

LA WEEKEND MIRACLES HOST FAMILY AGREEMENT

Dear Host Family:

Thank you for your interest in becoming a host family for the Kidsave Los Angeles Weekend Miracles. As a host family, you will serve as a responsible parent(s) for the Kidsave Los Angeles child during weekend and school holiday visits, providing encouragement and support, advocacy, transportation, and opportunities to participate in planned program activities. You will allow the child to spend designated weekends and school holidays in your home, and maintain the child's routine (i.e. homework, extra-curricular activities).

Kidsave

Los Angeles' mission is to give every child in our community the opportunity to grow up in a permanent, loving family or develop a long term, stable adult mentoring relationship. Weekend Miracles provides children with a unique experience to share weekends and school holidays with a local host family who will partner with the child to introduce him/her to the network of people known by the host family in order to help find him/her a permanent, adoptive home. The goal of the weekend visits is to find a permanent home by creating connections between each child and a family in the community.

In an effort to outline what is expected of you as a host family, the following information lists the host family roles and responsibilities and those of Kidsave Los Angeles Weekend Miracles program. We understand that there are many steps to complete before hosting a child. This is because each child is a dependent of the court, and the State of California requires that specific standards be met for a child to stay in a host family's home. Please do not feel overwhelmed. **Kidsave will help you through this process!** Please review it carefully before signing it and returning it to Kidsave. If you have any questions regarding the content, direct your questions to Lauren Reicher Gordon, (310) 642-7283, lauren@kidsave.org.

HOST FAMILY'S ROLE

Preparation

The role of the Kidsave host family is extremely important to the program. The requirements below will help host families prepare for a successful hosting experience.

- Attend Kidsave's Los Angeles Weekend Miracles Orientation.
- Training: Attend 12 hours of Kidsave Los Angeles Weekend Miracles Host Training and a 2 hour Program & Advocacy Training. If you would like to adopt, attend 33 hour PS-MAPP or PRIDE training through your foster-adopt family agency or the Department of Children & Family Services. Submit a copy of your MAPP/PRIDE certification and attend Kidsave's 2 hour program & advocacy training.
- Complete live scan for anyone 18 years and older living in your household. Kidsave will submit a live scan request on your behalf after a Kidsave Weekend Miracles Host application is filled out.
- If you want to adopt, obtain your foster-adopt license by contacting a foster & adoption agency or call the LA County DCFS foster care & adoptions assistance hotline at 1-800-697-4444.
- If you have a current foster-adopt license, you will need to provide a copy of your current license/certification.

- Meet with the Department of Children and Family Services Kidsave CSW to complete a “home visit report”. This face-to-face home visit will address your suitability to host and answer any individual questions or concerns you have about being a host parent.
- Review recommended readings and thoroughly read through your Host Family Handbook and Agreement and Profile of the Older Foster Care Child.
- Ensure that all required documents are signed and submitted to Kidsave.
- Prepare and educate immediate and extended family and about your host child(ren).

Host Family Responsibilities

- **Host the child** for a minimum of two weekends or days a month, for a minimum of one year.
- **Advocate** - The most vital responsibility you have as a host family is your commitment to advocate for your host child with the goal of finding a permanent adoptive family. Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services social workers determine the appropriateness of potential adoptive families for the child; but your contacts, knowledge, and assistance is very valuable and critical to your host child finding a family. Your role is to help recruit families that seem to have a real interest in adopting the child, or helping in other ways. As you find people who wish to engage with the program, you should direct them to the Kidsave staff.

You are required to organize and support activities that will give your host child opportunities to meet potential families. Some recruitment activities can include the following:

- Include the child in your daily family routine and activities
 - Attend block parties
 - Picnics
 - Sporting activities
 - Take the child to your place of faith
 - Provide LA Weekend Miracles information to your place of faith for news bulletins
 - Invite a group of people to your home for a gathering
 - Tell your friends about the child
 - Social or civic organization newsletters
 - Job newsletter or e-mail link
 - E-mails to family, friends, coworkers, etc.
 - Participate in speaking engagements about the Weekend Miracles program
 - Arrange play dates with friends and relatives
 - Plan volunteer activities for the children (helping elderly, raking leaves, etc.)
- Provide a safe, nurturing and stable home experience for your host child.
 - Attend scheduled Kidsave Los Angeles events.
 - Transport your host child to activities arranged by Kidsave Los Angeles
 - Interact with the child’s foster family to make arrangements for visits. Pick up and return your host child for visits. Ensure that your host child(ren) returns to the foster placement as scheduled.
 - Maintain confidentiality about the child’s sensitive information.
 - Maintain regular contact with the Kidsave. Alert them regarding any problems, concerns or needs with your host child.
 - Familiarize yourself with the medical procedures if your host child is in need of medical assistance.
 - Understand that corporal punishment is prohibited. Use of corporal punishment with your host child will lead to termination from the program.

- Attend support groups for host families.
- Do not contact school, take out of state, or start overnight visits without consulting the appropriate professionals.
- Complete on-line Weekly Reports on your host child/ren after each host visit.
- Agree to allow Kidsave to share information regarding your host child to professionals, volunteers and interested families that can play a part in advocating for them with the goal of finding a permanent, adoptive family.
- Be patient with your host child and understand the magnitude of the adjustment for him/her.
- If, for some reason, you are unable to have your host child visit on an arranged weekend, immediately notify by phone the child's current care giver, Kidsave CSW, and Kidsave staff.
- Advise Kidsave if you are considering the adoption of your host child
- Kidsave has a written procedure for employees, volunteers and hosts to report disclosure, suspicions or allegations of child abuse. For Weekend Miracles, the procedure is to immediately call LA County's Child Protection Hotline at **(800) 540-4000** to report the disclosure, allegation or suspicion and to inform the Director of Weekend Miracles, who advises the responsible DCFS authority.

Financial Responsibilities

You

will be responsible for:

- Providing food and care during the visits. This includes transportation and activities.
- Cost of certification of CPR and First Aid.
- Cost of TB test for every household member ages 3 years and older.
- Photo memory book of weekend visits for host child.

Host families are encouraged to keep in mind that children must transition back into their foster homes after the visits. Lavish gifts will cause problems. Host families may buy things for the child, but need to do so modestly, or in collaboration with the Kidsave staff and foster family.

Paperwork Responsibilities

- Complete Host Family Application and submit it to Kidsave. Application can be mailed to the Kidsave LA office (100 Corporate Pointe Suite 380 Culver City, CA 90230)
 - Review, sign and submit Host Family Agreement.
 - Submit Authorization for Release and Reciprocal Exchange of Information to Kidsave.
 - Review Client's Rights document and sign and submit signature page to Kidsave.
 - Review Release Form to Use Likeness, sign, and submit to Kidsave.
 - Review Confidentiality Agreement, sign, and submit to Kidsave.
 - Review Vehicle Agreement, sign, and submit to Kidsave.
- Provide proof of automobile insurance, car registration, and driver's license
- Submit TB test results (must be less than 2 years old) and CPR/First Aid certifications (must be less than 2 years old)
- Complete on-line Weekly Reports on your host child(ren) of each host visit.

KIDSAVE and DCFS WEEKEND MIRACLES ROLES

Kidsave:

- Identifies host families and volunteers that have the potential to be successful in the Weekend Miracles program.
- Coordinates monthly events for children, host families, and prospective adoptive parents to ensure permanency planning and adoption for children without families in our community.
- Introduces children who don't have identified families to families who are interested in either adopting them or helping them find adoptive families. Link families interested in adoption with children who need families.
- Recruits, guides, supports and motivates community and volunteers
- Provides and/or oversee host families' education, training, preparation and orientation for the Weekend Miracles program to help prepare host families for the experience.
- Facilitates initial contact and introductory meeting between the host family, foster family and child.
- Provides host families with ideas and for recruitment of potential adoptive families.
- Provides a Host Family Handbook designed to help prepare host families for the hosting experience.
- Provides Welcome Orientation meeting for participating children.
- Oversees the facilitation of support groups for children and host families.
- Builds partnerships with civic, social, fraternal, and faith-based organizations
- Financial support of the program through fundraising activities.
- Contact host families on a regular basis to provide assistance introducing host children to potential adoptive families

DCFS:

- Identifies children who have the potential to be successful in the Weekend Miracles program.
- Provide Live-Scan and child abuse clearance service.
- Approves family for hosting.
- Provides relevant information about the child to the host family.
- Provides case management services for the child.
- Has monthly contact with the child.
- Prepares the child for hosting experience.
- Assures that each child participating in the Weekend Miracles program is available for adoption.
- Prepares the child for adoption when applicable.
- Completes an Adoption Home study when applicable.

Kidsave and DCFS:

- Advocate for children who need families.
- Provide support and crisis intervention to all Kidsave children and host families
- Commit to program improvement in response to feedback and input from host families and program participants
- Publicize the need for adoptive families
- Provide assistance and support to families who are interested in adoption.

Kidsave Los Angeles children may present with some of the following behaviors, including, but not limited to:

- Learning disabilities
- Developmental delays
- Delayed/retarded growth and development
- History of trauma, loss, physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect and abandonment
- Neurological impairments
- Sensory integration problems
- Speech and language delays
- Emotional and behavioral problems
- Psychiatric history
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) or Fetal Alcohol Effects (FAE)
- Nutritional deficits
- Attachment problems
- Undetected health concerns
- Inadequate medical and dental care

Although DCFS identifies and screens children likely to succeed in the Weekend Miracles program, it is impossible to predict how they will transition to a host family setting. These are older children with life experiences that have affected them.

We cannot guarantee that the weekend hosting experience will be without complications. Kidsave Los Angeles Weekend Miracles staff and The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services staff will work with host families and assist them with the hosting experience. For families interested in adopting their host child, they should discuss this with the Kidsave staff.