



CONNECTIONS

By Our Home, Inc.

Program Description

Connections primary focus is the provision of treatment foster care services licensed through the Connections child placement agency. Connections offers an array of services to you in hopes that this will create more successful placements. Treatment foster care includes case management and therapeutic services in homes provided by Connections. Those services are designed to enhance your emotional, social functioning and overall well-being. The goal of Connections Treatment Foster Care Services is to prevent placement in a more restrictive setting such as group care or residential treatment and to provide services in order for you to step down to a less restrictive setting or home.

Services and Resources

Assessments: As part of your treatment planning and intake, a CAFAS will be completed at the beginning of placement and every 3 months during your stay at Connections. A CAFAS will be completed as part of the ongoing review of your strengths, abilities, and preferences. Your ACE score will be considered as part of the intake process as well as a CANS.

Family Meeting and Skill Building Group: Your TFC Case Manager will facilitate a family meeting to work on family goals and objectives for successful navigation of what is going well, and what can be done differently. The intention is for your skills to progress throughout your stay. Some of the things that might be identified are what activities are best for you, how to get you there, and a variety of other family pieces that may need to fall together.

Your TFC Case Manager will also lead skill building group with you and any other youth within the foster home. This time is to work on topics such as social skills, manners, communication skills, friendship making skills and/or other skills that match your needs.

Activities: To practice some of those ever so important social skills, a variety of opportunities will be explored within the community and close surrounding communities. Some of the examples may include use of the rec center, arts, crafts, sports, the library, riding bikes, attending community functions, etc. No matter where you are, each activity will be deliberate to help in the development of your particular skills needed. Some of those skill building exercises will come by trial and error as we get to know you. We want you to pursue your interests within the safety and availability constraints.

Case Management: Case management is a part of the services and will be provided per Connections philosophy of best practice. The TFC Case Manager is responsible for setting up team meetings, daily contact with the treatment foster parents, weekly progress reports delivered to the team, will be the guide for working with the team to create person-centered treatment plans, and keeping all paperwork in order and submitted timely.

24-Hour Crisis Response: The TFC Case Manager will serve as the hub to the foster home and will help wrap the treatment foster family and you in services and supports in times of greater need. The TFC Case Manager reporting to the TFC Coordinator will determine if paraprofessionals or other interventions are needed to prevent disruption to the placement.

Education and Extra-curricular Activities: The Parkston Community School district has been an amazing partner with Our Home, Inc. since the early 1990's. The school district is very open to working with case managers to deliver person-centered resocialization opportunities to youth who have possibly struggled in past school settings. The collaboration with class offerings and sporting or other extra-curricular opportunities with the school district allows for streamlining the skills necessary to further ready you for your forever placement.

Community Activities: The treatment foster care team will work with you to find activities and opportunities for social skill building and/or job skills in Parkston and/or surrounding communities. Several businesses in Parkston have been supportive of short-term employment to allow for workforce development.

Other Resources: Other resources are available for program use such as ILS programming, Young Voices, or department of labor programs to name a few.

Important Terms

Treatment Foster Parent

The term treatment foster parent as used throughout this handbook refers to treatment foster parents licensed by the Connections treatment foster care program.

Individualized Treatment Plan (ITP)

The primary tool for working with you in identifying strengths and needs, identifying culturally responsive services to address needs, authorizing and obtaining needed services, and measuring outcomes in areas of safety, permanency and well-being. It also serves as an organizer and a tool for communicating with those involved with your family.

Treatment Team

A team for you in TFC that includes the TFC caseworker, you, your family, the TFC foster parent, the DSS family services specialist/tribal worker, and others, e.g. therapist, teacher, and others you may identify as supports. The TFC Treatment Team is responsible for the development of your treatment plan within the TFC program and shall ensure that it is congruent with the family's ITP.

Initial Treatment Plan

A plan that is completed from the time of admission to therapeutic foster care and is based on early assessment and relationship-building efforts during the first thirty (30) days. The plan coordinates long-term goals and services to meet the identified goals. It shall be developed and implemented in a manner to achieve the overall outcomes for you identified in the ITP. Specific strategies will be developed by the TFC program to achieve the goals identified in the treatment plan.

Program Details

YOUR TREATMENT TEAM

Treatment Team

Your treatment team will consist of the TFC Coordinator, TFC Case Manager, Paraprofessionals, TFC Foster Parents, Referring Parties when applicable, Parent/Guardians/Custodians, and Community Resource Providers.

Treatment Foster Care Coordinator

The Treatment Foster Care Coordinator will be responsible for supervising your treatment foster care case manager, signing final treatment plans and providing professional consultation when needed. This helps to ensure that we are meeting all of the rules required for treatment foster care.

Treatment Foster Care Case Manager

The Treatment Foster Care Case Manager will serve as your case manager while placed in Connections. The Treatment Foster Care Case Manager will work with you at intake making introductions, helping you get settled, and once you are settled, will be responsible for direct services and assessment studies throughout your stay.

The Treatment Foster Care Case Manager will monitor your progress and assist in the development and coordination of the services you identify in your treatment plan.

Desiree Gunnare, TFC Case Manager, is your advocate and main point of contact for treatment specific services.

Paraprofessionals

Connections will employ Paraprofessional staff to assist the Treatment Foster Parents and TFC Case Manager. Paraprofessional staff will be called upon to assist on an emergency basis if needed, will assist in helping foster parents transport and will serve as the houseparent when Treatment Foster Parents request respites or have emergencies which require them to be out of the home for overnights.

Treatment Plans

You will have an individualized treatment plan (ITP) to guide you through your stay. You are encouraged to be an active participant in the writing of the ITP to assure your goals and needs are being met. Your first treatment plan will be developed within 30 days of your placement in the agency foster home. The plan will include specific information on where you are placed and will assure you are in the least restrictive setting available. The treatment plan will establish goals and objectives with established dates for goal completion. The treatment plan will list services available and provided to you. The treatment plan will focus on goals preparing you for permanency. The treatment plan will be reviewed every 30 days and a copy will be provided to you, whomever referred you, and parent/guardian/custodian when applicable.

The TFC Case Manager will assist you in preparing and updating your treatment plan.

Licensed treatment foster families with you will assume primary responsibility for implementing strategies in your individualized treatment plan. Licensed treatment foster parents will assist you in understanding treatment goals, objectives and interventions. The Licensed treatment foster parents will collaborate with the treatment team on implementation of strategies.

Therapeutic Groups

The Treatment Foster Care Case Manager will lead two groups a month which you are expected to participate in; one is a family meeting which will address strengths and needs of your ongoing roles within the foster home and the second will be with all youth placed to help strengthen social or other skills that you need or want to discuss.

Your Rights and Responsibilities

While in foster care, you have the right to have appropriate care, supervision, food, clothing, shelter, services, safety and security. These rights and responsibilities will help to encourage and support you during your time in treatment foster care.

You Have the Right To:

- Be told by your parent/guardian/custodian or individual appointed by the court why you came into foster care and what is going on with your family.
- Receive a copy of the Rights and Responsibilities for Children and Youth in Our Home, Inc. Connections Foster Care, the agency's grievance policy and the opportunity to ask questions.
- Live in a safe, nurturing environment that supports permanency, well-being and normalcy. This includes encouraging goals, interests, and participation in social, extracurricular, enrichment and cultural activities.
- Be placed in a licensed foster home where the foster family or foster parent is trained in and understands the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard.

- Be treated with respect and free from discrimination.
- Live in the most home-like and least restrictive setting available that meets your needs and provides you with food, adequate clothing, school supplies, and personal hygiene products.
- Be protected from physical, sexual, emotional or other abuse and to be free from cruel, harsh or unnecessary punishment including hitting or spanking.
- Be disciplined in a manner that is appropriate to your developmental and maturity level and medical condition.
- Make a complaint without fear of negative consequences if you feel like your rights are not being protected.
- You have the right to be enrolled in a school within 5 days.
- Receive medical, dental, vision, and mental health care regularly and/or as needed, and to continue to see your regular doctors if possible.
- Know what medication and why your doctor prescribed those medications as well as to be present at your appointments, participate in health care decisions, as appropriate for your age and development.
- Receive guidance on family planning and to consent to reproductive health care services.
- Have a permanency plan and to participate in the development of your ITP and to be given information about any changes in your ITP, placement, or other decisions that affect your life.
- Fair and equal access to all available services, placement, care, treatment, and benefits and how to access them.
- Have the name and contact information for your caseworker, your caseworker's supervisor, your Lawyer Guardian ad litem (LGAL), and your CASA worker.
- Have at least a monthly visit with your caseworker and have a private conversation with them.
- Have your records and personal information kept private and only given to people or agencies who have a legal right to see them.

Your Responsibilities Are:

- To maintain an open mind toward the treatment foster care process and understand adults have a responsibility to keep you safe.
- To know all rights carry with them responsibilities and to respect the rights of others, including treatment foster parents, parent/guardians and other foster siblings.
- To let your foster parents/guardian/custodian know if your rights are not being respected.

- Make a complaint without fear of negative consequences if you feel like your rights are not being protected.
- To respect yourself and others, and treat everyone as you would want them to treat you.
- To try to do your best to make positive decisions concerning your life.
- Try to learn from mistakes you make.
- To report any abuse or unusual punishment to your TFC case manager and to not be involved in the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of others.
- To treat others' personal belongings with respect.
- To not possess things that are harmful to yourself or others.
- To participate in the inventory of your items to make sure they stay with you.
- To ask questions about your placement and be open-minded to the information learned.
- To express your preference in where and with whom you want to live.
- To be able to participate in your treatment planning including discharge and aftercare
- To try to resolve problems in your placement when necessary
- To attend school and do your best. Let an adult know if you are having problems.
- To voice your opinion about the school you want to attend.
- To ask your TFC case manager about questions you might have about college or plans after high school.
- To be free from illegal drugs or alcohol, or medications which are not prescribed to you.
- To let someone know how your medications are working for you.
- To take your medications as prescribed and know the consequences of not taking them as prescribed.
- To let your TFC case manager know if there is a specific doctor you would like to go to.
- To be actively involved in your ITP and to advocate for your needs.
- To participate in services that are recommended for you or ordered through the court.
- To ask questions about things that you do not understand or agree with.
- To ask questions about your case during your caseworker visit or bring up concerns you may have.
- To let your caseworker or your foster parent know about any independent living skills you would like to know more about.

Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard:

Connections treatment foster care will make all efforts to comply with the “Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard” which is the standard characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the health, safety, and best interest of a child while at the same time encouraging the emotional and developmental growth of the child, that a caregiver shall use when determining whether to allow a child in foster care under the responsibility of the state to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural and social activities.

Confidentiality:

It is the responsibility of all Connections employees to safeguard sensitive information, as well as the youth placed in care to safeguard other foster youth’s information. Federal Law and State Regulations in some instances protect the confidentiality of the patient’s record maintained by this program. Violation of the Federal Law and Regulations by a program is a crime. Appropriate authorities in accordance with Federal Regulations may report suspected violations. Federal Regulations or State Regulations do not protect any information about a crime committed by a patient either at the program, against any person who works for the program, or any threat to commit such a crime. Federal Laws or State Regulations do not protect any information about suspected child abuse or neglect from being reported under State Law to appropriate State and Local authorities. It is also the responsibility of all youth in treatment foster care

to maintain confidentiality about other youth in the treatment foster home and the sensitive personal information that is shared in the home. Do not use sensitive information to take advantage of or belittle another youth in treatment foster care.

Abuse and Neglect Reporting:

The issues of neglect and child abuse are often very sensitive issues for all persons involved. It is something all too often not discussed or hidden. As a result, neglectful and abusive patterns within and outside the family go unrecognized and continue to harm those affected. If you have been neglected or abused emotionally, physically, or sexually, we want you to be able to talk about these issues in treatment. It is only by bringing these matters out from behind closed doors that you can begin to deal with your feelings and to protect yourself from future neglect and abuse. Even though we want you to feel free to discuss these issues, we also must tell you that the Connections treatment foster care staff are obligated by state law to report any suspected incidents of abuse to the Department of Social Services or law enforcement for investigation. We will not be able to maintain complete confidentiality in these matters. We do, however, recommend that you bring these issues forward so that responsible action in your best interest can be taken. We recognize that doing so may be very painful and cause conflict and we will do our best to support you in these efforts. Above all, if you are a victim of neglect or abuse, you need to understand that it is not your fault.

Control of Medications:

Youth entering the home will surrender all medications and over the counter drugs upon entry into the home. All medication will be inventoried upon entry into the home. All medication will be stored in a locked container and will be dispensed at the treatment foster parents discretion. Any medications or over the counter drugs surrendered or discovered upon admission shall not be administered unless they can be identified and written orders for their administration have been received from a licensed physician.

Cell phones/Calls:

Youth entering a Connections Treatment foster home will be allowed reasonable phone contact upon admission into a treatment foster home. Upon admission, contact will be limited to individuals approved by the youth's caseworker and treatment team. As you become more acquainted with the home, community and school, and additional people you meet, such as friends and classmates will be allowed contact at the discretion of the treatment foster parents. Reasonable contact restrictions may apply based on age and behavior, however, no restrictions shall be applied to telephone calls, with your approved relatives, unless prohibited by a court order, with caseworkers, authorized representatives, attorneys or CASA.

Upon entry into the treatment foster home, you will be allowed to utilize a home phone provided by Connections. This phone will remain in the home and is only to be used by you for contact approved by the treatment foster parents. Monthly the phone bill will be reviewed with you as part of your independent living skills and should there be excess costs due to your use, it will be your responsibility to pay out of your allowance.

Youth in Connections treatment foster homes will be allowed personal use of cells phones and be allowed to have cell phones on their person for private use once they become acquainted with the home, community and school. The use of cell phones for personal use and allowing them to be kept on their person will be determined by the treatment foster parents and treatment team. Prior to allowing youth to utilize cell phones for personal use and keep them on their persons, the youth, the treatment foster parents and the treatment team will establish individualized guidelines agreed upon by all. Misuse of a cell phone while being used for personal use or on their person will result in the youth being disciplined up to the loss of cell phone privileges permanently. Youth may only use cell phones for personal use or keep them on their person if they come into care with a cell phone and an approved individual is paying for the plan or they are able to purchase a cell phone and provide payment for the monthly plan.

Computers/IPADS/Internet/Social Media:

Youth entering a Connections Treatment Foster home will be given reasonable use of Computers, Ipads, the internet, social media and other electronic devices. Computer/technology usage will be determined by the treatment foster parents and will be individualized based on each youth in care. In order to utilize technology and internet devices youth will agree to give their user names and passwords to the treatment foster parents. Treatment foster parents will friend/connect with the youth through social media/networking platforms in an effort to provide supervision of the youth's social networking and

maintain connections. Youth will not falsify their ages in order to access internet services and social media platforms. Youth will not set up ghost or secondary social media sites. Youth are not guaranteed unlimited access and use of computers/technology will be monitored by the treatment foster parents and the treatment team. Use of social media is limited to youth ages thirteen and older. Youth are allowed to post appropriate pictures and share information about themselves, however they are not allowed to post information or pictures about other youth placed in the treatment foster care home. Youth will sign and agree to the agency technology and social media guidelines.

School:

Youth placed in the Connections treatment foster home will attend the Parkston public school unless other arrangements have been worked out previously. Foster parents with the assistance of the Treatment Foster Care Case Manager are responsible for enrolling you in school, arranging transportation, encouraging your academic and behavioral success, supervising when you are sick or are unable to attend school for other reasons, attending school conferences such as I.E.P.'s, obtaining report cards and progress reports and retaining copies for your file. You will be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities such as band, music, drama, sports, etc. during your time in Connections Treatment Foster Care. Participation in extra-curricular activities will be discussed with the treatment foster team and approved by the parent/guardian/custodian.

Religious Practices:

While in Connections treatment foster care you are free to attend religious services or activities of your choice and to have visits from the spiritual advisor of your choice. Your record contains information including but not limited to religious preference and the name and address of clergy or religious advisors, if any. Your selection for this treatment foster home was based upon your needs and how well the treatment foster parent can meet those needs. This includes the ability of the treatment foster parent to accept and respect individuals of any race, creed, color, religion, sexual orientation, or nationality. The treatment foster parent has the right to practice the religion of his/her choice, but the practice must not be forced on you in treatment foster care, nor interfere with the provision of care to you in treatment foster care. The religious beliefs and practices of the treatment foster parents should be discussed with you prior to placement in order to maximize the potential for compatibility. The religious practices of the treatment foster parents, including but not limited to, dietary restrictions, prohibition of birthday and holiday celebrations, and prohibition of the use of makeup, may not be imposed on you in treatment foster care. As well, religious practices that advocate the prohibition of medical care, use of corporal punishment, and other practices that pose a threat to your health and safety are prohibited.

Social and Recreational Activities:

Treatment foster parents are encouraged to promote and support your involvement in youth groups, sports, and other social and recreational activities. Connections Treatment Foster parents may plan regular activities for you in treatment foster care.

Family Visitation and Rules:

All home and family visits are coordinated by the Connections Treatment Foster Care Case Manager in cooperation with you, treatment foster parents and your placing worker. The Connections treatment team will work with those involved to determine the appropriate length, frequency, and location of the visits, and what degree of supervision is required. Feedback about your behavior during and/or following each visit is relayed to the Connections Treatment Foster Care Case Manager.

Letters:

You are able to send and receive letters from the first day of placement in the Connections foster home. You are able to write to individuals approved to be on your contact list by the Connections Treatment foster care team. Review of letters prior to sending and after receiving letters will be individualized and will be decided upon by the treatment team including your case worker.

Sending and Receiving Packages:

Youth in treatment foster care may send and receive packages. However, any sending and receiving of packages must be done through approval by treatment foster parents. Treatment foster parents may expect that any or all packages (sent or received) be wrapped or unwrapped in their presence. Treatment Foster Parents may remove any objects considered to be contraband or that are thought to be hazardous. Treatment foster parents reserve the right to immediately remove any package from the residence if there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the package is dangerous. Any objects removed as hazardous or as contraband will be handled as evidence, disposed of, turned over to authorities, stored until discharge or returned to the sender, depending upon the nature of the package content. The receipt of clothing, gifts, and home baked goods is permitted.

Life Book:

A life book brings together your past, present, and future. It is a book to document your history, celebrate accomplishments, and allow your talents to shine. It is a record of your life in your own words using photos, artwork, and things picked up along the way. It allows you to honor life, one day and one event at a time. Connections will ensure that time is set aside routinely to document your time while in Connections Treatment Foster Care. Working together on a life book can bring a Treatment Foster Parent and you closer together.

Independent Living:

Teaching and enhancing your Independent Living Skills will be a primary treatment focus for you in Connections Treatment Foster homes. Foster parents with assistance from the treatment team will offer Independent Living opportunities designed to enhance your ability to live independently and include trainings on topics such as goal setting, money management, health care, transportation, self-esteem, employment and decision-making. The Foster Care Case Manager will lead one group per month designed to assist you with social skills and other prevalent issues related to being able to navigate successfully outside of a treatment environment. Youth ages 16 to 21 will have Community Resource People made available to them to help with the transition from foster care to Independent Living. They

provide training and services in the areas of employment, education, housing, connections, life skills and health. The Connections Treatment Foster Care program's Independent Living goal is to provide you opportunities to practice and grow skills, all while allowing you to be more self-sufficient as you move towards adulthood.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Dating:

While in treatment foster care you are allowed to date within the guidelines of the reasonable and prudent parent standard. The treatment team including your case worker will be involved with the decision if and when you may date. Consideration will be made regarding the age, level of maturity, and appropriateness of each relationship. Placing workers have the right to restrict or disallow dating if they deem it necessary.

Homework:

Your homework will be monitored by the treatment foster parents. You are encouraged to complete all assignments and may receive consequences (such as a loss of privileges) if failing to do so, however, rewarding positive behavior is a first choice. Foster parents will assist you when needed and/or asked by you or your teachers. If additional assistance is needed the treatment team will seek out additional resources such as tutors.

Allowance/Chores:

Daily, weekly and monthly chores will be determined by the treatment foster parents. You are responsible to keep your bedroom clean. You will receive an allowance of \$15 every two weeks based on completion of assigned chores. A chore chart will be posted with adequate explanation for each chore listed. If you do not know how to do a chore the foster parents will role model by teaching you how to do chores.

Entertainment Equipment:

Entertainment equipment should be available to you as it is to other household members. You may be restricted from some items based on your age, maturity, and respect for property. While in treatment foster care you may own and possess entertainment equipment. Youth who own or possess their own entertainment equipment will have the items logged in their inventory.

Dress Codes:

Dress codes are established to protect you while in treatment foster care. Gang related apparel such as bandanas, sagging pants and particular colors of clothing are discouraged. You are encouraged to dress in a manner which prevents exploitation and enhances self-image while building self-esteem.

Laundry:

Providing for the laundering of your clothing and bedding is the responsibility of the treatment foster parent. Depending on your age and maturity, you may be given the responsibility to launder your own clothing, towels, and bedding at least once a week in order to teach Independent Living Skills. You will not be responsible for the clothing of other youth in the home or the treatment foster parents.

Prohibited Behaviors:

Some general prohibited behaviors include but are not limited to the following: using/abusing substances, tobacco use, sexual acting out, truancy, running away, assaultive behavior, property destruction, and any behavior which would require the use of law enforcement.

Visiting Friends:

You are encouraged to make new connections through friendships. Treatment foster parents may first want to invite your friend to visit in the foster home to evaluate the appropriateness of the relationship. Furthermore, the foster parents should meet the friends' parent(s), obtain their phone number and address, visit with the parents to assess for suitability, and inform them of their supervision requirements. These guidelines should generally be followed prior to allowing you to visit in the home of your friend. In the case of overnight visits, the treatment foster parents will need to get the permission of the Treatment Foster Care Case Manager and Case Worker prior to any overnight stays at a friend's home or in the treatment foster home.

Curfew:

While in foster care, you will have set curfews. Curfews will be individualized based on age, maturity, recent behaviors and safety will be taken into account. Curfews will be established by the treatment foster parents with guidance from the treatment team.

Driving:

For Youth in Connections Treatment Foster Care, driving is a privilege. Before a youth in foster care is allowed to drive all of the following requirements shall be met:

- A. The parent/guardian/custodian shall grant permission in writing.
- B. If the youth has a placing worker they shall grant permission in writing.
- C. The treatment team shall decide if the youth is at a point where driving would be conducive to treatment.
- D. The privilege of driving shall be included in the youth's treatment plan.
- E. The youth shall possess a valid driver's license and shall meet the requirements of all South Dakota laws pertaining to driving.
- F. The youth shall provide their own vehicle which is street legal and determined to be safe for driving.
- G. The Youth shall provide for their own insurance and licensing of the vehicle.
- H. The youth shall agree in writing to "House Driving Rules" established by the foster parents and treatment team.

Youth in Connections Treatment Foster Care are encouraged to be working towards a Driver's License permit in order to help prepare them for better opportunities for success as they move towards Independence. Youth will be given the opportunity when appropriate to take state-approved driver education courses in order to aid in obtaining a driver's license.

Employment:

After you have settled into the home, establishing a routine at school and activities, employment is encouraged. Employment is encouraged within the local community so that it does not impede on the care of other youth in care. Transportation to and from work should be considered when finding a job. Some local businesses that are accessible for employment are the flower shop, local café, Subway, Ampride, Casey's (age appropriate), Murtha's Repair, etc.

Employment while encouraged, as part of independent living skills, the needs of each individual placed within Connections will need to be considered for appropriateness of employment with all treatment members in agreement.

Hygiene:

While in treatment foster care you will be expected to follow at minimum the Department of Health's **basic** guidelines for personal hygiene.

- If possible, everyone should have a shower or bath every day. However, there may be times when this is not possible, if this happens a swim or wash all over the body with a wet cloth will do. We also understand that there are times where you might have two showers a day based on need.
- Cleaning teeth at least once per day. Brushing teeth after each meal is the best way of making sure that gum disease and tooth decay is avoided. It is important to clean teeth after breakfast and before going to bed.
- Washing hair with soap or shampoo once a week.
- Washing hands with soap after using the bathroom, and washing hands more frequently when you have a cold.
- Washing hands with soap before preparing and/or eating food. During normal daily activities such as working and playing, disease causing germs may get onto hands and under nails. If the germs are not washed off before preparing food or eating, they may get onto the food.
- Changing into clean clothes. Dirty clothes should be washed with laundry soap before wearing again.

While in treatment foster care you will be provided daily opportunities to cleanse yourself, brush and comb your hair. You will be provided combs, brushes, soaps and shampoos upon entry into care suitable to your needs. When you request, or it is appropriate for you to have a hairstyle or skin care product that may significantly change your appearance, the child's worker will be consulted.

Piercings/Tattoos:

Body piercings and tattoos are a form of self-expression and fashion that you may come into the program with or may want. If you express an interest in body piercings or tattoos it will be treated on a case-by-case basis depending on your age and understanding. Connections treatment foster care discourages you from getting these procedures done due to possible health care risks. Treatment foster

parents under no circumstances will give consent or encourage you to have your body pierced or tattooed. If you are determined to have your body pierced or tattooed this will be discussed with your case worker and parents if applicable. Treatment foster parents and the treatment team will confiscate any materials found to self-tattoo or pierce your body.

Contraband:

Contraband is any item possessed by you while in treatment foster care or found within the home that is considered illegal by law or prohibited by the Connections treatment foster care program. Items identified as contraband will be confiscated and either preserved for evidence, destroyed, placed in storage, or sent back to your parents or guardian. The following lists categorize contraband as either an illegal or banned (prohibited) item and clarify procedures for when contraband is discovered.

Illegal items:

These items shall be confiscated and retained as evidence for formal disciplinary action following the Preservation of Physical Evidence policy.

1. Any narcotics, marijuana, drugs, or related paraphernalia not prescribed for the individual.
2. A gun, firearm, weapon, knife, sharpened instrument, dangerous chemical, explosive, or ammunition.
3. A hazardous tool most likely to be used in an escape attempt or to serve as a weapon capable of doing serious bodily harm.

Banned items:

Any item prohibited by the treatment foster care program or considered inappropriate for youth in treatment foster care to possess. These items shall be confiscated and either destroyed, placed in storage, or sent back to the youth's parents or guardian.

1. Alcoholic beverages
2. Unauthorized prescription medications and Youth's medication will be placed in the locked box
3. Cigarettes or other tobacco products, matches or lighters
4. Clothing adorned with alcohol or cigarette logos, or advertisements identifying alcohol or drinking establishments
5. Pornography including videos, magazines, posters, including possession of 1-800 or 1-900 numbers or the Internet
6. Property or money not belonging to you

Note: Additional items may be banned or restricted during the course of your stay in the program.

Resident Discipline:

The role of Connections Child Placement Agency and the licensed treatment foster home is to assist you in the home in developing age appropriate patterns of behavior that foster constructive relationships

and increasing ability to deal with everyday life. Treatment Foster Parents shall provide positive reinforcement, redirection, and the setting of realistic expectations and clear and consistent limits for behaviors. A Treatment Foster Parent may not use discipline or a behavior management technique that is cruel, humiliating, or otherwise damaging to you.

Connections Child Placement Agency licensed foster homes may not use physical discipline in any form at any time on you while placed in the Child Placement Agency. Discipline techniques must be age appropriate and discipline associated with food or rest will not be used as a form of punishment. While placed in the home, you will not be disciplined by another youth placed in the home or by any other youth residing in the home. While placed in the home, you will not be deprived of contact with family, the placing agency or legal representation as a form of discipline. While placed in the home, you will not be deprived of medical resources in any form as a form of discipline. Threats of termination from the home will not be used as a form of punishment at any time (keep in mind that loss of least restrictive placement is based on your actions and you may be reminded therapeutically during treatment plans when those actions are threatening your least restrictive placement).

The placing agency, parent or guardian will be notified of the discipline techniques allowed to be used in the licensed foster home. While placed in the home, you will be free from physical restraint unless deemed necessary as a last resort for protection if you are a danger to yourself or others.

Grievance Procedure

It is the policy of Connections by Our Home, Inc. to provide for a grievance and appeal process for reviewing, investigating, and responding to formal complaints of youth in foster care.

Grievance and Appeal Process

Youth shall be given the opportunity to express themselves regarding problems they are having with the program or possible rights violations without being subjected to any retaliation or barriers to services.

The subsequent procedures shall be followed for a youth in treatment foster care complaint:

1. The youth shall initiate the grievance process by completing a standard Grievance Form. The completed form shall be given without alteration, interference, or delay to the youths foster care case manager. If assistance is needed, the youth shall be allowed to request a time to meet individually with the foster care case manager.
2. The Treatment Foster Care Case Manager shall review the complaint and conduct an investigation. If the complaint is in regards to the Treatment Foster Care Case Manager it will then be provided unaltered to the Treatment Foster Care Program Coordinator. This and any further investigation may include questioning the youth, other youth in the home, and para-professionals if involved. Following the investigation, the Treatment Foster Care Case Manager or Treatment Foster Care Coordinator shall render a decision and record it in the appropriate section on the Grievance Form. The Treatment Foster Care Case Manager or Treatment Foster Care Program Coordinator shall also meet with the youth to provide him/her with the decision. This investigation, decision-making, and meeting with the youth shall be completed within 10 days of the date of the complaint or in accordance with safety. If the complaint is resolved, the Grievance Form shall be filed in the youth's case record. Also, a copy shall be given to the youth and to the Treatment Foster Care Program Coordinator if not conducting the investigation.

WAYS IN WHICH INPUT CAN BE GIVEN

Connections values the input given by you and your family, and considers it as an essential component in providing quality treatment services. All forms of input will be reviewed with the intent of improving upon our services.

Throughout your stay, a variety of opportunities will be offered to you to provide input. These opportunities include: Grievance Procedure, Treatment Plan Meetings, Therapeutic Sessions, Pre/Post-Visit Meetings, Meal Suggestions, Family Activities.

After your stay, opportunities will also be offered to provide input regarding assessment of services and satisfaction. These opportunities include: Resident Satisfaction Survey, Parent/Family Satisfaction Survey, Resident Post-Treatment Outcome Survey

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Connections provides you with unimpeded access to health care. To report non-emergency illnesses or injuries, the following steps shall be followed:

- 1.) Inform your treatment foster parent that you have a non-emergency illness or injury
- 2.) The treatment foster parents will determine whether they need to schedule an appointment.
- 3.) Any complaints regarding health care shall be processed following the treatment foster care Grievance Procedures.