

TUSCALOOSA COUNTY FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS ASSOCIATION

Reference Guide

**THEY NEED YOU
WE NEED YOU**

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FORMS

Below is a list of forms you should receive once you receive a placement:

1. Referral form
2. Initial placement letter
3. Name and contact information of worker and their supervisor
4. WIC letter if child is 5 and under
5. Birth certificate
6. SS card
7. Medicaid info
8. Court Order
9. Family guidance referral if needed (children who will be in daycare)

* Some of these documents may take a week or more to obtain

BOARD PAYMENTS

Board Payments are usually mailed out on the 10th of every month unless a holiday.

Ages 0-2	\$527.57
3-5	\$543.43
6-12	\$556.84
13+	\$571.48

INDIVIDUAL SERVICE PLAN (ISP)

Once a child enters care there should be an ISP within 72 hours, another in 30 days, and every six months after that unless a major change occurs, in which case there would be another. Most of the time this is done in court and at any time anyone can request an ISP. People who can attend an ISP include:

- Child if 14 and older
- Birth parents
- Foster parent
- Social worker
- Worker's supervisor
- Child's attorney
- Birth parent's attorney
- DHR attorney
- Therapist
- Case aids (if there is one)
- Someone from the child's school

If you cannot attend, you should receive an absence form to fill out; however, you can also attend by phone. When signing in, do not list your phone number or your address. The birthparents will receive a copy and will have your information.

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLAN (ILP)

Children 14 years and older have meetings they can attend once a month at DHR. This meeting will help them prepare for what life will be like after they are out of foster care.

COURT HEARINGS

Your foster child will have court hearings. You as a foster parent can attend any and all hearings. You may be asked to sit outside of the court room but let the GAL, DHR attorney and social worker know if you would like to speak. Your foster child's social worker should invite you to each hearing.

GUARDIAN AD LITEM (GAL)

Your foster child has an (GAL) attorney. Their role is to do what they think is in the best interest of the child. Please find out who your GAL is and keep in touch with your GAL. They will need updates from you in order to represent that child in court.

TRAVEL CONSENT

There is a form your foster child's social worker should provide when you travel out of state. Workers and Supervisors do like to know in advance but you can still take your foster kids out of state on short notice. The social worker does have to provide paperwork to the state office for approval, so please request this 2 weeks in advance if possible.

CAR SEATS

DHR can issue you a car seat, **if available (sometimes these have to be ordered)**, but that car seat is to stay with that child. If that child is moved the car seat goes with the child. Also, Safe Kids of Tuscaloosa will provide your foster child with a free car seat. Please contact Janice Hagler at 205-469-1234. You will need to leave a message and it may take her a couple of days to get back with you. You will need a copy of their Medicaid card and a letter stating the child is in your care in order to receive a free car seat. Safe Kids will install the car seat in your vehicle and fit it to your child. They install them on Saturdays but you will need an appointment and the child must be present.

WIC

Children 5 and under are eligible for WIC. You will need to call the health department and schedule an appointment. You will need the WIC referral, WIC letter, driver license and a copy of your power bill. You DO NOT have to provide your income. Each worker is different so when you go they may ask for your foster care licenses too.

CLOTHING VOUCHERS

DHR will supply up to \$750.00 a year for your foster children. However, you are only allowed \$150.00 at one time. The places you are allowed to use the vouchers are Academy Sports, Hibbet Sports, Walmart and Plato's Closet. When using Academy and Hibbets, the purchases have to be the same day. The worker will need to meet you there, get the store to do a "dummy receipt", go back to the office and have a check printed then go back to the store to purchase the items.

The Foster Parent Association does have a clothes closet at University Church of Christ and at Englewood Baptist Church.

RESPIRE

Foster parents can request respite for their foster child. Respite is where DHR finds another foster parent to keep your child for up to seven (7) nights per year. Foster parents get 7 nights of respite per family, per year. DHR pays for respite at a rate of \$20.00 per night. As soon as possible, let your worker and supervisor know when you will need respite. It is recommended that you give a 2 week notices for respite requests.

UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

Dr. Gannon is an adoptive parent who has a foster clinic at UMC where he sees foster kids who are new to care. Your social worker will call his office and set up an appointment. Your child should see a doctor within ten (10) days of coming into care. Your child's worker or you should have the paperwork given to you by DHR. Some workers may even fax the information to his office. Once you are established with UMC, you can see any of the doctors there. When you call to schedule an appointment, you may ask if Dr Gannon is

working that day and time. I do know some parents prefer to see Dr Gannon.

When you fill out paperwork at the doctor's office, put the address and phone number for DHR. That way DHR will be responsible for any medical bills.

FOSTER PARENTS NIGHT OUT

On the first Friday of each month (if a sponsor has signed up) from 6-9 pm, a local church provides foster parents with a night out. You are allowed to drop off your foster kids, adopted kids and bio kids. The president of the local association will email all foster parents the week of to get a head count along with ages. The churches do provide dinner. If you have a special needs child most churches will have someone there but please check with the president of the association first in case arrangements need to be made.

FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION

Tuscaloosa County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association is a chapter member of Alabama Foster and Adoptive Parent Association.

Once a month the association holds a meeting so other parents can support each other and we also provide training periodically. The meetings are held at Cavalry Baptist Church in room 250 the third Thursday of each month from 6-8 pm. We provide dinner and childcare. We DO NOT meet in May, November or December due to the holidays.

We also have a mentoring program for new foster parents. If you are interested, we can pair you with a more experienced foster parent who will guide you along the way.

APAC

APAC is a statewide program designed to empower adoptive families facing adoption challenges and to facilitate stronger bonds and interaction within all adoptive families. APAC is a collaborative effort between Children's Aid Society and the Alabama Department of Human Resources. If you plan on adopting, please reach out to APAC. They also provide training and have a lot of resources for foster and adoptive parents.

FOSTER LOVE CLOSET

We have a clothes closet at University Church of Christ and at Englewood Baptist Church. When a child is placed in your home, you can stop by and pick up clothes, diapers and other age related items.

TUSCALOOSA ANGELS

The Tuscaloosa Angels has two great programs. One is called Love Box and their mission is to walk alongside children in the foster care system, as well as their caretakers, by offering consistent support through intentional giving, relationship building, and mentorship. The second program is called Dare to Dream and serve an aged-out or at-risk to age out youth in foster care (ages ranging from 15-21). Our mentors are advocates, teachers, guides, role models, valued friends, and available resources.

DANCE

Ballet Arts and Fitness offers a discount to foster parents. Foster children and other members of the home, can attend dance at only \$5.00 per class. DHR will pay for foster children to attend dance class. Let your social worker know and they will contact Alison at Ballet Arts and Fitness.

YMCA

The downtown YMCA offers current foster parents a 50% discount off of memberships. Current foster children get 50% discount on activities and classes. Let your social worker know if you would like to take advantage of this offer so they can sign off on the form.

DEFEND THE ORPHANS

Defend the Orphans is a non-profit resource through Coaling Baptist. They help DHR pay for items for children in foster care not covered by Medicaid and/or summer camp. There is a referral process that must be completed by the child's social worker and a board approves or denies the request.

TRAVEL FUNDS

There is a trust fund set up for foster kids to be able to travel. For example, plane tickets, tickets to amusement parks and hotel rooms can be paid for either through DHR or through AFAPA trust fund

The county social worker, by policy, must exhaust the following funds prior to requesting Foster Care Trust Funds:
Local DHR funds, foster parent board payment, private funds, ILP funds, donation requests, etc. If all funds have been exhausted, the social worker can complete an application for Foster Care Trust Funds and provide brochures, fliers, etc with the estimate of the activity costs. These funds CANNOT be used to reimburse a foster parent.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please feel free to contact any board members for support and/or questions.

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