

**Hephzibah Children's Association
Licensing Process for Foster Care**

- I. **INQUIRY-** Your information will be taken by a member of the Foster Care Team regarding your name, address, any previous licensure, motivation, and specific interests regarding age and gender of children to be placed in your home.

- II. **ASSIGNMENT and INITIAL PAPERWORK-**
 - a) You will receive a packet of information from the agency about the Foster Care Program.

 - b) You will be assigned a Family Development/Assessment Specialist who will contact you to schedule a home visit to evaluate the space and number of people living in the home. The worker will also discuss and review your motivation for foster parenting, the state's requirements for foster parenting, the specific requirements and needs of Hephzibah's program, and whether Hephzibah would be a good match for you.

 - c) If you decide to proceed towards licensure with Hephzibah, you will receive an application packet that includes an application (597A) form, a background check form, fingerprinting information (1-866-361-9944), and a family home information form (506). You will be responsible for making a fingerprint appointment and submitting the receipts to your licensing worker for your file.

 - d) The worker will need to get social security numbers and dates of birth for all members living in the home.

- II. **SIGN UP FOR FOSTER PARENT PRE-SERVICE PRIDE TRAINING-** Fill out the sign up form and return it to your worker who will send it to DCFS. All Hephzibah foster parents receive their training from our Foster Care Specialist unless a scheduling conflict arises. This training involves nine sessions of foster parent PRIDE training and two sessions of Educational Advocacy training. YOU MUST COMPLETE PRIDE TRAINING BEFORE LICENSURE. HOWEVER, COMPLETION OF TRAINING DOES NOT ENSURE LICENSURE.

- III. **WORKER RECEIVES PACKETS-** When the worker receives the 597A (application), authorizations for background checks, fingerprint receipts (or dates), and 506 (family home information) forms he/she will:
 - a) Send the originals to DCFS Central Office of Licensing, requesting a pending application status.

 - b) Send out reference forms to the people you indicated as references (references can deny; references can do a phone interview using the form).

 - c) Set up a case file.

- IV. **HOME STUDY PROCESS-** This takes place simultaneously or shortly after your training.
- a) The worker will need to conduct interviews with each member of the household.
 - b) You will need to submit medical evaluations to your Family Development/Assessment Specialist for all the members of your household.
 - c) You will also be given an agreements packet. This will include the following: Work/Child Supervision Plan, Income Verification and Budget form, Acknowledgement and Understanding Concerning Prohibition of Corporal Punishment, Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status, Foster Parent Confidentiality Agreement, Evacuation Plan, Foster Parent Rights and Responsibilities form, Placement Agreement Form, Financial Information Form, and the Documentation of Inspection of Smoke Detectors. Other supportive documentation may be requested throughout the process and must be submitted before licensure. This will be reviewed with you during home visits.
 - d) The worker will read over your PRIDE Connections, references, medical forms, and supportive documentation.
 - e) If needed, the worker may request consent forms to speak with doctors, therapists, etc. to determine your capacity for foster parenting.
 - f) The worker will review the criminal background information and complete any necessary investigations.
 - g) You will be asked to complete a Foster Parent Inventory, which assesses your comfort level with parenting different types of behaviors, and also identifies additional training areas to assist you in parenting children who have experienced abuse and neglect.
 - h) The worker will compile all information and write a narrative home study regarding your family and your capacity to foster parent and manage the needs of the children in our program. They will also assess your willingness and ability to communicate and work with the case management and supportive services teams at Hephzibah.
- V. **TEAM REVIEW-** The worker then reviews your home study with the Foster Care Team (Foster Care Services Coordinator, Foster Care Specialist, Clinical Advocates, Respite Supervisor, Family Development/Assessment Specialists, Family Therapist), who then collectively discuss the strengths and limitations of each foster family prior to licensure.
- VII. **RECOMMENDATION-** All forms will be sent in by the worker with a recommendation on licensure. If it is not appropriate to license your family, Hephzibah's Family Development/Assessment Specialist will discuss the reasons and rationale for that decision with you.

Hephzibah Children's Association Monitoring Your Foster Care License

- I. Contact from Hephzibah
 - Every six months, your Family Development/Assessment Specialist will contact you for a home visit. They will review the licensing standards with you and discuss any additional concerns you may have.
 - The Foster Care Services Coordinator or your Family Development/Assessment Specialist will contact you regarding placement once a child becomes available. This will depend on your openness to children with special needs, and various ages and genders.
 - If a child is placed in your home, you will have at least once monthly in-person contact with the child's caseworker. You will most likely have weekly, even daily, contact via the telephone from your child's caseworker.

- II. Ongoing training
 - As a licensed foster parent in the state of Illinois with a specialized agency, you **MUST** complete 12 credit hours of training each year related to caring for children with special needs. If you do not, your license will be placed on PENDING RENEWAL status upon your renewal time, which means that you may not have any more children placed with you until you complete the training hours.
 - Hephzibah offers ongoing training opportunities through the form of a group and other community settings. You can always participate in the Lending Library through DCFS that provides you with books, videos, and tapes of information that will earn credits toward your training.
 - **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING AND RECORDING YOUR TRAINING HOURS.** Submitting all training records will also ensure that your training hours are documented in your permanent foster care file.

- III. Service provision
 - As a licensed foster parent with Hephzibah, you will be required to participate in your foster child's services. This means you will be asked to be a part of and provide transportation to and/or from the child's therapy, medical, psychiatric, school, and other appointments.