

What is the Foster Care Review Board?



South Carolina was the first state to enact law that requires citizens from each community to review all children who spend longer than four consecutive months in foster care. The purpose of these reviews are to ensure that permanent plans are being made for the children so they do not grow up in foster care; identify gaps in available services to children and families; and, promote community awareness about these issues.

Each of South Carolina's sixteen judicial circuits has at least one local review board. Each local review board is made up of five volunteers from the community. The Governor, upon recommendation of their local legislative delegation, appoints members to the local board. The review board is responsible for making recommendations about the future of the children in foster care. A professional staff person from the Division of Foster Care Review coordinates the monthly review meetings of each local board.

Whenever possible, Review Board members recommend that children return to their parents. If this is not possible, local boards recommend that maximum efforts be made to secure permanent adoptive homes for the children.

Why Is Your Attendance Important?

The Review Board wants to hear what you have to say regarding the child's placement in foster care and your opinions as to the best permanent plan for this child. The review is **not** a court hearing. The Review Board will make a recommendation to the Family Court and to the Department of Social Services after hearing from everyone who participates in the child's review. The Family Court judges will make all final decisions regarding permanent placement of the child.



Issues and information discussed with the Review Board are confidential. Any interested party may meet with the Review Board privately if they wish to do so. Please inform a board member or the Board's staff person if you would like to meet privately with the Board. If you cannot attend the meeting, you can write or telephone your comments to the Review Board's staff member. However, your attendance and participation in the child's review is strongly encouraged.

The main goal of the Review Board is to ensure that each child has a safe, stable, permanent home. In order to do this, it is important that you help by attending review meetings and giving us YOUR input.

The Review Process

When a child is placed in foster care, the Department of Social Services (DSS) notifies the Division of Foster Care Review. The first review of a child's case is scheduled after a child has been in foster care for four months, but no later than six months. DSS mails all interested parties an invitation letter that includes the location, date and time of the review. This letter is mailed three weeks before the review. If necessary, subsequent reviews of the child's case will follow every six months after the first review until the child leaves foster care. At the time of the review, the Review Board will consider all important information about the case, including:

- The case plan, what services have been offered to the family and how these services relate to the reason the child entered care;
- The status of the case plan, what steps have been taken by the parent to have the child returned and the status of specific matters ordered by the court;

"You must work - we must all work - to make the world worthy of its children." - Pablo Casals

The Review Process Continued

- Information about the child's current placement and any other placements the child may have experienced in foster care; and,
- Reports from providers who have been providing services to the child and/or family.



After careful consideration of all information provided at the review, the Review Board will advise all parties of its recommendation regarding permanent placement for each child at the conclusion of the review. This recommendation also will address any systemic concerns noted during the case review. The written recommendation of the Review Board will be sent to the DSS within 30 days. All interested parties should receive a copy of the Board's recommendation from the DSS. The recommendation also is mailed to the Family Court and will become a part of the child's court record. If the local Review Board still has questions or concerns about the child's case after the review, the professional staff member assigned to the Board will look into these matters.

Any interested party who has questions or concerns about a child's case between reviews can contact the Division of Foster Care Review and talk with the assigned staff person. Legal concerns should be addressed to our legal staff.

Mission Statement

The Division of Foster Care Review provides an external system of accountability and advocacy for children and families involved with the foster care system. The Division utilizes panels of community volunteers to promote safe, permanent homes for children in foster care in a timely manner and to increase public awareness regarding the impact of child abuse and neglect.

For more information, contact:

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This brochure is deigned to provide useful information to parents, foster parents, guardians, children, treatment providers, and others who may be involved with a child's placement in foster care. Any time a child must be removed from their home, questions and concerns arise and the process can become very complicated. Your participation is an integral part in the review process.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Division of Foster Care Review

**Information for
Interested Parties Invited to
Attend Foster Care Review Board
Meetings**

