

Relative and Non-Relative Caregiver Handbook



**Brevard Family
Partnership**

Protecting Children, Strengthening Families, Changing Lives.

www.brevardfp.org

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Dear Caregiver,

Brevard Family Partnership (BFP) would like to thank you for making the decision to open your home and your heart to the children placed in your care. We understand that as a caregiver, you may need some guidance as you begin this walk through the dependency process. We would like to assure you that we are here to support you and there are other supports available to you as well. We have included some vital information in this handbook as a reference to use throughout the dependency case.

As the BFP Client Relations Specialist (CRS), I am able to assist you with navigating the System of Care, and resolving concerns or grievance's that may arise during the dependency process. I work closely with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child Protective Investigators (CPIs), ACCESS caseworkers, Guardians Ad Litem (GAL), Family Allies, Dependency Care Managers (DCMs), and the BFP Clinical Services Specialist (CSS). The CSS will contact you as soon as possible after receiving your contact information from DCF to discuss what the immediate needs of the children are and how to meet them.

It will be our pleasure to work with you to ensure you receive the support you need, and the children in your care have all of their needs met. We are a family of agencies working together to achieve outcomes that are in the best interest of the children and families we serve. Once again, thank you for caring for the children in their time of need.

Sincerely,

Client Relations Specialist
Brevard Family Partnership



A CHILD HAS BEEN PLACED IN MY CARE; NOW WHAT?

- The Child Protective Investigator (CPI) contacts Brevard Family Partnership (BFP) to provide information about the child that has been removed.
- The BFP Clinical Services Specialist (CSS) reviews information that may require immediate assistance or services for the child.
- The BFP Clinical Services Specialist (CSS) contacts the Caregiver after receiving the information from the CPI to discuss the immediate needs of the child.
- The BFP Revenue Maximization Unit applies for Medicaid for the child.
- An Early Services Intervention (ESI) Staffing is held to transfer the case from The Department of Children and Families to the Case Management Agency, Family Allies.
- The Case Management Agency, Family Allies, assigns the case to a Dependency Care Manager (DCM).



COMMON TERMINOLOGY

Brevard Family Partnership (BFP): BFP is the Community Based Care Lead Agency that manages the local child welfare System of Care for Brevard County's children and families.

Family Allies/ Dependency Care Manager (DCM): Family Allies provides the day-to-day oversight of child welfare case management activities for families in the dependency system.

Client Relations Specialist (CRS): The CRS addresses concerns and grievances submitted by clients within the System of Care and helps caregivers navigate throughout the dependency process.

Clinical Services Specialist (CSS): The CSS assesses the needs of the child and works with the family to ensure successful placement.

Department of Children and Families (DCF): DCF is a Child Welfare Program that works in partnership with local communities and courts to ensure the safety, timely permanency, and well-being of children.

Dependency Court: The court makes decisions concerning dependent children, including whether a child has been abused, neglected, or abandoned, and provides judicial oversight of the dependency cases.

Guardian Ad Litem (GAL): A volunteer, appointed by the court to represent the best interests of a child in any dependency case.

Early Learning Coalition (ELC): The ELC provides assistance with daycare services.

ACCESS Florida: A web-based system used to apply for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Food Stamps, and Relative caregiver funds.

CBHA: The Child Behavioral Health Assessment: Someone will contact you about completing the assessment.

Blue Book: A child's confidential resource record that **MUST** accompany the child to all medical appointments. As the child's temporary placement, if you have not yet received a "Blue Book", please contact your Care Manager.

Caregiver Input Form: When completed by the caregiver, the form allows the court and the Department to make informed decisions regarding the child's best interest. (form located in the Blue Book)

CAREGIVERS HAVE A RIGHT TO:

- Receive clear expectations and guidance as needed.
- Receive all appropriate contact information from Brevard Family Partnership (including the on call emergency services number).
- Ask the Dependency Care Manager for additional services or support to better care for the children, and participate in decisions regarding the permanency of the children.
- File a complaint or grievance through the Client Relations Specialist without fear of retaliation.
- Submit the “Caregiver Input Form” (located in section 7 of the child’s blue book) to the Dependency Care Manager who will submit to the court. Additionally, you have the right to attend and speak at all court hearings.
- Receive:
 - A Blue Book for each child in your care (see DCM if you do not have one)
 - A copy of the case plan
 - Notification and copies of all court proceedings
 - Any updates regarding the child in your care
- Receive auxiliary aids if you have a disability and interpreters if you are limited in your ability to speak, read, or understand English. Provision of these accommodations are mandated by Federal Civil Rights Laws to ensure that all clients, applicants, and employees have an equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from programs, services, and employment, regardless of disability or national origin. **For more information call Brevard Family Partnership and ask to speak with the Auxiliary Aid Coordinator.**

CAREGIVERS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO:

- Work alongside Brevard Family Partnership and the dependency court system to ensure the child's continued safety and wellbeing at all times.
- Treat the child placed in your home as your own by providing love, kindness, and care.
- Take the child to their medical, dental, and mental health appointments. Additionally, ensure all medications are given to children as prescribed.
- Attend meetings and court hearings when necessary.
- Ensure child and family confidentiality.
- Notify your Dependency Care Manager (DCM) of any changes including change of address, employment, household members, etc. If you have not been assigned a DCM, contact the Client Relations Specialist with Brevard Family Partnership.
- Ensure the children in your care are visited by the Dependency Care Manager at least once a month.
- Contact Law Enforcement IMMEDIATELY if a child runs away or is missing. Once law enforcement has been contacted, inform Case Management as soon as possible. On weekends or after hours you must contact the on call number: **321-213-5820**.
- Complete any required trainings identified during the dependency case.
- Comply with court ordered visitation with parents.

**Contact Client Relations at
321-752-4650 for required training information**

Dependency Process

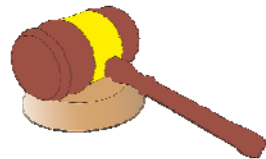
As a caregiver you are able to attend all court hearings

1 A report is made to the Florida Abuse Hotline because someone suspects a child is being abused, abandoned, or neglected. In home services cannot alleviate the immediate safety concerns.



2 The Department of Children and Families is sent out to the home to evaluate the safety of the child in the home. If the child is considered unsafe and it is determined services in the home will not make the child safe, the child will be removed from their home. The child is sheltered and after completion of a positive home study, placed in a foster home or with a relative or non-relative caregiver.

3 A shelter hearing takes place within 24 hours and the Judge decides if there is probable cause for the removal of the child and grants or denies the shelter petition or allegations presented. The temporary placement of the children is also discussed and possibly court ordered.



4 The Department of Children and Families will file a Petition for Dependency and it will be served on the parents. An arraignment will be held no later than 28 days after the shelter hearing, where the parents will enter a plea to the petition either admitting, denying, or consenting to the allegations. If the parties agreed to a case plan, the court may accept it at this time. If they do not agree, an Adjudicatory hearing will be set. A case plan outlines what needs to happen for the child to return home. It outlines tasks the parents need to complete and addresses the child's needs. Once the court approves the case plan, Brevard Family Partnership, parents, and caregivers are obligated to fulfill the case plan requirements.



5 Once the petition is filed, the case is transferred to the case management agency, Family Allies. An assigned Dependency Care Manager will work with the parents to develop a Case Plan that will address any safety concerns regarding the family.

Dependency Process Continued

As a caregiver you are able to attend all court hearings

6 At the Adjudicatory hearing, the judge hears evidence in order to determine whether the child was abused, abandoned, or neglected, or are at imminent risk of abuse, abandonment, or neglect. According to Florida Statute, this hearing will be held no later than 30 days from the date of the Arraignment on the dependency petition.



7 If there is an adjudicatory hearing, the court is required to hold a dispositional hearing within 30 days to determine what the case plan tasks and goals should be. All parties may present evidence as to what tasks should be required and what the plan for permanency should be. Please refer to the Florida Statutes for the most current information.

8

The initial Judicial Review hearing must be held no later than 90 days after the dispositional hearing. In no event shall the Judicial Review be held later than six months after the date the child was removed from the home. The Judicial Review shall take place every six months thereafter until permanency, which is identified in the case plan. The permanency goal is reviewed at each Judicial Review, which is held to give the court a status update on the case. Case Management provides updates on the parent's compliance with the case plan, and reports on the parent's visitations. The information you provide as a caregiver is important; please use the "Caregiver Input Form" which is located in your child's blue book.



Contact Us For More Information

www.Brevardfp.org

321-752-4650

info@brevardfp.org

Relative Caregiver

If you are a Relative Caregiver, you are able to apply for **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** and **Food Stamps (FS)** through My ACCESS as soon as a child is placed in your care. Cooperation with Child Support Enforcement is required for both benefits (all household income is included for FS determination).

TANF Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

- The determination for this benefit is made by ACCESS Florida and is based on the child's income, assets, and shelter expenses.
- Sibling income is included—No other household member's income is included.
- If only one child is placed in your care, the child's income cannot exceed \$180, which would be the maximum benefit amount.
- If you have 2 children placed in your care, the combined income for both children cannot exceed \$241, which is the maximum amount 2 children can receive.
- Benefit amount is dependent on number of eligible children placed in home.

The Client Relations Specialist will speak with you about the benefits you may be eligible to apply for and possibly receive.

Relative Caregiver Funds

- You may be able to receive this benefit once a child is adjudicated dependent by a Florida Court, and other eligibility criteria are met (also based on Florida Residency).
- If you are already receiving TANF benefits when the child is adjudicated, your Dependency Care Manager will submit a Relative Caregiver form to update the case, and change the TANF funds to Relative Caregiver funds.
- If you are not receiving TANF benefits when the child is adjudicated, the Dependency Care Manager will provide the Relative Caregiver form and you will apply for TANF through ACCESS Florida.
- This is a child only benefit, household income will not be included in the determination and sibling income will not be included.
- Relative Caregiver payments for children with no countable income are as follows: Ages 0-5 \$242, 6-12 \$249, 13-17 \$298.

Brevard Family Partnership does not determine eligibility for any benefits applied for.



Non-Relative Caregiver

If you are a Non-Relative Caregiver (NRCG), you are able to apply for **Food Stamps** as soon as a child is placed in your care, cooperation with Child Support Enforcement is required (all household income is included for FS determination).

When the child is **adjudicated** dependent by the court, you may request **Non-Relative Caregiver Funds**.

Non-Relative Caregiver Funds

- You may be able to receive financial assistance once a child is adjudicated dependent by a Florida Court, and other eligibility criteria are met (also based on Florida Residency).
- Your Dependency Care Manager will complete a paper application with you, and submit the application for you.
- NRCG monthly payments for children with no countable income are as follows: Ages 0-5 \$242, 6-12 \$249, 13-17 \$298.



Contact Us For More Information

www.Brevardfp.org

321-752-4650

info@brevardfp.org

Medicaid

Applies to Both Relative and Non-Relative Caregivers

- When a child is placed in your care, you do not have to apply for Medicaid through ACCESS Florida. Brevard Family Partnership will apply for Medicaid, and will assign the child to the Sunshine Child Welfare Specialty Plan.
- Contact our Nurse Care Manager if you have any questions regarding the child's Medicaid plan.
- A Medicaid card or number for the child in your care will be provided to you.
- If you would like to apply for Medicaid for yourself, speak to the CRS regarding eligibility requirements.
- If you receive permanent guardianship of the child, the Medicaid (that Brevard Family Partnership Applied for) will close and you will need to re-apply for Medicaid through ACCESS Florida.
- If you adopt the child, you do not have to apply for Medicaid. The Medicaid for the child will continue and you will become the primary person on the account and have the ability to make changes.

The Client Relations Specialist will speak with you about the benefits you may be eligible to apply for and possibly receive.

Brevard Family Partnership does not determine eligibility for any benefits applied for.

Information for Relative and Non-Relative Caregivers

- You are able to apply for Food Stamps (FS) through My ACCESS as soon as a child is placed in your care. Cooperation with Child Support Enforcement is required for both benefits (all household income is included for FS determination).
- If the children in your care receive any type of Social Security income or child support income, you will need to take a certified copy of the court order placing the child in your care to the Social Security office, or to the Department of Revenue's Child Support Enforcement office. You will be applying to become the payee of the child's account, to receive the funds on behalf of the child in your care.
- If you are determined eligible for any benefits, you will need to reapply at least every 6-12 months depending on the benefits you receive. If the parent lives in the home, the caregiver cannot receive any type of cash assistance (TANF and Relative/Non-Relative Caregiver Assistance) for the children, even if the court allows the parent to live in the home.
- If you have been given a daycare referral, you will need to speak with someone at Early Learning Coalition (ELC) regarding the referral.

Contact Information:

Melbourne: 321 752-3290 or 321-752-3291

Rockledge: 321-637-1800

- If a child under the age of 5 has been placed in your care, you are able to apply for WIC to receive healthy foods and nutrition education.

Contact Information: 321-639-5800

Additional Information for Relative and Non-Relative Caregivers

Child Resource Record (Blue Book)

- The blue book is used to collect basic documents, to include demographic, school, medical, and legal information, if available. You will continue to add information to the book while the child is in your care. You will return the book to case management when the case closes or when the child leaves your home.
- The blue book contains copies of basic information to include legal documents, demographic, school, and medical information etc., if available. You will continue to add information to the book as it becomes available while the child is in your care, and return the book to case management when the case closes or when the child leaves your home.
- All sections are mandatory for Children in Licensed Foster Care however, currently, not all sections of the Blue Book pertain to Relative/Non-Relative Caregivers.



Legislative Information for Caregivers

HB 1079 signed into law by Governor Scott on March 23, 2018

This bill launches a federally subsidized Guardianship Assistance Program managed by the Department of Children and Families in 2019. More information will follow in the near future.

Grandparents

Raising Grandchildren



Grandparents Raising Grandchildren of Brevard County is a program developed to enhance the wellbeing of relative caregivers and their families. This program has many available resources and supports available to all relative caregivers who are committed to caring for children in lieu of foster care placement. Support groups are available at various locations.



For more information on the many resources and supports available to assist you with navigating the child welfare system, contact Grandparents Raising Grandchildren at 321-631-7776.

The Florida Keys to Independence Act reimburses youth removed from their homes and caregivers for the costs associated with



driver's education, driver's licenses, and other costs related to getting a driver's license and motor vehicle insurance. This

K2I
Keys to Independence

includes children between the ages of 15-21 placed with a foster family, relative/non relative, in a group home, or in a residential facility.

www.keystoindependencefl.org

Resources

Brevard Family Partnership (BFP): 321-752-4650

- **BFP Client Relations**
- **BFP Clinical Services Specialist**
- **BFP Nurse Care Manager**

ACCESS Florida: Food Stamps (FS), Cash, RCG Funds, Medicaid

- **FS, Cash (TANF), RCG Funds, Medicaid:** 866-762-2237
- **EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer):** 866-356-3281
- **Child Support (Department of Revenue) :** 850-488-5437

Brevard County Courthouse: 321-637-5413

Brevard Health Alliance (BHA): (Main line): 321-241-6800

Department of Children and Families (DCF) : 321-634-3600

Early Learning Coalition (ELC): Daycare Assistance

Melbourne: 321 752-3290 or 321-752-3291

Rockledge: 321-637-1800

Family Allies (Case Management Agency)

Central Care Center (Rockledge): 321-634-6047

South Care Center (Palm Bay): 321-837-7500

Family Allies After Hours On Call: 321-213-5820

Florida Relay: 711 or TTY 1-800-453-5145

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group: 321-631-7776

Guardian Ad Litem (GAL): 321-690-6823

Internal Revenue Service (IRS): 1-800-829-1040

Mobile Response Team (MRT): 321-213-0315

WIC (Women, Infant, Children & Nutrition): 321-639-5800



Contact Us For More Information

www.Brevardfp.org

321-752-4650

info@brevardfp.org

Acknowledgement of Receipt

My signature below indicates I have received the Relative and Non-Relative Caregiver Handbook, which includes a link to the Brevard Family Partnership website where I can find the following information:

- ♥ Brevard Family Partnership’s Mission Statement
- ♥ Definitions
- ♥ Client Rights and Responsibilities
- ♥ How to file a Grievance

Print Name	Date
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Signature

Note: The original, signed “Acknowledgement of Receipt” form will be sent to the Client Relations Specialist.

Please let the person who is providing this to you know if you require an alternate version of this Handbook (Spanish, large print and/or audio).

Sponsored by Brevard Family Partnership and the State of Florida, Department of Children and Families.



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Brevard Family Partnership is a Council on Accreditation (COA) accredited Agency.