Children's Home Society of North Carolina

FMLA Leave for Foster Placement in North Carolina

PURPOSE:

To inform foster parents in North Carolina about their job-protected leave options under federal FMLA and state policies when accepting a new foster placement.

Why it Matters

- **Prepare for placement**: You can take leave prior to a child's arrival, such as for court, home study, or transportation needs.
- **Bonding time:** Upon placement, you may take up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave to support adjustment and bonding.
- **Protect income and benefits:** Leave is unpaid, but your job and health coverage must be maintained.
- **Know your rights:** State employees may have additional paid leave benefits for foster care placement.

Core Principles

- **Eligibility**: Applies to covered employers (private or public) with at least 50 employees within 75 miles. You must have 12 months of service and at least 1,250 hours worked.
- **12-Week Limit**: Total FMLA leave within a 12-month period — including time before placement (prep) and after placement (bonding).
- **State Paid Leave** (for public employees):
  - Birth/placement of child: up to 8 weeks paid for birthing parents, 4 weeks for others.
- **Intermittent or reduced schedule leave**: Allowed if employer agrees—helpful for appointments, travel, or gradual transition.

Resources

To learn more about North Carolina's FMLA policy, visit:
NC OSHR: Family and Medical Leave Policy

For more foster parent resources, visit:

chsnc.org

What You Can Do

Understand Eligibility:
- Confirm your employment hours and employer type.

Give Notice:
- If placement is foreseeable, request FMLA leave at least 30 days in advance.

Submit Certification:
- Your employer may require documentation—be prompt to ensure protection.

Coordinate Timing:
- Allocate FMLA before placement (prep) and after placement (bonding). The combined total cannot exceed 12 weeks.

Explore Paid Options if You're a State Employee:
- Apply for NC Paid Parental Leave to supplement bonding time.