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Indiana Department of Child Services creates Foster Parent Bill of Rights

Agreement describes rights of those helping our state's most vulnerable children

INDIANAPOLIS (Nov. 2, 2018) – The Indiana Department of Child Services has released its new Foster Parent Bill of Rights in support and appreciation of those families who open their homes to children in need.

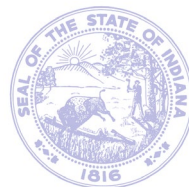
The document, a collaborative effort among area foster parents, advocates, older youth and legislators, a commitment from the agency that ensures foster parents are treated with respect and have the support they need throughout the placement process.

The Bill of Rights highlights several areas important to foster families, including privacy, security and open communication.

“Our foster parents take on the difficult job of being a consistent, safe and stable environment to help our children in crisis,” DCS director Terry Stigdon said. “The work group was a collaboration of partners, foster parents and older youth who determined the five key areas that support and empower our foster families.”

The document was created after Gov. Eric Holcomb signed [Senate Enrolled Act 233](#), authored by State Sen. Jon Ford, R-Terre Haute, into law earlier this year. The law required DCS to collaborate with area stakeholders on an in-depth statement defining the rights and responsibilities of Hoosier foster parents. Ford attended the group’s meetings and said he is pleased with the final product.

“I am proud Indiana now has a Foster Parent Bill of Rights,” Ford said. “This document gives Hoosier foster parents the support they deserve, emphasizes their rights and ensures that we are listening and reacting to their concerns.”



Indiana children will live in safe, healthy and supportive families and communities.

State Rep. Wendy McNamara, R-Evansville, sponsored the bill and said she hopes the document will give foster parents a voice and encourage more Hoosiers to consider opening their homes.

“These recommendations come at an important time for the thousands of children in Indiana who are in need of safe and supportive homes,” McNamara said. “This is a vital step as we work to create more opportunities to increase effective communication, enabling foster parents to better advocate for the children placed in their care, voice their concerns and receive important information about the foster care process.”

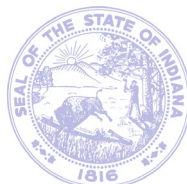
State Rep. Karlee Macer, D-Indianapolis, served on the work group that collaborated to determine which topics were most important to cover in the document.

“The best part about the Bill of Rights is that it ensures foster parents have a voice in a process in which they play an integral part,” Macer said. “I like the idea that this document was written with their full participation and that it emphasizes the role they must have in helping foster children achieve full and active lives. I am fully supportive of any effort that is made to help children who are at risk, and this Bill of Rights provides a large step in achieving that goal.”

For a complete copy of the Foster Parent Bill of Rights, click [here](#).

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About Indiana DCS: *The Indiana Department of Child Services engages with families and collaborates with state, local and community partners to protect children from abuse and neglect and to provide child support services. Indiana Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline: 800.800.5556. Child Support Customer Service Kidsline: 800.840.8757 or 317.233.5437. www.in.gov/dcs*



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