

## CATHOLIC CHARITIES, DIOCESE OF ALLENTOWN

Subject: RESOURCE PARENT INQUIRY, APPLICATION AND HOME STUDY

Department: Foster Care

Purpose: To establish the foster/kinship parent process for approval

### I. Inquiry

Prospective resource parents contact Catholic Charities inquiring about foster parenting. A packet of information is mailed or given to interested parties. Included in this packet is an announcement of the next scheduled Information Meeting. NOTE: All applicants must be at least 21 years of age and of good mental, physical, and emotional health to care for children. The number of children living with any foster family is limited to six. This includes the foster parents own children (DPW reg. 3700.31). Applicants who are couples must be legally married.

### II. Information Meeting

This group meeting is held at various times throughout the year. The purpose of the session is to familiarize prospective resource parents with the agency's policies and procedure, with an overview of how children come into care, resource parent qualifications and readiness, responsibilities to the children, review of the home study process, and training requirements.

### III. Application Process

Inquirers who remain interested in becoming a resource parent will be provided an application packet, which includes.

- (1) Application
- (2) Foster Parent Applicant Registration: All resource parent applicants must be registered with the Pennsylvania Resource Registry. Forms are supplied by the agency.
- (3) Guideline for selecting references: The agency requests the following references: Three (3) personal, non-relative references (we prefer at least 2 neighbors) and two (2) relative references (if you have grown children, please use them) and one (1) religious (pastor) reference. A Foster Home Developer will review and mail reference requests to persons submitted for reference.
- (4) Preference Questionnaire: The information on this form allows for the best possible match between foster family and child(ren).

### IV. Orientation

This session will be about 2 hours in length. Forms and additional information will be reviewed and distributed.

### V. Home Study

The Home Study begins with the completion and return of forms distributed at Orientation. These include:

- A. Forms Given to be Completed and Returned to Foster Home Developer
  1. Child Abuse Clearance (CY-113) There is a \$10 processing fee for each applicant (\$20.00 per couple). The agency will reimburse this

fee with first child placement. Any person 14 yrs. or older, residing in the home, or a person providing regular childcare must submit clearances, also at a fee of \$10 each. Forms will be provided and it is the responsibility of the applicant to mail this form goes to Childline in Harrisburg. The clearance document will be returned to the person requesting it. The original document must be forwarded to Catholic Charities. If an applicant has not resided in Pennsylvania for the past 5 consecutive years, Child Abuse Clearances must be obtained from former states.

2. Criminal Record Check: Any person 14 yrs. or older, residing in the home, or a person providing regular childcare must have criminal clearances completed. Persons convicted of certain crimes are prohibited from becoming foster parents per Dept. of Public Welfare (DPW) regulations. These clearances are processed by Catholic Charities at no cost to the applicant. Local police checks and driving records may also be requested.
3. FBI Clearance: As of January 2008, FBI clearances must be obtained for all applicants and household members age 18 or older. Further directions to obtain this clearance will be given during orientation.
4. Medical Form: Each applicant must have a physical by his/her doctor and have the agency medical form completed by the doctor.
5. Employer Reference: Each employed person completes a reference form giving us permission to contact your employer. This helps to further assess stability.
6. Automobile Information Form: This information is required for liability purposes to validate current drivers license and insurance coverage for transporting children in foster care.
7. Release of Information: In the event that applicants have been associated with another foster parenting agency (whether as an applicant or an approved foster parent) consent to contact that agency for a referral will be requested.

B. Foster/Kinship Parents will supply the following:

1. Copies of the face sheet of Homeowners/Renters and Automobile Policies: the agency requires a minimum of \$300,000 per accident \$100,000 per person for auto liability coverage
2. Copy of PA drivers license for each driver in the household
3. Copy of marriage certificate
4. Copy of divorce decree (if applicable)
5. Copy of birth certificate
6. Autobiography
7. Lab Report on Well drinking water. A well water certification is required at the time of the home safety inspection.
8. Copy of Veterinarian Verification of up-to-date Pet Immunization

C. There are a variety of forms and articles provided for further information on the responsibilities of foster/kinship parents.

When the Autobiography has been completed and returned to the agency, the interview process of the Home Study will begin.

D. Interviews and Home Visits:

Each person will participate in couple and individual interviews with a Home Developer. A home visit will be scheduled at which time a safety check will be done to satisfy DPW regulations for an approved foster home. The Home Developer will request to briefly meet with other members of the household. A home study is completed only when the Home Developer has enough information about the prospective family to make a solid recommendation.

E. Training

1. Education is an important aspect for a family's self-assessment of their ability to become foster/kinship parents. Families are highly encouraged to read the materials and literature.

2. Pre-Service Training: Applicants are to attend group-training sessions with other applicants and foster parents. (Approx. 12 hrs.)

Pre-Service Training may include the following topics:

Foster Parent Information Meeting, Orientation, Parenting Children Who Have Been Sexually Abused , Attachment, Separation and Loss, Child Welfare and Concurrent Planning  
Additional Training topics may include:

CPR, First Aid, Medication Administration, Prenatal Exposure to Drugs and Alcohol, and Transracial Issues

The agency will try to schedule training at a time that best meets the needs of the majority of the group members. Some persons may need to request leave from work.

Following approval there is 15 hr. yearly requirement for each foster/kinship parent.

F. Approval

The agency will notify approval by letter. If concerns exist about a person's readiness to become a resource parent, a personal interview will be offered to discuss concerns/ recommendations.

G. Changes in Home Composition following approval

Foster/kinship parents must report changes in home composition, and when such reports are received the agency will conduct an immediate assessment and follow-up home visit within two weeks. Substantial changes may result from myriad circumstances such as:

1. individuals who move in or out of the home (note clearances are required of all adults residing in the home) or members turning 14

2. death or debilitating illness of a caregiver

3. structural issues in the home related to fire, flood, or natural disaster or

4. legal proceedings affecting the family such as eviction or divorce

H. Annual Evaluation

Annual evaluations will be conducted prior to the approval anniversary date.