

Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Inc.  
BYLAWS

Approved by general membership on 11/10/05

Article I-Name

The name of this association shall be the Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Inc., referred to in these bylaws as the Association.

Article II-Purpose

The purpose of the Association is:

1. To provide supportive services to all Foster/Shelter/Adoptive/Relative-Kinship Care Associations, Foster/Shelter/Adoptive/Relative-Kinship Care providers, and Foster/Shelter/Adoptive/Relative Care/Independent Living Children in the State of Florida.
2. To take affirmative action as deemed necessary by the membership of the Association.
3. To improve conditions for the betterment of children, families, and the Foster/Shelter/Adoptive/Relative-Kinship Care systems.
4. To be the collective voice of all the Association's members.
5. To bring about better communication between Foster/Shelter/Adoptive Parents, and Relative-Kinship Care Providers, their agencies and the public.
6. To provide a vehicle by which Foster/Shelter/Adoptive Parents, and Relative-Kinship Care Providers can improve themselves and the quality of Foster/Shelter/Adoptive, and Relative-Kinship Care systems in Florida.

Article III-Membership

Section I-Definition:

A Foster/Shelter/Adoptive Parent, and Relative-Kinship Care Provider shall be defined for the purpose of these Bylaws as a person licensed or recognized by the Department of Children and Families and/ or Community Base Care agency to care for children in a family home, non institutional in character.

Section II-Types of Membership:

1. Regular Membership-Members must be dues paid licensed Foster/Shelter Parents and /or Adoptive Parent and Relative-Kinship Care Providers in good standing in accordance with Florida Statutes. Regular members shall have the right to vote on all matters brought to the member of the Association, and each shall receive all information and mailings about state/national activities of the Association.
2. Supporting Membership-Members must be dues paid interested persons and/or organizations that support the purposes and efforts of the Association. The benefits of this membership include auditing meetings and receiving mailings. This membership does not include voting rights or individual membership enrollment for members of the supporting organization or agency.
3. Honorary Membership-This shall be awarded by a majority vote of the local association representatives with voting privileges, who are present at a regularly scheduled meeting. The benefits of this membership are the same as a regular member in good standing.
4. Local Associations-Local Foster/Shelter/Adoptive/Relative-Kinship Care Association membership is granted upon payment of dues and entitles the association to designate one representative to vote on behalf of that Association. The benefits of this membership include auditing meetings, receiving mailings, and assistance from the President's Council. The President or designated Executive Board Member from each Association will be a member of the President's Council and participate in meeting.
5. Corporate Membership-This membership is obtained by payment of established dues. The benefits of this membership include auditing meetings, and receiving mailings and announcements. This membership has no voting rights.

Section III-Membership Privileges:

To receive a Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association membership card, mailings, announcements, and informational literature. Bylaws will be available either upon request (mail/internet) or on the FSFAPA website.

Section IV-Membership Year:

Dues paid at any time during the membership year will entitle membership from date payment is received until the end of the membership year. Dues shall not be pro-rated for payments made after January. Members, appointed/nominated for an office, must be members in good standing prior to appointment/nomination.

Section V-Dues:

Annual dues for all types of membership will be determined and set by the Board of Directors of the Association and ratified by the members at the annual meeting.

#### Article IV-President's Council

The President's Council shall be responsible for establishing a communications network between the Executive Board and the local Foster/Shelter/Adoptive/Relative-Kinship Care Associations and shall advise the Executive Board of the concerns and opinions of their Associations.

The Chairperson of the President's Council shall be the Executive Vice-President of the Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association. Members of the council shall include the Regional Vice-Presidents and the current President or President's designated representative of every local association with voting privileges.

This Council shall meet at each Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association meeting. Regional Vice-President may institute meeting with local Associations within their region with the approval of the Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association Executive Vice-President.

#### Duties of President's Council:

1. To facilitate a communication network to see that the needs of local associations are properly addressed on the state level, and to poll their membership on issues of major state policy to be acted upon by the Association between general meetings.
2. To provide supportive services to Foster/Shelter/Adoptive Parents and Relative-Kinship Caregivers.
3. To meet as the President's Council during each quarterly Association meeting to discuss concerns of their associations. This meeting is to be scheduled before the General Membership meeting.
4. Each local association representative of the President's Council shall submit a report quarterly to their Regional Vice-President. If there is no Regional Vice-President in their region the report should be submitted to the Association Executive Vice-President. All Regional Vice-Presidents will submit a report to the Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association Executive Board at their quarterly meeting. The Association Executive Vice-President shall submit an overview of the President's Council quarterly meeting

#### Article V-Executive Committee

The executive authority of the Association shall be invested in the Executive Committee, which shall be responsible for the management and property of the Association.

1. The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Executive Vice-President, Regional Vice Presidents, Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer.
2. Spouses or relatives of a current member of the Executive Committee cannot serve on the committee.
3. No officer shall be elected in the same position for more than 2 consecutive terms or 4 years.
4. If an officer does not have a current Foster Care license and/or is not an Adoptive Parent, they must resign their position.

#### Duties of the Executive Committee:

1. To promote by attitude, and action, constructive social action needed to bring about changes and improvements in the child welfare system and in legislation pertaining to children and families.
2. To enforce such rules and regulations as have been approved by the membership as necessary to further the interests and objectives of this Association.
3. To originate and disseminate ideas designed to further the purposes of the Association, and to receive requests for review of complaints concerning any aspect of Foster/Shelter/Adoptive/Relative-Kinship Care, submitted in writing by any individual or local association.
4. To establish such committees as deemed necessary to further the goals of the Association.

#### Article VI- Board of Directors

1. The Board of Directors shall consist of the Executive Committee, and all chairpersons of Standing Committees and Ad-Hoc Committees. Spouses or relatives of the Directors cannot be members of the Board of Directors.
2. The Executive Committee and the Standing Committees are voting members of this Board.
3. Ad-Hoc committee chairpersons are appointed by the President and voted on by the Board of Directors. Ad-Hoc committees are temporary committees and the chairperson has no vote.
4. The liaison between, The Department of Children and Families and/or Community Base Care agencies are appointed by those agencies. They are non-voting members of this Board. Their role is limited to being the spokesperson between the Association and Department of Children and Families and/or Community Based Care agencies.
5. All advisors appointed by the President and voted on by the Board are non-voting members. These members will act only as advisors.
6. Board members must be a member as defined in Section I of these bylaws.

The duties of the Board of Directors:

1. Attend all meetings (face to face or conference call) of the Board unless excused by the President.
2. Interprets and enforces the provisions of the bylaws, policies and standing rules of the Association.
3. Poll each member in good standing on matters of major Association policy before taking a position.
4. Act as an information center and research body regarding matters of resources, finances, education, and legislative for new members and to disseminate much information.
5. Promote by attitude and action, constructive social action needed to bring about changes and improvements in child welfare system and legislation pertaining to children.
6. Provide a vehicle for communication among members, the Department of Children and Families, Community Base Care agencies, association members and other interested parties.
7. Receive and consider all written reports, recommendations, and grievances submitted by children, members, and the Department of Children and Families or Community Based Care agencies.
8. Submit appropriate responses to all parties concerned.
9. This Board is empowered to act for the organization as a whole.
10. The Board cannot delegate its decision-making authority to a portion of the membership.
11. Each Director will be delegated a minimum of one Standing committee to either chair or co-chair listed below:

- |                           |                         |                          |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| A) Adoption               | B) Conference/Education | C) Fund Raising          | D) Newsletter           |
| E) Bylaws/Parliamentarian | F) F.A.S.T.             | G) Advocacy              | H) Community Based Care |
| I) Financial              | J) Membership           | K) Relative/Kinship Care | L) Public Relations     |
| M) Grant Writing          | N) Independent Living   |                          |                         |

12. Ad Hoc Committees will be appointed as needed. Ad Hoc Committees are: Foster Awareness, Awards, and Nominations.

#### Article VII-Officers

1. The officers of the Association shall be President, Executive Vice-President, Regional Vice Presidents, Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer.
2. Officers must be regular members in good standing of the Association for one year with a record of at least 50% attendance at the Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association meetings. Standard term of office is 2 years from January 1<sup>st</sup>. The office of President and Treasurer shall be elected in odd numbered years and the office of Executive Vice-President, Corresponding Secretary and Recording Secretary shall be elected in even numbered years. This method makes it possible to maintain an experienced officer on the Board at all times. Regional Vice-Presidents are appointed during the first year by the direction of the executive committee, thereafter to be elected by the membership for a two-year term. Regional Vice-Presidents need to reside within their region. No executive officer may hold the same office for more than 2 consecutive terms, a maximum of 4 years.
3. At the request of the Executive Board, an officer shall vacate his/her position if he/she has two unexcused absences from Association meetings.
4. In the event of vacancy, the Executive Vice-President will automatically assume the role of President. If other vacancies occur the President shall appoint someone and the Board of Directors will approve that individual by a vote till such time as that position is voted on by the membership. Vacancies must be filled by the next quarterly meeting.
5. The same person may not fill 2 offices for an entire term, only temporarily, till the next general meeting.

#### Article VIII-Duties of Officers

All out-going officers must forward all records and properties of the Association to the In-coming officers on or before the date of installation.

#### Section I-Duties of the President:

1. To preside at all general and board meetings of the Association.
2. To be responsible for the general management and supervision of the affairs and operation of the Association.
3. To appoint the chairperson of all committees and present them to the Board of Directors for approval by vote and to serve as an ex officio member of those committees.
4. To cast the deciding vote in the event of any tied issues.
5. To officially and publicly represent the Association.
6. To perform such other duties as provided by these Bylaws or as commonly assigned to the office of President.
7. To sign contracts of obligations authorized by the Board of Directors.
8. Along with Treasurer, another board member will co-sign on checks, drafts, notes, and order for payments of monies that are authorized by the Board of Directors.
9. To maintain order and decorum, to respond to parliamentary inquiries, points of order and to maintain partiality at all meetings.

10. Must not comment on motions during the course of debates unless he/she first vacates the chair of President. May respond to factual questions without vacating the chair. If he/she vacates the chair, he/she should not return to it, until the membership has disposed of the main motion.

#### Section II-Duties of the Executive Vice-President:

1. To assume the duties of President in the absence of the President.
2. To assume the office of President if the office is vacated during a regular term of office.
3. To chair the President's Council and report to the Board on the progress of the council.
4. To perform such other duties as provided by these Bylaws or as are commonly assigned to the office of the Executive Vice-President.
5. Upon request, to assist in the development and growth of local associations.
6. To act as Chairperson to any area caucus comprised of county/district/region chapter officers or their designees.
7. To help plan local, state, and national meetings of the association.

#### Section III-Duties of the Recording Secretary:

1. To perform other duties as provided by these Bylaws or as are commonly assigned to the office of Recording Secretary.
2. To record the minutes at all Association meetings, including telephone conferences. Minutes should include:
  - A) Call to order, with time, date, location, and by whom.
  - B) List of Board Members who are present and who are absent.
  - C) Record present Ex Officio and anyone present by invitation.
  - D) Approval of minutes of last meeting.
  - E) Officers Reports: President's, Officer's, Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees
  - F) Old business.
  - G) New business.
3. To distribute printed copies of the minutes of the previous meetings. Such minutes shall comply with the Revised Edition of Robert's Rules of Order.
4. Keep all records of the meetings of the membership.
5. Submit to the members of the Board of Directors and those others whom the President might designate a copy of any and all minutes taken.
6. To maintain current, accurate copies of all organizational documents such as Bylaws, Rules of Order and Standing Rules.
7. To file reports, noting their dates of presentation and their disposition.
8. To maintain and call the roll.
9. Provide the Standing and Ad Hoc Committee Chairs with a list of all committee members.
10. Provide committees with relevant information from the membership.
11. Read the minutes of the previous meeting.
12. Minutes will be completed within ten (10) working days of the meeting and will be available for inspection by all Board members.

#### Section IV-Duties of the Corresponding Secretary:

1. To keep all the records of the general Association meetings and Executive Board meetings of the Association and to distribute those records as directed by the Executive Board.
2. To compose communications as directed and approved by the President and/or the Executive Board and to keep a record of said communications.
3. To perform other duties as provided by these Bylaws or as are commonly assigned to the office of Corresponding Secretary.
4. To keep records of all newsletters published.
5. To keep record of receipts, tax letters, and thank you notes sent out for donation and to record winners of special awards.
6. Keep a record of all correspondences sent and received.
7. Send a written notice of the time and place of each meeting to each member of the Board at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of a board meeting. Notices sent electronically must allow for response from the recipient.
8. Send a notice of meeting and the agenda to the members at least thirty (30) days prior to the general membership meeting.
9. Be responsible for maintaining, monitoring, and evaluating the Board Manual.
10. Maintain an updated email address list of all members in good standing when applicable.
11. Maintain inventory control.

#### Section V-Duties of the Treasurer:

1. To collect and safeguard all funds of the Association.
2. To disburse such funds as authorized by the Executive Board for the standard operating expenses of the Association up to \$400.00, to be replenished as needed. An authorization for any purchase over the \$400.00 limit will require at least affirmative votes from Board members. This may be done electronically provided the Treasurer is in receipt of the e-mail response of the Board member. The rule of authorization of spending over \$400.00 will not apply to conference expense that does not exceed the conference budget amount.

3. To be bonded. The Association and the Insurance Company will provide bonding. Information on newly elected Treasurer must be provided within thirty (30) days of election to replace the information on the insurance policy.
4. To keep accurate records of all financial transactions of the Association and report to the membership the current financial status of the Association at every quarterly meeting.
5. To prepare a report and mail to the State of Florida for contract monies on or before the 9<sup>th</sup> day of each month. If the 9<sup>th</sup> should fall on a Saturday or Sunday the report must be prepared and mailed before that date
6. To Chair the Finance Committee and present an annual budget of the Association by the first quarterly meeting of the year.
7. To prepare an annual report to be audited by the Executive Board prior to the first meeting of the calendar year and to be presented to the membership at the first general meeting of the calendar year.
8. To maintain funds in a bank that operates statewide. Two separate accounts should be maintained one for general funds and one for funds from state contract. Each account should be set up to be accessed by the Treasurer, President and third board member who is appointed to sign on checks by sharing the account number and password.
9. On or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month a monthly financial report must be send to each member of the Board of Directors. This report should itemize all spending and deposits and show the balance of both accounts. This report may be done electronically if all members of the Board that has Internet connections are listed as recipients of the report. Any member that does not have an Internet connection should be mailed a report.
10. To perform other duties as provided by these Bylaws or as are commonly assigned to the office of Treasurer.
11. To co-sign on checks, drafts, notes, and orders for payments of monies, which shall be duly authorized.
12. To sign and execute contracts in the name of the Association, authorized by the Board of Directors.

#### Section VI- Duties of Regional Vice-Presidents

1. For the purposes of the representation of the Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Regional Vice- Presidents will be included on the Board of Directors with voting privileges. Regional Vice-Presidents represent the following districts and zones in Florida:
  - a) Suncoast (Sarasota, Manatee, Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco)
  - b) North East (D-12, D-04, D-03)
  - c) South (D-10, D-08, D-09, D-15)
  - d) Panhandle (D-02, D-01)
  - e) Miami-Dade (D-11)
  - f) Central Florida (D-14, D-07, D-13)
2. Promote organization efforts of the Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association with their region.
3. Meet with regional Administration quarterly.
4. Upon request, serve on regional DCF or Community Based Care Committees.
5. Upon request and along with the Vice-President assist in the development and growth of local associations.
6. Advocate for strengthening of the child welfare system.
7. Upon request help organize events around (March) Advocacy Day-Tallahassee and Social Worker Month-locally; (April) Child Abuse-locally; (May) Foster Care Month-locally; (November) Adoption Month-locally; or other events as deemed necessary.
8. Serve as member of the Membership Committee.
9. Recruit members and assist membership co-chairs (Treasurer and appointed) in achieving state membership goals.
10. Maintain current knowledge of and promote state position/policies.
11. Prepare and submit quarterly reports to the Board of Directors.
12. Be available for regional foster/shelter/adoptive parents and relative care providers to address their concerns and issues related to child welfare.

#### Article IX -Duties of the Board of Director Members

##### Section I- Duties of Standing Committees:

1. The duties of all Standing Committee Chairmen will be specified in the Association's policy manual that will be updated and voted on annually at the first meeting of the calendar year.

##### Section II- Duties of Ad Hoc Committees

1. The need for a special temporary committee will be addressed and voted on at either a face-to-face board meeting or on a conference call. Since this is a temporary committee the duties of the committee will be noted in the minutes.

#### Article X- Meetings

1. The membership of the Association shall meet quarterly of each calendar year.
2. The Corresponding Secretary will mail notice of the general meetings to the membership, thirty (30) days prior to each meeting. If mailed electronically, recipients must respond to the message by notifying the Corresponding Secretary who will make a copy of the reply and keep it in the records.
3. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order Revised.

4. Meetings are open to the general public, except only in those circumstances where confidential discussion is of the utmost necessity, as provided by law.
5. The Board of Directors may take action during a telephone conference. Such action shall be noted in a special memorandum placed in the minute's book and shall be reported in the minutes of the next meeting.

#### Article XI- Statement of Policy

1. The Association shall be self-governing, non-profit, non-partisan, and nonsectarian and shall not discriminate against any person because of sex, race, creed, religion or National origin.
2. The Association shall not engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are contrary to law or to the primary purposes of the Association.
3. The Association shall solicit and receive funds for the accomplishment and furtherance of the purposes of the Association.

#### Article XII- Standing Rules

##### Section I-Purpose of Standing Rules:

1. Provide definition and clarification of terminology used in the Bylaws as interpreted by the Board of Directors.
2. Provide a means for establishing and updating policy and procedures, which requires change from time
3. To time, due to changing conditions, for efficient administration of this Association by the Board.

#### Article XIII- Voting Qualification and Procedures

##### Section I- Qualifications:

1. Current year dues must be paid prior to the start of the business meeting before any person can vote on any issues brought before the membership for a vote.
2. One vote is allowed per member in good standing.

##### Section II- Procedures:

1. Voting may be by voice vote, show of hands, secret ballot, mailed ballot or electronic ballot.
2. A quorum is defined, as 15% of qualified voting members and a quorum must be present for an issue to be called to a vote.
3. Decisions are made by simple majority vote.

##### Section III- Nominations of Officers:

1. Nominations are made to the Nominations Chair at the general membership meeting of the Association prior to elections. At this meeting nominations are also made from the floor.
2. Nominees must be regular members in good standing of the Association for one year with a record of at least 50% attendance at the Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association meetings and have either no spouse or relative on the Board of Directors.
3. Within 30 days of accepting the nomination the candidate must present to the nomination chair a letter from their agency stating they are licensed foster or adoptive parents in good standing with their agency and are of high moral conduct. This letter will be required each time candidate is nominated.
4. If an individual that does not qualify for reasons other than not being a member in good standing, is nominated, and no one else will accept the position the Board of Directors may appoint that person until such time as that person qualifies and can be elected by acclamation. However, if another qualified member is nominated and accepts there must be a special election by ballot at the next general membership meeting.
5. In case of a sole nominee, he/she can be elected by acclamation.
6. The Board of Directors will declare acclamation of a sole nominee.

##### Section IV- Election of Officers:

1. Election of officers must be by secret ballot.
2. No less than thirty- (30) days prior to the last general membership meeting of the Association for the calendar year, ballots will be mailed to all members in good standing. These ballots will be numbered and sent randomly so no voting member can be identified but all ballot numbers will be recorded and numbers will be checked so no ballot is duplicated.
3. Members can either mail their ballots or hand carries them to the meeting. No ballots will be given out at the meeting.
4. At the meeting the Nomination Chair will present the ballots and ask for three volunteers to help sort and count the ballots.
5. All ballots will be checked to assure that the enveloped has not been tampered with and all numbers will be checked for duplication. Any ballots that are questionable will not be counted.
6. All ballots will be stored for each election for a period of four years.
7. Candidate with the greatest number tally wins.

##### Section V- Removal of Board:

1. Any or all of the Board of Directors may be removed for cause by vote of the Executive Committee or designated members in good standing or by action of the Board.
2. Any member of the Board of Directors who's actions and/or in actions cannot conform to the standards and ideals of this

Association, which are a matter of written record, may be charged accordingly. Said member will be provided with a copy of such charges to request a meeting with the Board and the person/s bringing the charges.

3. Upon receipt of such request, the Board will convene within thirty (30) days to hold said meeting. The person/s bringing the charges must be present before said meeting might commence. At the close of said meeting, the Board may take such action, as it deems necessary, including formal removal from office.
4. If no such meeting is requested, the Board will convene within forty-five (45) days of the receipt of charges to consider the charges. The person/s bringing the charges must be present before such meeting may commence. Upon close of meeting, the Board may take such action, as it deems necessary, including removal from office.
5. The Board must provide the charged member with a copy of the minutes of such meeting and its decision.
6. Any or all of the Board of Directors can be requested to relinquish their position when it is apparent that they are continually unable or unwilling to perform their job tasks. The Association minutes must reflect at no less than twice where the member of the Board has not given their required report or the report states that no effort has been put forth to perform their job. After the twice rule that member can be asked to step down. If the member refuses to relinquish their position the board may allow that person a grace period, till next quarterly meeting to perform. If no performance is made the Board will vote for the person's removal at that said meeting
7. Removal of office will occur in any position when the officer is not excused, and does not attend two meetings.

Section VI-Resignation:

1. Directors may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board's President or Secretaries of the Association. Unless otherwise specified in the notice, the resignation shall take effect upon receipt thereof by the Board or such officers, and the acceptance of the resignation shall be necessary to make it effective.

Section VII- Abandonment of Office:

1. Any member who fails to attend two (2) meetings, without a reasonable excuse being given to the President, will be deemed to have abandoned the member's seat on the Board of Directors and will be automatically recommended for removal from the Board.

Section VIII- Vacancy on Board:

1. When there is a vacancy on the Board the vacancy will be filled by appointment of the Board of Directors.

Article XIV-Mode of Amendment

1. The Bylaws of this Association may be added to, amended, or repealed, in whole or in part, by a majority vote of the voting members in good standing in attendance at any meeting of the Association; provided that notice of the intention to do so has been mailed to each member at least their thirty- (30) days prior to the scheduled meeting.
2. The Bylaws of this Association will be reviewed no less than once a year and if deemed necessary changes will be made.

Article XV-Duration

1. This Association shall continue perpetually unless dissolved. In the event of dissolution, the residual assets of the Association will be donated to one or more organization of similar intent and interest or to the Federal, State or Local government for exclusive public purpose, as chosen by membership vote. Said organization will be exempt as an organization described in section 501 © (3) and 170 © (2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or corresponding sections of any prior or future Internal Revenue Code.

These Bylaws were passed by a majority vote on November 10, 2005 at the general membership meeting of the FSFAPA in Tampa, Florida.

President \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary \_\_\_\_\_