



Foster Parent Handbooks

When foster parents take children into their homes, the children don't come with instruction manuals, but a foster care handbook from the agency is the next best thing. The NCCWE has compiled this state-by-state listing of free online handbooks. Most handbooks include explanations of the foster care system and the legal system as it relates to foster care, agency rules, what to expect from the children, whom to contact in various situations, what to do in an emergency, and how to engage with birth families.

State: Alabama

Title: *The Foster Parent Handbook: A Guide for Alabama's Foster Parents*

Description: This handbook developed by the Alabama Department of Human Resources serves as a guide for foster parents. If they are contemplating becoming a foster parent, this handbook provides an overview to inform their decision. The handbook is in no way to be considered definitive; however, it answers some of the questions foster parents and potential foster parents may have, and will lead readers to understand what other questions they might ask their social worker and the team of professionals at their disposal. (June 2001)

Link: http://dhr.alabama.gov/documents/FP_Handbook.pdf

State: Alaska

Title: *Resource Family Handbook*

Description: Designed by the Department of Health & Social Services, this handbook provides vital information for licensed foster care providers, unlicensed relative caregivers, and adoptive or guardianship families. This booklet is intended to provide families with basic information about caring for a child placed in their home. This handbook will introduce readers to what it means to be a resource family. They will find general information about what is expected of resource families, the care of children in out-of-home placements, financial matters, safety requirements, licensing, permanency, case planning, developing and maintaining connections between children and their families, the role of the court, and more. (January 2012)

Link: <http://hss.state.ak.us/ocs/Publications/pdf/ResourceFamilyHandbook.pdf>

State: Arkansas

Title: *Foster Parent Handbook*

Description: This handbook has been prepared to provide parents with information they will need to become a foster family and to maintain standing as a foster family. It also contains the standards that are required for a family to become approved to operate as a foster home and information about the role of a foster family. Topics such as medical insurance, adoption, responsibility of child services, finances, and placement are discussed in this handbook. (August 2012)

Link: <https://ardhs.sharepointsite.net/CW/DCFS%20Publications/PUB-30.pdf>

State: California

Title: *Foster Parent Handbook: County of San Mateo*

Description: Being a foster parent can be both a rewarding and difficult and demanding responsibility. It takes a special person to be a foster parent. This handbook will hopefully relieve some of those anxieties and stresses by covering topics such as: types of foster care, finances, medical information, resources, birth parents, school, the juvenile court, and the parenting process. (2005)

Link: http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/hsa.dir/pdf/fc-hb_from_bm.pdf

State: Colorado

Title: *Foster Parent Handbook: Policies and Procedures*

Description: This handbook is from Imagine!, the Community Center Board for Boulder and Broomfield counties. The mission of Imagine! Innovations for Children is to create and offer innovative community-based supports to children and youth with cognitive, developmental, physical, behavioral and health related needs so that they may live fulfilling and quality lives in their homes and communities. The guide includes the following sections: All About Imagine!; Placement and Contracts; Child Needs; Behavioral Emergency Protocols; Foster Parent Expectations; Medical Policies; Child Policies; Incident Report Procedures; Licensing Policies; SmartView & MedSupport; Natural Disaster Emergency Procedures; Glossary of Important Terms; and, Forms. (May 2011)

Link: http://imaginecolorado.org/documents/INNO/INNO_CHILD/FosterCareHandbook.pdf

State: Florida

Title: *St. Johns County: Foster Parent Handbook*

Description: This handbook from the Florida Department of Children & Families provides parents with a general overview of foster care in St. Johns County. Prospective and licensed foster parents can use this tool as an instruction manual on their journeys as foster parents. This handbook offers readers a general overview of foster care and the court system, finances, parenting, discipline, and the rights the child has while in care. (2007)

Link: <http://www.co.st-johns.fl.us/FIP/media/FosterCareHandbook.pdf>

State: Georgia

Title: *Foster Parent Manual*

Description: Foster parenting can be as challenging and demanding as it is rewarding and fulfilling. This manual has been developed to provide information that will assist foster parents in providing the highest quality service possible to the children placed in their care. This handbook covers a wide range of topics such as: types of foster care placement, state regulations, the role of the foster parent(s) in caring for the child, finances, medical coverage, and discipline. (December 2003)

Link: http://dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov/sites/dfcs.dhs.georgia.gov/files/imported/DHR-DFCS/DHR-DFCS_CommonFiles/16875120FosterParentManual2.pdf

State: Iowa

Title: *Foster Parent Handbook*

Description: This handbook provided by the Iowa Department of Human Services is intended to provide foster parents with vital and practical information regarding the important task of providing care to Iowa's children and their families. It is also designed to introduce foster parents to services that may be available for them or children placed in their home. Parents interested in becoming foster parents will also gain a well-rounded understanding of the process that must be taken before they can begin caring for foster children. (2002/2005)

Link: <http://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/comm33.pdf>

State: Kentucky

Title: *Resource Parent Handbook*

Description: The information in this handbook comes from recommendations made by resource parents and the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) staff. This is a basic guide about the roles and responsibilities of foster parents and was derived from the DCBS standards of practice (SOP) manual. It will help foster parents better care for their children in and out of the home. (2011)

Link: <http://chfs.ky.gov/NR/ronlyres/E5F11E11-7244-41F6-B462-F5C2912E7857/0/ResourceParentHandbook.pdf>

State: Louisiana

Title: *The Foster Parent Handbook*

Description: This handbook was developed for foster parents as a resource tool to provide general information regarding the Louisiana Foster Care Program. It will answer many of the questions regarding the foster care process from licensure to parenting. This handbook closes out with a foster parent bill of rights. (April 2009)

Link:

<http://www.dss.state.la.us/assets/docs/searchable/OCS/fosterParenting/FosterParentHandbook0409.pdf>

State: Missouri

Title: *Resource Parent Handbook*

Description: Resource parents are foster parents, relatives and/or kinship care providers who are licensed by the Missouri Children's Division to provide 24-hour care for children in the legal custody of the state. This handbook is available to resource parents to provide quick and easy access to important information. It covers such topics as: the Foster Parents Bill of Rights, parenting, discipline, the court system, medical issuance, frequently asked questions, and more. (March 2012)

Link: <http://dss.mo.gov/cd/fostercare/pdf/fcresource.pdf>

State: New Jersey

Title: *Resource Family Handbook*

Description: Becoming a foster parent is a very rewarding and impactful job, however at times can become very stressful and overwhelming. This handbook developed by the NJ Division of Youth and Family Services offers an explanation of the child welfare system, agency rules, what to expect from the child, important key contacts, and the rights of the child and birth family. (February 2011)

Link: <http://www.nj.gov/njfosteradopt/ResourceFamilyHandbook.pdf>

State: New York

Title: *Foster Parent Manual*

Description: This manual was developed by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services for foster parent's day-to-day life with the children in their care. It gives

them practical information on topics like medical care, payments, and the role of the court, and also provides guidance on areas like welcoming a child, discipline, and parent visits. Each chapter contains information on state policies related to foster parenting. Throughout the manual, emphasis is given to the role of foster parents in working together with caseworkers and birth parents in helping the child to achieve permanency.

English Link: <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/publications/Pub5011.pdf>

Spanish Link: <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/publications/Pub5011S.pdf>

State: North Dakota

Title: *Foster Family Handbook*

Description: This manual was developed by the North Dakota Department of Human Services for foster parent's day-to-day life with the children in their care. It gives them practical information on topics like medical care, payments, and the role of the court, and also provides guidance on areas like welcoming a child, discipline, and parent visits. Each chapter contains information on state policies related to foster parenting. Throughout the manual, emphasis is given to the role of foster parents in working together with caseworkers and birth parents in helping the child to achieve permanency.

Link: <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/docs/foster-parent-handbook.pdf>

State: Oregon

Title: *Foster Parent Handbook*

Description: This handbook is meant to be a quick reference for Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) Foster Parents. Certain pages are specific to local communities within Oregon. This handbook is separated into five sections: Contact Information; Working with OYA; Youth Offenders Daily Life; and, Youth & Home Safety.

Link: <http://www.oregon.gov/oia/docs/oyafosterparenthandbook.pdf>

State: Pennsylvania

Title: *Philadelphia: Foster Parent Handbook*

Description: This handbook focuses on the Philadelphia area of Pennsylvania and was developed by the Philadelphia Department of Human Services. It includes explanations of the foster care system, the legal system as it relates to foster care, agency rules, what to expect from the children, whom to contact in various situations, what to do in an emergency, and how to deal with birth family issues.

Link:

[http://dhs.phila.gov/dhsphilagovp.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/FosterParentHandbook/\\$FILE/+21202_Foster.pdf](http://dhs.phila.gov/dhsphilagovp.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/FosterParentHandbook/$FILE/+21202_Foster.pdf)

State: Rhode Island

Title: *Foster Parent Handbook*

Description: The Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families produced this handbook for foster parents in an attempt to relieve some of the anxieties that may coincide with being a foster parent. This handbook is divided into five main sections: Introduction; Steps to Licensing; Caring for the Child; Family Court; and Transition Out of Care. (2005)

Link: http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/docs/fster_parent_handbk.pdf

State: Tennessee

Title: *Journey To Excellence: Resource Parent Handbook*

Description: Resource Parents and DCF staff from across Tennessee developed this handbook so that individuals will have: a quick and easy guide that explains the various role of Resource Parents; a daily reference for the many situations in which Resource Parents

find themselves; information about rights, finances, and legal situations; and, online links to DCS policies. (March 2010)

Link: <http://www.state.tn.us/youth/fostercare/handbook.pdf>

State: Vermont

Title: *Resource Guide for Foster Parents*

Description: This guide will provide foster parents with basic information about making the decision to care for a child, transitioning a child into your home, caring for a child in foster care, working with DCF, understanding the court process, and the resources available to them. (2010)

Link:

http://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/pdf/fsd/pf/Resource_Guide_for_Foster_Parents.pdf

State: Wisconsin

Title: *Foster Parent Handbook*

Description: This Foster Parent Handbook was created to help parents begin and continue their journey as a foster parent. It was developed by the Department of Child and Family Services with input from foster parents and foster care staff. This resource includes explanations of foster home licensing requirements, recommendations for working in the foster care system, and insights and reflections from foster parents, foster youth and birth parents. (September 2008)

Link: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/publications/dcf_p_5000.htm

State: Wyoming

Title: *Foster Parent Handbook*

Description: Wyoming offers this handbook as a guide that foster parents will be able to use as a reference to many of the questions they will have regarding the children in their home. It covers issues such as: when the child first enters their home, parenting, the child's rights and the birth family's rights, conflict resolution, and the legal system.

Link: <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B-2EkWB4ILAQM1d1eFFTvjM1Ymc/edit>