted in the following five areas:

- Survival – existing
- Belonging – loving, cooperating
- Power – competing, achieving, and gaining importance
- Freedom – moving, choosing
- Fun – learning, playing

Each one of us is doing his best to fulfill these needs. Usually we do this by interacting with others because we are social creatures. Basically we are all good, active and rational. We each build a mental album of pictures of things, people, places, and/or actions that combine to meet our needs. When the pictures of **wants** are compared to what we are experiencing, the pictures that don't match that reality cause a behavior to occur, which hopefully will change the reality.

We choose our behavior. Usually this choice is based on what we have learned before about meeting our needs. When we make a bad choice, it is not because we are bad, but because we have learned an ineffective way of trying to get what we need.

There are two important parts of this theory to remember when working with children. First, sometimes the pictures of what the child wants are not appropriate and sometimes even harmful to the child or others. For instance, a child may believe that a beating from a parent means love. The child has that picture of what love is firmly implanted so we must begin to replace or add pictures which show healthy love, i.e. hugs, firm discipline, and positive attention.

Second, because all behaviors are chosen, people can choose to find a different way to meet their needs. The resource family has the primary responsibility to help the client identify alternative behaviors for meeting his needs and then strengthen him in making the best choices. Choice Theory emphasizes the responsibility of the individual for his own behavior, and it recognizes the ability of the person to make changes in his/her own life.

D. Parenting with Love and Logic:

Foster Cline and Jim Fay have developed a parenting style which focuses on providing love and care for our children while teaching them responsibility thru logical and natural consequences. Love and Logic is very easy to understand. Families United Network, Inc. has an extensive library of resources that is available to families as training resources.

Love and Logic has two main rules that are simple to follow:

Rule #1: Adults need to set firm limits in a loving way without the use of anger, lectures, or threats.

Rule #2: When a child has a problem, the adult must hand the responsibility for solutions back to the child in a loving way.

1. By using a loving approach, the parent holds the child accountable for solving his/her problems in way that does not create a problem for others.
2. Children are offered choices with limits.
3. Parents must use enforceable statements.
4. Parents can provide delayed/extended consequences.
5. The parent must lock in the empathy toward the child before the consequences are delivered.

E. Adoption and Safe Families Act:

On November 19, 1997, President Clinton signed the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA). Pennsylvania then implemented ASFA in 1999. The Act clearly states that the goals for children in the child welfare system are **safety, permanency, and well being**. The key principals this agency is required to follow are:

- The child's safety is the paramount concern
- Substitute (foster) care is a temporary setting, not a situation in which children should grow to adulthood
- Permanency planning for children begins as soon as the child enters substitute care
- Concurrent planning for all possible outcomes will take place to find a permanent home in a timely manner

The Act changes the requirement that county agencies make "**reasonable efforts**" to prevent placement and reunify families after placement occurs. Reasonable efforts are not required if **aggravated circumstances** are present. Aggravated circumstances include situations involving such issues as abandonment, serious bodily injury, sexual violence, aggravated physical neglect, which means any omission in the care of a child which is life threatening or seriously impairs child functioning. Reasonable efforts are also not required if parents have **committed certain crimes**, including murder of a sibling, voluntary manslaughter of a sibling, aiding, abetting, attempting, conspiring, or soliciting such murder or voluntary manslaughter or a felony assault that results in serious bodily injury to the child or another child of the parent. And finally, reasonable efforts are not required if there has been a **previous involuntary termination of parental rights** to a child's sibling within the previous three years.

The Act also requires that the county agency have a **concurrent plan** for each child in its custody. This means that although we may have a plan to reunify a family, we also have another plan to assure permanency for each child. This could include placement for adoption, with a legal guardian, or another family member.

Court hearings formerly known as placement and dispositional review hearings will now be known as "**permanency hearings**". A permanency hearing must be held within six months of the removal of a child from his/her home and at least every six months from the initial hearing. Permanency hearings will determine:

- The permanency plan for the child, including a date by which the goal of permanency for the child might be achieved
- Whether the child can be safely returned to the home of his or her parent
- Whether the child will be placed for adoption and the county agency will file a petition for termination of parental rights
- Whether the county agency will seek a legal guardian for the child, including any relative who is found by the court to be qualified to receive and care for the child
- Whether the child is safe
- The services needed to assist a child who is sixteen years of age or older to make the transition to independent living

Permanency hearings will also be held when there are indications of aggravated circumstances or specified criminal convictions, as listed in paragraph #2 above. These aggravated circumstances or criminal convictions may exist at the point of referral or may occur later while the child is in placement; in either event, a permanency hearing must be held within 30 days of such occurrence.

In addition, the county agency is **required to file petitions to terminate parental rights to children** involving cases in which:

- The child has been in placement for 15 out of the most recent 22 months;
- The child is an abandoned infant;
- The parent has committed one of the same crimes that are listed in paragraph #2 above;
- Parental rights to a sibling have been involuntarily terminated within the last three years on the same grounds that led to the removal of the current child.

Exceptions to this are:

- The child is being care for by a relative;
- Agencies have documented compelling reasons not to file petitions to terminate parental rights;
- Agencies have not provided services necessary for the safe return home within the required time frame.

The Act mandates that **foster parents, adoptive parents, and relatives providing care** for a child must be provided with **notice and an opportunity to be heard** in any review or hearing to be held regarding the child. However, they are not to be made party to a review or hearing solely on the basis of the notification.

F. Cultural Diversity:

Culture is a way of life that affects every human being. Culture consists of values, beliefs, and rules of conduct, therefore, culture determines the way we think, feel, act, perceive the world and respond to situations. As resource parents, we must all realize that cultural differences exist and we must be willing to discuss these differences, similarities, and provide an understanding to better serve our children and families.

There are many things we can do to increase our awareness of different cultures and provide a comfortable, safe environment for the clients we serve. In summary, the following ten tips are suggested:

1. Hold the assumption that no matter what culture a person comes from people are basically good.
2. Relate to individuals without placing them in a stereotype.
3. Recognize that your own knowledge, perceptions, and beliefs are valid only for yourself. Show empathy for other points of view and try to put yourself in the other person's shoes.
4. Be aware of discrepancies between what people say and what people actually mean. For example, many people from different cultures say "yes" just to be polite, but it does not mean they agree.
5. Avoid making moralistic and evaluative judgments in encounters with others. For example, what makes sense to the people of one culture may not make sense to other people.
6. Be honest and start discussions with subjects that are non-threatening. There may be some taboo topics. Making sexual references or talking about politics are frowned upon in some cultures.
7. Communicate respect, positive regard, encouragement and sincere interest in the other culture. When a child is placed into a home, we must go out of our way to understand where the child came from and the things that may help the child adjust to the new surroundings.
8. Avoid binary thinking. Things are not only black and white. There are many gray areas. This encourages tolerance for each other.
9. Be comfortable being different from other people and laugh about your mistakes.
10. Cultures are not right or wrong, just different.

G. Motivations to Become Resource Parents:

Deciding to become a resource parent is a very big step to make for any family. Deciding to let another child, family, and group of professionals into your life can be overwhelming. It takes a special person and/or family to agree to make the commitment. The most important step in deciding to become a resource family is first realizing that it must be a family decision. If any member of the family is not in agreement, there will be conflicts in the future. Problems are likely to arise in the existing relationship between the parent and the child or between the married couple and will interfere with the ability to provide a safe, secure, loving environment for a child placed into your home.

Deciding to be an adoptive parent specifically is equally as difficult and demands the same decision-making process as the prior step. Adoptive families must make a 100% commitment to the child/children. Failed adoptions can damage children forever.

Families must evaluate carefully why they want to be an adoptive family, foster family, or both. There are many children who need homes for foster care or adoption. If a family has the proper motivation to help a child, they can be successful. All families are viewed as resources for children and are referred to as "resource families" throughout this manual.

The following is a list of several motivations that are common among applicants. Many of these reasons are not appropriate. Please review and consider yourself what your true motivations are in making this decision.

- To help a child in need - an underprivileged child.
- For a playmate for my child.
- Raising a child will help our marriage.
- Adding a child will make me feel loved and complete.
- Because my spouse really wants another child.
- Because we cannot have any of our own children.
- To increase my income.
- To be an at-home mother full time.

True commitment means being able to look for solutions to save a placement even when it becomes difficult or painful emotionally. Being aware that as the adults, you must do what is best for a child is of ultimate importance. The willingness to learn new parenting styles and skills greatly enhances a family's ability to maintain their commitment.

G. Council on Accreditation:

The Council on Accreditation (COA) is an independent organization that accredits the full continuum of community-based behavioral health care and social service organizations in the United States and Canada, and is one of the three leading agencies providing such service. Over 1500 organizations – voluntary, public and proprietary, local and statewide, large and small have either successfully achieved COA accreditation or are currently engaged in the process.

COA is widely recognized by states and national organizations as an accrediting body with the capacity, scope, and ability to contribute significantly to the improvement of the behavioral health and social service delivery systems. Originally known as an accrediting body for family and children's agencies, COA has earned public recognition from mental health and substance abuse organizations.

Families United Network, Inc. received the initial full accreditation in April of 2007 and Hague Accreditation in February of 2008. The approval process occurs every four years. In the process of preparing for accreditation the agency examines itself internally, including each of the programs and practices offered to clients. Improvements and adjustments are made to address the standards of care promulgated by the Council on Accreditation. Specifically, the agency maintains a plan for Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). Stakeholder involvement is very important in the CQI process. As resource parents you are an active member of the team and your involvement is sought in many ways including regular completion of consumer satisfaction surveys.

Chapter 3 - Families United Network, Inc. Programs

A. Allegheny County Level System for Foster Care:

Any family residing in Allegheny County applying to become a resource family is required to work with our Western Pennsylvania based program office for approval. Allegheny County contracts with Families United Network, Inc. in a different manner than most other counties in Pennsylvania.

Children placed with the agency by Allegheny County are assigned a level of service. The county recognizes that each child's needs are different and assigning the appropriate level of service can aid the family, the child, and Families United Network, Inc. in providing the best care for the child. The assigned level determines the rate of reimbursement the resource family will receive as well as the amount of training the family must undergo annually. Allegheny County has established four levels of care with increasingly demanding requirements (Level I to IV). With changing circumstances, a child's placement level may change with the approval of Allegheny County after formal process of consideration and appeal.

Families United Network, Inc. provides appropriate orientation and training to families as they seek approval as resources for children placed by Allegheny County.

B. Foster Care:

Foster care is a temporary arrangement where a child is placed into a fully approved home for a period of time. Families United Network, Inc. offers foster care in many counties throughout the state of Pennsylvania. The county agency gains custody of the child and places him or her into foster care as needed. County agencies generally attempt to place children into one of the county's own foster care homes first. When this is not possible, the county agency then contacts private agencies such as Families United Network, Inc. to make a referral. Once a child is placed into an approved home, the child is in foster care.

C. Respite Care:

Families United Network, Inc. also offers respite care our agency resource families and county agency resource parents. Respite care refers to a child spending a night or weekend in substitute home that has been fully approved by the agency. We attempt to identify a respite home option for each child placed into care with Families United Network, Inc. and to plan respites periodically. The theory here is that a child should be familiar with a second family. This second family is a resource for the child in the event of an emergency or if the full time family make plans that cannot for some reason include the child.

Respite is also offered to county agencies for children who are not already in care with Families United Network, Inc. This separate respite program is offered for children who are in need of a safe, temporary, short-term placement. This type of respite is usually offered up to a seven days. Families United Network, Inc. resource families are encouraged to be available for respite care placements.

D. Emergency Foster Care:

Emergency care is provided to any child referred who is in need of immediate placement. This is usually a where limited information is available about the child and circumstances require same-day placement. Often emergency placements are made after business hours, late at night and on weekends. The emergency care status is limited to a maximum of seven days. If, at the end of the seven-day period, the child is deemed appropriate for continued foster care, they may remain in the home. The child will then be placed in the appropriate foster care category. The family receives the emergency care per diem for the first seven days of placement. Upon the assignment of a new care category, the family will receive the corresponding per diem.

E. Medical Fragile Foster Care:

Medical Fragile Foster Care refers to children who have diagnosis of existing medical problems that increase the level of care the child will need. If the child falls into a medically fragile foster care category, the family will receive an increase in their per diem. The family must also complete an increased number of training hours every year and participate in medical treatment plan meetings.

F. Mother/Infant:

Families United Network, Inc. also offers a special service category and corresponding rate to county agencies in need of mother/infant placements. This refers to a teenage child that has had one or more children who are to be placed into the same resource home as the mother. Resource homes that decide to accept this type of referral receive a combined rate for the placements. The family's main goal is to provide safety for both children, but also to relate to the young mother and help teach her how to care for her child. Teenagers who are in care and have children of their own are at high risk for having their own children placed into care in the future. Families United Network, Inc. and the resource family have the challenge of working with the young mother to try to reverse the cycle through support and education. The Ansel-Casey independent living assessment is completed for each child receiving these services. A Mother/Toddler rate is also available.

G. Intensive Foster Care:

Families United Network, Inc. offers Intensive Foster Care for children and adolescents who have a higher degree of social, behavioral, and/or mental health needs. Individuals placed in intensive foster care receive at least weekly case management and have highly skilled and experienced resource parents to provide a structured and nurturing environment for the child.

Within 60 days, each child will receive a psychiatric and psychological evaluation. In addition, a comprehensive social history will be completed as well as daily resource home living logs and a health and safety assessment.

In addition to the variety of assessments completed, the case management services are increased which is a vital component of this program. The case manager will provide at least weekly face to face contact with the child and foster family.

Families providing this type of care will be required to receive additional annual training and will receive a higher daily per diem.

H. Adoption:

Families United Network, Inc. is an affiliate agency of the Statewide Adoption & Permanency Network (SWAN). This relationship enables the agency to work in collaboration with County Children & Youth Service agencies to promote permanency for children in the Child Welfare System. The passing of the Adoption & Safe Families Act (ASFA) in 1997, outlined that children remaining in the foster care system for 15 out of a consecutive 22 months should have a permanency review hearing to explore a goal change from reunification to one of the other four identified permanency goals: adoption, placement with a fit and willing relative, permanent legal custodianship or another planned permanent living arrangement. The rationale is to allow children to have a 'forever family' and not subject them to a life in foster care with multiple moves and no sense of belonging.

The primary focus of the permanency program at Families United Network, Inc. is to orient and train families on the types of special needs children that become available for adoption through the Child Welfare System. The child population primarily consists of children between 7 years of age and adolescence who tend to be from minority families and are often part of a sibling group. These children may have experienced abusive or neglectful home environments and may require additional services or therapeutic intervention to help them manage this trauma.

Many of the adoptions finalized by the agency are for resource parents adopting the child who was originally placed in their home for the purpose of temporary foster care. New families interested in pursuing adoption will need to attend adoption orientation training and successfully complete the approval process. Families are asked to consider the type of child (age, race, gender) that would best fit into their household and what types of behaviors/issues (medical needs, physical handicaps, disorders) they are comfortable managing. Families have access to educational training seminars throughout the year and agency events where they can interact with other families going through similar experiences. Family fliers can be developed and shared at matching events and conferences to help market the families' availability and interest to identify a child. Once a child is placed in the home for the purpose of adoption, there will be a six-month adjustment period before the family can begin filing to finalize the adoption. There is typically no expense incurred by the family interested in adopting a child through SWAN. Based on the needs of the children, three subsidies are available to adoptive families that include: continuation of the Medical Assistance coverage until the child is 18 years of age, coverage of the legal fees, and a monthly cash subsidy. An agency representative will work with the family throughout the legal process and the filing of the necessary documents until the adoption is final. Post-adoption support services and resources are also available to families if needed through the Statewide Adoption & Permanency Network.

Private Adoption: Families United Network, Inc. is pleased to offer Home Study Services and other Pre & Post Adoption Support Services to Pennsylvania families seeking to adopt domestically or internationally with our assistance, or with the help of other adoption agencies throughout the United States.

A Home study Report is required for all adoptions. Families are permitted to read and suggest modifications to the home study report before its issuance to immigrations, adoption attorneys, or other private agencies.

After the home study process is completed, Families United Network encourages families to contact the agency with any adoption related questions. The agency will suggest additional adoption resources as appropriate.

I. Kinship Care:

This program is designed to assist caretakers who have assumed the responsibility to care for a child through formal kinship care arrangements by providing professional, educational, informational, and advocacy services to support them in providing care to the child. The goal of this program is to work closer with the child's family and all outside support systems to help promote permanency for the child whether that is reunification, adoption, permanent legal guardianship, or long-term kinship care. This program also exists as an intensive program if needed. All kinship families are fully approved as resource parents with Families United Network, Inc. with the same requirements and support as any other resource home.

J. Independent Living:

The independent living program is designed with the philosophy that adolescence is a developmental period wherein certain life skills must be acquired, developed, tested, and applied to real life situations. It is essential that youth be prepared educationally, financially, knowledgeably, and with the proper mental health framework in order to succeed independently. The youth needs to learn self-reliance on their own problem-solving abilities, as well as learn to more effectively communicate and interact with others. Another key factor in the independent living program is qualified staff and well trained resource parents to provide understanding, structure, and supervision.

Children admitted to this program will have added goals and objectives to complete which increases the role of the resource parent in many ways. Resource parents who have a child in their home placed with this program will receive an increased per diem rate.

K. Residential Care:

Ashler Manor: Families United Network, Inc. also has a facility that offers programs to adolescent girls, ages 13 to 18, in a residential setting. Ashler Manor is situated on 33 acres in the heart of north central Pennsylvania. The campus-like environment provides our residents and their families with a safe atmosphere conducive to the therapeutic process. The facility also provides an ideal setting for residents to take advantage of the many community resources that are available to meet their social, recreational and educational needs. Ashler Manor includes many additional programs such as supervised independent living and more. This program can be used as a support to the foster care program in working with girls who may need more than foster care can offer, or girls could step down from Ashler Manor into foster care when appropriate.

Arborvale: The Arborvale Manor program provides a progressive, life skills centered experience to acquaint male youth with realities of independent life, encourage personal growth, and to empower youth to make well-rounded decisions. The program also has an emphasis on discharge planning to reintegrate youth into the community of their choice following program completion.

Chapter 4 – Resource Family Approval Process

A. In-Study Process:

Families are approved by completing a series of interview, training and information gathering sessions. At the completion of the process, families who qualify are approved. The approval process is outlined below. The steps do not have to be completed in the exact order listed. A Resource Family Specialist (recruiter) from the program office will lead the family through the proper procedures.

- A call or referral is received by Families United Network, Inc.
- Information is distributed and each family is invited to attend orientation training.
- Orientation training classes occur and training workbooks are provided.
- In-home interviews take place between the recruiter and the prospective couple or single parent applicant(s).
- Additional training is obtained if the family is interested in intensive foster care, medical fragile foster care and/or adoption.
- Criminal record checks are completed on anyone in the home over the age of 14, including the State Police clearance, and Childline clearance. FBI clearances are required on any household member 18 and older. Additional references and or clearances may be requested as needed including motor vehicle clearances, prothonotary and county clearances.
- Inquiries are made to determine any previous involvement with county and/or private child welfare agencies.
- Documentation, including but is not limited to, proof of income, automobile and home owners/renters insurance, driver's licenses, car registrations, motor vehicle clearance, references, health statements, water tests, photos of the family, and an autobiography is collected.
- Families United Network, Inc. policies are reviewed and signed by the family.
- Orientation training is completed along with questionnaire worksheet. (Training must total 24 hours of training per parent. In the event a family is interested in therapeutic foster care, they must have an additional 6 hours of training prior to the child being placed into their home. The additional 6 hours of training does not have to occur prior to the family being approved.)
- First Aid and CPR training is completed.

If at any point, it is determined that a family has not been truthful or that information collected and/or interviewer's assessments indicate the family should not be approved, a letter will be sent to the applicants informing them of our decision to discontinue the approval process. Families who meet all of the qualifications will be approved and will receive a letter informing them of the decision.

B. Ongoing Evaluation:

Each approved family is required to undergo an annual re-evaluation which enables them to continue to provide care. It is usually initiated in the 9th month of service. An employee with Families United Network, Inc. will visit the home; interview the family and review policies, safety standards, and training progress. Upon the completion of a satisfactory re-evaluation, a family is approved to provide care for another year.

Re-approval Requirements

- Ongoing clear criminal record (State Police, Child Line, and FBI clearances renewed every two years)
- Annual motor vehicle clearance
- History of cooperation with Families United Network, Inc. and county agencies
- Ongoing completion of all safety requirements (Annual water test that is potable)
- Ongoing family stability (Health statements renewed annually)
- Completion of 10 hours of training per parent (24 hours per parent for Intensive Foster Care) (completed additional training for Level III and IV providers for Allegheny County)
- CPR/FA refresher training bi-annually

- Annual Prothonotary clearance review
- Current pet vaccinations

A family can be re-evaluated at any time before their anniversary date. Re-evaluations may be completed early if there is a concern to be addressed. In the event a family does not meet the approval requirements at any time, a family can be conditionally approved, provisionally approved or closed.

1. Conditional Approval Status – A family that meets the state requirements but may not meet all of Families United requirements may be conditionally approved. While under a conditional approval status a family may not receive any additional placements. A conditional approval status must be upgraded to “approved” within the time-limited period assigned by the office supervisor. Families who do not come into compliance can be closed.
2. Provisional Approval Status – A family who does not meet one or more of the state requirements are provisionally approved for a time-limited period. The family must complete the required items and may not receive any placements during their provisional status. In the event the required items are not brought back into full compliance the home may be closed. If any children are placed in the home, they will be re-located.
3. Addendums – If a resource family moves to a new residence a home addendum must be completed. This addendum will include documentation of a safety inspection of the residence requirements.

C. Ongoing Training:

Families must complete a prescribed number of ongoing training hours annually. Each office will schedule training opportunities for all parents. Most seminars are held on Saturdays or evenings to allow working parents to attend. Topics are geared toward and include but are not limited to parenting techniques, discipline, stress management, and mental health issues. Each resource parents receives \$5 for each hour of training that they attend most agency training classes. The total amount is added to the monthly resource family reimbursement statement. Sometimes families who attend training events can receive monthly reimbursement checks early. This is dependent on the date of the training event, the date the billing forms are handed in and the availability of staff to process early request. **At no point are checks guaranteed to be processed early!**

Many DVD’s, tapes, books and internet trainings are available as training resources to families. Any items borrowed for training must be returned so other families can have access to their use. Self-study programs do not qualify for the \$5 an hour payment, nor would any training events sponsored by other agencies.

D. Incentive/Compliance Bonuses:

Families are offered the opportunity to earn a compliance bonus each year. To earn this incentive a family must be fully re-approved by their annual review date having met all the home, training, and documentation requirements. A family that had been placed on either a conditional or provisional approval during any of the previous 12 months will not be eligible.

Families are also offered an incentive bonus for referring others to become approved families. Resource families are always needed, as families often drop out after adopting their former foster children, and children are always in need of quality homes. Our own resource families can be our best source of recruitment. If the referred family is fully approved, the family who referred them to us is awarded a bonus. Currently, the bonus offered is \$250.

Chapter 5 - Agency Care Practices

A. Emergency Situations:

There may be times when certain situations occur that affect the health and welfare of a child in your care. We refer to these situations as “unusual” incidents. Both county policy and state regulations require that these incidents be reported in a timely manner. This ensures that parents, county administration and other involved parties can be quickly notified and that any necessary actions can be taken.

Unusual incidents and emergencies must be reported *immediately* to the Families United Network, Inc. caseworker. The worker will file an immediate report, when appropriate, with the Pennsylvania State Department of Public Welfare, the county caseworker, as well as notify the child’s legal parents. The following are considered unusual incidents and emergencies:

- Any occurrence, such as a fire in the home, resulting in a condition that threatens the health or safety of the child.
- Abuse or neglect of a child in placement.
- Emergency room visit and/or hospitalization of the child; an injury, accident or illness requiring emergency treatment at a hospital or physician’s office.
- Arrest, violence toward people, violence toward property, victim of assault, or other crime.
- Voluntary or involuntary psychiatric commitment.
- Suicide attempt; death of a family member or child.
- Sexual aggression, severe psychological symptoms.
- Run away from the resource home.

B. Contacting Staff after Hours:

Each resource parent is given a 24-hour emergency phone number. This number should be posted by all the phones in the home. It is also important to have this number in your wallet in the event an emergency arises while the family is out of the home.

If the family contacts Families United Network, Inc. after hours they reach an answering service. In the event it is an emergency call, please inform the operator that you must speak to the “on-call” case manager. The operator will take your contact information and page the on-call worker of Families United Network, Inc. The on-call worker must be able to return your call by phone; therefore a phone number must be left with the operator.

The on-call worker will contact you as soon as possible to receive the emergency information and aid you in any concerns, questions or help you may need. The on-call worker will attempt to provide you with assistance over the telephone as much as possible. On-call workers will come to your home in severe situations or meet you at the hospital as needed.

Families are asked not to call the on-call worker for non-emergencies. Routine questions and concerns can be better handled during office hours. Many times families have questions that can only be answered by reviewing a child’s record or contacting the county worker which is not possible during an after-hours call.

C. Medical Care:

Resource parents are encouraged to secure the same quality medical care for their foster/adoptive children as they would for their own child. All children in care will be enrolled in the state’s medical assistance program and will receive an ACCESS card and/or an HMO card to be used for all medical needs. Families should locate a primary care physician and a dentist. Following identification of medical providers, it is important to find out which HMO they accept, so that when a child is placed into your home, the appropriate HMO can be assigned to the child. Resource parents are also responsible for providing a child with transportation to all medical appointments.

1. Insurance

When the county agency refers a child for placement into care, the Families United Network, Inc. intake worker will notify the resource family of a possible placement. Often, an HMO and a primary care physician are initially assigned independently of the input of the resource parent. At times however, the county will attempt to assign a primary care physician based on where the child will be placed. It is important that the resource family gives the intake worker the name and address of their primary provider and which HMO their medical providers will accept. When the initial placement paperwork is processed, the child will be enrolled in the appropriate HMO by the county worker. ACCESS cards and/or HMO cards should be processed and received within 6-8 weeks. If the child has already been in placement with another agency, HMO cards may be available at the time of placement. Please keep both the ACCESS and HMO cards – you will need them both.

There may be times when a child has already been assigned to a medical provider and has a primary care physician. It may be necessary for a family to continue to take the child to such a provider. In the event the travel distance is too great, a family can request through their Families United Network, Inc. case manager that a change be made. Until the change is made, a family will have to continue the child's care through the identified provider.

If a child in your care needs medical attention prior to receiving his/her cards, please call your worker to discuss whether it is a situation that can wait or if permission needs to be given to have the child seen. In many cases if the child has been assigned to a primary care physician and the HMO provider number is known, the child can be seen without having the medical card in hand. In the event that it is determined that the child needs to be seen and coverage is not yet in place, the bill will in most cases be sent to the county agency directly. In the case of a true **emergency (life threatening)**, please take the child to the hospital for treatment and then call your worker when you arrive at the hospital.

The ACCESS and HMO cards will be sent to Families United Network, Inc. from the county children and youth agency. They will be copied for your child's file and then sent to you. It is important to take these cards with you to each medical and dental appointment so that proper billing will occur. **Please remember that all non-routine or non-emergency treatment must have prior authorization.** This includes treatment such as braces, dentures and eyeglasses. Please contact your caseworker if you are unsure if permission is needed. Also, it is important to remember that resource parents **may not** sign for any medical treatment for a foster child.

When a child leaves your home, the medical card or cards must stay with the child. The cards should be given to the worker handling the discharge of the child.

2. Medical and Dental Appointments

Each child is required to receive routine and regularly scheduled doctor and dental appointments. There are several different requirements for the frequency of these exams which sometimes do not coincide with the HMO insurance guidelines. Resource parents are to do their best to schedule exams as frequently as necessary. In the event they are having any difficulty, they must contact their Families United Network, Inc. case manager.

Schedule of Exams

Medical – Initial Exam

Within 2 days of the child's placement

Dental – Initial Exam

(For all children age 3 and older)

Within 30 days of the child's placement

Special Note: In the event an exam can not be scheduled within the first two days of a child's placement, the resource family and case manager should make every effort to schedule an exam

within the first 30 days of a child's placement. If problems continue to delay any exam the case manager and the county worker must be notified to identify a plan of correction.

Medical Exam – Ongoing Care

*Birth to 6 months of age
(Once every six weeks)

*7-23 months old
(Once every three months)

*Age 2 and older
(Once a year but before the previous exam date)

Dental Exam – Ongoing Care

(Every 6 months from previous exam)

3. Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT)

All children in resource care must be enrolled in EPSDT. The purpose is to ensure that all children in placement receive all the necessary screening, diagnosis and treatment. Most often, your medical provider will be familiar with EPSDT and can complete the necessary forms.

Each time a child is taken to the doctor for an examination the resource parent must request an EPSDT evaluation. If a child is not eligible for an EPSDT exam the physician's routine exam will be accepted.

4. Medical Forms

Families United Network, Inc. will supply each resource family with medical forms concerning the child. This information should be safeguarded and kept in confidence. If a medical history is available, a copy will be given to a resource family, but not the medical history of the child's legal or birth family. From the point in time the child enters our care, Families United Network, Inc. is responsible for the documentation of the child's medical care. This documentation is done through the completion of the following basic forms:

PHYSICAL FORM – Each time a child is taken to the doctor, the resource parent must request that the physical form be completed. The resource parent should then take the form and pass it on to the Families United Network, Inc. case manager during their next contact together. Physical exam forms address many issues including, health history, vision and hearing screening, developmental assessment, and health education. Please note a billing statement cannot be used as proof of an exam.

DENTAL FORM – Each time a child is taken to the dentist, the resource parent must request that the dental form be completed. The resource parent should then take the form and pass it on to the Families United Network, Inc. case manager during their next contact.

CONTINUING MEDICATION LOG – The continuing medication log is used by the resource family to document **any** medication given to a child. This log should be completed monthly and forwarded to their Families United Network, Inc. case manager.

CONTINUING MEDICAL APPOINTMENT DOCUMENTATION: - The continuing medical appointment form is to be used to record any additional medical, dental appointments or immunizations not already recorded on the routine medical forms. Each form completed must be returned to the case manager and acts as documentation to additional and follow up medical care.

CONSENT FORM – A medical and surgical consent form is requested to be signed by the birth parent. In some cases, the placing county can sign the routine consent form. This consent form is only used for routine care. Neither Families United Network, Inc. nor the resource parent can give consent of any kind. A copy of the medical consent form will be given to the resource family to keep on hand in the event of an emergency. Additional consent forms are needed for the use of psychotropic medication, evaluations, elective surgery, etc. These consents will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

IMMUNIZATION RECORD – A copy of the child’s immunization record will also be given to the resource family. Any new immunizations given to a child must be recorded on the child’s record. Please be sure to alert your case manager so this information is appropriately documented.

5. Emergency Medical Care and Surgery

Unless an injury, accident or illness is life threatening, it is usually best to notify your pediatrician first and follow his/her advice. Resource parents should contact their case manager as soon as possible following an injury. Families may need to contact the on-call worker if after business hours. If circumstances are life threatening, the resource parent must immediately seek medical attention.

In any situation where a child is in need of elective surgery, consent must be obtained. **Only the child’s legal parent may consent to elective surgery unless the legal parents’ rights have been terminated.** At that time, the legal guardian (the county placing agency) is the entity responsible for consent. Elective surgery is defined as surgery that is neither urgent nor mandatory for the preservation of life or prevention of disability and surgery that may be scheduled in advance at a time of convenience.

If a physician is recommending surgery, it is important to let your caseworker know immediately so that the proper consents may be obtained. It will be a joint responsibility of the Families United Network, Inc. caseworker, the physician, and the county worker to obtain these consents. Resource parents should inform their physician that consents need to be obtained by the legal parents.

6. Prescriptions

When a child needs a prescription medication, you may use the pharmacy of your choice, provided they accept your child’s HMO card. If medication is needed prior to receiving an ACCESS and HMO card, you should provide the child’s insurance identification number to the pharmacy. If the pharmacy refuses to fill the prescription, ask your caseworker for assistance. In most cases, if a family must pay for a prescription, Families United Network, Inc. will reimburse the family as long as a receipt is provided. Requests for reimbursement are handed in with monthly resource parent billing statements.

7. Psychotropic Medication

Psychotropic medication is defined as any medication used for mental health issues and not needed for medical reasons. Some examples include: Ritalin, Concerta, antidepressants, etc.

Whenever a child is prescribed any type of psychotropic medication or a change is made to the existing prescription medication, the legal parent must give individualized consent. Each time a change is recommended by the doctor, parental or county consent must be obtained before the medication begins, changes, or the dosage is altered. Use of any psychotropic medication must be documented on the continuing medical log.

D. Lifebook Development:

A lifebook is an ongoing child-friendly recording of a child’s experiences. It is a written account of memories and dreams. By the use of pictures, documents, photographs and writings, children can recapture their past, and can begin to understand how and why they came to be placed into care. These recordings are collected in a binder for the children to enjoy forever. And a page can be added with every new experience.

Lifebooks are particularly important for children in care because of the instability of their family situations. Imagine moving from your parents’ home to a group home to a foster home and then to your aunt’s

home. Many times as children grow older they do not have the pictures, report cards, and other things that help us remember where we have been and what we have done.

Families United Network, Inc. encourages all families to help children document their memories. The family is encouraged to begin such a memory book for each child placed in their home. In some cases a child may be placed into a resource home with a lifebook already started. The lifebook (or a memory box) must be passed on to whoever provides care to the child. This may include a legal parent, relative, group home, adoptive home, or another foster home. The case manager will review the development of the lifebook through routine contacts with the family and be available to help gain past records of developmental history and medical records.

Further life book trainings are offered throughout the year by Families United Network, Inc.

E. Vacations:

Vacations are important times for family recreation and building memories. Because of this, Families United Network, Inc. encourages resource parents to plan their vacations in advance in order to include their foster children if possible. Children can only accompany their resource parents on vacation if prior written permission has been received from the child's legal parents and/or the county agency. Resource parents are requested to give their case manager four weeks prior notice when requesting permission for any overnight travel.

Whether for vacation or any other purpose, Families United Network, Inc. must be informed prior to any time that a child is sleeping in a home that is not an approved Families United Network, Inc. resource home. Signed permission from the legal parents will be needed for both in state and out of state trips where the child(ren) will be staying overnight. Signed permissions are not necessary for day trips that the family may take. For example, if the family is going to the Delaware Shore for the day, a parental signature is not needed. If, however, the family is traveling to State College and plans an overnight stay, a parental signature is needed.

Once your family has made plans for traveling, notify your caseworker, giving him or her the following information:

- Dates of travel (departure and return)
- Mode of travel (car, train, bus, plane)
- License plate number
- Destination(s)
- Date at each location with telephone number and address where you can be reached

It is very important to plan ahead. Often, it will take several weeks to obtain parental approval. Should the parents be unavailable to give their approval, the county can request the court to approve your travel, but this also is time consuming and could delay receiving permission for the child to travel.

F. Educational Placements:

1. Early Intervention

Early intervention services help families develop a child's full potential. All children grow and learn at different rates, and those who are developing more slowly are offered Early Intervention Services. Typically, the delay must be measured as a 25% delay in order to qualify for services. Common examples of such delays are speech, gross motor skills, and fine motor skills. Many children in care are in need of such services due to physical and environmental conditions that caused them to come into care. Support services are also offered to the resource family.

Resource parents who have questions concerning a child's development or disability can talk with their health care provider, the Mental Health/Mental Retardation office or their Families United Network, Inc. case manager for referral to an appropriate local agency to receive a developmental assessment. This will determine if the child is eligible for services.

Early intervention services may include: Speech therapy, physical therapy, parent education/support, and occupational therapy. Therapy may be provided in the child's home, a child care center, nursery school, play group, the Head Start program, or other setting familiar to the family. These programs are provided at no cost to families.

A child who has received Early Intervention Services before age 3 is generally referred automatically to the County Intermediate Units (within the county school system) for continuation of their services. Sometimes the extension of services will mean that the child will be offered placement in a Head Start or Developmental or Specialized Preschool environment where the particular services he or she receives are a priority. When these preschools are approved for the child, there is no cost to the foster parent for this education.

2. School-Aged Children

REGISTERING CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL: Children must be registered for school using their legal name. Families United Network, Inc. will prepare a registration letter and supporting documents and forward to the school district in which the resource home resides. Each individual school district may require additional steps in order to register a child. Pennsylvania only requires immunization records be available for a child to begin school. However, some schools will require additional paperwork. Families United Network, Inc. will attempt to honor individual school requests as needed.

It is important to note that when a child is transferring from one Pennsylvania school to another, the new school should honor the student's registration even if all the paperwork is not immediately available. School districts will often only transfer records from one educational institution to another, reducing the case manager's ability to speed up a school registration. All children should be able to begin school within one to three days. If a child is in special education, it could take up to two weeks to register a child to ensure proper placement.

If any school registrations become difficult, the Educational Law Center is contacted as well as the placing county agency. Resource parents can contact their area school to inquire about the ease of registration so problems can be worked out in advance.

SIGNING PERMISSIONS: Resource parents cannot sign any forms for early interventions, educational testing, or special skills programs. Legal parents must be given the opportunity to participate in all educational planning for their children and should be invited to all school meetings where their children(s)' performance and needs are discussed.

EDUCATIONAL SURROGACY: Occasionally a school system, in an effort to lessen the timeframe for completion of paperwork, or to eliminate the necessity to find legal parents when they are not available, will offer to you an "Educational Surrogacy" where you could sign paperwork for the school district. Families United Network, Inc. must be notified if this is a consideration. In many cases, permission is needed from the County Children and Youth Agency before a surrogacy is approved.

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM: Foster children are automatically eligible for free lunch in public schools. The resource family does not need to disclose their personal income for the child to qualify. The family will need to register the child for this program if they would like to use it as a resource. Families United Network, Inc. does not require families to use the free lunch program.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION: Children who are automatically eligible for free transportation to public schools are often eligible to receive tokens for this purpose. The school office can review

with you the requirements for this benefit. Otherwise, the public school system is to provide a child with all transportation to and from school.

PHOTOGRAPHY: At the beginning of each school year, parents are often asked to sign a “blanket” permission slip to use, or not use, a child’s picture and/or name in any photographs that might be taken of school activities by either school or public photographers. This permission CANNOT be given by anyone other than the legal parent or the county court. Annual school pictures are permitted and the resource parents will pick the package and be responsible for the cost.

SCHOOL TRIPS: Resource parents may approve school field trips if they will be concluded within the school day. Permission must be received from legal parents for overnight trips.

SPORTS: For children planning to play sports, please consult with the school district’s Athletic Director to obtain permission slips at least one month in advance of the season to allow time for caseworkers to obtain signatures from either legal parents or the court. Waiting for parental permission can be a very frustrating thing for a child who wishes to play a sport and we encourage you to develop a relationship with the school to procure several permission slips that will be on-hand in your file, or in the caseworker’s file, to be signed whenever a legal parent is available.

REPORT CARDS/PROGRESS REPORTS: Families United Network, Inc. is required to provide these reports to county workers on a regular basis. Therefore, when these reports are received, please copy them for your own file, and give the originals to your caseworker as quickly as possible. Report cards may also be forwarded to the legal family for review.

PRIVATE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE: In some situations, a resource family may decide that they would like their children to attend a private school. This is an option that requires the permission of the legal parent and/or county children and youth agency. In the event that a family chooses to pursue this option it is the responsibility of the resource parents to pay the private school’s fees. Private school is usually not considered unless a child is moving toward the goal of adoption. A legal parent cannot request the use of a private school unless they are willing to make arrangements to pay the fees.

HOME SCHOOLING: Some resource families request to home school their foster child. In individual rare situations, permission may be given by the legal parent and county children and youth agency. However, Families United Network, Inc. does not recommend home schooling any foster child. Although a home schooling education could be excellent, children must learn to use the services provided to them to better prepare them for their discharge from care.

G. Recreation and Sports:

It is very important for children to have the opportunity to participate in peer and resource family recreational activities of the child’s choosing. Families United Network, Inc. encourages families to help children get involved in school sports, activities, or community activities. Remember that consent may be needed.

H. Photography and Your Child in Care:

Please consider the implications of your child placed in your care being photographed by broadcast or private media. There are several guidelines concerning this issue.

Children in Children and Youth custody cannot appear in the media without written permission from parents except as noted. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Appearance on television programs as members of the audience
- Participants in radio talk shows
- Pictures in the newspaper as long as they are not identified as a foster child

The following procedure is to be followed for all requests concerning media participation for children.

- The legal parents of the child can give their approval through the county caseworker. If the legal parents object, the child cannot participate. If the parents are unable to be located, the child cannot participate.
- Only if parental rights have been terminated can the county caseworker, after consulting with their supervisor, approve the decision concerning the child's media experience.
- Please do NOT sign any permission with the school district allowing your child to be photographed within the school, with the photo being used for school purposes.

I. Treatment Services:

Many children may be in need of additional support. Their needs will vary widely. Referrals for service are usually done through the local school district, local County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Unit, or through the primary care physician.

Resource parents are expected to participate with a child in any identified treatment services, follow instructions and recommendations, and provide transportation to such appointments. All services are referred and billed under the child's medical insurance at no cost to the resource parent. The following is just a brief overview of a few of the most common forms of additional agency & community resources.

1. Agency Assessments:

The process of assessing a client begins at the point of intake to determine suitability for services and service needs for the child. There are several components that make up the assessment process. The first step is the referral. As much possible, background information is gathered from the referring placing agency such as identifying information, current location, health needs, reason for placement and placement considerations, history of abuse, drug and alcohol history, past and current involvement with the child welfare system, and other information available to aid in the placement of the child. This process is completed upon intake.

Upon the placement of a child, a request is made to the placing county agency for further information including medical records, educational records, mental health records, consent forms, and the family service plan. Efforts continue to take place to receive this information throughout a child's placement. Each individual child's needs are considered when requesting background information.

A formalized assessment is also completed for children in care using the Child Behavioral Checklist (CBC) by ASEBA or the Ages and Stage Early Intervention tool. The Achenback System of Empirically Based Assessment (ASEBA) uses an integrated set of rating forms for all ages. This approach offers a comprehensive approach to assess adaptive and maladaptive functioning. The ages and stages assessment evaluates young children for early intervention referrals.

The CBC has different questionnaires to be answered by the client, the teacher (if available), and the parent (or most available caregiver). Completion of the instruments is done within 30 days of the time of placement. The questionnaires are easy to understand and complete. Once completed, the answers are calculated using a software system that produces a report. The scores are rated normal, borderline, or clinical in nature. Special attention is placed on any area that is scored in the borderline or clinical level. Further assessment would then be pursued by a mental health professional if warranted. However, the goal of the CBC is to identify issues that our staff should incorporate in the child's Individual Service Plan. Having this information allows for a more specialized and individualized plan to use in the delivery of services to the child, the resource family and biological family. This form of assessment is updated along with each ISP amendment to evaluate the changes a child is making while in care.

All children ages birth to 5years old (60 months) will be assessed within 30 days from the date of placement using the appropriate Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) to assess developmental progress. The ASQ is divided into 5 developmental domains; communication, fine motor, gross motor, problems solving, and

personal/social. If a child's score does not fall within the critical area the agency will follow the prescribed DPW schedule for ongoing assessments.

In the event a child's score falls within the critical area, the child is referred to the appropriate early intervention program. Upon acceptance for services the agency will collect documentation of services and no further testing is required. If the child is evaluated and not accepted for services the child must be re-evaluated annually.

2. Individual Counseling:

Many children are in need of individual counseling. Some parents get false impressions about counseling and believe it can be a magic fix or get angry if a child's behavior gets worse once counseling starts. It is important for resource families to understand that a child's need to see a counselor is important. There are a number of reasons. First, it is a way to access more intense services a child may need. Oftentimes, a child must first see an individual counselor to determine the need for increased services. A second reason individual counseling is important is that it allows an objective outside party to talk with the child. This person can add insight, and help teach both the child and family skills to aid them in the adjustments needed for a successful placement. Common misconceptions concerning counseling may be as follows:

- a. My child is not talking to the counselor so it is a waste of time. Remember that it takes time for a child to build a relationship with a counselor. Many counselors are used to children who refuse to talk, and have ways to break through those barriers, but it may take time.
- b. The counseling is making the behavior worse. This may be true for a period of time. The saying, "it gets worse before it gets better" may occur. Children who are suffering emotionally do not know how to communicate their feelings, so they act out in ways to get our attention. Just because a child is acting out after counseling is not a reason to end counseling. On the contrary the counseling may be addressing important issues in order for the child to continue to progress.
- c. My child has no relationship with this counselor. Although this may be true, one must remember a relationship cannot be built after only a few sessions. Often, a family will feel the counseling is not working and they will stop scheduling the appointments. This, in turn, disrupts the relationship that was starting to build. Counseling appointments must be routine (bi-weekly) and ongoing over a length of time. Many children do not start to feel comfortable with a counselor until they have been seen for over 6 months.

3. Family Counseling:

Family counseling is the least utilized service and can be the most therapeutic. Sometimes, if appropriate, a child may have to attend counseling with the legal family. This is a step that is designed to help put the family back together and work toward the goal of reunification. Families United Network, Inc. and the resource parents must cooperate fully with family counseling requests. There may be times when the child refuses to attend, but we must all do our best to encourage the child to participate even if it means just sitting in the same room.

In some situations, family counseling may include the foster/adoptive family depending on the placement goal of the child. For the best results, both resource parents should attend. Many families believe they are not in need of counseling or they feel it is only the child that needs help. However, the whole family should be supported. It is the parents who live with the child day in and day out. Therefore, it is the parents who can help teach the child needed skills. Successful parents often become counselors in their own home.

4. Therapeutic Staff Support:

Often referred to as wrap-around services; it usually involves an individual titled a Therapeutic Staff Support (TSS). This person can hold a variety of roles and it may depend on the service provider as to the type of TSS worker that is assigned to a child. A child who is having difficulties adjusting to the

home and school environment may qualify for a referral for TSS. This TSS may go to school with a child to redirect the child to pay attention, not act out, re-teach, etc. The TSS worker may participate in play therapy or some other type of therapy that is beneficial to the child and the family. Oftentimes, the TSS worker works directly in the home or school where the child lives. The parents (foster or adoptive) interact during the contact to continue to learn more about the child and the behaviors or disabilities that interfere with learning and adjustment. Children who qualify for TSS generally receive a specific number of hours of service each week. The waiting list for TSS services can be extensive at times. There are not enough workers available in this field and sometimes resources to pay for services are weak. TSS workers are also prone to have a high rate of turnover in the field. TSS can be very helpful to families and children, but it is important to understand the difficulties that can occur.

5. Group Counseling:

Children (especially older children) may qualify for group counseling. Group counseling is a group of individuals that are all receiving services for a similar reason. It may be a group discussion about loss and grief, or a group of abusers, etc. This type of counseling can be very successful and should be considered as an option for service if appropriate for any child in your home.

6. Independent Living Assessments:

Any child age 16 or older will receive Independent Living Assessments. Families United Network, Inc. has adopted the Ansell-Casey curriculum which offers assessment of the youth's skills and knowledge in areas of money management, social relationships, career planning, communication, daily living, home life, housing, self-care, work and study skills. When the assessment is completed, a plan is generated from the identified needs offering various activities that the youth can complete. Some of the activities can be completed by the youth themselves. Others allow for assistance from either resource parent(s) or case managers. The goals of this plan are incorporated into the Individual Service Plan. They then serve as targets for achievement. Progress is monitored by the case manager during personal contacts. Children placed in the Independent Living program receive weekly face-to-face contacts from their case manager to work on these skills. Children who are not placed in the independent living program will receive routine bi-weekly contacts. They will though, benefit from the assessment and related identification of independent living goals.

7. Special Notes:

- a) All treatment services must be eligible for payment through a child's assigned insurance carrier. Private pay services are very expensive and not a reimbursable expense for resource parents. There may be times when a family selects a service that is not covered by a child's insurance carrier. A request can be made to the placing county agency to seek reimbursement. This request is made through the Families United Network, Inc. case manager. Often these requests are denied, but in extreme circumstances they could be approved. If the family decides to carry out the services that are not covered by the child's insurance nor approved by the placing county agency, the financial responsibility remains with the family.
- b) Continued Counseling Log: This is a log that is to be filled out by the resource parent and or the person providing service to the child. This is a form documenting the units of service and the date and time the child received them. Each log should be completed and attached to the monthly parent billing.

J. Insurance:

By State Law all resource parents must have their residence insured against fire and personal liability. Any family that is dually approved for adoption must also have insurance. A family may not be approved or re-approved if this insurance is not kept current. A family owning a home must have homeowner's insurance. Families that live in a rental property must have renter's insurance. Families are responsible for the cost of their insurance.

Families are also required to carry automobile insurance if they drive a motor vehicle. This insurance must include liability coverage.

It is important for families to understand that even though a child has medical coverage, insurance companies have their own definitions of who the responsible party is in certain situations. For example, if a child rides her skateboard into the fence of a neighbor and causes damage; the resource family's homeowner's insurance covers this cost after the deductible is spent. In another situation, a child may be hit by a car. The driver of the vehicle is first responsible for the medical coverage, and then the resource parents' car insurance is tapped. Once the resource parent's and the driver's insurance is exhausted, the child's own medical insurance provides coverage.

K. Permanency Planning:

When a child is placed into care the goal is almost always "reunification" with the biological/legal family. When this goal is not possible, additional goals are to be considered so that a child will have a permanent home.

Possible goals for a child include adoption or permanent legal custody. More information will be discussed later concerning adoption. Permanent legal custody allows any person significant in the child's life to take legal custody of the child. This can refer to a relative, a close family friend, or even the resource parents. The family may receive a subsidy to defray the cost of raising the child (similar to a foster care per diem, but it can be lower) yet no longer be in the foster care system.

The child's permanency is always the desired outcome from placement. This may mean that more than one goal at a time is discussed in order to plan for the child's future.

L. Independent Living:

Independent living, in many ways, is still an accepted placement goal for older foster children. In reality, independent living is an educational program for a child and not a placement goal. Many county agencies still use the terminology independent living as a placement goal. Together through ongoing training and development, we hope to someday come to a clear definition of independent living throughout the child welfare system.

Independent living can be defined in several different fashions. The first type of independent living is a formalized program. This program can consist of the child living in an apartment living, a group home, or other type of non-family living situation. The goal is to teach the child how to live on their own, with the supervision of staff. These children are not placed in foster care.

Another definition refers to formal or informal independent living training with the children who are placed in foster care. A formal program usually consists of the child attending a class either through Families United Network, Inc. or the placing county agency. Independent living and life skills training are addressed in each child's ISP. The case manager should guide the family and the child to identify needs, goals and objectives appropriate for the child. This may begin with the completion of an assessment. After the completion of the assessment, goals are outlined for the child. Many workbooks and training tools are available for a child to complete along with the help of the resource parent and the case manager. The majority of the preparation of a child for the future comes from the instruction a child receives in the resource home. Parents play a significant role in preparing a child for independent living. Examples of this include learning how to open and balance a checking account, buying groceries, cooking meals, cleaning a home, washing clothes, and renting an apartment.

Additional training will be provided as a child is involved in an Independent Living program.

M. Visitation with Legal Family:

1. Visitation:

Visitation is of vital importance in helping children maintain their ties with their legal families. The legal parents of a child have the right to visit with their children on a regular basis. These visits are, at the least once every other week and more likely weekly or more often. A schedule will be arranged that takes into consideration the needs and availability of the children's parents and also the convenience of the resource parents and availability of the social workers. In rare instances visits have been prohibited by court order. This is usually the only reason, with the exception of termination of parental rights, visits would not be arranged.

It is important to remember is that each child has a visitation plan and to change those plans your Families United Network, Inc. caseworker must have the approval of the county worker. Resource parents cannot make changes to a child's visitation plan without the agreement of Families United Network, Inc.

Visitation Logs:

Families United Network, Inc. staff is responsible for completing a visitation log each time the child's visit was supervised by us. Even if our staff does not supervise the visits, the event is logged in a record in the child's file. It is very important that all visits in which a child participates are reported to the case manager. It is equally important to report either positive or negative behaviors or incidents. Resource parents should use a visitation log to inform the case manager of visitation activities by attaching it to their monthly billing paperwork.

2. Supervision:

When Families United Network, Inc. places a child in a resource home the county worker may have already discussed visitation with the legal parents. The county worker will usually authorize the type of visit that is to occur. Families United Network, Inc. must adhere to these recommendations. Resource parents are encouraged to be available either before or after the visit to answer any questions the legal family may have for them concerning the child(ren) and to talk with the family about progress or concerns with the child(ren).

Visitation can either be supervised or unsupervised. The most restrictive visitation is held at the county or program office supervised by staff. As reunification nears, parents may gain permission to visit their child unsupervised and may even be permitted to take the child out of the office for a period of time.

3. Transportation:

Resource parents are expected to transport the children to and from the visits. Case managers can only help with transportation in an emergency due to their extensive casework responsibilities. Families are reimbursed for visitation mileage. Parking fees and turnpike tolls are also reimbursed.

4. Lateness:

Legal parents are late at times and sometimes say they are coming and then do not attend a visit. *The standard for lateness is 30 minutes, unless a call is received explaining the delay. After 30 minutes you are free to take your child home, however, each case is unique and lateness should be addressed in the child's ISP.* If this is a pattern, we will begin to require a confirmation call from the parent before we ask you to bring your child to a visit. Planned responses to lateness must be approved by the child's county caseworker.

When visits are not held as arranged it causes grief to the children and difficulty for both you and the staff. *We will work to hold everyone accountable for the plans that were made for visitation.*

Please be patient while we endeavor to get all arrangements made together for the good of the children.

5. Rescheduling:

When visits must be changed by the agency either because of inclement weather or illness of a child or family member rescheduling is to be completed immediately. Hopefully the visit will occur within the following two days. If it is impossible to hold this visit within two days, it will be re-scheduled as soon as possible. Visits cannot be permanently cancelled.

6. Behavioral Issues:

Visitation is very difficult for most children for a wide variety of reasons. Preparing children for visits is very important. As a resource parent you are able to prepare your children by helping them to understand that they will have to leave their parents at the end of the visit and encouraging them to enjoy the time they have with their family. Children often feel particularly upset about the first few visits. It is difficult to anticipate how the child will react, but you may need to help them process their feelings of loss and abandonment. Work with your child's caseworker to learn meaningful ways to comfort your child.

Children often can feel torn in different directions as they bond with their resource parents, but do not want to appear to be choosing their foster family over their legal parents. Resource parents can help with this conflict by speaking positively of the legal family and actively promoting visitation. At the end of visits many resource families find it helpful to go to a restaurant or a park immediately after the visit. If the visit is particularly difficult or emotional, this may help to give the child time to calm down before moving back into the household routine.

A common mistake made by case managers, resource parents, and other professionals is to limit a child's visits because their behavior has gotten worse after visitation with the family. Staff, resource families, and other professionals must try to examine the child's situation carefully. Many children will act out for several reasons, including stressors that are brought on by the legal family, or grief and loss that the child is suffering by being separated from everything that they once knew. In most situations, children even from abusive situations will want to continue to be with their legal family. If a child is acting out before or after visitation with the legal family, it may mean that the child is in need of increased contact and visitation with the legal family. We must all be very careful to not limit a child's contact with the legal family without examining the entire situation around the child's case.

7. Injury, Illness or Accidents:

In the event a child is ill or has minor bruises, burns, scrapes, etc... which might alarm the legal parent, it is advised that the foster family alert the Families United Network, Inc. case manager prior to the visit. This allows time for the worker to inform the legal parent of the situation.

N. Working with Legal Families:

As resource parents, many of you will have the opportunity to interact with the natural/birth parents of the children placed in your home. You may use the term birth, legal, or natural parents depending on the information you are reading or the preference of the placing county agency. In this document we will use legal family. The legal family will play an important role in a family's relationship and even success with the child placed in their home. For most of the children that we work with, the bond with their legal parents remains strong, even in situations where abuse and neglect have occurred. It is important to recognize, accept, and build on, this relationship.

We encourage foster parents to work closely with birth parents in such a way that you are viewed as an "extension" of the legal family, toward the eventual reunification of the family. The specific ways in which birth and foster parents work together will vary from case to case. Furthermore, in those occasional situations where a legal family is uncooperative or even disruptive, we do not require foster family

involvement. However, where there is a willingness to cooperate, we encourage you to consider the many ways in which you can be helpful to your foster child's parents, including:

- When transporting a child to or from a home visit, take time to chat with the parents about the visit.
- Between visits, write or call the legal parents to keep them informed of the child's progress.
- Encourage the legal parent's input on important decisions involving school, medical care, recreation, jobs, etc. Some county agencies require that the legal family be invited to attend all of the child's medical, dental, and counseling appointments.
- Share report cards with the family
- Share school photos with the family
- Share with birth parents the ideas & techniques that you find to be helpful in working with the child.
- In appropriate situations, we might ask you to allow the legal parents to visit your home. This can aid in the process of helping the child feel safe and comfortable. This will only be done at your agreement and with the permission of the legal family.
- Attend ISP conferences and court reviews, where you can communicate and work with the birth parents and agency personnel in developing and modifying plans for reunification.

These represent only a few of the many ways in which resource parents and legal parents can work together. The common goal remains the same, namely helping legal parents to view you, the resource parents, as working together with them toward the common goal of reunification. Another important rule to remember is that the legal family must know the location of their child at all times. This means upon a child's placement, the legal family is notified with a letter indicating the name of the agency, the name or the case worker, and the name and address of the resource family. The only time this information is not given to the legal family is if there is a concern for the child's safety.

O. Child's Belongings:

1. Clothing:

Families United Network, Inc. requires the resource family to supply their child with approximately \$50 a month in new clothing. If the child has not been in the home for a full month, the amount should reflect the length of time the child was in the home.

Only clothing is accepted for this expense. Hygiene items, hair products, book bags, etc... are not included as clothing items. Used or garage sale clothing is acceptable once in a while, but a child must have new clothes as well. Infants who wear diapers should also receive a percentage of new clothes although diapers are an accepted expense. Resource parents are encouraged to use their own best judgment.

Receipts are collected to ensure a child is receiving new clothes. The Families United Network, Inc. case manager will also inquire monthly about the purchase of new clothes. If the receipts do not document the \$50 requirement, funds will be deducted from the monthly parent billing statement.

Resource parents are encouraged to allow older children to select their clothing. However, it is the responsibility of the resource parent to ensure the child has an appropriate wardrobe for each season. Resource parents are also responsible for ensuring the clothing allowance is spent correctly. For example, buying one pair of \$80 sneakers when a child is in need of other basic clothing or buying \$50 pants or \$70 shirts would be unacceptable. Children need to learn how to spend clothing allotments appropriately.

2. Allowance:

A child receives a \$1 a day spending allowance. The use of the allowance varies depending on the age of the child. For younger children the resource parents help the child spend the allowance. The money should be spent on recreational items and toys that belong directly to the child. These items

should be something that the child can take home with them upon their discharge from care. For example, money used to buy a bike or another toy would be reasonable. Money used to buy a swing set would be inappropriate. A child cannot take the swing set home with them upon their discharge from the agency.

Some families wish to save a child's allowance, especially if they are too young to spend on their own. This is not encouraged. When a child is discharged from care, the saved money that goes home with the child may not be spent on the child.

School age and older children can begin to learn how to earn, save, and spend their allowance. The process of earning and spending the allowance is at the discretion of the resource family. However, the child must receive the allowance in some fashion. Allowance should again be used for recreational items and toys. Using allowance to buy additional hygiene items and food is unacceptable. Children should also be able to have possession of the items that they buy. Many school age children use allowance to buy additional snacks (ok, if in addition to the meals provided by the family), candy, toys, etc. Older children use allowance to buy phone cards, personal items in addition to those provided by the resource parents, CD's, toys, extra clothes of choice, etc... Children may also lose allowance to pay for fines, broken items, phone bills, etc.

3. Gifts:

Christmas presents, birthday presents, and other gifts given to a child must be his/her sole possession. Sometimes a family will buy an expensive gift for a child such as a TV, a stereo, or a Play Station. Then, when the child is discharged, they will not let the child take the gift with them. It is important for families to make appropriate gift decisions. When a family does not intend to allow a child to remove an item from the home, it should not be given to the child as a gift. Instead these gifts should be labeled household gifts and not a gift directly to that child. Household gifts can then stay with the resource family.

4. Income:

If children have part time jobs and earn a paycheck, the income earned by the child belongs to the child. This money may not be collected for payment toward normal food, clothing allowance or for housing. However, the resource parents can monitor how the child spends the money. Fifty percent or more of any income earned by a child should be saved. A child who owes any money for bills or fines, or owes the resource parents for an extra expense should be taken care of next. Any additional money can be spent as a child would spend extra allowance money. A child may then make the appropriate decision to spend saved money.

If a child has a bank account, the case manager will request a copy of the bank statement as well as a child's pay stubs. These tools will be used to help the child realize the amount of money they are saving and spending. Any money saved for a child in a bank account must be released to the child upon their discharge from the agency.

5. Pets:

A child in care may not own a pet because when the child leaves the resource home it is not always possible for the pet to transfer with the child. If a family wishes to have a pet, it is best that the pet belong to the family and not to the individual child.

6. Mail:

A child may receive correspondence by mail which may not be censored or opened unless dictated by the placing agency. This is only done in the event it is believed that the mail can cause some harm to the child.

P. Respite Care:

It is important that each child in placement have an identified respite home which is a second resource home with which the child can become familiar. A respite family can be used to provide short term care for the child if substitute care is needed. A respite family can also be used to provide a primary resource family a break or a weekend holiday. Respite families are tapped frequently in emergency situations.

Many families do not fully understand the use of respite care. It is not designed to interfere with the full time family, but to act as a support. Some families use respite over a weekend to provide themselves with a small break, especially if the child they are caring for is very difficult. This allows the full time family to reduce their own stress levels for a period of time so they can continue to provide permanent care for the child and not overwork themselves. Other families may use respite care as a back-up babysitter because the family may be going away and not be able to take the child along. An additional use of respite is for emergencies. In the event a family has an emergency (illness, death, accident, fire, etc...), a child may need to respite. In these most difficult times it is best if the child is already familiar with the respite family. For this purpose, respite families are identified and encouraged to be used at least occasionally to help the child develop a relationship.

Respite families with Families United Network, Inc. can be either regular full-time families who have the available bed space for additional children or they can be families who wish only to provide respite care to children instead of full time foster care. In some situations, resource families recruit their own family members to provide respite care for just the children in their care.

Q. Transportation:

Resource parents are responsible for providing transportation for their child. This includes transportation to medical appointment, school meetings, recreational events, and visitation with legal family, court, and treatment services.

The resource parents must maintain current driver's license, car insurance, car registration and sticker, and current inspections at all times. This information is collected and documented in the family file. Resource parents must obey all traffic rules and safety requirements including the use of restraints/seatbelts. Children under the age of 8 must be in an appropriate car seat or booster seat. Families United Network, Inc. schedules car seat safety training throughout the year. This is a mandatory training for all resource parents with children in this age group, as it is very important to use all car seats and booster seats properly to reduce the risk of injury to any child. If you are unable to attend this training, or will receive a child under the age of 8 before the next training, it is your responsibility to ensure you have received instruction. This training can be acquired by contacting your local police department. You may schedule to meet with an officer or employee who can give the proper instruction. This is usually a free service. If a family is unable to locate this training information in their area, they should notify Families United Network, Inc. immediately so we may help to locate or schedule this needed training.

R. Childcare:

Resource parents are encouraged to participate in normal couple activities such as going to the movies and going out to dinner together. Babysitting may be used as it would in any other family situation. It is the responsibility of the resource family to pay any babysitting fees. All temporary sitters must be 21 and known and trusted by the family.

Overnight or daily childcare falls into a different category. In the event a resource family is in need of this type of service, clearances must be obtained from the individual who will be caring for the child. Families United Network, Inc. will reimburse a resource family for the price of the clearances to approve of an alternative caregiver. The most common use of an alternative caregiver is a regular babysitter used to watch children every day after school. When overnight care is needed child should be placed in a respite home.

Daycare: Some families may decide to use daycare services. This is acceptable to Families United Network, Inc., as we understand many families are dual working families. The expense of daycare services is the responsibility of the resource parents. Daycare can be very expensive. If daycare services are needed for extended periods of time, a family will need to consider whether or not this is an expense they can afford. Many children qualify for subsidized daycare, which lowers the cost to approximately \$10-\$30 a week. However, due to a waiting list and the number of children who may qualify, there is often a delay in enrollment in some counties. Families need to have a back up plan in case it takes some time for a child to get into the subsidized daycare. Time may either be needed for the child to be enrolled or the child may be enrolled, but time may be needed for the child to qualify for the reduced rate. The length of time a family can wait varies from days to weeks.

Foster children may not baby sit other children. Although some teenagers may wish to earn money in this way, a foster child must be supervised at all times, and therefore could not be left alone to supervise other children. An exception may be made to this rule only with permission from the legal parent, the county, the executive director, and the parent of the child to be babysat. Also the child would need to demonstrate stability and responsibility in foster care and take a babysitting course which includes first aid. This activity is not encouraged.

S. Phone, Computer, and Pay TV Use:

Resource parents are responsible for supervising the children in their home. Families United Network, Inc. is not responsible for bills a child may incur on items such as long distance phone use, computer bills, and pay TV channels. Families should take steps to safeguard these items and limit their use by any child. Careful supervision should ensure misuse is not occurring.

A family may need to set up basic phone rules. A specific length of time may be allotted, especially for long-distance calls and a reasonable price must be established for the child to call home or call friends. A child who wants to use their allowance to pay for additional time may do so if agreeable to both the child and the resource parent. (Keep in mind, a child should be permitted "reasonable" long distance use of the phone in order to maintain some contact and relationship with the legal family. Additional time on the phone can be the responsibility of the child.)

T. Smoking Policy:

There may be no smoking inside any part of a resource family home or vehicle at any time while a child or children in placement are in the home or vehicle. This applies to anyone living in the resource home and to anyone visiting for any reason. Additionally, all resource families must post the universal "No Smoking" symbol in the home so it is visible to all who enter. Families United Network provides the signs at no cost to the resource family. Agencies and foster families are subject to significant fines for failure to comply.

Chapter 6: Roles in Foster Care

A. County Children and Youth Agencies:

1. **County Case Worker**

In Pennsylvania, the county children and youth agency shares legal custody of children in placement with the legal parents. The county also has physical custody of the children while they are in care. If the child is in a Families United Network, Inc. resource home, Families United Network, Inc. will then be assigned a county case worker. The county has authority over Families United Network, Inc. to determine appropriate placements for children. The county agency also has responsibility for legal representation in family court.

Some of the responsibilities of the county case worker are as follows:

- Developing an FSP (Family Service Plan) for each family. When the goal is reunification of the children with their parents, this plan will detail the goals that the legal parents need to achieve in order to be reunified with their children. County case workers must invite legal parents, child advocates and private agency social workers to an FSP meeting held every six months to update this plan.
- Monitoring the care of all children under the jurisdiction of the county. When children are placed with Families United Network, Inc., the county case worker maintains frequent contact with the agency and reviews quarterly reports and Individual Service Plans (ISPs) developed by Families United Network, Inc. The county case worker must be informed of any incidents that take place with a child or resource home and must agree to any plans that involve moving children from a home, vacations, and other important changes.
- Maintaining complete case records for all children in care.
- Notifying all necessary parties of upcoming court dates. The county worker is responsible to provide necessary documentation to the court for each hearing. The case worker often attends hearings and will testify regarding the welfare of the children as well as the status of legal family members who are working towards reunification.
- In cases where the goal is adoption, the county will process all forms, documentation and affidavits from private agencies concerning requests for a goal change and termination of parental rights. The county agency makes all the decisions as to whether to accept a home as an adoptive resource for a child.

Families United Network, Inc. acts as a liaison between the county case worker and the resource family. Resource families are not to contact a county worker, child advocate, or judge on their own. The reason for this is simple. There needs to be one person who acts as a liaison so that all of the information is passed along smoothly. County case workers are also to make contacts with families through the Families United Network, Inc. case manager to eliminate the duplication of information or miscommunication between the different parties. If, at anytime a county case worker contacts a family directly, the family must then contact their Families United Network, Inc. case manager to ensure the information communicated is correct and documented in the child's case record.

Any families working with Allegheny County placements may experience differences in these procedures. Those differences will be explained in your orientation classes.

Families should never accept referrals for children directly from the county agency. All referrals must come through Families United Network, Inc. staff.

2. **Child Advocate**

The child advocate is the legal representative for the child. This role is extremely important and the child advocate is an important member of the team involved in the care and decision making for children in care. Each county agency works independently and not all children may have an advocate.

Some of the specific responsibilities of the child advocate are as follows:

- Providing legal representation for the child involving decisions such as reunification of the child with their parents or termination of parental rights.
- Involvement in all ISP meetings convened by Families United Network, Inc. and the county agencies. The child advocate provides input as to the appropriate goals for both the children and the legal parents.
- Families United Network, Inc. can provide copies of all ISPs and quarterly reports to the child advocate for their review if requested.
- The child advocate can be an important resource to help ensure that children receive proper services while they are in care. If children are being refused necessary services, the child advocate can be of help in assuring that the child gets necessary services in a timely fashion. This may include treatment services and/or educational services.
- If the legal parent refuses an elective surgery, medication for a child, or travel permission, the child advocate, together with the county agency, can ask the court to approve the request. However, it is not guaranteed that permission can be granted.

Some county children agencies also have what is known as the CASA worker. The CASA (Volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates) are everyday people who are appointed by judges to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children. A CASA volunteer stays with each child until he or she is placed in a safe, permanent nurturing home.

3. Court Hearings

Adjudication: Adjudication is a court decision. For a foster child, adjudication is a decision that he/she is either delinquent or dependent. A delinquent child is a child who has committed a delinquent act as determined by the court and found by the court to require supervision or rehabilitation. A dependent child is a child placed in county agency custody by a court because a family is unable or unwilling to provide adequate care.

Each county agency varies in some fashion regarding court hearings. Families United Network, Inc. tries to be aware of these differences so to inform the resource family of its practices once a child is placed into their care. In general, an emergency hearing is needed to place a child into foster care. A follow-up hearing is usually scheduled within a few days to determine if there continues to be a need to keep a child in foster care. If a child remains in care from that point forward, court hearings are usually scheduled every six months.

Court hearings are held to determine if the circumstances have been remedied and a child can return home, whether a child should be moved to a more restrictive setting, or if a child's goal should be changed if reunification is not possible. The court hearings are routinely scheduled every six months, but can be scheduled closer together to expedite the reunification process or they can be continued for later dates for specific reasons.

Families United Network, Inc. staff, resource parents, and children attend most court hearings. Each county agency is a little different in its practice for notification and attendance requirements. Some county agencies allow the resource family and child to skip the court hearing if it is a routine review and the child will continue in care. This is rare, but it can occur. Some county agencies require that the resource parents attend the hearing and testify. Other agencies invite the resource family, but do not permit them to listen to the hearing and may not call them to testify.

By law, resource parents do have the right to be heard in any court proceedings related to the child(ren) in their care, and should be provided the opportunity to be heard regarding agency decisions or practices involving a child(ren) residing in with their home. The agency may not discharge, threaten or otherwise discriminate or retaliate against the resource parents for an appropriate inquiry regarding such decisions or practices.

B. Families United Network, Inc. Staff Responsibilities:

- Work in cooperation with families and children.
- Share any information concerning a child's physical condition, mental disabilities, emotional problems and past behaviors to those parties that have a need to know, according to HIPAA guidelines. Full disclosure does not include private information concerning the biological/legal parents.
- Provide twenty-four hour per day, seven day per week emergency case management services to families and children.
- Provide personal case management contact weekly for children newly placed and bi weekly thereafter. Additional contacts may be needed depending on the circumstances of individual cases. Case managers will make telephone contacts during those weeks when personal contacts are not made.
- Maintain proper client records.
- Work in conjunction with families to arrange for physical examinations and dental examinations for children within 30 days of the child's placement.
- Report any incident of suspected child abuse to Child line and the referring agency.
- Act as liaison with the referring agencies, resource parents, child and legal parents to develop and carry out appropriate plans of service. Schedule an Individual Service Plan with in 30 days of the child's placement and then every six months from the placement date.
- Comply with Family Service Plan as developed by the placing county.
- Provide required and other appropriate training for resource parents. Conduct ongoing safety assessments, inspections, and annual re evaluations.
- Conduct business in compliance with all Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare regulations including ongoing assessment, and inspections.
- Inform children and families of appropriate grievance procedures and respond to any problems or grievances in a fair and reasonable manner.
- Notify the resource and legal families at least 30 days in advance when removing a child, unless it is in response to an emergency.
- Provide overnight respite care for each child in care with an approved resource family.

Families United Network, Inc. is also responsible for the completion of an Individual Service Plan. This plan is designed to outline the goals, and objectives for a child's case. The child, the resource family, the legal family and the county agency are to participate in the meeting and plan development. This plan is reviewed every six months.

The child and the resource parents are asked to complete a goal planning worksheet prior to the ISP meeting to aid the case manager in the development of appropriate goals and objectives for the child. There are times when legal family members and perhaps the placing county agency do not participate. However, the child, the resource parent, and the case manager must always participate in the completion of the ISP.

C. Resource Family Responsibilities:

Approved families with Families United Network, Inc. are regarded as members of the professional team. We believe that living as part of a family is the best situation for a child to receive treatment for illness or disturbance, guidance for the future, and nurturing for growth and development. The following is a summary list of responsibilities and roles. More detail on many of the items can be found throughout the orientation packet.

- Provide proper care and twenty-four hour per day supervision for children placed in the home. Children may not be left home alone or unsupervised.
- Attend to the daily needs of a child as it relates to food, clothing, and shelter. Provide the opportunity for health, growth development, and a comfortable environment for children as it is stated by DPW regulations.

- Work with the agency to provide care and guidance as determined appropriate by the agency and the child's Individual Service Plan, as developed by the agency, the referring agency, the child, and the legal parents.
- Assist the child in understanding the need for placement and support the legal family as possible.
- Never use any form of physical punishment for any reason; use only those disciplinary methods approved by the agency.
- Notify the agency at least 30 days in advance when requesting the removal of a child from the home. Any problems should be reviewed with the case manager to alleviate the need to move a child on an emergency basis.
- Inform the agency in advance of vacations or special events, whether planning to take children in care, or requesting arrangements be made for supervision of children while absent. A 30-day notice is recommended.
- Follow the agency respite policy and cooperate with the agency in arranging for respite care for children in care.
- Arrange medical and dental care as required by the agency and foster care regulations. Follow the agencies directions regarding selection of clinics, physicians or dentists and make appropriate use of Medical Assistance or other insurance. The placing county and/or legal parents must approve all evaluations, HIV testing and psychotropic medications. Please note that some counties require haircut permission.
- Notify the agency immediately in cases of emergencies, problems, or grievances.
- Provide children with new clothing on a monthly basis and spending allowance.
- Provide transportation for **all** visits to the legal family home, referring agency office or other designated and agency approved site for visitations. Provide **all** transportation for medical, dental, ISP meetings & court reviews and other treatment appointments deemed necessary by the agency and/or required by the placing county agency. Resource parents must provide transportation to all functions deemed beneficial for the children in care and in accord with those considered in the line of parenting responsibilities. This also includes transportation for school and educational related events as well as Early Intervention/Head Start programs.
- Ensure that the child has the opportunity to participate in religious activities and services.
- Attend resource parent training as required by the agency and the foster care regulations.
- Maintain confidentiality in regard to any information concerning the child, his/her family or the agency. Respect the rights of the child and the legal family.
- Obtain approval from the agency before accepting any persons to live in the home from any source for any reason.
- Notify the agency immediately if the whereabouts of a child in care is unknown.
- Obtain adequate homeowner's or tenant's insurance and vehicle insurance.
- Supervise the use of home telephone. Resource parents are responsible for phone bills and any use by the child.
- Maintain records for the child, photos, school projects, keepsakes, and cooperate in the development of the life book.
- Be responsible for and not hold the agency responsible for any injuries to other people or the resource family or for damage to property or vehicles, which may result from caring for children.
- Fulfill required foster care regulations as stated by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare for the safety and welfare of children.

D. Legal Family Responsibilities:

The legal family has the largest responsibility as it relates to the child successfully being returned or reunified with the family member. The legal family may appear to have limited responsibilities, but it is the legal family that must achieve the goals and objectives set up in their Family Service Plan in order to regain custody of their child or children.

It is important for professional staff and resource families to be sensitive to the natural family. Although the natural family is usually the cause of a child's foster placement, there may be many barriers that either caused placement or hindered the legal family from fulfilling their goals and objectives. It is very difficult to assume we know what it is like to be that parent who lost their child, unless we have lived the

same life and experienced the same things. Just a few examples of barriers that legal families face are as follows:

Example One: A child is permitted to have supervised visits with the mother and father. These visits are scheduled during the day to meet the needs of the legal family and or agency worker. Perhaps the legal mother has a 9 to 5 job and to meet the goal of maintaining employment can not get off work to attend a visit.

Example Two: A legal parent does not have the skills to raise the child in the same fashion as the resource parent. Perhaps the legal parent was not raised properly themselves and did not learn how to parent the way healthy families do.

Example Three: A parent may struggle meeting the goals and objectives outlined because they suffer from a medical or psychological illness which is untreated. These are just a few examples of simple barriers that interfere with the legal families' ability to achieve the goals and objectives set up for them to regain custody of their children. Because of these barriers and many others the responsibilities of the legal family are sometimes the most difficult to fulfill. Their responsibilities include:

- Maintain visitation with the child/children
- Attend educational appointments, medical, and treatment appointments as invited. (Barriers may include transportation, and scheduling appointments around work and other treatment services.)
- Cooperate with the placing county agency
- Maintain appropriate housing (the family could be homeless)
- Maintain appropriate income (the family could be jobless)
- Provide safety and opportunities for a child to develop
- Be able to provide medical care for their children
- Comply with the goals and objectives as set forth in the county Family Service Plan
- Cooperate with a private provider agency
- Cooperate with the resource family

E. Child Rights & Responsibilities:

Families United Network, Inc. policy states that every child and youth in our care, and available parent, be informed of specific child rights as outlined by the Department of Public Welfare and other applicable state and federal laws. No child may be deprived of specific rights or civil rights. Rights may not be used as a reward or sanction. Child rights are reviewed and signed by the child, if they are 7 years of age or older, upon placement in foster care. In addition, the child rights are also outlined in our legal parent handbook which is sent with the placement letter to all legal parents. Procedures to file grievances and properly report violations of a child's rights are included in our agency grievance policy which is reviewed by each foster child 7 years of age or older and their legal parent(s).

Upon placement in our foster care program, the assigned Families United Network, Inc. Case Manager will review the Child Rights and Responsibilities form with the child, if they are 7 years of age or older, and have him/her sign the form verifying that this information has been reviewed and that they understand their rights. In addition, Families United Network, Inc. will send every parent a copy of the Legal Parent Handbook which outlines the specific rights of their child while they are in the program.

Specific child rights include:

1. A child may not be discriminated against because of race, color, religious creed, disability, handicap, ancestry, sexual orientation, national origin, age or sex.
2. A child may not be abused, mistreated, threatened, harassed or subject to corporal punishment.
3. A child has the right to be treated with fairness, dignity and respect.
4. A child has the right to be informed of the rules of the agency and foster home.
5. A child has the right to communicate with others by telephone subject to reasonable agency policy and written instructions from the contracting agency or court, if applicable, regarding circumstances, frequency, time, payment and privacy.

6. A child shall have the right to visit with family at least one time every two weeks as directed by the placing agency.
7. A child has the right to receive and send mail.
 - a. Outgoing mail may not be opened or read by staff persons.
 - b. Incoming mail from Federal, State or county officials, or from the child's attorney, may not be opened or read by staff persons.
 - c. Incoming mail from persons other than those specified in paragraph (b) may not be opened or read by staff persons unless there is reasonable suspicion that contraband, or other information or material that may jeopardize the child's health, safety or well-being, may be enclosed. If there is reasonable suspicion that contraband, or other information that may jeopardize the child's health or safety, may be enclosed, mail may be opened by the child in the presence of a staff person.
8. A child has the right to communicate and visit privately with his attorney and clergy
9. A child has the right to receive service in a manner that is non-coercive and protects the person's right to self-determination.
10. A child has the right to be protected from unreasonable search and seizure.
11. A child has the right to practice the religion or faith of choice, or not to practice any religion or faith.
12. A child has the right to appropriate medical, behavioral health and dental treatment.
13. A child has the right to rehabilitation and treatment.
14. A child may not be subjected to unusual or extreme methods of discipline, which may cause psychological or physical harm to the child.
15. A child has the right to clean, seasonal clothing that is age and gender appropriate.
16. A child, as well as their legal families and/or legal guardians, have the right to participate in decisions regarding the services provided.
17. A child has the right to discuss any complaints following the Families United Network, Inc. Grievance Policy.
18. A child has the right to access a Families United Network employee 24-hours a day; 7 days a week.
19. A child has the right to receive appropriate educational services.
20. A child has the right to request a respite with another approved resource family.
21. A child has the right to be represented in court by an attorney.
22. A child has the right to maintain all their personal possessions.
23. A child has the right to receive guidance beginning at the age of 16 on how to plan for life as an independent youth.
24. A child has the right to receive information about the reasons why s/he is getting help from Children and Youth Services and help explaining the situation to others.
25. A child has the right to receive help coping with separation from their family.
26. A child has the right to age-appropriate supervision and non-physical disciplinary methods.
27. A child has the right to refuse any service, treatment, or medication, unless mandated by law or court order. A child will be informed of the consequences of such refusal which could result in the termination or discharge from the program.

Responsibilities & Expectations:

Children in care are expected to follow the steps listed within the service plans from Families United Network and the placing county agency. Children must also follow any requirements dictated by the county court system and are also expected to follow the rules of the resource family household and community. Children also have the responsibility to inform their Families United Network, Inc. case manager of any safety concerns or problems as they arise. In the event a child is uncooperative or fails to meet the appropriate responsibilities and expectations, their need for further services will be re-evaluated. This may result in a discharge or termination of services with Families United Network, Inc.

Chapter 7: Placements

A. Available Children:

The children who are available for placement are referred to Families United Network, Inc. through county children and youth agencies. Families United Network, Inc. does not accept referrals directly from families, schools or other individuals.

The types of children available for placement can be of any age, race or gender. Families United Network, Inc. does not discriminate in regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin, age or sex. However, the most common children referred to private agencies like Families United Network, Inc. are children age 7 and older. Many children are part of a sibling group and may have a variety of special needs. Typical special needs include:

- Separation and loss issues
- Neglect
- Abuse
- ADHD behaviors
- Enuresis
- Sexual acting out behaviors due to prior abuse
- Attachment issues
- Failure to follow directions
- Poor school performance and learning disabilities

Families can be prepared to be resource parents by understanding the types of children available for placement. The younger children who have few special needs are easily placed into relative care or a county children and youth home. The remaining children are left with fewer options and a strong need for someone to care for them. The best option for a child is to be placed with a family whenever possible instead of being placed in a group home or shelter setting.

Families who are only interested in a particular type of child need to realize that specific children are not always available. Finding the perfect match for a family is not to be compared to shopping for children. Children are real and we must be willing to accept them for who they are and not try to change them to meet our criteria.

There are reasons why some families need to be specific about the children that are added to their home. Bedroom space and the needs of any existing children must be considered before adding any child to a home. Also, a family should only accept a child whose needs they feel they can adjust to or learn about.

B. Matching:

Placing children in family homes is not an exact science. There are situations when very little information is known about a child and the child may need immediate placement. Families that are the most flexible in their requirements may find themselves getting more referrals than other families.

In better situations, the agency is able to gather more information on a child before they are placed. Sometimes an interview or pre-placement with the child is possible. A pre-placement visit is defined as a time when a child visits the home for a few hours, an overnight visit or a weekend visit. If the child spends the night, the family is reimbursed \$10 a day for each night the child spends.

Families United Network, Inc. attempts to make the best matches possible between a family and a child. Traditionally, a child's referral is given to as many families as possible. All options are offered to the referring agency. The most appropriate placement to meet the needs of the specific child is selected. The referring county agency makes all of the final placement decisions. Families can sometimes get discouraged when they are not selected for placement. Families are not selected because there is something wrong with them, but rather due to the specific needs of the child.

C. Placements:

Under State Law, the county children and youth agency can place a child for up to 72 hours without parental consent if it feels this is necessary for the child's safety and with the verbal approval of the court. Beyond that, a formal hearing must be conducted to show the need to continue a child in care. The county children and youth agency selects the resource home it feels is best suited to meet the needs of the child, but the final decision to accept a child is left up to the resource parents that are selected.

County children and youth agencies attempt to place children in either their own county approved homes or with a private provider like Families United Network, Inc. Best practice is for the placement agency to give all of the needed information to Families United Network, Inc. who then completely informs the resource family.

It is common that little information may be known about a child, particularly if the child is being placed for emergency reasons. It is helpful for resource families to be aware that once a child is placed in their home and the child feels comfortable, they may begin sharing information. There are situations, where the foster parent becomes the primary source of information gathering as the child opens up to them in their home.

When a family is selected for a placement a number of activities must occur. These things include the following:

- Receive all known information about the child
- Prepare bedroom space for child
- Schedule medical and dental appointments
- Complete a clothing inventory once the child arrives
- Work with the case manager to register the child for school and refer for treatment services as needed

Once a child is placed in the home more information may become known. The resource family will probably be the first to find out additional information about a child as they begin to live and adjust to one another. Families are encouraged to keep the child's case manager informed of information the child discloses to better document a child's case and to aid in the child's care.

Once a child is placed into a home, the case manager must make numerous arrangements. An Individual Service Plan meeting must be scheduled within 30 days. Family visitation must be arranged as well as any special services a child will require. Please note that visitation with the legal family is best if arranged as soon as possible.

In addition, Families United Network, Inc. must disclose the name and address of the foster family to the legal family. The only reason to withhold this information is if there is a safety and security issue. In this event a court order is needed to withhold this information from the legal family. If a resource family is uncomfortable with this information being distributed they may want to reconsider whether foster parenting is right for them. Families United Network, Inc. staff can help educate a resource family and legal family in how to work together and respect each other's privacy. The most common abuse of this privilege by legal family members is inappropriate phone contact. If education to the legal family does not eliminate the problem steps can be taken to aid a resource family with inappropriate phone calls.

D. When a Child Leaves:

When the time arrives for your child to leave your home, it will be a time of complex feelings for both the resource family and the child including sadness, grief, loss, fear, accomplishment, relief, and pride. The situation and feelings are different for every child and every resource parent. As the resource parent you have the primary responsibility to assist in this process and help the child to be prepared to make the move. Be supportive to the child during this time. As much as they want to return home,

they know leaving their resource parents will be sad. Remember that they may not be showing you how they really feel.

Sometimes resource parents ask to have a child removed from their home. The reasons are varied. No Regardless of the reason the resource parent needs to remember that they have a responsibility to the child and the agency to assist appropriately with this type of separation. Flexibility is key in working with the county agency and Families United Network, Inc. Remember that the agency will need to make a new plan for the child and this will take time. Try to give as much thought to and understanding of this process as possible. Families United Network, Inc. requests a 30 day notice if a child needs to be removed from the home.

All resource parents and children deal with separation differently. Separation and loss is an important topic to address and discuss. Families United Network, Inc. devotes a section of the pre-service training to this topic. Each family will gain more information in the training that follows.

E. Resource Parent Appeal Rights:

Resource parents may appeal the relocation of a child from the family if they feel the move is not in the best interest of the child. An appeal may be filed except under the following conditions:

- The foster child has been in the home less than six months.
- The child is being placed in an adoptive home.
- The child is being returned to his/her legal parents.
- The court has ordered the child's removal.
- The child is being removed due to a report of alleged abuse against the resource parent(s).

Families United Network, Inc. must inform the resource family in writing that they may appeal a child's relocation at least 15 days prior to the relocation of the child. To file an appeal you must notify Families United Network, Inc. in writing with the letter postmarked within 15 days after you are informed of the child's removal.

When Families United Network, Inc. receives your notification letter it is forwarded to the Department of Public Welfare's Office of Hearing and Appeals. A copy of the letter is forwarded to the placing county children and youth agency. The office of appeals will schedule a hearing on your behalf. You may be represented by anyone you feel could aid you in presenting your case. The Office of Hearings and Appeals will render a decision. If the appeal is submitted correctly the child shall remain in the home pending a decision on the appeal. Parties to an appeal of a child's relocation may be represented by an attorney or other representative.

Chapter 8: Billing Procedures

A. **Resource Parent Billing:**

Resource parent billing statements are completed by the resource family at the end of each month. These statements when complete are due to be sent or given to your local program office by the third day of the month.

B. **Per Diem Payments:**

Resource parents are reimbursed the per diem rate for each night a child sleeps in a resource home. If a child respites with another resource family, then that family will bill for those days. If a child visits their legal family for a weekend, the resource family may still bill for the full per diem rate. (If a visit extends beyond a weekend, clarification will be needed between the placing county agency and Families United Network, Inc. Please discuss this with your case manager at the time.) Per diem payment varies depending on the program in which a child is placed. Rates may be adjusted from time to time. Families need to review the correct per diem billing rate with their case manager prior to submission of the billing statement.

C. **Monthly Clothing Allowance:**

A family is directed to spend \$50 a month from per diem payments on clothing for a child. The receipts for the clothing are collected by the case manager monthly. If the appropriate amount of money has not been spent on the child, the money is deducted from the resource parent billing statement.

D. **Compensation:**

The resource family per diem allocation is for room, board, supervision, personal care items, clothing, allowance, all child transportation, recreation and other personal and incidental items which include, but are not limited to such things as bikes, sports equipment, summer or youth camps, vacation costs, music lessons, graduation gifts or class rings, etc.

Special Note:

- Foster care per diem rates can change each fiscal year. In the event that rates are changed, resource parents will be notified in writing of all changes.

E. **Medical Expenses:**

A resource family is responsible for over the counter medical expenses. All medical care appointments and prescriptions should be covered under the child's medical insurance. The family must take the child to participating providers that accept the child's insurance. Any problems can be brought to the attention of the case manager. There may be some instances when a family must pay small amount for a prescription. In this situation the agency will consider reimbursing the family.

- Families will be reimbursed for medical expenses, which they may occasionally find it necessary to pay providing the child's insurance company does not cover these expenses, and only with prior approval of the agency. Original receipts must be attached to the expense form.

F. Training Expenses:

Each resource parent is reimbursed \$5 per hour to attend a Families United Network, Inc. formal training class. This is a benefit to resource families and can aid the family if they must pay for a babysitter. Additional reimbursements are available to attend training classes outside of Families United Network, Inc. with prior approval from the office supervisor.

G. Emergency Clothing:

Children placed on an emergency basis may be placed with little or no belongings. In this situation, Families United Network, Inc. may approve resource parents spending up to an extra \$100 on clothing. The placing county agency may approve a higher amount and reimburse Families United Network, Inc. for the expense. In this case Families United Network, Inc. will advance the appropriated amount of money to the resource family. The family must spend the money on reasonably priced clothing items. School bags, hair accessories, and other personal items are not included in this allocation since they are expected to be purchased from per diem payments. All of the receipts must be returned to the case manager within a 30 day period. Any receipts not returned will result in a deduction from the resource parent per diem. That deduction may be restored when the receipts are returned.

This reimbursement feature can be a great advantage to any child and foster family. At the time of each placement the family should review what is needed with their case manager and identify any special reimbursement requirements.

H. Child's Allowance:

A child is expected to receive \$1 a day of allowance from the resource parent. This amount is included in the total per diem payment. It is up to the resource family to distribute this allowance based on the child's needs and the child's ability to complete simple chores around the house that are appropriate for the child's age.

I. Federal Taxes and Foster Care:

If you receive qualified foster care per diem payments for caring for a foster child, do not include these payments in your income when preparing your tax return.

Of special interest to foster parents is the I.R.S. guideline on "Relationship Test – A resource family caring for a child may be eligible for an earned income credit if":

- a. The child lived with you and was a member of your household for the whole year, and
- b. You cared for the child as you would for your own child.

A full description of this credit is too lengthy to include here and may change from time to time. Please confer with your tax consultant for complete details. There are also many tax credits that may be available to adoptive families. These also vary from year to year. Consult your tax consultant for more details.

Chapter 9: DPW Regulations

Chapter 3700 Foster Family Care

The following is a reprint of the Office of Children, Youth, and Families' Chapter 3700 Regulations. These regulations refer to Foster Family Care Agencies. Also included are guidelines according to Families United Network, Inc.

§3700.1. Applicability.

- (a) This chapter applies to:
- (1) An agency operated by a person, organization, corporation, or society, public or private, for profit or not-for-profit, which approves or supervises foster family care.
 - (2) An individual providing foster family care to children placed by an approved foster family care agency.
- (b) This chapter does not apply to agencies and homes licensed or approved by the Department's Offices of Mental Health and Mental Retardation.

§3700.2. Goal

The goal of this chapter is to reduce risk to children in placement; to protect their health, safety and human rights; to establish minimum requirements for the operation of a foster family care agency; and to establish minimum requirements to be applied by foster family care agencies when approving and supervising foster families.

§3700.3. Legal base.

The legal base of this chapter is Articles II, VII and IX of the Public Welfare Code (62 P.S. §§ 201--211, 701--774 and 901--922); 42 Pa.C.S. §§ 6301--6365 (relating to the Juvenile Act); and the Child Protective Services Law (11 P.S. §§ 2201--2224).

§3700.4 Definitions.

The following words and terms, when used in this chapter, have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

Child—An individual who:

- (i) Is under 18 years of age.
- (ii) Is under 21 years of age, committed an act of delinquency before reaching 18 years of age and remains under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court.
- (iii) Is under 21 years of age, was adjudicated dependent before reaching 18 years of age, and while engaged in a course of instruction or treatment, requests the court to retain jurisdiction until the course has been completed.

County agency—The single county children and youth social services agency.

Department—The Department of Public Welfare of the Commonwealth.

Family service plan or service plan—A written document describing short- and long-range objectives for the provision of care and services to a child and his family, prepared by the placing agency or individual.

Foster family—The living unit, including the foster family residence and foster parent, approved by a foster family care agency to provide foster family care to children.

Foster family care—Residential care and supervision provided to a child placed with a foster family.

Foster family care agency or FFCA—A public or private agency which recruits, approves, supervises and places children with foster families.

Foster family residence—The primary domicile of a foster parent. The residence may be owned or rented by the foster parent; or it may be provided to the foster parent by the FFCA.

Foster parent—An individual responsible for providing foster family care to children placed by an FFCA.

Individual Services Plan or ISP—A description of the activities which implement the family service plan.

Licensure or approval—The certification of FFCA and foster family compliance with this chapter.

Passive physical restraint—The least amount of direct physical contact required to prevent immediate harm to the child or others.

Placement—Twenty-four hour out-of-home care and supervision of a child.

Placing agency—The agency or individual with legal authority to refer or place a child for foster family care. Included are courts, county children and youth social service agencies and parents.

§3700.5. Waivers.

(a) A waiver of a requirement of this chapter may be requested, by the legal entity, as specified in procedures established by the Department.

(b) Approval to waive a requirement of this chapter may be granted if the Department has determined that the need for the waiver is not due to simple noncompliance with this chapter, and the approval:

- (1) Does not alter the applicability, scope or purpose of this chapter.
- (2) Is based on evidence, supplied by the requesting agency, that the objective of the requirement will be achieved in another way.
- (3) Is based on evidence, supplied by the requesting agency, that a waiver will have no adverse effect on the health, safety and rights of children.
- (4) Does not violate or condone noncompliance with Federal statutes and regulations or State statutes and regulations other than the requirement of this chapter for which the waiver is approved.
- (5) Does not jeopardize receipt of Federal monies.

§3700.31. Number of children allowed in a foster family home.

FFCA's shall limit the number of children living with any foster family to six. The maximum of six children includes the foster parent's own children. Exception to this requirement may be made only with prior approval obtained in writing from the appropriate regional office of the Department.

§3700.34. Family Service Plan.

A private FFCA shall implement a family service plan and placement amendment as developed by the placing agency.

§3700.36. Discipline Policies.

The FFCA shall provide foster parents with a copy of the discipline policy as described in § 3700.63 (relating to foster child discipline, punishment and control policy).

§3700.38. Orientation and information for foster families.

(a) The FFCA shall provide an orientation for new foster families before placing a child with them. The orientation shall include information about:

- (1) FFCA philosophy.
- (2) FFCA practices.
- (3) Roles of the foster family.
- (4) FFCA policies and procedures for discipline, punishment and control of foster children.
- (5) Roles of the FFCA in assisting the foster family in serving children.
- (6) First aid procedures.
- (7) Applicable statutes, regulations and general procedures.

(b) The FFCA supervising the foster family home shall give the foster families an emergency telephone number, which provides 24-hour access to the FFCA.

(c) Foster families shall be provided information from the case record which is necessary to protect the child's health and safety and to assist in the child's successful accomplishment of necessary educational, developmental or remedial tasks.

(d) Foster families shall be provided information from the case record, which will enable them to function safely and in cooperation with the FFCA.

§3700.51. Medical and dental care.

(a) The FFCA shall ensure that a child receives a medical appraisal by a licensed physician within 60 days of the child's admission to foster family care, unless the child has had an appraisal within the last 90 days and the results of the appraisal are available. The appraisal shall include:

- (1) A review of the child's health history.
- (2) Physical examination of the child.
- (3) Laboratory or diagnostic tests as indicated by the examining physician, including those required to detect communicable disease.

- (b) The FFCA shall arrange for immediate medical attention when a medical problem is recognized at the time of referral.
- (c) After the initial health appraisal, the FFCA shall ensure that a child has contact with a licensed physician according to the following schedule:

Age: Birth through 6 months	Frequency: Once every 4 to 6 weeks
7 months through 23 months	Once every 2-3 months
23 months and older	Once every 9-12 months

- (d) The FFCA shall ensure that a child, 3 years of age or older, receives a dental appraisal by a licensed dentist within 60 days of admission, unless the child has had an appraisal within the previous 6 months and the results of the appraisal are available. The appraisal shall include:

- (1) Taking or reviewing the child’s dental history.
- (2) Examination of the hard and soft tissue of the oral cavity.
- (3) X-rays for diagnostic purposes, if deemed necessary by the dentist.
 - (e)After the initial appraisals, the FFCA shall ensure that dental examinations are given to children 3 years of age or older at least once every 9 months of placement.
 - (f)The FFCA shall confirm the immunization record of the child within 60 calendar days of placement. An appropriate immunization schedule shall be established for the child based on his immunization status.
 - (g)The FFCA shall ensure that children receive necessary medical care when they are ill.
 - (h)The FFCA shall encourage parents to participate in the program of regular and appropriate medical and dental care for their child.
 - (i)The FFCA shall ensure that a continuing medical record is maintained for each child by assisting with retrieval of past medical records and transfer of current records to the child’s ongoing source of child care.

Families United Network, Inc. Guidelines:

To ensure that all DPW regulations are met, the agency has established health care guidelines to be followed.

Physicals

Age	Frequency
Birth through 6 months	Once every month
7 months through 23 months	Once every other month
23 months and older	Once every 9 months
*initial physical	Due within 30 days of placement

Dentals

Age	Frequency
Age 3 & older	Once every seventh month
Once turned 3	Within 60 days of 3 rd birthday
*initial dental	Due within 30 days of placement

§3700.61. Transfer of approval authority.

The Department delegates its authority under Article IX of the Public Welfare Code (62 P.S. §§ 901—922) to inspect and approve foster families to an approved FFCA.

§3700.62. Foster parent requirements.

- (a)Foster parents shall be at least 21 years of age.
- (b)Foster parents shall pass an initial medical appraisal by a licensed physician prior to being approved. The appraisal must establish that the foster parents are physically able to care for children and are free from communicable disease. Further medical examinations may be required by the agency if the agency has reason to believe that additional medical appraisal is appropriate.
- (c)Effective January 1, 1986, foster family care agencies shall require prospective foster parents to comply with section 23.1 of the Child Protective Services Law (11 P.S. § 2223.1) and Chapter 3490 (relating to child-protective services—child abuse).

Families United Network, Inc. Guidelines:

Families United Network, Inc. uses these requirements as a minimum requirement of standards for foster parents. Additional requirements are reviewed with families upon orientation training.

§3700.63. Foster child discipline, punishment and control policy.

(a)Discipline

- (1)Foster children shall be directed with techniques that stress praise and encouragement.
- (2)Foster children may not be subjected to verbal abuse, derogatory remarks or threats of removal from the foster home.

(b)Punishment. The following forms of punishment are prohibited:

- (1)Abusive discipline practices.
- (2)Physical punishment inflicted upon the body.
- (3)Punishment for bedwetting or actions related to toilet training.
- (4)Delegation of punishment to another child.
- (5)Denial of meals, clothing or shelter.
- (6)Denial of elements of the service plan or ISP.
- (7)Denial of communication with, or visits by, the child's family.
- (8)Assignment of physically strenuous exercise or work solely as punishment.

(c)Control. Passive physical restraint is the only allowable method of restraining a child.

Families United Network, Inc.

Families United Network, Inc. staff reviews the discipline policy with each family during the orientation process. Each family is required to sign on the agreement to follow the discipline policy.

§3700.64. Assessment of foster parent capability.

(a)The FFCA shall consider the following when assessing the ability of applicants for approval as foster parents:

- (1)The ability to provide care, nurturing and supervision to children.
- (2)A demonstrated stable mental and emotional adjustment. If there is a question regarding the mental or emotional stability of a family member which might have a negative effect on a foster child, the FFCA shall require a psychological evaluation of that person before approving the foster family home.
- (3)Supportive community ties with family, friends and neighbors.

(b)In making a determination in relation to subsection (a) the FFCA shall consider:

- (1)Existing family relationships, attitudes and expectations regarding the applicant's own children and parent/child relationships, especially as they might affect a foster child.
- (2)Ability of the applicant to accept a foster child's relationship with his own parents.
- (3)The applicant's ability to care for children with special needs, such as physical handicaps and emotional disturbances.
- (4)Number and characteristics of foster children best suited to the foster family.
- (5)Ability of the applicant to work in partnership with an FFCA.

Families United Network, Inc.

Families United Network, Inc. staff conducts a minimum of two personal interviews with prospective foster families to complete their assessment of the foster parent capability as well as collect required paperwork. A full assessment is written in a Foster Family Home Study.

§3700.65. Foster parent training.

A foster parent shall participate annually in a minimum of 6 hours of agency approved training.

Families United Network, Inc.:

The Department of Public Welfare training requirements are a minimum requirement. All agencies and foster parents are encouraged to set higher standards. Families United Network, Inc. requires that families receive 10 hours of annual training per parent.

Families United Network, Inc. also has developed an incentive program for resource families to receive training. Families who receive 14 hours of training per parent are eligible for a bonus upon their annual re-evaluation. The 24 hours must include 18 hours of formal classroom training. The training must also be complete and documentation received 30 days before the family's annual re-evaluation date.

Families United Network, Inc. does provide medical fragile foster care services. In the event a family is providing such a service to a child and receiving a higher per diem than regular foster care, the family is required to obtain additional training. Families must inquire with their case manager to determine the exact number of training hours needed.

§3700.66. Foster family residence requirements.

- (a) The FFCA shall ensure that the foster family residence has:
 - (1) At least one flush toilet, one wash basin and one bath or shower with hot and cold running water.
 - (2) An operable heating system.
 - (3) An operable telephone.
- (b) Sleeping areas shall meet the following criteria:
 - (1) No unsuitable area such as a hall, stairway, unfinished attic or basement, garage, bathroom, eating area, closet, shed or detached building may be used as a sleeping area for children.
 - (2) Foster children of the opposite sex who are 5 years of age or older may not share the same bedroom.
 - (3) Each foster child shall be provided with a clean, comfortable mattress and clean linens, blankets and pillow.

Families United Network, Inc. will inspect the resource home before approval to ensure that appropriate residence requirements are met. Homes will also be inspected upon family's annual re-evaluation process and throughout a child's placement in their home.

§3700.67. Safety requirements.

- (a) Medication and containers of poisonous, caustic, toxic, and flammable or other dangerous material kept in the residence shall be distinctly marked or labeled as hazardous and stored in areas inaccessible to children under 5 years of age.
- (b) Emergency telephone numbers, including those for fire, police, poison control and ambulance, shall be conspicuously posted adjacent to all telephones.
- (c) Fireplaces, fireplace inserts, wood and coal burning stoves and free-standing space heaters, if allowed by local ordinance, shall be installed, equipped and operated according to manufacturers' specifications and requirements specified by local ordinance.
- (d) An operable smoke detector shall be placed on each level of the residence. The detector shall be maintained in operable condition.
- (e) A portable fire extinguisher, suitable for Class B fires, shall be available in the kitchen and other cooking areas. The extinguisher shall be tested yearly or have a gauge to ensure adequate pressure.
- (f) Protective safety caps shall be placed in electrical outlets accessible to children younger than 5 years of age.
- (g) Exposed electrical wires are prohibited.
- (h) Drinking water from an individual water source shall be potable as determined by an annual microbiological test conducted by a laboratory certified by the Department of Environmental Resources.
- (i) (Reserved).

§3700.69. Annual reevaluation.

- (a) The FFCA shall visit and inspect annually each foster family to determine continued compliance with the requirements of § 3700.62-3700.67 (relating to foster parent requirements; foster child discipline; punishment and control policy; assessment of foster parent capability; foster parent training; foster family residence requirements; and safety requirements).
- (b) The FFCA shall give each foster family written notice regarding the results of the annual evaluation.

- (c) The FFCA shall give written notice to foster families of its decision to approve, disapprove or provisionally approve the foster family. The written notice shall inform the foster parents that they may appeal the FFCA's decision to disapprove or provisionally approve the foster family.

§3700.70. Temporary and provisional approvals of foster families.

- (a) Foster families may be temporarily approved to provide foster care to children.
- (1) Temporary approval is a time-limited status which may be authorized by an FFCA when a complete assessment of the foster family has not been made prior to the placement of a foster child.
- (2) The FFCA may authorize temporary approval only if a partial assessment of the family indicates that a foster child's health or safety will not be jeopardized if placed with the temporarily approved foster family. The partial assessment shall include, at a minimum, the following:
 - (a) An on-site visit to the home.
 - (b) An inspection of the physical aspects of the home.
 - (c) A brief assessment of the social and emotional qualities of the parents as they affect their ability to care for a foster child.
 - (d) The willingness of the parents to accept FFCA involvement and work cooperatively with the FFCA.
 - (e) The ability of the parents to meet the special needs of a child taken into the temporary protective custody of an agency.
- (3) Temporary approval of a foster family may be authorized for a maximum of 60 calendar days, starting from the date on which the FFCA places the foster child with the foster family.
- (4) If an assessment verifying compliance with the requirements of § 3700.62-3700.67 (relating to foster parent requirements; foster child discipline, punishment and control policy; assessment of foster parent capability; foster parent training; foster family residence requirements; and safety requirements) is not completed by the FFCA within 60 days, the approval of the home terminates automatically, and foster children shall be removed from the foster family.
- (b) Foster families may be given provisional approval to care for foster children.
- (1) Provisional approval of a foster family may be authorized by an FFCA when a previously approved foster family is determined, in a reevaluation, not to meet one or more of the requirements in § 3700.62-3700.67.
- (2) The FFCA may authorize provisional approval only if the identified areas of regulatory noncompliance will not result in an immediate threat to the health or safety of foster children placed with the foster family.
- (3) During a period of provisional approval, the FFCA may not place additional children with the foster family.
- (4) For foster families approved before October 1, 1982, provisional approval may be maintained until children placed before October 1, 1982, have left the foster family.
- (5) For foster families approved after October 1, 1982, provisional approval may be maintained for no longer than 12 months. The FFCA shall terminate the provisional approval of a foster family unable to achieve compliance within 12 months of receipt of provisional approval. Upon termination of a foster family's provisional approval, the FFCA shall remove foster children living with the foster family.
- (c) (Reserved).

Families United Network, Inc.:

Families United Network, Inc. does not temporarily approve resource families as part of our every day practice.

Families United Network, Inc. will place families in a provisional status if needed. During a provisional status, a family may not receive any additional placements.

§3700.71. Foster family file.

The FFCA shall maintain a file for each foster family home. The file must contain a copy of the foster family home approval and the results of each annual foster family home reevaluation.

§3700.72. Foster family approval appeals.

- (a) The FFCA shall give written notice to each applicant of its decision to approve, disapprove or provisionally approve the foster family. The written notice shall inform the foster parents that they may appeal the FFCA's decision to disapprove or provisionally approve the foster family.
- (b) Foster parents who wish to appeal an FFCA decision to disapprove or provisionally approve the foster family shall submit to the FFCA a written appeal, postmarked no later than 15 calendar days from the date of the written notice. The appeals are subject to Title 9003 of the DPW Manual to be codified at Chapter 30 (relating to hearings and appeals).
- (c) Upon receipt of the foster parent appeal, the FFCA shall date stamp the appeal. The FFCA shall review the appeal and determine if steps can be taken to resolve the appeal without a hearing. If, after considering the appeal, the FFCA is unable to resolve issues of disagreement, the appeal shall be sent to the Office of Hearings and Appeals, Post Office Box 2675, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105 within 15 calendar days of the date stamp.

Families United Network, Inc.

If a family wishes to file an appeal, the letter must be sent to the office supervisor.

§3700.73. Foster parent appeal of child relocation.

- (a) Foster parents may appeal the relocation of a child from the foster family except under one of the following conditions:
 - (1) The child has been with the foster family less than 6 months.
 - (2) The removal is initiated by the court.
 - (3) The removal is to return the child to his parents.
 - (4) The removal is to place the child for adoption.
 - (5) An investigation of a report of alleged child abuse indicates the need for protective custody removal to protect the child from further serious physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or serious physical neglect as defined in Chapter 3490 (relating to child protective services – child abuse).
- (b) The FFCA shall inform foster parents in writing that they may appeal the relocation of a child in accordance with subsection (a) at least 15 days prior to the relocation of the child.
- (c) Foster parents who wish to appeal the relocation of a child shall submit to the FFCA a written appeal to be postmarked no later than 15 days after the date of the notice of their right to appeal the child's relocation.
- (d) Upon receipt of the foster parent's appeal, the FFCA shall date stamp the appeal and submit it to the Department's Office of Hearings and Appeals, Post Office Box 2675, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105, within 5 working days.
- (e) If a foster parent submits an appeal in accordance with subsection (a) and the foster parent has the right to appeal in accordance with subsection (a), the child shall remain in the foster family home pending a decision on the appeal.
- (f) Parties to an appeal of a child's relocation may be represented by an attorney or other representative.

Families United Network, Inc. Guidelines:

If a family wishes to file an appeal, the letter must be sent to the office supervisor.

Chapter 10: Regulations and Policies

A. Child Abuse Statement:

The staff of child welfare agencies has special obligations in regards to child abuse or serious neglect allegations under the Child Protective Service Law. There is a very stringent legal requirement to report any indications or any reports of abuse we receive to Child Line, 1-800-932-0313. The same law also protects anyone who makes a report from legal action against them for making the report. The law permits the name of a person reporting to remain confidential. The reason for this sort of law is clear since most child abuse is never reported. The law is an attempt to elicit reports so children can be protected.

If our agency becomes involved in an allegation of abuse, it is important to keep in mind that the people who are doing the investigation are doing a very difficult and necessary job. They deserve all the cooperation and courtesy we can show them. Investigations are done either by the public children and youth agency or by the Department of Public Welfare, Regional Office staff. Cases can also be forwarded to the local police department for investigation.

Our experience has been that investigations have been conducted in a fair and competent manner. When the investigation is completed, we are informed as to whether the allegations were indicated or unfounded.

It is not helpful for our staff or resource parents to attempt an independent investigation. We do not have the legal authority to determine if the allegations are indicated or unfounded. We do have the legal obligation to report to Child Line and cooperate in the investigation initiated by this report. It is also not helpful for our agency to press the investigator to learn the source of a complaint. The investigator is required to respect confidentiality and may not be able to disclose this information.

During the course of an investigation of an allegation of abuse in one of our resource homes the usual policy will be to have the child stay in another resource home until the investigation is complete. This does not imply that we are assuming the allegations are correct. The purpose of this policy is to simplify the investigation and to provide every protection for all parties (children, resource parents and agency).

Resource parents have the right to appeal the decision of removing a child from their home in certain instances. This right to appeal is described in D.P.W. Foster Family Care Regulation 3700.73. A copy of this regulation has been included in this orientation under the DPW regulation section.

It is also important to remember that our policies with regard to the discipline of children go well beyond legal definitions of abuse. We prohibit any physical punishment of children. Regulations prohibit any form of abusive, degrading or vindictive punishment for children. If there is ever any doubt about a form of punishment, the rule should be not to use that form of punishment until you have discussed it with your case manager.

Procedure Summary:

- A report or allegation of abuse or inappropriate discipline is given to Child Line
- The placing county agency is notified
- If the allegation concerns the existing foster family the child is placed in a respite home
- *Child Line decides whether an investigation is needed and the police may be notified
- Child Line or a county representative completes an investigation and outcome report
- The child in question is returned to the foster home if appropriate

*Please note inappropriate discipline can be handled as an abuse allegation. If Child Line does not initiate an investigation based upon inappropriate discipline, it will then be determined by the placing county agency and Families United Network, Inc. as to how to proceed. Options that can occur

include requiring additional training, respite care, increased family support and/or the removal of the child from the home.

Unfounded Reports: This decision means that the allegation or incident did not meet the definition of abuse. However, depending on the circumstances the case could still be prosecuted by the local police.

Founded Reports: This decision means that abuse occurred and the perpetrator is known. This classification also requires a court of law to recognize the incident through prosecution.

Indicated Abuse: This decision means that there are injuries or evidence that the abuse occurred. Information is then forwarded to the local police for further investigation.

B. Medication Policy:

Families United Network places high emphasis on safeguarding youth from the dangers and complications related to medication. Each resource family is required to review the medication policy and indicate their understanding of it via signature on the document. These procedures are promulgated by the agency since medication is stored and administered by the resource family. Each family must abide by the following procedures:

- A. Medications must be appropriately labeled and stored out of reach and possession of foster children in the home.
- B. Administration of all medication, including over-the-counter types, e.g. aspirin, cough medicine, Tylenol, Pepto-Bismol, etc., must be recorded on the Continuing Medical Record Form and maintained in the child case record.
- C. Medications must be administered by an adult. Prescription medications may only be administered with a physician's order.
- D. Families United Network must be notified within 24 hours of the prescription of psychotropic medication for a foster child in order to obtain consent.
- E. Medical consent treatment forms must be obtained from the placing county agency or the legal parent.
- F. Medication will not be given to a child to transport or packed in bags. Medications will be transferred only from adult to adult.

C. Fire Arms Policy:

It is the commitment of Families United Network, Inc. to ensure that all firearms in resource homes are stored in a secure manner. The intention of this policy is to have the potentially dangerous and hazardous elements of firearms in the home separated and under lock and key in a secure manner.

All firearms in resource homes shall be made secure by:

1. Prevention of accidental access or firing through:
 - a) use of trigger locks on each firearm, or
 - b) use of chain or steel cable to lock all firearms together by inserting the chain/cable through the trigger guards and locking the two ends of the chain together, or
 - c) placing guns in a locked metal gun safe
2. Removing firing pin or firing mechanisms if possible and kept in a place other than where the guns are located.
3. Storing ammunition in locked area set apart from the place where the firearms are stored.
4. Ensuring the keys used to lock firearms and/or ammunition are not accessible to children.

D. Hunting:

A child in placement will be allowed to hunt only when the resource parent supervises them. The child must have successfully completed the Hunter Safety Course and obtained a valid hunting license. Permission must be obtained from the case manager of the placing agency and the legal parents. No

child in placement will have in his/her possessions a weapon of any kind. This includes guns, bow/arrows, knives or other weapons. Use of such weapons may only occur in the sport of hunting and under full adult supervision. The child must also follow all safety guidelines and may not have any weapon or ammunition in their possession or stored in their personal areas.

E. Release of Information:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff and resource parents as members of the service team at Families United Network, Inc. have sufficient information from the client's case record so that they can effectively perform their duties; contain sensitive and private material regarding all persons involved in the case record within the confines of the professional practices of Families United Network, Inc.; assist all staff and resource parents to understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality and the serious consequences when confidentiality is broken.

Families United Network, Inc. defines confidentiality as: The protection of information concerning the client and other individuals which is disclosed in the professional relationship. Confidentiality is based upon a basic right for privacy, which is extended not only to the client, but to others named in the case record. Confidentiality is an ethical obligation of the staff and resource parents in Families United Network, Inc., and is necessary for effective services. The right for confidentiality is not absolute; the client's personal information is often shared with other professional persons within the agency and in other agencies; the obligation then binds all equally. Within the context of the above stated purposes and consistent with 3680.35, information contained in the child's record shall be disclosed upon request to:

1. The child's parents or guardian (3680.35,b(1)(i))
2. The child's or parent's attorney (3680.35,b (1)(ii))
3. The resource parents (Families United Network, Inc. & 3700.38,c)
4. The court or county child agency (3680.35,b(1)(iii))
5. Authorized agents of the Department of Public Welfare (3680.35,b(1)(iv))

In addition, those providing professional services to the child (e.g. medical and dental services) should also be provided information. This information should be limited to that which is needed to carry out their responsibilities.

Information from the child's record may not be released to any other person or agency (except those already noted) without prior authorization of the court. Also, information may not be released which violates the right to privacy of another individual or is protected or made confidential by law, including that which is protected by the Adoption Act (23PA C.S. Part III), the Child Protective Services Law and the related chapter (11P.S. ss2201-2224; Chapter 3490), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). This, however, should not be construed as protecting the right to privacy of a staff person employed by the agency.

1. Mail:

A client's private mail either outgoing or incoming may not be opened, read or photocopied. The only time this policy is waived is if there is a concern for the child's safety or well being. This permission must be sought from the placing county agency.

2. Journals:

A client's diary or journal is also a private matter. These items should not be read, shared with others or photocopied. The only waiver from this policy is if there is a concern for the child's safety or well being. This permission must be sought from the placing county agency. If a child is found to be making threats to another person (a family member, peers, school officials etc.) it must be reported.

It is important to note that although a child may leave these items lying around the house for the resource parent to find, it is best to resist the curiosity in reading this information. If a child has done this, place the found item privately back in the child's possession. Tell the child that the information was

not read, but ask the child if there is anything they want to share with you. Explore with the child whether they may want to talk to you but don't know how. Earn the child's trust by explaining that their journals, diary's, mail, etc. are private items to them just as you would want your personal information to remain private if the child came across it.

There may be times that a child may write inaccurate information to purposely anger the resource parent. This is why families are encouraged to not read private information.

3. Confidentiality:

In simple terms, a child's background, personal information and legal family information may not be shared with neighbors, the school or other individuals not directly responsible for the care of the child. Families must protect a child's privacy.

4. Notice of Privacy Practices for Protected Health Information:

This notice describes how medical information about a child in your home may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

How Families United Network, Inc. Uses and Discloses Your Health Information:

Families United Network, Inc. provides a broad range of services through a wide variety of social services programs. Although the agency does not generate health information related to resource families, it does possess it through health statements, screenings and evaluations that may be required by regulatory and accrediting bodies. If you receive services from a Families United Network, Inc. program or if the agency is in possession of information related to your health, the organization may use your protected health information and disclose it to other health and human services programs to:

- a) Plan and provide your care and treatment
- b) Communicate with health care professionals who care for you
- c) Describe the care you receive
- d) Obtain reimbursement from private insurers or other government programs
- e) Verify that services billed were actually provided
- f) Educate health professionals
- g) Inform public health officials charged with improving healthcare
- h) Administer Families United Network, Inc.'s programs which provide public benefits and/or health or human services
- i) Assess and improve the services provided and the outcomes achieved
- j) Pay for services you receive
- k) Inform you about other public programs and services

Families United Network, Inc. and its programs will not use or disclose your protected health information except as described in this notice, or otherwise authorized by law.

Your Health Information Rights:

You have the right to:

- a) Request a restriction on certain uses and disclosures of your protected health information
- b) Obtain a paper copy of this Notice of Privacy Practices upon request
- c) Inspect and copy your protected health information
- d) Request amendments to your protected health information
- e) Obtain an accounting of disclosures of your protected health information
- f) Request communications of your protected health information by alternative means or at an alternative address
- g) Revoke your consent to use or disclose protected health information to the extent that it has not already been relied upon
- h) File a complaint to Families United Network, Inc. and/or the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service if you believe your privacy rights have been violated.

Families United Network, Inc. Program Duties:

Families United Network, Inc. social services programs each have a duty to:

- a) Maintain the privacy of your protected health information
- b) Provide you with a notice as to our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to protected health information we collect and maintain about you
- c) Abide by the terms of this notice
- d) Notify you if we are unable to agree to a requested restriction
- e) Accommodate reasonable requests you may have to communicate health information by alternative means or at an alternative address
- f) Provide an accounting of disclosures of your protected health information

Families United Network, Inc. or any of our social services programs may change its privacy practices and make the new privacy practices effective for all protected health information we maintain. Should our privacy practices change, we will mail a revised notice to the address you have supplied us.

For More Information or to Report a Problem:

If you have questions and would like additional information, you may contact:

Janna Brubaker at Families United Network, Inc.,
412 South Angle Street, Mount Joy, PA 17552.

Telephone: 1-800-733-0136

Email: jbrubaker@families4kids.org

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with Janna Brubaker (Privacy Officer) or with the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint.

Examples of Disclosures for Treatment, Payment and Health Operations:

We will use your health information for treatment.

For example: Information obtained by a nurse, physician, psychiatrist/psychologist or other member of your healthcare team will be recorded in your file used to determine the course of treatment that should work best for you.

We will use your health information for payment.

For example: A bill may be sent to a county Children and Youth Agency or any private or public source of health coverage you have identified. The information on or accompanying the bill may include information that identifies you, as well as your diagnosis, procedures, and supplies used.

We will use your health information for regular child welfare operations.

For example: Members of a quality assurance team may use information in your file to assess the care and outcomes in your case and others like it. This information will then be used in an effort to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of the service we provide.

Others who may receive your health information

Business Associates. there are some services provided in our organization through contracts with business associates. When these services are contracted, we may disclose your health information to our business associate so that they can perform the job we've asked them to do. However, we require the business associate to appropriately safeguard your information.

Research. We may disclose information to researchers when the information is de-identified or when their research has been approved by an institutional review board that has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your health information.

Funeral Directors: We may disclose health information to funeral directors to carry out their duties, as required by law.

Public health. We may disclose your health information to public health or legal authorities charged with preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability.

Correctional institution: Should you be an inmate of a correctional institution, we may disclose to the institution or agents thereof any health information necessary for your health and the health and safety of other individuals, or for the administration of the institution.

Law enforcement. We may disclose health information for law enforcement purposes.

F. Multiethnic Placement Act:

The multiethnic Placement Act was adopted in 1994 and was legislated to promote the best interest of children. This is accomplished through three initiatives: decreasing the length of time that children wait to be adopted, preventing discrimination in the adoption or foster placement of children (based on race, color or origin) and facilitating the identification and recruitment of resource parents who can meet children's needs.

The Act reflects that the primary objective in placing children will always be to place children with qualified resource families in the shortest possible time. This requires the largest pool possible of recruited families. Families United Network, Inc. advertises for families in a variety of regions throughout the state of Pennsylvania including rural, urban and suburban areas. Recruitment of families also includes the use of various newspapers, community organizations, churches and other outreach activities. This is done in an attempt to reach as many different family applicants as possible.

Throughout the interviewing and the training process, families are evaluated for their appropriateness to meet the needs of many different types of children. Prior to approval, families will learn about the type

of children available for placement and the needs these children may have. They will be informed of the geographical region and common characteristics of the children served by the agency office and throughout the state. After full approval, every available family is considered a resource for children entering placement. Final placement decisions are made by the placing county Children and Youth agency.

All Families United Network, Inc. staff attends cultural diversity training throughout their employment with the agency. Training is also available to families and staff in a self-study program through www.fosterparent.com.

G. Nondiscrimination Statement:

Families United Network, Inc. does not discriminate in regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin, age or sex.

H. General Agency Rules:

One strength of a good program is that each child is treated as a unique individual. Consideration must be given to the special circumstances, needs and interests of each child. In order to encourage this approach we keep rules and regulations to a minimum. The following list of rules regarding children is a starting point for all children entering the program. It is intended as a guide to the expectations of the agency. Changes or exceptions to some rules are, of course, possible for a valid reason. All changes should be discussed in advance with the case manager.

1. Supervision
 - a. Resource parents are responsible for the proper supervision of children living in their homes. Children are expected to cooperate by always letting their resource parents know where they are going and when they will return. Children may not leave without permission.
 - b. If resource parents are away from the home they must arrange for responsible adult supervision while they are absent.
 - c. Children in placement are not permitted to baby sit or supervise other children.
2. Dating
 - a. Dating is permitted only for children 16 years of age and older and only with resource parents' permission for each date.
 - b. Curfew: 9:00 pm weeknights
11:00 pm weekends
Extended for special occasions with permission of the case manager.
3. Family Contacts
 - a. The right of a child to maintain contact with his/her family must be respected. Children are encouraged to write to their families. Mail is not opened or censored. A reasonable amount of telephone contact is also encouraged. The case manager, resource family, legal family and child decide together on the amount of telephoning which is appropriate.
 - b. Regular visits with his/her family are a part of the plan for each child whenever appropriate. Family visits are regarded as a right and are not used as either reward or punishment.
4. Moving
 - a. A child may leave our program at his/her request at any time. The placement agency with custody will need a reasonable time, usually 30 days, to arrange for another placement.
 - b. A child may move to another home within our program at his/her request if the caseworker agrees there is a valid reason for the move.
5. Personal Possessions - Ownership

- a. Children do retain ownership of any clothing or personal effects they bring with them or any purchased for them by the agency or foster parents. Children are not permitted to own pets because of the complications that may occur if a move is necessary.
 - b. Children are not permitted to have their own rifles, handguns, or other weapons, i.e. long knives. These will be confiscated if brought into the resource home. Hunting may be allowed with permission of the case manager, but firearms will be owned and controlled only by the resource parents.
 - c. Children are not permitted to own any motor vehicle or drive without the resource parent.
6. Allowance
Children receive an allowance of \$1.00 per day from their resource parents. This allowance is earned by attendance at school and cooperation at home.
7. Drugs, Alcohol & Tobacco
Use of drugs, alcohol and/or tobacco by foster children is prohibited. Children may not own any paraphernalia associated with the use of drugs.

I. Agency Grievance Policy:

All children in care, their legal family or resource family may file a grievance regarding treatment by staff, dissatisfaction with aspects of the program, privacy and/or confidentiality concerns, living conditions, violations of specific child rights, discipline, prejudice pertaining to race, religion or national origin, or any other matter that relates to the child's involvement with the agency or staff. Grievances may be filed without fear of retaliation.

The case manager reviews a copy of the grievance procedure with the foster child before or immediately after placement, explaining the contents and answering any questions the child may pose. Every child is given a copy of the grievance procedure and signs a statement acknowledging receipt of this procedure. If a child is under the age of 7 or not developmentally able to understand the procedure, the case manager will assess the child's capacity to comprehend the procedure at each Individual Service Plan review. When it is deemed that the child understands the content and process, he/she will be given the procedure and asked to sign the statement acknowledging receipt of this procedure. Legal parents are sent a copy of the Placement Letter and Parent Handbook outlining the grievance procedure at the time of placement. A copy of this letter is maintained in the child's file. An additional copy of the grievance procedure is distributed to the foster child or legal family member upon request and/or upon the initiation of a grievance. The recruiter reviews the grievance procedure during the orientation and family approval process which is also include in their orientation manual for future reference. The resource parent's signature acknowledging receipt of the grievance procedure is maintained in their family file.

To file a grievance, an individual must submit a written grievance statement to their respective case manager describing the situation or incident. After initial review, the case manager will address the grievance.

- A formal meeting will be scheduled with the Case Manager and their Supervisor where as a summary of events will be documented.
- Within 2 business days, the case manager and supervisor will review the complaint and investigate the incident. Interviews will be conducted with any third-party persons who witnessed the event.
- Based on the written summaries and interviews with all relevant parties, the case manager and supervisor will make a determination within one week of the formal grievance.
- the case manager and/or supervisor will notify each person of the outcome. A written copy of the decision will be placed in the foster child and/or resource family file. A separate file of all grievances and their investigated outcome will be maintained in a separate file by the Executive Director.

- If the parties involved are dissatisfied with the outcome, the Executive Director will review the written summaries and conduct further interviews. After rendering a decision, relevant parties will be informed of the determination.
- If the parties are still dissatisfied with the decision of the Executive Director, a final appeal can be made to the Chief Executive Officer. The Executive Director will present the case to the CEO. The CEO will make the final ruling, and a final written determination will be provided to all involved parties.

J. Discipline Policy:

Families United Network, Inc. requires all employees and resource parents to abide by agency discipline policy for all children receiving services. Children shall be directed with techniques that stress praise and encouragement and may not be subjected to verbal abuse, derogatory remarks or threats of removal from the resource home.

1. Families United Network recognizes the only acceptable methods of discipline are the reduction of allowance, reduction of privileges and the assignment of practical tasks. Discipline should teach responsibility. Natural consequences are practiced and highly recommended.
2. Discipline:
 - Children shall be directed with techniques that stress praise and encouragement.
 - Children may not be subjected to verbal abuse, derogatory remarks or threats or removal from the home.
3. Punishment: The following forms of punishment are prohibited:
 - Abusive discipline practices
 - Physical punishment inflicted upon the body
 - Punishment for bedwetting or actions related to toilet training
 - Delegation of punishment to another child
 - Denial of meals, clothing or shelter
 - Denial of elements of the service plan or ISP
 - Denial of communication with, or visits by, the child's family
 - Assignment of physically strenuous exercise or work solely as punishment
4. Control: No form of manual or mechanical restraint is permitted. Passive control is only permitted to keep a child from causing harm to themselves or others. If physical intervention is needed, it is recommended that the police & crisis intervention be contacted.

K. Run Away Policy:

Families United Network, Inc. is a voluntary program and children are accepted for placement only if they express a desire and willingness to be in the program and a willingness to comply with agency rules. The agency recognizes safety concerns for children in placement and thereby attempts to provide appropriate supervision to prevent runaway events.

The nature of our service makes it impossible for Families United Network, Inc. to detain children against their will. Families United Network, Inc. staff and resource parents therefore will not chase after or physically detain a child.

If a child runs away repeatedly, it may be an indication that our program is an inappropriate placement. The public county agency will have the often difficult task of making new arrangements for the child if the agency and/or the resource family decide not to provide care any longer.

Families United Network, Inc. is a private agency providing services to public child welfare agencies. Because of this status, both the responsibility and authority of Families United Network, Inc. is limited to the amount delegated by the public agency which has custody of the child.

1. If a child leaves without permission and the whereabouts of the child are unknown, the resource parent(s) will notify Families United Network, Inc. immediately. The Families United Network emergency on-call worker must be notified if the runaway occurs after regular business hours.
2. The resource parent and/or agency case manager will contact the appropriate police department and request that they find and detain the child.
3. The agency case manager notifies the child's legal parents of the incident and requests notification if the child contacts them or presents at their location.
4. The case manager or the emergency on-call worker will notify the placing agency of the incident within two hours of the report. *(All placing agencies are required to have twenty-four hour emergency service. Families United Network, Inc. case managers will make every effort to contact the placing agency through this service if an incident occurs during hours when the agency is closed.)* After this notification, the placing agency has the primary responsibility and authority in regard to actions to be taken. Families United Network, Inc. will remain involved as requested by the placing agency.
5. Families United Network, Inc. shall act as a resource for the placing agency in regard to the child that absconded. The placing agency may decide that the child may be returned to the original Families United Network, Inc. home, placed in a different Families United Network, Inc. home or discharged to the placing agency.
6. It is important that appropriate timely notifications are made to all concerned parties both when a child leaves and when he or she is found.

L. Permissions:

1. Driving:

Children in foster care may not own cars or motor vehicles. However, they may gain a learners permit and driver's license with the permission of their legal parents, resource parents, placing county agency, and Families United Network, Inc. The legal parents must give permission before the child can drive a car, motorcycle, farm equipment, mini bike, four-wheeler or any other motor vehicle of the resource parents. The resource parents are the main source of permission in these cases. This is because a foster child will be driving the resource parents' car and will fall under the resource parents' car insurance. Families United Network, Inc. will not be responsible for any damage done to vehicles or due to the result of the using a vehicle.

In addition to gaining a learner's permit and driver's license, a safety plan must be developed and approved as for the child's use of a car. Resource parents must maintain 24-hour supervision of all children. Permission to drive a car should be outlined in the child's ISP for purposes such as driving to school and work. A foster child should not be permitted to drive other children around or have free unlimited use of a car. Children who have shown they are responsible and trustworthy can seek approval for driving privileges.

2. Hair cuts:

Getting a child's haircut is a normal activity for most people. However, we must be sensitive to a legal family wishes or cultural differences. Each placing county agency may differ in their policy to give consent for haircuts. To ensure the proper care is given, the topic should be addressed with the legal parent or county worker if the legal parent is not available. Every attempt should be made to follow the wishes of the legal family in reference to hair care and haircuts for a child. A permission form has been developed to aid in the decision making process of hair care.

Resource parents should not cut a child's hair without first reviewing with the agency case manager whether the proper consent has been received with any special request that may be relevant to each child's case.

3. Tattoos and Body Piercing

Resource parents are required to obtain permission from the legal parents prior to allowing any foster child to have any part of their body pierced or tattooed.

4. Birth Control for Teenagers:

Families United Network, Inc. does not promote sexual activity for children in foster care. However, there may be situations that it would be in the best interest of the teen foster child to use birth control. A decision to use birth control must be made among the child, the legal parent, the agency and the resource parent.

M. Clearances:

1. State Police Clearance:

Applicants to be resource parents must have a state police criminal record check. This will be completed by Families United Network staff as part of the pre-service approval process. Families United Network, Inc. has the right to not approve or not re-approve a family or individual with a criminal record. Clearances must be completed on any resident in the home age 14 or older and must be renewed every two years for each adult age 18 and older.

2. Child Line Clearance:

Applicants to be resource parents must complete a Childline criminal record check. This process includes a \$10 fee, which is reimbursable to the family upon their approval with our agency. Clearances must be completed on any resident in the home age 14 or older, and must be renewed every two years for each adult age 18 and older.

3. County Reference and Involvement:

A reference will be requested from the county of residence a family resides in, as well as all previous counties the family has resided. Any negative county reference or involvement will disqualify a family from being approved with Families United Network, Inc.

A family may not be approved to provide resource care for any other agency while working with Families United Network, Inc. If a family wishes to work with another agency or county, they must first withdrawal from Families United Network, Inc.

4. Resource Family Registry:

Families United Network, Inc. participates in the State Resource Family Registry. This registry operates as a tracking system for resource parent applicants. IT is used to ensure that a family has been truthful regarding their past involvement with other resource agencies and the reasons they are no longer with those agencies. Families United Network, Inc. requests that all resource parent applicants disclose the name of any other agency they have worked with in the past. These other agencies will also be contacted for a reference after the completion of a release of information.

5. Disclosure Statement:

At any time, Families United Network, Inc. has the right to discontinue the approval process with any family based on the assessment of information gathered; it is felt that approval may not be in the best interest of a child or in the best interest of the family. In addition, there are several indicators that would prohibit Families United Network, Inc. from continuing based on both the Child Protective Services Law and the policy of Families United Network, Inc. These indicators include the conviction of any of the following offenses:

Chapter 25	(relating to criminal homicide)
Section 2702	(relating to aggravated assault)
Section 2709.1	(relating to stalking)
Section 2901	(relating to kidnapping)
Section 2902	(relating to unlawful restraint)
Section 3121	(relating to rape)
Section 3122.1	(relating to statutory sexual assault)
Section 3123	(relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse)
Section 3124.1	(relating to sexual assault)
Section 3125	(relating to aggravated indecent assault)
Section 3126	(relating to indecent assault)
Section 3127	(relating to indecent exposure)
Section 4302	(relating to incest)
Section 4303	(relating to concealing death of a child born out of wedlock)
Section 4304	(relating to endangering welfare of children)
Section 4305	(relating to dealing in infant children)
Section 5902(b)	(relating to prostitution and relating offenses)
Section 5903(c) (d)	(relating to obscene and other sexual materials)
Section 6301	(relating to corruption of minors)
Section 6312	(relating to sexual abuse of children) or
An equivalent crime under federal law or the law of another state.	

An applicant must also attest to the following:

1. I have not been convicted of a felony offense under Act. 64-1972 (relating to the controlled substance, drug device and cosmetic act) committed within the past five years.
2. I have been convicted of or am under the pending indictment for the following crimes (including the dates, location/jurisdiction, circumstances and outcome): Attach the explanations.
3. I understand that as a resource parent applicant, I may be disqualified for approval based on information collected, but not limited to, the above listed criminal acts. Upon receipt of the FBI clearance the approval status may be withdrawn upon the revelation of any negative information.
4. I swear/affirm that I have not been named as a perpetrator of a founded or indicated report of child abuse as defined by the Child Protective Services Law. I understand that I must be dismissed if I have been named as a perpetrator of a founded or indicated report of child abuse or have been convicted of any of the crimes listed above.
5. I agree to report any changes of information in criminal history record information or child abuse history clearances about myself or anyone 18 years of age and older who reside in my home, within 48 hours in accordance with the Child Protective Services Law.
6. I agree to report any change in household composition within 30 days in accordance with the Child Protective Services Law.
7. I understand that if I knowingly fail to provide the required information, I will be disapproved as a resource parent and foster children placed in my home will be immediately removed without a hearing.
8. I have provided accurate information relating to the following:
 - Previous addresses within the past 10 years.
 - Composition of the resident family unit.
 - Protection from abuse orders filed by or against either parent, provided such information is accessible to the agency.

- Details of any court proceedings in family court provided such information is accessible to the agency.
 - Drug or alcohol related arrests, whether criminal charges or judicial proceeding are pending and convictions or hospitalizations within the last five years. If an applicant provides information about a conviction or hospitalization within that five year period, information on the prior five years must be requested related to additional convictions or hospitalizations.
 - Evidence of financial stability including income verification, employment history, current liens and bankruptcy findings within the last ten years.
 - Number and age of foster children and other dependents currently placed in the foster home.
 - Detailed information about children with special needs currently living in the home.
 - Previous history as a foster parent, including number and types of children served.
 - Related education, training or personal experience working with foster children or the child welfare system.
9. I hereby swear/affirm that the information as set forth above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I have read and understand the foregoing. I understand that the penalty for false swearing is misdemeanor of the third degree pursuant to Section 4903(b) of the Crimes Code.

Families must sign a disclosure statement indicating they have not been convicted of the above offenses or a felony offense under Act 64-1972 (relating to the controlled substance, drug device and cosmetic act) committed within the past five years. We also ask for families to disclose any arrest records. Depending on the frequency and type of arrest, Families United Network, Inc. may decide not to pursue approval of a family.

6. FBI Clearance:

FBI Clearances will be required from all residents 18 and older in the home prior to home approval. If any disqualifying information or unreported information is found a family will be withdrawn. FBI clearances are renewed every 2 years.

Families will not be responsible for the cost of the FBI clearance. Families United Network will cover these costs. Families should follow the steps below:

1. Provide the required information to be registered with the Cogent system.
2. Provide name, address, and date of birth as appears on a document made or issued by or under the authority of the United States Government, a State, political subdivision of a State, a foreign government, a political subdivision of a foreign government, an international government or an international quasi-governmental organization which, when completed with information concerning a particular individual, is a type intended or commonly accepted for the purpose of individuals. 18 U.S.C. Section 1028(d)(2).
3. Provide a certification that I (a) have not been convicted of a crime, (b) am not under indictment for a crime, or (c) have been convicted of a crime. If I am under indictment or have been convicted of a crime, I must describe the crime and the particulars of the conviction.
4. I am entitled to (a) obtain a copy of any background check report and (b) challenge the accuracy and completeness of any information contained in any such report and obtain a prompt determination as to the validity of such challenge before final determination is made by the state government agency performing the background check. Such request for a copy of my criminal history record and any challenge to the accuracy of such record should be made in writing to Child Line, P.O. Box 8170, Hillcrest 2nd Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17105.
5. Prior to the completion of the background check, the entity may choose to deny my unsupervised access to children.
6. The government agency shall access and review State and Federal criminal history records and shall make reasonable efforts to make a determination whether I have been convicted of or am pending indictment for a crime that speaks to my fitness and shall convey that determination to Families United Network, Inc. The government agency shall make reasonable efforts to respond to the inquiry within 15 business days.

7. Prothonotary Clearance:

Prothonotary record reviews are to be completed prior to approval and for each renewal of the resource family

N. Additional Household Members:

Once a family is approved they are approved with the number of residents in the home as indicated throughout the approval process. Families United Network, Inc. must be notified of any additional (new) members of the household that arrive after the approval process. Any person over the age of 18 must have complete State Police Clearances, Child Line Clearances and FBI clearances completed. Upon notification of these changes to the home, the family's availability status must be re-evaluated as relates to the amount of space available for children and the type of child or children appropriate for the home.

Single parents are approved as single families. Families United Network, Inc. requests that the living status of a family remain the same while they are providing services. Building relationships can be very difficult and beginning a new relationship with a partner while providing care is very stressful not only on the resource parent's relationship with his/her significant other, but also on the child who has already experienced a great deal of loss and change. Families United Network, Inc. recognizes the need to support families and realizes that families going through these changes need to eliminate added stressors in their home. Single parents who are dating and decide to live with their boyfriend or girlfriend should then discontinue providing care. Unmarried couples (with established relationships) can be approved after assessments are completed through the pre-approval process.

In the event a fully-approved family decides to divorce, Families United Network, Inc. will make every effort to meet the needs of the family and child. In some situations it may be necessary to remove the child so that the family can either work toward reconciliation or facilitate the separation process and divorce. In some situations a child may remain in the care of one of the resource parents. In this situation the new single parent family must be re-evaluated to determine the appropriateness of the placement and whether it should continue.

In the situation where a single resource parent decides to get married again Families United Network, Inc. will make every effort to support the family. In some situations the child in placement may be moved, yet in other situations the child may remain in the family's care. The new member of the family must complete the full approval process and have proper clearances before moving into the home. One parent of a family living in the home may not choose to not be approved as a resource parent. Two parent families are approved as couples.

O. C-3 Regulations:

The Department of Labor and Industry in the past regulated the number of unrelated children that could be in a resource home. Any resource home that had more than three unrelated children living in the home had to meet the C-3 requirement before the fourth unrelated child could enter the home.

At this point, the C-3 regulations have been discontinued. Each municipality may or may not have requirements concerning the number of unrelated children that may be in a home. Resource parents are required to contact their local municipality to inquire if any limitations exist. Families United Network, Inc. will continue to individually assess whether it is appropriate to place more than three unrelated children in a home. The individual needs of the children and the family will always be considered.

P. Safety Regulations and Residence Requirements:

The Department of Public Welfare lists resident requirements that must be in place in a foster home before a family is approved for care. These requirements follow regulation 3700.66, 3700.67 and a resource home must be in full compliance at all times. At any point in time if a family falls out of compliance with any one of these items, they must notify Families United Network, Inc. staff immediately.

- At least one flushable toilet, one wash basin and one bath or shower with hot and cold running water.
- An operable heating system.
- An operable telephone.
- Sleeping areas shall meet the following criteria:
 - No unsuitable area such as a hall, stairway, unfinished attic or basement, garage, bathroom eating area, closet, shed or detached building may be used as a sleeping area for children.
 - Children of the opposite sex who are 5 years of age or older may not share the same bedroom.
 - Each child shall be provided with a clean, comfortable mattress and clean linens, blankets and pillows.
- Medication and containers of poisonous, caustic, toxic, and flammable or other dangerous material kept in the residence shall be distinctly marked or labeled as hazardous and stored in areas inaccessible to children less than 5 years of age.
- Emergency telephone numbers, including those for fire, police, poison control and ambulance shall be conspicuously posted adjacent to all telephones.
- Fireplaces, fireplace inserts, wood and coal burning stoves and freestanding space heaters, if allowed by local ordinance, shall be installed, equipped and operated according to manufacturers' specifications and requirements specified by local ordinance.
- An operable smoke detector shall be placed on each level of the residence. The detector shall be maintained in operable condition.
- A portable fire extinguisher, suitable for Class B fires, shall be available in the kitchen and other cooking areas. The extinguisher shall be tested yearly or have a gauge to ensure adequate pressure.
- Protective safety caps shall be placed in electrical outlets accessible to children younger than 5 years of age.
- Exposed electrical wires are prohibited.
- Drinking water from an individual water source shall be potable as determined by an annual microbiological test conducted by a laboratory certified by the Department of Environmental Resources. (Include copy of test in file.) Water test must test for total Chloroform and Nitrates.
- Guns: Are there any guns in the home? If so, they must be locked according to policy

Q. Relocating a Foster Child:

A child may not be moved from a resource parent home without proper notice being given. The only time this is not followed is if the safety of the family or the child is in question. Once notice is given to a family that a child is to be moved, the family may appeal if they disagree. The right to appeal and instructions are listed in the DPW regulations in chapter nine of this orientation.

R. Care Agreement:

The care agreement is a contract between Families United Network, Inc. and the resource family. This document lists in summary form the requirements, the roles and responsibilities and other information contained throughout his orientation. Each family must review this document and sign in agreement before they can be approved with Families United Network, Inc.

S. Sleeping Environment:

The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare strongly recommends children under the age of 12 months sleep on their back in the same room as the caregiver. This sleep environment should be a separate sleep surface without loose bedding, bumper pads, toys, etc.

Appendix One: Adoption Orientation

A. Types of Adoption:

There are several avenues to explore when considering adoption which include the private adoption of an infant, domestic and international adoption, and the adoption of older children who have been placed through the child welfare system. Families United Network, Inc. specializes in the adoption of older children who are in the child welfare or foster care system. Each of the different types of adoption described below provides clarification and helps a family decide if Families United Network, Inc. is the agency for you.

The Adoption of Older Children in the Child Welfare System (SWAN):

The adoption of foster children and children available for adoption in the child welfare system is on the rise. Many children who are placed in foster care are becoming available for adoption. Many of these children begin their journey as foster children, and if they are unable to reunite with their legal family, adoption may be explored with the resource family or another family available for an adoptive placement. Families United Network, Inc. specializes in this type of adoption. These adoptive placements break down into three types: Foster/Adopt, Adoptive placements, and legal risk placements.

Foster/Adopt:

Foster children are often with their resource family for a long period of time and they have bonded well together as a family. In instances when the family court terminates parental rights, resource parents may be asked if they would be interested in adopting the child.

Federal legislation enacted in 1997 and current thinking regarding permanency and child well-being significantly reduces the amount of time that children will be in foster care. This legislation, the Adoption and Safe Families Act, mandates specific timeframes within which states and counties must either reunite children with their legal families or terminate parental rights. One impact of this legislation is that more foster families will be asked to consider adopting children in their care.

Often the best adoptive placement for this child may be the home in which they live. Resource parents, if appropriate, will be asked by Families United Network, Inc. and by the county agency representing the child if they wish to adopt. The answer should be given only after much thought and open discussion with all involved family members. A resource family should be honest with the agency in saying "no, we are not prepared to adopt this child" without feeling pressure to do otherwise. If the answer is "no", Families United Network, Inc. will seek another adoptive resource for the child.

If the answer is "yes" there is a procedure by which the resource family can adopt this child through the Statewide Adoption & Permanency Network (SWAN), which will provide assistance with costs associated with the adoption. This process will be outlined further.

Legal Risk Placements:

Legal risk placements have been very successful in helping families adopt children. The adoption process folds into the foster care system and overlaps it in many ways. Families are approved both for foster and adoptive care. Families United Network, Inc. receives referrals from county agencies or has internal referrals through children who are already placed in foster care. These children are usually already placed in a foster home when the goal is changed to adoption. If the existing foster family does not wish to adopt an alternate family is researched. Local county agencies may explore additional resource families for a child if their interest includes adoption. This allows the child to be moved into a pre-adoptive placement as soon as possible.

Children placed through legal risk may be entering or re-entering foster care. In these situations, adoption is believed to be appropriate due to the legal family's history or previous adoptions. These

placements may involve children from a previous resource family who is not interested in adopting the child. Therefore a new foster family with interest in adoption is considered. Most of Families United Network, Inc. adoptive placements are made through this category of placement. Families United Network, Inc. has a working relationship with many counties who will consider our available families as adoptive resources for children. Families who are interested in younger children have the best chance of placement if they will accept a legal risk placement. However, families must keep in mind there is a risk, since adoption is not guaranteed. In these cases, a child could be returned to their biological home.

Adoptive Only Placements:

Families who are only interested in adoption can also be approved as resource parents for the purpose of accepting a placement. These types of families are interested in only accepting a child into their care if the parental rights are already terminated. These types of matches can come from local referrals or from the Statewide Adoption & Permanency Network and the process is very time consuming. Families United Network, Inc. participates in many activities to aid a family in being matched with a child. Families are registered with the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange and if desired, the Three Rivers Adoption Council. Agency representatives also promote families through mailings, matching events, the use of posted flyers, and other events. Children matched through this process may be placed through foster care to facilitate the adoption finalization but this is not always the case.

B. How does the System Work?

The adoption system can vary depending on the type of placement and the permanency goal of the child. There may be variation in the process from county to county. The steps are outlined below in general terms.

1. Adoption Process:

- a) A family begins by gathering information about adoption and the different agencies. Once a family decides on an agency they can move forward.
- b) A family begins the training process to become a resource family.
- c) An agency worker visits the home and the family will begin the approval process.
- d) The family prepares the necessary paperwork for approval.
- e) Once the family hands in the necessary paperwork for approval, the agency worker prepares the adoption family profile. The profile may have already been initiated through the foster care approval process.
- f) The family reviews the adoptive family profile before a final copy is prepared.
- g) Once the profile is complete, the family is registered with the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange, and if desired, the Three Rivers Adoption Council.
- h) Family continues to attend training events in preparation for adoption.
- i) Family inquires about available children.
- j) County agencies and exchanges inquire about available families.
- k) Various matching activities take place as appropriate for the family.
- l) Information is exchanged about children and families until possible matches are identified.
- m) Families are interviewed.
- n) Families meet the child and prepare for a pre-placement visit if indicated.
- o) Child is placed with the family after approval of the county agency, the child, and the family.
- p) The child may be placed into foster care for a period of time before moving forward with the formal adoption process. Some counties require a 6 month satisfactory placement.
- q) The child could be placed as a straight pre-adoptive placement and not receive foster care services or support.
- r) Family and child preparation takes place as needed.
- s) Family and child profiles are reviewed to ensure they are in order and any necessary updates are completed.
- t) Family negotiates subsidy agreement with the placing county agency.
- u) Intent to Adopt is completed. (Family visits attorney)

- v) Petition to Adopt and other needed documents are filed.
- w) Court date is assigned.
- x) Adoption court date is set for finalization.

2. Family Profile Process:

The completion of the adoption family profile is very similar to the foster care home study. The process begins with the training and a visit to the family's home by an agency worker. The following steps are completed. (Special Note: Families approved as a resource family for foster care must also complete the steps required to have an adoption profile completed. Although the steps are similar, a dual approval is required).

- a) A family expresses an interest in adoption and is invited to attend an orientation class or meeting within 30 days.
- b) The family is interviewed face to face, usually in their own home
- c) The family completes a request for clearances on all household members over 18
- d) The family completes a request for references
- e) The family completes an application for adoption
- f) The family begins and completes the training process
- g) The family signs the Profile Authorization Agreement Form
- h) Family interviews will include both parents and any other household members
- i) The worker completes a home safety assessment and checklist
- j) Medical history is completed on each family household member
- k) Medical health statements are received for each adoptive parent
- l) A financial summary information form is completed
- m) Additional paperwork is collected including a photo of family, photo of home, list of relatives, copy of marriage licenses, copy of divorce decrees, copy of proof of income and insurances, signature on release of information, signature on discipline statement, signature on disclosure statement, information for autobiography, and any other information identified as necessary by the worker to complete the assessment.
- n) The adoptive family profile is completed when the family completes the training process and all required paperwork is in the hands of agency staff.
- o) Family reviews and approves the final copy of the profile.
- p) The family is informed of their approval or non-approval.
- q) A flyer with photo is prepared.
- r) Profile addendums are completed as needed.
- s) Resource parent re-evaluations are completed annually.

C. Motivations and Availability:

The Statewide Adoption & Permanency Network (SWAN) exists to assist children with a goal of adoption or those moving toward the goal of adoption to achieve that level of permanency. A majority of the children available for adoption are males from nine years old through adolescence. Many of these children are part of a minority group and are often part of a group of siblings. Children available for adoption have often been victims of abusive or neglectful home environments. Some may require special education or medical services while others may have physical, emotional, and or behavioral issues that require added support and guidance from a family. It is the mission of Families United Network, Inc. to recruit and train families who are interested in providing stability and permanency for these special needs children.

The most common question from families is how fast can they get a child and can the child be young, healthy and Caucasian. It is also common for families to request a female child. Very rarely does a child that fits these criteria become available for placement. A young child under the age of 9 is rare. When a younger child is available, there are usually hundreds of families interested. Families need to understand that they may be a wonderful family, but that there are lots of wonderful families who may be looking for the same available child for adoption. Families who are interested in very young children are not recruited for SWAN adoptions and are encouraged to look into another type of adoption such as private domestic or international options.

Available Children Exercise: The Image of Your Child:

This exercise asks you to think about the type of child that you would like to adopt and parent.

- a) *Draw or list some characteristics of your "Dream Child."*
- b) *What do you believe will happen if the child that you actually adopt is different from your "Dream Child?"*
- c) *What changes do you anticipate occurring with the adoption of a special needs child?*
- d) *What preparations do you need to make before the child arrives?*

1. Available Families:

There are many types of available families. Reasons why families decide to adopt a special needs or older child vary greatly. Some of the more common reasons are:

- Infertile couple who may not be able to afford private or international adoption and are open to the adoption of older and special needs children.
- Couples who wish to parent a large family and are unable to have any additional children of their own
- Single people who wish to parent
- Families who have experience and a desire to parent children with special needs

2. Motivations to Adopt:

Each family that is interested in pursuing adoption must identify a clear understanding of why they want to adopt. The following are some examples that a family should review:

Motivation	Parent Expectation	Possible Reality
To help a child in need	We expect the child to be grateful that we have allowed this child into our home and life	The child may actually be resentful of you and see you as an uninvited intruder into their life.
A playmate for my child	We expect our children to be happy to have someone to play with.	The children may not get along and cause problems in the family.
Adopting will help our marriage	We will share a common bond and grow closer.	The stress of adoption can cause more marital problems.
Adding a child will make me feel loved and complete	A child will return love with the same energy I give the child.	The child will reserve true affection until trust is built, which happens over years.
My spouse wants another child	My spouse's need will be fulfilled and I can do other things.	Adoption is an investment of the entire family. If one spouse is not fully committed the child will sense this and the marriage will suffer.
We can not have our own children or more children	We will feel whole and be part of a family or larger family.	Infertility does not go away. It is still a loss a family must understand and they must acknowledge the child has birth parents.

Entering into adoption with unrealistic expectations can cause a great deal of strain on the parent, on the marriage, and on the family. Families must understand why they want to adopt and whether they are entering this phase of their lives for the right reasons.

Self-assessment questions one should ask should include: "Do I/we have the following interest to be a successful prospective adoptive parent(s)?"

- A genuine, pure love of children, their imperfections as well as their perfections?
- A commitment to grow in understanding of the child's development through each stage of life?
- A willingness to provide a flexible, safe and stable environment for a child to live and grow?
- A desire to be a role model for a younger person who overrides the need to satisfy own personal needs and desires?
- A commitment to care for a child no matter what occurs as the child grows older?

3. Infertility:

Infertility is a grueling experience for those who suffer from such a loss. Couples find themselves going through experiences they never imaged. Some couples may face years of trying to conceive naturally while others may try the medical approaches that are available. These include the use of hormones, fertility drugs, extensive testing, artificial insemination, In Vitro Fertilization (IVF-ET), surrogate parenting, and more. As couples go through this experience they experience a myriad of emotions.

Depression: Couples are saddened each time a procedure does not work. Jealousy: Couples may question why other people can get pregnant right away, even those who do not want to be pregnant. Feelings of "it's not fair" are common. Anger: Couples may get angry with each other, with their doctor, and even with the rest of their family for not understanding, not caring enough or for other reasons. There are stages a couple must go through to move from the infertility experience forward toward the decision of adoption.

The first stage is: **Letting go of the idea of having your own biological child.** A couple must go through what is similar to a grieving process for a child they lost or never had. This feeling is never really something that can go away. There will always be reminders of not having your own children even for those families who do go forward and adopt children. There will always be constant reminders that the child is adopted such as filling out health history forms for an adopted child, looking at pictures and not seeing a physical resemblance, completing family trees, reviewing baby photos, and becoming grandparents. As a grandparent the birth experience will not be something that can be shared and it can also be a time of sorrow as feelings of loss and regret surface once again. Couples must learn how to move forward from picturing themselves with the perfect infant or perfect family. As a couple can begin to imagine themselves with different types of children, they are ready to discuss adoption instead of having their own biological child.

The second stage is: **Accepting the differences between an adoptive and biological child.** This may be something that is easier for a childless couple as opposed to a couple that already has children. Couples who are childless do not have other children with which to compare to an adoptive child. Day to day activities involved in raising an adopted child can be very similar to those of raising a biological child but differences will exist as well. Families must be willing to understand differences and explore them in order to best meet the needs of a child. Differences extend beyond appearance and personality traits. Adoptive children may require different parenting styles, medical care, educational programs and emotional support throughout the child's life.

Stage three is: **Assuming the role of an Adoptive parent.** Once a family is able to really understand that there are differences between adopting children and biologically conceiving their own children they may be ready to move forward.

4. Characteristics of Successful Adoptive Families:

Successful adoptive parents share many characteristics. An important one is "*tolerance for ambivalence and negative feelings*". Solid adoptive parents keep going when the "warm mushy feelings are gone." They do not judge themselves too harshly for experiencing some negative feelings toward the child.

They accept the inevitability of such feelings given the child's behavior. They understand that they may feel angry without acting on the anger.

Another characteristic is "*entitlement*". Successful adoptive parents feel that their adopted child is truly their own. They made the transition from a tentative parental stance to being the parent in a relatively short time.

A third characteristic area includes tendencies toward "*intrusiveness and control*." Successful adoptive parents are comfortable giving direction and providing structure for their adopted children. As the adults in the family, they take the lead in the relationship and are intrusive and controlling in a caring way. They assume control, try to anticipate behaviors, interrupt negative behaviors early and provide a great deal of praise and physical affection. They are not deterred by a child's protest or withdrawal.

"*Flexible Expectations*" are a must in any adoptive family. Successful adoptive parents, particularly of children with special needs, have realistic and flexible expectations of themselves and their children. They do not work to remake the child, but strive to help the child achieve success by acknowledging and appreciating small steps toward goals.

The fifth characteristic is "*tolerance for rejection*". Successful adoptive parents are able to withstand testing by their adoptive children such as hurtful, angry and rejecting behaviors. They do not take it personally if the child is rejecting because they recognize the rejection as the child's fear of closeness. They realize that the child's ties to the birth family, former foster families and others are not a rejection of them.

"*Ability to delay parental gratification*" is important in an adoptive situation. Successful adoptive parents are aware that the relationship with their adopted children may not be reciprocal. They can nurture without receiving much in return. They can postpone their own rewards and not equate the child's behavior with failure as a parent.

Adoptive parents must have a "*sense of humor*". Successful adoptive parents must be able to use humor to cope with the stress that can result from adoptive parenting. They can laugh and vent feelings and find humor in daily exchanges with their children.

The "*ability to meet personal needs*" is another key characteristic of successful adoptive parents. They know how to take care of themselves. They refuse to be martyrs and recognize that taking personal time as a couple and as individuals is necessary. They take breaks from the child using respite care, relatives, friends and other resources.

Successful adoptive parents also have "*the ability to use resources*" effectively. They are able to seek and accept help. They learn how to identify and utilize a wide range of assistance and support. They may do this on a formal or informal basis, seeking assistance ranging from self-help support groups to professionally facilitated therapy. They let others into their family system to get the additional support they need.

Finally, successful adoptive parents maintain "*flexible family roles*". Effective adoptive parents share the responsibility of parenting and nurturing. They look to the total family system to find answers to problems. Parents are able to detect signs of "burn out" in their partner and share the care-giving role for the children. Such flexibility greatly increases the likelihood of success.

These characteristics develop over time. A family should not feel they cannot be successful if they struggle with one or more of these areas. Successful adoptive families grow and develop together. Identifying needs and accepting help is the key to success for any family.

5. Reaction of Birth Children:

Understanding how a child who is already living in the home may react to adoption is very important. Whether the children in the home are biological children, adoptive children or foster children their

reaction can impact the family as it plans to expand. Complete the following activity in an effort to prepare for a future addition to the family.

List how you believe your children will respond to the addition of another child into the family.

What problems might you anticipate from your children with the addition to your family?

How will you continue to meet the needs of all your children during the transition period?

6. Who are the other available families?:

Adoptive families are like you and me. They differ in shape, size, cultures, and family practices. There are many families who represent a perfect match for a child. And, there are many families who may have the same interest in the types of available children. The most common interest family's express is in a young female child of any race. Young children are rarely placed and to specifically identify an additional characteristic such as sex and race can reduce the likelihood of finding that specific type of child. When such a child is available, it is important to understand that there will be many families interested in them. Many family profiles and flyers are reviewed and only a small percentage of them are selected to be interviewed. Families are often turned down simply because there are just too many others interested in the same child.

Social workers who make selections for adoptive matches focus on the child's individual needs and not solely on the needs of the family. In situations where there are multiple families interested in the same child, the social worker may select childless families or families with special training depending on the needs of the child. Each case is unique and the needs of the individual child are the highest priority.

It can be very exciting to be selected as an adoptive resource and it can be very disappointing to not be selected for a specific child. All approved families are quality resources for children. Families United Network, Inc. recognizes that all of their families are unique and wonderful people and will make every effort to help match families with available children. However, there are many wonderful families with many other agencies. Families must recognize that each child has a unique situation.

D. Matching:

Families who are interested in being matched with a child available for adoption may be seek a match in a variety of ways. Families who are truly serious about the type of children available through the SWAN system are encouraged to work with their adoption worker to develop an adoption family flyer. These flyers are displayed at matching events, conferences, and training events where Families United Network, Inc. presents our available families. Flyers are also sent to county workers when a family is interested in a child they may have seen on an availability web site or other location.

As flyers and copies of family profiles are exchanged with placing county agency workers, these adoption professionals review the information and narrow their choices down to just a few families. These families are often interviewed by the placing county worker. Information is exchanged about the family and the available child and the placing county agency selects a family. Once a family is selected and if they are in agreement, visitation between the child and the family takes place. After a number of visitation days or weekends (varies depending on the needs of the child), a decision to place the child is made.

A child is usually placed in a pre-adoption home for a six month period before the placing county agency will move forward with the adoption process. Most of these placements are completed through foster care services. These kinds of adoption placements require that the child be in foster care status until the adoption is finalized. In these circumstances the child and family receive traditional foster care support and services and expanded orientation and training associated with preparation for adoption.

As reviewed early, a child can be moved into a home directly as a pre-adoptive placement. In this situation the child is not placed through the foster care system. Families United Network, Inc. can facilitate the finalization and provide the supervision of the placement if assigned by the placing county

agency. This involves monthly visits to the home in support of the child and family. One key goal here is to help the family prepare to finalize the adoption. Financial assistance is not provided by Families United Network, Inc. but, rather provided directly by the placing county agency after an adoption subsidy agreement has been signed between the placing county and the adoptive parents. Families involved in this type of placement are also invited to attend all recreational and training activities offered to other foster and adoptive families.

E. Financial Assistance:

Families going through the adoption process usually have financial questions. Families United Network, Inc. can provide a reference material to families that are helpful in explaining the details related to finance and adoption. Some financially related information that a family should be aware of includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. Subsidy Agreements:

A subsidy agreement is an agreement negotiated between the family and the placing county agency. There are three types of subsidy. The first is ongoing medical insurance coverage. A child that is being adopted is eligible to continue the medical assistance/HMO coverage until the age of 18.

The second part of the subsidy agreement is the reimbursement or direct coverage of non re-occurring court costs. This includes mileage to attend a finalization hearing, cost of clearances, health exams, legal fees, etc. These fees vary greatly, Families United Network, Inc. recommends each family seek further information from their adoption worker when it is time for them to work on their subsidy agreement with the placing county agency.

The third possible subsidy agreement is a monthly cash payment. This varies greatly from county to county and child to child. The amount of a cash subsidy is dependent on the specific county guidelines, age, race, and the needs of the child. In no situation can the subsidy be more than what would be paid to a family under a foster care per diem arrangement. Adoption subsidy amounts are often less than the foster care payment.

Many county agencies will require that a family make a written request for a subsidy and justify the amount they are requesting based on the needs of the child. In most situations a family should not have to pay for out of pocket expenses to finalize an adoption.

2. Private Medical Insurance:

Children can qualify for a family's private medical insurance once the intent to adopt has been filed with the court. Health insurance plans vary and have differing guidelines. A family should check individually to see when their adoptive child might be eligible.

3. Social Security:

Once an adoption is finalized a family must visit the social security office to apply for a new social security card for the child or children. In many situations a family may want to request a new social security number be assigned to ensure the safety and privacy of the adoption. Please note that income taxes can not be finalized until a new social security card has been obtained.

4. Non-Pennsylvania Children or Private Adoption:

There is not any cost to a family who wishes to have an adoption family profile completed. However, in the event the family wishes to use the profile to adopt privately or adopt a child from another state the family will be required to pay Families United Network, Inc. for the cost of the family profile. Please refer to the adoption worker for current billing rates.

F. Additional Training

Adoptive families are required to receive additional pre-service training. These training topics include child development, attachment issues, separation and loss, parenting skills, first aid and life book training. All of these trainings are offered through the foster care pre-approval training program. Adoptive families are also encouraged to participate in monthly training classes that are offered by Families United Network, Inc. throughout the year.

G. Post Adoption Services:

Families United Network, Inc. is able to offer post adoption services to families providing special needs children with permanency. These services include case management, respite and support group sessions. The availability of these services is dependent upon the availability of SWAN funds. Families interested in post adoption services may contact the SWAN helpline at 800-585-SWAN. SWAN will then initiate a referral to Families United Network, Inc. or another agency that can provide the services.

Appendix Two: Common Terms

Access Card

Access is government-funded health care insurance for low-income eligible families. It is also known as Medicaid.

Adjudication

Adjudication is a court decision. For a foster child, adjudication is a decision that he/she is either delinquent or dependent.

Adoption Assistance

Adoption Assistance is financial aid that is available to families who adopt children who are siblings, or children with special medical, physical, or emotional needs. Your adoption worker can discuss this with you.

Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA)

ASFA establishes unequivocally that the goals for children in the child welfare system are safety, permanence, and well-being. The law intends to make the child welfare system more responsive to the multiple, frequently complex, needs of children and their families. While affirming the need to forge linkages between the child welfare system, the courts and other support systems for families, the law affirms the need to assure the safety and well-being of children and their families. The law provides renewed impetus to dismantling the barriers to permanence existing for children in placement and the need to achieve permanence for these children. ASFA has been incorporated into Pennsylvania's overall policies for the child welfare program.

Child and Adolescent Service System Program (CASSP)

The Child and Adolescent Service System Program (CASSP) is a national initiative from the Office of Mental Health. CASSP addresses the needs of adolescents and children with serious emotional disturbances who are involved with two or more child-serving agencies. CASSP coordinates services among these agencies, pooling resources to serve the child most appropriately.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is physical punishment such as spanking. It is strictly prohibited for resource parents to use corporal punishment.

CASA (Volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates)

Volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) are everyday people who are appointed by judges to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children. A CASA volunteer stays with each child until he or she is placed in a safe, permanent, nurturing home.

County Children and Youth Agency (C&Y)

The county children and youth agency is the public agency that works with dependent, neglected, and abused children and their families. The mission of the agency is to help the family to avoid abuse and neglect and to protect children from further abuse.

ChildLine

ChildLine is Pennsylvania's toll-free telephone hotline to report suspected child abuse and neglect. The telephone number is 1-800-932-0313.

Child Protective Services (CPS)

County children and youth agencies provided CPS services to abused and neglected children and their families. These services are designed to protect children from further abuse while working to rehabilitate families.

Dependent Child

A dependent child is a child placed in county agency custody by a court because a family is unable or unwilling to provide adequate care.

Delinquent Child

A delinquent child is a child who has committed a delinquent act as determined by the court and found by the court to require supervision or rehabilitation.

Department of Public Welfare (DPW)

The Department of Public Welfare is the state agency that regulates and monitors child welfare services in Pennsylvania. The department also provides a wide range of programs for children and adults.

Disposition

A disposition is the part of a court hearing in which the court specifies the type of social service the child will receive.

Early Intervention Services

County mental health/mental retardation agencies use this term to describe services to young children designed to help them avoid or overcome physical or emotional development disabilities. Early intervention services provide the help children need to keep pace with other children their age, both socially and academically. Some foster children may need these services.

Family Reunification

This includes all efforts by the service delivery team to reunite children with their families. Resource parents can be a significant part of this team to work with and mentor birth families. Foster families working with birth families can have an extremely positive impact on the children.

Family Service Plan (FSP)

This is a plan that is a part of each family case record. It is prepared by the county agency and includes information about the family, the family's needs, the agency's goals for the family and the kinds of services that will be provided to help them meet those goals.

Family Service Plan Amendment

This is an amendment to the FSP describing the circumstances that make placement of the child necessary.

Foster Family or Resource Family

A family providing temporary care and supervision for a child placed in their home. The resource family provides parental care and supervision and works with the agency staff to help achieve permanence for the child. The term "resource" is a new term and can reflect a family providing foster care and/or is open to the placement of an adoptive child.

Guardian Ad Litem

Guardians Ad Litem are citizens who become part of a court program to represent the best interests of an assigned child. The Guardian Ad Litem is a representative for the child before the court, social services agencies and the community. He/she also represents and protects the child during crisis and court proceedings and follows the child's progress after the court disposes of the case.

General Protective Services (GPS)

These are activities and services to protect the health and safety of children who are without the proper parental supervision or have been neglected or exploited but not to an extent sufficient to be considered child abuse.

Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)

An IEP is developed to meet the special education needs of the child. The IEP sets specific academic goals for the child.

Individual Service Plan (ISP)

An individual service plan describes the daily care and services to be provided to individuals within the context of the family service plan. The plan is developed by the agency serving the individuals.

Judicial Review

A judicial review is a child welfare case review done at least every six months in juvenile court by either a judge or court master. At this review the judge will hear from all parties. Progress will be noted and disposition will be made.

Mental Health/Mental Retardation (MH/MR)

This refers to agencies that provide services to people with mental illnesses or mental retardation.

Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF)

OCYF is the office within the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare that is responsible for funding and regulating public and private services for dependent and delinquent youth.

Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association (PSRFA)

PSRFA is an organization comprised of foster/adoptive parents, professionals, and other interested parties. The goal of the association is to enhance the lives of families and children in Pennsylvania.

Petition

A petition is a request for court action filed by the county children and youth agency stating the facts of the case. A petition is filed at the time of initial placement and at each review hearing during a child's foster care placement.

Placement Amendment

Changes made to the placement service plan are done with a placement amendment prepared by the agency. It identifies any changes in the original placement service plan. For example, additional services may be identified or the family may make significant progress or complete the goals identified in the family service plan. Copies of the amendments are furnished to the child and the parents.

Placement Service Plan

The placement service plan is a part of the family service plan that is completed when a child is placed in foster or other substitute care. The plan includes a statement of goals that the agency, the foster family and the child agree to work on while the child is in the foster home.

Respite Care

Respite care is care provided by short-term substitute caregivers where available. It allows a foster family a temporary relief from parenting responsibility. Respite care is a good prevention for burn-out and can also be used during resource parent illness as well as times of other stresses and necessities.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

This is a Social Security Administration program which provides federal funds for eligible adults and children who have disabilities that prevent adults from finding employment and children from performing age appropriate tasks.

Special Needs Child

A special needs child is a child in need of child welfare services who is over the age of 5 or is a member of a minority or sibling group and/or has a disability. Special needs children require a special commitment from their foster or adoptive parents. Many special needs child placements are eligible for financial adoption assistance.

State Wide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN)

SWAN is a partnership among public and private agencies, judges, the legal community, foster and adoptive parents. The Department of Public Welfare, through a prime contractor, administers the network. SWAN's purpose is to build a better collaborative adoption process in Pennsylvania.

The SWAN program serves children in the custody of county children and youth agencies with the goal of adoption. The design of the network is to support the work of the county agencies in expediting the adoption process.

Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)

After all interventions have been exhausted by the agency to reunite a family, a TPR hearing is held before the court for decision and determination. Once a court has granted TPR, the biological parents no longer have any parental rights to the child - legal or otherwise. A TPR can be a voluntary request by the county agency agreed to by the parent(s) or can be involuntary and presented to the court without the consent and agreement of the parent(s) for the court's decision.

Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)

WIC is a supplemental food program for low-income pregnant women, mothers of infants, and children up to age five. WIC is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The program provides vouchers for specific kinds of nutritious food.

Appendix Three: PSRFA

History

The Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association (PSRFA) is a statewide association dedicated to addressing the needs and concerns of all foster and adoptive parents, foster and adopted children, and child placement agencies in Pennsylvania. Founded in 1974, the PSRFA members include foster and adoptive parents, professionals and other interested parties who work in the field of foster care or adoption throughout the commonwealth or who are otherwise connected with or interested in the welfare of families and children.

An executive director who reports to the PSRFA Board of Directors manages the association.

PSRFA Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is comprised of diverse PSRFA members who broadly represent the child welfare system and all regions of the state both professionally and geographically. The majority of board members are and must remain resource parents. Board members serve a three-year term and may not serve more than two consecutive three-year terms. Elected officers, who must be foster or adoptive parents, provide leadership for the PSRFA Board of Directors according to the organization's bylaws and policies. Officers serve two-year terms and may serve no more than two consecutive two-year terms.

PSRFA Mission Statement

PSRFA's mission is to be a catalyst to help all those who care about children and their families. PSRFA works directly with local resource parent associations and the agencies that refer children to care. Additionally, PSRFA seeks to involve all parts of the community to improve the quality of family life in Pennsylvania.

PSRFA Funding

PSRFA has been fortunate to receive funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare's Office of Children, Youth and Families. This grant allocates funds to enhance and improve services to foster and adoptive families as well as to improve the image of resource parenting to the general public through education and awareness.

PSRFA Member Services

Education and Training – PSRFA sponsors educational and networking opportunities for foster and adoptive parents and child welfare professionals. Board meetings and training conferences are held throughout the Commonwealth to enable membership participation.

Awards – An annual awards program recognizes the accomplishments of foster and adoptive families, professionals and other individuals who have touched the lives of and have made outstanding contributions to families and children in Pennsylvania. PSRFA is also available to assist local resource parent member agencies and member associations in honoring their families during their individual recognition events.

Newsletter – A newsletter is published quarterly and distributed to PSRFA members, state and local government, child welfare authorities and others interested in child welfare. The newsletter contains valuable and timely information regarding legislation, training opportunities, PSRFA's programs and activities and details about foster care in Pennsylvania.

Scholarships – PSRFA funds one of the most successful scholarship programs of its kind. Academic scholarships are awarded to graduating foster/adoptive and birth children of PSRFA members through an application process. PSRFA is a member of the PHEAA PATH Program that then matches scholarship dollar for dollar to all PSRFA's qualified scholarship recipients. All contributions to the scholarship fund are obtained through the work of the PSRFA board or contributed directly by organizations and others interested in the education of children.

Support Services – PSRFA operates and monitors a 24-hour a day support line 1-800-951-5151. This line is staffed by people who are available to provide PSRFA members with information and resources including contacts useful in all aspects of need for foster families as they provide substitute care to Pennsylvania’s children.

Local Resource Family Association Interaction and Support – PSRFA works most directly to provide services and opportunities to local resource parent associations who are responsible to inform and bring these services and opportunities to local resource parents.

Web Page – PSRFA maintains a web site to assist with providing information to board members, PSRFA members and the general public regarding foster care issues. Included on the web page are related links, on-line training and other opportunities for training. The web page also hosts a bulletin board where issues and questions are presented for comments by other web page readers. The web page address is: *www.psrfa.com*.

For more information on any PSRFA service or for membership information, please call 1-800-951-5151 in PA or 717-671-0102.

Appendix Four: References & Resources

How to Make Adoption Affordable, National Endowment for Financial Education

Together As Adoptive Parents, Inc.

Adoptive Families, monthly magazine

Reality Therapy in Action by William Glasser, M.D.

Control Theory Manager by William Glasser, M.D.

The Gus Chronicles: Reflections from an Abused Kid by Charles Applestein

There is No Such Thing as a Bad Kid by Charles Applestein

I Speak for this Child by Gay Crown

How to Raise the Adopted Child by Judith Schaffer and Christina Lindstrom

Adoption Wisdom by Marlou Russell

Raising the Odds for Responsible Children by Jim Fay and Foster Cline

Didn't I Tell You to Take Out the Trash by Jim Fay and Foster Cline

Avoiding Power Struggles with Kids by Jim Fay and Foster Cline

Helicopters, Drill Sergeants and Consultants by Jim Fay

Love Me Enough to Set Some Limits by Jim Fay

Four Steps to Responsible Behaviors by Jim Fay

Winning the Homework Battle by Jim Fay and Foster Cline

Trouble Free Teens by Jim Fay and Foster Cline

Toddlers and Preschoolers by Jim Fay and Foster Cline

Grief, Trauma and Loss by Foster Cline

Attention Deficit Disorder by Jim Fay and Ray Levy

Letters to Resource parent "Series" by Charles Confer

Parenting with Love and Logic by Foster Cline and Jim Fay

Regulation 3680, DPW

Regulation 3700, DPW

PA Manual for Resource parents by DPW & PSRFA

Parent Effectiveness Training by Gordon Thomas

A Child's Journey Through Placement by Vera Fahlberg

Note: There are many more resources available through Families United Network, Inc., local libraries and web sites. Please inquire with your case manager if you would like more information.

Appendix Five: Sample Forms

Clothing Log-Sample

Name: Jane Doe

Date: June 21,

2009

Date	Item	Price
6-22-09 K-mart	Socks five pair	7.99
	Underwear pack of five	8.99
	Underwear pack of five	8.99
6-22-09 Hills	Jeans	9.99
	Jeans	9.99
	Pants	14.99
	Shorts	9.99
	Shorts	12.99
	Shorts	15.99
	Shorts	9.99
	Casual Dress Shirt	15.99
	T-Shirt	9.99
	T-Shirt	9.99
	T-Shirt	9.99
	T-Shirt	9.99
	Sneakers	29.99
Total		\$ 195.84
Total Received \$200 minus 195.84, change returned 4.16		

Continuing Counseling Record-Sample

Name of Child: Jane Doe Date of Birth: 6-11-92

Please complete record:

Date of Service	Provider Name and Address	Comments and/or Outcome
6-30-09	Bob Smith, Counselors R Us 333 Silver Street Manheim, PA 17545 664-1111	Intake appointment completed.
7-6-09	Same	Jane attended 1 hr. session. She was talkative after the appointment and reported that she played games with the counselor.
7-27-09	Same	Jane attended 1 hr. session, the counselor talked to me for the last 15 min. He shared that they are working on different ways for Jane to express her anger instead of having a temper tantrum.

Recommendations/Medications, etc:

There is no medication recommended. The counselor is to continue to see Jane every other week.

Visitation Record-Sample

Child's Name: _____ Jane Doe _____ D.O.B. _____

Date of Visit	Participants	Time/Location	*Comments
6-22-09	Jane Doe and sister Ann	Three hours at the foster home of the sister	The two girls played without any problems
6-24-09 to 6-26-09	Jane Doe and mother Mary Ellen Smith	Overnight visit in the home of the mother	No problems indicated

Foster Family Reimbursement Statement-Sample

Office Any Office Month July Year 2010

Resource Parent Names: Sally & John Jones
(Please print)

Mailing Address: 210 First Avenue

Anytown, PA Zip 12345

Is this a new address? Yes No

Will you attend the next scheduled training session? Yes No
 Title of the next training: Car Seat Safety

A. Per Diem Instructions:

Place the full name of the child that spent the night in your home. Fill in the date the child arrived and the date the child left the home. This is the number of nights a child spent in your home. If the child came 1/1 and left 1/15, that would equal 14 days. To bill for the entire month, you must list the first day of the next month. For example, 1/1 to 2/1 would equal 31 days. If your child was on respite with another resource family, be sure not to bill for those days. Please be sure you receive the proper rate for the child in your care. If you pre-placed a child, the reimbursement would be \$10 a day. If your child was in the hospital, check with case manager and supervisor for directions.

	<u>Names of Children</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Nights</u>	<u>@</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Total</u>
1)	<u>Jane Doe</u>	<u>7/1/10</u>	- <u>8/1/10</u>	<u>31</u>	@	<u>\$23</u> =	<u>\$ 713</u>
2)	<u>Adam Smith</u>	<u>7/15/10</u>	- <u>7/17/10</u>	<u>2</u>	@	<u>\$23</u> =	<u>\$ 46</u>
3)	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	- <u> </u>	<u> </u>	@	<u> </u> =	<u>\$ </u>
4)	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	- <u> </u>	<u> </u>	@	<u> </u> =	<u>\$ </u>
5)	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	- <u> </u>	<u> </u>	@	<u> </u> =	<u>\$ </u>

A. Total Per Diem **\$ 759**

B. Training Expense Instruction:

Each resource parent is reimbursed \$5 per hour to attend a Families United Network formal training. This is a benefit to families and can aid the family if they must pay for a babysitter. (Self-instructional training, internet training, books, and videos are not considered formal training.)

Date	Description	Hours	Amount
1) 7/22/10	De-escalation	2 – Sally	\$ 10
2) 7/22/10	De-escalation	2 - John	\$ 10
2)			\$ 10

B. Total Training Expense \$ 20

C. Referral Incentive Bonus:

Resource families are offered an incentive bonus to refer a new family to Families United Network. If the family is fully approved the referring family will receive an incentive of \$250.

Family Approved	Address	Approval Date
1.		
2.		

C. Total Referral Incentive \$ 0

GRAND TOTAL (A + B +C) = \$ 779

Resource Parent Signature: _____

Case Manager Signature: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____

Comments: _____

Appendix Six: Pets in the Home

The following is a list of requirements when dealing with pets and children in care.

- Children entering care are not permitted to bring domestic pets of any type into placement.
- Resource parents are not permitted to purchase domestic pets whose ownership will be transferred to the child in placement or to transfer ownership to the child of a domestic pet already in the home.
- When a resource family owns or purchases domestic pets, children may be assigned age-appropriate responsibilities for the care of the animal such as feeding, walking, grooming, etc. The child should be in agreement with these assigned responsibilities.
- The resource parents shall ensure that pregnant adolescents are not permitted to clean a cat's litter box.
- Resource parents are not permitted to require the child to use his/her allowance for the purchase of supplies, pet food, veterinary bills, or other expenses associated with pet ownership. These expenses are the sole responsibility of the pet owner.
- Should the child in placement be involved in a domestic pet related incident in which the animal or another person is injured or which results in property damage, the resource family may not assign financial responsibility either to the child in placement or to Families United Network.
- The resource family shall ensure that pets kept by or located in their home, regardless of ownership, meet the appropriate local ordinances that permit the type(s) and quantities of animals.
- The pets will be vaccinated as prescribed by law. A record should be maintained on file at the home along with the name and address of the licensed veterinarian providing care for the pet. A copy should be accessible to Families United Network staff.
- If the pet poses a health hazard to children, the resource parents shall take corrective action as recommended by their veterinarian.
- Animal waste shall be disposed of in an acceptable manner.
- Exception to any of the above must be obtained from the placing county agency, legal parent if applicable, and Families United Network administration and documented in the child and resource parents' file.

Appendix Seven: Orientation Worksheet (Copy 1)

Each applicant must review and complete the following questions.

Chapter One: Introduction

1. What is the mission of Families United Network, Inc.?

Chapter Two: Philosophy

1. Adults need to set _____ limits in a loving way without the use of _____, _____, or _____.
2. The Adoption Safe Family Act has four key principles which are:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
3. What is your motivation to accept new children into your home?

Chapter Three: Programs

1. Which of the following programs are you interested in? (Check all that apply)
 Foster Care Emergency Care Mother/Infant
 Respite Care Medical Fragile Care Intensive Assessment
 Adoption Promoting Independent Living Skills

Chapter Four: Approval Process

1. How often will your home be re-evaluated for re-approval?
 Every 6 months Weekly
 Every 2 years Annually
2. Check all that apply to be re-approved as a resource family.
 Clear criminal record Home/Safety Requirements Have hazel eyes
 No speeding tickets 4 hours of training Ongoing stability
 Cooperative & truthful Required training
3. To receive a bonus, what is required?

Chapter Five: Practices

1. Check yes or no as to whether the following items require Families United Network, Inc. to be notified immediately.

	Yes	No
Child is taken to the hospital.	_____	_____
Criminal act by anyone in the home.	_____	_____
Any home conditions that threaten the safety of the child.	_____	_____
A friend comes to visit for the day.	_____	_____
A question arises about resource parent billing.	_____	_____
Child runs away from the home.	_____	_____
Child fails to return from a visit with family.	_____	_____

2. How soon must a child receive a physical and dental exam after they are placed into your home?

_____ 30 days _____ 90 days

3. Where should all medication be documented that is given to a child?

4. Who has permission to change, stop or start psychotropic medication?

_____ Resource Parent _____ Doctor Only _____ Teachers
 _____ Doctor Recommended And Have County/Legal Parent Approval

5. What kind of notice is recommended if a family wants to take a child on vacation?

_____ 1 business day's notice _____ 2 weeks' notice
 _____ 4 weeks' notice _____ 1 year's notice

6. Whose responsibility is it to take a child to counseling appointments, school functions and visitation with their legal family?

_____ Case Manager _____ Resource parent _____ County worker

6. How often is it recommended that a child visit their legal family?

_____ Monthly _____ Once A Year _____ Every Other Week

8. How much money is recommended to be spent on a child for clothing each month? _____ Allowance? _____

7. When a child leaves my home can I maintain some of their belongings that I bought for them as a gift?

_____ Yes _____ No

10. Why is it recommended each child have an identified respite home?

11. Can my teenage foster child babysit my children? _____ Yes _____ No

12. If a child runs up a phone bill in the resource home, what can be negotiated between the parent and child?

5. What should be done before a newly placed child receives a haircut?
 Get Permission From The Legal Parent And Find Out Any Special Requests
 Schedule Appointment And Get It Done
6. If additional household members are added to the home, who should be notified?
 Families United Network Staff The School
 The Birth Family The County
7. What is the maximum number of children allowed in my home without seeking special approval?
 3 foster children or no more than 6 total children living in the home
 2 foster children
 6 foster children

I certify that I have received the orientation materials and have reviewed it both with my recruiter/trainer and personally. I have also completed the worksheet.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Appendix Seven: Orientation Worksheet (Copy 2)

Each applicant must review and complete the following questions.

Chapter One: Introduction

1. What is the mission of Families United Network, Inc.?

Chapter Two: Philosophy

1. Adults need to set _____ limits in a loving way without the use of _____, _____, or _____.
2. The Adoption Safe Family Act has four key principles which are:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
3. What is your motivation to accept new children into your home?

Chapter Three: Programs

1. Which of the following programs are you interested in? (Check all that apply)
 Foster Care Emergency Care Mother/Infant
 Respite Care Medical Fragile Care Intensive Assessment
 Adoption Promoting Independent Living Skills

Chapter Four: Approval Process

1. How often will your home be re-evaluated for re-approval?
 Every 6 months Weekly
 Every 2 years Annually
2. Check all that apply to be re-approved as a resource family.
 Clear criminal record Home/Safety Requirements Have hazel eyes
 No speeding tickets 4 hours of training Ongoing stability
 Cooperative & truthful Required training
3. To receive a bonus, what is required?

Chapter Five: Practices

1. Check yes or no as to whether the following items require Families United Network, Inc. to be notified immediately.

	Yes	No
Child is taken to the hospital.	_____	_____
Criminal act by anyone in the home.	_____	_____
Any home conditions that threaten the safety of the child.	_____	_____
A friend comes to visit for the day.	_____	_____
A question arises about resource parent billing.	_____	_____
Child runs away from the home.	_____	_____
Child fails to return from a visit with family.	_____	_____

2. How soon must a child receive a physical and dental exam after they are placed into your home?

_____ 30 days _____ 90 days

3. Where should all medication be documented that is given to a child?

4. Who has permission to change, stop or start psychotropic medication?

_____ Resource Parent _____ Doctor Only _____ Teachers
 _____ Doctor Recommended And Have County/Legal Parent Approval

5. What kind of notice is recommended if a family wants to take a child on vacation?

_____ 1 business day's notice _____ 2 weeks' notice
 _____ 4 weeks' notice _____ 1 year's notice

6. Whose responsibility is it to take a child to counseling appointments, school functions and visitation with their legal family?

_____ Case Manager _____ Resource parent _____ County worker

8. How often is it recommended that a child visit their legal family?

_____ Monthly _____ Once A Year _____ Every Other Week

8. How much money is recommended to be spent on a child for clothing each month? _____ Allowance? _____

9. When a child leaves my home can I maintain some of their belongings that I bought for them as a gift?

_____ Yes _____ No

10. Why is it recommended each child have an identified respite home?

11. Can my teenage foster child babysit my children? _____ Yes _____ No

12. If a child runs up a phone bill in the resource home, what can be negotiated between the parent and child?

Chapter Six: Roles

1. Who develops the FSP? Resource Parent County Families United Network staff
2. Who develops the ISP? County Child Families United Network staff

 Families United Network & county worker, legal family, resource family & child
3. What kind of notice is needed to remove a child from your home? (unless due to safety)

Chapter Seven: Placements

1. Who are primary sources of information to learn about a child?
 - a. The County Agency
 - b. Families United Network Staff
 - c. Your Family As the Child Opens Up To Talk
 - d. All of The Above
2. Do you know how to look up your appeal rights for the removal of a child?
 Yes No

Chapter Eight: Billing

1. When are the completed resource parent billing statements due to the program office?
 By the 3rd of The Month
 By The 2nd Week of The Month
2. Can you buy anything extra for the child and request reimbursement? Explain how exceptionals are approved?

Chapter Nine: Regulations

1. Do you know where to look up the 3700 regulations? Yes No
2. Do you know what the safety & residence requirements are? Yes No

Chapter Ten: Policies

1. Can guns be anywhere in the home? Yes No
How should they be locked?
2. Can a resource parent open a child's mail or read their journal? Please explain answer.
3. Can a child smoke cigarettes? Can a foster parent smoke in the home?
4. Is spanking allowed if on a small child? Yes No
5. What should be done before a newly placed child receives a haircut?
 Get Permission From The Legal Parent And Find Out Any Special Requests
 Schedule Appointment and Get It Done

6. If additional household members are added to the home, who should be notified?

Families United Network Staff
 The Birth Family

The School
 The County

7. What is the maximum number of children allowed in my home without seeking special approval?

3 foster children or no more than 6 total children living in the home
 2 foster children
 6 foster children

I certify that I have received the orientation materials and have reviewed it both with my recruiter/trainer and personally. I have also completed the worksheet.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Aug 09 Revised
BH 8.12.09, 150 pieces

Professional Affiliations and Accreditations:



Families United Network, Inc. does not discriminate in regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin, age or sex.