



I would like to first begin with saying thank you for your consideration in transferring your foster care license to our agency.

Please read the packet in its entirety as well as the other materials enclosed to assist you in making the best choice for the children in foster care, yourself, and your immediate and extended family.

The typical age of the children we serve can range anywhere between the ages of 11-18, and many do not have a goal to return home due to the length of time they have spent in foster care.

Included are the following:

1. **The Process to Transfer your Foster Home License** - Please read this document in its entirety, as it explains the full process entailed in transferring your foster home license.
2. **Consent for Release of Information (CFS 600-3)** - Please complete this form to allow our agency to obtain your foster home licensing records from any agencies you are currently or were previously licensed with. If you need additional forms, please make additional copies of the one included.
3. **Foster Parent Responsibilities (OCH 104A)**
4. **Foster Parent Responsibilities Signature Page (OCH 104B)**
5. **An introduction to Our Children's Homestead**
6. **Frequently asked questions about being a foster parent**
7. **Frequently asked questions about foster care (2 pages)**

Please fill out these two forms - **Consent for Release of Information (CFS 600-3)** & **Foster Parent Responsibilities Signature Page (OCH 104B)**, mail these forms to:

Troy Reeves – Foster Parent Recruiter  
C/O Our Children's Homestead  
7210 E State Street, Suite 210  
Rockford, IL 61108

After all information has been processed (records transfer(s), transfer committee file review etc.), you will be contacted by a licensing representative to schedule your first of at least two home visits. During these home visits, you will also complete other documentation needed to complete the licensing process. A letter of recommendation form will also be forwarded to the individuals you have listed on the Foster Family Home Information sheet.

If you have any questions, please call Jackie Ganz – OCH Licensing Supervisor (630) 369-0004 ext. 130. Thanking you in advance for your diligence and support and we look forward to making you a part of our team!

Sincerely,

Troy Reeves,  
O.C.H. Foster Parent Recruitment / Director of Operations - Rockford

# OUR CHILDREN'S HOMESTEAD



## **The process to transfer your Foster Home License to OCH**

Transferring your foster home license is a process that involves both the agency you are currently licensed with and the agency you wish to transfer to. Transfers are only for persons who are currently licensed with another agency.












- ❑ Complete a Release of Information which will allow the licensing representative to obtain a copy of your foster home licensing record from the agency you are currently or have been licensed with.
- ❑ The OCH licensing representative will forward the Release of Information to the agency/agencies you have signed a release for.
- ❑ Your current agency will forward a copy of your licensing record to OCH.
- ❑ Once received, your licensing record will be reviewed by the transfer committee to determine if you and/or your family will be appropriate to foster the children we serve. The areas reviewed may include your licensing investigation history, the capacity you have in your home, overall licensing compliance history, and the geographical location of your home.
- ❑ The OCH licensing representative will inform you if our agency will proceed with the remainder of the transfer process. If you are accepted, your licensing record will be reviewed to determine if you are in need of any additional trainings or documentation to keep your licensing record in compliance with OCH standards. A home visit will also be scheduled at this time to determine that your home is in compliance with licensing standards.
- ❑ Once all additional requirements/documentations have been completed, the licensing representative will submit them to the Central Office of Licensing for processing the transfer. You will be receiving a new foster home license with Our Children's Homestead as the supervising agency.

Please keep in mind that the amount of time it takes to transfer your license varies and is partly determined by the time it takes your current agency to forward your licensing records.

Thanking you in advance for your interest in our agency and also in your desire to assist with our mission of **One Child One Dream!**

# OUR CHILDREN'S HOMESTEAD

## FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

-  Provide temporary care to children who have been removed from their home due to abuse, neglect, or dependency. Act as a parent to the child in nearly every respect:
  - Provide a safe, stable living environment and set rules of behavior, teach good hygiene and living skills, and provide consequences for inappropriate behavior.
  - Participate in the child's educational plan by registering the child in school, attending parent/teacher conferences and other meetings (i.e. IEP), and encouraging participation in extra-curricular activities.
  - Ensure the child's medical and dental needs are met.
  - Provide reasonable transportation for the child for visits with family, court dates, community activities, and other needs as they arise.
-  Have adequate space available to provide a separate bed for each child.
-  **Have sufficient financial resources to provide basic necessities for yourself and your own family. The financial reimbursement is NOT to be used as a form of income.** Appropriately utilize the reimbursement for board, clothing, and personal allowance.
-  Refrain from the use of corporal punishment in any form as means of disciplining a child. Also, no child should be subjected to verbal abuse, threats, or derogatory remarks.
-  Have a competent person in charge of the children at all times and inform the agency of alternate caregivers.
-  Accept supervision from the agency by allowing the workers (i.e. caseworker, therapist, licensing worker, etc.) to visit the home at any reasonable time, attending various meetings, and providing care according to agency policy. Recognize the final authority of the agency to make and carry out plans, which may include return to parents or relatives, guardianship, adoption, or transfer to other homes.
-  Immediately report any changes in address, phone number, or individuals residing in the home.
-  Consult with the agency prior to taking a child out of state or if you will be out of the home for a period exceeding 24 hours.
-  Attend at least one training per quarter at the agency. Understand that failure to do so will jeopardize future placements in the home or result in a reduction in the Professional/Difficulty of Care rate.
-  Give the agency a minimum of two weeks written notice if you would like a child removed from your home.
-  Express, in writing, complaints or grievances and address to the program supervisor.

Please keep in mind that OCH provides foster care services for children at three different levels:

1. **Traditional Foster Care** – Children without significant medical or mental health needs.
2. **Specialized Treatment Foster Care (SPEC)** – Children with medical, emotional, and/or behavioral concerns receive therapy and foster parents receive weekly consultations. The majority of children in OCH care are at this level.
3. **Specialized Adolescent Foster Care (AFC)** – Children with medical, emotional, and/or behavioral concerns receive therapy and foster parents receive weekly consultations. These children, most of them 14 years of age and older, receive 15 hours of mentoring per month.



**OUR CHILDREN'S HOMESTEAD  
FOSTER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES SIGNATURE PAGE**



I have read the Foster Parent Responsibilities, and I understand what my duties will be as a foster parent for Our Children's Homestead. I also understand that additional responsibilities may be included on a case-by-case basis.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Foster Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Foster Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



### CONSENT FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION

1. I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby give consent to:

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Provider of Information) (Address)

3. to release information concerning  \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_ . B.D.   .

4. to: **Our Children's Homestead 387 Shuman Blvd-Ste. 170E, Naperville, IL 60563** **ATTN: Jackie Ganz**  
(Address)

TYPE OF INFORMATION  
(CIRCLE)

5. Medical (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

6. Mental Health (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

7. Education: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Social History/Assessment (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

9. Financial (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

10. Other (specify): **Foster Home Licensing Records**

11. THE PURPOSE FOR REQUESTING THIS INFORMATION IS: **Release of Family Foster Home Records**

12. Treatment, payment, enrollment, or eligibility for benefits may not be conditioned on whether or not the consent is signed by the client or his/her personal representative. HOWEVER, I UNDERSTAND THAT IF I REFUSE TO CONSENT, THE FOLLOWING MAY HAPPEN: A lack of coordination of services.

I understand that I have the right to inspect and copy the information disclosed, except for certain adoption records, certain information regarding the identity of a source of information or the location of the child, or under certain circumstances where information was received from a minor under a promise of confidentiality.

I understand that I may revoke this consent at any time by notifying the Provider of Information listed in Line 2 above in writing. Revocation will be effective except to the extent that action has been taken in reliance on this consent. I also understand that, even if I do not revoke this consent, the consent will expire one year from the date provided on line 15 or line 16 below.

13. \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Minor 12 to 17 years of age Date

14. Further, I \_\_\_\_\_, the parent, or the legal guardian or custodian, appointed pursuant to 705 ILCS 405/2-11 or 705 ILCS 405/2-27, am authorized to act on behalf of the individual minor, N/A \_\_\_\_\_, and I hereby consent to this limited disclosure under the terms stated above. The legal guardian or custodian or parent is the legal representative of the unemancipated minor, pursuant to HIPAA, 45 CFR 164.502(g), unless otherwise required by law.

15. \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent, Guardian, or Authorized Agent Date  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

16.  \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Adult Consenting to Release of Own Records Date  
Address  \_\_\_\_\_

17. \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness Licensing Representative Relationship Date

REDISCLOSURE CONSENT: The information to be disclosed is confidential and is provided only to the party specified in the above consent. The receiving party cannot redisclose the information, with the exception of reports and other information that is required to be released to the court and certain parties to juvenile court proceedings as authorized by the Juvenile Court Act, 705 ILCS 405.: I (we) hereby consent to redisclose to:

"none other"  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(if none other, enter "none other").

N/A \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Consenting Party Date

N/A \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Minor 12 to 17 years of age Date

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE CFS 600-3

- Line 1:** Enter the name of the person giving consent.
- Line 2:** Enter the name and address of the facility or person that is the custodian of the information requested. It may be necessary to prepare a consent form for each provider if there are multiple providers with medical, mental health or substance abuse records that need to be released.
- Line 3:** Enter the name and date of birth of the person whose records or information will be released. Prepare a separate consent form for each person whose records are to be released.
- Line 4:** Enter the name and address of the agency or person to which the information will be released. Do not use specific names to avoid problems in the event of case transfers, job changes, etc. If it will be necessary to share the information beyond DCFS, the private agency or contractor, the Redislosure Consent section at the bottom of the form must be completed. Without consent for redislosure it may be necessary to prepare additional consent forms to authorize redislosure.
- Lines 5-10:** Enter the specific type of information to be released. Include relevant years of treatment/services. The law prohibits blanket consents. The consent should cover all documents **relevant** to the purpose for which the information is requested. You do not need to know of the existence of a particular document to request it. There should be a correlation between the type of information requested and the reason(s) for the request entered on line five. For example, if the purpose for the request is to assess parenting capabilities, the information requested must relate to the individual's ability to function or to parent, which may include therapist's notes, reports or other mental health information.
- Line 11:** Enter the reason for requesting the information. Frequently used reasons include:
- casework planning;
  - provision of social services;
  - evaluation for purposes of service planning/placement/licensing decisions;
  - assessment of parenting capabilities;
  - to assess progress in treatment;
  - to assist in determining whether abuse or neglect occurred;
  - to assess safety risks or identify risk factors that could impair the child's safety;
  - to determine prognosis for change; and
  - to determine appropriate visitation.
- Line 12:** Enter the consequences that will be imposed by the Department if the person refuses to consent. Such consequences may include:
- Worker may attempt to screen case into court;
  - Worker may seek a court order for disclosure;
  - Worker may recommend to the court that the child be removed;
  - Worker may be unable to recommend expanded visitation to the court;
  - Visitation may be denied or delayed;
  - Reunification may be denied or delayed;
  - The Department will be unable to assess for provision of services;
  - The Department may weigh failure to consent in determining whether the parent is compliant with services or has completed tasks satisfactorily;
  - The Department may make adverse decisions concerning foster children in your care; or
  - Any other valid consequence.
- Workers may not suggest or imply adverse consequences to clients beyond those that the Department can actually impose. In addition, no adverse consequence would flow from failure to consent unless the information sought is reasonably needed by the Department in fulfillment of legitimate departmental functions (i.e., investigating abuse or neglect allegations, providing follow-up services, determining appropriate placement or permanency goal, supporting termination of parental rights or licensure).
- Line 13:** After all sections of the form have been completed, have the appropriate person sign and date the form. If the records are for an adult, the adult should sign on line 17. If the child is a ward, the DCFS Guardianship Administrator or DCFS Authorized Agent should sign and date the form, and enter the address.
- Children 12 years of age and older are required to sign and date the consent in addition to their parent or guardian when their mental health information and information regarding birth control services, pregnancy, treatment for sexually transmissible diseases or drug or alcohol abuse treatment is requested. If a Department ward is age 18 or over and has not been declared incompetent by a court of law, only the ward may consent to release of his/her personal information.
- Line 14-15:** Enter the signature, date and address of the person giving consent to the person whose information is requested. If the person is signing as a child's parent, he/she should sign Line 15 only, not Line 17. The consent will expire one year from the date signed.
- Line 16:** Enter the signature, date and address of the adult when the adult is consenting to the release of his/her own records. When using this form to request information for an adult's records, no information for a child should be requested on the same form. The consent will expire one year from the date signed.
- Line 17:** A witness who is familiar with the person giving consent must sign and date the consent form when mental health information is requested. The witness should be someone other than the worker

**Redislosure Consent:** This section must be completed when the information will be shared with persons outside of the Department or private agency or contractor named on line 4. For information referenced in line 15 of the instructions, the same procedures must be followed for redislosure.



## ***AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR CHILDREN'S HOMESTEAD***



**OUR CHILDREN'S HOMESTEADS MISSION** is to build a strong, stable, foundation of support for each youth we serve, and develop opportunities that enable them to discover and sustain a positive future.

**OUR VISION:** All youth served by OCH are on a path to achieve happiness, health, self-sufficiency, and success.

### **OUR AGENCY'S SERVICE AREA:**

We serve an average of 300 hundred children, which also includes the children in our respite program. We have 140 homes in the Chicagoland area that extend south to Kankakee, IL up north to Gurnee, IL and out west to Rockford, our other office location. Our agency employs 50 staff members and has 40 contracted therapists providing direct services to our children.

### **THE CHILDREN WE SERVE:**

Our agency's foster care program serves children that are typically 10 years old or older. They have been in the foster care system for several years with the many having been placed in 12 or more foster homes before coming to our agency. These children have a wide range of developmental, behavioral, emotional and mental health needs. Their support systems are broken and they feel they're not wanted or loved; they believe there is little hope for a better future.

### **THE PEOPLE WE NEED:**

Our Children's Homestead is looking for caring individuals who are capable of providing a nurturing environment that our kids can call home. We seek to provide our kids with an authentic, loving, and lasting relationship with a dedicated foster care provider. Positive encouragement and long term support for our clients is a key factor to their growth and success. We believe that over time this relationship can deeply impact our children's lives and provide them with consistency and permanency.

# Frequently Asked Questions about Foster Care – Page 1

## **What is specialized foster care?**

Sometimes abused or neglected children need more intense services to be provided by the foster family who must possess additional skills to meet the individual needs of that child. Foster parents who either already have necessary skills, or are willing to be trained to meet the special needs of these foster children, may become part of a "specialized" or "treatment" foster care program providing intensive services. These foster families also receive a higher reimbursement rate and have increased training responsibilities.

## **What kinds of children need foster homes the most?**

Many kinds of children will need foster homes. The children who currently need homes the most are:

- Teenage mothers and their babies / Children with special medical/mental health needs
- Siblings who need to be placed together / Adolescents that were born drug exposed

## **Can we pick out the child we want?**

You can express a preference on the age, race, and sex of the child that you think would best fit in with your family. You do not have to accept a child that you do not want in your home.

## **Do all specialized foster children have problems?**

Most of them are struggling with challenges to some degree. Many are frightened and confused at the sudden separation from their parents. Some are angry. Others may think they are being sent to a foster home as punishment. These problems may gradually lessen, though, as a foster child comes to know that you care for him or her.

## **What kind of support will we receive?**

**Financial Assistance** - Foster parents in "specialized" foster care programs receive a bi-monthly check in the form of a reimbursement to cover the board payment, difficulty of care rate, clothing and personal allowance.

**Medical Care** - Each foster child gets a medical card from the state which provides the child with necessary medical care and preventive medicine. You will be given a number to call to get help in selecting a physician for a child placed with you. The medical card is also accepted by many hospitals and for approved prescriptions.

**Education Services** - Foster children go to regular public schools. Private or parochial school tuition cannot be paid by Illinois DCFS. Foster children may attend private or parochial schools, but only if the tuition is paid by someone other than Illinois DCFS.

**Personal Support** - Your supervising child welfare agency and your child's caseworker are responsible for supporting your family on a daily basis. Each agency, including DCFS, has developed internal supports, which include foster parent support groups, newsletters, after hours crisis telephone numbers, and community resources.

**Support from DCFS** - The Department of Children and Family Services provides overall support to licensed private child welfare agencies with foster care programs, while maintaining its own foster care program. DCFS also directly provides universal foster care information and impartial advocacy for all foster families statewide.

## **How long does it take to get a foster child?**

The licensing and training process takes from four to six months. You are eligible to have children placed with you once you have completed all requirements.

## **How will our children react to foster children?**

If you've prepared them well and they understand the temporary nature of foster care, there should be few problems. It's not unusual for your children to be a bit jealous at first -- just as they might be jealous of a new baby in the family.

## **Can we take our foster child on vacation with us?**

In most cases, yes. But if it involves out-of-state travel, you must call your child's caseworker in advance for approval.

## Frequently Asked Questions about Foster Care – Page 2

**Can single people care for foster children?** Yes

### **How many foster children can we take?**

That depends on factors such as your ability, your enthusiasm, how many children you have of your own, and how much room you have in your home. The maximum number, including your own children, is set out by DCFS licensing standards. Every Specialized Foster Home needs to meet State standards. If you have five children in your home under the age of 18 you **do not** have the capacity to have a specialized foster child in your home.

### **Do foster children need individual bedrooms?**

No. A foster child can share a room with your children or other foster children of the same sex and under the age of 18. Often, the child must have a bed of his or her own. A foster child **may not** share a bedroom with an adult -- except for brief periods due to the child's illness or another need for attention.

### **Can our foster children go to church with us?**

Yes. Sometimes, you will get children whose religious background is similar to your own. But if a foster child is of a different faith, he or she must be allowed to attend worship in that faith. If a child does not want to go to church, they cannot be forced.

### **Does a child's birth parents visit him or her?**

In most cases, yes. In fact, visits between parents and children are an essential part of the efforts to reunite families. The child's caseworker has the primary responsibility for planning visits and arranging supervision. The caseworker will talk with you and the child's parents to work out the time and location of the visits.

### **Can we ever adopt a foster child?**

The first goal is to return foster children to their families when that is possible. However, if a foster child who has been in your home for some time becomes available for adoption, you can discuss your interest in adopting him or her with the caseworker. At that time, you would have to meet all of the regular requirements for becoming an adoptive parent. For information on adoption in general, call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois at 1-800-572-2390.

### **Can I work outside the home and still be a foster parent?**

Yes, we just ask that someone is there so that the child is never alone and if you need a babysitter to come in, they will need to go through a background check. Every Specialized Foster Parent needs to be financially stable. Applicants must have proof of a reliable source of income outside of Foster Parenting.

### **What will we know about the child before he/she is placed in our care?**

When receiving a placement that is new to OCH, you will get a phone call giving you information about the child's behavior patterns as well as limitations and areas they excel. You will become privy to detailed information and diagnosis once a commitment has been established. Next you will move into the visitation period. At that time you will be able to meet and get to know the child before placing the child in your home.

### **What do I do if I have child who I cannot control?**

If you have a child with which all resources have been expended and you feel you can no longer care for this child you would need to submit a written 14 day notice to the caseworker, supervisor, and the licensing specialist.

### **Who pays for medical and dental appointments?**

Each child has a Medicaid card through the State of Illinois that will cover medical expenses. There are phone numbers available for you to call which will give you access to places that the medical card.

### **Will my child need a therapist? , and if so how often will they have therapy and where?**

Every treatment level child will have an assigned therapist that will meet with them weekly or bi-weekly depending on their treatment plan.

## Frequently Asked Questions about Foster Care – Page 3

### **What is the age range of children you serve at Our Children's Homestead?**

The kids we serve are typically 10 – 18 years old, we very rarely get babies or toddlers.

### **How do I get in touch with a worker after the office has closed?**

OCH has an on call pager system that is available 24/7, 365. You can call the OCH office and follow the prompts, you may need to leave a message regarding what your situation is. The on-call worker will then respond to you within 15 minutes with options or be able to get you further help.

### **How much space is required for a child's bedroom?**

Every Specialized Foster Parent needs to be able to provide children with a place to sleep in a room apart from adults. There needs to be 40 square feet of room space for the first child. It would take an additional 35 square feet of space to provide a home for a second child. You must have at least two bedrooms to get licensed. Every Specialized Foster Parents needs to provide a bed and bedding for each child that is in their care.

### **How do I keep my license updated?**

Your assigned licensing specialist will visit your home every six months once you are licensed for compliance checks. In addition you will need to attend the OCH or DCFS trainings to ensure that you earn the 64 credits needed to renew your license every four years.

Every Specialized Foster Parent needs to have a mode of transportation to care for their child. That could be having your own vehicle or easy access to other transportation that would allow you to take children to all doctor visits, school meetings, and all other appointments.