

Resource Parent and Kinship Caregiver Agreement

The purpose of this form is to inform and educate resource parents and kinship caregivers about their rights and responsibilities when caring for children in out-of-home care. Caregivers should receive a copy of this form for their records. The form should be completed at initial licensure and on an annual basis thereafter.

Date	
Caregiver(s)	
CJAMS Provider #	
Caseworker Reviewing Agreement	
Local Department	

caregiver's initials

Legal Responsibility: Children in out-of-home care are in the legal custody of the local department of social services. The court has the ultimate authority in matters and decisions regarding children in care.

caregiver's initials

Medical Consents: Consent from the parent or the local department is required in order for children in care to receive medical services that are not considered routine (ex. local or general anesthesia, nitrous oxide "laughing gas", vaccinations, etc). Additionally, consent is needed in order for children in care to take psychotropic medication. If caregivers have questions about what medical services they are allowed to consent to, they should consult with the child's caseworker.

caregiver's initials

Court Hearings: The caseworker will notify you of court hearings and encourage your attendance. Caregivers have the right to be heard at court hearings, but may be dismissed at the discretion of the judge or magistrate. The caseworker or child's attorney will tell you when the child needs to attend court.

caregiver's initials

Reunification with Parents and Guardians: When a child enters out-of-home care, the Department is mandated to provide intensive reunification services to the child and their parents or guardians. Reunification services may include support with mental health and substance use treatment, parenting education, transportation, and housing and job referrals. The goal of out-of-home care is safe and timely reunification. As the caregiver, you are expected to support the plan of reunification and the child's relationship with their parents, siblings, and other kin.

caregiver's initials

Permanency: Children cannot remain in care indefinitely and if reunification is not possible, the kinship caregivers or resource parents may be asked to

provide permanency to the child through custody and guardianship or adoption.

caregiver's initials

Creating Partnerships with Parents: Caregivers are expected to work toward building a positive and respectful relationship with the child's parents. This can be done by participating in Comfort Calls, Icebreakers, and keeping parents updated about their child's wellbeing, including their health, educational, and social needs and progress. Caregivers are expected to develop and maintain a means of communication with the children's parents and should encourage the parent's participation in the child's appointments and activities.

caregiver's initials

Supporting Placement and Relationships with Kin: Throughout the time that a child is in out-of-home care, the Department is required to make proactive, thorough, and timely efforts to locate kinship caregivers for the child. Caregivers are expected to support the child's relationship with kin whether it be for family time or placement.

caregiver's initials

Supporting Family Time (Visitation): The Department will establish a family visitation time plan for the child, the child's siblings, and their parents based on any applicable court orders. The purpose of family time is to help children and parents remain connected, to allow parents to practice new parenting skills, and to promote reunification. In some cases, children will have additional family time with extended family members. Caregivers may be asked to supervise the family time when appropriate. If caregivers have concerns related to supervising family time, they should speak with the child's caseworker.

caregiver's initials

Supporting Sibling Relationships: Caregivers play a critical role in helping children in care maintain relationships with their siblings and this is especially important when siblings are separated in out-of-home care. The local department and caregivers are responsible for ensuring that siblings have visits at least once a month.

caregiver's initials

Home Safety: Caregivers are responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of the children placed in their care. This involves maintaining a safe home environment, ensuring safe sleep practices are followed, providing close supervision around pools and other bodies of water, and ensuring that medication, cleaning chemicals, and other hazardous items are inaccessible to children.

caregiver's initials

Storage of Firearms and Ammunition: Unless required because a state, federal, or local law enforcement officer lives in the household and maintains and stores their service-issued firearm(s) in accordance with state, federal, and local law enforcement safety procedures, all firearms in the caregiver's home must be unloaded, stored in a locked storage area, and inaccessible to children. All ammunition must be stored separately from the firearms in a locked storage area, inaccessible to children. When a firearm and ammunition are being transported from the place of storage to a location outside of the caregiver's home, they must be kept inaccessible to

the child(ren) to the extent possible.

The caregiver is responsible for taking all safety precautions to ensure that firearms are not used to injure children in the home. The worker must obtain assurances from the caregivers that no loaded firearms will be kept in the home. These assurances must be documented in the electronic system of record.

caregiver's initials

Window Coverings “Angel’s Law”: Caregivers may not have window coverings that have unsecured cords, beads, ropes, or strings as they present a strangulation risk.

caregiver's initials

Smokefree Environment: The caregiver’s home must be a smoke-free environment. Smoking of any kind is not permitted in the presence of children in care, including in the home and in a vehicle.

caregiver's initials

Emergency Preparedness: In cases of emergency, caregivers are required to keep the Department updated regarding any changes in location or contact information. Caregivers agree to cooperate with the Department regarding any other actions that may be needed to implement the Department’s emergency preparedness plan.

caregiver's initials

Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard: Caregivers are responsible for using the reasonable and prudent parent standard in making age and developmentally appropriate decisions regarding activities, dating, and overnight visits with friends for children in care. The reasonable and prudent parent standard is characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the health, safety, and best interests of a child while at the same time encouraging their emotional and developmental growth. Caregivers should consider the child’s maturity, safety and normalcy in making such decisions. If caregivers are unsure or unclear about making a decision, they should consult with the caseworker.

caregiver's initials

Haircuts: Caregivers can use the reasonable and prudent parent standard to make decisions about maintenance haircuts (standard trims that do not significantly change the child’s appearance) unless the child’s hair style has significance to the child’s culture or identity. Haircuts or styles that change the child’s appearance require permission from the child’s parents. This may be requested through the child’s caseworker or by working in partnership directly with the parents.

caregiver's initials

Out-of-State Travel: Caregivers must notify the Department whenever a child in care will be traveling out of state and approval from the local department director is required. Notification should include the dates, purpose of travel, mode of transportation, specific location, and contact information. Caregivers should provide the Department with as much notice as possible regarding out-of-state travel plans. Best practice is to discuss the out-of-state travel with the child’s parents or guardian in order to promote teaming and engagement among the families.

caregiver's initials

Plans for Childcare: When caregivers are working or in school, they should choose childcare providers that meet their family's expectations to provide a safe, trauma-responsive environment that promotes child well-being. Approved childcare providers include: a licensed in-home daycare, a licensed daycare center, or an individual who is 18 years or older who has been approved by the Department as an informal childcare provider. The Department has funds to assist with some childcare related expenses.

caregiver's initials

Plans for Babysitting: Caregivers may arrange appropriate childcare on an occasional basis for a child in care. Caregivers are responsible for finding an appropriate and safe person to provide care. An occasional babysitter does not need to be approved by the Department.

caregiver's initials

Reporting Abuse or Neglect: Caregivers must immediately report any new allegations of or concerns about suspected child abuse and neglect to the Department. The Maryland CPS hotline phone number is 1-800-91-PREVENT (1-800-917-7383).

caregiver's initials

Reporting Children who Runaway or are Missing: If a child in care runs away or is missing, caregivers must immediately contact law enforcement to make a missing person report and speak to a Department staff member to inform them of the circumstances. The Maryland CPS hotline phone number is 1-800-91-PREVENT (1-800-917-7383) and this can be used after hours to report the incident to the local department.

caregiver's initials

Behavior Management (Discipline): It is important to clearly communicate expectations for behavior to children and to manage challenging behaviors in a trauma-informed manner, rewarding good behavior. Only resource parents, kinship caregivers, and other adult caregivers approved by the local Department and known to the children may discipline children in care. Children may only be physically restrained to the degree necessary to protect the child from self-injury or from injuring others. It is the caregiver's responsibility to communicate behavioral concerns with the Department.

Resource parents and kinship caregivers agree to refrain from the following prohibited punishments :

- Using corporal punishment that includes spanking, shaking, physical hitting, or any other type of physical punishment, no matter how inflicted;
- Requiring physical exercises such as running laps or performing pushups;
- Forcing a child to assume or hold an uncomfortable position such as squatting or bending, or to repeat physical movements;
- Confining a child in a locked room;
- Using mechanical or chemical restraints;
- Denying essential program services, such as not taking a child to a planned appointment for educational, psychiatric, or psychological services;

- Withholding visitation or communication with the child's family or kin;
- Withholding meals, clothing, or bedding, or disrupting a child's sleep;
- Making remarks that belittle or ridicule a child or a child's family;
- Threatening to have a child removed from the home.

_____ caregiver's initials **Confidentiality:** Local departments of social services will share information with caregivers about children, including why they entered out-of-home care and their health, mental health, and behavioral history. Caregivers are required to protect this confidential information about children in care and their families. This applies even when the children are no longer in your care. The Maryland law governing confidentiality requires that caregivers keep confidential any information that they are given, whether verbally or in writing. Without obtaining permission, caregivers may not share, release, or discuss information with anyone, except professionals who are involved with the child and are bound by the same standards of confidentiality. If you have questions about who you can share confidential information with, please consult with the caseworker.

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Information about the child's background, the reason they came into care, and their permanency plan.
- Information about the child's family, including who they are and their current circumstances.
- Information about the child's physical or mental health.
- Any information that you know because of your position as resource parent or kinship caregiver.

_____ caregiver's initials **Posting Photos on Social Media:** Without written permission from the parents or guardians and the Department, caregivers are prohibited from posting identifying photos or videos or the names or initials of children in care on social media. A child must not be identified as a child in out-of-home placement on social media platforms.

_____ caregiver's initials **Monitoring and Home Visits:** The Department is responsible for ensuring children are placed in safe and appropriate environments. The Department is responsible for conducting monthly face-to-face visits with the child, with a minimum of 7 out of 12 visits being in the caregiver's home. During home visits, the caseworker will need to speak with the child privately and should be able to see all areas of the home regardless of ownership or occupancy. Caregivers agree to be available and to make the children in care available for all home visits.

_____ caregiver's initials **Medical, Dental, Mental Health, and Educational Needs:** Caregivers will work with the Department to ensure a child in care's needs are met. This includes but is not limited to, scheduling appointments, transporting to and participating in medical and mental health appointments, and

attending school meetings. Parents and guardians are to be informed of medical and educational appointments in a timely manner and encouraged to attend in order to remain involved in the child's care. Care givers are required to administer medication as prescribed and instructed by the child's medical providers. Unless otherwise ordered by the Court, caregivers must consult with the Department prior to signing any medical or educational consent forms. Caregivers must provide the Department with all documentation related to medical, mental health, and dental appointments and education. Caregivers will alert the Department to all major decisions affecting a child's health or education.

caregiver's initials

Supporting Children's Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and

Expression: Caregivers are expected to respect and support all children in out-of-home care regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

caregiver's initials

Supporting Children's Religious Beliefs: Caregivers are expected to respect and support the religious beliefs of children in out-of-home care. If children in out-of-home care don't want to attend religious activities or practices, care givers may not force them to do so.

caregiver's initials

Transporting Children and Their Belongings: Caregivers are responsible for ensuring safe, legal, and reliable transportation for the child and must abide by Maryland child passenger safety laws. This includes, but is not limited to, transportation to medical, mental health, and dental appointments; school; appropriate social events; scheduled visits with relatives and friends; and events scheduled by the agency. Certain transportation is eligible for reimbursement if the total round trip mileage exceeds 30 miles. New and appropriate luggage must be used to transport the personal belongings of children and youth in out-of-home care. Trash bags or other disposable bags are not to be used at any time.

caregiver's initials

Monthly Care Stipend and Allowance: Licensed caregivers will receive a monthly care stipend for each child placed in their home by the local department. Stipends are issued around the 24th of each month for the days the child was in care during the previous month. The monthly care stipend is to be used to help meet the financial needs of children in care. The following items are expected to be covered by the monthly care stipend: food, clothing, housing, utilities due to increased utility costs, over the counter medications, transportation, fees for extracurricular activities and school trips, bedding, toiletries, allowance, and gifts for special occasions. Caregivers are required to provide children in out-of-home care with a weekly allowance based on their age, as outlined in policy. The weekly allowance rates are \$2 for ages 5-7, \$5 for ages 8-11, \$10 for ages 12-13, \$15 for ages 14-16, and \$20 for ages 17 and above. These amounts are minimum guidelines and may be increased depending on the child or youth's maturity, circumstances, and participation in household chore activities. The caseworker shall be consulted as to the appropriate allowance amount.

_____ caregiver's initials	Support Available to Resource Parents and Kinship Caregivers: Caregivers are encouraged to ask the caseworker about available supports, which include support groups, respite care, training, and reimbursements for certain items or services the child needs. Caregivers who have questions or concerns may also reach out to the Ombuds for Resource Parents and Kinship Caregivers or the Ombuds for Youth in Out-of-Home Care.
_____ caregiver's initials	Change in Child's Circumstances: Good communication is critical, and caregivers are responsible for communicating with the Department when they become aware of any changes in the child's circumstances (e.g., changes in health status, behaviors, education; suspected abuse or neglect; or when a child's whereabouts are unknown). Caregivers may not change or terminate any service the child is receiving without the approval of the Department.
_____ caregiver's initials	Change in Resource or Kinship Caregiver's Circumstances: Caregivers are responsible for communicating with the Department when they become aware of any changes in their personal or family circumstances (ex. new household members, new criminal charges against any household member, health, plans to move to a new residence).
_____ caregiver's initials	Request for Change in Placement: Caregivers must give the Department at least 30 day's notice when requesting that the Department move a child except when the child must be moved more quickly due to circumstances that immediately affect the child or the family's health or safety.
_____ caregiver's initials	Compassionate Transitions: When a child in out-of-home care needs to move from one home to another, it's important that the caregivers and local department work together to reduce the trauma that children experience when they have to move. Unless the child's safety or wellbeing is at risk, children and caregivers should be allowed to say goodbye and the current and future caregivers should have an opportunity to discuss information related to the child's needs and routine. It is critical to ensure that all of the child's belongings, including gifts given to the child by the caregivers and others and comfort items, follow the child to their new home.

Acknowledgement and Agreement

I understand and agree to the terms of this agreement. I understand that I must follow this agreement for the child to remain in my care.

Signatures

Date

Caregiver 1 _____

Caregiver 2 _____

Caseworker _____

Supervisor _____
