

The Visitation Receipt: A New Way To Document Home Visits

How often have you wished you kept a record of home visits conducted by the various workers assigned to the foster children in your care? With an average of two workers per child plus your foster care support worker, remembering what was discussed with each worker and when can be very difficult.

In September 2003, HCJFS initiated a new procedure called a Visitation Receipt, designed to help foster parents and workers document home visits. This new two-part form is completed and signed by the worker and the foster parent at the end of each home visit.

The Visitation Receipt documents six key aspects of a home visit. The: Purpose of the visit.

- Type of visit.
- People present and what their relationship is to the child.
- Items discussed and any actions agreed upon by those present.
- Signatures of those present.
- Time the visit began and ended.

Once the worker completes the Visitation Receipt and it is

signed, the foster parent receives a copy and the other copy becomes part of the child's file. Not only does this new procedure provide documentation of the visit to the foster parent it "helps workers organize their visits and facilitate services faster", said Lisa Belle, Children's Services Ongoing Manager. Belle chaired a group of 14 Children's Services Workers to develop the Visitation Receipt procedure. Part of that procedure includes the weekly review of all Visitation Receipts by supervisors.



Foster parents can make the Visitation Receipt a useful tool by:

- Keeping all Visitation Receipts with other important documents for each foster child in their care.
- Always read the receipt before signing.
- If there is something you don't understand ask for an explanation.
- If you have an issue or concern that was discussed at the visit, make sure it is recorded on the receipt.
- Remember that the Visitation Receipt is also your documentation of the visits and what was decided and discussed

Waiting Child

Introducing Ricardo, born Jan. 1992



Ricardo loves riding bikes, roller skating and playing tag. Energetic and active, Ricardo enjoys all sports from swimming and gymnastics to basketball and football.

Ricardo is especially proud of his karate skills. The concentration he has learned from karate helps him roller blade and climb trees. Indoors, he likes reading mystery books, playing with action figures and watching Pokeman or any kind of movie. Pizza tops his list when it comes to favorite foods.

Ricardo is a good student and earns good grades. He is on target educationally and developmentally. He needs a family who will support him with his anger and separation issues. He has an older and younger sister that he would like to keep in contact with. Ricardo needs a loving family who will help him achieve and succeed at his goals in life.

For information on other children available for adoption, go to our Web site, www.hcadopt.org.



Resource Corner



For a complete list of training classes: Go to www.hcjfs.org and click on Foster & Adoptive Parents, then click on Training Newsletter.

Get adoption and foster care information automatically: Go to www.hcjfs.hamilton-co.org, select Foster & Adoptive Parents and then select *Subscribe to News*. In your e-mail each month you will receive the latest news affecting foster and adoptive parents.

Information resource for foster and adoptive parents: For daily tips, articles on a variety of topics, chat rooms, training opportunities, etc. Go to www.foster-parenting.adoption.com.

National Foster Parent Association: Dedicated to supporting foster parents. For more information go to www.nfpainc.org.

Listing of children available for adoption in Ohio:

Go to Adopt Ohio :www.state.oh.us/odhs/oapl

A Foster Parent's World of Workers

During your career as a foster parent, you'll be asked to work with many professionals involved in your foster children's cases. Below is a list of most of the professionals you may work with. Family Matters will spotlight one professional and their responsibilities each issue.

- Foster Parent Support Worker
- Ongoing Caseworker
- Adoption Worker
- Guardian ad Litem (GAL)
- Case Aide
- Intake Worker
- Juvenile Court Magistrate
- Mentor



All newly licensed Hamilton County foster families are assigned a mentor. Mentors are experienced, knowledgeable foster parents who are licensed by HCJFS. Mentors "help newly licensed foster

parents navigate the foster care system", said Kris Flinchum, Program Manager.

Originally designed by local foster parent Pat McCollum, the Parent Mentor Program provides much needed support to help new foster parents get through those first critical months. Mentors maintain contact with their families regularly by phone or in person if needed.

Most often, mentors answer questions and provide parenting advice. They help new foster parents navigate the system to solve anything from payment problems to getting

critical services for the foster children in their care. But most of the time mentors "provide an ear", said Jackie Humphries, a veteran foster parent and mentor. "I listen and talk to them parent to parent".

Participation in the Parent Mentor program is voluntary. Newly licensed families are contacted by their assigned mentor. The mentor explains the program and the family decides whether to participate.

At a minimum, mentors must: have at least 2 to 3 years of experience as a licensed foster parent. Be in good standing and up-to-date in all training requirements. Have the recommendation of their support worker.

If you are interested in becoming a mentor or if you would like a mentor assigned to you, call Kris Flinchum at 946-7431.

SPOTLIGHT: Foster Parent Mentors

Family Matters

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FreeStore FoodBank Stop-n-Shop is Ending



The FreeStore FoodBank (FSFB) Stop-n-Shop program is being phased out. HCJFS is working with FSFB to develop a new food co-op. Look for details of the new co-op in future

editions of Family Matters. Families who are currently enrolled in the Stop-n-Shop program can deposit money until 12/31/2003. The last day to shop is February 27, 2004.

Tip of the Month

Are you thinking about expanding the type of placements you accept--but you're nervous about making a commitment.

Consider providing respite care to different types of children. You can get experience with different types of behavior and provide a much needed break to your fellow foster parents. Call your support worker for more information on respite care.

Don't Miss Your Night with the Ducks



The Foster Child Enrichment Council (FCEC) and the Cincinnati Mighty Ducks are sponsoring a "Night with the Mighty Ducks" on Saturday January 17 for foster and adoptive families.

Tickets for foster and adoptive children are free. Additional tickets can be purchased for only \$5.00 each.

You should have received a ticket order form in the mail. If you did not, call Richard Elvin at 513-351-3999 ext. 225 to get your order form.

Treat the whole family to a night of Mighty Ducks hockey.