National Center for Children and Families
Innovative Family Connections
Foster Parent Licensing

Discipline and Corporal (Physical) Punishment Policy

(COMAR 07.05.02.09.C10)

The National Center for Children and Families is mandated by the State of Maryland regulations (COMAR 07.05.01.12) to report child abuse and neglect. An abused child is defined as "a child under eighteen (18) years of age whose parent, guardian or custodian inflicts or fails to make reasonable efforts to prevent the infliction of physical, mental, and/or sexual abuse or molestation."

Corporal punishment means the inflicting of pain or discomfort.

Prohibited actions include, but are not limited to, hitting with any part of the body or with an instrument, pinching, pulling, shaking, binding a child, forcing him/her to assume an uncomfortable position, or locking him/her in a room or closet. "Emotional neglect is a significant impairment of the child's emotional ability to function adequately and which is caused by action or inaction of person(s) responsible for his/her care."

This prohibition is in effect whether punishment is spontaneous or a deliberate technique for effecting behavior change or part of a behavior management plan.

In addition to being mandated by law, the National Center for Children and Families believes that children who have been abused (physically and sexually) and neglected, must not be subjected to corporal (physical) punishment or emotional neglect in foster or adoptive homes.

Therefore, the following policy is in effect:

(1) Foster parents, adoptive parents, members of their families, volunteers and other substitute caretakers (who are approved by the foster or adoptive parents and agency)may not use corporal (physical) punishment as a disciplinary method.

(2) Foster parents, adoptive parents (and others as noted above) may not use emotional neglect or verbal abuse as a disciplinary method.

(3) Foster and adoptive parents may not give others permission to use corporal punishment toward any child under the supervision of the agency's care or responsibility.

(4) All instances of corporal punishment or emotional neglect must be reported to NCCF and the Local Social Services agency/Police department where the foster family resides.

(5) The National Center for Children and Families staff is prepared to partner with foster/adoptive parents in developing appropriate methods for discipline of the foster children in their care.

(6) The National Center for Children and Families supports the prudent use of punishment, for instance:

a. Be a role model
b. Develop behavior charts
c. Withholding privileges or toys for a specified time period
d. Withholding a portion of a child's allowance
e. Time out
f. Provide natural and logical consequences
g. Provide positive reinforcers
h. Hold family meetings
i. Replace negative time with positive time
j. Provide alternatives for destructive acting-out behaviors
k. Make a plan of change with the child
l. Make a plan of change with the child and a professional
m. Other rewards or punishments that are deemed appropriate for the child's age and the kind of behavior change desired.

The National Center for Children and Families social worker will provide guidance on the importance of disciplining foster/adoptive children, upon request.

I have read and understand the above policy and agree to abide by it to the best of my ability.

_____ _____

Signature Date

_____ _____

Signature Date