

## **1305: SURROGATE PARENT(S)**

In certain situations, a surrogate parent may be appointed for a child in the SoonerStart program to protect the child's rights to a free, appropriate, public education which includes early intervention services.

A surrogate is needed when no parent can be identified (see definition of "parent" in **Parent Rights for SoonerStart Services – Notice of Procedural Safeguards (Appendix H)**); and SoonerStart staff, after reasonable efforts, cannot discover the whereabouts of a parent.

A surrogate parent should have the knowledge and skills that ensure adequate representation of the child. The surrogate parent cannot be an employee of SoonerStart, or any other agency (i.e. DHS) that is involved in the education or care of the child and must have no interest that conflicts with the interest of the child he or she represents.

The surrogate parent may represent the child in all matters relating to the identification, evaluation, and development of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) for the child. The SoonerStart Resource Coordinator will provide the surrogate parent with information regarding parental rights and procedural safeguards and complete the **Surrogate Parent Verification of Training Form (Appendix J)**. Documentation must be included in the Resource Coordinator's progress notes that this activity was completed.