



# MCH Family Outreach

Offering Hope Since 1890



## MCH Family Outreach Office

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

MCH Case Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative MCH Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**MCH.org**

# MCH Foster Care Handbook

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are glad that you have chosen MCH to care for your child at this time. MCH foster homes provide children with a safe, nurturing, Christian home while case managers work toward the goal of returning children to the care of parents/guardians. Foster care is meant to be a temporary placement of three to twelve months. If return to your home is not possible, MCH will work with you to develop a permanency plan for your child.

This handbook was developed to help you and your child to understand what to expect during placement and who to contact with questions or concerns. There is a section with information specifically designed for parents/guardians. Please keep this handbook and consult it when you have questions. We are looking forward to working with you and your child.

Sincerely,

***The MCH Family Outreach Staff***

## **Mission Statement**

Methodist Children's Home offers hope to children, youth and families through a nurturing, Christian community.

## **Core Values**

### **CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES**

Apply the principles of the Christian faith which serve as the foundation of this ministry.

### **RELATIONSHIPS**

Build healthy relationships through communication, respect, trust and love.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

Be accountable for self and others.

### **GROWTH**

Provide opportunities for spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual development.

### **SERVICE**

Show compassion through generosity and care.

### **HOPE**

Believe in the possibilities of the future.

# Daily Living

MCH foster homes are responsible for meeting your physical, emotional, educational and spiritual needs. You will learn how to develop and maintain healthy relationships with adults and other children. Each foster home has rules that you are responsible for following. There are four basic rules that guide each foster home and should guide you in your own behavior and relationships with others.

- Be safe.
- Be respectful.
- Be responsible.
- Be helpful.

You will have opportunities to participate in age-appropriate activities in your foster home, school and community; and you will have the opportunity to earn privileges to help you learn acceptable behavior and self-control. Your foster parents are responsible for determining the privileges you can earn. These privileges may be removed, limited or adjusted by your foster parents when needed or as a consequence of misbehavior.

## Family Contacts and Gifts

Visits with your parents, siblings and other family members are encouraged unless restricted by your managing conservator or court order. How often and where the visits occur are decided by your parents/guardians and your MCH case manager. Visits may happen at your case manager's office, at your parent's home or somewhere in the community like a park or restaurant.

You may receive and send mail to your family unless this has been restricted by

your managing conservator or court order. Mail will be sent to your MCH case manager who will forward it to your foster parents. Phone calls to and from your family will be scheduled and arranged through your MCH case manager.

You may give and receive gifts from family and friends. Gifts you receive from family, friends, foster parents and MCH belong to you. Sometimes there are limits on the size, value and type of gifts that you can keep in your foster home. Any limitations on gifts and personal possessions will be explained to you by your MCH case manager. You are not expected to give gifts to your foster parents or MCH case manager. You may give gifts of a sentimental nature to your foster parents and MCH case managers, but gifts of a significant value are not permitted.

## Personal Possessions

You are permitted to bring personal possessions from home. These personal possessions must be appropriate for shared living space and possessions that are harmful, disruptive or prohibited by program rules are not permitted. Your MCH case manager and foster parents can answer questions on specific items you would like to bring from home. MCH discourages bringing personal possessions that would be a significant loss if damaged, lost or stolen. MCH assumes no responsibility for the return of damaged, lost or stolen items.

# Daily Living

## Spiritual Development

MCH accepts children into care regardless of your religious beliefs or background. You will attend church services and other religious activities as determined by your foster parents. Foster parents are counseled on the importance of supporting your religious beliefs, traditions and expressions of your faith experience and are encouraged to include opportunities for you to attend and worship in a your faith tradition. You will not be required or coerced into making any religious decisions.

During your placement, you will be able to see doctors, dentists, eye doctors, and a counselor as needs arise.

You or your family can hire your own therapist, attorney, doctor, or dentist if you have the need for these.

You do not have to take medication that you do not need or for a longer period of time than you need it.

You can receive counseling services designed for someone your age, and you do not have to receive services with adults.

## Educational Policy

All school age children will attend a public school or a school program that is accredited and is performing at the acceptable level as rated by the Texas Education Agency. Preference is given to the local public school system where your foster home is located unless there is a compelling reason that you should be enrolled at a different school to meet your educational needs. You and your parent will be involved in any decision to enroll you in a different school and prior approval by your parent/guardian is required to make this change.

## Trips Away from your Foster Home

You will be involved in events/activities in the community with your foster family. These include sporting events, school activities, church events, visiting friends and neighbors, shopping and recreational activities. Occasionally, foster families will travel outside their local community on overnight trips and vacations. Foster families will keep MCH fully informed of these trips away from your foster home. Permission from your parent/guardian will be sought and approval by the Vice President for Programs will be required before you may travel outside the State of Texas.

## Medical Care

You will have regular check ups with a doctor while you are in foster care and anytime you are sick. You will visit a dentist when you come into foster care, and regularly to make sure your teeth are clean and healthy.



# Child's Rights

Admission to any MCH program is based upon the applicant's need and the ability of MCH to meet those needs within the established program admission eligibility criteria and not based on race, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. MCH provides services in a manner that respects the personal dignity, confidentiality and privacy of those served. MCH assures that all persons served or their legal representatives are informed of their rights and responsibilities arising from receipt of MCH services upon placement or the first face-to-face meeting. MCH recognizes the rights of all clients to question decisions made concerning services provided and to file any grievance for unfair treatment, discrimination or a violation of client rights.

Children in placement have additional rights that cover safety, normalcy, family contacts, discipline, service planning, medical care, confidentiality of records, and reporting concerns to outside authorities. These rights are cumulative of any other rights granted by law or licensing standards and include the following:

## **You have the right to:**

1. be treated fairly.
2. receive quality care and treatment services that meet your needs in the most family-like setting possible.
3. know the reason(s) for placement and what MCH staff and volunteers will do to help you during your placement.
4. be provided information about the rules and expectations while in placement.
5. have your physical, developmental, social, emotional, cultural, and religious needs met.
6. be free from abuse, neglect and exploitation as defined in Texas Family Code §261.401.
7. discipline that is appropriate to your age, maturity and developmental level.
8. have restrictions or disciplinary policies explained at admission and when the measures are imposed.
9. receive educational services appropriate to your age and developmental level.
10. have personal care, hygiene and grooming equipment and supplies and to receive training in their use.
11. participate in childhood activities, including activities in the community and unsupervised activities away from caregivers, appropriate for your age, maturity and developmental level.
12. have clothing appropriate to your age and size and similar to the clothing of other youth in the community.
13. have personal items in your bedroom and to get additional items within reasonable limits.



# Child's Rights

- 14.** personal space in your bedroom and to store clothes and belongings.
- 15.** be informed of search policies.
- 16.** be free from unreasonable searches and unreasonable removal of personal items.
- 17.** clothing that protects you against weather.
- 18.** maintain regular contact with parents and siblings unless such contact is not in your best interest or contact is restricted due to the decision of the appropriate professional or court order.
- 19.** privacy, including sending and receiving unopened mail, making and receiving phone calls, keeping a personal journal and having visitors. This right will not be restricted unless it is in your best interest or due to the decisions of the appropriate professional or court order.
- 20.** be compensated for any work done for MCH with the exception of assigned routine duties that relate to your living environment, such as cleaning your room or other chores, or work assigned as a disciplinary measure.
- 21.** to seek employment, keep your own money and to have a bank account in your own name when appropriate to your age, maturity and developmental level.
- 22.** communicate in a language or any other means that is understandable to you.
- 23.** confidential care and treatment, including keeping medical records and client records private and only discussing these records when it is necessary for your care.
- 24.** consent in writing before taking part in any publicity or fundraising activity for MCH, including the use of your photograph.
- 25.** refuse to make public statements showing gratitude to MCH.
- 26.** be free of unnecessary or excessive medication.
- 27.** have a comprehensive service plan that addresses your needs, including transitional and discharge planning.
- 28.** to review and sign a service plan unless you are under 9 years of age.
- 29.** a copy or summary of the service plan.
- 30.** actively participate in the development of the service plan within the limits of your comprehension and ability to manage the information.
- 31.** medical, dental, vision, and mental health care and developmental services that adequately meet your needs and the right to request that care or services be separate from adults who are receiving services.
- 32.** not be pressured to get an abortion, give up a child for adoption or parent a child.
- 33.** make calls, reports or complaints without interference, coercion, punishment, retaliation, or threats of punishment or retaliation. You may make these calls, reports or complaints anonymously. Depending on the nature of the complaint, you have the right to call, report or complain to:  
  
DFPS Texas Abuse/Neglect Hotline: 1-800-252-5400  
HHSC Ombudsman: 1-844-286-0769  
DFPS Office of the Consumer Affairs: 1-800-720-7777  
Disability Rights of Texas: 1-800-252-9108

# Child's Rights

## **If you are a child in the custody of Child Protective Services (CPS):**

You have the right to know why you are in foster care and what will happen to you. You also have the right to know what is happening to your family members, including brothers and sisters, and how CPS is planning for your future.

You have the right to go to all court hearings (including status hearings, permanency hearings, and placement review hearings) that affect where you have been placed, and you have the right to speak to the judge in those hearings.

You have a right to understand and have a copy of the Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care.

## **If you are in CPS custody and 16 years old or older:**

You have the right to attend Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) classes and activities as they are appropriate to your case plan.

You have the right to a comprehensive transition plan that includes planning for your career and help to enroll in an educational or vocational job training program.

You have the right to be told about educational opportunities when you leave care.

You have the right to get help in obtaining an independent residence when you age out of care.

You have the right to one or more Circle of Support Conferences or Transition Planning

Meetings.

You have the right to participate in youth leadership development opportunities.

You have the right to consent to some or all of your medical care as authorized by the court and based on your maturity level. For example, if the court authorizes, you may give consent to diagnose and treat an infectious, contagious, or communicable disease; to examine and treat drug addiction; to counseling related to preventing suicide, drug addiction, or sexual, physical, or emotional abuse; and to hospital, medical, or surgical treatment (other than abortion) related to the pregnancy if you are unmarried and pregnant. If you consent to any medical care on your own, without the court or DFPS involved, then you are legally responsible for paying for your own medical care.

You have the right to request a hearing from a court to determine if you have the capacity to consent to medical care.

You have the right to help getting your driver's license, Social Security number, birth certificate, and state ID card.

You have the right to seek proper employment, keep your own money, and have your own bank account in your own name, depending on your case plan and age or level of maturity.

You have the right to get necessary personal information within 30 days of leaving care, including your birth certificate, immunization records, and information contained in your education portfolio and health passport.

# Guidelines for Discipline

The goal of all discipline is to connect with the child and correct behavior, preventing the need for more restrictive measures of intervention and increasing a child's ability to make positive choices in managing their own behavior. MCH utilizes Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) as a means to help children heal, learn and grow through the provision of nurturing relationships and structure in their daily routine. Discipline is based on investing, connecting, empowering, and correcting principles that include playful engagement, structured engagement, calming engagement, and proactive engagement in response to a child's behavior. Caregivers are supported in providing an IDEAL approach to discipline to solve behavioral challenges quickly and effectively, without breaking the connection between the caregiver and the child. The IDEAL response is:

**Immediate** (within seconds whenever possible);

**Direct** (engages the child through eye contact, proximity and touch whenever possible);

**Efficient** (maximizes playfulness when possible and uses as few words as possible);

**Action-based** (maximizes learning through action-based techniques); and

**Leveled** at the behavior (not the child).





# Emergency Behavior Intervention

MCH Family Outreach is committed to teaching and reinforcing conflict resolution and problem-solving for each child in care. MCH believes that emergency behavior intervention is the last alternative when working with a child who is experiencing emotional upset and is at risk of physical violence to themselves or others. Staff and foster parents are trained to respond to children in crisis and to resolve conflict using MCH-approved intervention techniques. Less restrictive behavior interventions include verbal redirection, quiet time, and brief personal containment, and these will always be utilized before any more restrictive intervention is used.

Personal containments are only used in urgent situations where immediate intervention is needed and the child aged 5 years or older has not responded to verbal redirection, or it has been ineffective. Urgent situations include external danger

that causes significant risk to the child or behavior that is dangerous to the child's safety and well-being.

Only staff or foster parents trained in emergency behavior intervention are permitted to initiate or participate in the personal containment of a child aged 5 years or older. We only use physical containments with children and will not use chemical or mechanical containments on any child in care. Staff and foster parents will stop any containment as soon as the child is no longer in danger, or a danger to himself or others, or if the child becomes physically distressed. Each containment is reviewed with the child and foster parents to make sure that the placement is still appropriate for all concerned. Staff also meet to review each containment, and the parent/managing conservator will have an opportunity to make and document comments.



# How to Get Help

## How to Get Help

You can always contact your case manager. Your case manager will visit your foster home at least once each month, and you can speak privately with him or her during the visit. You can call your case manager at his or her office, or reach them by telephone after office hours by calling the MCH Family Outreach office phone number.

If you ever have a problem in your foster home, you should try to contact your case manager first. If you cannot reach your case manager or you need help after office hours, you should call the MCH Family Outreach office phone number. If your problem is with the case manager, you should contact the case manager's supervisor at MCH Family Outreach.

If you believe you are being abused or neglected by your foster parents, your case manager or another MCH Family Outreach employee, or any other person, you can contact any of these:

- DFPS Texas Abuse/Neglect Hotline: 1-800-252-5400
- HHC Ombudsman for Children and Youth Currently in Foster Care: 1-844-286-0769
- DFPS Office of Consumer Affairs: 1-800-720-7777
- Disability Rights of Texas: 1-800-252-9108



# Parent's Information

As a parent or guardian of a child being placed in the MCH Foster Care program, you have decided to enter into a partnership with us. The primary purpose of this partnership is to aid your child and family in achieving goals, build on your child's assets and strengthen family relationships. As a partner with MCH, you will have ongoing responsibilities to both your child and MCH while your child is in our care.

Children in care benefit from consistent contact with their family. Family participation in a child's placement is vital. Many resources and opportunities for family participation are available.

Parents are expected to participate actively in their child's program at MCH. This will include contacting their child by phone and/or mail, regular visits with your child, and regular contact with your child's case manager.

## MCH Foster Care Program

MCH is licensed by the State of Texas to approve and license foster homes. MCH foster homes provide a temporary out-of-home placement for children and youth while their parent/guardian works toward reaching goals so that the child can return home to the parent/guardian. Foster care is meant to be short-term, ranging from 3-12 months, until you can resume parenting. MCH is licensed by the State of Texas to provide foster care services to children, youth, and families. MCH foster homes

provide your child with a safe and nurturing home.

Your child's needs are the most important consideration in determining which foster home MCH chooses for him or her. Your child will be matched with a foster family that is screened and trained by MCH to provide a loving, temporary home. MCH places children with families that can best meet the child's specific needs. MCH case managers will supervise your child's placement by making regular visits to the foster home and maintaining contact with the foster family.

It is very important for children to have safe, permanent homes. The goal at MCH is always family reunification as soon as possible. It is very important that the parent/guardian remains in consistent contact with the MCH case manager throughout your child's placement with MCH Family Outreach.

## Indian Child Welfare Act Policy

MCH makes every effort to comply with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in its work with children needing out-of-home care. In cases where ICWA is applicable, MCH works collaboratively with tribal social workers in planning and providing for the child's health, safety, well-being, and permanency.

# Parent's Information

## Plan of Service Meetings

A Plan of Service is an individualized plan created for each child upon admission and is updated quarterly to ensure the child is developing and growing according to the child's goals. Families are encouraged to participate in the child's initial plan of service process and attend regularly scheduled plan of service reviews. Parental participation in the plan of service process is essential to developing an effective plan for the child and to facilitate communication between the child, the parent and MCH. A Family Service Plan is also created and reviewed quarterly, to work towards permanency goals.

## Visitation and Correspondence Guidelines

MCH encourages family contact. Consistent and regular contact with parents and family members is essential to your child's well-being. You can support your child through:

- **Visits** – Families are encouraged to visit their child often unless contact is restricted by the managing conservator or by court order. The frequency and type of visit are arranged collaboratively between the child, family and/or managing conservator and MCH. Any limitations on visits will be documented in the child's plan of service.
- **Mail** – Families are encouraged to maintain contact with their child through mail unless restricted by the managing conservator or by court order. Mail should be sent to the appropriate MCH location and will be forwarded to the child through their Case Manager.

Any child who cannot independently read will be assisted with reading their mail. Any limitations on contact will be documented in the child's plan of service.

- **Telephone, Electronic Mail and Electronic messages** – Families are encouraged to maintain contact with their child through telephone contact, email and electronic messages unless restricted by the managing conservator or by court order. The location and schedule for phone contact will be arranged collaboratively between the child, foster parents and MCH. All contact between parent/managing conservators is arranged through and approved by the Case Manager. Any limitations on contact will be documented in the child's plan of service.
- **Gifts** – Children may give and receive gifts from family and friends unless restricted by the managing conservator or court order. Children may give and receive gifts from other children in care, but gifts of a significant monetary value are discouraged. Children may receive gifts from the agency. Gifts become the personal property of the child. Gifts should be limited in size and value in consideration of the program rules and the space constraints in the foster home. Gifts from children in care to foster parents and MCH are not expected and should be of sentimental nature only.



# Parent's Information

## Guidelines For Financial Participation

Methodist Children's Home provides services to children regardless of the family's ability to pay for service and has established a sliding fee scale to ensure services are accessible to all families. When appropriate, benefits such as Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and court-ordered child support will be assigned to MCH during the period the child is in care. No child will be refused services based on their family's inability to pay for services. MCH asks that parents/managing conservators keep MCH fully informed of any changes in their financial circumstances which influence their ability to maintain such support.

## Tobacco and E-Cigarette Use

A child may not use or possess tobacco products, e-cigarettes or any type of vaporizers. No one may smoke tobacco products, e-cigarettes or vaporizers inside any MCH building or foster home. No one may smoke tobacco products, e-cigarettes or vaporizers inside an MCH owned vehicle or in any vehicle when transporting children in care.

## Unplanned Discharges

MCH is committed to working with children through issues that arise during placement. However, discharge from an MCH foster home may be necessary in the following circumstances:

- The child becomes a danger to self or others.
- The child requires treatment for a chemical dependency.
- The child's needs for structure and support services exceeds the capacity of the program.

## Parental Notification

MCH staff is responsible for notifying the parents or managing conservators of the following:

**Involvement in serious incidents** – MCH staff will notify the parent/managing conservator of all serious incidents where licensing standards require parental notification.

**Plan of Service Meetings** – MCH will notify the parent/managing conservator at least two weeks prior to a scheduled plan of service meeting for their child.

**Prescription for psychotropic medication** – MCH will notify the parent/managing conservator prior to the administration of any prescribed psychotropic medication to a child in care. In cases where parental notification is not possible, medication will not be administered without approval by a licensed administrator.

**Involvement in personal containment** – MCH will notify the parent/managing conservator of any incident in which MCH staff uses a personal containment to manage their child's behavior.

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# Parent's Information

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**Legal Proceedings or Grievances** – MCH will notify the parent/managing conservator of any legal proceedings or grievances concerning their child.

**Reports** – MCH will communicate progress, significant events and achievements in regular and routine communications, at least monthly, with the parent/managing conservator which will be documented in the client record.

## Confidentiality, Privacy Protection and Publicity

Methodist Children's Home, in accordance with state licensing and national accreditation standards, prohibits the participation of any child in public performances that represent MCH without informed consent of the child, parent or managing conservator. MCH does not require children to make any public statements expressing gratitude to the organization, photographs, video, audio interviews, artwork, or creative writing for public relations or fundraising purposes without the informed, written consent of the child or parent/managing conservator. MCH will maintain updated operational

procedures regarding materials to be purged, accessed, disclosed and retained. MCH will attempt to comply with all state and federal laws, rules and regulations relating to confidentiality, access, disclosure, and retention of client records. MCH does not conduct research with children in care.

## Use of Volunteers

MCH Family Outreach occasionally utilizes volunteers to provide services or assist with foster care program events. The only formal volunteers used are student professionals completing required internships or field placements. All volunteers in this capacity must meet the same requirements as staff members and adhere to all personnel policies and practices. Other individuals occasionally provide parties, activities, gifts, or recognition for children's accomplishments. These individuals are never alone with any foster child and have no ongoing relationship with foster children. No personal or identifying information about children in care is shared with these individuals.



# Parent's Information

## Health Care

Methodist Children's Home is committed to promoting the health and safety of children in care. Children admitted to MCH are provided immediate access to medical and dental care upon admission. Individualized plans to meet routine medical and dental needs are created and reviewed as part of the youth's Plan of Service. Routine medical and dental care is provided by licensed health care treatment providers, physicians and dentists. Emergency medical and dental care is available at all times.

Families are financially responsible for their child's medical and dental expenses. Families with health care insurance benefits for their child are expected to maintain these benefits during the child's placement. Methodist Children's Home will attempt to qualify all children in care for Medicaid coverage if there is no insurance coverage available.

MCH does not admit youth that are pregnant. However, should a youth in care become pregnant, measures to provide appropriate health and medical care will be taken in accordance with the Minimum

Standards for Child-Placing Agencies. An individualized plan to transition the youth to a more appropriate placement is developed. This plan includes how MCH will meet the youth's needs for specialized medical care while the youth is in MCH care.

## MCH Policies

MCH Family Outreach reserves the right to change policies and procedures at any time. All changes will be made in accordance with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services' Minimum Standards for Child Placing Agencies. All changes in policy are reviewed by the MCH Board of Directors prior to implementation. Changes in policies and procedures will apply to both prospective placements and those children already in care. This handbook includes general information only, and it is not intended to, nor does it, contain all regulations that relate to children placed in the foster care program.





# Parent's Rights

## You have the right to:

1. be treated with courtesy, consideration, and respect.
2. have reasonable visitation and communication with your child as scheduled and agreed upon by all parties.
3. have your cultural, religious, ethnic, and racial heritage respected.
4. be informed of and consent to medical, dental, surgical, psychological, and psychiatric services for your child.
5. timely notification of any legal action or grievance concerning your child.
6. maintain legal custody of your child unless it has been demonstrated that this would jeopardize your child's health and welfare as determined by a court. Parents should be mindful that abandonment, abuse, neglect, or failure to maintain an active and ongoing connection with a child placed in foster care may become a basis for a caregiver (foster parent) to petition a court to terminate rights once a child has been in the care of that caregiver for at least six (6) consecutive months.
7. have information maintained by the agency about you kept confidential.
8. remove your child from MCH's care through the agency's discharge process.

Rights are limited for a parent who fails to provide financial and/or emotional support for their child and participate in the service plan and care needs of their child.

Rights and duties of a parent are subject to:

- A court order affecting the rights and duties;
- An affidavit or relinquishment of parental rights; and
- An affidavit by the parent designating another person or agency to act as managing conservator.





## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: Can I get my child back at any time?**

*A: MCH Family Outreach requires written notice of your intent to remove your child from care. We want to complete a safety assessment and help support your decision prior to your child being discharged from care. It is best to stay in touch with the case manager about your situation.*

**Q: Where do the foster parents live and what are they like?**

*A: In order to protect the confidentiality of you and the foster family, MCH will only tell you the town where the foster parents live. We can also tell you a little about the foster parents and their family such as how many children are in the home and the activities that the family enjoys together.*

**Q: Will I get to meet the foster parents?**

*A: You will be able to meet the foster parents if all parties (you, MCH staff, and foster parents) agree to the meeting and it is in your child's best interest.*

**Q: What items do I need to provide for my child while they are in foster care?**

*A: You are not required to provide any specific items while your child is in care; however, you are welcome to bring anything that you think might help your child cope with being apart from you. You are also welcome to bring anything that you think your child might need or want.*

*You are allowed to bring personal possessions from home within limits and within the guidelines of the program. Personal possessions that are harmful, disruptive, or prohibited by program rules are not allowed. Prohibited items include but are not limited to the following: weapons of any kind; fireworks; and movies, music, or games that are rated restricted or mature, come with a parental advisory label, or are deemed inappropriate for minors.*

*MCH discourages you from bringing items that would present a significant loss to you if the item was damaged or lost.*

**Q: When will I get to visit with my child?**

*A: The MCH case manager will discuss and plan a visitation schedule with you. He or she will take into consideration your availability for visits, the foster parent's schedule, as well as the child's class schedule and other activities if they are school-aged. Weekly visits with your child are recommended. If visits are inconsistent or a parent does not attend scheduled visits, the case manager may make other arrangements (like asking you to call one hour before to confirm the visit) before a visit is scheduled.*

**Q: Who else can come to the visit with me?**

*A: We want the parent(s) to visit the child alone initially, and then we can decide together who else should visit. Please do not attempt to bring anyone who is not related to the child to visits.*

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What am I allowed to bring to visits?**

*A: You are not required to bring anything at all, but you can bring snacks or gifts for your child if you would like. If you believe a favorite blanket or story book might help your child feel more comfortable during the visit, please feel free to bring the object with you.*

**Q: Will my child stay with the same foster family until I am able to parent them?**

*A: MCH works diligently to ensure that your child remains placed in the same foster home throughout his or her placement in care, and we are committed to working with children and youth through issues that arise during placement. Our hope is that children experience the same foster family for the entire placement; however, specific issues could cause that placement to change. The MCH case manager should discuss this more with you at the time of placement.*

**Q: Will I be notified if something happens to my child such as a major illness or injury?**

*A: The MCH Family Outreach staff will keep parents or managing conservators informed of the status of a child's care, especially in situations where a serious incident has occurred or where a parent's consent is needed for specific medication or medical treatment. For these reasons, it is very important that you provide us with the correct contact information for you and other family members at all times.*

**Q: How long can my child stay in care?**

*A: A typical foster care placement is 3-12 months long. We want to give you time to get prepared and feel supported for full-time parenting.*

**Q: Who will know that my child is placed in foster care?**

*A: MCH staff and foster parents will protect your child's identity. Based on your child's age, he or she will be able to participate in activities that any other child would participate in, so teachers, day care providers, or others may know that your child is living with a foster family. Also, the MCH case manager assigned to you will want to know if there are others in your family or close friends who you would want to visit with your child during the placement.*

**Q: Will MCH provide services to me in order to help me get my child back?**

*A: MCH will assist in connecting you to resources and will provide a family service plan to help guide the process.*

**Q: If I receive child support or state supported benefits such as WIC, SNAP, or TANF – am I obligated to report to them that my child is in foster care?**

*A: You should contact any services that you and your child currently receive to notify that service of the change to your family and household, unless doing so would cause harm.*

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: How will my child be disciplined while in MCH's care?**

*A: Foster parents are not allowed to spank foster children placed in their home. MCH ensures that all children placed in its care are treated with respect at all times. Foster parents must choose discipline that matches the child's age and level of development. We also require that they use discipline that teaches the child how to behave differently next time the same situation occurs. No child in MCH care may be deprived of necessities or subject to cruel, harsh, unusual, or unnecessary punishment.*

**Q: What can I do if I have a complaint?**

*A: You can contact the case manager directly if you have an issue with any aspect of your child's placement. If you do not feel comfortable speaking with the case manager, you may contact the Outreach office and ask to speak with the Director of the office or the Program Administrator assigned to the office.*

**Q: What if I have problems caring for my child after my child is returned to me?**

*A: We encourage you to contact us if you have any questions related to your child or feel the need for additional services or support. MCH also has a program that can provide services for you and your child that can help you both adjust to family reunification.*

**Q: What happens next?**

*A: The MCH case manager will call (or write a letter, if a phone is not available) you after your child's first night in care, or as soon as possible after the placement. You can call the case manager with any questions you have or information you think MCH would need in order to provide the very best care for your child. MCH is dedicated to providing your child with the most nurturing home environment possible. Thank you for trusting us to care for your child. We look forward to serving you and your child!*





# MCH Family Outreach

Offering Hope Since 1890

## Acknowledgement of Receiving Handbook

### Child & Parent/Managing Conservator Information

- Methodist Children's Home Core Values and Mission Statement
- Program Description and Rules
- Family Contacts and Gifts
- Personal Possessions
- Spiritual Development
- Educational Policy
- Medical Care
- Trips Away from your Foster Home
- Child's Rights
- Guidelines for Discipline
- Emergency Behavior Intervention
- Client Grievance Policy

### Additional Parent/Managing Conservator Information

- MCH Foster Care Program
- Indian Child Welfare Act Policy
- Plan of Service Meetings
- Visitation and Correspondence Guidelines
- Guidelines for Financial Participation
- Tobacco and E-Cigarette Use
- Unplanned Discharges
- Parental Notification
- Confidentiality, Privacy Protection and Publicity
- Research Policy
- Use of Volunteers
- Health Care
- MCH Policies

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Managing Conservator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date