

Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Inc.
BYLAWS

Approved by General Membership on 11/16/07

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 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/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 Based Care agency for children in a family home, non institutional in character.

Section II – Types of Membership:

1. Regular Membership-Members are all 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 membership of the Association, providing that they have registered to vote yearly and each shall receive all information and mailings about state/national activities of the Association. All members of the Association wishing to vote in the Annual election must complete a Voter Registration Form annually.
2. Supporting Membership – members must be dues paid interested persons and/or organizations that support the purpose s 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, which 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 due s and entitles the Association to designate one representative to vote on behalf of that Association. This voting member must complete a Voter Registration form annually. 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 all Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, mailings, announcements, and informational literature. Bylaws will be available either upon request (mail/internet) or on the FSFAPA website.

Section IV – Membership Year:

All Association members wishing to vote must be registered prior to August 1st. This will entitle them voting rights for one year. Members, appointed/nominated for an office, must be members in good standing prior to appointments/nominations.

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 communication 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 meetings 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, Secretary and Treasurer.
2. Spouses 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 3 consecutive terms or 6 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 the legislation pertaining to children and families.
2. To enforce such rules and regulations as have been approved by the membership as necessary in furthering 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, Regional Vice President’s and all chairpersons of Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees. Spouses of the Directors cannot be members of the Board of Directors.
2. The Executive Committee, the Regional Vice President’s 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 Based 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. These members will act only as advisors.
6. Board members must be members 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 Based 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) FAST |
| 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 & Nominations.

Article VII – Officers

1. The officers of the Association shall be President, Executive Vice President 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 3 years from January 1st. The office of President and Treasurer shall be elected in odd numbered years and the office of Executive Vice President and 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 or more than 3 consecutive years, a maximum of 6 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.
5. The same person may not fill 2 offices for an entire term, only temporarily, till the next general meeting.

Article VII – Duties of Officers

All out going officers must forward all records and properties of the Association to the incoming officers on or before the date of the 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 term 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 impartiality 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 membership has disposed of the main motion.

Section II – Duties of the Executive Vice President:

1. To assume the duties of the 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 we are commonly assigned to the office of Executive Vice President.
5. Upon request to assist in the development and growth of local associations.
6. To act as a chairperson to any area caucus comprised of county/district/region chapter officers or their designee.
7. To help plan local state, and national meetings of the association

Section III – Duties of the Secretary:

1. Perform duties as provided by these Bylaws or as are commonly assigned to the office of the Secretary.
2. To record the minutes at all Association meetings, including Executive Board meetings and 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, Officers, Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees
 - F) Old Business
 - G) New Business
3. To distribute printed copies of the minutes of the previous meetings to the Board of Directors as directed by the Executive Board and to those who the President might designate. Such minutes shall comply with the Revised Edition of Robert's Rules of Order.
4. To maintain current, accurate copies of all organizational documents such as Bylaws, Rules of Order and Standing Rules.
5. To file reports, noting their dates of presentation and their disposition.
6. To maintain and call the roll.
7. Provide the Standing and Ad Hoc Committee Chairs with a list of all committee members.
8. Minutes will be completed within ten (10) working days of the meeting and will be available for inspection by all Board members.
9. To keep records of all newsletters published.
10. To keep record of receipts, tax letters and thank you notes sent out for donation and to record winners of special awards.
11. Keep a record of all correspondences sent and received.
12. 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.
13. Send a notice of meeting and the agenda to the members at least thirty (30) days prior to the general membership meeting.

14. Be responsible for maintaining, monitoring, and evaluating the Board Manual.
15. Maintain an updated email address list of all members in good standing when applicable.
16. Maintain an inventory control.

Section IV – 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 to be replenished as needed. An authorization for any purchase over the \$400 limit will require at least affirmative votes from Board members. This may be done electronically provided the Treasurer is in receipt of the email response of the Board members. The rule of authorization of spending over \$400 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 contact monies on or before the 9th day of each month. If the 9th 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 15th of each month a monthly financial report must be sent 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 have been 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 purpose 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 as defined by the Board of Directors.
2. Promote organization efforts of the Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association with their region
3. Upon request serve on regional DCF or Community Based Care Committees.
4. Upon request and along with the Vice-President assist in the development and growth of local associations.
5. Advocate for strengthening of child welfare system.
6. Upon request help organize events around (March) Advocacy Day – Tallahassee and Social Work Month locally; (April) Child Abuse Prevention-locally; (May) Foster Care Month – locally; (November) Adoption Month – locally; or other events as deemed necessary.
7. Serve as member of the Membership Committee.
8. Recruit members and assist membership co-chairs (Treasurer and appointed) in achieving state membership goals.
9. Maintain current knowledge of and promote state position/policies.
10. Prepare and submit quarterly reports to the Board of Directors.
11. 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 Associations 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 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 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 circumstance where confidential discussion is of the utmost necessity, as provided by the 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’ 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 to due to changing conditions, for efficient administration of this Association by the Board.

Article XIII – Voting Qualifications and Procedures

Section I – Qualifications:

1. A current Year Voter Registration Form must be submitted prior to August 1st before you can vote on any issues brought up before the Association.
2. One vote is allowed per member in good standing that has a current Voter Registration Form on file.

Section II – Procedures:

1. Voting may be by voice vote, show of hands, secret ballot, mailed ballot or electronic ballot.
2. A quorum is define 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 a 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 the 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 no spouse 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 a 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 who have submitted Voter Registration Forms prior to August 1st. 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 carry 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 envelope 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 whose actions and/or inactions 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 persons bringing the charges.
3. Upon receipt of such request the Board will convene within thirty (30) days to hold said meeting. The persons bringing the charges must be present before said meeting might commence. At the close of said meeting, the Board may take such actions, as it deems necessary, including formal removal from office.
4. If not such meeting is requested, the Board will convene within forty-five (45) day of the receipt of charges to consider the charges. The persons bringing the charges must be present before such meeting may commence. Upon close of the 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 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 person is notified they will be given a grace period, until the next quarterly meeting to perform. If no performance is made the Board will vote for the persons 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 Secretary 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 given to the President will be deemed to have abandoned the members' seat on the Board of Directors and will automatically recommended for removal from the Board.

Section VII – 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

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 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 organizations of similar intent and interest or to the Federal state or Local government for exclusive public purpose, as chosen by membership votes. Said organization will be exempt as an organization described in section 501 C (3) and 170 C (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 16, 2007 at the general membership meeting of the FSFAPA in Jacksonville, Florida

President _____ Melisa Page Bailie _____

Secretary _____ Rhonda Mansfield _____