

# **STANDARD FOR RESOURCE PARENT/AGENCY PROBLEM RESOLUTION PROCESS**

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this standard is to provide direction and guidance to the Child and Family Services (CFS) Program regarding the problem resolution process for resource parent grievances. This standard is intended to achieve statewide consistency in the development and application of CFS core services and shall be implemented in the context of all applicable laws, rules and policies. The standard will also provide a measurement for program accountability.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Idaho Department of Health & Welfare Child and Family Services Program recognizes the need for a systematic process of expression, examination and resolution of resource parent grievances. The nature of our work is relational, as people work together as part of a professional team, conflicts will arise which may impact the quality of working relationships, potentially affecting outcomes for children and families. Resource parents are encouraged to bring forth challenges, concerns and positive experiences.

The management of child welfare practices is best assured when the local office reviews the decisions and actions of its staff. Handling complaints and concerns at the local level assures managers are informed of concerns and reinforces the agency's accountability and position of responsibility.

### **Principles**

- The primary focus of the process is to resolve a problem in a transparent, collaborative, manner; without prejudice. Parties coming together in this process will need to be willing to engage in open, non-judgmental discussion while seeking to maintain a positive, non-adversarial working relationship.
- Create an environment in which resource parents feel heard, informed about the process and respected during and after the discussion, without fear of retaliation. The process will respect cultural differences at all times.
- Early resolution of problems at the local level whenever possible, is encouraged.
- Every effort shall be made to resolve the problem in a mutually satisfactory manner.
- Mandated timeframes have been built into the procedure. Every effort should be made to shorten the timeframes, whenever possible.

- This process is designed for resource parents caring for children in DHW custody who may have a grievance. This is not intended for providers of congregate care settings or group homes.

## **TERMS**

### **Grievance**

A grievance is a statement of a complaint or problem that is considered filed when a resource parent has verbally or in writing communicated a this to CFS staff.

### **Problem Resolution Team**

The team's primary function is to assist in resolving resource parent grievances that are unable to be successfully resolved at the local level. The team is comprised of the Deputy Division Administrator, Program Manager, Program Specialists, Regional/Hub CFS representatives and Resource Peer Mentor. The team collects and reviews information related to resource parent's grievance, and makes recommendations for resolutions.

### **Resource Peer Mentor (RPM)**

A recruitment and retention effort that hires experienced foster/adoptive/kinship parents to provide knowledge, experience, and expertise specific to the resource family role. Resource Peer Mentors provide general, targeted and specific recruitment support activities as well as train, teach and mentor current and prospective resource families about the foster care system.

### **Resource Parent**

The term includes foster parents, adoptive parents, relatives, or fictive kin. The term broadly refers to anyone who is a licensed foster parent in the state of Idaho and provides a safe, stable, loving home for a child when the child's parents or guardians are unable to provide one.

### **Retaliation**

Knowing and willful application of a different standard to a particular foster parent, harassing a foster parent, threatening a foster parent with removal of a child from foster parent's care, refusing or failing to place a child in a resource home, or disrupting a child placement in reprisal for foster parent who has filed a grievance.

## **IMPLEMENTING THE STANDARD**

### **Regional Child and Family Services (CFS) Level**

#### **Examples of potential grievances:**

- Communication issues.
- Disagreement with the agency's decision to remove children from their home for non-safety related issues
- Failure to follow policies.
- Failure to arrange needed services for the child and/or resource family.
- Failure to abide by the responsibilities outlined in the Cooperative Agreement and the child specific service plan.
- Perceived retaliation.

#### **Examples of inappropriate grievances:**

- Resource parent is the subject of a pending investigation/safety assessment regarding allegations of child abuse and neglect.
- Conflict with another licensing or placement agency, other than CFS.
- Conflict is related to a revocation or denial of a foster care license. For the appeal process please refer to the Administrative Hearing policy at [www.adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/16/0503.pdf](http://www.adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/16/0503.pdf).
- Placing an Indian child in accordance with Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) placement preferences;
- If the child has been moved for the purpose of achieving reunification with the birth parent or placement with siblings.
- Conflict with a contested court decision.
- Disagreement with the permanency placement decision made by the Selection Committee. For the appeal process please refer to the Extended Placement Selection Committee process.

## **Step One: Child Welfare Social Worker**

When a resource parent has a grievance with Child and Family Services, they should first attempt to resolve the conflict through discussion with the social worker involved in the situation. This should occur as early as possible so that it can be resolved quickly. The social worker should document the concerns, results, and details of the discussion(s) in the iCARE monthly contact narratives. If the concern is related to supportive services/needs specific to the resource parent, this should be documented in the resource parent profile screen under the narrative tab. The social worker should advise their immediate supervisor of the concern and the plan to resolve the concern as soon as possible.

The supervisor will contact the resource parent no later than seven (7) business days upon notification of the concern to follow up and ensure the concern has been resolved. If the concern has not been resolved, the supervisor will assess the progress of the plan and any challenges that may delay the resolution. Ongoing follow up will continue to be initiated by the supervisor every seven (7) business days until a resolution has been achieved and acknowledged by both parties. All efforts shall be made to successfully achieve timely resolution within fourteen (14) business days. If a resolution has not been successfully achieved within (30) business days of the resource parent initiating the problem resolution process this should advance to step two. At any time during step one, the supervisor may advance the resolution to step two.

If a resource parent does not feel the conflict can sufficiently be resolved with the social worker they may immediately proceed to step two. In some circumstances, a timely resolution may require expediting the process, advancing to step 3. These circumstances should be considered on a case by case basis and must be approved by the Program Manager.

## **Step Two: Child Welfare Supervisor**

If the concern has not been resolved as identified by the supervisor through the monitoring process or upon notification by the resource parent to other CFS staff the supervisor will arrange a meeting with all parties to come to a mutually satisfactory resolution. The meeting may include the assigned Resource Peer Mentor (RPM) of the resource parent(s) and/or another supportive individual, identified by the resource parent. The RPM's role is neutral and will provide further clarification for the resource parent(s) regarding the discussion, plan and solutions. This meeting will take place within seven (7) business days of the supervisor's contact with the resource parent. Any variance beyond the outlined times frames must be due to extraordinary circumstances and must be agreed upon by the resource parent.

Resource parent(s) may choose to have a supportive individual present during the problem resolution process. If a support person participates a confidentiality statement must be signed prior to participating in the meeting.

During this meeting, the supervisor will facilitate a discussion to explore ways to solve the problem. The supervisor's role is to act as a mediator, listening to everything the two parties have to say, and assisting in exploring a plan that offers a mutual solution. The plan should include a mechanism for monitoring progress and resolution by the parties. The supervisor shall

document the concern and details of the plan in the Resource Parent Problem Resolution Plan, see attachment B, and provide a copy of the plan to the resource parent. The supervisor should advise the Child Welfare Chief of the concern and the plan to resolve the concern as soon as possible. The supervisor will address the progress of the plan during regular scheduled supervision with the social worker. This will be documented in iCARE under the resource family's profile screen under the narrative tab and on the Resource Parent Resolution Tracker in SharePoint for tracking purposes.

The supervisor will contact the resource parent within seven (7) business days after the meeting to follow up with the resource parent regarding the progress on the plan. Ongoing follow up calls will continue to occur every seven (7) business days until a resolution has been achieved and acknowledged by both parties. All efforts shall be made to successfully achieve timely resolution within fourteen (14) business days of meeting with the resource parents. If a resolution has not been successfully achieved within thirty (30) business days this should advance to step three.

### **Step Three: Child Welfare Regional/Hub Field Program Manager**

In the event a workable plan is not achieved and/or the problem is not resolved following implementation of the plan, the resource parent should present the problem via email or telephone to the Child Welfare Regional/Hub Field Program Manager explaining: (a) the issue/problem and the efforts to resolve the problem; (b) the plan developed; and (c) why those efforts have not been sufficient to satisfactorily resolve the situation. The supervisor and/or Child Welfare Chief of social work may also request the Child Welfare Regional/Hub Program Manager's assistance in addressing a grievance with a resource parent if previous attempts in reaching a resolution have been unsuccessful. The Child Welfare Regional/Hub Field Program Manager will arrange a meeting with the resource parent(s) and will include the social worker, supervisor, resource family's licensing social worker, the resource family's assigned RPM, and/or another supportive individual, identified by the resource parent. The meeting will be held within seven (7) business days after receiving the request.

The Regional/Hub Field Program Manager will facilitate a meeting ensuring all parties are heard; promoting a transparent and collaborative process. The Regional/Hub Field Program Manager will seek to achieve a resolution during the meeting. If the resolution requires the implementation of a plan, this should be documented in the Resource Parent Problem Resolution Plan, see attachment B. A copy of the plan will be provided to the resource parent(s). The Regional/Hub Field Program Manager will advise the resource parents by phone of the decision within seven (7) business days, followed up in writing no more than ten (10) business days following the meeting. Documentation will be entered in iCARE on the resource family's profile screen under the narrative tab and in the Resource Parent Problem Resolution tracker in SharePoint for tracking purposes.

Under no circumstances shall this step exceed the time frames outlined unless good cause can be shown. In this instance, the Child Welfare Regional/Hub Field Program Manager must contact the resource parent by phone as well as send the resource parent a letter, which specifies a date by which the region expects to resolve the issue. This must be documented in iCARE under the resource family's profile screen under the narrative tab and in the tracker on SharePoint.

## Statewide Level Problem Resolution Team (PRT)

### **Examples of possible referrals to the Statewide Level PRT include:**

- Regional level efforts to reach resolution have failed and the problem is directly related to the well being or permanency of the foster child in care.

### **Issues which make Statewide Level PRT referrals inappropriate include, but are not limited to:**

- Referrals to the PRT, which are made, by the resource parent, more than seven (7) business days following or regional program manager regional problem resolution level.
- When a resource parent does not agree with the permanency placement decision made by the Selection Committee please see the Statewide Extended Placement Resolution Process.

The purpose of the Statewide Level Problem Resolution Team (PRT) is to provide resource parents and the regional office an opportunity to be heard when problems arise and unresolved issues remain following regional attempts at problem resolution. The intent is not to remove authority from local CFS offices to handle problems within their region or to be punitive in nature. PRT referrals may only be made after regional attempts to reach resolution have been unsuccessful.

The PRT will be comprised of individuals selected by the Division Administrator for Family and Community Services. These individuals may include: FACS Deputy Division Administrator, Child Welfare Program Manager, state level Program Specialists, Regional/Hub CFS representatives and a RPM outside of the Hub in which the referral was received. A minimum of three members must participate in each conflict resolution meeting. PRT members will not participate in meetings related to concerns from their own hub/region.

The PRT process, from receipt of initial referral to final decision should take no longer than fifteen (15) business days.

PRT referrals must be made within seven (7) business days of the resource parent being informed verbally, of a Hub/Regional Program Manager regional level problem resolution decision. Referrals received after this time will not be considered.

Please see Attachment C for the Resource Parent Problem Resolution Team Referral.

Referral to the PRT may be made by submitting a Resource Parent Problem Resolution Team Referral form to:

Idaho Department of Health & Welfare, FACS  
Attn: Problem Resolution Team  
450 State Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boise, Idaho 83720  
Email: FosterCarewebsite@dhw.idaho.gov

A Problem Resolution Team liaison will notify the referent, the regional CFS office and the Problem Resolution Team via letter, telephone or e-mail that the referral has been received, within two (2) business day. A PRT liaison will contact the referent to gather additional information regarding their concerns; schedule a PRT meeting time and request copies of records and any other documentation to be considered by the PRT at that time. All materials to be considered by the PRT must be received two (2) business days before the scheduled meeting time of the PRT.

PRT meetings will be held in-person, telephonically and/or via video conferencing within seven (7) business days of receiving the PRT referral. PRT committee members are expected to have reviewed all provided written documentation prior to the meeting. The PRT shall conduct interviews with appropriate CFS staff and supervisors as well as the referent during the meeting. Interviews may be held either in-person or telephonically. Due to the time-sensitive nature of these requests, it is incumbent on all parties to make themselves available for interviews at the scheduled time.

The PRT will develop recommendations based on all information received. A meeting summary including a description of information and documentation considered will be compiled into a report and submitted to the Division Administrator. Notification of the decision will be made via telephone to the referent and via telephone or e-mail to the Regional/Hub Field Program Manager within seven (7) business day. Original copies of the written decision will be sent to the Regional/Hub Field Program Manager. Courtesy copies of the written decision will be provided no later than ten (10) business days to the resource parent, PRT members, the Child Welfare Foster Care Recruitment and Retention Program Specialist, and the Child Welfare Permanency Program Specialist. The meeting summary and decision will be documented in iCARE under the resource family's profile screen under the narrative tab and in the Resource Parents Problem Resolution tracker in SharePoint.

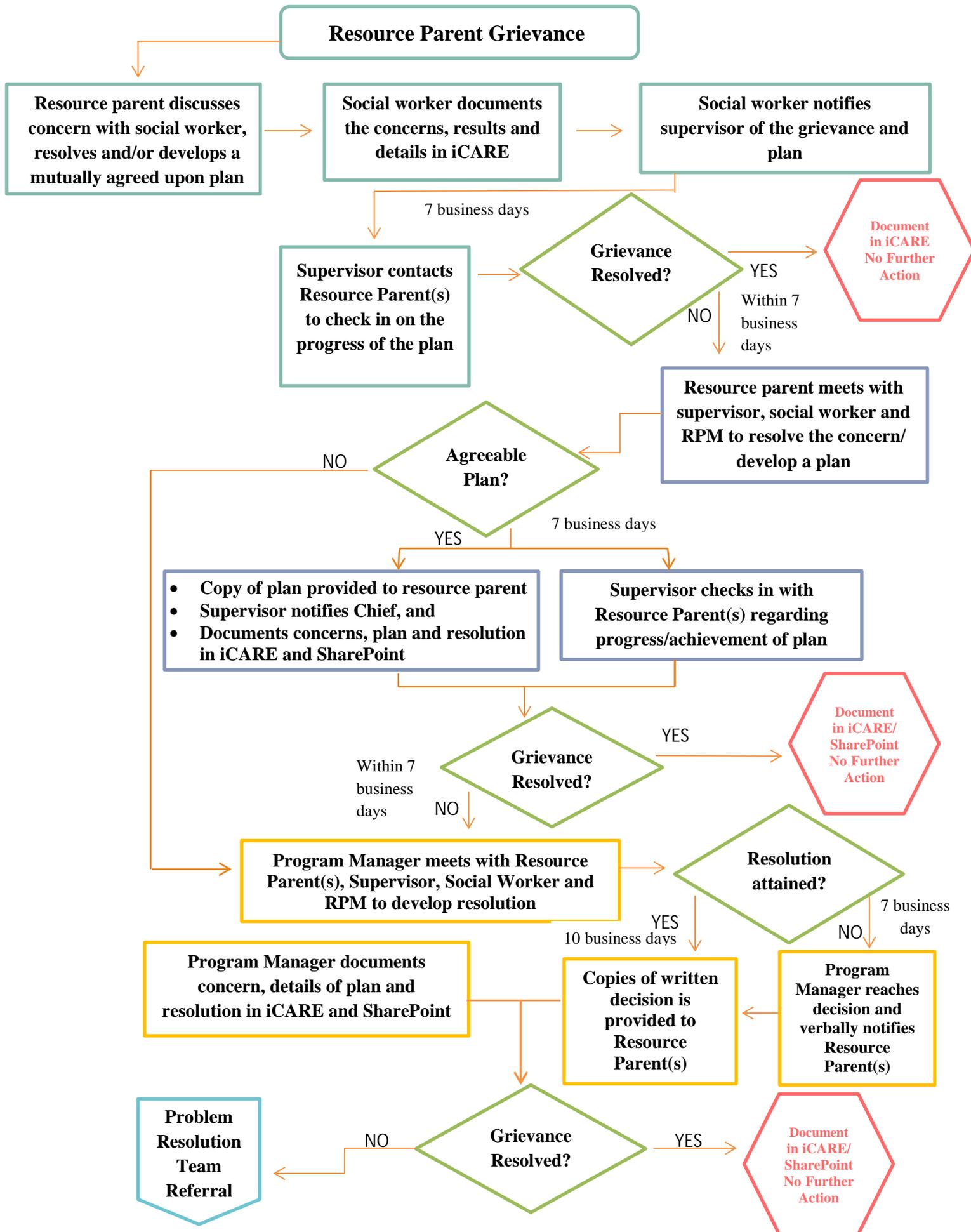
The Division Administrator or designee has the final decision making authority regarding PRT referrals. If action by the region is outlined in the final recommendations, the Hub/Regional Program Manager shall prepare a written response to the recommendations including their plan for implementation. The plan shall be sent to the PRT liaison within seven (7) business days of receiving the final written decision.

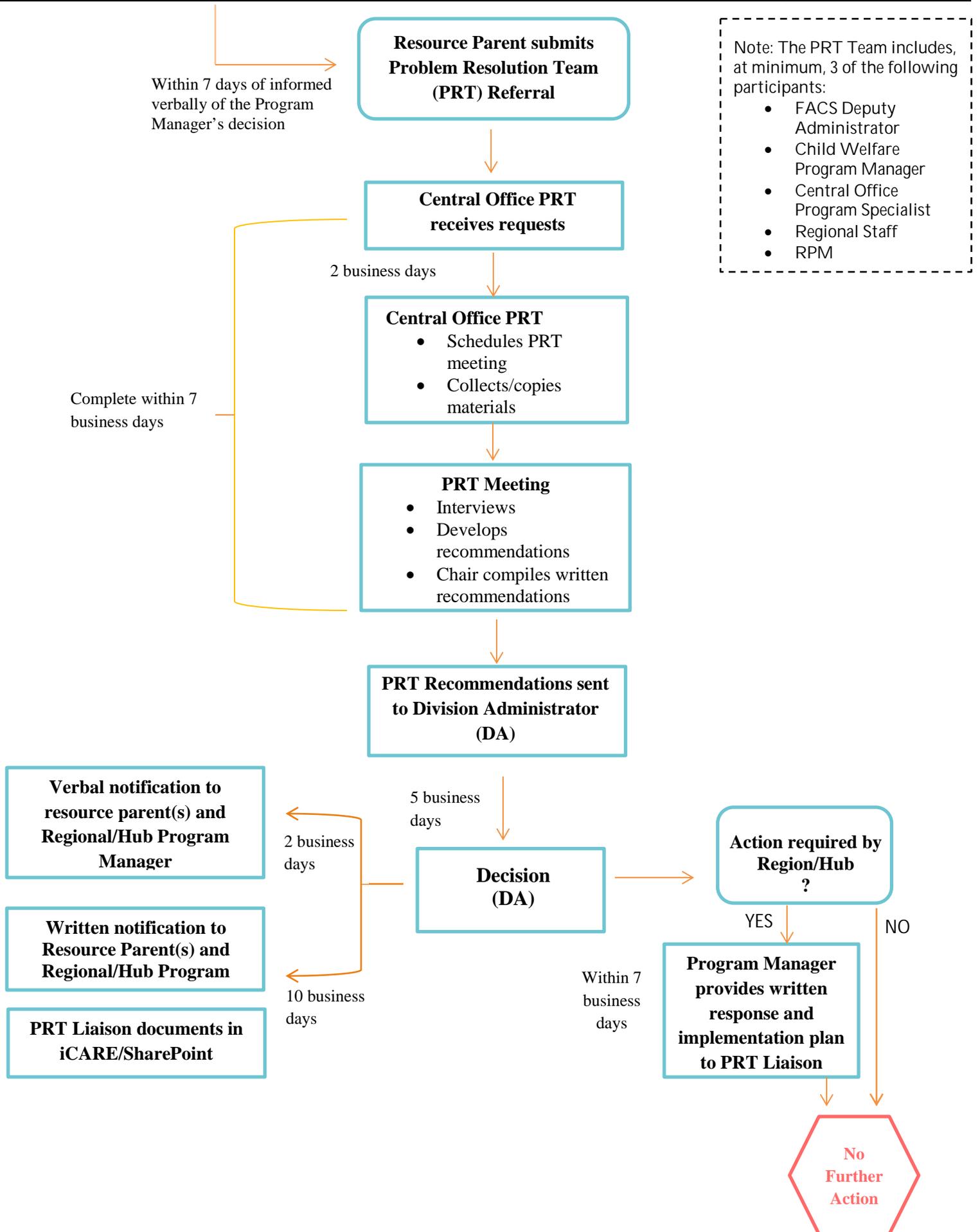
**Any action taken not consistent with this standard must be pre-approved by the FACS Division Administrator or designee. The action, rationale and approval must be documented under the narrative tab on the Resource profile in iCARE.**

Attachment A: Resource Parent Resolution Process Flowchart  
Attachment B: Resource Parent Problem Resolution Plan  
Attachment C: Problem Resolution Team Referral Form  
Attachment D: Idaho Resource Parent Grievance Process Pamphlet

## Resource Parent Resolution Process

2016







Resource Parent Resolution Plan

2016

Resource Parent:		Resource Parent:	
Resource Parent Email			
Social Worker		Supervisor	
Region/Hub Program Manager			
Date			

GRIEVANCE (Please clearly identify the grievance)		
GOAL (Please clearly identify the desired result)		
INTERVENTION #1		
RESPONSIBLE PARTY		
DATE REVIEWED:	DATE REVIEWED:	DATE ACHIEVED:
INTERVENTION #2		
RESPONSIBLE PARTY		

DATE REVIEWED:	DATE REVIEWED:	DATE ACHIEVED:
RESOURCE PARENT SIGNATURE	RESOURCE PARENT SIGNATURE	
	<i>Date</i>	<i>Date</i>
EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE	SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE	
	<i>Date</i>	<i>Date</i>
PROGRAM MANAGERS SIGNATURE *Signature only required if the Regional/Hub Program Manager is involved in the development of the plan		<i>Date</i>

**Resource Parent Problem Resolution Team Referral**

Please submit form to:  
Child Welfare Problem Resolution Team  
Idaho Department of Health & Welfare, FACS  
450 State Street, 5th Floor  
Boise, Idaho 83720  
or  
Email: fostercarewebsite@dhw.idaho.gov

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to child: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Referral Information**

Name of child(ren): \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of child's case manager: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of case manager's supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Region/Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe your concern (communication issues, agency decision, failure to follow policies, arrange needed services, comply with responsibilities outlined in Cooperative Agreement and/or child specific case plan; perceived retaliation):

Please describe the steps you have taken to resolve the problem, include the names of people you have reported the complaint to, who you have worked with and the dates.

What concerns would you like addressed by the Problem Resolution Team?

**For Problem Resolution Team Use Only**

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Date contacted: \_\_\_\_\_  
date of PRT meeting: \_\_\_\_\_ Decision Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Examples of Potential Grievances

- Communication issues
- Disagreement with the agency's decision to remove a child from their home for issues not related to safety
- Failure to follow policies
- Failure to arrange needed services for the child and/or resource family
- Failure to abide by the responsibilities outlined in the Cooperative Agreement and child-specific service plan
- Perceived retaliation

### Examples of Inappropriate Grievances

- Resource parent is the subject of a pending investigation regarding allegations of child abuse or neglect
- Conflict with another licensing or placement agency, other than CFS
- Conflict is related to a revocation or denial of a foster care license; for this appeal process please refer to the Administrative Hearing policy at [adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/16/0503.pdf](http://adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/16/0503.pdf)
- Placing an Indian child in accordance with Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) placement preferences
- A child has been moved for the purpose of achieving reunification with the birth parent or placement with siblings
- Conflict with a contested court



Child and Family Services Program (CFS) is very proud and appreciative of the resource parents who open their hearts and homes to children in foster care.

This guide is designed for licensed resource parents caring for children in foster care who may have a grievance. It embraces an open and systematic process to provide opportunities for all participants to be heard and explain their perspectives without judgment.

We are committed to building supportive relationships with resource parents to help ensure the best outcomes for children and families.

For questions, contact:

Julie Sevcik  
 Idaho Department of Health & Welfare  
 Family & Community Services  
 Foster Care Program Specialist  
 450 W. State Street, 5th Floor  
 Boise, Idaho 83720  
 Phone: (208) 334-6953  
 Email: [Julie.Sevcik@dhw.idaho.gov](mailto:Julie.Sevcik@dhw.idaho.gov)

## Idaho Resource Parent Grievance Process



## Chain of Command

Child and Family Services believes concerns are most effectively addressed at the local level. In the event that is not possible or when all local measures have been exhausted, concerns may be escalated to division administration for resolution.



## Child Welfare Social Worker & Supervisor

If you have a conflict with your social worker, engage in an open conversation with them. Discuss your concerns; be transparent and honest, and work to develop a solution that is mutually agreeable, if possible. The social worker will share the concern and solution with their supervisor, who will follow up with you within seven business days to check in on the progress and determine if the resolution has been achieved. If you do not feel the conflict can be resolved with the social worker contact the supervisor.

## Child Welfare Field Program Manager

In the event a workable plan is not achieved, please contact your hub/regional program manager. A meeting will be arranged within seven business days of your request. The social worker, supervisor, licensing worker, and your Resource Peer Mentor may be included. You may choose to have an additional support person present during the meeting. Best efforts will be made to reach a resolution. You will be contacted by phone within seven business days following the meeting with a decision.



## Problem Resolution Team (PRT)

In the event there is an irreconcilable difference at the local level, resource parents have the right to file a formal grievance with our Problem Resolution Team. Formal grievances must be made within seven business days of the resource family being verbally informed of a regional/hub program manager's resolution.

A PRT liaison will contact you within two business days to gather additional information and schedule a meeting. Interviews will be conducted with appropriate CFS staff, resource parent(s), and any others determined by the PRT to be necessary for the resolution process. The team includes the deputy division administrator, program manager, program specialists, hub/regional CFS representatives, and a Resource Peer Mentor. Recommendations will be developed based on the information received and submitted to the Division Administrator for approval. Notification of the decision will be made via telephone within seven business days. The Division Administrator has final decision-making authority.

Referral forms are accessible through the Regional/Hub Program Manager or online at <http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Children/AdoptionFosterCareHome/FosterAdoptiveParentResources>.

### **Please submit a grievance to:**

Child Welfare Problem Resolution Team  
Idaho Department of Health & Welfare, FACS  
450 State Street, 5th Floor  
Boise, Idaho 83720  
Phone: (208) 334-5700  
Email: [fostercarewebsite@dhw.idaho.gov](mailto:fostercarewebsite@dhw.idaho.gov)