

Responsibilities

In your role as a foster parent, you probably will have contact with a number of people from the agency. This may include the child's caseworker, your foster home worker, and perhaps a child support worker. Each person has a specific role as a member of the agency team. The agency's responsibility to you as a foster parent and a member of the agency team is:

- to provide you with the required assistance and support you need to meet the needs and goals of the care plan for foster children placed with you;
- to ensure that you are aware of and understand agency policies and procedures that impact on you;
- to respect the confidentiality of the information regarding your home and to share this information only with appropriate agency personnel or with others as authorized in writing by you;
- to share with you all available relevant information about children placed with you including background circumstances necessitating placement, any known behaviour problems, patterns of behaviour, special care needs, medical history, children's strengths and weaknesses, the length of time the child is likely to be in care, and visitation rights of the biological family;
- to provide support and information when children move from your home, an allegation is made against a member of your family or your licence is cancelled;
- to involve you in the development of the care plan for the child;
- to facilitate preplacement visits for the child and you;
- to advise you of any known risk factors that the child may present to you or others in the home including, but not limited to offending behaviours, fire setting and aggressive behaviour;
- to arrange for the child's personal belongings to accompany the child at the time of placement;
- to have face-to-face contact at least once a month with you and the child;
- to facilitate creating and maintaining a life book for all foster children placed with you who are permanent wards; and
- to involve you in the quarterly review of the care plan.

When to Call Agency Worker(s)

As vital members of a team, you and your agency worker(s) will be working closely together, sharing information, problems and successes. You should know how and where to contact an agency worker during the day or at night, in case of an emergency or the need for assistance. Do not wait for a major problem to develop before you call the agency. When you have a complaint or a problem or you need help, the *first* person to talk to is your agency worker.

Call your worker when you need:

- answers to specific questions;
- information about the child, the system, foster parenting, community services or referrals;
- suggestions on how to handle a problem;
- help in decision making;
- emergency assistance during crises;
- to make the agency aware of changes in the child's situation;

- consultation with someone else;
- encouragement during difficult times;
- someone to listen; or
- an advocate for the child or for yourself.

If you have disagreements or difficulties with an agency worker, try to “work it out” with him/her. If, after trying, you still do not feel satisfied, ask to speak to the worker's supervisor. If an agreement can't be reached with the supervisor, then speak with the agency's Executive Director.

