

Foster Parent Standards and Important Information



Butte County Foster Care Licensing

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Dear Caregiver -

When a child must be removed from his or her own family, the placing Social Worker will first look to members of the extended family to provide care, comfort and shelter. These individuals share a common history and experience and may provide the most secure placement for the child. A child may be placed in foster care when a relative cannot be found to care for the child.

There are certain state and federal requirements that must be met in order to care for a child. If you are a Relative Caretaker or prospective Foster Parent planning to provide care for a dependent child, you are requested to thoroughly read this booklet, as you will be required to meet all of the standards described.

In specific circumstances, alternative plans, allowable exceptions to the rules, may be available.

This booklet provides an overview of the requirements and will be explained in detail at the orientation meeting.

This booklet contains information about:

1. General qualifications
2. Criminal record clearance
3. Emergency Plan
4. Reporting Requirements
 - ❖ Danger to child
 - ❖ Changes in the household
 - ❖ Absences
5. Children's records
6. Personal rights
7. Discipline
8. Telephones
9. Transportation
10. Food service
11. Responsibility for providing care and supervision
12. Activities
13. Buildings and Grounds
 - ❖ Bedrooms
 - ❖ Beds
 - ❖ Home safety standards
 - ❖ Pools and ponds
 - ❖ Other Safety Standards and Regulations
14. Outdoor activity place
15. Storage space
16. Court orders
17. Role of the Social Worker

1. General Qualifications

- Ability to provide care and supervision for the type of children to be served including the ability to communicate with them
- Knowledge of the laws and regulations and ability to comply with them
- Ability to maintain financial and other records
- Complete an orientation
- Ability and willingness to follow all orders of the Juvenile Court, including specific instructions regarding visitation between the children and the parents
- Be educated, trained or experienced in areas related to the qualifications

2. Record Clearance

All caregivers are subject to federal, state and local criminal record review, including fingerprint clearance and clearance of state and local child abuse records.



3. Emergency Plan

Each Caregiver shall post emergency telephone numbers, discuss emergency situations with the children, practice emergency procedures every 6 months and at the time of new placements. §89376.



4. Reporting Requirements

The caregiver must report the following to Licensing if you are a Foster Parent or to the Child's Social Worker if you are a Relative Caretaker:

- ⊕ "Danger to Child" Incidents
 - Death of any child from any cause
 - Any injury to any child which requires medical attention/treatment



- Any unusual incident or child absence which threatens the physical or emotional health or safety of any child
- Any suspected physical or psychological abuse of any child
- Communicable diseases as reported to the caregiver by a health professional
- Poisonings
- Catastrophes
- Fires or explosions which occur in or on the premises

⊕ Changes

- Any household composition changes, including when anyone in the home other than a “child” turns 18, within 24-hours
- Any change in the caregiver’s residence or mailing address is to be reported within 10 working days following the occurrence.
- Any new person moving into your home requires immediate notification and record clearance.



⊕ Absences

When the caregiver intends to be absent from the home for 48 hours or longer, the approval agency must be notified in writing or by telephone and include the following information:

- Dates on intended absence
- Whether the child will accompany the caregiver or remain in the home
- Telephone number where caregiver can be contacted
- Name, address, and telephone number of approved substitute caregiver

5. Children's Records

The caregiver must maintain the following confidential information:



- ⊕ A separate, complete and current record or file in the home for each foster child, including a current placement agreement with the name, birthdates and date of placement in the home, educational records, and case plan information for each child
- ⊕ The file must also contain a written consent, which authorizes the caregiver to obtain routine medical and dental care in an emergency if the Department cannot be reached.
- ⊕ A record of all medical, dental and mental health appointments must be maintained, including the doctor's name and the date of the appointments.

6. Personal Rights §89372

Each child shall have personal rights, which include, but are not limited to, the following:



1. To be accorded dignity in his/her personal relationships with other persons in the home
2. To be accorded safe, healthful and comfortable accommodations, furnishings and equipment that are appropriate to his/her needs
3. To be accorded the independence appropriate to the child's age, maturity and capability as outlined in the child's Needs & Services Plan or Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP)
4. To be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse or other actions of a punitive nature including, but not limited to, interference with the daily living functions of eating, sleeping or toileting, or withholding of shelter, clothing or aids to physical functioning.

Recent regulation changes include:

- ❑ Family visits and contact may only be prohibited by court order
- ❑ Electronic communication added to confidential phone calls and letters
- ❑ Confidential information must be released to appropriate parties (bio family, social worker, physician, CASA, etc.) unless prohibited by court order
- ❑ Confidential information may be released as appropriate to babysitters, schools, etc. unless prohibited by court order
- ❑ Personal Rights must be discussed with child and copy provided to child at time of placement (LIC613B)



7. Telephones §89373.

All foster family homes shall have telephone services, unless alternative telephone access is approved and documented.

8. Transportation §89374

The caregiver shall ensure transportation is provided for the following:

- * Medical appointments
- * School
- * Extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities

The caregiver shall ensure that all transportation provided for children in their care is provided in vehicles that are in safe operating condition and that the drivers comply with all applicable laws.



9. Food Service §89376

The caregiver will provide at least three nutritious meals daily to meet the children's dietary needs. Whenever the children in



placement eat at the home, they will have their meals with family members and in a family setting. Infants under 7 months shall be held during bottle-feeding.

10. Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standards (RPPS) §89377, 89378, 89379, 89387, & 89387.2

- ⊕ The RPPS applies in **specified situations** when a caregiver arranges other care for a child or allows a child to participate in activities in or outside the home
- ⊕ The Caregiver is responsible for applying RPPS and must consider:
 - ✓ Age, maturity and developmental level of child
 - ✓ Nature of activity and inherent risk
 - ✓ Best interest of child based on caregiver's knowledge of child
- ⊕ RPPS cannot contradict the written plan, violate personal rights, or violate a court order

11. Responsibility for Providing Care and Supervision §89378

- Occasional short-term babysitters
 1. Care for a child on an occasional basis in or out of the caregiver's home for no more that 24-hrs at a time
 2. Must use RPPS when selecting a sitter
 3. May be under age 18, however, must be able to care for child
 4. Foster children allowed to babysit other children, including other foster children
 5. Caregiver must provide emergency contact information to sitter
- Alternate caregiver
 1. Cares for a child on an occasional basis in the caregiver's home
 2. Must use RPPS when selecting alternate caregiver
 3. Must be age 18 and have fingerprint and Child Abuse Check Index (CACI) clearances



4. Caregiver must provide child's Social Worker or Probation Officer with notification prior to absence and get approval prior to absence if longer than 72 hours
- Respite Provider
 1. Cares for the child when the licensed caregiver is absent or incapacitated and it has been determined that such care is in the best interest of the child, up to 72 hours at a time
 2. Must be a licensed, certified or approved caregiver
 3. Services are pre-arranged and offered as part of a case plan
 - Leaving a child without adult supervision on an occasional basis
 1. Must use RPPS when determining if appropriate
 2. Cannot be overnight
 3. Caregiver must ensure child knows emergency procedures and phone numbers
 - Licensed Child Care Facility
 - Participation of the child in extracurricular, enrichment and social activities -Must use RPPS when determining if appropriate
 - Child may be left alone in parked car using RPPS and where it does not violate Vehicle Code section 15620
 - If "Whole Family Foster Home", caregiver must work with minor parent and representative from county welfare agency or probation department to develop shared responsibility plan

12. Activities

The caregiver shall provide opportunities for, and encourage participation in, time, family, living skill RPPS when extracurricular, activities are



group, sports, leisure special school and daily activities and must use determining if enrichment and social appropriate.

13. Building and Grounds

⊕ Bedrooms §89387(a)

Arrangements in the home must, at a minimum, meet the following requirements for everyone in the home including adults where relevant:

- Minor parent may share a bedroom with the minor parent's child of the opposite sex
- Documented Alternative Plan (DAP) may be used for bedroom based on child's gender identity
- Child who turns 18, but meets the definition of "child" may continue to share a bedroom with another child
- Children of the opposite sex shall not share a room, unless each child is under 5 years old
- No more than two children per bedroom
- No more than two infants (0-23 months) may share a bedroom with the caregiver(s)
- No room commonly used for other purposes can be used as a bedroom
- No bedroom can serve as a passageway to another room. Bunk beds must have a rail on the upper tier.
- Lamps, portable or permanent closets and drawer space for children's belongings are provided
- Toys/books/games/educational material provided



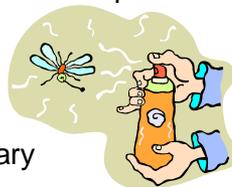
⊕ Beds and Cribs §89387(a)

- One child per bed
- Mattresses/box springs/linen in good repair
- Bunk beds must have railings on both sides and child under age six who is unable to climb into or out of the upper tier unassisted not allowed to use upper tier
- Each infant shall have a crib/bassinet appropriate for



age/size

- Tiered or stacked cribs shall not be permitted.
- Crib slats shall not pose the danger of an infant being trapped.
- Crib mattresses shall be clean, comfortable and fit properly in the crib.
- Linen shall be changed at least once per week or more often when necessary to ensure that clean linen is in use by infants at all times.
- An infant who can climb out of a crib shall be provided with an age-appropriate bed.

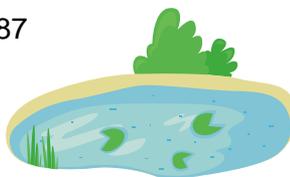


⊕ Home Hygiene and Safety Standards

- The home shall be clean, safe, sanitary and in good repair at all times for the safety and well being of the children. The caregiver shall take measures to keep the home reasonably free of flies and other insects.
- All outdoor and indoor passageways, stairways, inclines, ramps, open porches and other areas of potential hazard are to be kept free of obstruction.
 - ✓ The caregiver who accepts a child with a disability is expected to make special provisions, including changes to the buildings and grounds to protect and assist the child and maximize the child's potential for self-help.
 - ✓ Additional equipment, aids, and/or conveniences shall be provided in home accommodating children who need such items.
 - ✓ The caregiver shall maintain at least one toilet, sink, and tub or shower in safe, clean operating condition.

⊕ Pools and Bodies of Water §89387

- The caregiver shall use the reasonable and prudent parent standard when deciding whether children



in care should have access to fish ponds, fountains, creeks, and similar bodies of water.

- Caregivers should provide supervision near swimming pools and other bodies of water and are encouraged to provide age and developmentally appropriate instruction to children on water safety skills, including teaching them how to swim.
- When applying the reasonable and prudent parent standard to allowing a child to have access to fish ponds, fountains, creeks, and similar bodies of water, the caregiver is encouraged to consider the distance of the body of water from the home, depth, and water flow, and the level of supervision a child requires.



- A caregiver who accepts a "child" under 10 years of age or a "child" who is developmentally, mentally, or physically disabled shall ensure that swimming pools, fixed-in-place wading pools, hot tubs, spas, or similar bodies of water are inaccessible as defined in Health & Safety Codes §115921, 115922 & 115923

⊕ Other Safety Standards and Regulations

- The caregiver shall maintain a safe and comfortable temperature for a "child" in the home at all times.
- The caregiver shall ensure the safety of a "child" in a home that has fireplaces, open-faced heaters, or woodstoves.
- The caregiver shall provide lighting as necessary in all rooms and other areas to ensure comfort and safety in the home.
- Faucets used by a "child" for personal care and grooming shall deliver hot water at a safe temperature.
- Waste shall be stored, located, and disposed of in a manner that will not permit the transmission of communicable disease or odors, create a nuisance,

provide a breeding place or food source for insects or rodents

- Except a home with a sprinkler system, a home shall have an approved, commercially manufactured, and functioning smoke detector installed in the hallway(s) in each sleeping area in the home. The smoke detectors shall be audible in each bedroom or sleeping room.

14. Storage Space §89387.2

⊕ Medicines, disinfectants, cleaning solutions, poisons, firearms, and other dangerous items shall be stored where inaccessible to "a child."



- Storage areas for poisons, firearms, and other dangerous weapons shall be locked.
- In lieu of locked storage of firearms, the caregiver may use trigger locks or remove the firing pin.
- Firing pins shall be stored and locked separately from firearms.
- Ammunition shall be stored and locked separately from firearms.

⊕ Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard, in determining if it is age and developmentally appropriate for a "child" to have access to and use items specified in subsections (b)(1) through (3).



- Household kitchen knives and appliances do not need to be locked or inaccessible to a "child" who is of sufficient age and maturity to use such items.
- Medications shall be stored where inaccessible to a "child," except as specified in Section 89475.1, Emergency Medical Assistance, Injections, and Self-Administration of Medications.
- Disinfectants and cleaning solutions shall be stored where inaccessible to a "child," except when the

caregiver has ensured that the child knows how to safely handle and use these products.

- In allowing the child to have access to and use items specified above the caregiver shall ensure that the safety of a "child" and others in the home is maintained.



15. Health Related Services §89475

- Caregiver must ensure that a licensed health care professional trains people who provide emergency medical assistance and injections to a child.
- Emergency medical assistance and injections for severe diabetic hypoglycemia and anaphylactic shock and subcutaneous injections or other medications, such as insulin, are permitted.
- With physician's approval, a child may self-administer medication or injections unless prohibited by court order.
- Psychotropic medications must only be given to a child if a physician request has been approved by the court.

16. Court Orders

The Juvenile Court has/will be making specific court orders for the child to:

- Visit with parents, siblings and/or grandparents
- Attend counseling/therapy
- Be given certain medications



It is critical that the caregiver follow these orders exactly. Be sure that you understand the orders as they pertain to your responsibilities.

Adapted from 2001
CWDA Bay Area Regional Children's Services
Policies and Procedures Committee