

## **Partnership Plan for Children in Out-of-Home Care**

*Safe Children, Healthy Families, Caring Communities*

The purpose of this partnership plan is to outline a commitment to children through a common understanding of the necessary values, principles and relationships in order to fulfill our responsibilities to children in the care of Clark County Department of Family Services (DFS).

### **Caregivers provide quality parenting.**

- Quality parenting, the expectation of all caregivers, involves a commitment to the safety and well-being of the child. Quality parenting includes the following: having an awareness of the impact of trauma, including the child in family life; having respect for the individuality of the child; providing appropriate supervision; utilizing appropriate methods of discipline; encouraging the child's strengths; providing opportunities to develop the interests and skills of the child through normalcy.
- Caregivers support the educational success of the child by participating in school activities, meetings and encouraging the child's participation in extracurricular activities.
- Caregivers provide developmentally appropriate opportunities to allow children to learn and practice life skills and have hands-on experiences in preparation for transition to adulthood.

### **Caregivers and DFS staff are respected partners.**

- Caregivers and DFS staff work together in a respectful manner that supports a positive partnership.
- Caregivers and DFS staff participate in developing a plan for the child in their care. Caregivers are invited to attend and are encouraged to participate in all Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings and court review hearings. DFS staff attempt to provide alternative methods of participation such as telephone access for caregivers who cannot be physically present.

### **Caregivers and DFS staff share information.**

- DFS staff shares all relevant case information as soon as reasonably possible and within legal limitations in order to assist caregivers in appropriately caring for the child.
- Caregivers and DFS staff share information with each other about the child's progress and needs, academic performance, behavioral functioning and issues regarding school placement.
- Caregivers work in partnership with DFS staff to maintain school records, medical and mental health records, photographs of the child, and records of special events and achievements.

### **Caregivers have the right to respite.**

- DFS honors and respects the right of the caregiver to take a time-limited break between placements of children without fear of adverse consequence from DFS.
- DFS and the caregiver work together in identifying a respite provider who is someone the child knows, willing to work in partnership with the family's support system as well as the natural parents.
- DFS respects the right of the caregiver to take respite without fear of adverse consequence from the agency. Respite is not intended to replace the duties or obligations originally agreed to by caregivers. Foster children should be included in family holiday events, activities and family vacations to support the child's sense of belonging.

### **Caregivers and DFS staff support each other.**

- Caregivers are expected to request support without fear of retaliation. Caregivers, with the assistance of Resource Development and Support staff, must seek out training, support and services that assist them in providing quality care for children placed in their home.

### **Caregivers support connections between the child and the child's natural family.**

- Caregivers must respect and support the child's ties to their natural family and other connections. Caregivers, with the guidance of DFS staff, support the child in maintaining these relationships by assisting with appropriate visitation and other forms of communication.
- When the permanency plan for the child includes reunification, caregivers and DFS staff work together to support the transition plan and to provide continuity for the child by assisting the child's natural family in improving their ability to care for and protect the child.

### **Every child is welcomed in their placement.**

- Caregivers, with the support of DFS staff, fully incorporate the child into their family life to support the child's sense of belonging.
- Caregivers and DFS staff demonstrate respect for the identity of the child, including the child's religion, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

### **Placement stability of the child matters greatly.**

- The child remains with the caregiver following placement, unless the caregiver is clearly unable to safely care for the child, reunification is achieved, the child is placed with an extended family member, the child is placed in accordance with the case plan or court order, or DFS staff determine a moderate or low degree of confidence in the safety of the placement.
- When a child leaves the caregiver home, a transition plan is developed jointly between members of the CFT. This transition respects the child's developmental stage and psychological needs, relationship to the caregiver family, belongings of the child, and allowance of a pace that is in the best interest of the child. Whenever possible, continued contact with the caregiver is facilitated after the child leaves the caregiver home.

### **Caregivers and DFS staff support the well-being of children.**

- Caregivers, with the support of DFS staff, advocate for children in their care within the child welfare system, the court, and community agencies.
- Caregivers participate fully in the child's medical, psychological and dental care, ensuring that the needs of the child are met, and advocating for any services.

By their respective initials below, both the DFS staff and the caregiver(s) understand and are committed to practicing the outlined partnership expectations that ensure quality care for children placed in the home.

Caregiver Initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Caregiver Initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

DFS staff Initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_