



Program Manual



CONNECTING **FAMILIES** 2019-2020



embrella[™]
Embracing & Empowering Families

Mission Statement

embrella is a New Jersey nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. Our mission is to provide advocacy and enriching programs and services to empower families and youth to thrive.

Children are placed in care because they cannot live with their birth parents due to neglect, abuse, abandonment, homelessness, parental illness or incarceration. embrella helps to bridge the gap between what the government can provide and what children in foster care actually need.

Vision Statement

Our vision is a future where all youth and families thrive in safe, stable and nurturing homes.

Our Standard

embrella's dedicated volunteers and professional staff work relentlessly as frontline advocates to serve foster, adoptive and kinship families in an objective and empathetic manner. We strive for excellence and we build trusting relationships with all those we serve.



Welcome to **embrella**'s Connecting Families Program

embrella welcomes all volunteers. To assist **embrella**'s Volunteer Chairs in learning about the agency, and their specific volunteer responsibilities, **embrella** has developed this Manual which is intended to provide Volunteer Chairs with a solid foundation regarding **embrella**'s mission, goals, program responsibilities and procedures, and general guidelines as related to the volunteer experience.

embrella requires that all Volunteer Chairs become familiar with the information presented. As a volunteer of **embrella**, you are expected to follow the guidelines and requirements provided here.

Thank you for offering your time and services to help **embrella** meet its mission to provide advocacy and enriching programs and services to empower families and youth to thrive, as well as help **embrella** meet its commitment to providing a safe and enjoyable environment for employees, volunteers and the families we serve. Your volunteer commitment is greatly appreciated!

Questions about this manual should be directed to the Director of Support Services or the Support Services Manager.



Agency Overview

History

embrella was founded by two resource families, Bernie and Sue Dondiego of Middlesex county and Hattie Talley of Burlington County, in 1972, and incorporated in 1974 when we received a 501(C)3 designation making us officially a non-profit organization. embrella's original name was NJ Foster Parent Association; however, we changed to Foster and Adoptive Family Services (FAFS) in 2000 to better reflect our mission, and changed again to embrella in 2019 to better position us for growth in our future.

embrella is currently governed by a volunteer Board of Directors composed of foster and adoptive families and others who are concerned about the welfare of our children. Presently, embrella is staffed with over thirty-five employees and over thirty volunteers who are dedicated to our organization and mission.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) has been contracting with embrella since our inception to provide support services and training to resource parents. Our contract is renewed annually and has received many expansions over the years.

Programs

Support Services

- ***Information Line***

Our Information Line serves as the initial point of contact for foster, adoptive and kinship parents and other individuals seeking information and/or assistance in four very important areas.

1. Completing an inquiry to become a foster, adoptive or kinship parent as well as explaining the licensure process
2. Providing basic information on Division of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P) policies and procedures as well as the Manual of Requirements for Resource Parents
3. Providing information on community resources
4. Referring to Family Advocates or other agencies when appropriate



- **Family Advocates**

Family Advocates assist resource families throughout New Jersey with a variety of problems that range from lack of policy information to IAIU investigations. They can provide basic assistance by answering questions or providing referrals. They also provide more in-depth individualized support and advocacy services specific to the issues faced by the resource parent. A main function of the Family Advocates is to mediate concerns with CP&P and the Office of Licensing. Volunteer Chairs should always refer parents or families that are in needs of such services to a Family Advocate.

- **Volunteer Peer-to-Peer Programs**

- ✓ **Connecting Families Program** is led by a Volunteer Chair who plans and facilitates recreational activities where resource, kinship and adoptive families can come together to share parenting tips, encourage one another and take part in an enjoyable experience.
- ✓ **Heart to Heart Mentoring Program** connects experienced resource parents with new and existing resource parents in need of extra support and guidance. Mentors are paired with mentees to share their personal experiences and provide a listening ear and encouragement.

Training

embrella is the largest provider of in-service training to licensed resource parents in New Jersey. All training is free to open licensed resource families. There are over 100 course topics that are available to licensed resource parents to assist them with the various challenges and issues they may face when caring for New Jersey's most vulnerable children.

Training is currently offered through several modalities:

- **Home Correspondence Courses** – a paper copy of the course is mailed to the resource parents to read on their own. All courses have a test that must be completed after reading the course and sent back to embrella. A score of 100% is required on the test to receive credit for the training.
- **E-learning** – online courses that resource parents can access from their computer at their leisure.
- **Webinars** – live presentations that take place via the web. Resource parents must register in advance to receive a link to access the webinar.
- **Community Based Training**– live workshops that take place in the community.



Privately Funded Grants and Scholarships

embrella manages numerous privately funded programs that directly impact the lives of children in foster care including:

- **Fostering Wishes for Children** – grants wishes up to \$100 per year for the little extras in life, such as class trips and prom, that the State and resource parents may be unable to provide due to financial constraints.
- **Dreamers and Believers** – allows children in foster care, adopted from foster care or in kinship care (up to age 21) to pursue a dream based on exceptional skill, ability or interest. Dreamers and Believers grants offer up to \$600 per child for enrichment activities.
- **We Heart Birthdays** – provides a birthday gift to children in foster care
- **Camp Scholarships** - provide children in foster care with the opportunity to attend a week of overnight camp where they can flourish and build self-confidence while having fun.
- **Private Scholarship & Grant Program** – provides young men and women with the opportunity to pursue their educational and vocational goals, as well as support their independent living efforts.

NJ Foster Care Scholars Program

This program is funded by the federal and state governments to assist youth aging out of foster care, and those adopted after the age of 12, with financial assistance to attend a post-secondary educational institution. Several hundred students are currently enrolled.

embrella also offers community workshops to youth eligible for the NJFC Scholars Program to assist in completing their FAFSA and NJFC Scholars applications.

Pathways to Academic and Career Exploration to Success (PACES)

The Pathways to Academic and Career Exploration to Success (PACES) program serves New Jersey Foster Care (NJFC) Scholar eligible adolescents between the ages of 16-21 as they transition out of high school in the following counties: Hunterdon, Middlesex, Somerset, Mercer, Monmouth and Ocean. This program focuses on adolescents' educational and



employment development, as coaches assist each adolescent in decision-making processes, soft skill development and direct assistance during the college application and job application process.

This program also provides: direct access in finding scholarships and understanding financial aid, support in completing the FAFSA, postsecondary applications and job applications, education and career planning for high school students and support to current adolescents seeking postsecondary education.

Website and Social Media

embrella maintains a highly informative website www.embrella.org with tons of relevant information and the latest news of interest to the resource parent community. Social media is used to promote our organization, share news and information and work to change the public's perception of foster care for the better.

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/embrella.nj>

Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/embrella.nj/>

LinkedIn – <https://www.linkedin.com/company/embrella/>

Pinterest - <https://www.pinterest.com/embrellanj/>

Twitter - https://twitter.com/embrella_nj

Vimeo - <https://vimeo.com/embrella>

YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQLM2AZucPCrCp1xCVevrNw>

We publish a quarterly online newsletter, News from Our Heart, as well as a blog on topics relevant to the foster care community.

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Connecting Families Program Overview

embrella's Connecting Families Program provides an opportunity for licensed foster, adoptive, and kinship families to come together to support and encourage one another. Through this program, families not only create and build community connections, but also strengthen their education and experience as resource, adoptive and kinship families.

Services within this program are divided into two main areas:

Events:

Per embrella's contract with the Division of Child Protection & Permanency (CP&P), two events must take place each year in each designated area. With the support of embrella staff, Volunteer Chairs are responsible for planning and facilitating these recreational activities within their assigned area.

Meetings:

Although meetings are not required per embrella's CP&P contract, embrella does see value in providing opportunities for resource parents to connect with one another and receive in-person training. Family Advocates plan and facilitate meetings in each CP&P area designation throughout the year. Volunteer Chairs are welcome to participate and assist as needed.

As an embrella Volunteer Chair, your effort and initiative will help to provide families a chance to become stronger together, thus enhancing the family's ability to care and provide for our children.

The Support Services Department is here to assist you in your role as a Volunteer Chair.

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embrella Volunteer Chair Role & Responsibilities

As an embrella Volunteer Chair, you play an essential role in connecting families with one another and with our agency. You are a representative of embrella, and therefore, it is very important that you have a strong understanding of the programs and services that we offer, so that you can share this information with families in your area. Additionally, we work very closely with CP&P and expect all staff and volunteers to maintain a positive outlook of CP&P when communicating with the community.

Your basic responsibilities are to plan and facilitate two recreational events in your assigned area. One event will be a holiday party that must take place in December. The second event can take place any time during the remainder of the fiscal year. Additional events may also be planned, if funding is available.

Volunteer Chair Responsibilities

- Plan two events for assigned area, one being a holiday party in December
- Be knowledgeable and prepared to represent embrella within your area
- Submit all required paperwork to embrella in a timely manner
- Have monthly contact with Family Advocate
- Participate in mandatory trainings
- Promote embrella programs and services including the Friends of embrella donation program
- Serve as a friendly, supportive ear to all resource, adoptive and kinship families
- Refer those needing further assistance to their Family Advocate
- Maintain a positive outlook on CP&P when communicating with the community

Other Areas of Importance

- Strongly encouraged to attend Connecting Families meetings and embrella's Annual Recognition Brunch
- Conduct small scale fundraising on behalf of embrella

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Connecting with **embrella**

As a Volunteer Chair, you will work very closely with the Support Services Department. You may also work with other staff members from other Departments of **embrella** as well. Here is the breakdown of when you may work with certain staff members at **embrella** and the support /assistance they can provide.

SUPPORT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Director of Support Services (DSS)

- DSS oversees the Support Services Department and the Connecting Families Program. You can contact the DSS at any time to ask questions or report concerns.
- Sends out appointment announcements and conducts orientation with all volunteers.
- Sends regular email reminders such as program, manual and form updates.
- Works in conjunction with Director of Communications & Development to approve announcements included in FAFS monthly e-blast, use of agency logo for Connecting Families groups, as well as email communication between Volunteer Chair and families within their area.
- Works in conjunction with CEO to approve Connecting Families expenses.
- Works with Director of Finance to monitor Connecting Families area financial balances.

Contact the Director of the Support Services when you have collected donations and/ or fundraised money and other contributions. Cash donations received are to be reported on the ***Internal Deposit Form*** and mailed with all checks and money orders to the Director of Support Services.

You will also contact the Director of the Support Services if you need to request a reimbursement.

Further information regarding donations and reimbursements can be found in Section 6- Program Funding area of this manual.

Support Services Manager (SSM)

- SSM directly supervises the Family Advocates. You can contact the Support Services Manager at any time to ask questions or report concerns.
- SSM can assist with any of the duties listed above for DSS or below for Family Advocate.

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Family Advocate

- Family Advocates are a direct liaison to the Volunteer Chairs. You will have an assigned Family Advocate that will work closely with you providing guidance and support.
- Conducts regular monthly contact with assigned Volunteer Chairs to discuss event status and activities within their area.
- Available to provide support to Volunteer Chairs whenever needed.
- Assists Volunteer Chairs with completing needed paperwork for approvals and/or reporting.
- Can provide you with agency promotional items and additional forms when needed.

Office Coordinator

- Emails quarterly financial statements.
- Emails list of licensed resource parents and Friends of umbrella donors for your area as requested.
- Coordinates mailing of event invitations.

COMMUNICATION & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

- Prepares Connecting Families monthly e-blasts and event invitations.
- Reviews and approves all communications that are distributed publicly, including any emails or announcements sent by Volunteer Chair to community constituents.
- Assists community-based groups with soliciting donations.
- Maintains agency website and provides Chairs with the opportunity to list announcements.
- Manages statewide holiday toy drive and Annual Recognition Brunch.



Contact List

SUPPORT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Tara Rizzolo	Director of Support Services (DSS)	609.520.1500 Ext 309	trizzolo@fafsonline.org
Lenore Bonilla	Support Services Manager (SSM)	609.520.1500 Ext 332	lbbonilla@fafsonline.org
Courtney Brown Atlantic/Cape May, Burlington and Essex	Family Advocate	609.520.1500 Ext 303	cbrown@fafsonline.org
Jessica Hernandez Bergen/Hudson, Hunterdon/Warren, Morris/Sussex, Passaic and Somerset	Family Advocate Bilingual Statewide	609.520.1500 Ext 344	jhernandez@fafsonline.org
Salendria Mabrey Camden, Mercer, Middlesex and Union	Family Advocate	609.520.1500 Ext 305	smabrey@fafsonline.org
Nia Nanton Cumberland/Gloucester/Salem, Monmouth and Ocean	Family Advocate	609.520.1500 Ext 314	nnanton@fafsonline.org
Novelette Williams	Office Coordinator(OC)	609.520.1500 Ext 308	nwilliams@fafsonline.org

TRAINING DEPARTMENT

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Larkesa Carr	Training Information Associate (TIA)	609.520.1500 Ext 320	lcarr@fafsonline.org

COMMUNICATION & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Lynn Patmalnee	Director of Communication & Development (DCD)	609.520.1500 Ext 324	lpatmalnee@fafsonline.org

CONNECTING FAMILIES

Annual Timeline

This timeline provides a general overview of Volunteer Chair tasks and is meant to serve as a guide to assist you. This timeline is broken into monthly, quarterly and seasonal checklists.

Monthly Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer Chair and all Planning Committee Members submit <i>Volunteer Record of Hours</i> .
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monthly communication between Family Advocate and Volunteer Chair occurs. This may be via phone, email or face-to-face.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer Chairs notifies embrella of any special announcements to include in monthly e-blasts by 20 th business day of the month for the following month's e-blast.

Quarterly Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer Chair submits quarterly <i>Donor Report</i> .
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Seasonal Checklist- Fall/Winter

<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer Chair discusses Holiday Party plans with Family Advocate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer Chair submits their <i>Event Application</i> and includes contact information and invoices for vendors.
<input type="checkbox"/>	embrella contacts Volunteer Chairs regarding agency Holiday Toy Drive.
<input type="checkbox"/>	embrella prepares invitations for Holiday Party. All RSVP's are taken by embrella .
<input type="checkbox"/>	Holiday Parties take place in December.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer Chair submits <i>Event Follow-Up Report, Attendance/Registration Sheets</i> and <i>Volunteer Sign-in Sheets</i> .

Seasonal Checklist - Spring/Summer

<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer Chair discusses second event plans with Family Advocate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer Chair submits their <i>Event Application</i> and includes contact information and invoices for vendors.
<input type="checkbox"/>	embrella prepares invitations for event. All RSVP's are taken by embrella .
<input type="checkbox"/>	Following the event, Volunteer Chair submits <i>Event Follow-Up Report, Attendance/Registration Sheets</i> and <i>Volunteer Sign-in Sheets</i> .
<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer Chairs confirm their interest in continuing as a Volunteer Chair for upcoming fiscal year by completing <i>Reappointment Application</i> . embrella will announce reappointments prior to July 1 st .
<input type="checkbox"/>	Annual Recognition Brunch takes place in May. All Volunteer Chairs are encouraged to attend.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer Chair mandatory orientation meeting takes place. embrella provides updated Connecting Families Program Manual and annual forms to all Volunteer Chairs.



Forms and Reports

REPORTING

As a Volunteer Chair, you will be reporting back information that will assist in documenting and tracking the success of the Connecting Families program. Reporting is essential as it provides the necessary information to assist **embrella** in enhancing this program and maintaining our state contract funding.

embrella INTRANET - VOLUNTEER TOOLBOX

All Volunteer Chairs have access to a single location where you can obtain all forms and reports you will need throughout the year. We highly recommend that you bookmark and utilize this site so that everything is easily accessible to you. All of the forms noted below, as well as other useful information and resources (i.e. contact lists, copies of trainings, etc.) are available on the site.

The Volunteer Toolbox can be accessed by visiting:

<http://www.embrella.org/volunteers>

CONNECTING FAMILIES FORMS

Volunteer Paperwork

Volunteer Monthly Record of Hours (Section 3 – Volunteer Chair)

As a 501(c)3 organization, **embrella** is required by the IRS to track all volunteer hours. This form is completed on a monthly basis and notes dates and volunteer hours for all volunteer activities conducted for the month. This form must be submitted within 5 business days following the month's end.

Stationery Request Form (Section 3 – Volunteer Chair)

This form allows you to request Letterhead, Business Cards, NJ Sales Tax Exempt Form and Thank You note cards. Overview of when you will need to utilize these forms and their purpose is as follows:

- Agency letterhead is available upon request for the purpose of soliciting non-cash donations valued at less than \$250.
- Business cards are available upon request for the purpose of sharing with families, potential donors or anyone interested in learning more about **embrella**.
- The ST-5, also referred to as the NJ Sales Tax Exempt, is for purchasing items on behalf of **embrella** for agency events. This form serves as proof of our tax exempt status when making purchases at NJ stores and will be prefilled with the store's information prior to sending to you.
- Thank You note cards are available upon request and can be used to express thanks to any donors, volunteers or other individuals who may have provided support or assistance to the Connecting Families group.

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Event Paperwork

Event Application (Section 4 – Connecting Families Events)

This form is completed and submitted as you plan events. It includes event information such as location, time, description of activities and vendor information. **embrella** will also use this form to prepare payment for event vendors. This form must be submitted at least one month prior to your anticipated event.

Insurance Certificate Form (Section 4 – Connecting Families Events)

This form is completed and submitted to your assigned Family Advocate when a location or vendor requires a certificate of insurance for an event. This form must be submitted at least one month prior to your anticipated event to ensure enough time for **embrella's** Insurance Company to process and issue an Insurance Certificate.

Event Follow Up Report (Section 4 – Connecting Families Events)

This form is completed and submitted after your event has taken place. It notes event attendance, as well as areas of success and improvement for the event. It is a useful tool when planning additional events, as it documents what worked and what could have gone better. This form must be submitted within 5 business days following the event.

Financial Paperwork

Deposit Form (Section 5 – Program Funding)

This form is submitted to the Director of Support Services along with any money received by the Connecting Families group.

W-9 Form (Section 5 – Program Funding)

This form is required by the IRS from any vendor receiving payment from **embrella** in the amount of \$600 or more per calendar year. Form is completed by the Vendor.

Volunteer Expense Voucher (Section 5 – Program Funding)

This form is used to reimburse volunteers for mileage expenses, as well as any other expenses purchased on **embrella's** behalf. Receipts must be submitted for any purchases. Completed forms must be submitted to the Director of Support Services within 30 days following the expense.

Donor Report (Section 5 – Program Funding)

This report is completed and submitted quarterly. This form reports on any donations you may have received within the quarter. As a non-profit organization, **embrella** is required by the IRS to track donors/donations. Additionally, **embrella** uses this report to provide "Thank You" letters to donors.

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Events

Through **embrella**'s contract with the Department of Children (DCF) and Families Division of Child Protection & Permanency (CP&P), we are required to offer recreational, social activities and events to resource, kinship and adoptive parents throughout New Jersey. Each area is required to offer 2 events - a holiday party in December and a second event of your choosing. Additional activities/events may be planned as funding allows.

Per our contract, all programs, activities and events hosted through the Connecting Families program must be available to all licensed foster, adoptive and kinship families in the area and closed adoptive and KLG homes cannot take seats away from open homes.

Due to the unpredictability of weather, events should not be planned for January and February.

Planning Deadlines

To ensure that Connecting Families activities are not overscheduled in one area, and to assist in coordinating efforts with CP&P Local Offices, the following event planning deadlines must be adhered to.

Summer Events (July and August) – June 15th

Fall Events (September and October) – July 15th

Holiday Parties (December) – October 15th

Spring Events (March and April) – January 15th

(May and June) – March 15th

Budget

Each Connecting Families group has an allotted amount of funding to utilize for events and activities. This funding is possible through our contract with CP&P and is based on the total number of licensed resource parents in the area. Donations received may supplement this funding.

Additional information regarding funding can be found in **Section 6 - Program Funding** of this manual.

Utilizing Funds

An **Event Application** must be completed and submitted to your assigned Family Advocate at least one month prior to the event. This application provides basic event information, as well as vendors providing services. We will review your **Event Application** for approval prior to disbursing funds. Any vendor

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contracts or agreements should be submitted with the **Event Application** in order to process payments and for our CEO to sign any necessary contracts or agreements. **embrella's** CEO is the only authorized individual to approve and sign vendor contracts.

Volunteer Chairs may submit the **Event Application** electronically or print, complete and send via email, mail, or fax to their assigned Family Advocate. When submitting an **Event Application**, all requests for payment must include a receipt or invoice. If payment to a vendor exceeds \$600 in a calendar year, the vendor will need to complete a **W-9 form**.

embrella can make payments to vendors via credit card and/or check. If a payment is completed via check it can take up to 3-5 weeks to process. Be aware that some vendors, such as caterers and event facilities may need a deposit prior to the event.

embrella is a nonprofit and therefore tax exempt. Before purchasing any item, be sure to inform the vendor that the purchase is for a non-profit. You may need to show a tax exempt form in order to complete the transaction. Contact your Family Advocate to obtain a copy of our **Tax Exempt Form** for the vendor/store location you plan on making purchases from.

Additionally, it's important to consider that some event locations may require proof that **embrella** has liability insurance. An insurance certificate can be obtained by completing the **Certificate of Liability Insurance Form** and submitting to your Family Advocate. This form must be submitted at least one month prior to the anticipated event to ensure sufficient time for our Insurance company to process and issue an Insurance Certificate.

Reimbursements

Although it is not encouraged, in the event that you utilize personal money to make a purchase on the agency's behalf, you can submit your receipts along with a **Volunteer Expense Voucher** to receive a reimbursement. If your receipts consist of personal transactions as well as **embrella** transactions, for efficient processing we ask that you highlight which items were purchased for **embrella's** purposes. Receipts can be emailed, mailed or faxed to the Director of Support Services. Reimbursements will be made in the form of a check and can take up to 3-5 weeks for processing.

Invitations and RSVP's

embrella will create and mail all event invitations. In an effort to ensure that families are connected with **embrella**, all RSVP's will be taken by your assigned Family Advocate.

It is **embrella's** policy to include the following statement on all event invitations where children will be present:

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“Children MUST be accompanied and properly supervised at all times by a responsible adult other than **embrella** staff or volunteers to ensure the children’s safety, welfare and appropriate behavior. **embrella** and its staff members and volunteers are not responsible for the direct supervision, safety and welfare of any child.”

Vendors

Vendors are defined as a person(s) or company offering paid and/or voluntary professional services to **embrella**. All Connecting Families events will have at least one vendor, whether it be the event location, caterer or some form of entertainment.

Since the event is being held by a non-profit organization, we encourage you to solicit for donated or reduced cost services to help stretch the budget.

When you are ready to secure a vendor, be certain to obtain any contracts, invoices and/or agreements that the vendor may need and confirm the payment methods accepted by the vendor. Again, it’s important to remember that only **embrella**’s CEO can sign contracts or agreements on behalf of **embrella**.

Event Supplies

When planning an event, it’s important to make a list of the items needed, keeping in mind what supplies are already on hand, what needs to be purchased in advance and what should be purchased the day of or close to the start of the event. Some questions to consider:

- Do you need to order food or will the venue include food?
- Will the venue need decorations to make it more festive?
- Is there money in the budget to give out prizes or gift bags?
- Will plates, utensils, napkins, cups, drinks, etc. be provided by the caterer/event facility?

How far in advance you will need to purchase items depends on the size and complexity of your event and the required item. The **Event Supply Checklist** can be used as a tool to ensure that nothing is forgotten.

Holiday Toy Drive

Each year **embrella** solicits donations of toys/gifts to be distributed at Holiday Parties and other events. **embrella** will notify all Volunteer Chairs as the annual toy drive approaches. You will be asked to designate a person to pick-up the requested toys on the date provided by **embrella**.

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It's important to note that since toy/gift availability is based on donations, **embrella** cannot guarantee the quality and number of toys/gifts provided. It's also important to note that it is not required to provide toys/gifts to children at the holiday parties. Toy Drive participation is voluntary.

Volunteer Chairs are able to solicit toy/gift donations. Further information regarding donations can be found in **Section 6 - Program Funding** of this manual.

Volunteers

Volunteers can assist in helping to ensure that an event runs smoothly. **embrella** has a Volunteer Manual that outlines policies and procedures regarding volunteers. Please keep in mind that the intention of these policies is to minimize risk for our children, as well as to **embrella** as an organization and to you as a Volunteer Chair.

Additional information regarding volunteers can be found in **Section 2- FAFS Volunteer Manual** and **Section 7- Non-Registered Volunteers** of this manual.

Inclement Weather

In the event of anticipated inclement weather for **weekend events**, a cancellation decision must be made by 12pm on the Friday prior to the event to provide sufficient time for an eblast to be prepared and sent to families notifying them of a cancellation

In the event of anticipated inclement weather for **weekday events**, a cancellation decision must be made with as much advance notice as possible, preferably at least 24 hours in advance. Oftentimes, if inclement weather is expected, **embrella's** office will close. Advance notice is necessary to provide sufficient time for an eblast to be prepared and sent to families notifying them of a cancellation.

If a cancellation decision is not made, the expectation is that the event will take place as scheduled.

Event Day

The event day can be lots of fun, but it can also be stressful. Keeping calm and having a plan will help make the day easier for you.

Prior to the start of the event make sure:

- You and/or your Planning Committee arrive with sufficient time to set-up the event. Depending on the type of event, this could be 60 minutes to a few hours before the event start time.
- Post any necessary signage at event location to direct families on where to go. This is especially important for large or unclear event locations.

At the start of the event make sure:

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- Registration takes place during the event. This is mandatory, as **embrella** reports this information to CP&P. **Following the event, embrella will need a record of all attendees.**
 - Depending on the type of event, you may check off attendees on the RSVP list provided by your Family Advocate as they arrive or have attendees sign-in on a Connecting Families attendance sheet. If attendees are signing in, be sure they record all members of their party.
 - Remind attendees that they are responsible for children in their care.
 - Remind attendees that per CP&P policy, children cannot be photographed for social media, Facebook or any other publication where their identities would become known.

During the event make sure:

- Food handling instructions are clear:
 - Anyone handling or serving food must wash their hands with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling the food.
 - Avoid touching food with bare hands. Food servers should wear appropriate food handling gloves.
 - Keep perishable food out for no longer than two hours in temperatures below 90 degrees and one hour in temperatures above 90 degrees.
 - Throw away food left out more than two hours in temperatures below 90 degrees and one hour in temperatures above 90 degrees.

At the end of the event make sure:

- Event location is left clean and mess free. If the event location requires the space be put back to its original state, make sure that things are cleared with your contact person prior to leaving.

Agency Representation

It is very important to have agency representation at all events or meetings. This is to make sure that the families who attend feel connected to **embrella** and to help promote **embrella**'s programs and services. The more recognition **embrella** receives, the better able we are to serve our families. Events are an excellent way for **embrella** to be active and noticed within the community.

As a Volunteer Chair, you are an essential part of our organization and our Connecting Families Program. Therefore, it is very important that at events you introduce yourself as a Volunteer Chair, acknowledge that the event is funded by FAFS and CP&P and speak about the many programs and services we offer. If you have questions about what **embrella** offers, please don't hesitate to contact your Family Advocate to learn more.

There are many additional options for **embrella** representation:



Holiday Toy Drive

When a holiday toy drive is conducted by **embrella** (either statewide or through the **embrella** Connecting Families Program), toys will be made available to resource families regardless of their Friends of **embrella** status.

embrella cannot guarantee a sufficient number of donations to provide toys/gifts to meet all requests.

1. **Donations** - **embrella** solicits contributions and donations through two venues:
 - a) Main office – **embrella** solicits gifts for children living in resource homes which may be distributed at local Holiday Parties and other Connecting Families events.
 - b) Work of Connecting Families Groups – groups may solicit gifts specifically for children in out-of-home placements and may also include all adopted and/or biological children living in a resource family home, providing it is made clear to the donor at the time of the initial solicitation by stating “gifts are for children living in resource homes.”

If a Connecting Families Group receives donations in excess of need, we encourage them to contact **embrella so we can assist groups still in need. However, if the donor requests that the gifts stay in a specific county, that request must be honored.**

2. **Distribution**
 - a) All toys and gift cards received by the Connecting Families groups from the main office must be distributed to children living in resource homes, one item per child.
 - b) A Connecting Families group may choose to distribute gifts at their annual Holiday Party or hold a separate distribution event.
 - c) Gifts not picked up by the end of the Holiday Party or other gift distribution/pick-up event can be distributed in an appropriate manner that honors the donor’s intent (i.e. providing gifts to a CP&P local office for distribution) Selling the gifts is prohibited.

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- Wear your **embrella** T-shirt.
- **embrella** can provide you with promotional items and giveaways with the agency logo to display and hand out to families.
- Set-up a table with **embrella**'s table runner, information, flyers and brochures.
- Your Family Advocate or another staff member may attend and speak about agency services.
- Packets of **embrella** information and flyers can be made in advance and distributed to guests. In case a staff member cannot attend your event, please make sure that you get agency flyers and items in advance of your event.

Following the Event

After the event has taken place, it is important for the Volunteer Chair to submit the following paperwork to their Family Advocate:

- ***Event Follow-Up Report***
 - At **embrella**, we strive for excellence and understand there is always room for improvement. By completing this form, **embrella** is able to get a summary of your event, hear how successful the event went and get your suggestions on any changes that can be made to improve the event in the future.
- ***Attendance Sheet***
 - Depending on the type of event, you may check off attendees on the RSVP list provided by FAFS Family Advocate as they arrive or have attendees sign-in on a Connecting Family Attendance Sheet.
- ***Volunteer Sign-In Sheets*** (if applicable)
 - Any person volunteering is required to sign the Individual and Group Volunteer Sign-In sheet. This is a release and waiver of liability.
- ***Donor Report*** (if applicable)
 - As a non-profit organization with 501(c)3 status, **embrella** is required by the IRS to keep track of all donations received. This information is also very important, so that thank you letters can be sent to all donors.

It is important to keep in mind that **embrella** is contracted through the Department of Children and Families and as part of our contract, we have reporting requirements that must be met. This is why it is imperative that the above mentioned items be submitted as promptly as possible.

As always, feel free to contact your Family Advocate if assistance and/or support is needed.

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Funding Basics

Each Connecting Families group has access to funding through **embrella** that can be used to support their group's activities and events. Financial protocol for all **embrella**'s programs must remain in compliance with extensive state and federal tax laws and pass an annual financial audit to maintain our non-profit 501 (c) 3 status.

Funding is designated into two different types- restricted and unrestricted.

Restricted Funding

This type of funding is received through **embrella**'s contract with CP&P and can be used to support group activities and events open to all licensed resource families in the group's area. Restricted funding must be utilized within the fiscal year of July 1st through June 30th, and cannot be carried over from year to year.

Unrestricted Funding

Funds that are donated or received through fundraising efforts are designated as unrestricted. These funds have no cap and unutilized funds can be rolled over from year to year.

Donations

Non-cash donations – Connecting Families groups can solicit non-cash donations (i.e. toys, food, gift cards, in-kind services, etc.) valued under \$250. Any requests for non-cash donations valued over \$250 must be processed by **embrella**. As a non-profit organization, **embrella** is required to track all donations received. Therefore, all donations received by Connecting Families groups must be documented and submitted to **embrella** quarterly using the ***Donor Report***. This includes in-kind services, such as reduced or no-cost services.

embrella discourages donors from paying vendor directly as a donation. If a donor would like to pay for a vendor's services, they should make a monetary donation to **embrella** and note the intention of the donation. **embrella** will accept the donation and make a payment directly to the vendor for the services.

Cash donations – Connecting Families groups may not solicit cash donations. All potential donation requests soliciting cash must be processed by **embrella**.

Should a Volunteer Chair received a donation in the form of a check, the check must be made out to embrella. A Volunteer Chair may never accept a check made out directly to them as a payee, as that is not a donation to **embrella**.

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Fundraising

Connecting Families groups may conduct small scale fundraisers on behalf of **embrella** to assist in securing additional funds for their group. **embrella** must be notified in advance of all fundraising activities. When conducting fundraisers, it is extremely important that the intent of the fundraiser is clear to the public. If funds are being raised to support a specific Connecting Families group, then this must be stated in all communication and information regarding the fundraising event. Any funds raised under **embrella**'s 501(c)3 belong to **embrella** and use of these funds must comply with all **embrella** policies and procedures.

Friends of embrella is a donation program that anyone can be a part of. Visit <https://www.embrella.org/friends-of-embrella/> for more information.

Any donations or funds that are received by a Volunteer Chair must be mailed to the Director of Support Services (DSS) and accompanied by the **Internal Deposit Form**. Information on the donor/source and any designated restrictions which the donor/source may have made on the expenditure of the funds (i.e. holiday party, etc.) should be noted on the **Internal Deposit Form**. Cash will need to be converted into a check or money order prior to being mailed. The funds shall be deposited by **embrella** and credited to the appropriate Connecting Families account.

embrella will provide a quarterly statement of funds to each Volunteer Chair via email. This will include the funds available, as well as deposits and expenses for the quarter. At any time, you can request to receive a current account balance by reaching out to your Family Advocate.

embrella will mail official thank you letters to all donors reported to **embrella**. Volunteer Chairs may send a handwritten thank you note to the donor, however, the note may not include any specifics on the donation. For example, note can read "Thank you for your continued support of **embrella**'s programs and services for children in care in _____ County. Your support is greatly appreciated."

Per IRS regulations, non-cash donation acknowledgement letters may not contain a value of the donated goods or services. It is up to the donor to place a value on the donation.

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Planning Committees

Forming a Planning Committee is one way to help share the responsibility of event and meeting planning with others, helping to spread the work and stress load amongst a few people. Although it is not required to have a Planning Committee, it can be very effective and is strongly encouraged.

Committee members can be recruited at any Connecting Families events and/or meetings that are held throughout the year. Members can be resource, kinship and adoptive parents and/or individuals who are willing to be active participants in brainstorming, planning and implementing events and activities for your area.

Planning Committee members are considered non-registered volunteers of **embrella** and must complete the ***Planning Committee Non-Registered Volunteer Application***. Volunteer Chairs are responsible for ensuring that each committee member completes and submits their application to **embrella**.

As non-registered volunteers, Planning Committee members can participate in low-risk activities, such as brainstorming ideas, assisting in the decision making process for planning activities, events and meetings, preparing event or meeting supplies, scheduling Speakers and participating in small scale fundraising efforts. They may not participate in any high-risk activities, such as engaging in activities involving unsupervised children, handling property or money of significant value, operating motor vehicles/equipment or any activities involving access to **embrella** records, data or assets. In order for a Planning Committee member to participate in the previously noted high-risk activities, they must first be approved as an **embrella** Registered Volunteer.

Once Committee members have been decided, it is important to come up with a meeting schedule and format that will work best for the Committee. Teleconferences may work well to assist in accommodating committee member's personal schedules; however, some prefer face-to-face meetings over phone calls. Determine how often the committee needs to meet or connect with one another. It will also be helpful to create a list with committee member's contact information to distribute to the entire committee.

A well-established meeting will consist of doing your research, setting the groundwork to discuss, appropriately facilitating and following-up. During this time everyone will come together, tasks will be assigned and goals will be made clear. We encourage you to have an agenda at each meeting.

Different responsibilities and/or tasks can be delegated amongst the Committee members based on individual strengths and interests. It is important to talk with Committee members to ensure that everyone feels comfortable in the role they are playing as this should be a creative experience for all. A strong commitment from the Committee will be reflected in the success of the group.

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Funding Requests

All requests to utilize Connecting Families funds must be approved in advance by **embrella**. Expenditures by Connecting Families groups must further the mission of **embrella** to provide support, training and advocacy to meet the special needs of foster, adoptive and kinship families, who provide a safe, stable and nurturing home for children in care.

Event Application: An **Event Application** must be submitted for all Connecting Families events at least one month prior to the event. This application keeps us informed of your plans for the event, including basic event information, vendors and anticipated expenses. Any invoices or agreements should be submitted with the **Event Application** in order for **embrella** to process payments for the vendors. **embrella's** CEO is the only authorized individual to approve and sign contracts with vendors.

Volunteer Chairs may submit the **Event Application** electronically or print, complete and send via email, mail, or fax to their Family Advocate. When submitting an **Event Application**, all requests for payment must include a receipt or invoice. If payment to a vendor exceeds \$600 in a calendar year, the vendor will need to complete a **W-9 form**.

embrella can make payments to vendors via credit card and/or check. If a payment is completed via check it can take up to 3-5 weeks to process the check. Be aware that some vendors, such as caterers and event facilities may need a deposit prior to the event.

Gift Cards or Cash Advance: If you wish to purchase small scale items such as decorations and serving items, **embrella** may be able to provide you with a gift card or cash advance to purchase these items. Receipts for all purchases must be mailed to your Family Advocate within 30 days of purchase.

Reimbursements:

Mileage - Each Connecting Families group is eligible for a mileage reimbursement of up to \$200 per fiscal year. **embrella** complies with the federal mileage reimbursement rate which is currently \$.58 per mile. A **Volunteer Expense Voucher** must be completed and submitted to request this reimbursement.

Other - Although it is not encouraged, in the event that you expend personal money to make a purchase on **embrella's** behalf, you can submit your receipt(s) along with a **Volunteer Expense Voucher** to receive a reimbursement. Receipts must be submitted within 30 days of expenditure and all current expenses must be submitted by the end of the fiscal year (June 30) to ensure payment. If your receipt consists of personal transactions as well as agency transactions, for efficient processing we ask that you highlight which items were purchased for **embrella's** purposes. Receipts can be emailed, mailed or faxed to your Family Advocate. Reimbursements will be in the form of a check and can take up to 3-5 weeks for processing.

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Non-Registered Volunteers and Guests

In addition to Planning Committee members, there may be other individuals or groups who volunteer to support Connecting Families activities.

embrella's Volunteer Manual (Section 2 of the Connecting Families Program Manual) outlines policies and procedures regarding all volunteers. Please keep in mind that the intention of these policies is to minimize risk for our children, as well as to embrella as an organization and to you as a volunteer.

As a reminder, non-registered volunteers and guests have a low level of responsibility, such as serving food or assisting with set-up and clean-up. They work under direct supervision and are not responsible for supervising children or handling property or money of significant value. Non-Registered volunteers and guests do not have access to client or agency information, records or data. An **Event Task List** which contains generic duties that may be assigned to volunteers is available to assist you.

All non-registered volunteers and guests must be scheduled to volunteer in advance of the event and may not be accepted as walk-ins at the event. This is in place to protect the safety and security of all in attendance.

A few days prior to the event, it will be important to reconfirm anyone who agreed to volunteer, making sure that they have all important event details, such as location, time to arrive, what to wear, what they need to bring, etc. If you will be working with a local group of volunteers, you should have one point-person who will serve as the group lead and your contact for the event.

On the day of the event you will need to check all volunteers in. **A photo ID must be provided by anyone who is unfamiliar to you.**

embrella **Event Contact Check List** is designed to assist you in ensuring that FAFS policies for volunteers are adhered to. Please review this Check List for each non-registered volunteer or group lead at the event.

All volunteers must sign-in on the appropriate sign-in sheet provided by FAFS:

- **Individual Volunteer and Guest Sign-In Sheet:** Any person volunteering is required to sign the Volunteer Sign-In sheet. The Volunteer Sign-In sheet also serves as a release and waiver of liability.
- **Group Volunteer Sign-In Sheet:** If you have any groups volunteering to help you, all volunteers must sign in and the group leader's contact information must be noted on the top portion of the sign-in sheet. This also services as a release and waiver of liability.

Volunteer sign-in sheets must be submitted to embrella within 5 business days following the event or activity.