

**UHLICH CHILDREN'S ADVANTAGE NETWORK
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE
ILLINOIS FOSTER PARENT
BILL OF RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES
2010**

1. THE RIGHT TO BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY, RESPECT, AND CONSIDERED AS A PROFESSIONAL MEMBER OF THE CHILD WELFARE TEAM.

The foster caregiver is a valuable as members of the team serving the child(ren). Uhllich Children's Advantage Network (UCAN) respects the foster caregivers' relationship with and knowledge of their particular child. UCAN Professional Foster Parenting (PFP) case managers invite and encourage caregivers to attend quarterly child and family team meetings to plan for the child(ren) in their care. The PFP case manager considers the schedule of the foster caregiver when setting up these meetings in order to ensure their ability to attend. PFP case managers encourage foster caregivers to participate in the, quarterly clinical staffing and development of the behavior management plan and treatment planning meetings for children in the specialized and adolescent foster care program. Foster Caregivers receive a written summary of staffing meetings, recapping decisions made and tasks assigned to all persons involved in the child's care. All UCAN PFP staff are committed to demonstrating professional respect and courtesy by returning phone calls within one business day, notifying foster caregivers as far in advance as possible in the event of the need to cancel or change appointments, and by extending other routine professional courtesies that reflect the value placed on the caregivers.

UCAN distributes a Foster caregiver Satisfaction Survey on an annual basis. Results and comments are used to continually improve the foster care program.

Foster caregiver/support group meetings are held 10 times a year for the purpose of providing a forum for networking, expressing concerns, problem solving, and for providing additional external resources for foster caregivers. The foster caregiver support group also provides a vehicle for caregivers to offer feedback to UCAN staff and administrators regarding services. The Vice President of Foster Care holds round table discussions two to three times per year, which enables foster caregivers to have direct communication with management staff. This allows foster caregivers to become members of the professional team working with UCAN. In addition, both during foster parent orientation and during ongoing training events, UCAN encourages foster caregivers to directly contact case managers, licensing specialists, supervisors, or administrative staff with any questions or concerns. UCAN PFP staff members are expected to accept and respond promptly and professionally in all communications with foster caregivers.

2. THE RIGHT TO BE PROVIDED STANDARDIZED PRE-SERVICE TRAINING AND APPROPRIATE ON-GOING TRAINING TO MEET MUTUALLY ASSESSED NEEDS AND IMPROVE THE FOSTER PARENT'S SKILLS.

In Cook County, the required Pre-service training, PRIDE, is offered at multiple locations and at times convenient to prospective foster caregivers. In Lake and McHenry County, PRIDE Training is provided through DCFS and prospective foster caregivers are referred to the nearest location for this training during the licensure process. Educational Advocacy is offered every other month to foster caregivers as a requirement for foster home licensing, and is provided by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS).

In addition to the state pre-service and in-service training requirements, UCAN, as an accredited agency, has additional requirements based on the level of care the foster caregiver is interested in providing. Those being:

Specialized Foster Care

- ❑ Sexual Abuse (3 hours)
- ❑ Behavior Management (6 hours)
- ❑ Clinical Philosophy (12 hours, including instruction on Trauma, Attachment and Loss, Human Development, Social Systems)
- ❑ Various training topics to address the foster child's special needs

Adolescent Foster Care

- ❑ Medical Issues (3 hours)
- ❑ Behavior Management (6 hours)
- ❑ Transition from residential care to community settings

Traditional Foster Care

- ❑ CPR (8 hours)

Due to the HMR Initiative, UCAN offers to relative foster caregivers PRIDE training on-site as well as via videotape (6 hours), which can be viewed in their own home.

Foster caregivers participate as co-trainers with staff. In Cook County an experienced foster parent speaks with each group of prospective foster parents during orientation, and maintains contact with applicants throughout the licensing process. Members of the foster parent support groups suggest training topics, and they develop the agenda for their own support group meetings. In our Lake/McHenry program, caregivers provide training to foster parents regarding hair care for African-American children.

The training coordinator in Cook County, or the Family Development Specialist in Lake and McHenry Counties, works with the foster caregiver to mutually assess caregivers' training needs. The Training Coordinator or Family Development Specialist is available for one on one consultation with all foster parents. In addition, the Licensing Specialist or Family Development Specialist devises a training plan with foster caregivers to ensure all training requirements are met as well as to encourage feedback from the individual foster caregiver about their own training needs. Foster caregivers are encouraged to attend trainings that they believe will enhance their parenting abilities or fulfill their specific training needs in order to better serve the children in their care. Training topics may also be suggested by case management staff based on needs they identify in working with caregivers.

UCAN has an on-going in-service training program. This training is offered several times each month, during the week and on Saturdays. The Training Coordinator sends regular notices of upcoming training to foster caregivers through mail and advises foster caregivers of upcoming training opportunities during the monthly foster caregiver meetings. UCAN requires the following in-service training hours for foster caregivers depending on the program they serve.

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|---|-------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relative and Traditional | 12 hours annually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Specialized | 26 hours annually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adolescent | 26 hours annually |

UCAN has a Lending Library, which enables foster caregivers to receive additional training hours by viewing videotapes in their own home.

UCAN PFP trainers receive immediate feedback from foster caregivers after all in-service training through a written evaluation form which asks foster caregivers about the usefulness of the training for their needs and those of the children in their care and about what other training they may want or need.

Foster caregivers offer input and suggestions for training topics at each training session. Support group participants and case managers offer additional ideas for training topics as the caregivers identify areas where training is needed.

3. THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED AS TO HOW TO CONTACT THE APPROPRIATE CHILD PLACEMENT AGENCY IN ORDER TO RECEIVE INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE TO ACCESS SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN THEIR CARE.

At the time of placement, the foster caregiver receives a placement packet, which outlines the current service needs of the child(ren) and the providers of those services. In this packet, the foster caregiver also receives the name and phone numbers of the assigned caseworker and supervisor who will be addressing the child(ren)'s service needs, along with resource numbers, which include the Crisis Line/System of Care line. UCAN also has an after-hours emergency number, (312) 464-2878 which is given to the foster parent. This is the number ~~is~~ to UCAN's answering service for after hours and weekend emergencies. All staff members are accessible by cell phone during business hours. In the event of an emergency, the after-hours service will contact the appropriate case manager. If contact with the case manager is unsuccessful, the after-hours service will then follow the chain of command for contact: Supervisor, Vice President, and Vice President for Placement Services.

UCAN provides foster parents with other important phone numbers including:

- Caseworker
- Supervisor
- UCAN main number
- UCAN emergency line
- Healthworks hotline
- Advocacy, i.e. OMSBUD
- Office of the Inspector General (OIG)

- ❑ Medical Card Hotline
- ❑ Daycare referrals
- ❑ IDCFS Payment Unit
- ❑ Child Abuse Hotline
- ❑ Systems of Care/Crisis Line

Phone numbers are routinely updated and distributed to caregivers along with boarding checks.

4. THE RIGHT TO RECEIVE TIMELY REIMBURSEMENT COMMENSURATE WITH THE CARE NEEDS OF THE CHILD AS SPECIFIED IN THE SERVICE PLAN.

It is UCAN's practice to pay foster caregivers their monthly compensation for providing foster care on the second Tuesday of each month. Those caregivers attending the Saturday training, which always is scheduled for the Saturday preceding the second Tuesday, are able to receive the boarding payment at the conclusion of training. This payment is for the care provided in the previous calendar month.

UCAN provides a full continuum of foster care services, which allows a child to be served on various levels according to his/her needs. Upon a child's placement in a foster home, the foster caregiver is informed in writing what program the child is in and the corresponding monthly payment.

With supervisory approval, respite is available for extended periods (vacation, family illness) by a provider of the foster caregiver's choosing, on the condition that the identified respite provider passes background screening. UCAN Caregivers are encouraged to serve as respite resources for one another. This respite is paid through the foster caregiver board payment.

As appropriate, and based on the needs (as detailed in the client service plan or treatment plan), UCAN will pay a portion of camp and/or special services fees, per child. To access these additional services, the foster caregiver should contact the child's caseworker.

If problems arise related to a foster caregiver's board payment, the foster caregiver may contact the case manager first, and may also contact the supervisor or Vice President, who shall then work with the foster caregiver to resolve payment issues immediately.

During the year, a specific training session is held to review the payment policy, including amounts for various ages and levels of care, special fees that are available, and to review the process for resolving payment questions.

5. THE RIGHT TO BE SUPPLIED A CLEAR, WRITTEN UNDERSTANDING OF A PLACEMENT AGENCY'S PLAN CONCERNING THE PLACEMENT OF A CHILD IN THEIR HOME. INHERENT IN THIS POLICY IS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO SUPPORT ACTIVITIES, WHICH WILL PROMOTE THE CHILD'S RIGHT TO RELATIONSHIPS WITH HIS OR HER OWN FAMILY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE.

Foster caregivers are invited to attend child and family team meetings and other staffings for child(ren) in their home to discuss issues, concerns or problems and develop a plan to resolve and address the presenting problem. Foster caregivers are viewed as an integral part of the planning process, their active participation and input is valued and incorporated in the development of the service plan. In advance of the Administrative Case Review (ACR) the assigned caser manager will discuss with the Foster caregivers the permanency goal and the service plan tasks for which they are responsible. If a child's permanency goal is changed, the case manager will inform the foster caregiver in a phone call or face-to-face conversation within two business days, and in writing within ten days of the change.

The caseworker will notify the foster caregiver if the change to the permanency goal necessitates changes to the visitation and service plan or to the foster care placement. While the needs of the children must be given primary consideration, case managers do make reasonable efforts to accommodate the schedules and interests of caregivers when planning parent-child and sibling visits. The caseworker will document discussion of Administrative Case Reviews in the case file and provide foster caregivers with their portion of the child's service plan.

Caseworkers help to establish, whenever possible, comfortable opportunities for caregivers and biological parents to share information and communicate regarding the needs of the child, and to coordinate regarding visiting arrangements. As both foster parents and biological parents gain comfort and trust, the case manager will support and encourage increased communication and cooperation toward the goal of reunification or biological parent support for another permanency option.

6. THE RIGHT TO BE PROVIDED A FAIR, TIMELY AND IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION OF LICENSING COMPLAINT ISSUES AND BE PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE A PERSON OF THEIR CHOOSING PRESENT DURING THE INVESTIGATION AND DUE PROCESS; THE RIGHT TO BE PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO REQUEST AND RECEIVE MEDIATION AND/OR AN ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OF DECISIONS CONCERNING A LICENSING CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN SPECIFICALLY EXPLAINED AND TIED TO THE LICENSING STANDARD VIOLATED.

UCAN's policy regarding allegations of licensing violations and the appeals of those investigations are as follows:

When a complaint is received that a foster caregiver has allegedly abused or neglected a foster child in their home, the Department of Children and Family Services (Division of Child Protection) is notified immediately. At its discretion, DCP shall conduct a child abuse or neglect investigation in accordance with Part 302, Services Delivered by the Department, or turn the investigation over to the Licensing Unit of UCAN Professional Foster Parenting Program for completion of the investigation.

The UCAN Licensing Unit shall handle all other complaints alleging violation of licensing standards and/or rules. An investigation shall commence within two (2) business days of receipt of the complaint. During the investigation, the person making

the complaint (if known), as well as all other parties who may have knowledge relevant to the complaint shall be interviewed. A personal unannounced visit by the licensing specialist will be made to the location of the licensee. The respondent's refusal to allow the licensing specialist to conduct the licensing investigation will require UCAN to recommend revocation of the foster caregiver's license. The respondent will be notified by mail the following business day of an attempted visit and of UCAN's recommendation to revoke the foster home license. The respondent will be given a 24-hour deadline by which to cooperate with the licensing investigation.

During the unannounced visit, the licensing specialist will clearly indicate to the foster caregiver the purpose of the visit and advise the foster caregiver of the right to have an individual of their choice present during the investigation. If it is determined that one or more violations exist, the licensee will be given written notice of all violations via a 597-C (Licensing Monitoring Record). The licensee will also be given a Corrective Action Plan, which will detail the violation, explain how the licensee is to come into compliance, and give the licensee a date by which to comply. The licensee will be supplied with a current copy of IDCFS Rule 402 Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes.

Upon the conclusion of the investigation, which shall occur within 45 days from the date of the initiation of the complaint, the licensee will be informed of the allegations and the results of that investigation. If at any time during the investigation of a licensing complaint, it is determined that the licensee is in violation of a licensing standard that puts the child in placement in imminent danger, the child will be removed immediately. UCAN staff shall provide the foster caregiver with a "Notice of Decision" immediately, as well as an IDCFS Service Appeal Brochure. The notice of decision will serve as formal notification to a licensed foster caregiver that the agency has made the decision to remove a foster child(ren) from their care. The licensee will receive a certified letter within five (5) business days summarizing the findings of the investigation. This letter shall:

- 1) Cite the licensing rules or standards violated;
- 2) Notify the respondent that within ten (10) days of the postmark date of the letter, they may send a written request to the licensing supervisor, requesting an informal review of the decision with the licensing specialist and the licensing supervisor;
- 3) Notify the licensee that failure to correct the violation(s) will result in UCAN seeking to revoke or refuse to renew their foster caregiver license;
- 4) Notify the licensee that they are encouraged to bring an advocate of their choosing to the informal review whom they feel will represent their best interest. The caregiver is provided a period of four hours to secure an advocate to be involved in the initial review meeting, or the caregiver may sign a form waiving the right to have an advocate present.
- 5) State that when the licensee requests an informal review of the findings of the investigation or determination and indicates a willingness to correct the violation(s), a time period will be allowed for them to come into compliance. This is called a Corrective Action Plan.
- 6) If the findings of the informal review do not demonstrate

reasonable compliance within the specified time period, the licensee shall be notified by certified mail of UCAN's intention to revoke their license or refuse to renew it. The licensee shall also be notified by certified mail that they have ten (10) days from the postmark of that letter to request, in writing, a hearing.

There will be distinct time frames established for the caregiver to come into compliance with each standard for which a violation is noted. If the licensee has not come into compliance by the specified date, a staffing will be held to discuss the reasons why the corrective action plan was not followed. This staffing will include the foster parent(s), case manager, licensing specialist, casework and licensing supervisors, therapists (if necessary), and the vice president of foster care. UCAN staff will again encourage the foster caregivers to bring to this staffing an advocate of their choosing whom they feel will represent their best interests. A 30 day extension period to the corrective action plan may be granted depending on the existing circumstances.

The aforementioned procedure will also assist the licensee in appealing any decisions made regarding any pending investigations or determinations.

The licensing investigative report will be maintained in a separate file maintained by the UCAN Licensing Supervisor. The licensing complaint and corrective action plan will be filed in the foster caregiver's licensing file. Upon successful completion of the corrective action plan, the licensee will be notified of such in writing and considered for future placements.

7. THE RIGHT, AT ANY TIME DURING WHICH A CHILD IS PLACED WITH THE FOSTER PARENT, TO RECEIVE ADDITIONAL OR NECESSARY INFORMATION THAT IS RELEVANT TO THE CARE OF THE CHILD.

It is UCAN's practice to inform foster caregivers of any and all information about child(ren) in their care upon initial placement in the home and upon any significant changes that are relevant to the care of the child. It is the belief that foster caregivers are better able to provide care to children when they are well informed about the child. Foster caregivers are invited to and encouraged to participate in an initial Child and Family Team Meeting held within 35 days after a case opens and to also attend subsequent quarterly meetings. Specialized foster caregivers are expected to participate in behavior planning meetings or treatment planning meetings, to discuss the most recent progress of and concerns about their child(ren). Foster caregivers are encouraged to participate in therapy/therapeutic processes with the children in order to ascertain and understand the special needs of the child and appropriate treatment goals.

As part of the on-going training curriculum at UCAN, case managers receive training related to disclosure and IDCFS rule 431. Regular staff supervision is also utilized as a mechanism to reinforce sharing of appropriate and relevant information with the foster caregiver. As part of the supervisory process, as significant changes take place in the life of a child, the case manager is instructed to share relevant information with the foster caregiver. In addition, case notes are reviewed regularly by supervisors to ensure cases are being managed effectively. During treatment planning meetings and Child and Family Team Meetings, foster caregivers are encouraged to share information relevant to the child(ren) in their home.

It is the foster caregivers right to escalate issues of communication problems with the caseworker to the supervisory level. It is the responsibility of the caseworker to keep the foster caregiver informed of any changes in the child' case plan.

8. THE RIGHT TO BE GIVEN INFORMATION CONCERNING A CHILD (I) FROM THE DEPARTMENT AS REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (U) OF SECTION 5 OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT AND (II) FROM A CHILD WELFARE AGENCY AS REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (c-5) OF SECTION 7.4 OF THE CHILD CARE ACT OF 1969.

As part of the on-going training curriculum at UCAN, case managers receive training related to disclosure and confidentiality of client information. Caregivers also receive training regarding the management and protection of confidential information. Each caregiver signs a UCAN confidentiality agreement, in which they commit to compliance with statures, regulations, and policies from DCFS and from UCAN DCFS regarding confidentiality. At the time of placement of a child, UCAN case managers, after consultation with their supervisors, provide caregivers with relevant and appropriate information available to them at the time, including case information and history, health and medical information, educational information and history, placement history, and information regarding the child's behavior. Confidential information regarding the parents or family is not shared except to the extent necessary for the caregivers to be able to serve the child. As additional information becomes available, the case manager continues to provide information to the caregiver. Documentation to be given to the caregiver includes the child's portion of the service plan, medical documentation, copies of the current IEP, and other available written documentation as required by DCFS policy guide. The case manager provides form CFS 600-4, Sharing Information with the Caregiver, to the caregiver within 10 days from the time of placement, verifying the information that has been provided. A signed copy of form CFS 600-4 is retained in the child's record.

If the placement of a child becomes an adoptive placement, the caregiver is provided additional information regarding the health history of the biological parents. Supervisory review and approval is required prior to the sharing of information with the caregiver. In addition, case notes are reviewed regularly by supervisors to ensure cases are being managed effectively.

9. THE RIGHT TO BE NOTIFIED OF SCHEDULED MEETINGS AND STAFFINGS CONCERNING THE FOSTER CHILD IN ORDER TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE CASE PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING PROCESS REGARDING THE CHILD IN THEIR CARE, INCLUDING INDIVIDUAL SERVICE PLANNING MEETINGS, ADMINISTRATIVE CASE REVIEWS, INTERDISCIPLINARY STAFFINGS AND INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLANNING MEETINGS; THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED OF DECISIONS MADE BY THE COURTS OR AGENCY CONCERNING THE CHILD; THE RIGHT TO HAVE THEIR INPUT ON THE PLAN OF SERVICES FOR THE CHILD GIVEN FULL CONSIDERATION IN THE SAME MANNER AS INFORMATION PRESENTED BY ANY PROFESSIONAL ON THE TEAM; AND THE RIGHT TO COMMUNICATE WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS WHO WORK WITH THE FOSTER CHILD WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE TEAM, INCLUDING THERAPISTS, PHYSICIANS AND TEACHERS.

It is UCAN's expectation that foster caregivers attend and participate in all meetings regarding the child(ren) in their care, including but not limited to IEP meetings; psychiatric

appointments; medical and dental appointments and family therapy appointments; as well as any other services the child(ren) may be involved with. Upon placement of a child into their home, a foster caregiver receives, from the caseworker, in writing, the names and phone numbers of all service providers, the UCAN caseworker, and casework supervisor. This assists in the development of a working relationship where the foster caregiver is able to communicate their knowledge and observations of the child's behavior, emotional and physical needs.

The foster caregivers are routinely invited by the child's caseworker to attend in-house case staffings and Child and Family Team meetings for case planning. If they are unable to attend, caregivers are asked for information that will be relevant to the family meeting or staffing, and case managers share appropriate information from the staffing with the caregiver.

Foster caregivers receive written notification of Administrative Case Reviews from IDCFS. Case managers are required to inform foster caregivers in writing about in-house case staffings, court dates, ACRs and all other appointments regarding foster children in their care both in writing (either by letter or by forwarding documents from IDCFS and other service providers), and verbally during regular home visits and through phone contact. Copies of these letters and documents must be placed in the case file, annotated with the date and time the information was provided to the foster caregiver as well as any additional information provided, such as agendas, transportation and temporary care arrangements and the like. The file copies must also include acknowledgement of receipt by the foster parent. This procedure will ensure that case workers are held accountable for their responsibility to inform foster caregivers of these events and facilitate their participation.

Case managers schedule appointment for home visits prior to Court hearings and ACRs and incorporate information provided by the caregiver into the service plan or court report. If foster caregivers choose not to attend court or an ACR, it is the case manager's responsibility to inform the foster caregiver of case progress during home visits, through phone contact, and in writing via the UCAN Administrative Case Review Acknowledgement. The importance of the foster caregiver's role and input in court, ACR, and any case staffing is an on-going dialogue addressed during pre-service and in-service trainings and outlined in the UCAN Foster caregiver Manual.

Foster caregivers are encouraged to share ideas, raise questions, and offer suggestions regarding the implementation of appropriate services for the child. These suggestions will help UCAN staff make appropriate decisions for the child's service plan.

- 10. THE RIGHT TO BE PROVIDED, IN A TIMELY AND CONSISTENT MANNER, WITH ANY INFORMATION A CASEWORKER HAS REGARDING THE CHILD AND THE CHILD'S FAMILY WHICH IS PERTINENT TO THE CARE AND NEEDS OF THE CHILD AND TO THE MAKING OF A PERMANENCY PLAN FOR THE CHILD. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING A CHILD'S FAMILY SHALL BE LIMITED TO INFORMATION, WHICH IS ESSENTIAL FOR UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS AND PROVIDING CARE TO THE CHILD IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD'S FAMILY. WHEN A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP EXISTS BETWEEN THE FOSTER PARENTS AND THE CHILD'S FAMILY, THE CHILD'S FAMILY MAY CONSENT TO DISCLOSURE OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.**

During the placement process/meetings, the foster caregiver is informed of the child(ren)'s permanency goal and current family relationships in addition to all the other information

given to them about the child. UCAN staff and the foster caregiver also discuss visitation rights and schedules for both parents and siblings. Details are not given to the foster caregivers regarding the biological parent's progress or the content of their service plan.

Caregivers receive a completed DCFS 600-4 within 10 days from the time of initial placement, and the case manager provides updated information as it becomes available. The foster caregiver signs the DCFS 600-4 form indicating the dates they received additional information regarding the child in care.

During the placement process/meetings, the foster caregiver is also given information about the child(ren) that due to its nature, also includes family information. This may include information about in-utero drug and alcohol exposure, family medical history (to insure that foster caregivers are aware of physical and mental illnesses of the parent and which may be inherited by the child) and any history of abuse and neglect, physical or sexual abuse. Information disclosed about the parent only contains parts of the shared history of the parent and the child, which are pertinent to, and impacts the care of the child. On-going information received by the case manager or other service providers in regards to the child's physical, emotional, educational or behavioral needs will be shared with foster caregivers during regular home visits and phone contact.

UCAN requires caseworkers to inform foster caregivers of scheduled court hearings and Administrative Case Reviews for any child placed in their home. UCAN staff/caseworkers encourage foster caregivers to provide input in the case planning of the child. If the foster caregiver chooses not to attend court or ACR's, it is the responsibility of the caseworker to inform the foster caregiver what decisions were made. This information is given to foster caregivers during regular home visits, through phone contact, and in writing via the UCAN Administrative Case Review Acknowledgement. The decisions on case direction will not include specific progress of the parent regarding their service plan goals; only the legal, permanency plan, and casework issues to be addressed in relation to the foster child(ren) in the home.

Foster caregivers are encouraged by their caseworkers to meet and talk with biological parents before and after parent/child visits. During this time, biological parents may disclose more personal information about themselves, and caregivers are trained to respect the confidential nature of any such information. A UCAN caseworker may help facilitate a meeting between foster caregivers and natural parents. In specific instances it may be necessary to solicit consent from natural parents in order to be able to share additional information to foster parents. In these instances UCAN will obtain consent from the natural parent prior to the release of that information. Issues of permanency and confidentiality are also initially explained and addressed in PRIDE training. Foster caregivers are required to sign a confidentiality statement.

11. THE RIGHT TO BE GIVEN REASONABLE WRITTEN NOTICE OF ANY CHANGE IN A CHILD'S CASE PLAN OR OF A PLAN TO TERMINATE THE PLACEMENT OF THE CHILD WITH THE FOSTER PARENTS AND OF THE REASONS FOR THE CHANGE OR TERMINATION OF PLACEMENT. SUCH NOTICES SHOULD ONLY BE WAIVED IN CASES OF A COURT ORDER OR WHEN THE CHILD IS DETERMINED TO BE AT IMMINENT RISK OF HARM.

When all attempts for stabilization and/or corrective action plans have failed, it is UCAN's practice to follow IDCFS policy and give a foster caregiver a 14 day written notice, ("Notice of Decision") for the removal of a child(ren) from their care. The Notice of Decision cites the IDCFS Rule and Policy that supports the decision to remove the child and tells the foster caregiver how to appeal the UCAN decision to remove the child(ren). The 14-day notice for removal allows the foster caregiver time to appeal the removal of the child(ren) from their home. If there is a determination of imminent risk to the child in care, the foster caregiver is notified immediately and the child(ren) is removed from the foster home. A child may be immediately removed from the caregiver's home when his/her behaviors poses a serious risk of harm to themselves or others, including risk to the caregiver. In most instances of this type, the child will be hospitalized for psychiatric assessment and care.

Prior to the removal of any child(ren) from a foster home, unless there is a determination of imminent risk, a placement meeting is scheduled by the case manager. The placement meeting shall include the foster caregiver, case manager, and supervisor. At the request of any of the participants, or at his own discretion, the Vice President of Foster Care may also participate in the meeting. The placement meeting is the forum for both the caregiver and for UCAN staff to address issues and concerns related to the continuation or termination of the placement.

12. THE RIGHT TO BE NOTIFIED IN A TIMELY AND COMPLETE MANNER OF ALL COURT HEARINGS, INCLUDING THE DATE AND TIME OF THE COURT HEARING; THE NAME OF THE JUDGE OR HEARING OFFICER HEARING THE CASE, THE LOCATION OF THE COURT PROCEEDING AND THE COURT DOCKET NUMBER OF THE CASE AND THE RIGHT TO INTERVENE IN COURT PROCEEDINGS OR SEEK MANDAMUS UNDER THE JUVENILE COURT ACT OF 1987.

It is UCAN practice for case managers to inform foster caregivers of the purpose and date of hearings at Juvenile Court. Case managers notify foster caregivers during regular home visits or through phone contact. Case managers are also responsible for counseling caregivers on their need to attend court or to obtain waivers of appearance when necessary. Case managers provide caregivers the names and phone numbers of the guardian ad Litem assigned to the child in their care, and also the contact information for any assigned CASA volunteer.

During regular supervision and contact with foster caregivers, management/administrative staff are able to track the case manager's communication of information to the foster caregiver.

Foster caregivers are given in-service training regarding their rights and responsibilities in juvenile court proceedings.

13. THE RIGHT TO BE CONSIDERED A PLACEMENT OPTION WHEN A FOSTER CHILD WHO WAS FORMERLY PLACED WITH THE FOSTER PARENT IS TO BE RE-ENTERED INTO FOSTER CARE WHEN SUCH PLACEMENT WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD AND OTHER CHILDREN IN THE HOME.

When a child re-enters the foster care system, UCAN gives first priority to the previous foster placement. Consideration of re-placement includes review of the case file by the

child's caseworker and the case management supervisor, as well as a review of the foster caregivers licensing file. The caseworker will contact IDCFS to acquire the child's foster care placement history. The caseworker will use the history to determine if the child has been previously placed in the care of a UCAN foster parent. If the child has previously been in a UCAN foster home and the caseworker makes a preliminary determination that re-placement of the child is in the best interest of the child and other children in the home, the foster caregiver will be contacted and offered the opportunity to receive the child. A staffing will be conducted involving all professionals involved in the case and the foster caregivers seeking re-placement to determine if re-placement is consistent with the best interest of the child and other children in the home. The offer to re-place the child in the foster home is contingent upon determination within the staffing that re-placement is in the best interest of the child and other children in the home.

If the child is verbally and cognitively able to contribute input as to their preference in returning to the home, consideration encompasses why the child left the home previously, the success of the placement in the home, and the current ability of the foster caregiver to meet the child's needs. UCAN practices an extensive matching and pre-placement process as well as operating a continuum of care that includes step down of children from more restrictive settings to a previous foster caregiver when appropriate. During this period, different homes are considered for placement of the child. The placement determination is made during pre-placement staffings. The placement team consists of the assigned case manager, supervisor, licensing specialist, prospective foster caregiver and Director. In cases of children being stepped down from a residential setting, the caregiver will be included in the transition team and will be supported in the transition. Pre-placement visits and preparation for the transition will occur as outlined in the DCFS residential transition protocol. The foster care case manager will also be a part of the transition team and will continue to provide case management services following the child's placement back to foster care.

14. THE RIGHT TO HAVE TIMELY ACCESS TO THE EXISTING APPEALS PROCESS WITH THE CHILD PLACEMENT AGENCY. THE ASSERTION OF THE ACCESS TO APPEAL WILL BE FREE FROM ACTS OF HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION.

In addition to the UCAN grievance procedure described below, UCAN also participates fully in the current IDCFS Appeal Process and provides foster caregivers with the IDCFS Service Appeal Process brochure at the time of placement. UCAN offers training regarding the service appeal process at least once a year, during the training session regarding the Foster Parent Implementation Plan. Trainings regarding the IDCFS Office of the Inspector General and IDCFS Advocacy Office also will be offered in 2010.

UCAN encourages foster caregivers to request meetings with Supervisors and the Vice President of Professional Foster Parenting to discuss differences of opinion in the case plan. Supervisors and the Vice President will carefully consider the foster caregivers concerns and will make a decision based on what is believed to be best practice. UCAN staff and administrators continually assure caregivers that they will not experience any negative ramifications, or retaliation, for bringing grievances or appealing service decisions made within the foster care program.

UCAN Grievance Procedure

If a foster caregiver believes they are being treated unfairly or that one or more of their rights have been violated, they have the right to address their concern with agency staff and/or file a grievance. If necessary, the foster caregiver may have their concerns heard by the President/Executive Director of the agency. Certain procedures must be followed in the grievance process:

1. Address Issue with the Case Manager and Supervisor

If any issue or concern arises, the foster caregiver should first address concerns with the specific case manager/staff member and secondly, with that person's supervisor. The supervisor and caseworker will attempt to resolve the presenting issue with the foster caregiver and develop a plan to address the issues. If the presenting problem can not be settled at this level all involved parties will report directly to the Vice President of Professional Foster Parenting.

2. Submit a Written Report

If the foster caregiver is not satisfied with the outcome of their grievance, and feel that the problem has not been resolved, they may submit a written grievance to the Vice President or the Executive Vice President.

3. Address Issue with the Vice president

If the foster caregiver cannot settle their grievance with the first level of staff, they should arrange to talk to the next level supervisor, which is usually a Vice president. This discussion can take place over the phone or in person. The Director may wish to call a "staffing" to resolve the situation with the foster parent, staff and other involved parties. During the staffing, the foster caregiver has the right to have an individual of their choosing present for support.

4. Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer or President/Executive Director

If the foster caregiver has followed these steps and still believes that the grievance has not been settled, they may speak with the Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer or President/Executive Director. The decision of the Executive Vice President and/or President is final. However, copies of the grievance, including the final decision will be sent to UCAN Board of Directors and IDCFS. A copy will also be kept on file with the foster caregiver's licensing information.

The UCAN Foster caregiver Grievance Policy in no way affects the foster caregiver's ability to file an appeal through the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. In order to ensure that the foster caregiver's rights to a service appeal are upheld, UCAN will provide the foster caregivers with all necessary information on the policy and procedure regarding filing a service appeal.

15. THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED OF THE FOSTER CAREGIVER HOTLINE ESTABLISHED UNDER THE ACT AND ALL THE RIGHTS ACCORDED TO FOSTER PARENT CONCERNING REPORTS OF MISCONDUCT BY DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES, SERVICE PROVIDERS OR CONTRACTORS, CONFIDENTIAL HANDLING OF THOSE REPORTS AND INVESTIGATION BY THE INSPECTOR GENERAL.

During PRIDE training foster caregivers are given a copy and provided training on their Rights and Responsibilities and the Foster caregiver Hotline, 1-800-722-9124. A copy of the Foster caregivers Rights and Responsibilities is kept on file at the agency and can be accessed at any time. In addition, brochures regarding the service appeal process, IDCFS Office of the Inspector General and IDCFS Advocacy Office are mailed to foster caregivers and are readily available at the agency. On-going training is provided to assist foster caregivers with utilizing IDCFS services. As part of the placement packet, the Foster caregiver Hotline number, the number for the Child Abuse Hotline, and the rights of the foster caregiver are included.

Other numbers that are provided include:

- Caseworker
- Supervisor
- UCAN main number
- UCAN emergency line
- Healthworks hotline
- IDCFS Advocacy i.e. OMSBUD
- IDCFS Office of the Inspector General (OIG)
- Medical Card Hotline
- Daycare Referrals
- IDCFS Payment Unit
- Child Abuse Hotline
- Foster Caregiver Hotline

16(1) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO OPENLY COMMUNICATE AND SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHILD WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CHILD WELFARE TEAM.

During PRIDE training and the licensing process, foster caregivers learn that they are an integral part of the child welfare team, and that it is necessary for them to be involved with the child's services. They are encouraged be open with caseworkers and other appropriate service providers about what is happening with the child in their home. Foster caregivers are informed about critical issues that require immediate notification of the agency and may require a call to UCAN's 24-hour emergency line.

UCAN provides opportunities for foster caregivers to share on-going information through frequent and regular home visits by the child's caseworker. Foster caregivers receive training to be able to effectively advocate for their children in court hearings and school staffings, Foster caregivers are strongly encouraged to participate in school staffings, quarterly Child and Family Team meetings, Administrative Case Reviews, and Court Hearings. Foster caregivers in the specialized care or Adolescent Foster Care programs are expected to participate fully as members of the treatment team in quarterly treatment planning meetings. Case managers consult with foster caregivers to help them prepare, when needed, to be able to fully and effectively communicate and participate in these important events for the children in their care.

17(2) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO RESPECT THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION CONCERNING FOSTER CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES AND ACT APPROPRIATELY WITHIN APPLICABLE CONFIDENTIALITY LAWS AND REGULATIONS.

The issue of confidentiality is addressed in PRIDE training. UCAN has developed an in-service training curriculum, which more thoroughly addresses the issue of confidentiality on an on-going basis. Foster caregivers also receive the Foster caregiver Manual upon licensure or placement. Outlined in the manual is UCAN's policy on confidentiality. Foster caregivers sign a confidentiality agreement at the time of licensing, indicating their acceptance and agreement to abide by rules and requirements regarding confidentiality.

18(3) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN IN THEIR CARE.

UCAN encourages foster caregivers to advocate for their foster child(ren) through involvement with juvenile court proceedings, participation in Administrative Case Reviews, Child and Family Team Meetings, treatment planning meetings, and IEP meetings. All licensed foster caregivers are required to attend the Educational Advocacy Training, which is part of UCAN's in-service training curriculum. This enables the foster caregiver to participate more fully in their child's educational plan.

UCAN encourages both licensed caregivers and unlicensed relative foster parents and those seeking to become licensed to participate in all available training. Foster caregivers are provided training on court, service appeal procedure, and Administrative Case Reviews during PRIDE. On-going trainings covering these topics are also offered throughout the year and service appeal brochures are readily available.

19(4) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO TREAT CHILDREN IN THEIR CARE AND THEIR FAMILIES WITH DIGNITY, RESPECT AND CONSIDERATION.

This issue is addressed in PRIDE training and through the licensing process. UCAN also has an in-service training curriculum, which more fully addresses issues related to the natural family. These topics include:

- Impact of Placement on the Foster Family
- Cultural Diversity and Self Awareness
- Understanding the Birth Family
- Stress Management
- Grief, Loss, and Attachment

UCAN provides in its in-service training, an abbreviated overview of the UCAN clinical philosophy, a 4-part perspective that addresses the issues of child development, separation and loss, childhood trauma, and social systems as they impact the lives of children and families. Caregivers are also encouraged to participate in agency-wide in-service training that explores each of these topics more fully. Case managers and therapists help caregivers to understand the challenging and disruptive behaviors their children may exhibit as the result of childhood experiences and trauma. Caregivers are assisted to implement behavioral strategies to more effectively address and positively shape those behaviors.

UCAN is also committed to the goal of cultural diversity and inclusion. Training sessions are provided to assist caregivers in gaining greater awareness of and appreciation of the

richness of cultural diversity, and to enhance their ability to effectively serve children and families that identify with cultures, racial identities, religious beliefs, or sexual orientations different from their own. When a child with a culturally different background or heritage is placed in the home, the case manager works closely and openly to assist the caregiver in showing respect and sensitivity to the child's cultural background.

Through in-service training and continual support from licensing and case management staff, foster caregivers are also encouraged to recognize the role and importance of families of origin in the lives of children in their care. Caregivers are helped to become gradually more comfortable in efforts to more actively support reunification and the maintenance of strong family ties between the child in care and the biological family.

Caregivers receive ongoing training in the use of the Life Book as an effective tool for the child to maintain a record of his family and his personal identify. In home visits and licensing monitoring visits, UCAN staff encourage and reinforce the benefits and importance of maintaining the child's life book.

Case managers are required to monitor relationships between foster children and their birth families and between foster children and their cultural heritage during each home visit. The foster caregiver task sheet is used for this purpose. Caseworkers are also required to place comments in the case notes verifying that foster children, their birth families and their cultures of origin are being treated, by foster caregivers and UCAN staff, with the dignity and respect due them. Supervisors are required to address these issues with caseworkers during regular staff supervision. Licensing staff also ensure foster caregivers are compliant with licensing standards during six month monitoring visits. Annual client satisfaction surveys are completed by foster children regarding the above issues in their foster home. Biological parents also complete client satisfaction surveys.

20(5) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO RECOGNIZE THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILIAL STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS WHEN DECIDING WHETHER TO ACCEPT A CHILD INTO CARE, RECOGNIZE THEIR OWN SUPPORT NEEDS AND UTILIZE APPROPRIATE SUPPORTS IN PROVIDING CARE FOR FOSTER CHILDREN.

Referrals from Case Assignment for placement of children new to DCFS care come with identified homes. In selection of these homes, priority is given to the location of the home, with preference given to homes closest to the home of the parent. Stated preferences for gender and age of the child, and capability of the caregiver to support reunification are taken into account as well.

For re-placements, internal referrals from UCAN teen parent services network, and for referrals from residential care, UCAN practices an extensive matching and pre-placement process. UCAN utilizes a Foster Family Interest Inventory Checklist that is completed by the foster caregivers during the licensing process along with recommendations of the licensing specialist in determining the appropriateness of placing a foster child in a foster home. During this period, foster caregivers and staff discuss the child(ren)'s needs and the foster caregiver's ability to meet those needs. During these meetings, foster caregivers are encouraged to openly discuss their concerns about accepting the child into their home, so that the best decision can be made for them and the child. Additional training is recommended and implemented if it is determined that more skills are needed prior to placement.

UCAN provides additional supports to foster caregivers or youth at risk including support groups, nursing, psychiatric evaluation on-site, advocates and volunteers or psychotherapy. The case manager is required to assess the strengths and areas in need of improvement of foster caregivers during each home visit and discuss any improvement areas with the foster parent. The case manager must place in the case notes any information about improvement areas noted, need for additional training or changes in the “goodness of fit” between the foster caregivers and children placed in their care. The case manager must notify the licensing worker of any areas in need of improvement noted. The licensing worker will then assess the need for additional training or support and ensure that the foster caregiver receives the training and support necessary to provide care for the children in their home.

UCAN is working to re-establish, as a function of the new Foster Caregiver support group, a Foster caregiver Mentor Program that provides new foster caregivers with insight into and support for family foster care. This program will help foster caregivers to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses relative to the matching process and will provide ongoing support by matching the new foster caregiver with an experienced foster parent.

During the licensing process, foster caregivers are encouraged to evaluate their own strengths and areas in which they need improvement and are given the opportunity to select trainings to enhance their skills. The licensing specialist identifies and recommends in-service training which would be beneficial to the foster caregiver in providing care of the child(ren) in their home.

21(6) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BE AWARE OF THE BENEFITS OF RELYING ON AND AFFILIATING WITH OTHER FOSTER PARENTS AND FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATIONS IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CARE AND SERVICE TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

UCAN maintains an active foster parent support group in both service areas. Among the functions of the foster caregiver support group is the opportunity to share concerns regarding program operations. Additionally, the support group provides encouragement for individual caregivers to voice their own concerns and identify their needs. During 2010 Foster caregivers will lead and facilitate these meetings, with staff performing a supportive and back-up role.

In addition to serving as a vehicle for communication between caregivers and the UCAN foster care program, the foster caregiver support group may carry out additional functions, such as conducting fund raising activities, organizing foster caregiver events and acting as a support and information network to the general foster caregiver population. Experienced foster caregivers do serve as informal mentors for caregivers with less experience.

Foster caregivers are also included in annual activities for foster children, such as the annual PFP Holiday party for foster children. Due to the several communities and area covered by Lake & McHenry Counties, Foster caregivers are invited to collaborate with other Private Agency Foster caregivers for support from their peers. There are several groups, which meet on a regular basis and are open to all Private Agency Foster Parents. UCAN encourages foster caregivers to participate in these inter-agency support groups.

UCAN provides extensive and frequent in-service training (several times per month). Foster caregivers are encouraged to participate in this training to meet their training requirements, but also to meet and network with other foster caregivers for support and information sharing. Foster caregivers receive regular mailed notices of up-coming training from the Training Coordinator in Cook County or the Family Development Specialist in Lake and McHenry Counties, in addition to being informed of up-coming training during the monthly foster caregiver meetings. Many foster caregivers are now providing e-mail addresses and receive most agency communications through that vehicle. In addition, many caregivers utilize e-mail accounts to communicate with each other.

22(7) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ASSESS THEIR ONGOING INDIVIDUAL TRAINING NEEDS AND TAKE ACTION TO MEET THOSE NEEDS.

A training needs assessment is conducted and given to all agency foster caregivers during semi-annual licensing monitoring visits. Based on these results, a training plan is developed and implemented. Staff and selected experienced caregivers who are interested in conducting pre- and in-service trainings are provided with a training of trainer's curricula for core training sessions. Additional curricula were researched and made available to the members. These curricula are the basis for the in-service trainings offered to all agency foster caregivers. Caregivers also identified training needs during the review of the foster parent implementation plan, with topics to be included in the training plan for the coming year.

Some pre- and in-service trainings are presented by a team consisting of a staff and a foster caregiver member. UCAN believes that having both a staff member and a foster caregiver train will afford an opportunity to enhance the foster caregiver's skills, attitudes and values for learning. This is the model of training that is currently in use at UCAN when possible.

23 (8) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO DEVELOP AND ASSIST IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES TO PREVENT PLACEMENT DISRUPTIONS, RECOGNIZING THE TRAUMATIC IMPACT OF PLACEMENT DISRUPTIONS ON A FOSTER CHILD AND ALL MEMBERS OF THE FOSTER FAMILY AND TO PROVIDE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE FOSTER CHILDREN AND MEMBERS OF THE FOSTER FAMILY SHOULD PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES FAIL AND PLACEMENT DISRUPTION OCCUR.

Through on-going, in-service training, a curricula has been developed to educate the foster parent(s) in identification of medical, educational and behavioral issues of children, which may cause placement disruptions. Foster caregivers are encouraged to enable the foster child to participate in one of several UCAN preventive community programs which include:

- Vocational Training
- Advocate Program
- G.E.D. Preparation
- Hands Without Guns
- Volunteer/Mentor program
- Office of Mission and Spiritual Care
- Registered nurses available for consultation and assistance

- ❑ Therapeutic Services
- ❑ Project Visible Man
- ❑ Phenomenal Women
- ❑ Alumni Services

(Please see the narrative for question #5)

UCAN provides support to foster caregivers through frequent home visits where they are encouraged to discuss their problems and concerns with the child's caseworker. The licensing specialist is also receptive to concerns reported by the foster caregivers regarding the functioning of the placement and reports concerns to the Licensing Supervisor, Case Management Supervisor, and the Director of the Program. If the caseworker or licensing specialist determines, through their own observation or through discussion with the foster parent, the conditions exist which create the possibility of placement disruption, he or she must refer the matter to his or her own supervisor. The supervisor must convene a staffing to include, at a minimum, the licensing specialist, caseworker, licensing and case work supervisors and the foster parent. This staffing will determine what services are needed to stabilize the placement. Depending on the child and family, the stabilization plan could include: respite services, parenting coaching, counseling, temporary psychiatric hospitalization, psychological or psychiatric evaluation and treatment, contracting with the child, putting in place a behavior management plan, additional training for the foster caregiver, etc. Continued training workshops are offered, such as Understanding the Foster Children's Behavior During the Holidays, which serves as a preventative strategy to preserve placement.

If a foster caregiver feels they can no longer provide care for a child, and all placement stabilization and crisis intervention services have not resolved their problems, UCAN requires a 14-day written notice to find a new home, but encourages foster caregivers to maintain the placement until another home is found. Unless there are safety issues involved, continued relationships are encouraged as to promote life long connections versus relational cut offs between a foster caregiver and a foster child.

UCAN staff recognizes that disruptions may occur regardless of the efforts of the foster parent to stabilize the placement. UCAN assures caregivers that a disruption of a placement will not necessarily prevent the agency from utilizing the home again, especially if the caregiver has clearly worked diligently to avoid the disruption, and helped to the fullest extent possible in minimizing the trauma for the child experiencing the disruption.

Foster caregiver Mentoring/Networking programs are used as a vehicle to provide stabilization support. Foster caregiver meetings can provide direction on how to access appropriate support services, as well as a forum to discuss preventative strategies and stabilization services.

Foster caregivers are given the Foster caregiver Manual upon licensure or placement. Outlined in the manual is UCAN's policy on placement disruption.

24(9) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE IMPACT FOSTER PARENTING HAS ON INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND ENDEAVOR TO MINIMIZE, AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, ANY STRESS THAT RESULTS FROM FOSTER PARENTING.

UCAN understands the challenges of foster parenting and the effects it may have on their families. These challenges are addressed during PRIDE training and in the licensing process. During the licensing process, licensing specialists discuss with foster caregivers the changes that foster parenting will have on their family. Licensing specialists help foster caregiver applicants to assess their ability to become foster caregivers and measure the impact it will have on the lives of them and their family. The Licensing Specialist also makes a recommendation, which is documented in licensing file regarding the level of care the foster caregiver appears to be equipped to provide. This recommendation is based on the level of commitment displayed by the prospective foster caregiver throughout the assessment process. Additional on-going training is offered to address the on-going needs of foster caregivers.

UCAN also provides supportive services to foster caregivers such as respite care and counseling. UCAN utilizes its clinical and counseling services department to intervene with individual or family therapy to assist families in time of crisis. UCAN provides reimbursement for respite care services (when available) as part of its support to foster caregivers who care for children with identified special needs. Respite is also available with supervisory approval for extended periods (vacation, family illness) by a provider of the foster caregiver's choosing who is in compliance with CANTS/LEADS. This respite is paid through the foster caregiver board payment. Each family is required to discuss with the child(ren)'s caseworker the development of a respite plan. The plan is dependent on the level of care the child requires, and the number of children in the home.

Foster caregivers are able to initiate a "voluntary hold" which means that no children will be placed in their home while this hold is active. It is at the foster caregiver's discretion to determine when this hold will be lifted. UCAN recognizes that from time to time foster caregivers may need to abstain from foster parenting responsibilities. UCAN ensures foster caregivers are aware that initiation of a voluntary hold will not have an adverse impact on their eligibility to receive children for foster care when they lift their voluntary hold.

UCAN provides a training course entitled "Compassion Fatigue" to offer support to foster caregivers. The agency also, on a case-by-case basis, involves the caregiver in the foster child's therapeutic sessions in order to support the relationship between foster caregiver and child. When appropriate, case managers and licensing staff may encourage foster caregivers to utilize outside resources for counseling or other services to meet needs of the caregiver and his/her family.

25(10) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE REWARDS AND BENEFITS TO CHILDREN, PARENTS, FAMILIES AND SOCIETY THAT COME FROM FOSTER PARENTING AND PROMOTE THE FOSTER PARENTING EXPERIENCE IN A POSITIVE WAY.

UCAN foster caregivers are recognized annually in a Foster Caregiver recognition dinner hosted by the agency. This event is designed to convey appreciation for the year-round efforts and selfless dedication of the UCAN foster caregivers. Testimonies from youth in care are often shared during these recognition events, reminders of the positive impact

caregivers have on the lives of children. Additionally, one foster caregiver is selected annually to be acknowledged as Foster Caregiver of the Year at the Annual UCAN Youth Advocacy Awards Dinner, the major fund-raising event of the UCAN year. In this event, a gathering of 400 friends and supporters of UCAN acknowledge the critical role carried by the UCAN caregivers in service to children and youth.

Foster caregivers are encouraged to be involved in recruiting efforts and are provided a financial incentive for successfully recruiting a new foster caregiver. Caregivers are also encouraged, as described above, to participate and contribute to ongoing foster caregiver training. During the course of the year, caregivers have been called to provide testimony before the Illinois legislature, or in legislative hearings regarding the challenges and rewards of foster caregiving.

UCAN administers a STARS program, which is an internship for young adults who were previously DCFS wards and who had been in foster care or other out of home placements. These young people often assist or participate in training events for caregivers, and they remind caregivers of the benefits they derived from the caregivers who were most beneficial to them during their time in the child welfare system.

26(11) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE ROLE, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FOSTER PARENTS, OTHER PROFESSIONALS IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM, THE CHILD AND THE CHILD'S OWN FAMILY.

UCAN recognizes the importance of informing foster caregivers of their rights and responsibilities as well as those of other members of the professional foster care team. This information is discussed during PRIDE and in the licensing process. Foster caregivers receive the IDCFS copy of foster caregiver rights in their IDCFS Handbook during PRIDE. UCAN also has an in-service training curriculum, which more fully explains this information to foster parents. (The in-service training is available to traditional and home of relative foster parents.) The PRIDE training model is implemented with a staff and foster caregiver as co-trainers facilitating the curriculum. Open forums are scheduled monthly to discuss the on-going roles of UCAN professional staff. To ensure that all foster caregivers are aware of professional staff roles, the information presented in these forums is made available by letter to all foster parents. Foster caregivers are strongly encouraged to attend at least two of the open forums each year. The Vice President of Professional Foster Parenting is present during open forums twice a year. The Chief Executive Officer makes himself available as needed to meet with the foster caregiver to discuss programmatic changes and to hear foster caregiver's concerns.

During monthly foster caregiver meetings, UCAN staff is present to address any concerns/issues. The training coordinator in Cook County or the Family Development Specialist in Lake and McHenry Counties serves as the liaison between foster caregivers and the agency to ensure their needs are being met. Representatives from IDCFS are also invited to foster caregiver meetings and provide trainings on relevant topics. UCAN's management staff is responsive to foster caregivers via their presence at foster caregiver meetings, welcoming phone calls, and their availability at staffings requested by the foster parent. Foster caregivers are also included in behavior planning and treatment planning meetings and service plan development.

The DCFS approved Implementation Plan for the Illinois Foster caregiver Bill of Rights & Responsibilities is reviewed with foster caregivers in order to solicit opinions and suggestions from them. Three meetings with foster caregivers also were held in October, 2009 prior to the submission of the revised plan. Foster caregiver recommendations are taken seriously and incorporated with revisions of the plan for the next year.

27 (12) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW AND, AS NECESSARY, TO FULFILL THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO SERVE AS MANDATED REPORTERS OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT UNDER THE ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILD REPORTING ACT AND TO KNOW THE CHILD WELFARE AGENCY'S POLICY REGARDING ALLEGATIONS THAT FOSTER PARENTS HAVE COMMITTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT AND APPLICABLE ADMINISTRATIVE RULE AND PROCEDURE GOVERNING INVESTIGATIONS OF SUCH ALLEGATIONS.

During PRIDE training and the licensing process, foster parents are instructed about their role as a mandated reporter. Additional in-service training on the topics of mandated reporter requirements and caregiver rights and responsibilities is planned as a part of the annual training plan for 2010. During the licensing process or upon placement with a relative caregiver, the foster caregiver signs an acknowledgment of their "Mandated Reporter Status". The foster caregiver is also given a copy of IDCFS Rule 402, which outlines this requirement.

Foster caregivers are made aware that they may be subject to an investigation by the Department of Child Protection or the Licensing Department at UCAN if a call is made to the Child Abuse Hotline about them. This process is explained during PRIDE class and the licensing specialist also explains this process during the family home study assessment.

Additional in-service training on this topic has been developed to more fully explain what the law requires of both foster caregivers and UCAN staff in regard to reporting possible child abuse or neglect. This training instructs foster caregivers in recognizing what signs and behaviors may indicate that a child has been a victim of abuse, what signs and behaviors must be reported, and to whom they should be reported. This training also instructs foster caregivers that their child advocacy and mandated reporter responsibilities require them to escalate reports to supervisory levels within UCAN or to agencies outside UCAN (such as IDCFS or law enforcement agencies) if they believe it necessary to ensure allegations are adequately investigated and children in their care are protected. Sexual abuse training and training regarding sexually reactive and aggressive behavior in children is offered to educate foster caregivers about the behaviors they may observe and their reporting responsibilities under the Child Neglect and Abuse Reporting Act. Foster caregivers are also informed during the home study process that they must report any odd behaviors of a foster child to their case manager.

28 (13) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW AND RECEIVE TRAINING REGARDING THE PURPOSE OF ADMINISTRATIVE CASE REVIEWS, CLIENT SERVICE PLANS AND COURT PROCESSES, AS WELL AS ANY FILING OR TIME REQUIREMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THESE PROCEEDINGS, AND ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THEIR DESIGNATED ROLE IN THESE PROCEEDINGS.

During PRIDE training and the licensing process, the child welfare system is explained to foster parents. During the home study assessment process, the licensing representative informs and encourages the foster caregiver to become involved in Administrative Case Reviews and the court processes to share valuable input about a foster child in their care. Case managers provide on-going information on the children placed in the foster home and their specific court and service plan involvement.

Included in the in-service training curriculum for 2010 is additional training regarding the Administrative Case review and juvenile court functioning and processes. Court personnel will be providing training for caregivers to address these topics in a more extensive and relevant manner. This training will address the role and responsibility of foster caregivers in court hearings, permanency planning including adoption, and the appeals process. Case managers encourage foster caregivers' attendance and participation in permanency planning, court hearings, ACR's etc.

29(14) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE CHILD WELFARE AGENCY'S APPEAL PROCEDURE FOR FOSTER PARENTS AND THE RIGHTS OF FOSTER PARENTS UNDER THE PROCEDURE.

Foster caregivers are given the Foster caregiver Manual upon licensure or placement. Outlined in the manual, is the UCAN grievance policy. The grievance policy was reviewed and improved by UCAN's quality assurance department in 2008. It is distributed to all foster caregivers by their case workers. The UCAN grievance procedure was reviewed during meetings with caregivers as a part of the development of the 2010 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan, and foster parent rights and responsibilities are discussed repeatedly during ongoing training. During this year, foster parents utilized the agency's appeal procedures to address payment disputes, or to raise concerns regarding the work of case managers or to advocate for changes in service plans .

30(15) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING ACCURATE AND RELEVANT RECORDS REGARDING THE CHILD'S HISTORY AND PROGRESS AND IS AWARE OF AND FOLLOWS THE PROCEDURE AND REGULATIONS OF THE CHILD WELFARE AGENCY WITH WHICH THEY ARE LICENSED OR AFFILIATED.

The topics of health passports and maintaining child records are discussed during PRIDE training and the licensing process. Upon placement, foster caregivers receive a placement packet, which consists of a folder containing pertinent information on the child and his/her special needs. The folder is utilized to maintain records for each child. Caseworkers conduct an initial home visit within 72 hours of placement. During this and subsequent visits in the first month, the case manager discusses with foster caregivers the importance of documentation of medical issues, and informs foster caregivers what specifically should be documented for children with identified medical needs, i.e. immunizations, medication logs, asthma plans, etc.

The licensing department conducts six-month compliance visits during which they audit all child specific documentation/records. The licensing representative must certify that all records are complete and correct or describe any deficiencies and establish a plan to correct them. The importance of maintaining complete records is stated during each monthly foster caregiver meeting. Foster caregivers are held responsible for ensuring that all child specific

records are maintained. The importance of maintaining records is also stated in Rule 402 Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes. Foster caregivers receive a copy of rule 402 prior to signing the IDCFS foster care application.

UCAN Foster caregivers are encouraged to help maintain a life book for the children in their care, which will always stay with the foster child. Training regarding the importance of maintaining photographs, school reports, etc. is provided to UCAN Foster Parents. Life Books are provided by UCAN. Caseworkers review foster parent records and life during home visits, and these records are also reviewed during semi-annual licensing compliance visits.

31(16) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO SHARE INFORMATION THROUGH THE CHILD WELFARE TEAM REGARDING THE CHILD'S ADJUSTMENT IN THEIR HOME WITH THE SUBSEQUENT CAREGIVER, WHETHER THE CHILD'S PARENT OR ANOTHER SUBSTITUTE CAREGIVER.

Foster caregivers are given the opportunity and are encouraged to provide feedback on the child's adjustment through frequent home visits and regular case staffings. They are also involved in the matching and pre-placement procedure into another home if appropriate.

Training on this subject includes:

- Partnership Role of the Foster Parent
- Shared Parenting
- Reunification

If possible and deemed appropriate, the foster caregiver is encouraged to share information with the subsequent foster caregiver or with the child's parent or relative caregiver about the child specific needs/behaviors before the placement or re-unification occurs. Foster caregivers are also informed during PRIDE training that they have the right to be informed of additional information about the foster child's history as it becomes available to agency staff.

32(17) THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE CARE AND SERVICES WHICH ARE RESPECTFUL OF AND RESPONSIVE TO THE CHILD'S CULTURAL NEEDS AND ARE SUPPORTIVE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHILD AND HIS/HER OWN FAMILY. RECOGNIZE THE INCREASED IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING A CHILD'S CULTURAL IDENTITY WHEN RACE OR CULTURE OF THE FOSTER FAMILY DIFFERS FROM THAT OF THE FOSTER CHILD AND TAKE ACTION TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES.

During the matching and pre-placement process, natural family, cultural and language issues are discussed with the foster caregivers. At that time, it is determined if the foster caregivers feel comfortable with the child and capable of meeting their needs and embracing the child's unique racial, religious, or cultural identify or sexual orientation.. UCAN provides a wealth of training opportunities addressing a range of issues of diversity and inclusion.

UCAN offers an in-service foster caregiver training on Cultural Diversity and Inclusion, which is available to foster caregivers to increase their knowledge and comfort level. Cultural Diversity and Inclusion issues are also discussed during PRIDE training and during

the initial licensing process. The caregiver's capacity and willingness to competently care for children from diverse backgrounds is fully explored during the home study.

UCAN training curriculum includes courses in Self-Awareness, Cultural Issues, and Understanding the Birth Family. Specific training is provided regarding hair and skin care for caregivers who are unfamiliar with those requirements and who are cross-culturally serving African-American children or other who have unique skin and hair care requirements. Outside resources are available such as training on Interracial Adoptions.

When desired by foster parents, UCAN establishes mentor relationships between new foster caregivers (or foster caregivers who are fostering children of other ethnic/cultural heritages for the first time) and foster caregivers of the child's ethnic /cultural heritage or who have fostered children of the child's ethnic/cultural heritage. These mentoring relationships enable foster caregivers to gain insight into ethnic heritages other than their own and the effect those other heritages have on foster child behavior and adjustment to the foster home. Thus cross-cultural foster placements are made more stable and less subject to disruption.