

FOSTER PARENT FACTS

IN THIS ISSUE

RESPIRE 101

Respite is an essential part of many foster parents self-care and sustainability. This section defines respite care, highlights the policy for SCDSS managed homes, and breaks down the steps to request respite for your placement.

HOLIDAY TIPS

The holidays bring times of joy, family, and CHAOS! In foster care this chaos can threaten to disrupt even the best of plans. Foster parents share their advice to survive and general holiday best practices.

FOSTER PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

The FPAC provides SCDSS with guidance, assistance, and recommendations for addressing the service and support needs of foster parents, children in foster care and their families. Find out the focus of this FPAC's session and how they plan to make an impact.

As a foster parent are you ever confused?
Need help and not sure where to turn?

Reach out to your Foster Parent Liaisons!

We are here to help you navigate it all, which allows you to focus on the children in your care.

Email: FPHelp@dss.sc.gov
Helpline: 803-898-4174

UPCOMING

MEET THE NEED ADOPTION TRAINING CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 30 - DECEMBER 1

If you are in the process of adoption or if adoption might one day be in your future make plans to attend two days of trauma-focused attachment-based training.

[Click Here to find out more information and register!](#)

FOSTER PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Foster Parent Advisory Council provides SCDSS with guidance, assistance, and recommendations for addressing the service and support needs of foster parents, children in foster care and their families. Each Session the FPAC members decide on a Vision and set of Values they will use to create a Roadmap for action during their service year. The Roadmap shapes the projects they undertake.

VISION

Identify and close the gaps in foster family recruitment and retention, and equip families to serve the children in their care.

VALUES

- Communication
- Resource Knowledge
- Emotional Intelligence
- Strategy Focused
- Sustainability
- Collaboration

ROADMAP

In collaboration with DSS and CPAs, the Foster Parent Advisory Council will identify and develop effective, sustainable solutions to improve foster care in South Carolina.

RESPIRE CARE

DEFINITION

A temporary break in caretaking responsibility either as a result of a child, youth, or young adult experiencing a crisis, the caregiver's need for a break, or as a part of a child, youth, or young adult's case plan (Planned or Unplanned).

OPTIONS TO FACILITATE RESPIRE

DSS or CPA Facilitated Respite

DSS Managed Family - contact child's case manager directly to request respite days

CPA Managed Homes - contact family licensing/support worker to request respite days.

Direct foster family to foster family

Self-identify another foster family and coordinate respite plans. Payment is handled between the two foster families.

Alternative Caregiver

Under prudent parenting a foster family may self-identify an alternative caregiver to provide respite up to 10 days.

Alternative caregivers must be a person the foster family knows and would trust with biological and adopted children as well.

SCDSS POLICY

SCDSS managed licensed foster parents are eligible for up to 14 days of respite care per federal fiscal year (October-September), with up to six of the days being paid.

Private agency (CPA) foster parents are not eligible for paid respite care from SCDSS.

Check with your CPA on their specific respite policy.

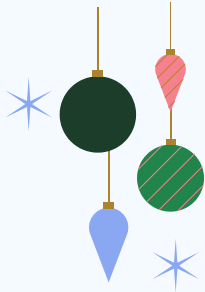
Don't forget! DSS must know where a child is staying at all times, so keep your case manager updated on any respite plans.

TIPS FROM FOSTER PARENTS TO MAKE THE MOST OF THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

INCORPORATING TRADITIONS AND FAMILIES OF ORIGIN

It's important to respect what bio families get as gifts for the children. Something we might view as easily affordable may be an expensive gift or something they have truly had to save up for.

-Corissa L.



When talking to the kids about their traditions, don't use the word "tradition" as some kids will not understand. Instead ask "what do you do for fun during Christmas time?" Then incorporate some of those activities.

-Corissa L.

I always ask our kids what they normally do at Christmas and they say "we ALWAYS do this" and I try to do whatever it is.

One kiddo told me they always went to this specific neighborhood that has holiday displays, so off we went!

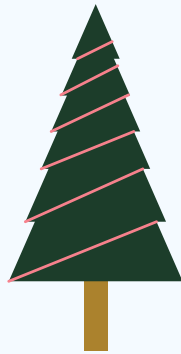
-Brittany M.

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

As Foster parents we need to remember that holidays can be triggering for children in care. Although we (and our other children in the home) may be excited about our holiday traditions, holidays are a reminder of what these children have lost. They may not want to participate in festivities. They may retreat to their rooms. They may "act up". These are all normal responses.

We need to honor their feelings.

-Maria D.



As foster parents, our hopes and expectations of the holidays might not be the same as the children in our care. Try to understand what your child is thinking, feeling, and experiencing. The more we understand, the more we can be inclusive.

-Paige W.

Be mindful that what we may consider an "average" amount of gifts may be completely overwhelming to a child that has never received any. Consider staggering the gifts, opening some Christmas Eve and some throughout Christmas Day if necessary to avoid the anxiety that can come from being overwhelmed.

-Christy M.

HOLIDAY REMINDERS

- Plan for any respite needs now!
 - Let your family support worker and agency know if you need respite for travel or if you will be home and available to house a respite placement.
- Communicate with the case management team.
 - Gifts, family visits, travel
- Give yourself and the children grace.
 - Don't try for perfection. Strive for connection and meeting the child and your family in your current situation. Holidays are stressful for everyone, even a "good" stress brings out emotions.

DIRECT DEPOSIT

Complete the [form for direct deposit](#) to receive your monthly Board Payment.

Email the form and a voided check to DSS-EPAY@dss.sc.gov. Be sure to include the word ENCRYPT in the subject line of the email to protect your information.

FOSTER PARENT HANDBOOK

Find information on roles within DSS and other case management team members, understand the court process, and expectations of foster parents.

View and download the [Foster Family Handbook](#) on the DSS website.

SC CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

1. At time of placement, Foster Families need to let Licensing and Placement staff know if child care is needed.
2. Parents choose an approved provider who will care for their child and DSS pays the provider directly.
3. Licensing and Placement staff forward Foster Parent contact information and name of child care provider.
4. Scholarship Program staff contact Foster Parent to request any additional information to process request.

Visit the official [SC Child Care](#) website for more information.

Email questions to: fosterchildcare@dss.sc.gov

CHILD AND ADULT INFORMATION PORTAL (CAIP)

CAIP is a secure, virtual platform to view and share health, education, and well-being information about children in foster care.

To Gain Access:

1. Complete Training on the [SCFPA Training Platform](#).
2. After successfully completing training, receive a username and password from SCDSS to access CAIP. This can take a few weeks from training completion. If you do not receive login information after that time, please reach out to FPHelp@dss.sc.gov
3. Log into CAIP within 24 hours of receiving email.
4. Access CAIP using a smartphone, tablet, desktop or laptop computer.
5. View and update important information about the children and youth in your care.

CONTINUED EDUCATION

SCFPA offers courses and trainings in two convenient formats:

Live Webinars

1. Go to [SC Foster Parents Training & Resources \(scfpa.com\)](#).
2. Click on "Open Training Calendar."
3. Search by event type or just scroll down to the bottom and select the blue link that says, "Click for more details."
4. Register directly with the trainer.
5. Receive an invite via email from Let's Talk Video notifications@letstalk.video.

Subscribe to the SCFPA Email List for a weekly email with training opportunities.

Visit www.scfpalms.com and select "Click Here to Join the SCFPA Email List" and add your e-mail address.

Recorded Webinars

SCFPALMS has many recorded trainings that you can access anytime, day or night! Just go to www.scfpalms.com and create a FREE account.