

## Foster Families,

HHS is excited to roll out Comfort Calls and Bridge Meetings between foster families and the child's family. One of the primary goals of the Bridge Meeting is to introduce the child's family to the foster parent and encourage building a relationship between them. A relationship between the foster parent and child's family allows for the foster parent to better care for the child and provide support to the family, if needed. It is anticipated that Bridge Meetings will also reduce the number of placement changes for a child and increase the family's engagement in family interactions.

A Comfort Call is a phone call facilitated by HHS and includes the child's family and the placement within 24 hours of placement, though it is best to occur at the time of placement. The Comfort Call provides an opportunity for the child to talk with their family and for the family, placement, and HHS to have a brief conversation regarding the child's medical information, allergies, routines, and to share any other information which might help the child transition into their new setting. This is also an opportunity for the HHS worker to set up the Bridge Meeting.

The Bridge Meeting provides an opportunity for the child's family and foster parents to meet and talk about the needs of the child. The meeting will be facilitated by the social worker case manager and lasts about 30 – 40 minutes. The meeting will be held at a place convenient for both the child's family and foster parents. The Bridge Meeting must be held within five business days of the child's removal.

The meeting will be attended by the child's family, foster parents, Social Worker Case Manager, Foster Home Caseworker and the child, if appropriate. Family Centered Services may attend to help support the family.

As a Foster Family, your role in these meetings is:

- Ask for specific information about the child from the birth parents such as routines, favorite things and medical needs.
- Ask questions about cultural traditions and other information that will help you care for the child.
- Talk about why you are a foster parent and your desire to help reunite the birth family.

The Comfort Calls and Bridge Meetings will be rolled out on different dates based on the county the child originally resided in rather than where the foster home is located. Please see attached sheets for roll out dates for each county.