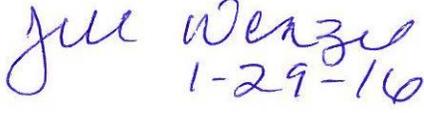




Policy Title: Foster Parent Grievance	Effective Date: 11/06
Policy Type: Foster Care	Revision Dates: 3/08; 1/16
 2-1-16 Chief Executive Officer	 1-29-16 Secretary, Board of Directors

Policy Statement

Caritas Family Solutions values Foster Parents. Agency personnel are expected to strive to meet the needs of Foster Parents effectively, efficiently, and in a sensitive manner. Personnel are asked to be attentive to Foster Parent satisfaction, be alert to indications of dissatisfaction, and be open and approachable to those who wish to address a perceived problem. When conflicts with Foster Parents arise, personnel are asked to work with them to solve any problem openly and honestly, and, if necessary to produce a satisfactory result, recommend that the Foster Parent work toward resolution with a licensing worker, supervisor, program director or Regional Director. The agency commits its representatives to respond to complaints and grievances in a timely manner whether they are communicated in writing (formal) or in person (informal).

Policy Rationale

To assure the best possible service for Foster Parents, it is necessary to listen to them at all steps in the process. Grievance procedures should allow the Foster Parent a simple and effective way to communicate perceived problems with the way they are being treated and guarantee that Caritas Family Solutions will respond to those grievances in a manner consistent with agency values.

Procedure

A. Staff response to a complaint:

1. A worker, upon learning of a complaint, shall make every reasonable effort to resolve the issues surrounding the complaint.
2. If the worker is unable to resolve the issue, the worker shall encourage the Foster Parent to address the issue with the worker's supervisor or the program director either by personal contact or in writing. The appropriate referral will depend on the particular facts and circumstances surrounding the complaint. The worker shall offer to assist in arranging personal contact with the supervisor or program director. If the Foster Parent indicates a preference to communicate in writing, the worker shall provide them with the Agency's Foster Parent Complaint Resolution Form. The complaint may be written on the form provided, or written in any other form such as a letter.

B. Upon receipt of a foster parent complaint, the Director of Licensing, or designee, will review it to determine if the complaint is an alleged violation of the Foster Parent Law. If it is not an alleged violation of the Foster Parent Law, it will be considered an informal complaint. If it is determined that it is an alleged violation of the Foster Parent Law, it will be considered a formal complaint. All formal complaints will be logged with the Statewide Foster Parent Advisory Council on an annual basis. Rules and Procedures in accordance with The Department will be followed. The formal grievance process is to be used by foster parents only in the case of grieving alleged violations of the Foster Parent Law that are not already covered by an already existing grievance or appeal process. This general grievance process does not replace grievance or appeal processes required by law or regulation (e.g., it cannot be used to address issues that are covered by the service appeal process, the appeal process for indicated cases of child abuse/neglect, the process for appealing licensing investigation findings or license revocations, etc.). These regulatory processes take precedence.

All complaints, whether formal or informal, will be fully evaluated and follow the complaint procedure.

C. Responsibilities of supervisors and program directors in responding to a complaint:

1. Supervisors and program directors shall make themselves available to the Foster Parents wishing to meet (in person or on the phone) to discuss a complaint and shall make every reasonable effort to resolve the matter.
2. If the supervisor or program director is unable to resolve the Foster Parent's issue, they shall encourage them to address the issue with the Regional Director either by personal contact or in writing. The supervisor or program director shall offer to assist in arranging personal contact with the Regional Director. If the Foster Parent indicates a preference to communicate in writing (and has not already documented the complaint in writing), the supervisor/director shall provide the Agency's Foster Parent Complaint Resolution Form to them.

3. Upon receipt of a written complaint (whether on the Complaint Resolution Form or otherwise), a supervisor or program director shall, within 10 business days research the issue and attempt to make personal contact with the person making the complaint to gather any necessary additional information and complete steps 1 and 2 above. Within 5 business days of this personal contact, or if attempts to reach the Foster Parent within 10 business days are unsuccessful, the supervisor or program director shall reply to them in writing and summarize the outcome of the discussion or, if no discussion took place, the status of research into the complaint and the proposed resolution. If no discussion took place, this written response shall offer the Foster Parent the option of presenting the issue to the Regional Director either by personal contact or in writing and shall provide the Regional Director's contact information. In any event, copies of the written complaint and the written response shall be forwarded to the Director of Quality Improvement, the Chief Operating Officer and other staff members involved in the matter.
4. If attempts to resolve the complaint with the caseworker, supervisor and Regional Director are unsuccessful, the foster parent may request the complaint be brought to the Complaint Resolution Committee. This request must be made in writing to the Director of Quality Improvement within 5 business days of the receipt of the Regional Director's written response. The Complaint Resolution committee shall be comprised of at least 3 various management personnel including, but not limited to, the Chief Operating Officer, The Director of Licensing (or a designated licensing representative), and a Regional Director not involved in the case. The Complaint Resolution Committee shall meet within 10 business days of the request. The committee will review the complaint. The process may include, but is not limited to, review of written statements, witness interviews, review of documentation, and on site investigation. The Committee will prepare a response to the foster parent within 5 days of their meeting date. The response of the committee is final.

Caritas Family Solutions does not tolerate any form of retaliation against foster parents who avail themselves of the Complaint Resolution Committee.

D. Responsibilities of the Regional Director in responding to a complaint:

1. The Regional Director shall be available to the person/s wishing to meet (in person or on the phone) to discuss a complaint and shall make every reasonable effort to resolve the matter. However, if the person making the complaint has not addressed the complaint to the Program Director, the Regional Director may direct them to discuss the issue with the Program Director first. If the issue cannot be resolved in a satisfactory manner at that level, the Regional Director may become involved to a greater degree.
2. Depending on the outcome of a personal contact from a Foster Parent regarding a complaint, the Regional Director will determine if it is necessary to provide a written response to them. If a written response is necessary, the director should follow the guidelines for a written response listed below.
3. Upon receipt of a written complaint (whether on the Foster Parent Complaint Resolution Form or otherwise), the Regional Director shall, within 10 business days research the issue and attempt to make personal contact with them to gather any

necessary additional information and complete step 1 above. Within 5 business days of this personal contact, or if attempts to reach the person making the complaint within 10 days are unsuccessful, the Regional Director shall reply to them in writing and summarize the outcome of the discussion or, if no discussion took place, the status of research into the complaint and the proposed resolution. Copies of any written complaint and the written response to a complaint (whether written or brought in person) shall be forwarded to the Director of Quality Improvement and other staff members involved in the matter.

- E. Responsibilities of the Director of Quality Improvement with respect to written complaints:
 - 1. The Director of Quality Improvement shall maintain a log of written complaints and written responses to complaints and shall report to the Board of Directors, at least annually, summarizing the nature of complaints and the outcomes achieved.
- F. Copies of all documentation related to a grievance shall be included in the case file.