

Foster Parent and Licensed Caregiver Bill of Rights**24-2****Policy**

There is established a Foster Parent and Licensed Caregiver Bill of Rights, which is intended to ensure that the permanency, safety, well-being and basic needs of all children in the foster care system are consistently met and based on the following principles and values:

- families are the experts regarding their own needs
- families are motivated to recognize their needs and resources
- families have a lead role in working towards change
- children and families have the right to be understood within the context of their norms, traditions, history, and culture. The child welfare system promotes racial equity, inclusion, diversity and wellbeing
- support should be flexible and consistent statewide, and are individualized and responsive to a family's circumstance, needs and goals
- relationships, collaboration and partnerships are the foundation to positive outcomes for children and their families
- foster care services should be temporary, safe, nurturing, supportive and equipped to meet the needs of children and their families while they are entrusted to the care of licensed caregivers and
- supporting and promoting reunification with the children's families is the primary focus.

Nothing in this section shall be construed as creating or permitting a cause of action for a violation of any provision of this section.

**Rights of
Licensed
Caregivers**

The following are the rights of licensed caregivers, which shall be afforded to the extent feasible and consistent with applicable provisions of state and federal law:

- licensed caregivers shall not be discriminated against based on religion, race, color, creed, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, age or disability
- licensed caregivers shall be treated with dignity, respect, and consideration

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Licensed
Caregivers,**
continued

- licensed caregivers shall have an opportunity to be heard by DCF's Child Welfare chain of command, including, but not limited to, issuing or filing a complaint with the Commissioner, DCF's Office of Community Relations or Connecticut's Office of the Child Advocate
- licensed caregivers shall have access to information and available opportunities for pre-service and post-service training
- licensed caregivers shall receive, to the extent possible allowed under state and federal law, information about the child entrusted to their care prior to placement and additional information that becomes known including, but not limited to:
 - o daily routines of the child(ren)
 - o medical history
 - o behavioral health history
 - o any history of trauma experienced
 - o educational needs
- licensed caregivers shall have reasonable access to DCF's Child Welfare chain of command
- licensed caregivers shall have access to Careline, DCF's after hour response call center, in case of an emergency
- pursuant to C.G.S. 17a-28, licensed caregivers shall receive a copy of the case plans after attending the Administrative Case Review meeting of the child(ren) entrusted to their care
- licensed caregivers shall be afforded the opportunity to discuss and provide feedback on the case plans of the child(ren) entrusted to their care
- licensed caregivers shall receive communication and notification of any change to the child's case plan
- licensed caregivers shall receive notice of meetings regarding the child in their care
- licensed caregivers shall be afforded the opportunity to actively participate in such meetings, except those that involve information that is confidential. For confidential meetings, DCF shall provide licensed caregivers with the ability to offer input to DCF before a final decision is made
- licensed caregivers shall receive notice when a child entrusted to their care is scheduled to leave their home

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Caregivers,
continued**

- licensed caregivers shall be informed and consulted in the planning of supervised and unsupervised visitation with the entrusted child's family.
- DCF shall make appropriate efforts to accommodate the licensed caregivers schedule in arranging visits and other contact between the entrusted child and the child's family.

**Expecta-
tions of
Licensed
Caregivers**

The following are the expectations of licensed caregivers:

- licensed caregivers shall provide the entrusted child with an environment that is accepting, non-judgmental, welcoming, nurturing and safe
- licensed caregivers shall not discriminate against the child, birth parents, relatives or other interested partners based on religion, race, color, creed, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, age or disability
- licensed caregivers shall maintain a healthy relationship with the child by emphasizing trust, understanding, empathy and communication. Also, they shall set appropriate boundaries with respect to curfews, homework, and household responsibilities to provide a stable living environment.
- licensed caregivers shall assist the child in building life skills, including, but not limited to, grocery shopping and cooking meals, personal financial management and laundry
- licensed caregivers shall apply the same age-appropriate household rules and provide the same opportunities to all children residing in the home, including, but not limited to, participation in family activities and vacations
- licensed caregivers shall work in partnership with birth parents and relatives to the greatest extent possible
- licensed caregivers shall cultivate positive, supportive relationships with the child's birth parents, relatives, other familial and significant relationships whenever possible
- licensed caregivers shall treat birth parents and relatives with dignity, respect and consideration
- licensed caregivers shall promote regular contact, as approved and to the extent possible, between the child and their birth parents and relatives

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continued

- licensed caregivers shall make routine decisions about the entrusted child's daily activities and may continue practicing their own family values and routines, excluding physical discipline, while respecting the child's culture, background, identity, experience, trauma history and preferences
- licensed caregivers shall use the reasonable and prudent parent standard pursuant to C.G.S. section 17a-114d when making decisions about the daily routines of a child
- licensed caregivers shall provide DCF with information regarding the child's connection to relatives and other significant individuals, age-appropriate social, scholastic, and enrichment activities, milestone events, medical, physical, behavioral health and overall well-being
- licensed caregivers shall work in partnership with DCF and community providers
- licensed caregivers shall provide reasonable access to the Child Protection Services and Foster Care Division staff
- licensed caregivers shall provide adequate notice of changes in the entrusted child's behaviors or treatment
- licensed caregivers shall participate in meetings related to permanency planning, and assist, support and promote the planning of supervised and unsupervised visitation between the child, their parents and family.