

# CARE COMMUNITY PROGRAM GUIDE

MEMBER GUIDE

**care communities**





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHY CARE COMMUNITIES MATTER \_\_\_\_\_ PAGE 1

CHILD WELFARE TERMS \_\_\_\_\_ PAGE 2

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF CARE COMMUNITIES \_\_\_\_\_ PAGE 3

THE CARE COMMUNITY STRUCTURE \_\_\_\_\_ PAGE 5

CARE TEAM MEMBER \_\_\_\_\_ PAGE 8

Care Team Organizational Chart  
Care Team Member - Your Strengths  
Foster Parent Wish List  
Care Plan  
Confidentiality Agreement  
Care Community Training  
Offering Help and Trauma Tips



## **WHY CARE COMMUNITIES MATTER**

Almost 40% of foster parents stop fostering within the first year and cite lack of support as one of the main reasons. The responsibilities of foster care are demanding, and providing specialized care can feel overwhelming - even for our highly skilled foster parents.

## **STRENGTHENING FAMILIES**

We know that children have better outcomes when they stay connected with their family of origin. Children experience separation from their families when they are removed due to neglect or abuse. Their parents may not have the skills, resources, or support necessary to be safe parents. Children are brought into temporary state custody to be cared for in licensed foster homes, while their parents are given the opportunity to make the changes needed to safely care for their children again.

## **THE ROLE OF FOSTER PARENTS**

Supporting the goal of reunification includes significant sacrifices of time and emotional energy for our foster families. In addition to all of the typical parenting responsibilities, foster parents take children to therapy, extra doctor visits, multiple weekly visits with the children's parents, attend court, meet with caseworkers, and participate in ongoing foster parent training. They often welcome children into their homes on short notice and navigate unknown timelines and outcomes. Although our foster parents have support from child welfare agencies, what they truly need is additional care on a more personal level.

## **HELPING THE HELPERS**

Foster parents are natural helpers, and are not likely to ask for help. You can help ease their load by providing ongoing and consistent support to one foster family as part of their Care Team.



## CHILD WELFARE TERMS

**FOSTER CARE:** When a child is legally taken into the temporary custody of the state. The goal of foster care is to provide immediate protection for a child while working with the family of the child to reunite the family. Foster care is considered only when a child cannot be kept safe in their own family.

**KINSHIP CARE:** When a child needs to be brought into foster care, the state will first seek to place the child with extended family. Some children placed with kin do not officially come into foster care. Kinship keeps many children out of foster care.

**DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES (DCFS):** DCFS is the child welfare agency in Utah. They are a part of the child welfare system. The system includes other agencies and entities that serve children and families in Utah.

**CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPS):** Part of DCFS that investigates child maltreatment referrals. CPS workers are generally only involved at the beginning of a case.

**CASEWORKER (CW):** Each child in foster care has a caseworker. Generally, these caseworkers are assigned to the children and the family. Their role is to provide support and services to reunify the family. While they can be a support to the foster family, that is not their primary role.

**GUARDIAN AD LITEM (GAL):** The attorney that represents the child's best interests in court.

**RESOURCE FAMILY CONSULTANT (RFC):** RFCs are assigned to the foster families. Their primary role is to provide support to the foster family that will assist them in meeting the child's needs.

**VISITS:** Typically, weekly, but can happen more often; visitation is to provide family-time for the child and their family. At the beginning of a case, these often occur at a DCFS office but may move "off-site" as the case comes closer to reunification.

**FOSTER TO ADOPT OR CONCURRENT PLANNING:** As permanency is the ultimate goal for each child, DCFS asks foster families to work toward reunification but also be willing to potentially adopt. While this importantly reduces moves for the child, foster families may struggle with keeping two apparently contradictory goals in their hearts.

**TRAUMA:** An event that threatens the well-being of an individual that overwhelms that person's capacity to cope. Traumatic events can be acute or chronic—and often both.

**TRAUMA-INFORMED:** You may also hear "trauma-responsive" or "trauma-sensitive" or other related terms. This is the shift in thinking from "What is wrong with you?" to "What has happened to you?"

**RESILIENCE:** Though asking "what happened to you?" is valuable, people are so much more than only what happened to them. Many factors play into resilience—but the one that shows up in all research is supportive relationships.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF CARE COMMUNITIES

A Care Community is a team of individuals who work together to build relationships that support the needs of foster families. This support gives them valuable time back in their lives to better care for the children in their home. The goal is to empower foster parents to continue providing care, which supports better outcomes for children in foster care.

## ACCEPTANCE

The needs of children in care and each foster family are unique. They need unconditional acceptance of the work they are doing to support reunification and meet the needs of children who have experienced trauma. Let the foster parent's needs guide your support.

## SAFETY

As you protect the privacy and confidentiality of the foster family and the children in their home, you will build a relationship of trust. Do not ask for children's phone numbers or contact information. Do not ask for specifics about the case, the children's parents and family of origin, or other sensitive information. As the foster family shares more about their lives with you, treat that information as confidential.

For many of us, receiving physical contact is a typical expression of affection. Children who have experienced trauma or neglect often struggle with accepting physical contact and will react accordingly. Do not initiate touch with the children in care or other children in the home, including hugs, pats on the arm and back, and holding hands. Ask permission from the parents and child for fist bumps and high fives. Being a safe adult in the lives of these children builds trust.



## VULNERABILITY

As we surround foster families with unconditional acceptance and emotional and physical safety for the children in their care, they are more likely to be vulnerable about their needs, and lasting friendships will be formed.

# CARE COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

## DIRECTOR OF CARE COMMUNITIES - TAMI CARSON



Work directly with Organization Leaders to implement the Care Communities program in your group.



Help plan an introductory event for your organization.



Provide training and mentoring for Organization Leaders, Care Team Leader(s), and Care Team Members.



Receive care record updates weekly and monthly from all program participants to address concerns, share successes, and report to First Lady Abby Cox's Show Up Team and Utah Foster Care.



Work with all participants to complete 3, 6, 9, and 12-month evaluations of the program.



Tami will be available for help and support via virtual means, text, email, and in-person meetings to answer questions, address concerns, and mentor Care Team Leader(s) weekly and for Care Team Members as needed.



Select the foster family for the Care Team and give them additional support as needed.

## ORGANIZATION LEADER



Identify an individual or couple from within your organization who will serve as the Care Community Team Leader(s).



Plan an introductory event hosted at your location.



Ensure your Care Team Leader(s) completes the "Welcome to the Care Community" training.



Sign the agreement between Utah Foster Care, the Show Up Committee, and your organization called a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU).



Review the Care Plan that your Care Team creates.



Check-in with your Care Team Leader(s) often to resolve concerns, provide support, and maintain confidentiality.



Work with your Care Team Leader(s) to replace members of the Care Team as needed.

# CARE COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

## CARE TEAM LEADER(S)



Use the Care Team organization chart and member tracking sheet to help you ensure each member of the Care Team is adequately trained and update Tami Carson to verify training status.



Build a written Care Plan with your team and the foster family. Share the plan with your Organization Leader.



Use the Care Plan to connect with the foster family and members of the Care Team throughout the week. Give support, share ideas, address concerns, provide encouragement, help build relationships, and gather details of the service provided.



Complete weekly care record updates using the online form. Include details about the service provided to the foster family, the number of people who served, and the total service hours. Include concerns and successes.



Continue to build and adjust the plan for serving the foster family. Attend additional training that matches your capacities. Identify members of the Care Team who can care for children more regularly. Connect them with Tami for additional background screening and training.



Check-in with your Organization Leader often to resolve concerns, provide updates, and maintain confidentiality.

## CARE TEAM MEMBER



Evaluate your strengths, availability, and capacities with your Care Team Leader(s). This will help you identify ways you can serve.



Help build the Care Plan.



Use the Care Plan to connect with the foster family and other members of the Care Team throughout the week. Give support, share ideas, address concerns, provide encouragement, and help build relationships.











Continue to help build and adjust the plan for serving the foster family. Consult with your Care Team Leader(s) about additional training that matches your capacities.

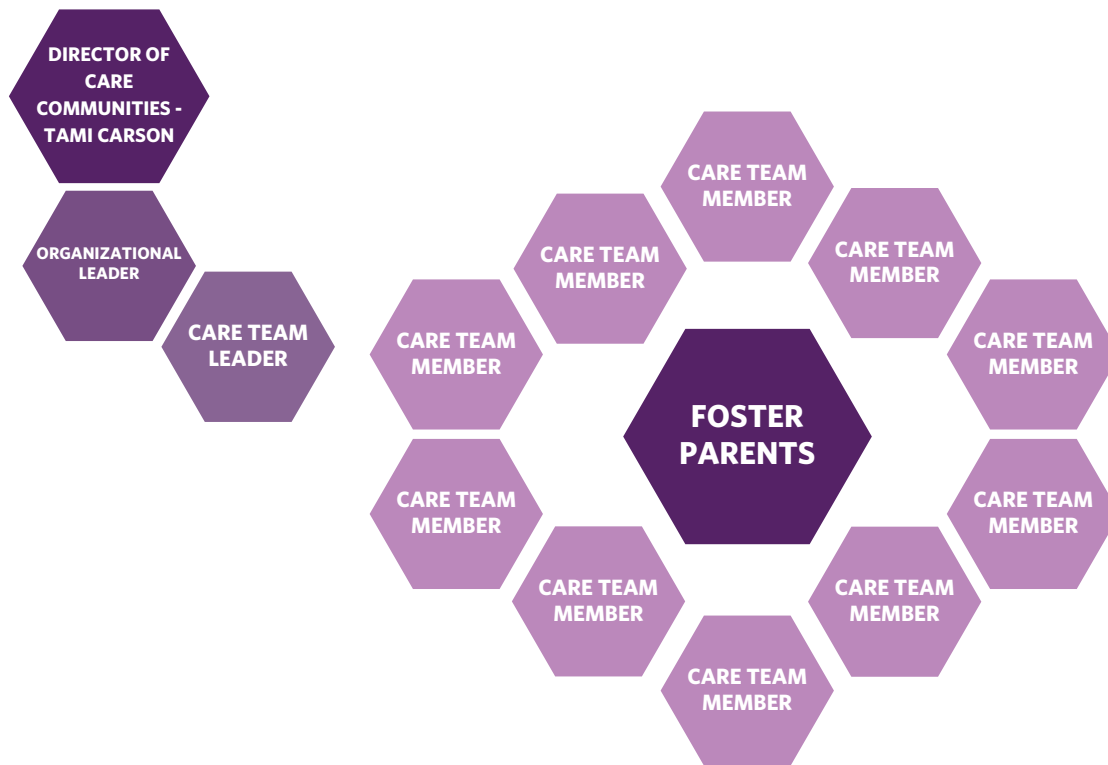


Check-in with your Care Team Leader(s) often to resolve concerns, provide updates, and maintain confidentiality.

# CARE COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

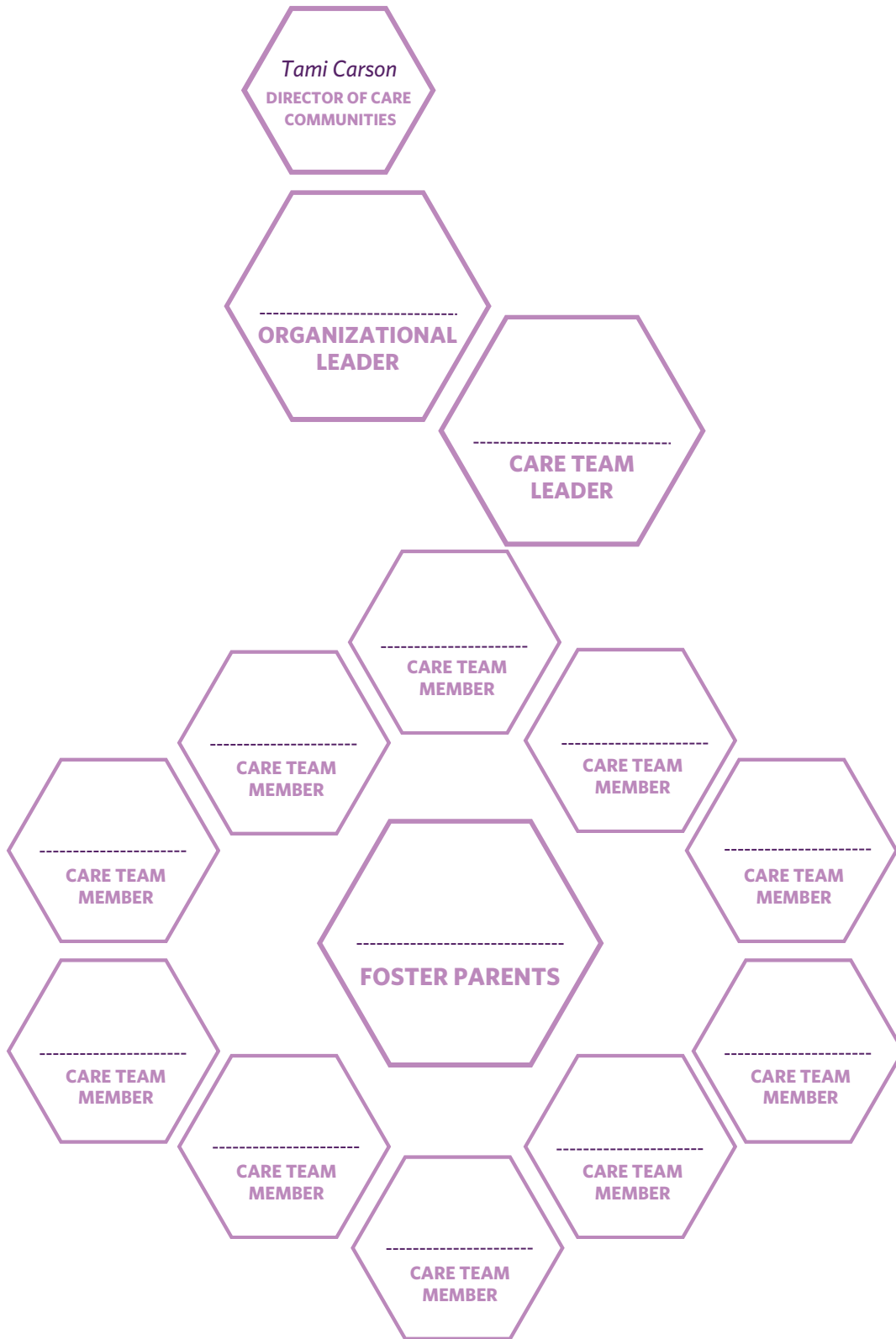
## ALL PARTICIPANTS

-  Review the Program Guide.
-  Participate in the training - "Welcome to the Care Community".
-  Attend the in-person training - "Building Your Care Community".
-  Work with the Care Team to maintain confidentiality, address concerns, and share successes.
-  Help plan and participate in the Care Plan.
-  Complete regular Care Record updates using the online form - weekly for the Care Team Leader(s) and monthly for all participants.
-  Complete a background screening with Utah Foster Care as needed.
-  Complete 3, 6, 9, and 12-month evaluations provided by Utah Foster Care.





# YOUR CARE COMMUNITY





# CARE TEAM MEMBER - YOUR STRENGTHS

Everyone has skills, talents, and resources they can share with a foster family. Each team member is available at different times and days during the week. As you prepare to be a part of the Care Team, use these questions to determine your capacity and bandwidth to help and share this with your Care Team Leader.

Circle which days of the week and times are you most available:

MONDAY	AM	PM	AFTERNOON	Middle of the night (for urgent needs)
TUESDAY	AM	PM	AFTERNOON	Middle of the night (for urgent needs)
WEDNESDAY	AM	PM	AFTERNOON	Middle of the night (for urgent needs)
THURSDAY	AM	PM	AFTERNOON	Middle of the night (for urgent needs)
FRIDAY	AM	PM	AFTERNOON	Middle of the night (for urgent needs)
SATURDAY	AM	PM	AFTERNOON	Middle of the night (for urgent needs)
SUNDAY	AM	PM	AFTERNOON	Middle of the night (for urgent needs)

Circle which communication methods you prefer the Care Team Leader and foster parent use to contact you.

PHONE CALL      TEXT      EMAIL

Phone number:

Email:

Circle items in the list below that match your strengths and resources. Add to the list additional ways you can contribute.

### PHYSICAL

- Yard work
- Household repair
- Mechanical help
- Service project planning
- Sports
- Outdoor activities

---



---



---

### PRACTICAL

- Grocery shopping
- Errand running
- Homework help
- Laundry/household help
- Computer/tech skills
- Organizing
- Meal/snack making
- Party/event planning

---

### EMOTIONAL/MENTAL

- Notes of encouragement
- Mentoring: school, career, etc...
- Tutoring: math, history, art, science, etc...
- Teach a skill
- Attend activities and events to offer support

---



---



---

# FOSTER PARENT WISH LIST

*These ideas are a place to start - Circle the ones you like. Add more ideas as you build your Care Plan.*

## WHEN A NEW PLACEMENT ARRIVES:

- Day and nighttime errands help
- Arrange meal drop-off for the first week
- Pick up donations from Utah Foster Care: socks, underwear, backpack, etc...
- Grocery delivery or pickup
- Parent helper for a few days

---

---

---

## VISITATION DAYS:

- Drop off a meal
- Texts to check in on the family
- Help with other children in the home
- Treat drop off
- Become a Family Time Supervisor

---

---

---

## THERAPY OR APPOINTMENT DAYS:

- Help with other children in the home
- Drop off a meal
- Help with errands
- Texts to check-in
- Put together activities or games for the car and waiting rooms

---

---

---

## COURT DAYS:

- Attend court with the family
- Care for other children in the home
- Drop off a meal or the children's favorite dessert
- Texts or porch visit to check-in

---

---

---

## REUNIFICATION TIME:

- Gift cards to movies or other family activity
- Drop off the family's favorite meal
- Texts or porch visits to check in on the family
- Drop off the family's favorite meal
- Help put notes & pictures together for the child to take home

---

---

---

## BRAINSTORM ADDITIONAL PHYSICAL, PRACTICAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT IDEAS:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



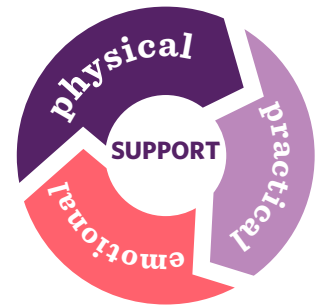
# CARE PLAN

Help foster parents fill this space with things they do each week. Include visitation, appointments, therapy, meetings with DCFS, household projects, etc. Include monthly and weekly items.

*Tip: use the "other" column for items that may not have a specific day.*

MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.	SUN.	OTHER

- Circle items the care team members can do in the next month.
- Brainstorm additional items.
- Use the space below to assign items to members of the care team.
- Care Team Leaders will follow up with each member of the care team.



**ACTION**

**CARE TEAM MEMBER**

**RETURN & REPORT BY**

-----

-----

-----

-----

-----

-----

-----

-----

-----

-----

-----

-----

-----

-----

-----

-----

-----

-----

## CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Confidentiality Policy and Agreement for Care Community Leaders and Team Members also referred to as Volunteers in this document.

Respecting the privacy of our clients, donors, members, staff, and volunteers and of Utah Foster Care itself is a basic value of Utah Foster Care (UFC). Volunteers will strive to maintain the confidentiality of the families and children being served. Information regarding the clients, including verbal and written information, as well as images and digital information (such as digital photographs and video clips, etc), is confidential and will be safeguarded. This includes the release of information in social networking mediums and other public forums.

Confidentiality is essential when working with sensitive information in the form of verbal communication, written communication, and the general use of data. This adherence to confidentiality protects against identification, exploitation, or embarrassment that could result from the release of information which would identify individuals or families as having applied for or having received services or assistance from the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) or UFC. Unauthorized release of information could have a detrimental effect on the relationship with the child and/or family.

Some of the information that volunteers and others have access to will be classified as confidential, private, controlled, or protected. Such information must be handled according to the laws governing its classification. Confidential information includes but is not limited to: identifying factors of the foster family, children in the home, DCFS Staff, and biological family members of the children in care; and information regarding the status of the children's case and/or of biological family members. It is the policy of UFC that such information must be kept confidential both during and after volunteer service. Access and use is limited to purposes that are consistent with the purposes of the Care Communities Program as outlined in the program guide and are subject to changes and updates. Volunteers are expected to return privileged or confidential materials at the expiration of service.

Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or privileged information is a serious violation of this policy and will subject the person(s) who made the unauthorized disclosure to appropriate discipline, including removal from the program.

I have read the above confidentiality policy of UFC and agree to abide by the following during and after my time as a member of the Care Communities Program:

- To prevent invasion of privacy, I agree not to disclose the names, ages, genders, and identifying information of the foster family and child(ren) in their home, outside of communication with the Care Community Leader(s) and Team Members, regardless of how such information was obtained, if related information would allow others to identify the child(ren) in care and/or their biological family.
- The invasion of privacy does not apply to giving identifying information about the child(ren) and family to UFC, DCFS staff assigned to the child(ren) and their family, and associated social service professionals via written and verbal communication with UFC.
- I understand my role as a Care Community Team Leader or Member is to uphold and maintain the confidentiality of the foster family I serve along with the child(ren) placed in the home, and their biological family, only reporting to the Director of Care Communities, my Care Community Leader(s), and any assigned UFC Staff. Written communication and Care Records regarding the foster family and child(ren) in the home, sent to UFC, will be shared with DCFS staff assigned to the child(ren) and the family, including: DCFS supervisors, RFC, KFC, and caseworkers.
- I understand that all Care Records I complete via the UFC website are viewed and documented by the Director of Care Communities and can be made available to UFC and DCFS staff assigned to the family and child(ren) as deemed necessary. All information in electronic format sent to UFC shall be stored and processed in such a way that it adheres to UFC policies regarding said information.
- I agree to handle any information with which I come in contact according to the law governing its classification. I agree not to share any personal identifying information in social networking mediums or public forms. Additionally, this agreement extends to any written communication done independently of UFC, including personal email, text, and other messaging platforms.
- As an Organization Leader, I have completed the Memorandum of Understanding (form CC001) and understand my responsibilities.
- I have a right to access technical assistance, training, and mentoring regarding this confidentiality agreement, and that Utah Foster Care will maintain ongoing communication, instruction, and support regarding my role. Additionally, if I am unsure how to handle any information with which I come into contact, I will consult with the Director of Care Communities before I disclose any information and will handle the record or information according to UFC instructions.

I have read Utah Foster Care’s policy on confidentiality and expectations presented above. I agree to abide by the requirements of the policy and inform the Director of Care Communities immediately if I believe any violation of the policy (unintentional or otherwise) has occurred. I understand that violation of this policy will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of my service with Utah Foster Care and the Care Communities Program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
First and Last Name of Care Community Leader or Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Care Communities Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## CARE COMMUNITY TRAINING

### **TRAINING #1 - WELCOME TO THE CARE COMMUNITY**

Organization leader and Care Team Leader(s) attend this virtual one-hour training hosted by Utah Foster Care. All other Care Team Members watch the recorded version prior to training #2.

This training includes an introduction to the Care Communities Program, terms and principles of child welfare, and an introduction to the ways trauma impacts children in care.

### **TRAINING #2 - BUILDING YOUR CARE COMMUNITY**

The Care Team Leader(s), all Care Team Members, and the foster parents in each Care Community attend this live, in-person training. During this time together participants will learn more about the Care Community model, how caring relationships positively impact children in care and their foster family, the basics of child welfare safety standards, and spend time getting to know each other. The Care Team will gain a better understanding of the needs of the foster family and leave with a plan for serving them. This training is hosted by Utah Foster Care and includes food, fun, and all of the program materials.

### **TRAINING #3 - FAMILY TIME SUPERVISOR**

This optional training is for Care Team Members who want to provide supervision between children in care and their parents. These visits require supervision, and Family Time Supervisors help make this possible by allowing caseworkers and foster parents to focus on other responsibilities. This training is hosted by Utah Foster Care, in partnership with the Division of Child and Family Services. Requirements include: a time commitment of 1-2 hours per week for 6-12 months and an additional background screening.

### **TRAINING #4 - CARING FOR CHILDREN WITH TRAUMA**

Available in 2024. This training prepares Care Team Members to care for children overnight.

*More information will be available in 2024!*



**care communities**



**SHOW UP for  
FOSTER  
CARE**



**Utah  
FosterCare**