

SCCS Caregiver Agreement for Discipline, Care, Time-Out, and Prohibition of Seclusion & Restraint

Foster, adoptive and kinship caregivers ("caregivers"), are members of a helping team, which includes SCCS staff, birth parents, the court, and other community members who want to protect children in the care of SCCS and help them grow into healthy adults. Such growth happens best when SCCS, community services, and caregivers work together for children under care.

Since discipline is an essential part of helping children grow and develop, it must always be administered thoughtfully, and only for the purpose of teaching, so a child can learn to become a responsible adult and good member of the community.

In an effort to define approved techniques and provide a consistent guide for caregivers, SCCS will adhere to the following guidelines:

- A. A caregiver shall treat each child with kindness, consistency, and respect.
- B. A caregiver shall not discriminate in providing care and supervision to children on the basis of race, sex, religion, or cultural heritage.
- C. A caregiver shall provide humane, instructive discipline appropriate to the age and functioning level of a child.
 - 1. Disciplinary methods shall stress praise and encouragement for desired behavior rather than punishment.
 - 2. All rules and expectations made by a caregiver shall be explained to a child in a manner appropriate to his/her age and understanding during the child's initial orientation and prior to any disciplinary act for violation of such rules.
 - 3. A child shall not be punished for actions over which he has no control.
 - 4. A child shall not be punished for bed-wetting or in the course of toilet training activities.
- D. A caregiver shall not subject a child to verbal abuse or swearing; to derogatory remarks about the children, their families, their race, their religion, or their ethnic or cultural backgrounds; or to threats (direct or implied) of physical violence or removal from the caregiver home.
- E. A caregiver shall not administer any of the following punishments when interacting with a child:
 - 1. Physical hitting or any type of physical punishment inflicted in any manner upon the body such as spanking, paddling, punching, shaking, biting, kicking, hair pulling, pinching, or rough handling.

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2. Physically strenuous work or exercises when used as a means of punishment.
 3. Requiring or forcing a child to take an uncomfortable position, such as squatting or bending, or requiring a child to repeat physical movements when used as a means of punishment.
 4. Use of chemical mechanical restraints. Physical restraint of a foster child may only be utilized by a treatment provider who has received specific training and annual review in acceptable methods of restraint. A treatment provider must use the least restrictive restraint necessary to control a situation. SCCS does not currently have a treatment foster care program. No family foster caregiver is trained or approved to administer physical restraint. A foster caregiver from a treatment provider network must notify the recommending agency immediately following the use of restraint. The recommending agency must notify SCCS through an incident report within 24 hours.
 5. Denial of social and recreational activities for excessive or prolonged periods of time. Social or recreational activities shall not be denied for more than a 48-hour maximum period. Caregivers should be expected to impose appropriately shorter periods with younger children (and for instances of minor behavioral infractions). Discipline should always be handled on an individual basis depending on the child's age and needs. Although not all social or recreational activities may be denied, in some instances it may be deemed appropriate to deny specific social or recreational activities for periods not to exceed one week for children and youth ages 12 through 17.
 6. Denial of social or casework services, medical treatment, or educational services.
 7. Deprivation of meals or drinks.
 8. Denial of visitation or communication rights with the family of the child as a means of punishment.
 9. Denial of sleep.
 10. Denial of shelter, clothing, bedding, or restroom facilities.
- F. SCCS prohibits the use of isolation and seclusion as behavior management or a therapeutic technique.

Isolation is defined as "the practice of separating a person from others in a monitored non-locked or quiet room in order to calm the person removed and physically preventing the person from leaving the designated space or room where she or he is placed."

Seclusion is defined as "the placing of a person in a locked room to prevent harm to self or others."

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The use of "Time Out" is permitted as a non-therapeutic technique of removing a child from his or her environment or situation to another place for a specified period of time to reflect on his or her behavior. Unlike isolation, a child in time out has the ability to leave the room or space if he or she chooses. Though time out may be used as an appropriate method of discipline, it must be time limited and appropriate to the needs of the child.

Time out is not to be used for extended periods which may result in the child feeling or being isolated from the family. It is best to use time out for only two kinds of misbehavior at a time. Using time out for every unacceptable behavior results in the child being in time out constantly. Other parenting methods including, but not limited to, distraction, substitution, structuring of time/routine and changing the environment can be used to deal with a child's additional negative behaviors.

Guidelines for caregivers are: the time out period should not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age for children 24 months to 5 years. For children age 6 to 12, time out can be used for periods of 10 to 15 minutes if that is appropriate for the child's ability to maintain himself/herself in time-out. Generally, one minute for each year of age can be used up to age 12. Grounding is a term used more exclusively for teenagers and is a type of time-out. Grounding (the loss of social and recreational activities) is best used for one to two days at a time and for not more than one week at a maximum.

The designated time out area should be within the field of observation of the caregiver so that the child can be monitored at all times.

- G. Caregivers should discuss, with the caseworker for each child, the caregiver home coordinator and any therapists involved, proper parenting methods including the use of discipline (reasonable, appropriate consequences) for behavior infractions, throughout each child's placement.
- H. Any act of omission or commission by a caregiver or other member of household which results in the death, injury, illness, abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a child shall be grounds for the denial or revocation of a foster or adoptive home certificate and/or the removal of children from the home. This may be a recommendation of the agency supervising a caregiver home or ODJFS. In such an event, SCCS may pursue appropriate legal action to protect its rights, or those of the child, in law or in equity.
- I. A caregiver shall ensure that each child placed in his home who is unable to take care of personal hygiene needs is clean and groomed daily. A child's clothing and footwear shall be clean, well-fitting, seasonal and appropriate to the child's age and sex. Children capable of meeting their own personal hygiene needs shall be provided with adequate personal toiletry supplies appropriate to the child's age, sex, race, and cultural background. A caregiver shall provide each child instruction on good habits of personal care, hygiene, and grooming, appropriate to the child's age, sex, race, cultural background and need for training.

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A caregiver should notify the child's caseworker or the home coordinator and let them know of behavior problems, as this may be an indication of a child's need for special services and support. A caregiver must work with SCCS staff and community providers on behalf of the child. Caregivers may consult the parenting manual "Parent Effectiveness Training" for general information about appropriate behavior management methods.

The above policy has been developed with the intent of providing caregivers with clear and concise guidelines to follow when disciplining children. Also, since SCCS is charged with ensuring the well being of all children, it is required under Ohio law to investigate all instances involving the abuse or mistreatment of children in substitute care.

I have read and agree to follow the rules outlined in the SCCS Caregiver Agreement for Discipline, Care, Time Out, and Prohibition of Seclusion & Restraint.

Caregiver's Signature _____

Caregiver's Signature _____

Caseworker's Signature _____

Date: _____

OAC 5101:2-5-13; 5101:2-7-09; 5101:2-42-90