**RELATIVE AND FICTIVE KIN CAREGIVER DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Discipline is an essential part of caring for children. The goal and purpose of discipline is to teach a child acceptable behaviors and to replace negative behaviors with positive behaviors. Through positive discipline, children should be assisted in developing the awareness and ability to control their own behavior, assume responsibilities, and make daily living decisions. In providing discipline, it is equally important to encourage positive, desirable behaviors, as it is to correct or provide consequences for unacceptable behaviors.

Relative and fictive kin caregivers should recognize that most children in out-of-home care have been abused, neglected, emotionally maltreated, or sexually exploited. Relative and fictive kin caregivers can expect that some children may anticipate harsh treatment based on previous life experiences and may misbehave to test the boundaries. It is not unusual for challenges to arise in providing discipline for children in out-of-home care. It is important that relative and fictive kin caregivers consult with the Department if they become frustrated in their discipline efforts

Relative and fictive kin caregivers are to use the discipline techniques described in the Pre-service family preparation process. Appropriate discipline considers the age and developmental needs of the child, as well as the child’s history and experiences. It is important to establish clear guidelines, limits or “house rules”, so that the expectations of the child are understood.

Relative and fictive kin caregivers may not:

* Use any form of punishment or corporal physical discipline as defined in KRS 199.896(18);
* Deny food, shelter, or clothing;
* Interfere with implementation of the child’s case plan;
* Deny visits or contact with family members;
* Have the child engage in extremely strenuous work or exercise; or
* Act in bizarre, severe, cruel or humiliating ways. Examples of unacceptable actions include, but are not limited to, verbal abuse, derogatory remarks to the child or about the child’s family, threats of removal from the home, placing non-food or painful substances in a child’s mouth to placing noxious, irritating or potentially damaging substances in the mouths or lips, whether food, or non-food.

Additionally, relative and fictive kin caregivers should not use inappropriate discipline or punishment for bedwetting. Relative and fictive kin caregivers should not delegate or permit discipline or punishment of a child by another child. Separation from others or “time out” should be used with caution and should only be provided in a safe, unlocked, well-lit environment where the child can be easily observed by the relative and fictive kin caregivers. The maximum time limit should not exceed the number of minutes equal to the child’s age plus one minute.

If relative and fictive kin caregivers use any prohibited form of discipline or punishment, designated Cabinet staff will complete relative and fictive kin caregiver’s home review with the family to include recommendations for corrective action. The SRA or designee is responsible for approval of the relative and fictive kin caregivers, which may include a recommendation for closure of the relative and fictive kin caregiver’s home.

I have been given an opportunity to review and discuss the agency’s policy on discipline of children in out-of-home care. I understand the policy and agree to abide by it.

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Relative or Fictive Kin Caregiver(s) Date

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Relative or Fictive Kin Caregiver(s) Date