



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE
P.O. BOX 2675
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Nancy L. Hardy
Deputy Secretary for
Children, Youth and Families

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Dear Children and Youth Agency Administrator:

As you may be aware House Bill 1579, Printer's Number 2952, was signed by Governor Edward G. Rendell on November 22, 2005 and is now known as Act 73 of 2005. This act became effective January 21, 2006. The attached Act is known as the Resource Family Care Act and it is intended to provide resource parents fair treatment, consideration and respect, and to ensure collaboration among all parties involved in protecting the safety and well-being of children and youth within the foster care system.

Act 73 of 2005 establishes responsibilities for county and private children and youth agencies regarding information and services to be made available to resource families. The information that is to be provided to resource families by the agencies includes:

- A timely response that is open and complete when contacted by a resource family regarding the family's role and the care of the child.
- All policies and procedures relating to the role of the resource family.
- Information regarding accessing services and how to reach the agency on a 24 hour-a-day, 7 day-a-week, basis.
- The child's medical history, behavior and relationship with their parent(s) shall be provided as soon as this information is made available to the agency. Also, information regarding the child's educational history, life experiences, and previous and prospective placement circumstances are to be provided within a reasonable amount of time.
- Notification of scheduled meetings in order for a resource family to actively participate in the service and permanency planning process regarding the child.
- The opportunity to be heard regarding practices and decisions of the agency involving the child that resides in the home. The agency shall not discharge, threaten, or otherwise discriminate or retaliate against a resource family for an appropriate inquiry regarding this.
- Consultation when a decision is made regarding the release of the resource family's address to the child's parent. This information is released only after informing the resource family.
- Confidentiality is to be maintained by the agency when a report of suspected child abuse is made involving a member of the resource family. This provision will not be applicable if it interferes with the safety of the child.

The services that are to be available to resource families by the county and private agencies include:

- Support services to assist in the care of the child which is consistent with the child's approved permanency plan.
- Appropriate training to enhance the skills and performance of the resource family.
- Coordination of services that may be necessary due to family loss and separation when a child departs from a home and isn't the result of an immediate threat to the health and safety of the child caused by the resource family.

Act 73 of 2005 lists many responsibilities to county and private agencies that are already in place and should currently be practiced. Representatives from the Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Family Services, the Pennsylvania State Foster Parents Association, the Statewide Adoption Network, county agencies and the Department of Public Welfare have met to discuss implementation of the requirements contained in the Resource Family Care Act. Additional information will be forthcoming. This legislation will help in keeping resource families active and committed to children in their care. Questions regarding Act 73 of 2005 may be directed to the Office of Children, Youth and Families' Program Policy Unit at (717) 346-0445.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy L. Hardy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "H" at the end.

Nancy L. Hardy