

UNDERSTANDING THE REGULATIONS:

What Alaskan Foster Parents Need to Know

TOPIC: #7 Recordkeeping and Notifications of Changes to the Foster Home

7 AAC 67.160 Records of a child

7 AAC 67.170, General Records and Reports

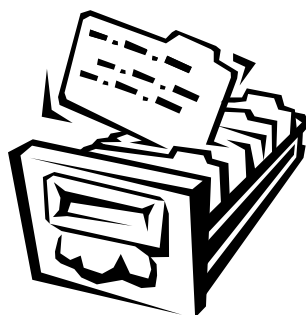
7 AAC 67.180 Recordkeeping & Reporting

This series is a guide to the regulations, but is not a substitute. In all discrepancies between the information in this series and the regulations, the regulations are the final authority. Contact your licensing worker for a complete copy of the regulations.

A recordkeeping system helps you have an organized way to find information regarding a child. These records should be returned to the agency when the child leaves your home and passed along to the next caregiver of the child. The more complete your information, the better the continuity of care for the child. In addition to keeping records for the child, foster parents need to keep records for themselves. *The records you keep for your home* is documentation that you have met the standards set by the State of Alaska for being a foster parent.

WHAT DO THE REGULATIONS SAY...

About records you need to keep when a child is placed with you?



The record for your foster child is modeled on the Placement Packet you receive when a child is placed with you. If you do not get a Placement Packet, **ask for it**. OCS developed the Placement Packet for use throughout Alaska and it usually takes one of two forms. Either you will receive a paper folder with some basic forms and information in it or you may receive these same forms in an electronic format. You should use the Placement Packet as the central place to keep your records. You have the right to ask for the information that is in it. The child's placement worker should give you a Placement Packet within five working days of placement of a child. If you do not get it, *ask for it*. The Placement Packet includes the forms listed below.

- Each Placement Packet should include the **Consent for Emergency and Routine Medical Care**. This gives you authority to obtain medication, dental and emergency care for the child. Within the next 30 days, arrange for a health exam for all children over three years who have not had an exam within the last year or for all children under three years who has not had an exam within the last three months.

- Inventory what the child comes with and fill out the [Clothing Inventory Form](#). If a child needs some things immediately before your first foster care payment comes in, make the necessary arrangements or submit this request to the Special Needs Unit (follow the instructions on the form.) This form also serves as the **Clothing Inventory Form** when the child leaves your care.
- The Placement Packet should also include some blank [Medical, Dental and Medication Record Forms](#). You can use these to keep track of a child's health visits, including dates, reasons for visits, name of health provider, the treatment recommended, and information about medications including name of medication, dosage instructions, and refill information.

About records you need to keep while a child is living with you?

Keep *a log of significant events and experiences* of child. Keep school photographs, report cards, drawings, photos of home, family and pets, and photos of holiday or school events. Keep these in the plastic sleeve included in the Placement Packet or in a file or binder you provide. These are very important records! These are the tangible memories of the child's history that go with the child when he leaves your home.

During the time your child is placed with you, *keep records of any medical care or counseling sessions* the child received. These records need to include name of child, dental or medical provider, address and phone of provider, dates and type of treatment provided. These records include immunization records, medical or dental treatment, and records of any mental health or substance abuse counseling.

Keep an *"injury log"*-- a running record of serious cuts, bruises, injuries or medications given. This documents all injuries to the child and may protect the foster parents from false allegations.

Keep a *record of any reports made to the placement worker* about suspected abuse or neglect, behavior problems, injuries, and concerns about visitation or child progress. Make a notation in a log or keep a copy of anything you send to the agency.

About records that need to go with the child when they leave?

When a child leaves your home, be sure all the information in the Placement Packet is updated. That includes all medical records, immunization records, school records and report cards. And all those photos and drawings you have been saving during the time the child was with you? Make sure they go with the child! The case worker should pass these on to the child's next caregiver or to the birth parents.

Use the **Clothing Inventory Form** to document all clothing and personal items and toys that are going with the child. Be sure to include all clothing, toys and personal items supplied by the birth parents.

WHAT DO THE REGULATIONS SAY...

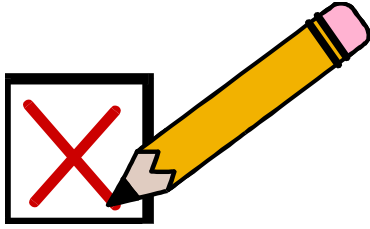
About records you need to keep for your foster parent licensure?



The records you keep for yourself provide a file of materials that demonstrate compliance with licensing regulations. Your licensing or placement worker may request (and has a responsibility) to review these records.

- ☞ You will receive a copy of your Community Care License from the State of Alaska that will list your information, name and address, and licensing conditions. You should post this in a conspicuous place in your home.
- ☞ Keep your license and the name and phone number of your primary licensing worker (or local OCS worker) and their supervisor. There is a place in the Placement Packet for you to keep all relevant phone numbers and names of caseworker, licensing worker, and Guardian ad litem.
- ☞ It is helpful to keep a copy of the foster regulations and [Alaska Resource Family Handbook](#) for reference. (The Handbook is on the State of Alaska OCS Publications website, on the ACRF website or can be obtained from your licensing worker.
- ☞ Any approval of variances should be in writing. Keeping a copy for your file is a good idea, but not required. If the worker who places a child in your home and your licensing worker are not the same person, remember that variances need to be approved through licensing, not just suggested by your caseworker.
- ☞ Keep a copy of your current Individual Training Plan or ITP. Contact Alaska Center for Resource Families at 1-800-478-7307 to help you complete those hours or send documentation of your training completion to ACRF to put in your training record. You can always request a copy of your training record from ACRF to put in your records.
- ☞ Every foster home should have regular fire drills and emergency evacuation drills. Post your [Emergency Evacuation Plan](#) in a place where family members can review it. You should document your monthly emergency evacuation drills and include the date and time of the drill, the name of each caregiver present, the initial of the children present, and the amount of time required to complete the drill. Keep this record available to show to your licensing worker upon request.

Retain your records for at least 3 years. These records should be available to your licensing representative to review.



CHECKLIST FOR FOSTER PARENT REQUIRED RECORDKEEPING

GENERAL CHECKLIST:

- Write the date each time you add something or write something in your records.
- Identify who is making each entry using initials or a signature.
- Keep your records in a safe place.

FOR EACH FOSTER CHILD:

- Have a file for each child clearly identified with their name.
- In the child's file, keep updated medical information about the child, including the consent for emergency and routine. Establish proof of immunization with a copy of the child's immunization card.
- In the child's file, keep any dental records you may have or make a note of what dental treatment a child has received and from who.
- In the child's file, keep a record of what counseling or behavioral services a child has received and from who.
- In the child's file, keep any education records you may receive (such as individual education plans or report cards).
- Return this record to the placement worker when the child leaves your home.

FOR YOUR OWN FOSTER HOME RECORDS:

- Document your monthly emergency evacuation drills or fire drills. There is a copy of the **Emergency Evacuation Log** included in this self study.
- Keep a copy of your current Individual Training Plan (ITP) and a copy of your yearly training record that you can receive by contacting the Alaska Center for Resource Families.

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NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES IN YOUR FOSTER HOME

(Reference: AS 47.32.200 Notice of Changes from an Entity 7AAC 67.160 Records of a child and 7AAC 67.170 General Records and Reports; 7 AAC 67.180 Critical Incidents Records)

According to the regulations, you must notify OCS or your placement agency when certain changes take place in your home. There is a specific form you can use to document these incidents called the **Incident, Emergency, Accident, Illness and Change Report** that is available in the Electronic Placement Packet or through your Licensing Worker.

Notify the child's caseworker and your licensing worker immediately or as soon as reasonably possible:

- o any reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered child abuse or neglect;
- o serious injury or illness of a child in care requiring attention by medical personnel outside of the foster home;
- o death of a child, licensee, or household member;
- o suicidal or homicidal ideations, gestures or attempts by a child in foster care or any other household member;
- o any use of physical restraint of a foster child;
- o any disclosures of sexual or physical abuse of a child reported to the licensee;
- o sexual contact between two or more children associated with the foster home;
- o physical assaults between two or more children associated with the foster home;
- o physical or sexual assaults of a foster parent or household members by children or youth;
- o any incidents of medication, prescription or non-prescription, incorrectly administered or not taken as prescribed;
- o hospitalization or in-patient services or treatment of a licensee;
- o change in the physical health, mental health, or medications of a household member that could affect the ability of the member or the family to meet the needs of a child for safety, health, and well-being;
- o a licensee or household member is arrested, charged with, convicted of, found not guilty by reason of insanity for, or adjudicated as a delinquent for any criminal activity by any law enforcement agency such as state, local, tribal or military.

Contact your licensing worker immediately regarding:

- o addition of a new household member, employee, contractor, volunteer provider, or volunteer, who might have unsupervised contact with the children in care;
- o if a member of the household applies to become an in-home child care provider, an adult assisted living home, or in-home adult day care provider;
- o change in the household composition, such as:
 - birth, adoption, marriage, or divorce;
 - incapacity or serious physical or mental illness of a licensee or member of the household;
 - the death of anyone in the household;
 - a change in who resides in the foster home;

NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES IN YOUR FOSTER HOME

(Reference: AS 47.32.200 Notice of Changes from an Entity 7AAC 67.160 Records of a child and 7AAC 67.170 General Records and Reports; 7 AAC 67.180 Critical Incidents Records)

Continued...

- o change in the name of the individual operating the foster home;
- o change in the location or premises, including address;
- o change of telephone number;
- o change of specialization.

Contact the child's placement worker no later than the first working day known regarding:

- o pregnancy of a child in care;
- o severe distress, depression, or significant changes in the behavior of a child in care;
- o non-emergency medical care requiring consent from the child's parent; in this paragraph "non-emergency medical care" includes surgery, anesthesia, and the administration of psychotropic medication, or another drug prescribed for mental illness or behavioral problems;
- o violation of a condition of probation by a child in care, if applicable;
- o allegations of criminal conduct by a child in care;
- o property damage caused by a child in care must be reported within 72 hours.

Contact your licensing worker with 24 hours or on the first working day if outside or normal business hours regarding:

- o when another agency or Tribe requests to place a child in the licensee's home;
- o when the licensee agrees to provide respite care for another licensee.

If a child's caseworker is not available, the licensee shall give the reports required the department by contacting the caseworker's supervisor. Document when and whom you talked to and put that documentation in either the child's file or your foster parent file.



SUGGESTIONS OF OTHER RECORDS TO KEEP

These records are not required but have been found to be helpful.

- o Keep a list of phone numbers you call often or have found helpful. If you contact an agency or OCS, always find out whom you talked to and *write it down!* It helps for follow up calls when needed.
- o Many foster parents keep notes on behaviors, changes, challenges, sexual or physical acting out behavior, and other events in a child's life such as visits or transitions. This picture into the child's world establishes patterns and can very helpful in describing behavior to a placement worker or a therapist.
- o Keep track of telephone calls. Write down names of people you talk to and note if you were unable to reach someone. When you leave a telephone message, always leave your name, phone number, what it is about and when is a good time to reach you. If you have an emergency, let that be known and ask to talk to someone else who is available.
- o Keep copies of letters or emails with OCS workers, agencies, and legal representatives. Date and sign these letters. This is especially important if you are advocating for services, providing information, explaining an action or seeking services.
- o Keep copies of anything in writing that concerns complaints, investigations and plans of correction about your foster home. Request a copy of the investigation findings if applicable. If required to make a correction or complete additional training as result of an investigation, request written verification you completed what was required.
- o For particularly explosive or difficult cases, you may wish to retain your records for longer than the suggested three years. This is especially wise in cases of abuse allegations, sexually acting out children, or children who are removed from your home.
- o Foster parents should be aware that licensing records maintained by OCS are open and subject to public inspection. Some parts of licensing records, however, are closed for reasons of confidentiality. The following records are not available to the public:
 - ✓ Names of children in care and their parents.
 - ✓ Records that would be an invasion of foster parent's personal privacy such as the background information statement submitted with foster care application.
 - ✓ Material protected under state or federal law such as a criminal justice printout on a foster parent or a medical report on a foster parent.

For more information about the **UNDERSTANDING THE REGULATIONS: *What Alaskan Foster Parents Need To Know*** series, contact the Alaska Center for Resource Families at 1-800-478-7307. In Fairbanks/North Pole, call 479-7307.

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