

Client Brochure

Date: _____

Dear _____, (Name of Child)

While you are in the care of Family Link, we want to ensure your rights as described in the enclosed list. Along with these rights, you also have certain responsibilities (rules—also enclosed), which you (and others in your foster home) must follow.

Family Link has assigned a team of workers to make sure that you have the best care possible. They include:

- Foster Parents—responsible for your daily care and well-being
- CPS Case Manager—responsible for overseeing you and your family's service plan
- Family Link Case Manager—responsible for managing your team of workers
- Therapist—responsible for helping you deal with your feelings and behaviors
- Psychologist—responsible for assessing your emotional and behavioral needs
- Psychiatrist—responsible for assessing and monitoring your medication(s) needs
- Others—physicians, dentists, teachers, administrators, court personnel—all working in support of YOU!

We want to quickly establish where you are going from here, what has to happen to get you there, and how long it should take. Within the first thirty (30) days, and each three (3) or (6) months thereafter, you and your treatment team will convene to determine how well you are doing in each area of your life. Then we will help you establish goals that you wish to pursue and plans to meet those goals.

We hope that you feel valued while you are in our care and forever after.

Please call 512-233-6464 if you have any needs or questions that your foster parent(s) cannot address.

Sincerely,

Family Link Case Manager Printed Name

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

1. Children must not be abused, neglected, or exploited. ("First and foremost, do no harm"). Children have the right to report abuse, neglect, exploitation, or violation of personal rights without fear of punishment, interference, coercion, or retaliation.
2. Children must have the opportunity for sibling visits and contact when a sibling group is not placed in the same home or facility. FamilyLink will provide transportation to ensure that siblings have the opportunity to visit. FamilyLink will attempt to provide the facility for visits for sibling groups when requested by the legally responsible party.
3. Children must have the opportunity for regular contact with their family unless this is against the child's best interest, as determined by appropriate professionals or court restrictions.
4. Children must receive appropriate care and treatment in the least restrictive setting available that can meet the child's needs. The environment must provide reasonable protection from harm and appropriate privacy for personal needs.
5. Children must have an appropriate education as well as the right to appropriate amount of school supplies.
6. Children must have their own bed, mattress, towels, pillows and personal storage space.
7. The right to be able to communicate in a language or any other means that is understandable to the child at admission or within a reasonable time after an emergency admission of a child.
8. The right to be free from discrimination on the basis of gender race, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation
9. The right to a humane environment, including any treatment environment, which provides reasonable protection from harm and appropriate privacy for personal needs
10. The right to have his physical, emotional, developmental, educational, social and religious needs met.
11. Children must have an opportunity to participate in community functions and recreational activities and have their social needs met.
12. Children must have clothing suitable to their age and size and have some choice in clothing selection. Clothing must be adequate to protect against natural elements such as rain, snow, wind, cold, sun, and insects. Children have the right to label their clothing if they desire to do so.
13. Children must be given training in personal care, hygiene, and grooming. Each child must be supplied with equipment for personal care, hygiene, and grooming. Appropriate ethnic hair care must be given when applicable.
14. Money a child earns or is given as a gift or allowance must be his personal property. A child's money must be accounted for separately from the agency's funds or the funds of the facility with whom (s)he is placed. A child must not be required to use his personal money to

pay for room and board, unless it is a part of the service plan and approved in writing by the parents or legally responsible party and the child-placing agency. A child has the right to be compensated for any work done for the agency or home as a part of the child's service plan or vocational training, with the exception of assigned routine duties that relate to the child's living environment.

15. Children have the right to privacy in writing, sending, or receiving correspondence (including electronic mail) and telephone calls. The children's mail or calls will not be censored unless the mail or call(s) is/are suspected of containing *unauthorized, injurious or illegal material, information or substances*. If so, the need for restriction is determined by the Treatment Director of FamilyLink, and the need is documented in the child's record. If the restrictions last more than a month, the same personnel must re-evaluate the restrictions at least monthly, explain those reasons to the child and document the reasons for continued restriction in the child's record.
16. A child must be allowed to bring personal possessions to the agency home and allowed to acquire other personal possessions. Children are allowed any possessions that are not illegal and do not go against the individual rules of the foster home. These rules will be explained at admission.
17. Children have the right to an opportunity to participate in religious activities, services and counseling, taking into account choices specified by the parents or guardian of the child.
18. Children have the right to file a grievance if they are dissatisfied with the service. They should notify any of the professional staff at FamilyLink. Each FamilyLink worker has the responsibility to respond within forty-eight hours. If the child is dissatisfied with the response (s)he may appeal to the any level of staff, including the Executive Director. Any time a child feels (s)he is not making progress in the appeal process (s)he may contact his/her legally responsible party or state licensing representative.
19. Children have a right to participate in and be informed of their plans of service and to receive the services based solely on their needs. If there is a discrepancy among the services identified and the care, treatment, and/or payment of such services, FamilyLink serves as an advocate to ensure resolution of such conflicts. Service plans will discuss the child's needs, including transitional and discharge planning.
20. Children have the right to receive emotional, mental health, or chemical dependency treatment separately from adults (other than young adults) who are receiving services. Children also have the right to receive appropriate treatment for physical problems that affect his/her treatment or safety.
21. Children are protected from breaches of confidentiality and privacy as well as research conducted without their consent and the consent of the legally responsible party. Foster children's identities shall be protected ("whited out") from anyone viewing information from their records without (a) the authorization (signed, valid "Release of Information") from either (a) the legally responsible party or (b) an authorized representative from the referring agency. Children's identities are not protected from those that "need to know:" (a) members of the "treatment team" (those who sign plans of service) and their supervisors, authorized representatives from the state system, e.g., licensing personnel and other authorized agents of the Department, investigative personnel, caseworkers and their supervisors, child advocates, state contract personnel and their subcontractors, a child or parent's attorney, a

court and court services; or (b) the legally responsible party. Information released to persons other than the above must have prior authorization of the court. Information may be made available only when the information released does not contain material which violates the right to privacy of another individual or is protected or made confidential by law, or both.

22. Children have a right to consent in writing before permitting the use of his/her photograph for any publicity or fund raising activity for the agency
23. Foster children shall not be required to acknowledge their dependency, neglect, destitution or gratitude. They shall not be required to perform at public meetings or be used for media or fund-raising events. Any information that invades the privacy of the child may not be used without express written consent of the child and his/her parent(s) or legally responsible party.
24. Children have a right to report an inappropriate restraint in accordance with the above grievance procedure.
25. Children have the right to be free of any unnecessary or excessive medication.
26. Children have a right to be free from pressure to get an abortion, relinquish a child for adoption, or to parent a child, if applicable.
27. Foster children 14 years or older have a right to review information in their (“open” as well as “closed”) records according to the following procedures. The request should be made to the child’s Case Manager at Family Link. The request should include the type of information requested and the purpose of request. The Treatment Director will review the request within one work week, and (s)he will determine compliance with the request. (S)he may censor any information that (s)he believes would be more injurious than beneficial to the child; the reasons for such censorship will be explained to the child. If the child feels that the decision is unfair, the child may appeal the decision in accordance with the above grievance procedure. All client files are locked in a file cabinet in the local administrative office of Family Link when not in use. Files which must be taken out of the office for court hearings, Plan of Service meetings, etc., must be checked out and documented in the file as follows: *Date and time out; reason for checking out; Date and time in; signature of person checking the file out.* All information in the files is confidential and may not be expunged. Other access to client records is available only to those members of the treatment team who are employees of FamilyLink, the referring agency, or subcontractors of FamilyLink who have a need to know.
28. Children have a right to the best effort of Family Link to have any disability needs met. Children with physical, mental, medical and/or emotional disabilities will be afforded all resources available to Family Link including but not limited to: Foster home recruitment, training, screening, support and supervision; clinical services provided by FamilyLink staff or subcontractors; money from fund-raising efforts for services not included in payments made to FamilyLink or by Medicaid; and referral to other resources which may be better equipped to meet particular needs.
29. Children have the right to hire independent mental health professionals, medical professionals, and attorneys at their own expense.

30. Children have the right to discipline that is appropriate to the child's age and developmental level. Children have the right to have restrictions or disciplinary consequences explained when the measures are imposed. Discipline of any kind is not appropriate for infants. Children also have the right to be free from any harsh, cruel, unusual, unnecessary, demeaning, or humiliating punishment, which includes:
- (A) Shaking the child;
 - (B) Subjecting the child to corporal punishment;
 - (C) Threatening the child with corporal punishment;
 - (D) Any unproductive work that serves no purpose except to demean the child, such as moving rocks from one pile to another or digging a hole and then filling it in;
 - (E) Denying the child food, sleep, toileting facilities, mail, or family visits as punishment;
 - (F) Subjecting the child to remarks that belittle or ridicule the child or the child's family; and
 - (G) Threatening the child with the loss of placement or shelter as punish

RULES:

1. Keep Daily Schedule and routine of my Foster-Adopt home
2. Obey my Foster-Adopt Parents the first time
3. Keep hands and feet to myself (unless I get permission from my Foster-Adopt parents)
4. Knock and get permission to enter rooms with closed doors
5. Get permission to use others' property and return it in the same (or better) condition at (or before) the time agreed
6. Follow through on my responsibilities in my service plan
7. If I don't know about something ASK a trusted adult for guidance!
8. Alcohol, Tobacco, Cigarettes, Drug Paraphernalia, objects which can cause harm, sexual behaviors, and unauthorized drugs, including but not limited to marijuana, cocaine and heroine, are prohibited
9. Dating, use of phone, driving, hunting, church attendance and other privileges will be determined by my team of workers. They will be in line with the habits and values of my Foster-Adopt family and my desires and level of maturity.

CONSEQUENCES: (Level Systems, Point Systems, Other--All consistent and reasonable)

POSITIVE:

1. Encouragement--specific to the behavior
2. Privileges--TV, Video games, phone, music, free time, social activities, one-on-one time, extended awake time, (not food)
3. Money--define amount
4. Points or Level changes--formal written and approved system

NEGATIVE: (See Discipline Policy in Handbook for Foster Parents)

1. Restitution
2. Withdraw or reduce privileges (See above list)
3. Fines--define amounts
4. Restriction to house (no more than 24 hours w/o approval) grounds or care taker
5. Points or Level changes--formal written and approved system
6. Time out--One minute per year of age + 1"Shadowing"—Defined distance and time period with care taker
7. Special Meeting--Support team decides on punishment for gross misconduct
8. Redirection

POLICY OF DISCIPLINE

The Agency's discipline policy prohibits the use of physical punishment. Foster parents must be attuned to opportunities to emphasize and reinforce the positive aspects of each child's behavior. Restrictions, restitution or other activities may be used as consequences for misbehavior.

The use of positive reinforcement and positive responses to children will greatly reduce the negative responses and acting out of children. Appropriate use of the level system and a desire to respond with the answer "yes" rather than "no" will always encourage the child to respond likewise in a positive manner. Foster parents must look for opportunities to reward and acknowledge good or improved behavior.

Disciplinary measures used by foster parents must:

1. Be consistent with the use of least restrictive intervention.
2. Not be physically or emotionally damaging to the child.
3. Be individualized to meet each child's needs.

Discipline, properly administered, should promote a value of self-control and positive regard for self and others. Specifically, foster parents must adhere to the following:

- Praise and encouragement.
- Positive interaction with the foster child.
- Positive recognition for good behavior (i.e. rewards, positive feedback, extra privileges, individual attention).
- Discussion within the limits of a child's age and verbal capacity of alternative behavior, solutions and consequences
- Logical and natural consequences (i.e. cleaning up cereal intentionally poured on the floor)
- Restitution for damage at no more than a dollar for dollar value
- Loss of visits with friends or classmates not to exceed two weeks without the approval of the family's case manager or Placement Director.
- Loss of the use of the telephone not to exceed two weeks without the approval of the family's case manager or Placement Director.
- Loss of special activity
- Loss of the use of television, radio, cassette or CD player not to exceed two weeks without the approval of the family's case manager or Placement Director
- Loss of outings, not including visits with parents or managing conservator, for a specific period of time not to exceed one week
- Time out in one's room not to exceed two hours with adequate food, water, and restroom breaks.

All Abusive discipline practices are prohibited, including:

- Ridicule, verbal abuse or threats, derogatory or humiliating comments.
- Physical punishment inflicted on the body.
- Punishment for bedwetting and actions related to toilet training.
- Denial of food, water, shelter, sufficient sleep, clothing or bedding
- Denial of actions prescribed by the Individual Service Plan.
- Delegation of discipline to another child or group of children.

- Denial of communication with or visiting by or with the family for the purpose of punishment.
- Assigning physically strenuous exercise or unproductive work solely as punishment (i.e. moving rocks from one pile to another).
- Requiring a child to remain silent for long periods of time.
- Placing a child in a locked room
- Group punishment for the misbehavior of an individual child
- Delegation of discipline to a person not known by the child.
- Fixed body positions and mechanical restraints.
- Using food (including snacks and candy) as a primary reward.

Prohibited Discipline Techniques

The following techniques may not be used on a child:

1. Chemical restraints, mechanical restraints, and seclusion.
2. Aversive conditioning, which includes, but is not limited to, any technique designed to or likely to cause a child physical pain, the application of startling stimuli, and the release of noxious stimuli or toxic sprays, mists, or substances in proximity to the child's face;
3. Pressure points;
4. Rebirthing therapy; and
5. Hug and/or holding therapy.

Restricting a Child's Activities as a Behavior Management Tool

Within limits, a foster parent may restrict a child's activities as a behavior management tool. Restrictions of activities, other than school or chores, which will be imposed on a child for more than 30 days, must be reviewed with and approved by the child placement management staff or treatment director prior to or within 24 hours of imposing the restriction. Restrictions to a particular room or building that will be imposed on a child for more than 24 hours must have approval from the service planning team, a professional service provider, or treatment director prior to or within 24 hours of imposing the restriction. FamilyLink will inform the child and parent about any such restrictions placed on the child. Documentation of all approvals, justification for the restriction, and informing the child and parents will be in the child's record.

All complaints of abuse and/or neglect on the part of the foster parents or others associated with the foster home will be reported to the TDFPS abuse hotline and appropriate law enforcement agency (if warranted). A TDFPS Licensing Representative and/or appropriate law enforcement agency will investigate to determine whether or not the complaints are valid. FamilyLink foster families must cooperate fully during any investigative process conducted by TDFPS and law enforcement.

Personal Restraint

Personal restraint is permitted only for emergency use when a child is a danger to himself/herself or others and only after less restrictive measures have been attempted. Personal restraint is defined as any contact with a caregiver's body applied to restrict the movement of the whole or a portion of the child's body. Behavior endangering self or others is defined as behavior capable of causing physical harm to self or others. Behaviors requiring restraint may include fighting, attacking foster parents, self-abuse, and destruction of property. Personal restraint will not be used as punishment, as a substitute for effective treatment or

program, or for the foster parent's convenience. When emergency personal restraint is used, only such force as is reasonable and necessary may be used.

Only foster parents and foster home childcare staff trained in the use of personal restraint are authorized to restrain a child. This training will occur prior to children being placed in a home, and annually thereafter. Foster parents will be administered a test at the end of each training to verify whether or not they are appropriately trained to administer restraints. FamilyLink Treatment Services, Inc. approves of restraint methods taught in CPI and PAPH training courses, and such methods are physical holds that do not produce pain.

At admission, FamilyLink will obtain each child's input on preferred de-escalation techniques that caregivers can use to assist the child in the de-escalation process. FamilyLink will revisit this information with the child and caregivers during each post emergency behavior intervention discussion

Before deciding whether or not a restraint is appropriate, the caregiver must use de-escalative techniques such as the following:

- The caregiver will offer choices and avoid power-struggles.
- The caregiver will allow face-saving for children, allowing the "last word".
- The caregiver will use humor and diversion where appropriate.
- The caregiver will offer the child the chance to "cool off" by spending time in their room or outside (while being properly supervised)
- The caregiver will offer the child the opportunity to express his or her emotions in a positive way such as by punching a punching bag or screaming into a pillow
- The caregiver will ask the child for suggestions on what to do to help calm the child down.

Only once these techniques have been attempted and proven ineffective (i.e. the child's harmful behavior continues to escalate or remains the same) will the caregiver consider implementing a restraint.

Prohibited Restraints

The following personal restraint techniques are prohibited:

1. Restraints that impair the child's breathing by putting pressure on the child's torso, including restraints that obstruct the child's lungs from expanding such as leaning a child forward during a seated restraint;
2. Restraints that obstruct the child's airway, including procedures that place anything in, on, or over the child's mouth, nose, or neck;
3. Restraints that obstruct a caregiver's ability to view the child's face;
4. Restraints that interfere with the child's ability to communicate or vocalize distress; or
5. Restraints that twist or place the child's limb(s) behind the child's back.

Prone and supine restraints are also prohibited as a short personal restraint.

Techniques for the prevention and management of aggression such as, but not limited to, holding and take down procedures, are considered forms of a personal restraint.

Personal restraint does not include helping children from immediate danger (i.e. helping a toddler from running into the street or coming in contact with a hot stove). Such action is not

considered personal restraint because its purpose is primarily to protect the child from an immediate external danger. When the “restraining action” is an appropriate response to behavior that is “normal” or usual for a child under the age of five (5) years old (chronologically or developmentally) it is not considered a personal restraint (i.e. a child throwing a tantrum in a public place). The caregiver must release the child as soon as imminent danger is over. Only FamilyLink approved caregivers (foster parents or respite providers), who have current restraint training shall conduct restraints.

Emergency Situations Where Restraints Are Appropriate:

1. Person exhibiting self-injurious behavior that has caused or is likely to cause injury
2. Aggressive behavior that is likely to cause injury to others
3. Behavior which is likely to result in danger to self or others

Restraining measures must not be used as punishment, as a substitute for effective program treatment, or for the caregiver’s convenience.

The FamilyLink Behavior Intervention policy applies in Primary Medical Needs and Habilitative homes unless otherwise noted in the Individual Services Plan. Respite caregivers, home health aids and foster parents will sign that they received and agree to adhere to the Behavior Intervention Policy.

Special Requirements for the Use of Emergency Restraints:

1. Restraints should require the least amount of restriction consistent with their purpose. Persons should be released from the restraint when they are **calm**. Calm is defined as no longer being a danger to self or others. The person must be informed of this criterion when placed in restraint.
2. An opportunity for motion and exercise must be provided for a period of no less than five minutes every hour, and this must be documented.

Caregivers involved in the emergency behavior intervention must conduct a post-emergency behavior intervention discussion. The goal of the discussion is to allow the child and caregiver to discuss:

1. The child’s behavior and the circumstances that constituted the need for an emergency behavior intervention;
2. The strategies attempted before the use of the emergency behavior intervention and the child’s reaction to those strategies;
3. The emergency behavior intervention itself and the child’s reaction to the emergency behavior intervention;
4. How caregivers can assist the child in regaining self-control in the future to avoid the administration of an emergency behavior intervention; and
5. What the child can do to regain self-control in the future to avoid the administration of an emergency behavior intervention.

Caregivers involved in the emergency behavior intervention must:

1. Debrief with child placing staff concerning the incident as soon as possible after the situation has stabilized; and
2. Make reasonable efforts to debrief with children in care who witness the incident.

Caregivers must document the following after discussing with the child the use of the emergency behavior intervention:

1. The date and time the caregiver offered the discussion;
2. The child's reaction to the opportunity for discussion;
3. The date and time the discussion took place, if applicable; and
4. The content of the discussion, if applicable.

Reporting a Restraint:

The use of protective devices, mechanical restraints, emergency medication for behavior management and seclusion or placing a child in a locked room is prohibited in an agency home.

If any child in the home feels that restraints are being inappropriately used at any time, he/she should contact his/her case manager immediately at (512) 462-9821. The child should also call the Licensing Hotline 800-252-5400.

FamilyLink prohibits discharging or otherwise retaliating against:

- **An employee, client, resident, or other person for filing a complaint, presenting a grievance, or otherwise providing in good faith information relating to the misuse of emergency behavior intervention at the agency or foster home; or**
- **A client or resident because someone on behalf of the client or resident files a complaint, presents a grievance, or otherwise provides in good faith information relating to the misuse of emergency behavior intervention at the agency or foster home.**

Religious Participation: The Foster parents will support or arrange for the child to practice his or her religion of choice. If the child does not have a preference and would like to, he or she may participate in the religious practices of the foster parents. The child may also choose not to participate in religious activities of any type.

Trips

Any time a foster child is to be away from the foster home overnight; either with the foster parent or without, the foster parent will discuss it with the child's Case Manager and get permission prior to the visit or trip. For any trip over 48 hours, the foster parent needs to inform the agency staff so permission may be granted from the child's managing conservator. If foster parents are planning to leave the country, they will contact the agency Case Manager at least two weeks before they plan to leave, to ensure they have the proper paperwork and to keep the agency staff aware of the child's location at all times. If the foster parent wants to take the child along to travel outside of the state, authorization will be granted from the child's managing conservator. For travel out of the state, at least 2-3 weeks notice is necessary to get the proper paperwork completed. The travel authorization paperwork will be carried at all times while traveling.



APPEAL POLICY NOTIFICATION TO CHILDREN IN CARE

Welcome to Family Link!

We know you have a lot of questions about us and what we are here for. The most important thing for you to know is that we are here to help you. In order to do this, we will work with you, your parents and your caseworker to make decisions about how to best take care of you. You have many rights, and these rights will be explained to you by a Family Link case manager. One of the rights that you have is the ability to appeal any decision made about you by Family Link. This means that if you disagree with a decision that is made about you, you have the right to tell someone of your disagreement. This document details for you Family Link' appeal policy. Please read it, keep a copy for yourself, and sign a copy to be put in your file. If you ever have any questions about this process, a Family Link staff person will be happy to answer your questions.

APPEAL POLICY

We will make every effort to ensure that you have access to information that is necessary to make informed decisions about care and treatment.

You become a client of the Family Link when you are placed with a Family Link foster family.

You have the right to review Minimum Standards for Child-Placing Agencies, agency compliance status reports, and agency policies. In order to exercise these rights, make your request in writing to the Treatment Director.

You have the right to appeal decisions directly affecting you. The request for appeal must be made in writing and be given to the Treatment Director. The Treatment Director will review the appeal request and respond in writing with decision and explanation within 15 working days.

All clients associated with Family Link have the right to contact Residential Child Care Licensing or the child abuse hotline at 800-252-5400 in order to file a complaint.

In order to make a complaint to the Licensing Division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, you may contact:

Residential Child Care Licensing
14000 Summit Dr., Ste. 100
Austin, Texas 78728
(512) 834-3195

I have read and understood Family Link's Appeal Policy.

Age 5 and over - Child's Signature

Date

Foster Parent Signature

Date



CLIENT BROCHURE SIGNATURE PAGE

Child's Name: _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE CHILD AT ADMISSION

The following actions are steps my foster parents can take to help calm me down if I am upset:

The Below Signed acknowledge that the following policies of Family Link: Children's Rights; Rules, Rewards and Consequences; Policy on Discipline; Policy on Restraint; Policy on Trips and Visits; and Policy on Religious Participation—have been shared with the above child on the date noted by their signature (below).

**All children must sign this form. Please note if the child is too young to sign.

Family Link Case Manager

Date

Foster Parent

Date

Foster Parent

Date

Age 5 and over Child Signature

Date