

FOSTER<sup>the</sup> *family*

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NEW JERSEY

1892 Greentree Rd. Suite #4

Cherry Hill, NJ 08003

## VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

SUPPORT · ENCOURAGE · MOBILIZE · EQUIP · ADVOCATE

[WWW.FOSTERTHEFAMILY.ORG](http://WWW.FOSTERTHEFAMILY.ORG)

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# WELCOME

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Dear New Volunteer,

On behalf of our team of staff and volunteers, we want to formally welcome you to Foster the Family NJ. Foster the Family NJ exists to support and encourage foster and adoptive families, mobilize and equip the community and church for foster care and adoption, and advocate for vulnerable children. Thank you so much for your willingness to work with us as we serve foster families and children, in Camden, Gloucester, and Burlington Counties, New Jersey.

Volunteers are one of the greatest resources we have at Foster the Family. People like you, who give their time, energy, and talents to provide help and inspire hope, are essential to our ability to deliver quality support and care to foster families and children.

Our program volunteers are priceless. I am so very grateful for you and your willingness to partner with Foster the Family NJ. Thank you so much.

With Gratitude,

Jamie Finn  
Executive Director

# THE HANDBOOK

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This handbook is to provide you with the policies and procedures which provide all of us, employees and volunteers, with guidance and direction within Foster the Family NJ.

As volunteerism within the organization grows and changes, there may be a need to modify the practices, procedures, and other information described in this handbook. When such changes occur, you will be notified by email. Please keep current and stay informed about practices and changes that affect you.

If you have any questions or need any clarification on the information contained in this handbook, please contact our Director of Operations, Jesse Boykin at [jesse@fosterthefamily.org](mailto:jesse@fosterthefamily.org).

# LOCATIONS AND CONTACT INFO

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## **Foster the Family NJ Center**

1892 Greentree Road, Suite #4

Cherry Hill, NJ 08003 (lower level office)

### **Executive Director**

Jamie Finn

jamie@fosterthefamily.org

(856) 906-1528

### **Director Of Operations**

Jesse Boykin

jesse@fosterthefamily.org

(856) 770-4771

### **Program Coordinator**

Jenna Taylor

jenna@fosterthefamily.org

(609) 744-2548

### **Inventory Manager**

Judy Volz

judy@fosterthefamily.org

(609) 280-3219

# ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

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## **Mission**

Foster the Family exists to support and encourage foster and adoptive families, mobilize and equip the community and church for foster care and adoption, and advocate for vulnerable children.

## **Programs and Services**

**Foster the Family NJ:** brings practical necessities and caring support to the doorstep of a foster family within the first 24 hours of a new placement. Serving families in Camden, Burlington and Gloucester Counties, New Jersey. Join Foster the Family NJ's Facebook and/or Instagram pages to be updated on special events and other ways to get involved.

**CARE:** A night for foster and adoptive moms to come together and study God's word, give and receive encouragement, pray, and connect with like-minded foster moms.

**FOSTER LOVE:** A night of support, encouragement, and information for South Jersey foster and adoptive moms.

**FATHERS MATTER:** A night of support, encouragement, and information for South Jersey foster and adoptive dads.

**FOSTER THE FAMILY BLOG:** One mom's musings and broodings on foster care, adoption, and family.

**REAL MOM PODCAST:** A podcast for biological, adoptive, and foster moms.

**FILLED RETREAT:** A weekend retreat curated especially for foster + adoptive moms. A time of worship, teaching, fun, and refreshment.

**SPECIAL EVENTS:** Jamie Finn speaks at local and national conferences, retreats, fundraisers, church events, and training. Hosting local training for foster and adoptive parents (i.e.: Empowered to Connect Conference). Special events for local foster and adoptive parents and families.

**FOSTER THE FAMILY FOSTER PARENT SUPPORT PAGE:** Online support page for foster parents to receive encouragement and information from other foster parents throughout the country.

# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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## **Attendance and Time**

Volunteers are committed to serve on the day assigned but should notify the coordinator, as far in advance as possible, if they are unable to be present in their scheduled time slot or any other volunteer service. FosterCare Package Volunteers are responsible to attempt to find a replacement if they are unable to be in attendance by using the Volunteer Facebook Group or the FosterCare Package Volunteer Schedule Calendar that will be emailed to each volunteer monthly.

## **At-Will Employment**

All staff and volunteers should be aware that your employment with FTF is for no specified period of time and constitutes at-will employment. However, we would ask for a 6 month commitment when at all possible. As a result you are free to terminate your employment at any time and for any reason, or no reason at all. If you decide to terminate, please allow at least seven days before the next shift. Similarly, FTF is free to terminate your employment at any time and for any reason, or no reason at all.

## **Background Checks**

Volunteers for all positions, working directly with foster families or children, are required to undergo a background/criminal records check prior to beginning service. Current foster parents are not required to be background checked, as the status of licensed DCP&P Resource Parent verifies safety. However, we will need a copy of your current OOL home license.

FTF covers the cost of all background record checks for volunteers.

## **Company and Personal Property**

Equipment provided by FTF NJ should not be taken for personal use or removed from FTF NJ, unless approved for use in off-site volunteer activities. Use caution and safeguard any personal belongings brought to the FTF NJ center or off-site locations. FTF NJ cannot reimburse you for lost or stolen property.

## **Concerns**

If you feel unhappy or uncomfortable with any aspect of your volunteering, please first speak with the direct supervisor for your task. Confidentiality around your work and work with clients cannot be guaranteed, as issues discussed may need to be raised with other staff etc. Please check with your supervisor if you require guidance on this.

FTF NJ seeks to maintain open communication and wants its volunteers to enjoy the work they do and to know they are making an impact.

# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES CONT.

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## **Confidentiality**

FTF NJ respects the privacy of personal information of those it serves or employs. Therefore, you are responsible for maintaining confidentiality of all information to which you are exposed while serving as a volunteer. Absolutely no information regarding the foster family, foster child, home, or anything else pertaining to the foster family can be shared with anyone outside of the Foster the Family NJ staff. Photographs of the foster family, child, or home are not permitted in any capacity.

## **Conflict of Interest**

FTF NJ is judged, in large part, by the individual and collective performance of its volunteers and staff. Each volunteer must act in all matters in a manner that will safeguard the reputation and integrity of FTF NJ and will preserve and strengthen public confidence in our activities. Likewise, volunteers must refrain from engaging in any transaction in which personal interests conflict, potentially conflict or appear to conflict with those of FTF NJ.

## **Contact Information**

Please remember to regularly update your personal contact information, to include address, phone number, email, and emergency contact information. These updates can be made by contacting Jenna Taylor at [jenna@fosterthefamily.org](mailto:jenna@fosterthefamily.org)

## **Discrimination and Harassment**

Foster the Family NJ is committed to providing all staff, volunteers, clients and vendors with a working environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere which promotes equal opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices or harassing behaviors. Any behavior that may undermine respectful and professional work relationships will not be tolerated or condoned.

Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated.

FTF NJ encourages volunteers to bring any incidents of discrimination or harassment to the immediate attention of the Program Coordinator or the Executive Director.

FTF NJ prohibits sexual harassment of employees and volunteers. Sexual harassment refers to any unwelcome sexual attention, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and similar conduct. Any employee/volunteer who feels victimized by sexual harassment should report the alleged harassment immediately to his/her supervisor.



# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES CONT.

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## **Dress Code**

As a volunteer, you are responsible for presenting a positive image to clients and to the community as a representative of FTF NJ. You should dress in a neat, well-groomed and presentable fashion for the conditions and performance of your duties.

## **Driving**

FTF NJ volunteer drivers use their own insurance coverage when driving their own automobiles. A copy of your driver's license and auto insurance card must be on file in the FTF NJ center. Any parking or traffic violation fees that may be incurred during a transportation service should be paid by the volunteer.

Once a volunteer driver has completed the screening process they are presented with an official FTF NJ identification which is to be visible when making service deliveries.

Drivers will adhere to the following policies while operating as a FTF NJ volunteer driver:

- Contact the foster family client to inform them of drop off time
- Be punctual for all driving assignments
- Maintain vehicle in safe working order
- Ensure all passengers are buckled while operating the vehicle
- Inform staff member of any charge or ticket while volunteering
- Inform staff member of any change in health status that may affect driving ability
- Keep identification badge on his/her person while volunteering

## **Drug-Free Workplace**

FTF NJ is a drug-free workplace. Volunteers and staff may not be impaired by any substance while working. Such action will result in your immediate dismissal.

## **Identification**

Volunteers should always conspicuously wear their FTF NJ ID badge when volunteering. Volunteers are required to wear the ID badge while delivering the FosterCare Package or other supplies to a foster home. Volunteers should wear ID badges whenever serving at a FTF NJ event. Extra ID badges will be available at the Foster the Family Center if a personal ID badge is lost or forgotten.

## **Photo Release**

Below you will need to complete a photo and video release. We hope you will agree to allow FTF NJ to use your photo, if needed, on our Facebook, website, and/or additional publications. This is a great way to show how important volunteers are to the work of FTF NJ.

# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES CONT.

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## **Mandatory Reporting**

Mandated reporter: In New Jersey, any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare is a mandatory reporter.

If a volunteer suspects or witnesses the abuse, neglect, or abandonment of a child at a home or an event in which they're volunteering, they should report this to 1-877-NJABUSE. For definitions and examples of abuse and neglect, please see Abuse/Neglect Addendum. After reporting, please inform Foster the Family Executive Director, Jamie Finn.

## **Non-Smoking Environment**

Smoking by our employees, volunteers, clients, or vendors in any interior offices or spaces of any building occupied by FTF NJ is not allowed.

## **No Solicitation/No Distribution**

The conduction on-site of non-FTF NJ business such as canvassing, collection of funds, pledges, circulation of petitions, solicitation of members or any other similar types of activity is prohibited.

## **Personal Involvement with Clients**

If your volunteer position involves working directly with clients, it is important to maintain boundaries and keep your relationship professional, not personal. Continued contact between the Response Supporter and foster family after delivery is not permitted. Volunteers should not enter the homes of foster families under normal circumstances.

## **Theft**

FTF NJ has a zero-tolerance policy regarding theft. If any volunteer is found stealing, they will be dismissed immediately. "Theft" is consuming or possessing our inventory that is meant for those in need unless directly given the items by FTF NJ staff, or being in the possession of property of FTF NJ, its employees or other volunteers.

## **Weapons**

To ensure FTF NJ maintains a workplace safe and free of violence for all employees, FTF NJ prohibits the possession of use of any unauthorized firearms or weapons on FTF NJ property or during service for FTF NJ.

# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES CONT.

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## **Safety and Liability**

FTF NJ aims to provide a safe and healthy environment for all volunteers. If a volunteer is injured in the course of the volunteer's service, it is important that the volunteer notify the Program Coordinator.

All volunteers must abide by the following safety policies:

1. Follow safety directions from FTF NJ staff
2. Show caution while lifting, reaching, and using step ladder
3. Immediately notify a FTF NJ staff member if you see or experience any safety issues

## **Resignation & Leave of Absence**

Your volunteer position may conclude at the end of a particular project, event, or set time period, but you are also free to end your volunteer service with FTF NJ at any time. Because volunteers are so important to the programs and agency, however, we request that you provide advance notice of your departure. The role of the FosterCare Package Volunteer is a six month commitment, with the option of continuing service.

*Should a volunteer have or foresee a problem that may interfere with his or her commitment or ability to adequately perform their responsibilities, please immediately discuss the matter with the Program Coordinator. This will help FTF NJ find ample time to fulfill the duty with another qualified volunteer.*

## **Termination**

You may be terminated from your position as a volunteer for a variety of reasons. Some of these include: gross misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property or misuse of agency equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of clients or coworkers, failure to abide by agency policies and procedures, failure to meet physical or mental standards of performance, breach of confidentiality agreement, and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.