

CODE OF ETHICS FOR ALBERTA FOSTER PARENTS

PREPARED BY THE ALBERTA FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION - APPROVED NOVEMBER 4, 1989

PREAMBLE

Foster Parents employ a multi-disciplinary body of knowledge, methods and skills in performing professional services and activities. These activities are aimed at facilitating, maintaining and enhancing the developing child's ability to function as a contributing member of society. Further, foster parents are committed to the child welfare system, the fostering profession and the community.

A. COMMITMENT TO THE FOSTER CHILD AND HIS/HER FAMILY

In recognition of the public trust that is a result of children placed in their care, foster parents recognize their obligation in providing a safe, nurturing environment conducive to the development of each foster child to his or her full potential. In order to fulfill this obligation the foster parent will make a commitment to the children and to work with the child's family and other professionals.

Foster Parents Agree To:

1. Regard the welfare of the child as the primary obligation.
2. Respect the worth of all individuals regardless of ability, religion, sex or natural ancestry in the capacity as a foster parent.
3. Deal with foster children and their family in a just and considerate manner.
4. Be discreet with information of a sensitive or confidential nature, sharing such information with other professions only if it is felt that such information would benefit the child, their family or if sharing is requested by law.
5. Refrain from unprofessional comments about the foster child or their family.
6. Avoid exploiting* the relationship with any foster child or their family.
7. Work with the child welfare authorities to inform appropriate individuals and agencies of the special needs of a foster child. Assist other individuals and agencies in their endeavours to provide services, treatment and care.
8. Accept any reluctance of the child in care to discuss his/her past circumstances.
9. Hold themselves responsible and to advocate for the quality of services preformed for children in care.

B. COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY

Foster Care is a community social concern. Foster parents recognize their responsibilities towards the community by sharing responsibility in developing sound social policies and programs.

Foster Parents Agree To:

1. Share in the responsibility of improving child welfare services.
2. Acknowledge the right and responsibility of the public to participate in the formulation of child welfare policy and foster care policy.
3. Evaluate, through professional procedures, the conditions of child welfare services and foster care. Make known to the proper authorities if serious deficiencies exist.
4. Protect the welfare of the children against undesirable infringements by advocating for children's rights and opportunities.

C. COMMITMENT TO THE FOSTERING PROFESSION AND FOR THE ASSOCIATION

Foster parents recognize the necessity for continuing education and individual growth within the profession. Foster parents recognize the need for providing a positive and responsive situation to enhance the competency of foster caregivers. They recognize and encourage the retention of competent and dedicated foster parents.

Foster Parents Agree To:

1. Distinguish clearly in public between statements and actions that are made by an individual or as a representative of a foster parent association.
2. Recognize that a profession, and a professional association, must accept responsibility for the conduct of its members and understand that its members' conduct may be regarded as representative of all foster parents.
3. Participate and conduct oneself in a responsible manner in the development and implementation of policies affecting foster children.
4. Cooperate in the recruitment and retention of foster parents by providing honest and objective information.
5. Treat with respect the finding, news and actions of fellow foster parents and use appropriate channels such as Foster Parent Organizations to express any opinions.
6. Accord just and equitable treatment to all foster parents in the exercise of their rights and responsibilities and support them when accused or when they perceive they are being unfairly treated.
7. Refrain from exploiting one's relationships within the Profession, the Association and the Community.
8. Maintain the integrity of the fostering profession and the Association by basing criticism on careful evaluation of facts.
9. Make appropriate use of the time and privileges accorded by one's position as a foster parent or as an Association official. Accept no gratuities or gifts of significance that may influence one's judgement in the exercise of professional duties.
10. Maintain intellectual honesty and integrity by appropriate interpretation and use of all reference materials, research studies and literature.
11. Accept one's own responsibility towards continuing education and personal development.
12. Accept responsibility to work towards assuring that ethical standards are adhered to by any individual, or organization, providing foster care service.

D. COMMITMENT TO PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND PLACEMENT PRACTICES

Foster parents recognize their role and contribution within the child welfare system and in doing so acknowledge and support positive professional practices between themselves and other professionals. Sound relationships with government representatives, community agencies and other professionals are built upon personal integrity, dignity and mutual respect.

Foster Parents Agree To:

1. Accept child placement only when the terms, policies and practices that lead them to believe that their professional skills are adequate to meet needs of the children.
2. Negotiate and execute the terms of all working agreements fairly and honestly.
3. Adhere to the conditions of a working agreement or to the terms of the placement until either has been terminated legally or by mutual consent.
4. Accept no commitment that will impair the effectiveness of ones professional service and permit no exploitation of their professional position.
5. Maintain an attitude of mutual respect when working with other professionals involved in childcare.
6. Follow appropriate channels of resolution when dealing with specific concerns or difficulties.

E. ACCEPTABLE CONDUCT

Should a foster parent fail to abide by the Code of Ethics as set forth, disciplinary action may be taken which can result in censure, suspension or expulsion from the Association or may require corrective action within defined time limits.

*DEFINITION: Exploit: to make use of selfishly or unethically.