



November 24, 2010

Dear Foster Parent,

As a foster parent, you are a critical partner in ensuring the safety, permanency and well-being for children who are in the state's care, and especially now, as we're focusing on more family settings for children in the state's custody.

We'd like you to know that we're moving forward with a name that better reflects the vision for reform efforts: "Families Matter." We believe that families matter, whether children are with their family, a foster family, an adoptive family or a guardianship family. We believe that children grow best in their own homes, and if they have to be out of the home, we look to relatives and our dedicated foster parents to provide safe, temporary families, and in some instances, the permanent family through adoption. We believe children should be reunified or moved to permanency through adoption or guardianship in a timely manner.

Our plan to move some case management decisions from DHHS to KVC and NFC in the Southeast and Eastern Service Areas will help eliminate duplication in services and lessen any confusion caused by having workers from the contractors and from DHHS in your lives.

DHHS staff will focus on safety assessments and investigating child abuse or neglect, preventing removal of children from their homes when possible, and providing additional oversight of contractors and outcomes. KVC and NFC staff will focus on service coordination and case management. DHHS will retain overall responsibility.

One thing we've heard recently is that some foster families are having difficulty getting someone to call them back. We all want foster and adoptive parents to have the support you need. In instances like this, please contact your foster care agency first. If that's not successful, you can always call KVC (402-420-8600 for the Southeast Service Area, 402-431-4200 for the Eastern Service Area) or NFC (402-498-1297) if you're having difficulty getting calls returned. In addition, the Department has asked the Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parents Association (NFAPA) to take calls from foster parents at 800-7-PARENT (800-772-7368). NFAPA won't be answering case-specific questions, but they can make contact with contractors or DHHS and facilitate getting someone to

return your calls so you get the information you need. They will also be tracking the number of requests they receive to give us feedback about the extent of any concerns so we can see that the issue is resolved. Another resource is the DHHS Helpline at 800-254-4202. All of these numbers are available 8:00am-5:00pm, Monday through Friday.

We believe that families matter, and that every child needs a place to call home. Thank you for opening your hearts and homes to children.

Sincerely,

Todd Reckling, Director
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