



County of Onondaga

Department of Children & Family Services

Child Welfare • Children’s Mental Health • Juvenile Justice • Youth Bureau • School-based Initiatives

John H. Mulroy Civic Center

421 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, NY 13202

J. Ryan McMahon II
County Executive

www.ongov.net

Richard Gasiorowski
Commissioner

STATEMENT FOR UNDERSTANDING DEPARTMENTAL POLICY REGARDING DISCIPLINING FOSTER CHILDREN

I am aware and understand the Department of Social Services policy on Discipline of Children in Foster Care.

I agree to follow all provisions of that policy and further agree never to use corporal punishment on a Foster Child.

I understand that if I do not adhere to this policy, a child placed in my care by the Department of Social Services may be removed and my certification terminated.

Signature of Foster/Adoptive Parent Applicant

Date

Signature of Foster/Adoptive Parent Applicant

Date

Witnessed by Caseworker

Date

Assisting Those In Need - Independence With Dignity

DISCIPLINE

Section 470.9 of Chapter 2 of Regulations of Department of Social Services of New York State says:

- “(a) Deprivation of meals, snacks, mail or visits by family as methods of discipline are prohibited.
- (b) Room isolation as a method of discipline is prohibited.
- (c) Corporal punishment is prohibited.
- (d) Solitary confinement is prohibited.
- (e) Discipline shall be prescribed, administered and supervised only by adults. Such responsibilities shall never be delegated to children.”

Discipline is essential in caring for children. It helps to train and structure a child to function independently, by self-discipline, when he reaches maturity. How discipline is administered is particularly important in the life of a foster child, who may have suffered neglect, deprivation or abuse before placement. A wholesome attitude toward the child and the creation of an environment in which he can become a happy, self-respecting, self-reliant person is the responsibility and the privilege of foster parenthood.

Firm guidance is needed, but a child may rebel at unexplained or arbitrary orders. Rules of conduct should be established, explained with kindness and then enforced. Conditions for others must be learned early if it is to become a part of ones life. It is most readily taught through good example and being treated with consideration.

Praise, reassurance and recognition are simple tools that are effective in discipline. Corrective measures should be kept at a minimum. Frequently, seeming misbehavior is merely a bid for attention. All discipline problems should be discussed with the case worker.

The following guides are advised in achieving a positive approach to discipline:

1. Respect individual differences in children.
2. Set realistic goals with a child's ability to achieve.
3. Let a child know what is expected of him.
4. Try to separate behavior caused by anxiety or tension from deliberate misbehavior.
5. Be fair, be firm, be gentle and consistent, and be honest. Admit mistakes.
6. Be aware of disapproving the act, not the child.
7. Give recognition to good behavior.
8. Enjoy your child and he will enjoy you.
9. Corrective measures, if necessary, should follow the act and not be prolonged or repetitious.

We do expect that the disciplining of a foster child in your home will be consistent with that which you use for your own children; if it is in accordance with the principles mentioned above. We would recommend depriving the child of TV privileges or a favorite activity. Sometimes a child needs to be removed from activity with other children in order to “calm down”, perhaps to another corner of the room for a few minutes, or inside if others are involved with activity outside. As you become better acquainted with your foster child, you will be better able to select the method of discipline that seems most effective for that child. You will discover that what works well with one child may not be the right answer with another.

For your protection, we want you to know that foster parents, as caretakers of foster boarding children, will be investigated by the Protective Services of Children's Division if complaints of abuse or maltreatment of foster boarding children are reported to us. There are many persons who are mandated to report any abuse treatment or suspected abusive treatment. Occasionally, reports are made anonymously. With any report, there must be immediate response and follow up investigation by workers in the agency Screening Unit.