

Consumer Handbook

REVISED 7/20/2019



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Communities Connected for Kids provides oversight and coordination of the child welfare system of care in St. Lucie, Martin, Indian River and Okeechobee counties. Services provided through our local system of care include foster care, adoptions and protective services.

NOTES

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT

You will be asked to sign a form, which will be filed in your record and contains the following information:

I have received the Communities Connected for Kids Consumer Handbook. I was given time to ask questions and I understand the answers that were given to me.

The Communities Connected for Kids Handbook has information on the following subjects:

- Mission Statement/Vision
- Definitions
- Consumer Rights and Responsibilities
- Civil Rights
- Confidentiality of Client Information
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
- Consumer Grievance Procedure

Note: The original, signed, "Acknowledgement of Receipt" form is to be filed in the consumer's record to document receipt of the above information.

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MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance the safety, permanency and well-being for all children in Okeechobee and the Treasure Coast through a community network of family support services.

VISION

To eliminate abuse, neglect and abandonment in Okeechobee and the Treasure Coast so all children grow to their full potential.

DEFINITIONS

Consent – To give permission.

Consumer – The person receiving services.

Confidentiality – Information that needs to be kept private, not discussed or shared with others in any way.

Grievance – A perceived injustice.

Service/Treatment Plan – The activities and tasks that you, your family and any Case Management Agencies agree must be done to obtain your goals.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Headquarters and service center office hours are 8:00-5:00.

On-Call

Martin	772-631-3868
Saint Lucie	772-418-0006
Indian River	772-321-3044
Okeechobee	863-697-1966

Fraud, Waste, Abuse Detection, and Reporting

What is Fraud, Waste, Abuse, and Overpament

In order to detect fraud, waste, abuse and overpayment, you need to know the Law.

Fraud - An intentional deception or misrepresentation made by a person with the knowledge that the deception results in unauthorized benefit to herself or himself or another person. The term includes any act that constitutes fraud under applicable federal or state law.

Waste – Mismanagement of resources, including incurring unnecessary costs because of inefficient or ineffective practices or systems.

Abuse - Provider practices that are inconsistent with generally accepted business or medical practices and that result in an unnecessary cost to the Medicaid program or in reimbursement for goods or services that are not medically necessary or that fail to meet professionally recognized standards for health care, or recipient practices that result in unnecessary cost to the Medicaid program.

Overpayment – As per s. 409.913 F.S., includes any amount that is not authorized to be paid by the Medicaid program whether paid as a result of inaccurate or improper cost reporting, improper claiming, unacceptable practices, fraud, abuse or mistake.

To report suspected fraud, waste or abuse in the Medicaid program, please use one of the following applicable avenues:

AHCA Consumer Complaint Hotline: 1-888-419-3456

Florida Attorney General's Office: 1-866-966-7226

The Florida Medicaid Program Integrity Office: 1-850-412-4600

Complaint Form: https://apps.ahca.myflorida.com/inspector general/fraud complaintform.aspx

Sunshine Health Compliance hotline at 1-800-345-1642 or Sunshine Health's anonymous and confidential hotline at 1-866-685-8664

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<u>Grievance and Appeals Processes for Case Management Agencies or</u> Providers

All Communities Connected for Kids contracts for services require providers to follow Communities Connected for Kids grievance and appeals procedures. If a contract provider wishes to file a grievance, a summary of the process is outlined below.

- In the event that a difference of opinion or conflict occurs, the dissatisfied provider
 is encouraged to bring the specific issue to the attention of Communities Connected
 for Kids in the context of an inquiry. The Communities Connected for Kids Quality
 Management department processes all inquiries and provides the response.
- If the Communities Connected for Kids Quality Management department can not resolve the issue, a meeting with Communities Connected for Kids management and the provider will be set to discuss the issue.
- If the Communities Connected for Kids management team and the provider can not resolve the issue, a meeting with the Communities Connected for Kids Chief Executive Officer will be set for final resolution.
- 4. Final authority to resolve disagreements, if necessary, rests with the Communities Connected for Kids Chief Executive Officer. If needed, all data collected will be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer for final review. The agency designee will notify the provider of the final decision which will be given no later than five (5) days after the Chief Executive Officer receives the request for review.

Review of all Complaints and Grievances

On a monthly basis, the Communities Connected for Kids Quality Management Director reviews all complaints and grievances filed within the month. Results are reviewed with the Communities Connected for Kids Senior Management Team. Timeliness of resolution, corrective actions taken, and customer satisfaction with the resolution is evaluated.

CONSUMER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At Communities Connected for Kids and our subcontracted providers you are protected by certain rights and responsibilities that support the services you receive. You have the right:

To be treated with courtesy, dignity and respect without regard to race, religion, age or disability.

To understand the availability of the services you need, what services you will be using, and Communities Connected for Kids expectations and rules for using those services.

To receive quality service, given in a professional and timely manner.

To expect that employees working on behalf of Communities Connected for Kids will comply with all laws that protect you from abuse, neglect or exploitation.

To have your rights to confidentiality and privacy respected and upheld within the limits of the law, and to give your consent before information is given to another agency or person outside Communities Connected for Kids.

To know that your record may be reviewed for quality and compliance by persons from the Council on Accreditation, Department of Children and Families, and other monitoring agencies.

To participate in setting up and reviewing service plans, case plans and/or any other meeting between you and Communities Connected for Kids.

To understand rules and conditions related to Communities Connected for Kids discontinuing services.

To refuse service, unless the court has limited your rights, and to be informed of what will happen if you refuse.

To file a grievance and to be given a copy of the Communities Connected for Kids Consumer Grievance Procedure.

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You have the Responsibility:

To be honest in giving information that is requested by Communities Connected for Kids in order to be provided services.

To comply with Communities Connected for Kids rules, policies and requests. To work toward all service plan goals and any other request that has been agreed upon.

To respect the privacy/confidentiality of others receiving services.

To behave in a manner that does not threaten or endanger another person and to understand that such activity could cause Communities Connected for Kids to discontinue services.

Please read these Consumer Rights and Responsibilities and take this time to ask questions. When you are satisfied that you understand your rights and responsibilities, please sign the receipt form to indicate that you have received our handbook.

CONSUMER GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

It is the policy of Communities Connected for Kids to respond to all grievance and appeals in a manner that is respectful of individual clients, providers, and others who file a grievance. This policy is included in all contracts with service providers. The grievance and appeals process promotes fair, non-intimidating, and timely resolution.

Grievance and Appeals Processes for Parents

The case manager will explain the grievance and appeals process to the child and family at the initial contact. Grievance and appeals forms are included in the consumer guide that will be provided at initial contact.

The following procedure will be followed when a child/youth or a parent files a grievance:

- In the event that a difference of opinion or conflict occurs, the dissatisfied person(s)
 is encouraged to bring the specific issue to the attention of the Case Manager in the
 context of an inquiry. The forum for this dialog is informal and the results are
 documented in the appropriate file. Documentation includes the circumstances
 surrounding the issue and resolution/status.
- 2. If the concerns are not resolved at the inquiry or complaint level, the case manager will provide the person(s) with the name of his/her supervisor so that the person(s) may speak with them regarding the concern/complaint. This process should move up the chain of command within the case management agency until the issue is resolved.
- 3. If the management personnel within the case management agency can not resolve the issue, the case management agency shall request a meeting with Communities Connected for Kids management and the complainant to discuss the outstanding issue.
- 4. Final authority to resolve disagreements, if necessary, rests with the Communities Connected for Kids Chief Executive Officer. If needed, all data collected will be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer for final review. The agency designee will notify the person(s) served of the final decision which will be given no later than five (5) days after the Chief Executive Officer receives the request for review.

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COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS may amend the information to indicate the problem and notify others who have copies of the incorrect information. If you would like us to amend information, you must make a request in writing and explain why you would like us to amend the information. You may either write us a letter or fill out the "COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS Record Request Form"

COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS may deny your request in certain situations. If COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS denies your request, COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS will explain why in writing. You will have the opportunity to send us a statement explaining why you disagree with our decision and COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS will share your statement whenever COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS shares your information in the future.

- 1. You have the right to have a list of who COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS has shared your information with for the previous six (6) years. If you would like to have a list, you may send us a letter requesting a list or fill out the "COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS Record Request Form". The list will not include some types of shared information, including sharing for treatment, payment or health care operations. It will also not include sharing made prior to December 1, 2003. If you request a list, COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS may charge you a fee to cover the cost of preparing the list.
- You have the right to request that COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS limit the use and sharing of your protected health information (PHI) for treatment, payment and health care operations. COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS is not required to agree to your request. If COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS does agree to your request, COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS must follow your restrictions (except if the information is necessary for emergency treatment). You may cancel the restriction at any time as long as COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS notifies you of the cancellation and continues to apply the restriction to information collected before the cancellation.
- 3. You have the right to request to be contacted at a different location or by a different method such as your work address instead of home address. If you would like to request a different method of contact, you must make a written request by letter to update your record.

COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

 Communities Connected for Kids has the right to serve you according to the staff and programs offered and available. A waiting list for services referred may become available when people needing services exceed program capacities.
 Communities Connected for Kids may provide you with information about other agencies that offer similar services if a waiting list exists.

Communities Connected for Kids offers high quality services and will facilitate appointments and activities that are helpful to you. We will strive to make our services as accessible and convenient as possible.

- Communities Connected for Kids is responsible for protecting your privacy/confidentiality except when required by law if abuse or neglect is suspected.
- Communities Connected for Kids is responsible for obtaining your ideas and help in developing and carrying out your service/treatment plan.
- Communities Connected for Kids is responsible for hiring qualified staff.
- Communities Connected for Kids is responsible for providing services in safe and clean buildings.
- All Communities Connected for Kids staff is required by law to report suspicion of child abuse or elder abuse.

It is essential that Communities Connected for Kids (CCKids) maintains a safe environment for its employees and provides necessary supports and resources to keep staff, caregivers, families, and children safe. CCKids does not employ restrictive behavior management interventions, as defined as isolation, manual restraint, mechanical restraint and locked seclusion. CCKids uses positive reinforcement, verbal de-escalation, and Family Safety Contracts that are compliant with federal, state, and local legal and regulatory requirements.

- If Communities Connected for Kids staff consider a consumer as an immediate danger to himself/herself or others, the staff member must:
 - Consult with mental health professionals and, in some instances, call 911 for crisis intervention;
 - If possible, notify the individual who is believed to be in immediate danger or their family that the consumer may be a danger to himself/ herself:
 - Notify the appropriate law enforcement personnel, unless in the

PAGE 16 judgment of the staff member and their supervisor, the situation has been resolved without such notification;

Disclose information needed to resolve the dangerous situation; and

• Document the situation as an incident.

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CIVIL RIGHTS

The agency and its contracted providers of client services will provide to all persons with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, and those persons with limited proficiency in the English language, appropriate assistance that is necessary to afford such persons equal opportunity to access and benefit from the services and programs administered by the agency.

Auxiliary aids for clients with sensory impairment may include:

- Amplified telephones and other assistive listening devices and systems such as Pocket Talker;
- TDD/TTY Text telephone used like a typewriter that can be used by people who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired;
- Florida Relay Service (FRS) A service which enables a hearing person to communicate with a person who is hearing or speech impaired through a specially trained operator called a communications assistant;
- Braille, Large Print, and Audiotapes; and
- Qualified American Sign Language interpreters, note takers, and readers. Assistance for persons with limited proficiency in English may include:
- Hiring bilingual staff
- Hiring staff interpreters
- Using volunteer staff interpreters
- Arranging for volunteer community interpreters
- Contracting outside interpreter services
- Telephone interpreter services

All qualified clients and/or potential clients are entitled to equal opportunity to use and benefit from the programs and services of the agency. This includes reasonable accommodations to ensure that programs and services of the agency are equally accessible to and effective for otherwise qualified persons who have hearing, vision or mobility impairments, or who are limited in their ability to speak, write, read or otherwise understand English.

- Research organizations- To research organizations after they satisfy conditions about protecting the privacy or medical information.
- Certain government functions- For certain government functions, including but not limited to military and veterans' activities, national security and intelligence activities, and correctional institutions in some situations.
- 7. Authorization: Other than the uses and sharing listed above (#1-6), COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS will not use or share your protected health information (PHI) without your/a parent/guardian's signed permission on the "COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS Consent to Release/Request Information Form". You may later cancel your permission form by writing us a letter canceling your permission. Certain programs may have more legally required restriction on disclosure of your medical information.

YOU HAVE RIGHTS CONCERNING YOUR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI)

- 1. You have the right to see and have copy of your protected health information (PHI) that is kept in certain groups of records. To see or receive a copy of your protected health information (PHI), you must make a written request or fill out the "COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS Record Request Form". We will respond to your request within a reasonable amount of time.
 - Requests for older records may take some time to obtain from storage. COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS may deny your request in certain situations but will explain why in writing and let you know if you have the right to have our decision reviewed by another person.
- You have the right to have us amend your protected health information (PHI) that COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS keeps if you believe that COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS has information that is not correct or not complete.

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- Reviewing COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS activities and using information in the event of COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS system changes.
- Working with this notice and other laws.
- 4. Persons Involved in Your Care: COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS may share your protected health information (PHI) with a relative, close personal friend or a person you identify if that person is involved in your care and the information is about your care. If the consumer is a minor, COMMUNITIES CONNECTED

FOR KIDS may share your protected health information (PHI) about the minor to a parent, guardian or other person responsible for the minor except in some situations.

- Required by Law: To report known or suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families.
- 6. National Priority Uses and Sharing: When permitted by law, COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS may use or share your protected health information (PHI) without your permission for various activities that are recognized as "national priorities" such as:
- Threat to health or safety If COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS believes it is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat to health or safety.
- Public health activities -For public health activities
- Abuse, neglect or domestic violence If COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS believes that you may be a victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence.
- Health oversight activities A review by a health oversight agency.
- Court proceedings- A review by a court or an officer of the court (such as an attomey) if a judge orders us to do so.
- Law enforcement- A review by a law enforcement official for specific law enforcement purposes.
- Coroners and others A review by a coroner, medical examiner, funeral director or to an organ donor or transplant agencies.
- Worker's compensation- To comply with workers' compensation laws.

Auxiliary aids will be available for use by clients, potential clients, and employees with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, or limited English proficiency in each phase of the service delivery or employment process when the lack of such aids may in effect deny or delay service accessibility, hinder service effectiveness or deny persons with disabilities reasonable accommodations to ensure nondiscrimination and equal opportunity.

<u>Purpose:</u> This plan provides Communities Connected for Kids with guidelines as follows:
All clients for services with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, have equal

- opportunity to use and benefit from the programs and services administered by the agency.
- Qualified persons, due to their limited ability to speak, read, write, or otherwise
 understand the English language, are not excluded from or denied equal access to
 the services and programs administered by the agency.
- Reasonable accommodation(s), as needed, are made available to the above clients
 to ensure that they are not denied full participation in the programs and services
 of the agency.

Scope: The policies and procedures described in this plan apply to all Communities Connected for Kids' offices and service centers, including those of agencies providing direct services to clients or potential clients with impaired sensory (hearing and vision), manual, or speaking skills, and those with limited proficiency in English.

Procedures: The following procedures are to be followed by agency and network providers of direct client services in providing auxiliary aids.

• Client needs are assessed through consulting with the client/potential client concerning his/her preferred communication mode, and if applicable, with the assigned case manager, counselor, parent or other family member, guardian or other representative and the auxiliary aids/hearing impaired coordinator. (NOTE: Hearing impaired clients or those clients with limited proficiency in the English language have a right to a qualified interpreter. The use of family or friends as interpreters is highly discouraged except in an emergency, as it could result in a breach of confidentiality or reluctance on the part of beneficiaries to reveal personal information critical to their situations to family and friends.)

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- It is the responsibility of all supervisors/directors for each program to ensure that appropriate auxiliary aids are provided for the client. When obtaining auxiliary aids, every effort should be made to utilize the agency's current resources; however, if auxiliary aids need to be obtained from outside the agency, the supervisor/director shall contact the Communities Connected for Kids Finance Department.
- Certain auxiliary aids are not always readily available, particularly in rural areas.
 This problem is compounded when advance notice cannot be anticipated, which is often the case for child protective services cases and walk-ins. To help alleviate this problem, each major service center will have staff available to provide assistance.
- The staff are either reasonably skilled in basic sign language and finger spelling or are knowledgeable of the existing resources available in the community, including qualified interpreters from the Deaf Service Centers. Auxiliary aids shall be provided in a time frame that will not unreasonably delay, impede or deny services to clients. This will also include other languages.
- During the initial needs assessment, clients must be informed of the available auxiliary aids, and that the agency will provide these services at no cost to them.
 The clients' wishes and needs for auxiliary aids should be taken into consideration before deciding on the appropriate auxiliary aids.
- Posters containing information about the availability of auxiliary aids are posted in all service centers.
- When meetings, conferences, or seminars are scheduled, information will be included in the advertisement, conference registration materials or meeting notices that participants with mobility or sensory impairments will be provided with necessary auxiliary aids at no cost to themselves. The information will include the name of a contact person and a date by which the participant must request such assistance.
- The registration process should include a method for determining the number and type of participants with disabilities needing assistance as well as the type assistance/accommodation requested. Provisions may include but are not limited to qualified interpreters, readers, adequate lighting, handicapped parking spaces, appropriate entrance ramps, appropriate seating arrangements and accessible restrooms for the mobility impaired.

HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

NOTICE OF PRIVACY POLICY

Communities Connected for Kids adheres to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). On the basis of that law, privacy regulations now apply to certain Protected Health Information (PHI). PHI refers to individually identifiable health information created or received by a healthcare provider, health plan, or healthcare clearinghouse that relates to the past, present, or future health of an individual; the provision of health care to an individual; or the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care. Communities Connected for Kids will comply with all other federal and state laws concerning medical privacy. Such health information includes health status, medical condition, claims experience, receipt of health care, medical history, genetic information, and evidence of insurability and disability.

COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDS MAY USE AND SHARE/ DISCLOSEYOUR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI) IN A FEW SITUATIONS:

- Treatment: To give or coordinate your health care and related services by talking with or disclosing your protected health information (PHI) with health care providers.
- Payment: To obtain payment from your insurers, collection agencies, and consumer reporting agencies either for services that you received or before you receive certain services to know whether the insurance plan will pay for a service.

Business Operations:

3.

- Evaluate the skills and performance of caregivers taking care of you.
- Training programs for student care givers.
- Cooperating with licensing authorities and government agencies.
- Reviewing the quality of your care.
- Managing the care of people who have similar problems.
- Planning for COMMUNITIES CONNECTED FOR KIDSfuture operations.
- Resolving grievances.

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- 5. With the exception of the child's medical records provided to substitute care parents (and to the child's natural parents or other legal guardian), case material which discloses that the child has HIV/AIDS will be kept within the file in a "Confidential Information" envelope used to safeguard sensitive case information.
- The child's case records will not be segregated or flagged in any way which would permit their identification as case records of HIV/AIDS infected children.

Training: The Communities Connected for Kids training program includes the various communication options available for auxiliary aids; how to access and utilize these aids; and the responsibility of the agency to provide reasonable accommodation to ensure training is accessible.

Dissemination: A copy of this plan will be posted on the agency's Internet website and internal Intranet for all employees to view.

Revisions: This plan will be updated as needed but at least annually.

Consumers who believe that they have been discriminated against may file a written complaint of discrimination within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory act with:

Assistant Staff Director for Civil Rights DCF Office of Inspector General Office of Civil Rights 1317 Winewood Boulevard Building 1, Room 110 Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700 (850) 487-1901;TDD (850) 922-9220

United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Attention: Office of Civil Rights Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center, Suite 16T70 61 Forsyth Street, S.W. Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8909 (404) 562-7886;TDD (404) 562-7884 PAGE 10 PAGE 11

CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLIENT INFORMATION

1. All information regarding past, present and future clients and/or their relatives is considered to be confidential and is covered by these procedures.

Need-to-Know Basis

Information is shared among staff, agencies, and foster parents only on a need- to-know basis. Under no circumstances will a staff member share information about past, present and future clients outside his/her responsibilities and duties as a staff member working on a specific case. If approached by an individual seeking information outside these parameters, the staff member will decline to offer information and direct the individual to the appropriate agency staff.

- 2. Staff will practice extreme diligence in sharing information only in staff secure areas. Staff will not discuss clients in common areas of the facility where members of the public may hear such information.
- 3. Volunteers who work with the agency are also subject to the need-to-know rule. Staff members who oversee the work of volunteers will share minimal information with volunteers about specific clients, sharing information only to the extent that it impacts the scope of the volunteer's work with the client. For example, a volunteer who tutors a child may be told that the child is experiencing difficulty in school performance, but the same volunteer is not to be told personal information about the client, his family, the status of the case, or the problems that brought the family under the supervision of the agency.
- 4. Staff will continue to caution foster parents to share only need-to-know information with other foster parents.
- 5. All agency staff, providers, volunteers and caregivers will receive appropriate training on confidentiality and ethical standards.

Access to Records

At no time is information regarding clients and/or relatives and/or other relevant
parties to be released to any person without prior written consent of the client, or
in the event of a minor child, his/her parent or legal guardian, or under subpoena
of the judicial system.

All client records will be handled in a manner which will protect the nature of the information contained within them.

- 3. All automated records meet standards for security to ensure all users see only the information appropriate for their needs.
- 4. All records regarding clients are considered the property of the agency.

Special Requirements Related to HIV/AIDS Records

The following procedures apply to HIV/AIDS records and information access:

- 1. Case narrative will not contain any reference to the child's HIV infection or AIDS.
- 2. Communities Connected for Kids and the placement provider will disclose to adopting or substitute care parents the medical condition, but not the name, of an HIV/AIDS positive child prior to the decision to adopt or accept the child into the substitute care home. Only after the parents have made the commitment to adopt or accept the child into the home will the name of the child be provided.
- 3. The substitute care parents will be provided with documentation of the complete medical history and condition of a child placed in their care, including HIV/AIDS status. This documentation must be maintained by the substitute care parents and held as confidential information with access strictly limited to the child's physician(s) and other providers of medical and dental care when treatment is required.
- 4. Medical documentation needed for school enrollment, day care or similar purpose must be provided separately by the physician and may not contain any reference to the child's HIV/AIDS status.