



## C.A.R.E.S.

### Becoming a Church that C.A.R.E.S. for Resource Families

Resource Family - Foster, Kinship and Adoptive Families

#### C – Commits

**A church that C.A.R.E.S. welcomes resource families and the children they care for by being intentional in how they minister to them and their specific needs.**

What this looks like:

- Identifying your church as a church that C.A.R.E.S. by memorializing the commitment with your congregation and being intentional in emphasizing the church's responsibility to care for children in need by serving the resource family. (James 1:27)
  - Signing and presenting a "Certificate of Commitment."  
(Document will be provided by Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children Foster Care Ministries.)
  - Establishing a C.A.R.E.S. Ministry.
  - Raising awareness for ministry opportunities and impact via sermons, studies, speakers, testimonies, videos, etc.
  - Celebrating national awareness day/month(s) such as:
    - January – Sanctity of Human Life Sunday
    - March – Social Worker Appreciation Month
    - April – Child Abuse Prevention Month
    - May – National Foster Care Month
    - June – National Reunification Month
    - September – National Kinship Month, National Grandparent's Day
    - November – National Adoption Month, Pure Religion Sunday
- Providing trauma informed training for church staff and volunteers as described in the "Equipping" section below.
- Per your commitment, the church will be listed on the OBHC website designating you as a church that C.A.R.E.S.



## A – Appreciates

**A church that C.A.R.E.S. demonstrates appreciation to resource families, child welfare workers and agency staff for the hard work they do in caring for the children and families of Oklahoma.**

What this looks like:

- The church will host and/or sponsor events or activities of appreciation.  
*(OBHC will assist with spreading the news of such events through our Oklahoma Department of Human Services and local/statewide agency contacts, as well as listing church events in our online calendar.)*
  - Examples include but are not limited to:
    - National awareness appreciation dinners.
    - Resource parents' day out.
    - Letters of appreciation.
    - Child welfare luncheons.
- The church will celebrate special events in the life of children under the care of resource parents.

## R – Recruits and Retains

**A church that C.A.R.E.S. actively engages in resource parent recruitment and implements activities and service opportunities designed to retain resource parents as they continue to minister and care for children.**

What this looks like:

- The church will host, sponsor or support recruitment and retention events or activities.
  - Examples include but are not limited to:
    - Inviting resource care agencies to participate in church events.
    - Implementing small/support groups for resource parents.
    - Facilitating Q & A sessions with foster care professionals.
    - Extending access to the church's existing community assistance programs such as food pantries, community closets, recreation centers, etc.
    - Supporting regional or statewide C.A.R.E.S. CONFERENCE.



- The church will constantly raise awareness of the need for safe, loving and nurturing homes for children.
  - OBHC can provide the following resources to facilitate the church's engagement:
    - Providing Statistical real-time data such as the number of existing homes in the community and children placed outside their county of origin, etc.
    - Movie screenings.
    - Discussion materials and facilitators.

## E – Equips

**A church that C.A.R.E.S. equips resource families and those who serve them through specialized training opportunities. OBHC will work with the church to provide the highest quality training for families and staff.**

What this looks like:

- The church will host or support training events for church staff/volunteers, resource families, child welfare staff, community partners, or resource family care agencies.
- OBHC, in partnership with FaithBridgeU, can provide specialized online training at no cost for church staff and resource parents who are being served through the C.A.R.E.S. Ministry.
  - In person training can be provided across the state in partnership with local agencies, organizations and licensed trainers.
- The church and OBHC will stay apprised of training opportunities presented through Oklahoma Human Services and other community partners that are pertinent to the role of foster parents and/or church staff and volunteers.

## S – Surrounds

**A church that C.A.R.E.S. surrounds resource families by showing and sharing the love of Christ through practical, consistent support and selfless acts of service and hospitality through the W.R.A.P. model (Words of Encouragement, Relief Care, Acts of Service, Prayer).**



- **W**ords of Encouragement – being intentional in giving written and verbal encouragement on a weekly and as-needed basis.
  - Monthly thank-you cards.
  - Phone calls and texts.
  - Words of encouragement from the pulpit.
- **R**elief Care – ministering to resource families by providing short-term caregiving to their children and opportunities of self-care to resource parents.
  - Parents' days out.
  - Informal caregiving (seven days or less).
  - Respite care (long-term care in case of emergencies).
  - Self-care breaks.
- **A**cts of Service – showing and sharing the love of Jesus through consistent, practical support.
  - Providing meals – regularly scheduled or as needed.
  - Facilitating services and goods – clothing, food, diapers, or other needed items.
  - Assisting with laundry, lawn mowing, snow shoveling, minor repairs, grocery runs, etc.
  - Responding to Care Portal requests.
  - Providing transportation – assisting with visitations, reunifications or appointments.
- **P**ray – praying without ceasing for the children from hard places, resource families and child welfare and agency staff.
  - Dedicatory prayers.
  - Develop or enhance a church-wide prayer sheet where resource families are included and prayed for.
  - Pray for the needs of resource parents, children in their care and their family of origin.
  - Pray that those served through the C.A.R.E.S. Ministry will be led to a life changing relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

For more information about starting a C.A.R.E.S. Ministry at your church, or for information on FaithBridgeU or any of the other services and support we offer, please contact us.

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