



Safe Families for Children

Safe Families for Children Referral Guidelines

Safe Families for Children connects families experiencing crisis with fully trained and certified volunteer Host Homes who offer a safe, temporary place for children to stay, while a team of other volunteers come alongside parents to help address barriers that led to the hosting arrangement. Our goal is to offer support in a time of need and reunite children with their families in a stronger home environment. Participation with Safe Families is voluntary and parents retain all of their legal rights.

Key Components

Safe Families for Children (SFFC) is most successful under these conditions:

- All parties involved are committed to reunite the family as soon as possible
- Parent/family is experiencing a crisis
- Parent is willing to participate with SFFC volunteers and work toward stability
- Parent/family is isolated and has few, if any, extended family or other supportive relationships

Parent should understand these key elements about our hosting and mentorship arrangements:

- SFFC participation is 100% voluntary
- Parent retains custody of their child and can have their child returned to them at any time
- SFFC Host Homes and other volunteers are background checked and trained
- SFFC Host Homes and other volunteers are not compensated for their service

Common Referral Situations

SFFC can place a child with a volunteer Host Home when a parent:

- Needs to be hospitalized (i.e., surgery or substance abuse rehabilitation)
- Is facing homelessness
- Has a mental health concern (i.e. depression)
- Feels overwhelmed or lacks social supports

SFFC cannot place a child with a volunteer Host Home when:

- There is evidence of current abuse (we will defer to Child Protective Services)
- There is domestic violence present and the abuser has legal custody of the children
- We are unable to obtain consent from a parent or guardian who has legal custody
- The child is exhibiting dangerous or violent behavior
- The child is in need of substance abuse rehabilitation

For any questions or to make a referral,
Please contact us at referrals@dc127.org or (202) 670-1145

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Child Welfare Deflection

Our volunteer Host Homes support overwhelmed and resource-limited parents by providing safe and temporary homes for their children, without threat of losing custody, to help avert potential abuse/neglect. Through the help of Safe Families for Children, less than 4% of the children served enter state custody. 90% of the children we serve return to their parents within 44 days.

Expectations

Parents should understand the following about SFFC:

- We cannot guarantee availability of a Host Home
- We will assign the parent a volunteer Family Coach who will monitor the hosting arrangement, facilitate family visits and help the parent gain stability
- We will try to place siblings together
- We will try to place the child close to home

SFFC will expect the parent to:

- Set goals for themselves and work to address the issues that led to the arrangement
- Work with the Family Coach to identify their needs and solve problems
- Contact the child and visit regularly
- Participate in decision-making regarding their child's care

Our Intake Process

Parents will need to complete the following consent agreements:

- Assignment of Custodial Power of Attorney
- Authorization for Medical Consent for a Minor Dependent
- Liability Waiver
- Health Privacy Agreement

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