



**“Children are the living message
We send into a time
we will never see”**

-George Whitehead

The FireLodge Children & Family Services

Placement Home Handbook

**Citizen Potawatomi Nation
1601 S. Gordon Cooper Drive
Shawnee, OK 74801**





Welcome,

The FireLodge Children and Family Services Child Welfare program, under the direction of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, wants to thank you for contacting our office. We truly appreciate your interest in opening your home and your heart to a child in need.

Our Indian Child Welfare department strives to maintain a quality foster care and adoption program for our children and placement families. This level of quality can only be achieved through the teamwork of our office and our foster care or adoptive homes. We do all we can to provide safe homes and healthy environments for our children; however, we desire the input of our families. Your thoughts, concerns and ideas will help us achieve more positive outcomes for all involved.

For our children,

Darla Courtney
Foster Care/Adoption Specialist
Citizen Potawatomi Nation

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CONTACT NUMBERS

Citizen Potawatomi Nation ICW office (405)878-4831

ICW Fax (405)878-4659

Once a placement is made with your family, you will be given a worker's cell number for emergency purposes. The worker is on call 24/7 to meet the child's needs.

Email contact can be made to the foster care/adoption specialist at dham@potawatomi.org or the ICW Director at jdraper@potawatomi.org

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this handbook is to give placement homes (foster and/or adoptive) a general understanding of the FireLodge Children and Family Service's goals and policies. Citizen Potawatomi Nation's Indian Child Welfare (ICW) acts as a placement agency for children and families that generally come from a background of court involvement. **Our ultimate goal is to keep families together and in touch with their tribal and community connections.** As a team, we all work together to meet this goal for our families and children. Ongoing communication and contact between the placement home and the assigned ICW worker is encouraged and welcomed.

Our approved placement homes are an important part of the overall team. Whether a child is placed in a home on a temporary or long-term basis, the experience of that placement has an effect on the child. One role of the placement home is to help prepare the child for any future changes or moves. The child may be returned to their home or be placed with an adoptive or other permanent home. During these transitions, the children need reassurance, a listening ear, and positive support.

Our ICW department understands that every family is unique. We will work with your family dynamics to find an appropriate placement that will be successful for the child and your family.

THE PURPOSE OF A PLACEMENT HOME

A foster placement home provides care for a child when they cannot be cared for in their own home by their family. A parent may recognize an immediate need and ask for a voluntary emergency placement until the need has been met. Court involvement may order out-of-home placement until the crisis that brought the child into court is resolved and the child can be returned to the parent(s). Adoptive placement homes only wish to be considered when a child is available for adoption. However, a number of families may wish to foster a child and later adopt if the parental rights are terminated. Regardless of the cause, the purpose of the home is to provide a safe, healthy environment that ensures a sense of stability until permanency can be achieved.

TYPES OF HOMES

Regular Foster Home- A temporary placement home that is willing to provide care for a child that has been removed from their home. The child may be in tribal or state custody. There is no time frame as to how long this type of placement may last. These homes must always be aware that it is ICW's ultimate goal to reunite the family and return the child to their home when deemed appropriate. Regular foster home could be called upon to provide emergency or respite care if needed.

Emergency Foster Home- A placement home that is “on call” to provide immediate placement of a child; day or night. The temporary placement will generally be short-term. This type of home will need to be flexible and will need to provide understanding and support to the child during this stressful time.

Respite Foster Home- A temporary placement home to provide short term care for children who may be already placed in another foster or adoptive home. The families of the foster/adoptive homes may be ill, traveling, or just need a short break. Respite care can range from overnight care to a few weeks, if needed.

Regular Adoptive Home- A home that wishes to provide a permanent placement for a child. The children could range in age from birth to 17. Most of these children have been removed from their homes and reunification efforts failed. The parental rights have been terminated and a permanent placement is needed for the child. Generally, these placements are successful and lead to a legal adoption. However, there are certain legal risks involved; these are addressed later in the handbook.

Foster/Adopt Home- A home that wishes to adopt, but is willing to provide foster placement for a child who is not legally available for adoption. While ICW's ultimate goal is reunification of the family, there are often situations which make reunification impossible. If and when the court determines reunification efforts have failed and declares the child is eligible for adoption, the foster/adopt home *may* be considered as a permanent placement for the child that has been in their home. ****IMPORTANT- ICW can never guarantee one of our foster/adopt families that a child placed in their home will be available for adoption by them. Until all**

legal matters have been settled, the child has been made eligible for adoption and the foster/adopt home has been approved for the adoption, the home remains in foster status.

TRIBAL PLACEMENT HOME STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS

Basic Standard for Placement Families

It is the responsibility of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation's Indian Child Welfare Department to recruit, screen, and approve tribal placement homes. During the application process, the primary consideration will be the applicant's capacity to provide love and understanding to a child or children in distress.

Each application received in our office will be assessed by our staff to confirm the applicant(s) meet our tribal qualifications. Some of the necessary requirements are listed in the following sections.

Background Checks

Background checks will be conducted for every family member in the home 18 and over. Other individuals who provide care and supervision for the child may be subject to a background investigation. Acceptable background checks should be free from criminal or child welfare charges. Background investigations include state background checks, fingerprints, and four personal references.

Health

A written statement from a physician, regarding the applicant(s) and their children's general health, specific illnesses, or disabilities must be submitted prior to initial approval. Thereafter, physician statements must be updated every year.

Physical handicaps of applicant(s) will be a consideration only as it affects their ability to provide adequate care to children or may affect an individual child's adjustment to the placement family. Cases will be evaluated on an individual basis with the assistance of medical consultant when needed.

Age

The age of the applicant(s) will be a consideration only as it affects their physical capability, flexibility, vitality, maturity, and ability to provide appropriate authority, supervision, and physical and emotional stamina to manage the guidance, care, and protection of the specific child.

Income

Placement families should have a stable and sufficient income for the maintenance of their household before planning to foster or adopt. This will assure that reimbursement or payment received for placement care will be used to meet the essential needs of the child(ren).

While most children are eligible to receive monthly payments for care, there are rare circumstances that no payments are issued. When situations like this arise, it is important for ICW to be assured the family's income is stable to meet the needs of the home.

Employment

In a two-parent home, it is preferable, in most instances, that both parents are not employed outside of the home so one parent is available for the parenting that the child requires. When both parents or a single parent are employed, it is preferable that the home be used for school aged children. Our agency will make decisions regarding employment situations on the basis of what is in the best interest of the child.

When both parents in a two-parent home or single parents are employed, suitable plans for day care and/or supervision of the child must be approved by the agency. Likewise, for school aged children, plans for after school and summer care must be approved by our agency.

Assessment of the home environment and physical structure

During a scheduled visit, a worker will conduct a home study. The worker will document the following criteria during this visit:

Safety of Physical Facilities

The house and premises shall be reasonably clean. The physical facilities of the home must present no hazards to the safety of the child(ren) placed in the home. The home must meet zoning and housing requirements and/or codes

as set by the public safety department for individual family dwellings. Physical standards for placement homes will be set according to individual living standards for the community in which the home is located; these standards will be sufficient to assure a degree of comfort which will provide for the well-being of the family and its self-respect in the community in which it resides.

Sleeping Arrangements/ Personal Space

A child who is placed in an approved home will be provided an adequate and appropriate sleeping space, consistent with their needs for privacy or personal contact. Individual space will be provided for the child's personal belongings. To ensure the child's comfort and privacy, the following will be considered:

- It is preferable for no more than two children to share sleeping rooms.
- The sharing of sleeping rooms by children of the opposite sex is undesirable, especially for children who may be experiencing difficulties in the development of their sexual identities, attitudes, and behaviors.
- Children must not share sleeping quarters with adults in the household, unless ICW has been notified of special circumstances and has approved the arrangement.
(In all instances when exceptions are necessary, it shall be for children under two years of age or when special cultural, ethnic, or socioeconomic create a situation in which such approval will not be to the detriment of the child.)

Location of Residence

The location of the placement home must be accessible to schools, recreation, churches, other community facilities, and special resources (such as medical clinics) as needed.

Transportation

Placement homes must have ownership or complete access to vehicle. The vehicle must be safe and covered under a current auto insurance policy. Proof of insurance will be required. Age appropriate safety restraints must be used on all children placed in the home.

Telephone

Placement homes must have access to a telephone either by a cell phone or a home phone.

Play Space

The placement home needs to have space inside and outside of the home where the child(ren) can play. Outside spaces should be fenced, if needed, and free from hazards that could prove dangerous. Swimming pools and other types of water sources (ponds, lakes, etc.) will be evaluated for safety.

Additional assessment information

If the home is overall suitable, yet has minor violations, ICW will provide the family with available assistance to meet the above requirements, standards, and/or codes.

All required forms and information must be provided to our office before the home study is considered complete.

If at any time during the certification process it becomes necessary to deny the application, the home study will be closed and the reason(s) for denial will be explained to the applicant.

Family Composition

Our office strives to place a child in a placement that can meet their specific needs. The composition of the family is considered before a placement is made. The addition of a child in the home affects the entire family unit and the best interest of all who are involved must be considered.

While two-parent homes will be selected in most cases, single parents will be selected when they can more effectively fulfill the needs of a particular child.

The presence of other children (biological or foster) and other adults (related or unrelated) in the placement home will be taken into consideration in terms of how they might be effected by or have an affect on another child being brought into the home.

The number and ages of children in a placement home (biological or foster) will be considered on an individual basis. ICW will take into account the parent(s) ability to meet the needs of all children present in the home,

physical accommodations of the home, and especially the effect which an additional child would have on the family as a whole. It is preferable that :

- Placement families will care for not more than two infants (under 2); including the parent(s) own children.
- Placement families should not have more than a total of six children, including foster children and the parent(s) own children. Exceptions could be made in order to keep siblings together.
- The age range of the children in a placement home should be similar to that in a “normal” family in order to lessen competition and comparison.
- All placement families who have children in the home should consider the effect it could have on a child that has not been around other children.
- A foster home will not provide placements for more than one agency at a time without a written agreement delineating the responsibilities of all parties involved.

Personal Qualities and Characteristics

Prospective placement providers will possess qualities of maturity, stability, flexibility and ability. These characteristics are reflected in the following:

- Psycho-social history, including significant childhood relationships and experiences (parent-child, sibling, or other)
- Role identification and acceptance
- Reactions to experiences of separation and loss (through death, desertion, etc.)
- Education, employment, and patterns of interpersonal relationships
- General social, intellectual, and cultural level of the family
- Level of everyday functioning:
- Home and money management ability (daily routine and habits; reactions to stress, etc.)
- Affect responses (ability to give and receive love, deal with loss, separation and disappointment, etc.)
- Moral, ethical, and spiritual qualities of the family
- Religious affiliation and habits
- Hobbies, special interests, skills and talents

Placement Parenting Abilities

An assessment of prospective placement provider's parenting ability regarding a specific child will take into account the following:

- Motivation for application at this time
- Positive morals, values, character and ethics which are beneficial to the child's well-being
- Characteristics and number of children best suited for placement family
- Existing family relationships, attitudes, and expectations regarding own children and parent-child relationships, especially where such existing attitudes and relationships could affect the foster child
- Attitudes of significant members of the extended family regarding child placement
- Ability to accept and love the child as he/she is
- Capacity to absorb the child into the family life functioning without undue disruption
- Capacity of parent(s) to provide for the child's needs while giving consideration to own child(ren)
- Own child(ren)'s attitudes toward accepting a foster child
- Realistic assessment of positive and negative aspects of foster and/or adoptive parenthood
- Personal characteristics necessary to provide continuity of care throughout the child's need for placement
- Flexibility and ability to accept child's relationship with their own parent(s)
- Ability to relate to neglecting and/or abusing natural parent(s)
- Special ability to care for children with special needs. (physical disabilities, emotional disturbances, etc.)
- Ability to accept areas for which ongoing social work assistance may be needed
- Ability to help a child return home or be placed for adoption and gain satisfaction from the experience

Cultural Values

Placement homes must have respect for the child's cultural heritage. Placement homes are encouraged to provide cultural experiences for the child that reflect his/her background.

Spiritual Values

Our agency recognizes the importance of spiritual values held by placement families and our children. The placement home will respect the spiritual beliefs of the child(ren) placed in their home. Placement providers are encouraged to make arrangements for the child(ren) to attend services of their choice if at all possible. A child can not be forced to attend religious services against their will.

Boarders/Child Care providers

Placement homes will inform our office of all persons living in the home. A home will not have adult boarders or roommates living in the home unless special permission is granted from ICW. All adults who live in the home and provide care for the child will be required to have background checks and/or fingerprints completed.

References

Prospective placement homes will submit four references that can testify to the applicant's ability to care for children. Possible references include friends, co-workers, or social acquaintances. The purpose of the references is to get an overall view of the family's interactions, functioning, and character.

THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

After receiving contact from individuals who wish to be considered as a placement home, an information packet is mailed. At any time an applicant needs additional information or assistance in completing the paperwork, they may contact our office. Forms included in the packet are the application, State background check forms, and National Fingerprint background check forms, Department of Public Safety forms and forms for Child Welfare history. Once these forms are returned to our office, references are checked and background checks are submitted to the proper offices.

A check list is attached of certain documentation that must be submitted to our office. All documentation remains confidential.

Documentation includes:

- A copy of tribal membership card/letter
- Automobile Insurance verification
- Copy of Drivers License

- Copy of Social Security Card
- Copy of Marriage License, if applicable
- Copy of Divorce Decree, if applicable
- Notarized financial statement and copies of previous 2 years income tax documents
- Physical exam reports
- Pet Vaccinations, if applicable
- Photos of the family and the home

After the application is reviewed, all background results are obtained and references are returned to our office, a worker will schedule a time to meet with the applicant and family in their home. During the visit, the worker will assess the home and interview the members of the family. The home study is not meant to be intimidating or judgmental. Seeing the applicant(s) and family in their home environment gives the worker a greater picture of family dynamics and interactions. Also, the visit provides time for the family to ask questions or express concerns.

REIMBURSEMENT

Reimbursement rates are set by the State of Oklahoma and are set according to a child's age. These payments are not to be considered a salary for the placement home. The monthly reimbursement is to be used for the child's needs. The needs will vary from child to child but may include clothing, toiletries, toys, school supplies and other related costs, gifts, extra-curricular activities, non-prescription medications, and transportation expenses.

Should the child meet difficulty of care criteria for physical, emotional, or mental health needs, an additional reimbursement would be added to the monthly payment.

All reimbursement payments are sent to the placement home the month following care of the child. Should you have any question regarding overpayment or underpayment, please contact your worker immediately.

Presently, there are not any reimbursements available for out-of-state placement homes.

ADOPTION SUBSIDY

Upon the finalization of an adoption, all foster care reimbursements stop. For placements in Oklahoma, an adoption subsidy application can be submitted prior to the finalization. The subsidy may include a monthly payment and/or medical coverage for the child. In order to obtain adoption subsidy, certain qualifications must be met and approval must be obtained by the State of Oklahoma. Your worker will be able to discuss the details at the time of application.

MONITORING OF PLACEMENT

Every child in the custody of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation will be monitored at least once a month. Face-to-face visits with the child(ren) and the placement family are preferred. However, phone contact will be made if circumstances arise and the visit is not possible. Visits may or may not be scheduled. Your worker will be available should more visits be needed. Any time you need assistance or have concerns, feel free to contact your worker.

Your worker will be required to make oral and/or written reports to the court concerning the child and progress. Information provided by the placement homes is essential in determining the best outcome for the child. An open, honest and trusting relationship between the placement home and the worker is critical. Your worker will do their best to keep you informed of the court progress and changes in the case. While some information is not pleasant for placement homes to hear, our staff will be truthful and do our best to relieve any anxieties you have.

VISITATIONS

When reunification of the family is the goal, there may be court ordered visits for the child and their biological family members. Transportation to and from visits will be needed. Prior to placement, your case worker will inform you of your portion of transportation responsibilities. It is common for placement families to have concerns when dealing with biological families; however, any questions or concerns can be discussed with the worker.

DAYCARE

When both placement parents work and/or attend school, the State of Oklahoma may provide daycare costs. Your worker will provide application information to you prior to placement. Your local DHS can provide you with a list of licensed daycare providers in your area.

Application should be submitted as soon as possible. The placement home may be responsible for daycare costs incurred prior to approval by the DHS.

Out-of-state placement homes will need to contact their local social services agency to see what assistance may be available.

TEMPORARY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Occasional care may be needed for the child(ren). Placement homes may make informal arrangements with friends, relatives, or neighbors. However, background checks must be conducted on all individuals prior to them providing care for the child(ren). Notify your worker for assistance in this matter. Should care be provided in a home other than the placement home, a walk-through of the home must be completed.

CHILD PASSENGER RESTRAINTS

The State of Oklahoma requires "Every driver, when transporting a child under eight (8) years of age in a motor vehicle operated on the roadways, streets, or highways of this state, shall provide for the protection of said child by properly using a child passenger restraint system. For purposes of this section and Section 11-1113 of this title, "child passenger restraint system" means an infant or child passenger restraint system which meets the federal standards as set by 49 C.F.R., Section 571.213. . . Children at least eight (8) years of age but younger than thirteen (13) years of age shall be protected by use of a child passenger restraint system or a seat belt."

*Passenger restraint laws vary from state to state. When residing outside of Oklahoma or traveling to another state, please inquire of that state's requirements.

KNOW THE LAW. PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

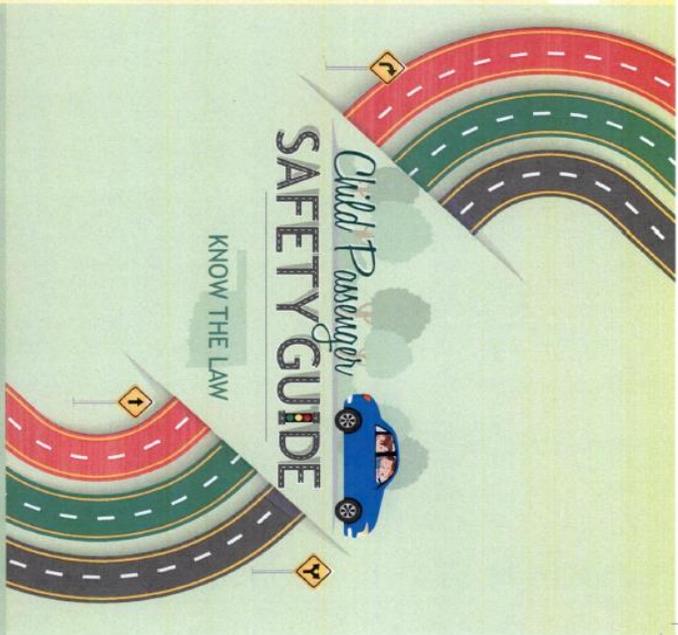
Have your child's car seat or booster seat checked by one of the many certified child passenger safety technicians available throughout the state.

To find a CPS technician
www.safecar.gov/parents
 select "Car Seats," and then
 "Get Your Seat Inspected."
 Oklahoma State Department of Health
 Injury Prevention Service
 (405) 271-3430 or 1-800-522-0204
cps.health.ok.gov

Oklahoma's Child Passenger Safety Law, effective November 1, 2015, meets the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

4 OUT OF 5 KIDS ARE NOT AS SECURE AS THEY SHOULD BE because their car seats are not being used correctly.

Properly installed car seats & booster seats reduce the chance of death in a motor vehicle crash by **71%** for infants under 1 year & **54%** & **54%** for toddlers ages 1 - 4.



Oklahoma's Child Passenger Safety Law

OKLAHOMAS
CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY LAW

Know the Ages & Stages

BIRTH - 2 YEARS



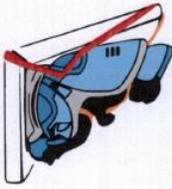
REAR-FACING

INFANT | CONVERTIBLE | 3-IN-1

All children under age 2 must be properly secured in a rear-facing car seat.

- Rear-facing is the safest way for small children to travel.
- They should remain rear-facing until they reach 2 years of age or until they exceed the height or weight limit of the car seat.

2 - 4 YEARS



FORWARD-FACING

CONVERTIBLE | 3-IN-1 | COMBINATION

All children under age 4 must be properly secured in a car seat with an internal harness.

- A 5-point harness is the safest restraint system and should be used as long as possible (until the child exceeds the harness' weight limit).

4 - 8 YEARS



BOOSTER

3-IN-1 | COMBINATION | BOOSTER

All children at least 4 years old (but younger than age 8) must ride in a child passenger restraint system or booster seat, unless they are taller than 4'9".

- A booster seat should be used until the child can properly fit into a seat belt.

8 YEARS +



SEAT BELT

BACK SEAT FOR SAFEST TRAVEL

All children taller than 4'9" (or age 8 and up) should be restrained in a seat belt.

- Front seat airbags may hurt small children.
- Riding in the back seat of the vehicle is the safest way for children to travel.



FITS YOUR VEHICLE
 Not every car seat can be installed correctly in every car. Try before you buy.

KNOW THE LIMITS
 ALWAYS follow the weight and height limits of the car seat.

AGE IS IMPORTANT
 The younger children are, the more fragile they are, and the more protection they need.

EASY FOR YOU TO USE
 Try out the features of the car seat. Choose a car seat that will be easy for you to use correctly every time.

MEDICAL SERVICES AND MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

When a child is placed, the placement home will be provided an authorization for medical care. The placement home will be responsible for scheduling routine medical, dental, and visual care. Should you have any questions, contact your worker.

Should an emergency illness or accident arise, contact your assigned worker immediately. You should carry emergency contact information and the child's medical information with you at all times.

All children who are eligible for medical coverage will be issued a medical card. The card should be provided to you at the time of placement. Medical cards cover the expense of medical services and prescriptions for the child. Over-the-counter medications are not covered by the medical insurance. It is the responsibility of the placement to locate a physician who accepts the child's medical card. Your worker can assist you if needed. Always remember that Indian Health Services are available for tribal children.

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Placement homes and the child's worker share responsibility in meeting the child's educational needs. Your worker will assist in obtaining school records and transcripts that are needed for enrollment. It is the placement home's responsibility to see that the child attends school regularly and receives special assistance or tutoring, if needed. When filling out paperwork, the placement home should provide their information as well as contact information for the child's worker.

Often, children who have been deprived or neglected have developmental delays and function below their chronological age. Many of these children flourish with positive influence and care; however, others may require various services. As a placement home, ICW expects the placement home to stay actively involved and advocate for the child's educational needs.

TRAVEL/VACATIONS

We all need a break now and then and we encourage our placement homes to include the child(ren) in their travel and vacation plans. Prior to traveling, you must inform the child's worker of where you are going, how long you

will be gone and how to contact you while you are gone. When a child is traveling out-of-state, consent must be given by ICW.

If it is not possible for the child to travel with you, contact the child's worker to discuss alternative arrangements. We strive to make the transition for short term care as easy as possible for the child. If the child knows the individual, the change of care proves to be easier and less stressful.

GRIEVANCE PROCESS

As a placement home, you have the right to file a grievance should you have a dispute or complaint regarding policies, rules, decisions, behaviors or conduct that has a negative effect on the child in custody. All grievances will be reviewed and given fair consideration. Corrections will be made should misconduct be confirmed.

ICW will make every effort to resolve disputes at the time of the incident. If a concern occurs, please contact your worker or the supervisor immediately. By working together, most issues can be resolved before there is a need to file a grievance.

OUR EXPECTATIONS OF TRIBAL PLACEMENT HOMES

Once the applicant has completed the process and received approval as a foster and/or adoptive home, they will be considered for the placement of a child in their home. ICW holds certain expectations for our placement homes.

Approved placement homes (foster and/or adoptive) are expected to:

- protect any child placed in their home
 - Families will not subject a child in their care to any form of dangerous or unhealthy situation.
 - Any member or friend of the placement family who have a present or past criminal history of violence or sexual crime will not be allowed to be around the child placed in their home.
 - Families will not allow a child placed in their care to be around individuals who may be or are under the influence of drugs or alcohol
 - Families will not be involved in any illegal activity or allow a child to be around individuals who are involved in illegal activity
- fully cooperate with ICW staff at all times

- Families will maintain contact with the assigned case worker and allow the child to make contact with the worker if he/she desires
- Families will give the ICW workers access to the child(ren) for announced or unannounced visits
- Families will notify ICW immediately if emergency medical attention is required, if the child harms him/herself or others, if the child is missing, or if there is suspicion the child in their care is abusing drugs or alcohol
- maintain confidentiality at all times
 - Families will agree to and abide by the ICW confidentiality policy. (See the enclosed Confidentiality policy and acknowledgement)
- be open and honest during the approval process and maintain their truthfulness throughout their time as a placement home
 - Families will be honest concerning past or current involvement with any child welfare agency, criminal activity, or substance abuse and past or current health issues.
- provide our office with current and updated information
 - Families will provide information to ICW concerning any changes of contact information, housing, employment, or other personal issues that could effect the child(ren) placed in their care
- agree to all FireLodge Children and Family Services policies and guidelines found in this handbook.
 - Families will agree to the policies and guidelines within the handbook. (See the enclosed Discipline policy and acknowledgement, Confidentiality)
- provide a safe, nurturing environment, in which a child is treated with respect and kindness
 - Families should never belittle the child(ren) or make negative statements about the child or their biological family. Families should never pressure a child to talk about their past; the child will bring it up if and when they choose. Families are encouraged to engage the child in normal age appropriate activities. Families will provide the child(ren) with food, shelter, clothes, and personal care items. Families will provide support and understanding to the child(ren)

What You Can Expect From Our Agency

A Case Worker will be assigned to each case. As the placement home, you should be aware of what you should expect from ICW and our workers.

- ICW workers are expected to treat children and placement homes with respect and kindness
- ICW workers expected to stay in contact with our children, placement homes and make monthly visits
- ICW workers are expected to support and help our placement homes when they have questions or concerns
- ICW workers are expected to keep the placement home and child(ren) (if applicable) informed to court hearings
- ICW workers are expected to maintain communication with the child(ren) and answer questions they may have
- ICW workers are expected to cooperate with placement providers to make sure the child(ren)'s needs are met; referral resources will be accessed, if necessary
- ICW workers are expected to provide contact numbers to placement providers for use when our office is closed
- ICW workers expected to return phone calls and/or emails in a timely manner
- ICW workers are expected to act upon the best interest of the child and the tribe when making recommendations to the court

After reading the Handbook and Expectations of Tribal Placement Homes, please sign this page and return it to your worker. This page will remain in your file.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, _____ and
(Name of applicant)

_____,
(Name of applicant)

Hereby acknowledges I/we have reviewed the handbook and understand the Citizen Potawatomi Nation FireLodge Children and Family Services' Expectations of Tribal Placement Homes. I/we understand we are responsible for the information contained in this handbook. By signing below, I/we agree to cooperate with ICW, abide by the expectations and work within the guidelines set forth in this handbook.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Signature of Applicant

Date

**DISCLAIMER: Citizen Potawatomi Nation reserves the right to make necessary changes, or additions to this policy.*

DISCIPLINE POLICY

ICW understands that our discipline policy may be different from the way placement homes have chosen to discipline their own children. However, all placement homes must agree to abstain from the use of physical punishment, agree to abide by our policy, and sign the acknowledgement page. The signed paper will become part of the placement home's file.

At the mention of the word 'discipline,' many thoughts come to mind; much of those are negative. However, discipline is defined as teaching or training. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the placement homes to teach the child(ren) placed in their home acceptable behaviors. The goal of positive discipline is to teach children what to do instead of just telling them what they can not do.

As placement homes use positive discipline, the benefits are great. The child learns self-control and how to problem solve in order to get their needs met. In addition, the child experiences a positive adult-child relationship and their self-esteem is not diminished.

Positive discipline techniques include:

Positive behavior management

Rewards- While this technique can not be used all of the time, it can be used to acknowledge the effort and interest the child has taken in correcting their behavior(s). Small rewards may include stickers, treats or special privileges. Praise of the child's effort is always an acceptable reward.

Self-Control

Expectations-Many children have never experienced boundaries and if they have been in several placements, the boundaries varied from home to home. First, placement homes need to establish rules for their home and communicate these rules to the child at the beginning of the placement. A child feels more secure when they know what to expect and what is expected from them. Routines and structure provide an environment in which a child can develop and maintain self-control.

Modifications-If the child is to succeed at certain tasks, the home environment may need to be modified. A child friendly environment is a must. Sources or items of stimulation

may have to be moved or removed to help the child gain and maintain self-control.

Direct Intervention – If a child is not able to demonstrate self-control in their behaviors, intervention by the placement home is needed. It is important that all interventions are age and developmentally appropriate.

Reinforce- Reinforce the rules of the home; remind the child what can and cannot be done. Reinforcement teaches the child what is right and what is wrong. Placement homes may need to demonstrate correct behavior and teach the child how to respond to problems. Verbal disapproval of unacceptable behavior should only be directed at the behavior, never at the child.

Redirect- Redirect the child to another area or activity. Redirection may include removing an unsafe object or toy and replacing it with a safe toy. The child may need to be guided to a safe area in which they have less restrictions.

Time-Out- Time-out should be used as a means for children to separate from the unacceptable situation and regain self-control.

Recommended time-out is one minute per age of the child.

Restricting privileges- Restrictions may include, but are not limited to, television privileges, playing with a certain toy, or engaging in a certain activity. Restricting visitation with siblings or parents can not be used as a form of discipline.

Grounding- Grounding is generally used for older children and usually involves restrictions concerning outside-the-home activities, such as attending a specific functions (parties, movies, etc) or not being allowed to go with friends. Grounding is normally set for a specific length of time. Caution must be exercised to not over use this form of discipline and the time frame must be kept reasonable.

ICW is available to assist you in exploring discipline options, if needed. If a child ever displays behavior to the extreme of hurting others or themselves, please contact our office or the emergency number provided to you.

It is important to note that for many children who are in court custody, physical and emotional discipline has been used in their home. Often, the physical punishment was the only attention they received. For others, physical discipline resulted in abuse. Positive discipline teaches the child

healthy behavior modification and potentially breaks the generational cycle of physical abuse.

Examples of discipline techniques which are not appropriate include, but are not limited to:

- Use of a hand or any object (such as a paddle, belt, switch, wooden spoon, hair brush, fly swatter, etc.)
- Deprivation of food or sleep
- Deprivation of family visits
- Slapping, pinching, shaking, biting, kicking, shoving, or rough jerking
- Cursing or other verbal abuse
- Private or public humiliation or any act that degrades the child
- Derogatory remarks about the child, the child's biological family, race, religion, or cultural background
- Solitary confinement in areas such as closets, or rooms with locked doors or any type of confinement for long periods of time
- Threatening to move a child from the placement home
- Use of any chemical agent, such as mace, sleeping pills, or alcohol
- Physical force or threat of physical force
- Assuming and maintaining an unnatural position (arms outstretched, nose against the wall, squatting against the wall, etc.)
- Tying with a rope, cord, or other object
- Ordering, allowing, or encouraging physical discipline or hitting by other children or adults in the home
- Washing the mouth out with soap, eating certain foods which may include peppers or hot sauce as a form of punishment
- Forced physical exertion, such as running laps and push-ups

After reading the Discipline Policy, sign the form below and return it to your worker. This page will remain in your file.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, _____ and
(Name of applicant)

_____,
(Name of applicant)

Hereby acknowledges I/we have reviewed and understand the Citizen Potawatomi Nation FireLodge Children and Family Services' Discipline Policy. By signing below, I/we agree to abide by and cooperate with the Discipline Policy.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Signature of Applicant

Date

**DISCLAIMER: Citizen Potawatomi Nation reserves the right to make necessary changes, or additions to this policy.*

CONFIDENTIALITY

A certain amount of personal information about the child will be disclosed to Placement families, as they must be informed before accepting a child in their home. Placement Homes need to be aware of a child's history which may include health conditions and behaviors. As time goes by, additional information may be disclosed or discussed.

Our agency's standard of confidentiality applies to all children in our custody, without exception. All information that is shared between ICW and the placement family is extremely confidential. This type of information cannot be shared with close friends or other family members. A high level of care must be exercised when talking in a public setting and/or in front of the child; careless comments could be overheard and damaging. With that knowledge, our placement homes must remain guarded and protect each child.

Certain professional agencies need confidential information in order to provide care of services for a child. Confidential information may be shared with the child's personal physician, therapist or counselor, attorney, school personnel, the court and other ICW workers involved with the child.

Information regarding a child's biological family is not to be shared with others. Our desire is for every child to feel safe and secure in their placement and know their family situations and problems are not being talked about with others. Our children have a right to privacy and to have their privacy respected by those who care for them.

If a placement home ever questions whether they can disclose information in certain situations, they are asked to contact our office and speak with an ICW worker.

After reading the Confidentiality Policy, sign the form below and return it to your worker. This page will remain in your file.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, _____ and
(Name of applicant)

_____,
(Name of applicant)

Hereby acknowledges I/we have reviewed and understand the Citizen Potawatomi Nation FireLodge Children and Family Services' Confidentiality Policy. By signing below, I/we understand that information which is disclosed to me at any time, either in private or while visiting the Indian Child Welfare Office, is confidential. I/we understand that disclosure of this information without written consent of the client or the ICW Office is a breach of confidentiality and subject to the laws and regulations dealing with such disclosure.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Signature of Applicant

Date

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NO SMOKING POLICY

FireLodge Children and Family Services strive to maintain healthy environments for all children in our custody. Many studies have shown the harmful effects and damage of second-hand smoke. Therefore, our agency requests all placement homes provide a smoke free environment when children are in their home.

Our agency and OKDHS policy states “when children are in care, smoking is prohibited inside the home or when transporting children.” ICW encourages those who smoke to designate smoking areas outside of the home. Possible smoking areas include the front or back yard, garage, front or back porch or a patio. If you have questions or concerns regarding this policy, please contact your assigned worker.

After reading the No Smoking Policy, sign the form below and return it to your worker. This page will remain in your file.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, _____ and
(Name of applicant)

_____,
(Name of applicant)

Hereby acknowledges I/we have reviewed and understand the Citizen Potawatomi Nation FireLodge Children and Family Services' No Smoking Policy. By signing below, I/we agree to abide by and cooperate with the No Smoking Policy.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Signature of Applicant

Date

**DISCLAIMER: Citizen Potawatomi Nation reserves the right to make necessary changes, or additions to this policy.*

LEGAL RISK INFORMATION

Every placement home should be acquainted with the term “Legal Risk,” especially those who are interested in becoming a foster/adopt or adoptive home.

“Legal Risk” usually involves placements whose ultimate goal is the adoption of a child. Any time parental rights have not been terminated, there is always a “risk” that the child will be returned to the biological parents. All placement homes need to understand this risk and realize that our agency can never guarantee that the child will eventually be free for adoption. Until termination of parental rights occurs, the “risk” remains.

The Federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) establishes placement preferences for children who have been removed from their home. ICWA lists the preferences in the following order:

1. With a member of the child’s extended family
2. With a member of the Indian child’s tribe
3. With other tribal families

Under ICWA, relative placements are researched first. If no interest or appropriate placement is found, the child is placed in an approved tribal placement home. However, at any time during court intervention, a member of the child’s extended family may present themselves to the court and request consideration for placement. Again, this places prospective adoptive placements at “risk” until a final decree is issued.

Every case is unique and the legal risks vary from case to case. However, our agency will provide each placement home with as much permanency information as possible so they can make informed decisions. We value our placement families and understand that only they can make the decision as to whether or not they are willing to take the risk for the potential reward of adopting a child.

While the risks may seem overwhelming, there are many benefits of placing a child in a foster/adopt or adoptive home before the parental rights are terminated. Rewards for the child include acceptance in a family and a sense of belonging. Often, foster/adoptive homes tend to accept the child fully into their family, knowing that the child could potentially become a

permanent member. Even if the child is returned home, the time spent in the family was often of a higher quality level of emotional and physical care.

The family that is willing to take the risk reaps benefits as well. Due to the possible permanency of the placement, the child generally experiences less moves and displays less behavioral and emotional problems. Even if a child is returned to their biological home, the family can know that they provided quality care to the child and made an impact on their life.

After reading the Legal Risk Information, sign the form below and return it to your worker. This page will remain in your file.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, _____ and
(Name of applicant)

_____,
(Name of applicant)

Hereby acknowledges I/we have reviewed and understand the Legal Risk Information provided by the Citizen Potawatomi Nation FireLodge Children and Family Services. By signing below, I/we understand there are legal risks associated with accepting foster/adopt or adoptive placements.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Signature of Applicant

Date

**DISCLAIMER: Citizen Potawatomi Nation reserves the right to make necessary changes, or additions to this policy.*