

*Ashland County Department of Job and
Family Services*

Foster Care and Adoption Policy Manual



*Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services
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Welcome

You have joined an elite group of hard working, dedicated individuals who are concerned about the abused, neglected, and dependent children of Ashland County. Thank you for your willingness to assist our children who are in need of temporary families where they can grow and be nurtured. We at Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services have been given the responsibility to identify those children who have been abused, neglected, and/or dependent and to assure that these children are provided care and assistance. This manual is being provided to you to assist you, as our foster family in caring for our children. The manual will provide you with policies, procedures, and additional information required by the Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services and information regarding the children we serve. Again, we welcome you and thank you for making a difference in the life of a child.

Mission Statement

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services are dedicated to serving our community by providing services that enhance the quality of family life. We value and depend on our partnership with other agencies and private citizens. We advocate self-sufficiency in an environment that promotes professionalism and values diversity. The mission of Ashland County Children Services is to empower our families and community members to achieve family stability and well being by providing and ensuring safety, education and support.

Agency Philosophy

As a Public Children Services Agency, the Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services is required to receive reports of child abuse and neglect, and to investigate those reports in a timely manner. When necessary, ACDJFS works with families to identify services and develop a case plan that reduces the risk of future abuse or neglect.

The goal in every child protection case is to provide children with a safe and permanent home. That means restoring children to their birth families when possible, granting legal custody to a relative or family friend, or adoption. Laws, regulations and rules govern virtually every aspect of this process. In most cases where a need for services has been identified, ACDJFS provides services to the child and family while the child remains in the home. However, there are instances when the child cannot remain safely in the home and it becomes necessary for ACDJFS to work with the Ashland County Common Pleas Juvenile Court to remove the child from the situation. When the child is placed outside of the home, ACDJFS must develop a plan detailing the activities that must occur to ensure that the child is able to return home safely. If that is not possible, the plan will identify an alternative safe, stable, permanent living situation that promotes the child's health, growth and development.

Foster care is a temporary setting and not a permanent place for children to grow up as all children are in need of a family. Foster homes are resources and supports for children who may have experienced abuse, neglect, and/or dependency. Children in need of foster care may have been physically or sexually abused, neglected or abandoned. Foster children are of every age, race, nationality and religion. Foster families provide temporary care for children while Children's Services works to reunify parents or relatives with their children.

Being a Foster Parent

Foster parents are chosen with care. They must be motivated by their love and commitment to help children. Foster parents love, nurture, and care for the children placed in their home. However, there is a great deal more involved. Foster parents arrange and accompany children to medical, dental, and/or therapy appointments. Foster parents may act as advocates for the children at school, court, or work in order to prepare the children to return home.

As a foster parent you are an important part of Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services and their mission in keeping children safe. Foster parents are part of a treatment team that includes the child's biological parents, social workers, therapists, juvenile court personnel, and additional collaborative resources put in place for both the child (ren) and family. Foster Parents impact the lives of children placed in their home by being a positive role model and many times assist both the child and parent in the reunification process by providing additional support. Foster care is only temporary but is a full- time responsibility until the child can achieve reunification or permanency.

Relative/Kinship Placements Licensed as Foster Parents

Relatives, kinship, and non kinship caregivers are eligible to apply to become foster parents for children who are in the custody of Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services and are in need of placement. The relative, kinship, or non kinship caregiver must meet the same licensing requirements as other foster parents.

Foster Care Program Statement of Assurance

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services shall maintain compliance with 42 U.S.C., the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, Public Law No. 105-89, the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, 25 U.S.C.A. 1901, et seq. The Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 as amended by Section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C. 622 (b) (9), 671(a) (18), 674 (d) and 1996 (b) (hereinafter "MEPA") and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C.2000d, et seq., as they apply to the foster care and adoption process of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978. Non-discrimination Requirements for Foster Care and Adoptive Placements: JFS 01611 is attached. Please see Appendix 1. Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services shall not discriminate in approving or disapproving a home study on the basis of disability in violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794 and of Title II of

the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. 1201. Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services acts in accordance with these requirements.

Standards of Conduct

Employee and Contractor/Provider Compliance with
MEPA and Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964
Effective February 1, 2005

The Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services has established the following Standards of Conduct with regard to the performance of employees and contractors/providers related to compliance with the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 as amended by Section 1808 of the Small business Job Protection Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C. 622(b)(9), 671(a)(18), 674(d) and 1996(b) (MEPA) and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq (Title VI), as they apply to the foster care and adoption process. These Standards of Conduct prohibit policies, procedures or actions which serve to:

- Deny any person the opportunity to become a foster caregiver or an adoptive parent on the basis of race, color or national origin of that person, or of the child involved; or
- Delay or deny any placement of a child in foster care or for adoption on the basis of the race, color or national origin of the foster caregiver(s), of the adoptive parent(s), or of the child involved.

Permissible Actions:

MEPA and Title VI permit the following actions as they apply to the foster care or adoption process:

1. Asking about and honoring any initial or subsequent choices made by prospective foster or adoptive parents regarding what race, color, or national origin of child the prospective foster or adoptive parents will accept.
2. Honoring the decision of a child twelve years of age or older to not consent to an adoption when that decision has been approved by a court pursuant to section 33107.06 of the Ohio Revised Code.
3. Providing information and resources about fostering or adopting a child of another race, color or national origin to prospective foster or adoptive parents who request such information and making known to all families that such information and resources are available.
4. Considering the request of a birth parent(s) to place the child with a relative or non-relative identified by name.
5. Considering race, color or national origin of the child as a possible factor in the placement decision when compelling reasons serve to justify that race, color or national origin need to be a factor in the placement decision pursuant to 5105:2-48-13 and 5101:2-42-18.1 of the Ohio Administrative Code. These rules permit consideration for race, color or national origin if an Individualized Child Assessment (JFS 01688) completed pursuant to these rules indicates the child has

- needs related to race, color or national origin that should be taken into account when placing the child. Even when the facts of a particular case allow consideration related to race, color or national origin, this consideration shall not be the sole determining factor in the placement decision.
6. Promoting cultural awareness, including awareness of cultural and physical needs that may arise in the care of children of different races, ethnicities, and national origins as part of the training which is required of all applicants who seek to become foster or adoptive parents.
 7. Documenting verbal comments, verbatim, or describing in detail any other indication made by a prospective foster or adoptive family member living in the household or any other person living in the household reflecting a negative perspective regarding the race, color or national origin of a child for whom the prospective foster or adoptive family has expressed an interest in fostering or adopting. The documentation shall indicate whether those comments were made before or after completion of the cultural diversity training which is required for all foster and adoptive applicants. Documentation shall be included in the family's home study, update, or an addendum to the home study or update prior to consideration of placement or a matching conference. A matching conference is the process of determining the most appropriate adoptive family for the child based on the child's special needs. The matching committee may consider the information in determining if the placement is in the child's best interest.

Prohibited Actions:

MEPA and Title VI prohibit the following actions as they apply to the foster care and adoption process:

- Using race, color or national origin of a prospective foster or adoptive parent to differentiate between placements
- Honoring the request of a birth parent(s) to place a child with a prospective foster or adoptive parent(s) of a specific race, color or national origin, unless the birth parent(s) identifies a relative or non-relative by name and that person is found to meet all relevant state child protection standards, provided that the agency determines that the placement is in the best interest of the child.
- Requiring a prospective adoptive family to prepare or accept a trans-racial adoption plan.
- Using "culture" or "ethnicity" as a proxy for race, color or national origin.
- Delaying or denying placement of a child based upon the geographical location of the neighborhood of the prospective foster or adoptive family whenever geography is being used as a proxy for:
 - the racial or ethnic composition of the neighborhood;
 - the demographics of the neighborhood; or
 - the presence or lack of presence of a significant number of persons of a particular race, color or national origin in the neighborhood or any similar purpose.
- Requiring extra scrutiny, additional training, or greater cultural awareness of individuals who are prospective foster or adoptive parents of children of a different

- race, color or national origin than required of other prospective foster or adoptive parents.
- Relying upon general or stereotypical assumptions about the ability of prospective foster or adoptive parents of a particular race, color or national origin.
 - Relying on the general or stereotypical assumptions about the ability of prospective foster or adoptive parents of a particular race, color or national origin to care for or nurture the sense of identity of a child of another race, color, or national origin.
 - “Steering” prospective foster or adoptive parents away from parenting a child of another race, color or national origin. “Steering” is any activity that attempts to discourage prospective foster or adoptive parents from parenting a child of a particular race, color or national origin.
 - Requiring an ongoing, foster care or adoption worker or contractor to justify a proposed placement for the reason that the race, color or national origin of the child is different from that of the family whom the worker is proposing as the child’s foster caregiver or adoptive parent.

Prohibition on Retaliation:

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services employees and contractors/providers may not intimidate, threaten, coerce, discriminate against or otherwise retaliate against any individual who makes a complaint, testifies, assists or participates in any manner in an investigation related to alleged discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in the foster care or adoption process.

Additional Information:

Employees or contractors/providers who desire more information about MEPA and Title VI as related to the adoption and foster care process may contact:

- Patty Sheppard, Ashland Co. DJFS MEPA Monitor
419-282-5043

Procedure for Complaints of Alleged Discriminatory Acts, Policies or Practices in the Foster Care or Adoption Process that Involve Race, Color or National Origin:

MEPA Complaint Procedure:

Any person who believes that Ashland Co DJFS, or any other public or private Ohio adoption or foster care agency, or the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has policies or procedures that violate MEPA and Title VI may file a complaint. In addition, anyone who believes that he or she was intimidated, threatened, coerced, discriminated against or otherwise retaliated against in some way because he or she made a complaint, testified, assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation related to alleged discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in the foster care or adoption process may also file a complaint. Individuals who may file a complaint include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a foster or adoptive parent or other member of a foster or adoptive family
- a prospective foster or adoptive parent or other family member

- an employee or former employee of Ashland Co DJFS or any other Ohio adoption or foster care agency

Individuals who wish to file a complaint must complete the “Discrimination Complaint Form: (JFS 02333). This complaint may be filed with the following:

- Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services
Attn: Director
15 W. Fourth Street
Ashland, Ohio 44805
- Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
Bureau of Civil Rights
30 East Broad Street, 37th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43266-0423
- Any other public or private Ohio foster care or adoption agency.

If the complaint is filed with Ashland County DJFS Director or with any other public or private Ohio foster care or adoption agency, the agency Director, MEPA Monitor or other public or private agency must forward the complaint within 3 business days to the Bureau of Civil Rights of Ohio Dept. of Job and Family Services for investigation. ODJFS must complete the investigation within 90 days of receipt of the complaint, unless unusual circumstances prevent it from completing the investigation within that timeframe. ODJFS will provide a copy of the investigation report to the complainant and to the agency that is the subject of the complaint.

Enforcement Requirements:

These standards of conduct include enforcement requirements to be used whenever an agency employee or contractor/provider engages in discriminatory acts, policies, or practices involving race, color or national origin in the foster care or adoption process as determined by the Bureau of Civil Rights of ODJFS upon the completion of the investigation conducted pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code.

For Ashland Co DJFS employees, these enforcement requirements shall include employee discipline in accordance with agency policy.

For contractor/providers performing foster care or adoption services on behalf of this agency, these enforcement requirements shall include discipline in accordance with the contractor/provider’s personnel policy and may include contract termination. Enforcement requirements for contractor/provider subcontractors shall include corrective action in accordance with the contractor/provider’s contract with the subcontractor and may include contract termination.

These enforcement requirements are applied in accordance with applicable employment law and union contracts.

Corrective Action Plan:

Ashland County DJFS shall provide for the submission of a corrective action plan whenever an investigation conducted by ODJFS, pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code, results in a finding that an agency employee or contractor/provider engaged in discriminatory acts, policies or practices. If the finding involves a discriminatory act, policy or practice by a contractor/provider or subcontractor, Ashland Co DJFS shall develop the corrective action plan in collaboration with the contractor/provider or in collaboration with the contractor/provider and subcontractor.

The corrective action plan shall:

- Address how Ashland Co DJFS will prevent future violations by that employee or contractor/provider or subcontractor, and
- Be submitted to ODJFS within thirty days of notification of the findings of the investigation.

Ashland County DJFS shall provide a copy of these Standards of Conduct to each employee or contractor/provider who is:

- Engaged in the placement of children into foster care or for adoption, or
- Engaged in the recruitment, assessment, approval, or selection of foster or adoptive families.

Employees or contractor/providers shall receive a copy of the written Standards of Conduct no later than March 2, 2005. If these Standards of Conduct are revised, employees and contractor/providers shall receive a copy of the revised Standards of Conduct within 30 days of the completion of any revisions. New employees or contract/providers shall receive a copy of the written Standards of Conduct within 30 days of their hire date or the effective date of their contract. Ashland County DJFS and contractor/providers shall ensure that these Standards of Conduct are provided to their employees and subcontractors.

Accessibility of the Administrator/Grievances

Persons with concerns or complaints as to the decisions of the Ashland County Job and Family Services, Social Services Unit, will be able to meet with the social service supervisor as well as with any staff involved in the problem to work out a satisfactory answer to their concern or complaint. If the person is not satisfied with the decision, then an appointment will be scheduled with the director of the agency. The director will investigate that situation and meet with the complainant. The complaint or concern will be discussed at this level and the decision will be explained to the complainant. This meeting between the director and complainant will occur within 30 days of the original complaint. In the event that the director or the Ashland County Job and Family Services are not available, the HR Manager for Ashland County Job and Family Services will serve in this position. The policy shall assure the accessibility of the administrator or designee with executive authority to agency staff and ODJFS representatives at all times. The administrator or representative can be reached at, ACDJFS, 15 W. 4th. St., Ashland, Ohio 44805, 24 hour contact number, (419) 282-5000. Should a complaint be received during non-working hours (i.e., after hours, weekends, holidays), the supervisor on call, who has been given executive authority in all matters related to the foster care program that arise

during non business hours, can be reached by calling the Ashland County Sheriff's Dept. If the complaint needs immediate attention, then the supervisor will address the concerns immediately. If the complaint is not emergent, then the complainant will receive a call to address the concerns the next business day following the day of the complaint.

OAC Rules and Regulations & Agency Policies and Procedures

In addition to rules for foster care, the OAC authorizes agencies to develop internal policies and procedures to govern program operations. The OAC rules and regulations are included in this manual. During the pre-service training classes, applicants receive copies of the state rules and agency policies relating to foster homes. Revisions or additional rules and regulations can be accessed at <http://emanuals.odjfs.state.oh.us> , and will be implemented by the Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services. Manual training will be completed by the agency as needed and required to be attended by all foster parents in order to ensure all rules and regulations are in compliance. Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services internal procedures complement or add to the existing state rules and regulations and ensure that all our programs operate consistently, fairly and in the best interests of the children we are mandated to serve.

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Foster Parent Inquiry

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services does not deny any person the opportunity to become a foster parent or foster to adopt parent on the basis of race, color,

or national origin. An adoption assessor or supervisor shall respond to foster care inquiries within seven working days with the following information:

- A JFS 01691, "Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Application for Child Placement".
- A criminal records release of information form, required as a precondition to being approved for an adoptive placement, for all prospective foster and foster to adopt parents and adult residents of a foster and adoptive home.
- Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services MEPA procedure for complaints of discriminatory acts, policies, or practices in the Foster Care or Adoption process that involve race, color, or national origin and the JFS 01611 "Non-discrimination Requirements for Foster Care and Adoptive Placements."
- A copy of Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services Foster Care and Adoption Policy.
- The JFS 01675, "Ohio Adoption Guide"

Applicants may not apply at Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services and to any other foster/adoptive agency at the same time. If an applicant submits a formal application to another foster/adoptive agency, the Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services must be notified immediately and the applicant's file with Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services will be closed.

To avoid a conflict of interest, or the appearance of a conflict of interest, an adoption assessor shall not conduct or approve a foster care home study for any of the following:

- Him or herself;
- Any person who is a family member of the assessor;
- Any agency employee for whom the assessor has any supervisory responsibility; or
- Any agency employee who has any supervisory responsibility for the assessor.
- An agency administrator and a family member of the agency administrator shall not serve as a foster caregiver for the agency with which the administrator is employed.
- A member of the agency's governing body and a person known to the agency as a family member of the agency's governing body shall not serve as a foster caregiver for the agency with which the governing body member is associated.

Foster care inquiries from persons who wish to become certified foster caregivers shall be referred to another recommending agency where there will be no conflict of interest. An existing foster home certificate of any person per this rule shall be transferred to another recommending agency within 14 working days of notification of conflict, except that such persons who have one or more foster children currently placed in their foster home and who elect not to transfer to another agency may maintain the certificate and continue to provide care for the foster children currently placed in the home but shall not accept any additional placements of foster children.

When an agency becomes aware that a certified foster caregiver of the agency is a family member of the administrator or a family member of a member of the agency's governing body, it shall take the necessary steps to initiate a transfer of the foster caregiver's foster home certificate. The transfer shall be accomplished within thirty days of the discovery.

As used in this rule, "family member" means a spouse or significant other, or a parent, child, sister, brother, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or cousin whether through birth or adoption. "Significant other" means a person in a domestic relationship between two or more people living together and sharing a common domestic life but who are not joined in any type of legal partnership, marriage or civil union recognized under Ohio law.

No Foster, Foster to Adopt or Adopt Only home studies will be conducted by Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services on their own employees.

Eligibility Requirements

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services requires the following basic eligibility requirements for foster and/or adoptive applicants:

- You must be at least 21 years of age;
- You may be married, single or divorced;
- You must be able to show an income sufficient to meet the basic needs of the household and make timely payment of shelter costs, utility bills, and other debts;
- You must be in good physical, emotional and mental health and capable of caring for a child;
- You must complete 36 hours of pre-service training and two (2) hours of Infant CPR/First Aid training if wanting to foster/adopt children zero (0) to two (2) years old;
- You must be a Legal Resident of the United States or a permanent United States resident ("green card" status). An exception to this requirement can be made if the applicant is being considered for placement of a specific child who is "kinship" to the applicant. Kinship is defined in the Ohio Administrative Code as any individual related by blood, adoption, or marriage to the applicant or a person who has a familiar and long-standing relationship or bond with the applicant, or whose family has a long-standing relationship with the applicant;
- You must be fluent in English: At least one foster parent in the home must be able to read, write, and speak in English or be able to effectively communicate with any child placed in their home and Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services.

Additional Basic Requirements of all Foster Caregivers

Policies and Instructions:

- A foster parent must comply with all agency policies and instructions. This Foster Parent and Adoption Policy Manual contains agency policies specific to foster

homes and foster to adopt homes. Foster parents will also receive information and instructions specific to the care of a particular foster child in the Individual Child Care Agreement (ICCA) and from individuals involved in the care of the foster child, such as the child's case worker, guardian-ad-litem (GAL), physician, teacher, therapist, etc.

Boarding or Rooming House:

- A foster parent may not operate the home as an adult boarding or rooming house.

Home-Based Business:

- A foster parent must get written approval from Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services before conducting any business, or allowing any business to operate, including babysitting services, in the home.

Babysitting:

- A foster parent must not provide or allow babysitting services in the foster home such that more than ten children, including foster, biological or adopted children, are present and under the supervision of the caregiver at any one time. A former Type B family day care home whose certification has been revoked or terminated may be ineligible for foster home certification.

Transportation:

- Foster parents who transport foster children must be licensed drivers. Any vehicle used to transport a foster child must be maintained in a safe condition and must be covered by liability insurance as required by state law. Whenever possible, foster children under the age of 12 should ride in the rear seat. Foster home rules are more stringent than current state law and have the following requirements for foster children:
 - Infants under 1 year and weighing less than 20 pounds must be secured in a rear-facing car seat placed in the rear seat, if possible.
 - Foster children under the age of 4 years and weighing less than 40 pounds must be secured in a forward-facing car seat.
 - Foster children between 4 years and 8 years and weighing less than 80 pounds, or who are shorter than 4' 9" must ride in a belt-positioning booster seat.
 - All other foster children must wear seat belts at all times.

Applicants for foster parenting must have car seats or booster seats available to accommodate the number and age range of children they wish to foster.

Basic Site, Safety and Space Requirements

A foster home must be safe and comfortable with sufficient furniture and sleeping, storage, and living space to accommodate a foster child or children. The home must be clean and sanitary and in a reasonable state of repair with no evidence of vermin infestation. To ensure the health and safety of foster children, all prospective foster homes must meet the

following requirements. Once licensed, these requirements must be maintained throughout the family's service as foster parents.

1. **Clean and Sanitary Residence:** The foster home's floors, walls, kitchen utensils and surfaces, bathroom fixtures, upholstery and bedding must be clean and sanitary. Trash must be removed and clothing laundered regularly.
2. **Reasonable State of Repair:** The foster home and all structures associated with the home must be maintained in a clean, safe, and sanitary condition and in a reasonable state of repair. Walls and ceilings must be free of holes and all surfaces, including woodwork, must be free of peeling or chipping paint. All electrical outlets and switches must be covered and there must be no exposed wiring. The home must have a working stove and refrigerator.
3. **Recreation Equipment:** Indoor and outdoor recreation equipment on the grounds of the foster home must be maintained in a safe state of repair.
4. **Hazardous Outdoor Areas:** Outdoor areas on the grounds of or immediately adjacent to the foster home which are potentially hazardous to a foster child must be reasonably safeguarded, considering the age and functioning level of the foster child. Such areas include, but are not limited to:
 - Natural water areas, including lakes, ponds, rivers, creeks, streams, and quarries
 - Swimming pools, hot tubs, wading pools and ornamental ponds: (Swimming pools must be safeguarded and inaccessible to foster children when not in use)
The foster parent must be present when a foster child is using the pool or is in the pool area.
5. **Heat, Light, and Ventilation:** The foster home must be adequately heated, lighted, and ventilated.
6. **Hazardous Items:** Potentially hazardous items in the foster home or on the grounds of the home must be stored in a safe manner. Families caring for children under the age of six (6) years old must store the following items in cabinets equipped with child-proof latches or on shelves well out of the reach of the foster child.
 - Bleach,
 - Cleaning materials,
 - Poisonous or corrosive household chemicals,
 - Flammable and combustible materials,
 - Potentially dangerous tools or utensils,
 - Electrical equipment or machinery
7. **Firearms and Other Weapons:** Any firearm, air rifle, hunting slingshot or other projectile weapon kept on the grounds of or in the foster home must be stored in an inoperative condition, and locked in a an area inaccessible to children.
All ammunition, arrows or projectiles for such weapons must be stored in a separate locked space.

8. Telephone: The foster home must have a working telephone or be able to demonstrate to ACDJFS reasonable access to a working telephone for emergency situations.
9. Emergency Phone Numbers: Emergency phone numbers listed below must be posted in a prominent place in the foster home:
 - Fire department
 - Police
 - Life squad
 - Poison control
 - Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services After-Hours emergency number
10. Door Locks: All locking doors to any room or storage area inside the foster home in which a person could become confined, and from which the only other means of exit requires the use of a key, must be able to be unlocked from either side. Slide bolts, hooks, chain locks, padlocks and dead bolts may not be used on interior doors. Locking of the children's bedroom doors while children are sleeping is prohibited. Locking of outside doors is permitted. Doors to balconies and upstairs porches must be locked when not in use.
11. Drinking Water: The foster home must have a continuous supply of safe drinking water. Well water used for drinking and cooking must be tested and approved by the health department prior to initial certification and at each re-certification.
12. Bathrooms: The foster home must have working bathroom and toilet facilities within the home and connected to an indoor plumbing system.
13. Garbage: Garbage must be disposed of on a regular basis. Garbage stored outside must be in covered containers or closed bags.
14. Smoke Detectors: The foster home must have a working smoke alarm approved by "Underwriter's Laboratory" on each floor of the home, including the basement.
15. Carbon Monoxide Detectors: Foster homes who utilize gas for heating or other things such as cooking, must have a carbon monoxide detector located near the bedrooms of the home.
16. Evacuation Plan and Instruction: The foster parent must have a written plan for evacuating the home or seeking shelter in the event of fire, tornado or other disaster. The evacuation plan must contain a primary and alternate escape route for each floor. Foster parents must include their name and address on the evacuation plan and provide a copy to the assessor.
17. Heating Equipment: Furnaces, fireplaces, woodstoves, space heaters, and other household heating equipment in the foster home must be equipped with appropriate safeguards in accordance with the age and functioning level of any foster child in the

home. If the home uses a woodstove, the foster parents are required to sign a safety agreement.

18. Fire Extinguisher: The home must have an "Underwriter's Laboratory" approved portable fire extinguisher in working order in or near the cooking area of the home.
19. Pets: Pets or domestic animals in or on the premises of the home must be kept in a safe and sanitary manner in accordance with state and local laws. The foster parent must provide proof of current vaccinations.
20. Safety Gates: Interior and exterior stairways accessible to foster children must be protected by child safety gates or doors according to the child's age and functioning level.

Child Abuse and Neglect History Check

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services is required to conduct a search of abuse and neglect report history in the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS). A summary of findings, if applicable, will be compiled and will be used in the evaluation of an applicant(s) and other adult members in the home seeking foster care licensing. The summary will be contained in the applicant's file.

ACDJFS is also required to request a check of the child abuse and neglect registry of any other state in which a prospective foster caregiver or other adult household member in the applicant's home has resided in the five years immediately prior to the date of the criminal records check as required by division (A) of section 2151.86 of the Revised Code.

The summary report shall include, for each applicant and each adult household member, a chronological list of abuse and neglect determinations or allegations in which the person was involved where a PCSA has done one of the following:

- Determined that abuse or neglect occurred;
- Initiated an investigation, and the investigation is ongoing;
- Initiated an investigation, and the agency was unable to determine whether abuse or neglect occurred.

The summary report shall not contain any of the following:

- An abuse and neglect determination of which a person seeking to become a foster caregiver of a child is subject and in regards to which a public children services agency determined that abuse or neglect did not occur;
- Information or reports the dissemination of which is prohibited by, or interferes with eligibility under, the "Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act," 88 Stat. 4 (1974), 42 U.S.C. 5101 et seq., as amended;
- The name of the person who or entity that made, or participated in the making of, the report of abuse or neglect.

If the search indicates there are no allegations or reports of involvement in child abuse and/or neglect investigations or there are only unsubstantiated reports for any applicant or adult household member, the summary report shall indicate that there are no substantiated or indicated reports involving any applicant or adult household member in an allegation or report of involvement in a child abuse and/or neglect investigation reported to the uniform statewide child welfare information system or any other states central registry. ODJFS will provide the results within 30 days of request. The results of this report must be received and reviewed prior to foster care certification.

Criminal Background Checks

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services requires all applicants and other adult individuals who are eighteen years of age and older to complete criminal background checks through ACDJFS and criminal background checks in the applicant's county of residence. The criminal background checks include a local background check, a finger print check through the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Criminal background checks conducted by BCII and FBI are not public records.

The agency will arrange for fingerprints to be completed through Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services. Hours for finger printing are Monday-Friday 8:30am-3:30pm. The cost of a BCII check is \$25.00 for each adult in the home and an FBI check is \$26.00 per person. All fees for criminal background checks are waived for foster parent and foster to adopt parent applicants.

Local background checks, BCII criminal records checks, and FBI checks must be completed:

- Prior to recommendation of initial Foster Care Certification and/or Adoption Approval
- All adult household members MUST have these background checks completed every four years. Although it is ACDJFS' policy to renew them when the foster home goes through the recertification process every two years.

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services does not process applications, foster care home studies, foster to adopt home studies, or approve foster care placements if an applicant or any other adult member of the household was convicted of or plead guilty to any of the crimes listed in Appendix II of this policy manual. Prospective foster or foster to adopt parents convicted of an offense in OAC 5101:2-48-10(C) may be considered for foster placement when all conditions of this rule have been met:

Where the offense was a misdemeanor, or would have been a misdemeanor if conviction had occurred under the current criminal code, at least three years have elapsed from the date the person was fully discharged from any imprisonment or probation arising from the conviction.

Where the offense was a felony, at least ten years have elapsed since the person was fully discharged from imprisonment or probation.

The victim of the offense was not one of the following:

- A person under the age of eighteen.
 - A functionally impaired person as defined in section 2903.10 of the Revised Code.
 - A mentally retarded person as defined in section 5123.01 of the Revised Code.
 - A developmentally disabled person as defined in section 5123.01 of the Revised Code.
 - A person with a mental illness as defined in section 5122.01 of the Revised Code.
 - A person sixty years of age or older.
- The person's certification as a foster caregiver or the person's residency in the foster caregiver's household will not jeopardize in any way the health, safety or welfare of the children the agency serves. The following factors shall be considered in determining the person's certification as a foster caregiver or the person's residency in the foster caregiver's household.
 - The person's age at the time of the offense.
 - The nature and seriousness of the offense.
 - The circumstances under which the offense was committed.
 - The degree in which of participation of the person participated involved in the offense.
 - The time elapsed since the person was fully discharged from imprisonment or probation.
 - The likelihood that the circumstance leading to the offense will recur.
 - Whether the person is a repeat offender.
 - The person's employment record.
 - The person's efforts at rehabilitation and the results of those efforts.
 - Whether any criminal proceedings are pending against the person.
 - Whether the person has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a felony contained in the Revised Code that is not listed in paragraph (J) of this rule, if the felony bears a direct and substantial relationship to being a foster caregiver or adult member of the caregiver's household.
 - Any other factors the agency considers relevant.

Pre-Service Training

All applicants must successfully complete 36 hours of required pre-service training. If an applicant is applying to foster/adopt children ages zero (0) to two (2) years old, they will be required to take two hours of Infant CPR/First Aide training. For applicants applying to foster /adopt children ages three (3) years and older, will have to take the two hours of Infant CPR/First Aide training within the first year of licensure/approval.

All prospective foster care applicants will receive the same training, which will not be influenced by the applicant's race or the race of the child they are interested in fostering. Applicants will be notified when the required training sessions are being held. The training program provides an overview of the child welfare system, information about the families and children that are served, and the changes in lifestyle many families experience while fostering.

The agency expects that foster care applicants will attend all of the training sessions in order to meet this requirement. The agency believes all sessions are important to prepare applicants to be foster parents. A prospective foster parent for Ashland County must attend a minimum of 36 hours of pre-service training and two (2) hours of Infant CPR and First Aide training if wanting to foster children ages zero (0) to two (2) years of age. A prospective foster parent cannot be any later than 15 minutes to pre-service classes as they will be requested to complete the session over and will not receive credit. If an applicant is unable to attend a particular session it is the applicant's responsibility to notify the foster care caseworker or adoption assessor in advance. Each pre-service class covers specific topics related to foster parenting.

The assessment process allows families to self-determine, with the aid of an assessor, their strengths and weaknesses in a variety of areas impacting their ability to meet a specific child's needs. In addition to pre-service training, Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services, may provide additional materials or refer the family to ongoing training to assist foster applicants to develop their skills to be able to meet the family's needs as well as the child's needs.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services through Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services makes stipend payments to individuals who successfully complete pre-service training and become licensed foster parents. A stipend of \$360.00 will be paid to each foster parent for successful completion of pre-service training. Payment for pre-service training will be deferred until after the foster parent becomes licensed. Prospective foster parents who complete some or all of the pre-service training but do not complete the home study process and become licensed foster parents, are not eligible for the stipend payment.

*Pre-Service Training must be completed within 18 months prior to the recommendation of foster home license approval. Individuals who complete the training outside of this timeframe will be required to attend the pre-service training session(s) again, pursuant to OAC 5101:2-5-20 (K).

**If you wish to become licensed to foster children under the age of 2 years old, you must complete First Aid and CPR for infants prior to placement of children under the age of 2 years old in your home.

Foster Care Application Process

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services shall not discriminate in approving or disapproving a home study on the basis of disability in violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794 and of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. 1201. The agency does not prohibit anyone the opportunity to become a foster parent on the basis of the person's race, color, or national origin (RCNO), nor does the agency delay or deny the placement of a child or the prospective foster parent based on RCNO.

All applicants must accurately and thoroughly complete the JFS 01691 "Application for Child Placement" which is provided upon request or provided in the inquiry packet. Upon the request of the applicant, ACDJFS will provide assistance in completing out the application and securing all documentation and information required by the agency in the home study process. An applicant may revise their application (JFS 01691) at any time regarding the characteristics or number of children desired during the home study process. The agency strongly encourages those individuals seeking to become foster and adoptive parents to attend the pre service training prior to completing the JFS 1691, Application for Child Placement.

ACDJFS encourages applicants to apply for a joint home study for simultaneous approval as an adoptive parent and licensure as a foster parent. Applicants may indicate their interest in simultaneous foster parent licensure and adoptive parent approval on the application or at any time during the home study assessment process.

Upon receipt of the completed application, signed by the applicant(s), the agency will assign the application to an adoption assessor. Application's that are not completed in its entirety will not be initiated and will be sent back to the applicant to make the necessary changes. The applicant will then be contacted by the adoption assessor assigned to begin the home study process. ACDJFS shall then determine whether or not the applicant meets eligibility requirements as discussed in this policy. The adoption assessor will begin the home study process within 30 days of the agency's receipt of the completed, accepted application and will request additional information to commence the home study assessment.

If the ACDJFS determines that a home study cannot be initiated or the decision is not to approve the applicant for licensure of a foster care home study, the written notification shall contain the following:

- An explanation for the reason for denial;
- A description of procedures for agency review

Foster Care Home Study Process

The home study shall be a joint decision making assessment and process involving the applicant and ACDJFS which is designed to determine whether foster care is a viable option for the applicant and the characteristics of children the applicant can best parent. Individuals and couples are encouraged to become foster parents prior to or at the same time as becoming adoptive applicants. All applicants have a right to a joint foster/adopt

home study and this can be completed by this agency. Foster applicants must be at least 21 years old.

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services complies with JFS 01611, “Non-discrimination Requirements for Foster Care Placements”. Please see Appendix 1. Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services shall not discriminate in approving or disapproving a home study on the basis of disability in violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794 and of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. 1201.

The home study process takes time, patience, and the hard work of the applicant(s), their family and support systems, as well as the agency. It is important to understand that this process is designed to not only identify your strengths but also areas of vulnerability that may affect your entire foster family after placement has occurred. The agency adoption assessor is there to support your family and to assist you in answering questions as well as referring you to additional trainings and supports that may be beneficial to your family.

Applicants are required to complete and submit the necessary documents to the adoption assessor assigned to their home study. If at any time you have questions the agency will attempt to assist the applicant in this process if possible. It is important to remember the agency has only 180 days from receiving that applicant(s) Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Application for Child Placement (JFS 01691) to complete and receive the Foster Home Certification. This 180 day completion time frame may be extended by written mutual agreement between the applicant and ACDJFS in extreme circumstances. However, if the applicant is unable to submit all required documentation within one (1) year from the date the application was accepted, the agency has the right to terminate the application. The home study will be documented on the JFS 01673, “Assessment for Child Placement (Home study)” and shall be conducted and/or supervised by an adoption assessor.

The following documents are required as part of the foster care home study process:

- Medical Statements (JFS 01653) for applicant(s) and all members of the household:

A licensed physician must complete medicals for all household members within six (6) months prior to the agency’s approval of the home study. If a physician has seen a family member recently the physician may choose to complete the medical statement based on past records. In other cases the physician may require an office visit. A signature and physicians licensure number must be on the medical statement.

If an applicant is receiving SSI, disability, and/or workers compensation, documentation must be provided of the nature of the disabling condition along with a statement from the physician stating that the disabling condition will not compromise the ability to care for a foster or adoptive child.

- References:

Four personal references will be requested. All references must be from non-relatives to determine the applicant's suitability to parent a child. If there are adult children of the foster or foster to adopt applicant, then a reference from each adult child is required even if they do not live in the home. All references provided by the applicant shall be contacted by ACDJFS and the information received will be documented. The applicant's employer may be asked to provide a reference if they are listed on the application and/or the applicant has worked or is working with children.

- Fire Inspection:

To be completed by a state certified fire safety inspector or the state fire marshal's office. The fire inspection must be completed within 6 months of the agency's approval of the home study. Contact the local fire department to arrange this inspection.

- Safety Audit of a Foster Home (JFS 01348):

Please refer to site and safety requirements

- Applicant Financial Statement (JFS 01681):

Applicants must show that they are financially stable and able to provide for the needs of a child. Verification of income must be shown through two (2) months of recent pay stubs, and or confirmation of social security, SSI, pension, unemployment, and/or child support received.

- Proof of the applicant(s) residence for the past five year period immediately prior to the date upon which the criminal background check is requested:

Proof of residency may include: rent/utility receipts, bank records, school attendance records, W2 forms, 1040 tax forms.

- Proof of income for the household for the most recent tax year prior to the date of application;

- At least one utility bill for each utility the household utilizes. The bills shall not be older than the date of application;

- Local Background Checks, BCII and FBI reports from applicants and all adult household members and emergency and alternative caregivers;

- Well Water Test, if applicable;

- Psychosocial Assessment:

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services may require a psychosocial assessment for foster care applicants, if deemed necessary by the adoption assessor during the home study process. This evaluation will be used as part of the home study process to aid the agency in assessing the applicant's suitability as foster parent.

- Copy of driver's license and proof of car insurance card, if applicable
- Documentation of current marital status, which shall include a marriage certificate, divorce decree, or other verification of marital status, if applicable;

Married couples must have been married a minimum of one year (verified by marriage certificate), with evidence of a stable marriage. The agency must be notified within 24 hours of any separations, deaths, or other significant life traumas which would impact the family home study. Applicants with more than one divorce per applicant will not be excluded. However, more than one divorce may require further assessment by the agency.

- Child Characteristics Checklist (JFS 01673 A):

The checklist is used to indicate acceptable and non-acceptable characteristics of the child the applicant is requesting to foster and/or adopt. It is important to sit down and complete the checklist as a family to determine what health, education, and behavior needs will have a positive impact on your family. If you have questions on any of the items listed, it is important to research them and follow up with the adoption assessor completing the home study process. The checklist is used to help match adoptive and foster children with families that can best meet their needs.

- Releases to Contact Other Agencies or Individuals:

If the applicant has been a foster or adoptive parent or day care provider with another agency, the applicant will be asked to sign a release of information to allow the assessor to contact those agencies or individuals to provide a report on the applicant's services. If applicable the assessor may ask for releases to contact;

- ✓ Counselors/Therapists
- ✓ Alcohol or Drug Treatment Programs
- ✓ Child's School Counselor
- ✓ Juvenile or Adult Probation or Parole Officer

- Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment (JFS 01530):

When a family has a total of five or more children residing in the home, including the foster children and children in kinship care, or if the family will have a total of

five or more children who will reside in the home upon the foster or adoptive placement of a child, an adoption assessor shall complete the Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment.

- Central Registry Check for all applicant(s) and adult household members if they have lived in another state within five years prior to the application date. A SACWIS, Alleged Perpetrator Search will be conducted on all applicant(s) and adult household members;
- Verification of United States Citizenship;

Birth certificates and Social Security cards for applicant(s) and all household members.

- Vaccinations for animals in the home, if applicable;
- Applicant(s) will be required to identify two emergency/alternate caregivers. At least one emergency caregivers will be required to complete a Safety Audit of a Foster Home (JFS 01348). Emergency/alternate caregivers will be required to show proof of auto insurance and a valid driver's license;
- Verification of Military Discharge Papers, if applicable;
- Proof of Insurance for Home and Health;
- Photo of caregiver and or family to be used for a family flyer with attached narrative to utilize in the introduction and placement of children being matched and placed in your home.

Agency Home Study Interviews

The agency foster care caseworker or adoption assessor assigned to complete the home study will at a minimum complete two face-to-face interviews with the family. Depending on each family's individual situation, the assessor may ask the foster parent(s) and family to meet in order to discuss strengths, limitations, and/or for other information to be provided or obtained. The agency foster care caseworker or adoption assessor will interview each foster parent, together and individually, to discuss such issues as, but not limited to:

- The role of Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services and that of the foster parents and the mutual expectation of both;
- The reasons underlying their desire and motivation to be foster parents;
- The attitude with regard to situations of abuse and neglect;

- Childhood and family experiences;
- Methods of discipline;
- The applicant's view on parenting, relationships between parent and child and how they resolve conflict;
- Daily family routines, habits, and the rights of foster children in relation to religion.

The agency foster care caseworker or adoption assessor will interview other members in the household, individually and collectively, and discuss such issues as, but not limited to:

- How they feel about becoming a part of a family foster home;
- Their ability to accept differences in individuals;
- If interviewing young children, determine how they feel about having another child in their home and how they expect to react, i.e. do they resent this possibility or are they willing to accept the child?

A home visit will be made for the purpose of observing the family interaction and how they function together. All household members must be present for this visit. This will give everyone an opportunity to ask questions and become familiar with the assessment process.

Foster Care Falsification

Applicants are cautioned to complete all paperwork thoroughly and accurately and to participate in the home study process with openness and candor. Information for the home study is gathered through interviews, references, medical report, criminal record checks and occasionally through an additional outside assessment. An applicant who knowingly makes a false statement on the application or other document or during the course of the home study may be guilty of falsification, as defined in Ohio Revised Code 2921.13.

Foster Care Approval or Denial of a Home Study

The Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services shall complete a written home study report called the Assessment for Child Placement/Home Study (JFS 01673), on the basis of interviews, medicals, referrals, and other reports and documents obtained. The home study will be completed within 180 days from receiving that applicant(s) JFS 01691, "Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Application for Child Placement" for approval or denial. This 180 day completion time frame may be extended by written mutual agreement between the applicant and Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services in extreme circumstances, however if the applicant is unable to submit all required

documentation within 1 year, the agency has the right to terminate the application. The assessor will provide written notification to the applicant of approval or denial to be provided within ten days after the home study has been approved or denied.

The foster care caseworker or adoption assessor shall arrive at one of the following conclusions at the completion of a home study:

- Recommend the certification of the applicant(s) as foster parent(s);
- Recommend that certification for foster care not be approved;

If the Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services approves the home study, the written notification of said approval will be completed within ten (10) days of completion of the home study and shall include, but will not be limited to the following information;

- Date of approval of the foster home study
- A description of the characteristics of the child or children for whom the applicant is being approved.

If the application is recommended for certification as a foster parent or a foster to adopt parent, the assessor will forward the certification recommendations to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services which will issue a JFS 1213 “Notice of Approval for Foster Home”. This approval is valid for two (2) years.

If the Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services determines the decision is to deny an a foster home study , the written notification will be documented on the “Notification of Denial of Initial Certification, Recertification or Revocation of a Foster Home Certificate” (JFS 01315) and will be sent by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, with the following:

- An explanation for the reason for denial;
- The specific laws or rules with which the applicant is not in compliance;
- A description of procedures for agency grievance policy

An applicant who disagrees with the denial recommendation may;

- Request a grievance hearing or;
- Withdraw their application

If the applicant fails to request a Grievance Hearing or submit a voluntary Withdrawal of Application, the agency will submit the Recommendation for Denial to ODJFS. ODJFS will notify the applicant of the denial recommendation and give the applicant an opportunity to request a state hearing. If the application is denied by ODJFS, the applicant will not be eligible for any ODJFS children’s services license or certification for five (5) years from the date of denial.

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Foster Parent Reporting Responsibilities

State foster home rules have the following specific communication requirements of foster parents. The following circumstances or events require the foster parent to notify the agency immediately or no later than 24 hours.

These events require that both the child's worker and the foster care worker/adoption assessor be notified. In the event that either the child's worker or supervisor is not available by phone the foster parent should contact the Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services Director. If you have an emergency or need to report abuse or neglect

please contact a screener at (419) 282-5000. As a mandated reporter you must make verbal contact to report the concern as soon as you are aware of the incident. If it is an emergency and after hours foster parents should contact the Ashland County Sheriff's Department at (419) 289-3911 to speak with the on-call worker immediately.

According to OAC section 5101:2-7-14 the following events require immediate notice, within one hour, after the event occurred:

- Serious illness or injury involving medical treatment of a foster child;
 - Death of a foster child;
 - Unauthorized or unplanned absence of the foster child from the home (failure to return from a home visit, apparent runaway, etc);
 - Removal, or attempted removal, of the foster child from the home by anyone other than an employee of the placing agency;
 - Suspected abuse or neglect of the foster child;
 - Involvement of a foster child with law enforcement
 - According to OAC section 5101:2-7-14 the following events require the foster parent to notify the agency within 24 hours or the next business day after the event occurred:
- Foster home becomes uninhabitable for any reason;
 - Foster parent places the foster child with the emergency caregiver temporarily to attend to a family emergency;
 - Foster parent arranges respite for the child with an approved respite provider;

These events require that both the foster care caseworker or adoption assessor and supervisor be notified. In the event that either the foster care specialist/adoption assessor or supervisor is not available by phone the foster parent should contact the Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services Director. If you have an emergency or need to report abuse or neglect please contact (419) 282-5000. As a mandated reporter you must make verbal contact to report the concern as soon as you are aware of the incident. If it is an emergency and the agency is closed, the foster parent should contact the Ashland County Sheriff's Department at (419) 289-3911, to speak with the on-call worker immediately. The following events require immediate notice or no later than 24 hours:

- Fire in the foster home requiring the services of a fire department
- Impending change in foster parent's marital status
- Change in household occupancy, including birth of baby
- Serious illness or death of any household member
- Foster parent places the foster child with the emergency caregiver temporarily to attend to a family emergency
- Foster parent arranges respite for the child with an approved respite provider
- Any juvenile in the home has been convicted of a crime**

- Any criminal charge brought against the foster parent or other household member**
- Any criminal conviction of the foster parent or other household member**

****NOTE:** A foster parent's failure to notify the foster care caseworker or adoption assessor and supervisor in either of the circumstances noted above regarding criminal charges shall result in ACDJFS recommending that the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) seek an order to revoke the foster parent's certification and licensure.

Change of Address

Foster parents must notify the agency at least four (4) weeks prior to any planned move. Once the move has been completed, the foster care specialist/adoption assessor will complete a review of the new residence and circumstances. The review consists of:

- Safety audit of the home within ten (10) working days of the move
- Completion of a fire inspection within 90 days
- Assessment of the new home and household including:
- General living and play areas
- Bedrooms
- Outdoor space
- Income and expenses
- Determination of the number, age range and gender of foster children for which the home is approved

With the exception of the fire inspection, the foster care specialist/adoption assessor must complete the home study update and submit a recommendation to ODJFS for certification of the new residence within 30 days of the move. Although a new license is issued, the license expiration date does not change.

Changes in Household Composition

Foster parents must notify the foster care specialist/adoption assessor within 24 hours whenever someone (other than a foster child) moves in to or out of the household, including the birth of a new baby. If the new household member is expected to reside in the home for more than two (2) weeks, the following activities must be completed:

- The foster care specialist/adoption assessor will interview the new household member
- A BCII and FBI fingerprint check and local criminal records check must be initiated within ten (10) days if the new household member is an adult.
- Central Registry Check and/or AP search in SACWIS
- Juvenile record check and a record check in the family's county of residence, if different, if the new household member is a youth ages 12 to 18 years
- Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members for the new household member must be completed and submitted to the

foster care specialist/adoption assessor within 60 days of the person's move into the household.

- If the new household member is the newborn of the foster parent and is receiving regular medical care, the Medical Statement must be completed and submitted within 90 days of the date the newborn becomes a household member.

Based on the interview(s) and results of the criminal records check, the foster care specialist/adoption assessor will determine if the new household member meets all applicable requirements of state foster home rules and agency policies. In addition, the foster care specialist/adoption assessor will assess the impact of the new household member on the family and re-determine the number, age range and gender of foster children for whom the foster parent is approved. This assessment must be completed within 30 days.

Occupancy Limitations and Accessibility for Foster Homes

During the first year that a foster home is certified by the Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services, the foster home shall have no more than three (3) foster children placed in that foster home. There are certain circumstances when a foster home can have over three (3) children during the first two years. If this shall happen the agency may be able to request a waiver from Ohio Department of Job and Family Services if the home is a relative foster home and the waiver is for a non safety issue. Documentation is then required as to why the foster caregiver has more than three (3) children in that home at one time. The exceptions to this rule include:

- If the foster placement is a sibling group.

There should not be more than two (2) children under the age of two in a foster home at one time. The only exception to this rule is if the foster placement is a sibling group. There should not be more than four (4) children under the age of five (5), including the children of the foster caregiver in a foster home at one time. The only exception to this rule is if the placement is a sibling group. After the first two years of a foster home being certified by the agency the foster home can have up to five (5) children in a foster home at one time.

There should not be more than a total of 10 children, including the children of a foster caregiver, residing in the foster home at one time.

Change in Marital Status

The foster parent must notify the foster care caseworker or adoption assessor in advance of any pending change in marital status. If the change involves a spouse moving out of the household, the foster care specialist/adoption assessor will assess the impact of the change in circumstances on the foster family and determine if the family is capable of providing continued care for foster children. If indicated, the foster care specialist/adoption assessor will re-determine the number, age range and gender of foster children for whom the foster parent is approved. If the change involves marriage and addition of a prospective foster

parent to the household, the new foster parent must complete all of the foster parent requirements including:

- Completion of the 36 hour pre-service training classes and additional two (2) hours of Infant CPR/First Aid, if applicable. All classes must be completed within 120 days of the move into the household.
- A BCII and FBI fingerprint check and local criminal records check must be initiated within ten (10) days of the move into the household.
- Central Registry Check and/or AP search in SACWIS

Completion and submission of the following documents and checks within 30 days of the move into the household:

- Application for Child Placement (JFS 01691)
- Applicant Financial Statement (JFS 01681)
- Names of four (4) personal references
- The Medical Statement (JFS 01653, “Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members”) must be completed and submitted to the agency within 60 days of the move into the household.

A home study assessor will meet with the prospective foster parent to review personal history, foster family rules and policies, and complete a written assessment of the new foster parent within 30 days of the change. The new foster parent must meet all foster home standards and comply with all agency policies in order to be approved. As part of the assessment, the assessor will re-determine the number, age range, and gender of foster children for whom the foster parents are approved. When all requirements are met and the new spouse completes the pre-service training requirements, a recommendation for certification is submitted to ODJFS and a new license is issued in the names of both foster parents. Although a new license is issued, the license expiration date does not change. The new spouse’s continuing training hour requirement is calculated from the date pre-service training is completed to the date of license expiration.

Addition of a Significant Other to a Household

If the foster parent’s “significant other” (boyfriend or girlfriend) moves into the household, that individual is considered a co-parent and must complete all of the assessment and training activities required of a new spouse. These activities must be completed within the same timeframes required for a new spouse.

Foster Care Annual Review

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services annually, from the date of the initial or recertification of the foster care licensure, may complete an annual assessment

with the foster care caseworker or adoption assessor and the foster caregivers in their home. This assessment will be completed prior to one year of being certified. The assessment consists of a meeting between the foster care caseworker or adoption assessor and the caregivers, all household members over the age of four residing in the home with the exception of foster children to review the following:

- The foster parents strength and growth areas
- Foster children placed in the previous year
- Supportive services provided to the family in the previous year
- Training needs and completion of training
- Safety audit of the home
- Request Child Characteristics Checklist to be updated
- Local Criminal Background Checks to be completed
- Verification of a Driver's License and Car Insurance
- Emergency caregiver criminal background checks, safety audit, and proof of license and insurance

This is a great opportunity to discuss with our caseworkers what additional training you feel would be helpful and any ideas or suggestions you may have for the future.

Foster Care Recertification

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services is required to monitor all home studies currently certified and approved through the agency. Updates to the initial study must be completed at least every two (2) years. A formal recertification assessment is completed by the foster care caseworker or adoption assessor prior to the licensure expiring. Not less than ninety or more than one hundred and twenty days prior to the expiration of the home study, the assigned assessor will mail "Notice of Expiration and Reapplication for a Foster Home Certificate" (JFS 01331) to the foster parent. Included with the Notice of Expiration is a cover letter about the recertification process, the date of expiration, along with information about the current number of training hours completed and documentation required for submission for the home study recertification process. The recertification consists of at least one home visit between the foster care caseworker or adoption assessor and the caregivers, all household members over the age of four residing in the home with the exception of foster children to review the following:

This Notification of Foster Care Home study Update includes

- Due date of home study update
- Notification to the foster parent(s) that failure to reapply or voluntarily terminate prior to the expiration date of the certificate will result in expiration of the foster home certificate.

Individuals who are certified as a foster parent or a foster to adopt parent must complete the following at the two-year update:

- Local Criminal Records Checks, Bureau of Criminal Identification and

Investigations (BCII) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) fingerprints of all adults in the home and juvenile records checks of youth ages 12 to 18 years old every four years upon initial certification or pursuant to rule 5101:2-5-09.1 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

- Review of training completed; required 40 hours
- Safety audit of the home (Deficiencies found through the safety audit will require a corrective action plan to be completed per state regulations)
- Local criminal records checks on emergency caregivers
- Water test for well or cistern water, if applicable
- New Financial Statement (JFS 01681)
- Fire Inspection, if applicable or found to be needed
- Interviews with the foster and/or adoptive parents and all family members over the age of 4 years old.
- Current training in infant CPR and first aid for homes licensed for 0-2 year olds
- Medical Statements (JFS 01653) for applicant(s) and all members of the household if there has been a change in the individuals' health a new medical statement is required.
- Requested updated Child Characteristics Checklist, if not updated within one year.
- Emergency caregiver must have a safety audit and proof of a license and insurance.

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services may also require a report of physical, psychiatric or psychological examination.

The foster care caseworker or adoption assessor shall then complete the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Assessment for Child Placement Update (JFS 01385). The assessment and required documentation will be turned in for agency review. The foster care or adoption specialist will then provide written notification to the applicant(s) of approval or denial of the update to the home study within ten days of completion of the home study update.

Failure to respond to the Notification of Foster Care Home study Recertification

- A notification letter will be sent to foster applicants reminding them that all needed verifications, home visits, and the recertification approval must be completed prior to licensure or approval expiration. It will also be noted that all children placed in their home will be removed if all requirements are not met at prior to licensure or approval expiration.
- If the foster and/or adoptive applicants have not completed all necessary requirements prior to the due date for the update the agency will begin the process of removal for all children placed in the home and place them in other licensed homes.
- The agency will then notify the foster and/or adoptive parents that Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services will recommend Denial of Recertification based on failure to comply with the agency policies, procedures and requirements.

Training Requirements

Once licensed, foster parents must complete 40 hours of continuing education training during each 2-year certification period to maintain licensure. CPR and First Aid training must be completed every two years and verification must be on file. A maximum of 13 hours of out of class room hours can be completed with prior approval from department supervisor. The foster parent is responsible for turning in all certificates of ongoing education trainings attended that is not offered by Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services and out of class room hours within 30 days of the attended training or completed activity. Agency policy requires that the foster parent complete the full 40-hour requirement at least 30 days prior to license expiration. This allows time for training verifications to be submitted to the agency and entered into the foster parent's training record. This also ensures that the agency's recertification recommendation to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services can be submitted prior to license expiration. ACDJFS reimburses foster parents at a rate of \$10.00 per credit hour earned for training to be paid after the foster parent completes the training and attendance is verified. The agency pays for only those trainings that occurred in a classroom setting. The agency does not provide a training stipend for self-directed programs such as online training (Foster Parent College) and readings. The agency does not provide a training stipend for programs that are not delivered in a conventional or traditional setting where the principal transfer of knowledge occurred through the physical presence of a trainer whose responsibility it was to impart instruction to the foster parent.

ITNA, 2-year Training Plan and Training Hours Waiver

An Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA) must be completed no later than the first 30 days of certification and again at the time of recertification. The ITNA is completed in collaboration with the foster parent's caseworker and the foster caregiver to help determine the type of training each foster caregiver needs. Based on the results of the ITNA, the caseworker will develop an individualized 2-year training plan with each foster parent that will specify the courses that must be completed and the criteria the agency will use to determine successful completion of the courses.

A waiver can be granted at the beginning of a licensing period, for up to eight (8) hours of training as part of the ITNA if the foster parent meets all of the following requirements:

- The foster parent has been licensed for two (2) or more years
- The foster parent provided foster care for at least 90 days in the 12-month period preceding the date the training plan is completed
- The foster parent had no rules violations in the 12-month period preceding the date the training plan is completed
- The foster parent complied in full with the previous training plan

Ongoing Training

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services offers ongoing training on a regular basis. The agency will send out notices of training at both Ashland County and surrounding agency's. Credit will only be given for the amount of time attended for class

room hours. Class room hours must be at least 28 hours of the 40 hours required at recertification. Foster parents must obtain training in CPR and First Aid during the certification period. The Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services continuing training for ongoing foster families shall be based on the caregiver's individual training needs assessment. Initial orientation classes may not be used toward ongoing training hours.

The following is a guideline for Ashland County Foster Parents regarding training opportunities in which 12 credit hours may be earned.

- Books or magazines (1 hour per book/magazine)
(The books selected must be related in some way to child and family development and be approved by the Foster Care Specialist. A maximum of three hours can be used in a two year period). This must have prior approval.
- Internet Training and Video presentations may be used provided that a qualified trainer is present during the training session to respond to questions or the video presentation has a pre-test, posttest, or a one page written component is approved to be used for training hours within 30 days of the date of event. (A maximum of 10 hours of combined internet training or video presentations can be used in a two year period) This must have prior approval.
- The acceptance of continuing training that is completed outside a classroom where a trainer is not present, shall be considered by the recommending agency on an individual basis and shall not be used for pre-placement training or to meet more than one-third of a foster caregiver's continuing training requirements. Such trainings, which may include training offered through video presentations, computer programs, internet sites, interactive video presentations, books or magazines, professional workshops, seminars, parenting education classes, college courses total contact/class hours with documentation provided.

To be accepted by a recommending agency to meet a foster caregiver's continuing training requirements, the training must include a transfer of learning component prior to or following the training. Transfer of learning components may include a pretest, a posttest, or a discussion following the training. Such training shall be consistent with the recommending agency's written needs assessment and continuing training plan developed for the foster caregiver. This must have prior approval.

A foster caregiver may complete up to twenty per cent of his or her continuing training requirement by teaching one or more training classes to other foster caregivers as requested by the agency. To qualify for teaching a foster caregiver shall:

- Have at least two years experience as a certified foster caregiver.
- Have had at least two child placements in their foster home.
- Be a currently certified foster home.
- Not be under a corrective action plan by a recommending agency.
- Not be under investigation for a violation of state statute or rule by a recommending agency or ODJFS.

Internet Training

Foster Parent College offers internet training. You can access this training by contacting the North East Ohio Regional Training Center to see if there are hours available. There currently is no cost to take this training. No training stipend is paid for training completed through the Internet (see the end of this chapter for more information on training stipends).

Good Cause Policy

If a foster caregiver does not have their ongoing training hours completed in time for their foster care recertification, the agency can request a good cause waiver for that training. There must be one of the following documented by the agency in order to request a good cause waiver:

- A documented illness of the foster caregiver that prevented the caregiver to get their training in a timely manner.
- A documented critical emergency of the foster caregiver or their immediate family.
- A documented lack of accessible training programs. This will be documented by the foster caregiver and the agency.
- If the foster caregiver has served in active duty as a member of the Ohio organized militia, as defined in section 5923.01 of the Revised Code, for more than 30 days in the preceding two-year period and that active duty relates to either an emergency in or outside of the state or to military duty in or outside of the state. The additional time shall be one month for each month the caregiver was on active duty

If the good cause policy is approved there will be a corrective action plan that provides the foster caregiver with the prompt completion of the ongoing training within 30-60 days. Failure to comply with the corrective action plan with the time frames given will result in the agency recommending revocation of the foster care license to ODJFS.

Training Stipends

Ashland County Department Job and Family Services makes stipend payments to foster parents to compensate for the cost of attending training sessions. The stipend payment is currently \$10.00 per hour of successfully completed training. Stipends are limited to a maximum of 36 hours for preservice training (\$360.00) and 40 hours of continuing training in each 2-year certification period (\$400.00). The following conditions apply:

A foster parent can receive stipend payments up to \$400 for training completed during each 2-year certification period. Stipend payments are available only for completion of training through classes, workshops, and other in-person training activities in which a trainer is present. No stipends will be paid for completion of any self-directed training such as Internet courses, home-study booklets, or completed at work. Stipends for continuing training will be paid within 120 days of the training event.

The agency has the right to deny payment if it is determined that the foster caregiver has not successfully acquired the skills the training was designed to teach, it is the beyond of the individualized training plan of the foster caregiver, or if the training was a self-directed study and not delivered in a traditional setting with a physical trainer. Verification must be provided if an individual attends training, this must include a certificate or signed verification from a presenter.

Voluntary Termination of the Foster Care License by a Foster Parent

A foster parent may voluntarily initiate termination of a family foster home certificate for any reason. Notice of intent to terminate shall be provided fourteen (14) calendar days prior to termination in the form of a written notice to Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services. Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services then will notify any other agency which has a foster child in placement in that home. Within thirty (30) calendar days, Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services shall submit the ODJFS 1317 form to ODJFS indicating the family foster home certificate has been terminated and the foster home record closed.

Contacting the Agency

The foster child's caseworker will be available to you during regular working hours of Monday through Friday, 7:30am-4:30pm, excluding holidays. The foster care caseworker/adoption assessor can also be reached during those hours for help and support. During working hours if you are unable to reach your child's caseworker or the foster care caseworker you need to ask for their supervisor. The Director of the agency may also be available during business hours. In the event that you are unable to reach the caseworker, foster care caseworker/adoption assessor, or their supervisor please follow the chain of command by first calling the other social service supervisor, and then the agency Director. If you have an emergency or need to report abuse or neglect please call (419) 282-5001. As a mandated reporter you must make verbal contact to report the concern as soon as you are aware of the incident.

We know that emergencies sometimes happen when our offices are not open. For this reason, a caseworker is always on call to assist you. After hours, call the Ashland County Sheriff's Department at 419-289-3911 to reach one of us in the event of an emergency.

Emergency after Hours Procedures

Children Services' on-call worker is to be contacted in emergency situations only.

- This means the reporter knows or suspects a child is in immediate danger or at imminent risk of harm:
- Child in agency custody is taken to hospital for in-patient or out-patient procedures.
- Child in agency custody has run away or is being charged with a misdemeanor or felony crime.

Contacting the on-call worker is not to be used for:

- Requesting to talk to individual workers.
- Non-emergency reports.
- Information and referral requests.

Please use this policy as a guideline for determining when to call our on-call, emergency service worker. Of course, if you have any serious questions or concerns regarding a child in your care, and you are unsure if it is an emergency please call the Ashland County Sheriff's Department to speak with the on-call worker.

Section IV

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Agency Responsibilities

It is a very big decision to remove children from their birth family. When children are placed with our foster families, we all have to work together to assist our children and our birth families. All members of our treatment team have big responsibilities to make sure that the needs of our children and birth families are being met, and to make sure we are making timely decisions about the future of our children. The child's social worker, also known as the intake or ongoing worker or in some cases the adoption worker is responsible for:

- Maintaining open, honest and timely communication with the foster parent and other team members
- Securing, monitoring, and coordinating services for:

- The foster child
 - The child's biological family
 - The foster family, in some cases
- Sharing case plan information with the foster parent
- Informing the foster parent of all relevant facts concerning the child's history, behavior, relationships, and abuse/neglect experienced.
- Arranging and, if necessary, monitoring parent/child and sibling visitation and coordinating all pre-placement visit with the child
- Ensuring that the foster parent is informed of all Case plan meetings, Semi Annual Reviews and other events in which the foster parent's participation is required or needed.
- At least monthly home visits with the caregiver and child to assess how the child and caregiver are adjusting to the placement, visitation, independent living (if applicable)

The foster care caseworker or adoption assessor provides resources and support directly to the foster parent to assist them in providing the best possible care to the foster child, and are responsible for:

- Maintains open, honest and timely communication with the foster parent,
- Monitors the foster family's needs and well-being and may provide or arrange for additional support or intervention if indicated;
- Assesses the foster parent's training needs;
- Develops the two-year training plan with the foster parent and may arrange for additional training;
- Monitors and ensures foster parent's availability for placement;
- Screens for appropriate placements;
- Facilitates resolving problems with per-diem checks or other reimbursements;
- Approves changes in emergency and alternate caregivers;
- Monitors and ensures on-going rule compliance;
- Investigates allegations of rule non-compliance and develops corrective action plans, if indicated;
- Completes annual written assessments with the foster family
- Determines changes in approved usage of foster home (number, gender, age range)

Foster Parents Responsibilities

In order to help you better understand your responsibilities and the major responsibilities of each member of our treatment team. This list is not

exhaustive, it is meant to give you some guidelines about who is responsible for doing what, to help our children in foster care. Foster parents provide a safe nurturing growth-enhancing family experience for the foster child and is responsible to:

- Maintain open, honest and timely communication with the child's social worker, the support worker, and other team members.
- Participate in the development of case plans;
- Attend Semi-Annual Reviews (SAR's) when possible;
- Participate in all facets of the child's life such as educational planning, school functions, counseling, agency team meetings, family conferences, etc.
- Transport to visitation, medical, extra-curricular activities and all necessary appointments;
- Provide for the foster child with food, shelter, personal care, recreational opportunities and clothing;
- Honor the foster child's feeling for his own parents;
- Encourage the foster child's relationship with the caseworker, complete progress reports;
- Work with the child's parent, as appropriate, during placement and prepare the child for reunification, encourage the foster child's relationships with those parties actively involved in the child's case plan or who have or will have a significant role in the child's life, as determined by the agency.
- Work with adoptive parents, as appropriate, and prepare the child during the adoption pre-placement and placement process;
- Work with agency staff to prepare the child for removal from the foster home for any reason;
- Notify the caseworker and obtain permission before taking the foster child on trips of extended time or distance;
- Give the caseworker reasonable notice when requesting the removal of the foster child;
- Respect final decisions made by the agency , team, and court;
- Foster caregivers will continue to use the foster child's own name when in a foster home. This aides not only in preserving individual and legal identity, but also in maintaining an emotional tie with the biological family.

Confidentiality

All information regarding the children and family who we work with is confidential. This agency, by the Ohio Revised Code and by the regulations of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, is bound to confidentiality on all cases. Confidential information is private and is not to be shared unless authorized by the agency. When children are placed

with foster families they are provided confidential information to assist them in providing for the children placed in their home. This information is not to be disclosed at any time prior, during, or after the placement of a child in the family foster home. Specific confidential information may be approved to be disclosed to the therapist, school, physician, or alternative caregiver if deemed necessary and appropriate by the agency. Permission to disclose this information must be obtained by the agency. Divulging confidential information without authorization is grounds for revocation of the family foster home license.

Placement of a Foster Child

It is very traumatic for a child when they must be removed from their birth family. The agency makes every attempt to gather as much information about the child and the birth family as possible in a very short period of time. Most children entering foster care do so on an emergency basis. It is possible that limited information may be available in emergency situations but will be obtained as soon as possible. Federal and state laws set certain standards for the selection of a placement for a child who cannot remain with his own family. If the child must be removed, the agency will first look for placement with the non-custodial parent, maternal and paternal relatives, or with a non-relative who has an established relationship with the child. If none of these individuals is available or if the placement is not in the child's best interest, the child will be placed with a foster family or in another setting.

The Ohio Administrative Code (5101:2-42-05) requires that the agency select a setting which is consistent with the best interest and special needs of the child and which is also:

- The least-restrictive, most family-like setting available which meets the child's emotional and physical needs
- In close proximity to the home from which the child was removed or the home in which the child will be permanently placed
- In close proximity to the school in which the child was enrolled prior to placement
- Designed to enhance the likelihood of reunification, when appropriate;
- Able to protect the child and provide a safe environment for the child.

Matching Children with Foster Families

Throughout the home study process, the foster care caseworker or adoption assessor, and foster family together assess the family members' strengths, limitations, and capacities to determine the types of children whose needs can best be met by placement with this particular family. The child characteristic checklist is completed and a variety of areas are discussed regarding factors the family considers acceptable for placement. This includes specific medical, social and behavioral characteristics the family is willing to accept. The Checklist is used to help match foster children with families who can best meet their needs.

Once a family has been identified the foster care specialist with assistance of the caseworker if necessary contacts the families and presents information about the

prospective child or siblings. Foster parents are encouraged to ask as many questions as necessary about the child in order to make a comfortable decision about accepting or declining the placement. Once the family makes the decision to accept the child, the child's worker contacts the family directly to make placement arrangements.

The following information is provided by the caseworker to the foster parent when the placement is made;

- Authorization for Routine Medical Care
- 72 hour and 60 day medical screening and physical examination form
- Review of the Individualized Child Care Agreement
- Education and Health Information
- Information to Caregiver and Care Agreement
- Life Book, if the child has one
- Visitation Schedule
- Juvenile charges and disposition, if applicable

The foster parent will sign the Individual Child Care Agreement. Additional information will be provided to the foster parent including talents, medical and education, restrictions, etc. The agency will provide the foster parent with additional information as soon as it is received if it is unavailable at the time of placement. If time permits, the foster parent should familiarize the child with the physical layout of the home, the child's bedroom and storage space, bathrooms and emergency exits and procedures before the child's social worker leaves the home. In addition, the foster parent should introduce the child to all household members and explain the "rules of the house" so the child understands the foster parent's expectations.

Maintaining of Records

Foster parents are required to maintain a record on all child (ren) placed in the home. Initial placement information including the individual child care agreement, medical and educational records, per-diem agreement and juvenile probation records should be kept in a folder. Medical, mental health, dental and optical appointments should be documented; copies of physicals, immunizations, and physician directives should also be maintained in this file. School achievements and recognitions, Individual Education Plans (IEP), grade cards, progress reports, suspension and detentions, and discipline reports. The original documents should be provided to the Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services and copies should be maintained for the child's record.

Lifebooks

Lifebooks are books similar to that of a scrapbook including pictures of the child's family, school, activities, and other pictures and documents that are important events in the child's

life. Lifebooks are provided by the agency and may be expanded by the foster parent. This not only assists the child in remembering events prior to entering foster care but allows them to use pictures to assist them in the grieving process and in remembering significant times in their life. This should document chronological events during the time the child is placed in the family's home and can obtain pictures and letters taken by the children during family events, extra-curricular activities, schools, and visits. Foster Parents are encouraged to get the children to participate in the creation and adding of additional items in the lifebook. Foster parents are responsible for having the lifebook for the caseworker to view monthly and at SAR's. Copies of the lifebook are to be maintained in the file. The original lifebook is to be provided to the agency for the child when leaving the foster placement. Foster parents are cautioned that child (ren) may destroy their lifebook and it should be kept in a safe place that is accessible to the child with the foster parent(s) permission. The agency does offer ongoing training annually on the development of life books.

Home Visits

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services will provide continued support prior to placement, during, and following a child leaving the home. This will be completed through home visits from the child's caseworker, phone contact, newsletters, and etc. The agency encourages foster parents to ask as many questions as needed.

Throughout the period a child is placed in the home the agency requests the foster parents and other household members cooperation in the completion of the following services being provided and the requirements to be completed by the agency;

- A home visit with at least one of the foster caregivers and the child(ren) is required in the home no later than 72 hours from the date of placement, in the home;
- A home visit with all foster caregivers, the child(ren), and all household members in the family's home within 28 days of the placement;
- The agency will need to complete visits in the home no later than 30 days after the caseworker's home visit with the child and at least one caregiver. Additional visits shall continue in the home within thirty days from each of the last preceding visits. All household members residing in the home must be seen at least every 60 days. Home visits are not required to be announced.

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Agency Discipline Philosophy

The children coming into foster care are in need of a secure, stable, loving environment where they can grow. Our ability to provide such an environment is dependent upon the use of effective methods of discipline in working with them. Children entering foster care may be victims of physical, emotional, sexual abuse, or have witnessed abuse. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has developed rules for the care, supervision, and discipline of children. The agency educates foster parents on the state rules during pre-service training, manual training, and through ongoing trainings on behavior management and discipline. Discipline is an essential part of child-rearing and should be viewed as a learning experience so that the child will develop accepted patterns of behavior and responsibility. This process in conjunction with other parenting functions helps provide the child a foundation which enables him/her to effectively deal with life as an adult.

Discipline Policy

The agency provides strict guidelines on discipline and helpful hints on methods that may work with children placed in the family foster home. It is important to remember that each child is different and what may work for one child may not work for another. If a foster

parent is in conflict with these disciplinary guidelines, discussion about alternatives should take place with the social worker. The following guidelines are required to be followed by all foster parents:

A foster caregiver shall treat each foster child with kindness, consistency and respect.

A foster caregiver shall not discriminate in providing care and supervision for foster children on the basis of race, sex, religion, color or national origin.

A foster caregiver shall provide humane, instructive discipline appropriate to the age and functioning level of a foster child.

- Disciplinary methods shall stress praise and encouragement for desired behavior rather than punishment;
- All rules and expectations made by a foster caregiver shall be explained to a foster child in a manner appropriate to the child's age and understanding during the child's initial orientation and prior to any disciplinary action for violations of such rules;
- A foster child shall not be punished for actions over which the child has no control (i.e. ADD behaviors, Tourettes Syndrome, etc.)
- A foster child shall not be punished for bed wetting or in the course of toilet training activities.

A foster caregiver shall not subject a foster child to verbal abuse or swearing; to derogatory remarks about foster children, their families, their races, their sex, their religion, their color or their national origin; or to threats of physical violence or removal from the family foster home.

A foster caregiver shall not use any of the following punishments for a foster child:

- Physical hitting or any type of physical punishment inflicted in any manner upon the body such as spanking, paddling, punching, shaking, biting, hair pulling, pinching or rough handling. The substantiated use of physical punishment by a foster parent will be cause for immediate termination of a family's foster license.
- Physically strenuous work or exercises, when used as a means of punishment;
- Requiring or forcing a foster child to take an uncomfortable position, such as squatting or bending, or requiring a foster child to repeat physical movements when used as a means of punishment; Denial of social or recreational activities for excessive or prolonged periods of time, in general time outs for pre-school children should not exceed 5 to 10 minutes. Removal of the TV or certain play

activities for 1 or 2 days for young school age children is appropriate. An older child may be grounded or lose certain privileges for one day or several days depending on the severity of the act;

- Denial of social or case worker services, medical treatment, or educational services;
- Deprivation of meals;
- Denial of visitation or communication rights with the family of the foster child as a means of punishment;
- Denial of sleep;
- Denial of shelter, clothing, bedding or restroom facilities.

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services does not approve nor train foster parents on restraints, this is not an approved method of discipline.

A foster caregiver shall NOT use any form of mechanical or chemical restraint on a foster child.

Any act of omission or commission by a foster caregiver or other member of the household which results in the death, injury, illness, abuse, neglect or exploitation of a foster child shall be grounds for the denial or revocation of a family foster home certificate. This may be a recommendation of the agency supervising a family foster home or ODJFS.

Foster caregivers shall ensure that each foster child placed in the foster home who is not capable of meeting their own personal hygiene needs is cleaned and groomed daily. A foster child's clothing and footwear will be clean, well-fitting, seasonal, and appropriate to the child's age and sex. Foster children capable of meeting their own personal hygiene needs shall be provided with adequate personal toiletry supplies appropriate to the child's age, sex, race and national origin. Foster parents should provide foster children with instruction on good habits of personal care, hygiene, and grooming appropriate to the child's age, sex, race, national origin, and need for training.

Suggestions for Effective Discipline

In creating an environment where children can grow emotionally, socially, intellectually, physically and spiritually, foster parents must first be aware of their role in the adult-child relationship. Effective foster parents combine firm and consistent management with understanding, warmth, flexibility and a relaxed attitude. This provides children the opportunity for growth within the security which comes from knowing limits will be set on their behavior when they do not control their actions. Consideration should be given to previous experiences and personality in selecting discipline for a child. All children may not respond to these methods.

We believe all children coming into Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services placement will benefit from some common expectations of acceptable behavior. These common expectations of behavior can be used as a good educational tool by foster parent to assist in creating rules for a family foster home. This code is a guide to be interpreted in light of each foster home's own conduct expectations.

1. Language and Respect - All people have a responsibility to show respect to others and in turn have the right to receive respect. This includes the manner in which one relates to others - their physical and emotional privacy, as well as the way one treats another's feelings and property. Profane and/or menacing language, as well as belittling remarks are not part of a respectful attitude and should not be used.
2. Stealing, Possession of Stolen Property - Stealing is not acceptable either socially or legally. Possession of stolen property is equally unacceptable.
3. Physical Abuse - Physical abuse by any person perpetrated against any other person violates that person's right to safety, to respect and to personal dignity. Abuse includes striking, punching, biting, scratching, burning, etc. and is not to be tolerated.
4. Weapons - Under no circumstances should a child possess articles such as knives, guns, clubs, etc., which that particular child could use it as a weapon.
5. Drugs and Alcohol - Children are not permitted to use drugs, alcoholic beverages or other substances. Prescription medication should be taken as directed, under the supervision of an adult, and should remain in the possession of the foster parent. (See Administration of Medication)
6. Appropriate Dress - The guidelines for designated dress are to be defined by foster parents and the agency based on the child's present situation, age, and the activity which he/she is pursuing.
7. Supervision - Foster parents are responsible for knowing at all times the whereabouts of children in their care. Children are responsible for seeking permission from foster parents and following regular rules of the house regarding whereabouts.
8. Smoking - Smoking is not permitted. It is not only illegal for minors to buy cigarettes; it is not healthy and can pose a fire hazard to the foster home.
9. Destruction of Property - Releasing feeling through the willful destruction of property is not appropriate. Adults should help the child understand that such behavior is not acceptable.

10. Fighting -Fighting is a normal part of growing up. As long as it remains within the boundaries that are defined by the agency and the foster parent.
11. School - All children of the appropriate age are to be enrolled in an educational or training program. It is the responsibility of each child to conduct himself in such a manner as to insure his right to an education. This includes appropriate dress, regular attendance, and participation in class work. It is the responsibility of foster parents to give the child all possible support, encouragement and guidance in this area.
12. House Rules - All homes have specific house rules regarding bedtime, chores, special privileges, etc. Depending on the specific home, there may be other house rules not covered here. It is expected that house rules will be followed provided the child (ren) know and understand the rules.

The twelve expectations (Code of Conduct) listed previously serve as a starting point for suggesting when foster parents are creating rules with children who are placed in the family's home. As the adults responsible for each child's well being, foster parents need to help the child understand these expectations as well as the child's responsibility that accompany these rights.

Once the child is told what our expectations are, we, as adults, should help the child understand and follow through. All children need to go through the learning process of establishing relationships with others, conforming to rules, and interacting in society without infringing on the right of others. Often, children who enter placement may have had faulty learning experiences in these areas.

Therefore, when children enter placement, our role as responsible adults is to determine their needs and assist them in further development through education. This education relies on the effective use of discipline applied on a consistent basis. Discipline, is a tool used to help foster parents enforce the above expectations, which, along with other services, make it possible for children to grow in all areas.

The following suggestions are offered to foster parents to assist them in working with children as they help the individual child develop his full potential:

Know yourself. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Are you aware of how you feel regarding such things as abusive parents, lying, drug use, sexual promiscuity, etc. affects your response to a child's problems?
- In working with children, what are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? Do you have self-confidence and self-respect?

- Are you able to determine when you should handle a situation immediately and when it is better to wait until both you and the child can deal with it more constructively?
- Are you able to seek assistance and take advantage of opportunities provided to discuss problems?
- Are you willing to involve yourself in training programs?

Promote a Positive Image of Authority. In doing this, consider the following:

- Use role modeling to set an example. Look at your feelings toward authority. How do you relate to authority? Your feelings will be picked up by youngsters.
- Negotiate for change and offer alternatives when possible. If a power struggle can be avoided neither individual is threatened by the situation.

Develop a relationship of mutual respect and trust on which to base effective discipline. Consider:

- Are you sensitive to the child's readiness to form a relationship?
- Do you show the child respect and give him reason to trust you?
- What are your feelings for this particular child?
- How do these feelings influence your relationship?

Suggestive Disciplinary Techniques for Children

The following are suggestions for the more effective use of discipline in working with children:

Provide consistency in terms of expectation presented to the child. Consistently enforced and logical rules are important, as well as daily routine in regard to bed making, brushing teeth, changing clothes, showers, and so on. External structure and consistency to this extent are important in helping the child to gain control of himself and to help the child feel safe and secure.

Keep the following in mind:

- Be aware of your unspoken house rules. Make sure the child knows what to expect. Be prepared to repeat and rephrase guidelines.

Don't assume that saying it once will be enough. Keep in mind that a foster child did not grow up in your home and doesn't know your unspoken rules. (i.e. Do you use a paper towel for spills or a dish cloth?)

- Make sure that expectations are reasonable. Recognize if you are working with more than one child, there will be differences in terms of each individual's needs and abilities.

Positive Reinforcement:

- Accentuate the positives a child possesses in order to enhance his self image and self-respect. Encourage the child to choose appropriate behavior by providing him with positive reinforcement (rewards).
- Make discipline relevant to the behavior. Consider at what level the child is presently functioning and choose consequences that are realistic and will provide a learning experience.

There are some techniques which could adversely affect the child's emotional life and are strictly prohibited and are grounds for revocation:

- Threats of violence, of the unknown, of being returned to the agency or sent to jail;
- Use of deliberate frightening techniques, such as locking in a dark closet, tying-up and leaving alone;
- Ridiculing or humiliating the child with his peers;
- Deprecating a child's birth family;
- Physical punishment of any nature.

Techniques that work with your biological child may not work with a foster child. Individual disciplinary plans may have to be worked out.

There are five basic types of intervention available to adults as disciplinary tools:

- 1) natural consequences;
- 2) loss of privileges;
- 3) reparation or repayment;
- 4) removal and isolation; and

5) physical restraint.

Each type is presented below with suggestions and implementation.

Natural Consequences - In some situations the most effective way of dealing with a behavior is to allow the natural consequences of that behavior to occur. This technique is especially effective in helping the child assume responsibility for his own actions. Some examples of how this technique could be effectively used are:

- When a child is late for dinner, the child could have a cold dinner or fix his/her own dinner.
- When a child doesn't put dirty clothes in the clothes hamper, natural consequences could be that the clothes don't get washed or the child needs to wash his/her own clothes.
- When a child is careless with toys, belongings and/or money and loses them, he/she would have to do without the lost object.
- Of course, this technique would not be appropriate if the child's health or welfare would be threatened by the natural consequences.

Loss of Privileges - Every child is entitled to adequate clothing, food, shelter and family contact. In addition to these guarantees, youngsters enjoy a variety of privileges which may be withheld for unacceptable behavior. Again, it is important to consider the child's present level of development and make consequences logical and relevant to the offense. The following privileges can be withheld or modified:

- Phone Calls - Phone privileges can be eliminated for a period of time or restricted in the following manner (excluding court ordered conversations):
 - Amount of time (5 minutes, 10 minutes, etc.)
 - Days (middle of week or weekend)
 - To whom (friends)
- Community/Neighborhood Activities - This area encompasses a variety of activities in which the child with permission is able to enjoy community contact outside the home. A child may be restricted (grounded) completely or partially from going to the store, movies, and friends' homes, playing in the yard, etc.
- Special Outings - Children can be restricted from special activities such as:
 - parties
 - school social activities (athletic events, dances, clubs, etc.)
 - special events (trips to Cedar Point, State Fair, Circus, Zoo, etc.)

- Allowances - If allowances are given as part of the framework within the living situation, part of all of the money may be withheld.
- Television - Viewing can be restricted completely or limited in terms of:
 - late night movies
 - special programs or favorite shows
- Other special privileges such as:
 - use of toys or equipment (bikes, stereo, tools, radio, etc.)
 - inviting friends to dinner or to visit.
- Snacks - Depriving children of snacks can be an option if they are not part of the daily nutritional needs. Suggestions include:
 - between meals
 - bedtime or T.V.
 - desserts
- Free Time - Time which the child has the option of using as he wishes can be withheld or modified by giving special assignments, studying, and work.
- Dating - Dating can be restricted completely or limited in terms of:
 - days and/or
 - hours

Reparation or Repayment - Reparation or repayment of damages can be required within reason. Children can be expected to return things they have acquired improperly, pay for damaged or destroyed property (if money is regularly earned) and/or make repairs when appropriate. For example:

- In the case of a child who has taken another child's personal property, the item(s) are to be returned. If appropriate, the child should personally return the item(s) to the owner.
- A child who trampled on a neighbor's flower bed could be expected to do weeding and other gardening chores for that neighbor for a designated (and reasonable) amount of time.
- A child who is responsible for breaking a window could be expected to make reasonable restitution for replacing the window. Restitution can be made out of his weekly allowance or a special task assignment from which the child earns money. It would be preferable to budget a certain amount out of each allowance rather than causing the child to go for an extended period of time without any allowance.
- A child who has stolen something can be taken to the store or owner to admit his guilt and make arrangement to pay or return the item. In these situations, the child should be given the opportunity to apologize for his actions. Forcing or expecting an apology from a youngster who is unwilling may reinforce dishonesty.

Removal and Isolation - Removing the child from a situation and reducing stimulation of the immediate environment is an acceptable means of intervention. When isolation is used as the alternative choice, the amount of time the child is placed should be limited to brief periods. The responsible adult should be nearby to supervise the child and remove the child from isolation when it is deemed that this alternative had achieved its purpose. Isolation can take several forms as indicated in (a), (b), and (c), below. Note that for some children the type of isolation must be carefully selected based on the child's past experiences. Special consideration should be given to the child who experienced trauma through abandonment, placement in a closet or similar circumstances. In these situations, isolation should not be used.

When isolation is appropriate, the following are some suggestions:

- Removal and isolation in a room, chair or corner. When possible, it is preferable to allow the child to voluntarily remove himself and have some control over the length of time.
- If the child is involved with others, the friends can be sent home.
- If the child is outdoors, the child can be brought inside.

Religious Participation

All children have the right to enjoy freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services demonstrates consideration for, and sensitivity to, the religious backgrounds of children and of families receiving services. Parents retain the right to choose the religious affiliation of their children. Foster parents may be asked to accommodate the requests of the parents by allowing parents, with agency consent, to arrange for children to attend religious services requested by their parents. It is the agency's policy that the foster parents shall permit a foster child to practice their own or their family's chosen religious beliefs and faith unless it is determined and documented in the child's case plan by Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services to not be in the child's best interest. If at all possible, the foster family shall arrange appropriate transportation for the foster child to attend activities of the chosen faith; a foster child may be encouraged to participate in religious activities but shall not be required nor be forced to do so. The foster child shall not be baptized or submit to any religious procedures without prior consent of the child according to their age and functioning level and prior approval of the foster child's parent, guardian, or custodian.

A foster child may not receive non-emergency medical treatment that conflicts with the religious beliefs or practices of the child or his parents without the specific written consent of the parent or guardian. When a foster child requires emergency medical treatment that conflicts with the religious beliefs or practices of the child or his parent or guardian, the foster parent must immediately transport or arrange for the transportation of the child to the nearest hospital emergency room. The foster parent

must then notify the child's caseworker or contact the Ashland County Sheriff's Department immediately to speak to the on-call caseworker if it is after hours. Under no circumstances may the foster parent consent to medical treatment for the foster child that conflicts with the religious beliefs or practices of the child or his parents.

Socialization

Foster children must be allowed privileges and assigned responsibilities similar to those that would be assigned to family members of a similar age and functioning level. Whenever possible, foster parents should teach foster children the skills and tasks required for life in the community. Foster parents should encourage foster children to participate in community, school, recreational and cultural heritage activities appropriate to their age and functioning level. It is important to help foster children find talents and hobbies that complement their strengths. Whenever possible, foster parents should arrange transportation for the foster child to such activities.

It is the agency's philosophy that children should be allowed to spend the night at friends and foster families' extended family homes. Although we want our foster children to lead lives that are as normal as possible the agency must take care that they are in responsible hands at all times. It is our responsibility to ensure that our children are supervised at all times. If the child(ren) in your home want to spend time at a friend's house the agency must be informed prior to the event. You must know the friend's family and have a conversation with the other parent before approving overnights. We expect that the caregiver will use good sound parenting judgment and know where the child is spending the night. It is important that you get to know the parent(s) of the children of whom they want to spend time with. It is reasonable to allow the child to spend 1-3 consecutive nights with friends or extended foster family members. If the child is to spend more than 72 hours in the friend's family's home or the foster family's extended family's home, the agency reserves the right to request that the family complete a criminal background check through finger printing and a physical inspection of their home to ensure adequate space and safety.

We encourage your children to get involved in activities and to attend school events such as football and basketball games but please take discretion when allowing them to attend these events as you are responsible for knowing where they are and who they are with at all times.

If an older child wants to go out into the community unsupervised with friends foster parents and other caregivers shall have prior written approval by the agency specifying whether or not the foster child may be left unattended and, if so, for what period of time based on that child's ability and behavior. Child must have the ability to contact foster parent if the family does not have a house phone. The foster parent must know where the child is going and who they will be with during this unsupervised time.

It is also important to remember that children cannot ride in the car with anyone who is under the age of 18 and whom the agency does not have local criminal background

checks and proof of driver's license and auto insurance. Any person transporting a foster child in a motor vehicle must have a valid driver's license and must carry liability insurance. The vehicle must be in a safe condition according to state laws and rules regarding use of seat belts / car seats apply. A local criminal background check must be completed on the person providing the transportation. Children ages 16 years old and older who are in the custody of the agency may be permitted to ride in a car with a friend who has a driver's license if the following apply: The foster parent/caregiver know the teen driver and their family and have spoken with the parent of that teen prior to the child getting in a car with the teen driver; the foster parent/caregiver shall verify the teen driver's license and insurance information; the teen driver must follow all the guidelines set forth by the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

Overnights Away from the Foster Parent

The child's caseworker and agency representative must be informed of any overnights away from the foster parent. This includes such things as an overnight at the home of a friend, a relative of the foster family, a slumber party, Boy or Girl Scout campout, etc. A discussion with the child's caseworker or other agency representative must take place prior to child staying overnight anywhere other than the foster family's home. Approval is discretionary based on the child's needs and the foster parent's knowledge of the overnight family or setting. The agency will complete local background checks be completed on all adults residing in the home in which the child will be staying and a safety audit of the home if the child is to stay longer than 24 hours. The worker will document the discussion with the foster parent and note the name, address, and phone number of the overnight caregiver if the overnight. Foster parents will know where the child is staying at all times. They will have contact with the other child parent's to confirm plans.

Cell Phone and Cell Phone Use

Children who are in the custody of Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services may be able to have a cell phone depending on the child's age, developmental level, behavioral concerns, and the caregiver's expectations and rules pertaining to having a cell phone. The caseworker for the child or other agency representative shall have a conversation with the foster parent when the issue of the use of a cell phone is brought up by either the child, birth parent/guardian or the agency. Cell phones are not recommended for children under age 13 years old and will not be approved by the agency.

Rules should be established by the foster parent regarding the use of cell phones. Caregivers are encouraged to not allow child to have cell phone after bedtime. Caregivers should set expectations and monitor activity as appropriate to the child's age and developmental level.

If the child works they can buy their own cell phone or the child's birth

parent/guardian can buy them their own phone and maintain payments for the phone. The agency will not be responsible for maintenance of the phone or phone bill. Foster parents and other caregivers are discouraged from purchasing the child a cell phone.

Social Media Accounts

Children who are in the custody of Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services have the right to have contact with their birth family, friends, and significant others as deemed appropriate and according to their service and treatment plans. Foster parents and other caregivers shall have a conversation with the child's caseworker or other agency representative regarding the child's age, developmental level, and behavioral issues prior to authorizing or opening up a social media account of any kind. Foster parents and caregivers shall also be notified of the birth parent/guardians wishes regarding this issue.

Social media accounts are not recommended for children under the age of 13 years old and shall not be approved by the agency caseworker or other representative.

Foster parents and caregivers should set expectations and monitor activities according to the child's age and developmental level. **Under no circumstance shall a picture or pictures of children in the custody of ACDJFS be posted on any social media site. This is prohibited.**

Education

Enrolling children in school is a joint responsibility of both the foster parent and the agency case worker. All school age children shall attend a school which complies with the minimum standards as prescribed by the state board of education and shall ensure that the child attends school in accordance with the child care agreement provided by the agency.

The caseworker will provide to the new school the following:

- Birth Certificate
- Social Security Card
- Immunization Records
- Judgment Entry citing school district responsible for child's education.

The caseworker is also responsible for the following:

- Completing the enrollment paperwork and requesting transcripts be provided to the new school if there is a change.
- Enrollment paperwork

- Transfer of IEP, if applicable
- Arrangements for any special needs or further testing to be completed.
- Informing the school of any changes in placements

The foster parent is responsible for the following responsibilities:

- Take the child to the school for enrollment.
- Take the child to school the first day and introduce the child to the new teacher;
- Ensure the child is attending school regularly and on time;
- Call the school and the caseworker if a child is sick and can not attend;
- Assists the child with homework and school assignments;
- Attends meetings; parent-teacher conferences Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting; school programs, open house, etc;
- Signing report cards and keeping the child's report card for child's record and sends a copy of the report card to the agency with the monthly progress report;
- Saves any awards or other memorabilia that would be important to the child, and includes such items in child's Life Book;
- Encourages the child to learn and to participate in school activities;
- If the child is having school problems, call your case worker right away for assistance;
- Inform the caseworker of special educational needs of the foster child, if identified.

The caregiver is able to sign permission slips and other forms for school activities. If there is a question about whether or not the child can attend an event, the caregiver needs to contact the child's caseworker or other agency representative. The agency **MUST** approve and sign any permission forms related to any overnight field trip or out of state field trip.

What Happens if a Foster Child is Suspended or Expelled From School?

It is very important for foster children to receive the best possible education. If a foster child is having problems and the child is suspended or expelled from school, the caseworker needs to know right away. School law gives the foster child certain rights and protection. The agency will follow school guidelines and procedures.

We will do everything possible to protect the rights of our children if a problem comes up that causes the school to consider suspension or expulsion. If in the end, the foster child is suspended or expelled, then we will help you to decide what activities the foster child should be involved in during regular school hours.

School Fees

Payment for school fees is the responsibility of Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services. Foster children are eligible for the free lunch program at school and foster parents should fill out the appropriate school form for this program. School fees do not include field trips or extracurricular activities. Foster parents are responsible for the purchasing of school supplies for foster children. Foster Parents will purchase at least a basic school picture package yearly and provide a picture to the caseworker for the child's file.

Graduation Expenses

Will be reimbursed up to a maximum of \$300.00 for items such as cap and gown rental, prom dresses, tuxedos, pictures, announcements and class rings. Cases will be reviewed on an individual basis for requests over the maximum amount.

Initial Medical Screening

A medical screening exam is required within 72 hours of the placement. This screening can be arranged at the local health department or family practice or with the foster families' medical provider if they take Medicaid as form of payment. The caseworker and or foster care specialist can assist, if notified, with the foster parents to arrange this health screen check. If the child is moving from one agency placement to another a screening exam is needed. This exam can be completed either by:

- A licensed physician, advanced practice nurse, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, or physician's assistant.

If a physician completes the exam and a full physical is completed, another routine medical exam is not needed for a year. If a nurse completes the exam, the foster parent must arrange for the child to have a comprehensive exam by a physician within 60 days of placement.

Routine Medical, Dental, Therapy, Optical Care

Often, foster children have not had good medical or dental care prior to coming into foster care. All of us know how expensive medical care can be for a family. Sometimes children have special medical needs that are not discovered until the child comes into foster care. In order to make sure that we do a good job of getting medical care for our foster children, the state has rules and requirements that we must follow when we get medical and dental services for our foster children. Forms for these exams are included in this policy.

Foster caregiver(s) shall be responsible for following instructions of the agency which placed the child for providing health care services to each foster child. This includes a comprehensive medical including vision, hearing and developmental checks. Foster parents are responsible for the following information:

- Schedule a physical examination to be completed by a doctor within

60 days of placement in foster care. The physical examination must be done by a licensed physician. The physical must include a vision and hearing screening.

- A dental and optical exam, for children who are three years of age or older, must be completed within 6 months after first being placed in foster care. The dental examination must be done by a licensed dentist. Additional dental exams must be completed every 6 months for as long as the child remains in foster care. The eye examination must be completed by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist. Additional eye examinations must be completed annually for as long as the child remains in foster care.
- A Psychosocial Assessment must be completed for each child in the custody of the agency to detect any mental and emotional disorders and must be completed within 30 days of placement. This appointment will be arranged by the caseworker within 7 days of initial placement but the foster parent is required to be present to transport the child and to provide input to the therapist on the child's strengths and concerns in his or her placement.
- Therapy is often a part of the health care plan for the child. When a foster parent identifies a need for therapy or the child's case plan includes therapy, the foster parent is encouraged to become involved in the process by transporting the child to appointments and occasionally attending with the child to provide input to the therapist on the child's progress.

It is important to keep a calendar for all scheduled appointment including the dates for when additional appointments are due for the child. It is your responsibility to provide verification of these appointments on the agency forms and provided to the caseworker. If you have problems getting your foster child to any of these medical appointments, please call your case worker or foster care specialist for assistance. It is important that our foster children receive health care timely. Failure to schedule and attend appointments will result in a rules violation.

Administration of Medication

According to Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-7-07 (B) states that a foster caregiver shall administer or supervise the administration of prescription drugs to foster child only for whom the medication was prescribed and according to the prescribing physician's instruction. Foster parents must keep all prescription and over-the-counter medications, whether for the foster child or for another family member, in their original containers in an area inaccessible to children. All prescription drugs in a foster home shall be stored in a locked cabinet or storage area except that an inhaler or medication may be available to a person with a special health condition, who may need these for an emergency.

Any side effects of prescription drugs shall be reported immediately to the prescribing physician and to the agency. If the physician changes the foster child's medication, the foster parent must report the change to the child's worker by the next business day. The foster parent should ask the pharmacy to provide an extra container and label when the child must take medication away from the foster home. The foster parent is responsible for instructing the school or alternate care provider on proper administration of the medication. Prescribed drugs shall be disposed of in a safe manner when the prescription is no longer current.

Foster parents must keep track of the dosage and time given the medication on the prescription log:

- This log must be kept for each medication a child is on.
- Prescription logs must be attached to the monthly progress report for the caseworker to review and keep in the child's file.

Psychotropic Medication

The Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services needs to ensure proper monitoring and use of psychotropic medications for children in foster care. Psychotropic medications are those prescribed to affect the central nervous system to treat psychiatric disorders or illnesses. Psychotropic medications/drugs are capable of modifying mental/physical activity and prescribed for that purpose.

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services (ACDJFS) will only approve a child in agency custody to be placed on psychotropic medication when there exists a psychological/psychiatric evaluation or a diagnostic assessment indicating the diagnosis and there is a clearly stated specific need for the medication. This evaluation must be completed prior to administration or initiation of the medication. Any child who enters into the custody of the agency and is currently prescribed a psychotropic medication will continue on the medication without interruption while arrangements are made to obtain the proper documentation from the prescribing physician and obtain approval from a Social Service Supervisor.

No child in the custody of ACDJFS shall be prescribed or given psychotropic medications for the sole purpose of behavior management or behavioral control.

Foster parents need to inform the assigned caseworker of the date, time and place of any physician appointment when the child is on a psychotropic medication or if there is a possibility that the child may be placed on a psychotropic medication.

If a physician prescribes any medication intended to control the child's behavior, foster parents are to contact the assigned caseworker for that child or their supervision within 24 hours of when the physician prescribes the medication. **Foster parents are not permitted to approve whether or not a child is placed on psychotropic medication.**

For children who are on psychotropic medication when initially placed in the home or for children who are prescribed psychotropic medication during their placement in the home, foster parents shall obtain and administer the psychotropic medication in accordance with the prescription after receiving authorization from Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services. If the child refuses to take their medication, the foster parent shall inform the prescribing physician within 24 hours and follow any and all instructions and recommendations. The foster parent will also notify the agency within 24 hours if a child refuses to take their medication.

Foster parents need to accompany the child to all follow up appointments regarding to the psychotropic medication. Foster parents shall notify the child's caseworker or supervisor within 24 hours of any changes to the child's medication or if the physician for the child changes.

Foster parents are required to keep a log of the child's medications including the type of medication, dosage, routine/times taken per day (i.e. by mouth, 3x per day), start date of medication, stop date of medication and prescribing doctor's name.

Appendix IV has an example of the log

Hospitalization of a Foster Child

In the event that a child is hospitalized, the foster parent will receive the full per diem up to a period of two weeks to compensate the foster parent to maintain the home for the ill child and to compensate for travel to visit/assist in the child's care. For a period beyond the two weeks, per diem reimbursement may continue, upon approval of the agency Director.

Death of a Child in Foster Care

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services shall be notified immediately by a foster parent following the death of a child in care. The agency will then be responsible for notifying the parent, guardian, or custodian upon the agency's knowledge of the child's death for a child in the agency's temporary custody. This agency reserves the right to make the decision to contact the parent, guardian, custodian, or other relatives for a child in the agency's permanent custody. Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services will then notify the court and law enforcement with jurisdiction upon knowledge of the child's death. If it is after hours the foster parent should contact the Ashland County Sheriff's Department to speak with the on-call worker immediately.

Independent Living

Foster parents are encouraged to begin working with the children placed in their homes on life skills at an early age. Independent living skills are the essential needs to be able to

successfully transition into adulthood. Foster parent are essential in this process and are key teaching and modeling these skills to the children placed in the family's home. These areas include, budgeting, personal hygiene, money management, community resources, personal decision-making and communication skills, evaluating educational goals (job training, vocational school, college, etc.), securing and maintaining employment, planning for health care needs, building positive self-image and self-esteem, developing positive adult relationships and support systems, and a multiple of other daily life skills such as cleaning, cooking, and laundry that are important skills to obtain.

Once a foster child turns 15.5 years old or prior to if determined appropriate by this agency, an independent living skills assessment is completed. This assessment, which is completed by the foster child and with assistance of the child's caseworker and / or foster parent, identifies the strengths and limitations the child possesses in life skills. An Individual Service Plan is then developed from the assessment to strengthen those areas that need additional services. The plan will outline specific tasks to complete for each area. The child's caseworker will be reviewing this plan at least every six months to evaluate the status.

Clothing

Children who initially come into the agency's custody will be entitled to a \$200 Wal-Mart gift card for clothing. Every six months from date of initial placement into the foster home, the child will be eligible for a \$150 Wal-Mart gift card for clothing. All other requests for uniforms whether it be for sports or school related events must go through the caseworker to give to the supervisor for approval and payment.

AWOL Procedure

When a child in the custody of this agency is placed in a foster home and is AWOL (has run away and/or left your home without permission) follow the procedures below:

1. Contact the police department in your jurisdiction immediately upon discovering the child to be missing. In many cases you will be asked to go to the police department and file charges.
2. Contact the child's social worker to report the child AWOL. If it is after hours, contact the on-call social worker via (419) 289-3911, at the Ashland County Sheriff's Department.

Upon finding the foster child, if you are willing to take the foster child back into your foster home when he/she is found, you can be paid for up to seven (7) days while the child is AWOL. If you do not want the foster child to return, the per diem will end on the day the foster child left your home.

IMPORTANT NOTE: You must report any contact from a child that is AWOL to the agency immediately. Also, if you learn any information as to the whereabouts of a child that is AWOL, report it to the agency immediately following the above procedure.

Babysitting & Child Care Policy

All foster children, regardless of age, require adult supervision. Many of our foster children have been exposed to different forms of abuse. This does not make them safe candidates as babysitters. As a result, the agency does not believe that any foster child should be placed in a position of supervisory responsibility over other children and is **PROHIBITED**.

To clarify, this means that teenaged foster children should not be encouraged to baby-sit to earn extra income. There are plenty of fast food and retail type jobs in our area to keep foster children employed and to help them earn spending money. On the other hand, foster parents should not go out on Saturday night and leave the children in the care of their teenaged foster child. In the same vein, it would not be appropriate (in the summertime or on weekends) to use a foster child as your babysitter if one of the foster parents is employed outside of the home.

- The best babysitter a foster parent can use is another foster parent. If that is not possible, look for a responsible adult who is willing to undergo some screening by the agency to insure that they can adequately supervise our kids.
- All alternative care arrangements must be prior approved by the agency. Anyone who will be providing alternative care for the children will be required to have a criminal background check.

At-Risk Activities

While many of the following activities can be fun and adventurous it is imperative that you proceed with caution with the activities listed below. You must get the biological parents permission and the agency's permission prior to allowing any foster child to participate in any of the following activities. If the agency and biological families do give permission then the foster child must be accompanied by the foster parent on the activity and must be in compliance with all safety requirements (i.e. helmets, etc.)

- Motorcycle/Dirt Bike Riding
- Snowmobiling
- Riding on ATV's (All-Terrain Vehicles)
- Hunting, Target shooting

If you should have any questions about any of the above stated activities or any other activity that may seem to be at-risk please contact the agency to discuss the activity.

Changes in Foster Child's Appearance

Foster parents may not authorize any action or procedure that might result in a change in appearance without the permission of the child's parent or the agency's permission. Changes in appearance may include, but are not limited to:

- Body Piercing
- Tattoos
- Hair color
- Hair style

A child's hairstyle (color, texture, length, body, style, etc.) is decided by the child's parents. Foster parents may add temporary accessories such as beads to maintain the style. Routine hygiene and moisturizing is expected. However, a foster parent is not permitted to use any chemical processes without parental consent (straighteners, relaxers, body permanents, etc.). In the event that a foster child's health is jeopardized by the condition of the hair as determined by a health professional, a change in hair style can be made to ensure the child's health. This change can be made only with the prior consent of the child's case worker.

Driver's License Policy for Children in Care

The Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services recognizes that obtaining privileges to operate a motor vehicle is a desirous step in a teenagers' life. The agency believes that obtaining such privileges can be in a child's best interest when that step is coupled with maturity and responsibility. Therefore, the agency has adopted the following policy governing obtaining operator's privileges and operating motor vehicles by a child who is in the custody of the agency.

A child in the agency's custody may take driver's education when they are encroaching upon emancipation or as part of adoption negotiations if that child is 16 years or older. They may not participate in the driving piece of the driver's education without meeting the qualifications listed below.

No child who is in the custody of the Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services may apply for a driver's license unless the following qualifications are met. None of these qualifications can be waived without the consent of the agency's Director:

- The child must be at least (16) years of age;
- The child must have been employed for a minimum of 6 months and maintain employment thereafter;
- The child must maintain enrollment in school and maintain good grades which is defined to mean a minimum of all A's and B's in

each class taken;

- The child must have liability insurance coverage in at least the minimum amounts required by Chapter 4509 of the Revised Code and must deposit current proof of such insurance with the Department;
- The child must not be on probation with Juvenile Court;
- The child must provide an adult other than the agency or foster parent to sign the child's license application;
- Positive recommendation from the child's caseworker;
- Positive recommendation from the foster parent/caregiver;
- Complete and pass driver's training/education; and
- Pass the driver's test as required by law.

If a child in custody meets the foregoing qualifications, he or she may apply for a driver's license. If at any time after obtaining a license, the child shall no longer meet all of the qualifications, he or she shall immediately surrender the license to the foster parent and the foster parent shall give it to the agency.

If a child enters into the custody of the agency in possession of a valid driver's license, the child shall immediately surrender the license to the agency unless he or she meets the foregoing qualifications.

Any child in the custody of the agency who has surrendered his or her license to the agency shall not thereafter operate a motor vehicle until he or she meets all of the foregoing qualifications and obtains the permission of the agency.

Any child who obtains or maintains a license pursuant to this policy shall operate a motor vehicle in compliance with all rules and regulations applicable thereto and shall not operate a motor vehicle in pursuance of any activity mandated by a case plan or on behalf of the agency.

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Policy on Use of Volunteers or College Interns in the Family Foster Home Program

The Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services does not accept any volunteers into the family foster home program. Any college interns that are approved to work at Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services are assigned to other areas of the department and do not do work with the family foster home program.

Participation in Human Research Projects

The Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services is committed to broadening the knowledge base of child welfare by participating in human research projects whenever possible without compromising the confidentiality of our clients. Participation in research projects must be authorized, in advance, by the agency Director or designee. Written consent will also be obtained by the parent, guardian or legal custodian and the child prior to participation in human research projects.

Liability Insurance

- *Liability Insurance and Compensation

- *Legal Representation, Legal Fees, Counseling or Legal Advocacy for Foster Caregivers

- *Investigation of abuse and/or neglect involving a child living in a family foster home

Liability insurance and compensation for damages done by children placed in foster care will be processed through the foster caregiver's own home owners insurance.

Legal representation, legal fees, counseling or legal advocacy for foster caregivers for matters directly related to the performance of their roles will be the responsibility of the foster caregivers.

Accepting Money or Gifts

Foster parents may not accept financial payment of any kind directly from birth parents and/or relatives of a child placed in their home with prior approval of the agency. Birth family members should be referred to the agency with all financial concerns.

Third Party Investigation

If a report of abuse or neglect of a foster child is received from any source, including foster children, at the agency the Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services is required and obligated by Ohio law to begin coordination of a third party investigation and to report the matter to the county sheriff for his investigation. If that investigation reveals a problem with the functioning of a foster family member or the overall functioning of the foster family, the agency must make efforts to deal with this as soon as possible. If the sheriff's investigation indicates that abuse was inflicted, it could be referred to the appropriate court. The agency reserves the right at any time, to remove foster children from a foster home placement, either temporarily or permanently.

Children have the right to be protected from abuse and/or neglect. It is the goal of the agency that any child removed from his/her home environment be placed into an environment that is functioning in a healthier manner than does his/her family of origin. While it is understood that all families have strengths and limitation, we expect our foster homes to be able to meet the needs of our children without causing the children additional harm. It is our mission to protect children; therefore we may remove children from your home if risk is determined to investigate the matter further. This is not a direct reflection on you. It is our way of meeting the responsibility of our mission.

After a problem is identified, the agency will hold an informal staffing at the agency to decide how best to proceed. A preliminary course of action to correct the problem will be decided. The third party investigation and disposition will be completed by the caseworker assigned to the investigation and the Ashland County Sheriff's Department. A corrective action plan may be presented to the foster family if a rule violation or concern is found in the home and it is found to be an issue that is able to be corrected. During this presentation, it is very important that the communication be honest and complete. We need you to help us identify and correct the problem. If the reason of the problem is not accurate, we will not be able to design a plan that will effectively deal with the concerns identified. A plan of action will be designed to address the identified problem. (Please see the section addressing Violations of Foster Home Rules)

Any recommendation to revoke or deny certification shall be submitted on the ODJFS 1317 form with supporting evidence to document the recommendation.

Foster Parents Rights

- Right to not be discriminated against on the basis of religion, race, color, creed, sex, national origins, age, sexual orientation or physical handicap.
- Receive appropriate, reasonable, and timely guidance and support from Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services not only in the placement period, but also in the post-placement period.

- Participate in appropriate pre-service and on-going training to enhance their skills and abilities. Be informed about any issues regarding the child or the child's biological family that could affect the health and safety of the caregiver. Any such issues should be shared prior to and during the placement.
- Right to refuse a placement or request the removal of a child with timely notification being provided;
- Be considered for a child formerly placed in the caregiver's home that returns to foster care.
- Be considered as the permanent family for a child, who becomes available for adoption and has been in the home for 12 months or more.
- Receive regular evaluation and feedback.
- Receive adequate and timely reimbursement for the expenses of the child in care.
- Receive a fair, timely, and impartial investigation of complaints concerning the caregiver's home.
- Right to have input in the planning for a foster child and be a team member
- Right to be given full, accurate information regarding prospective child (ren) and to make their own decision based on this information.
- Right to be treated with dignity and consideration.

Children's Rights

According to Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-5-35, no agency or foster caregiver or any employee of the agency shall in any way violate any of the following rights of children:

- The right to enjoy freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or to abstain from the practice of religion.
- The right to reasonable enjoyment of privacy.
- The right to have his or her opinions heard and be included, to the greatest extent possible, when any decisions are being made affecting his/her life.
- The right to receive appropriate and reasonable adult guidance, support, and supervision.
- The right to be free from physical abuse and inhumane treatment.
- The right to be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation.
- The right to received adequate and appropriate medical care.
- The right to received adequate and appropriate food, clothing, and housing.
- The right to his own money and personal property in accordance with the child's service or case plan.
- The right to live in clean, safe surroundings.
- The right to participate in an appropriate education program. A foster child may only be home schooled by a foster caregiver with prior approval from this agency.
- The right to communicate with family, friends, and Asignificant others from whom he/she is living apart, in accordance with the child's case plan.

The right to be taught to fulfill appropriate responsibilities to himself/herself and to others.

Violations of Foster Home Rules

Allegations of foster home rule and policy violations are investigated by the foster parent's support worker. The investigation must be initiated within three (3) calendar days of notification of the alleged violation and must be completed within 30 days of the start of the investigation. Depending on the nature of the allegation, the child's social worker, another support worker or a supervisor may participate in the investigation. If there is a rules violation or concern in the home, a corrective action plan is developed with the foster parent to address the violation. The agency will ask the family to come to the agency to discuss the rules violation and or concern to then develop a plan of action. The corrective action plan will note actions or changes that must be completed and a specific time frame for completion. Additional training and support may be required to address a discipline violation. In some cases, a rules violation may be of such a serious nature as to require the immediate removal of the foster children from the home (a life- or health-threatening safety violation or a family member's arrest or conviction for a serious criminal charge, for example). The foster parent must complete the corrective action plan within the time frame specified. Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services will make no additional foster placements in the home until the corrective action plan is completed. If the foster parent fails to complete the corrective action plan as required, this agency may remove any foster children still in the home and recommend that the foster parent withdraw from the foster home program. If the foster parent refuses to withdraw, the agency will recommend revocation of the foster parent's certification.

If a foster parent is in compliance with a state regulation but has not followed the internal policies and procedures of Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services the family will then have a concern in the foster home and a corrective action plan will need to be developed with the family and completed within 30 days or the designated time frames set by the agency. The foster family will not be able to except placements or respite until the corrective action plan is completed. If the foster parent fails to complete the corrective action plan as required, this agency may remove any foster children still in the home and recommend that the foster parent withdraw from the foster home program. If the foster parent refuses to withdraw, the agency will recommend revocation of the foster parent's certification.

There are certain circumstances in which the agency **MUST** recommend to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services that a foster home license be denied or revoked. The Ohio Administrative Code gives the following circumstances as examples regarding foster care applicants:

Any one or any combination of the following circumstances may be considered valid cause for denial of initial foster home certification, denial of recertification, or revocation of a foster home certificate either upon the recommendation of a recommending agency or through unilateral action by the Ohio department of job and family services (ODJFS):

- (1) A foster caregiver or applicant fails or refuses to comply with any requirement of Chapter 5101:2-5 or 5101:2-7 of the Administrative Code.
- (2) A foster caregiver or applicant furnishes false or misleading statements or reports to the agency.
- (3) A foster caregiver or applicant falsifies, refuses or fails to submit any report required by Chapter 5101:2-7 of the Administrative Code.
- (4) A foster caregiver or applicant refuses or fails to make available any record required by or necessary to the administration of Chapter 5101:2-7 of the Administrative Code.
- (5) A foster caregiver or applicant refuses to admit into the residence any person performing duties required by Chapter 5101:2-5 , 5101:2-7 or 5101:2-34 of the Administrative Code or any laws of the state or any subdivision therein.
- (6) A foster caregiver or applicant fails or refuses to comply with agency instructions regarding care of a foster child an agency has placed within the home.
- (7) A foster caregiver or applicant interferes or acts in conflict with an agency plan for a foster child's care.
- (8) Any resident of a foster caregiver or applicant's home, other than the foster children who are placed there, is found guilty of any crime perpetrated against a child.
- (9) A foster caregiver or applicant, any adult resident of a foster home, or any minor resident of a foster home at least twelve years of age, but less than eighteen years of age, residing with the foster caregiver has been convicted of, pleaded guilty to, or been adjudicated delinquent for commission of any offense listed in paragraphs (J) and (R) of rule 5101:2-7-02 of the Administrative Code.
- (10) A foster caregiver, applicant or any other resident of a foster home who is a person subject to a criminal records check refuses to obtain a criminal records check.
- (11) A recommending agency can document, in their assessment, that a foster caregiver , applicant or a foster home should not care for a foster child.
- (12) Any act of omission or commission by a foster caregiver, applicant or other member of the household which results in the death, injury, illness, abuse, neglect or exploitation of a child.

Sharing of a Foster Home

A foster home certified by Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services may share a bed space in their home with another agency. The agency wishing to share a bed

space will complete an Agreement to Share a Foster Family Home that specifies the following information:

- The child's name
- The child's date of birth
- Placement date
- Per-diem rate to be paid by the placing agency
- Services to be provided to the child and the foster family by the placing agency

All parties to the agreement must approve the agreement. Any placements made by another agency in a foster home certified by Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services must be approved by Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services prior to placement to insure that the placement of an additional child will not negatively impact the foster family and/or other foster children already placed with the family. If Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services believes the proposed placement will not be in the foster family's best interest that agency will assist the foster family in attempting to resolve the problems. Any other agency currently using the home will be notified in writing of the new use of the home and will be provided a copy of the new share agreement.

Notification to the Custodial Agency of Incidents with Foster Children

ACDJFS will notify the custodial agency of any child placed in an ACDJFS foster home within one hour if there is a death of the child in the home or the child sustains serious injury or illness involving medical treatment of the foster child. ACDJFS will notify the custodial agency of any child placed in an ACDJFS foster home within 24 hours of unauthorized absence of the foster child from the foster home, removal or attempted removal of the foster child from the home by any person or agency other than the placing agency, or any involvement with the foster child with law enforcement authorities.

Policy for Foster Home License Transfers

The agency respects the right of the family to select the agency with whom they want to work. Ashland County will consider all transfer requests from a certified foster parent to another PCSA, or to a PCPA or PNA certified by ODJFS but reserves the right to determine whether to accept the transfer of a home to Ashland County. The following requirements and restrictions must be met for an Ashland County foster parent to request a transfer to another agency and for foster parents from another agency to request a transfer to Ashland County:

- The transferring foster parent must have been licensed for at least one year. An exception to this standard can be made if the foster parent has relocated to the county to which they wish to transfer and the sending agency does not serve families in that county. An exception can also be made if the sending agency ceases to recommend foster homes for certification to ODJFS.

- A foster caregiver certified to operate a specialized foster home wishing to transfer to Ashland County would be identified as a family foster home, if the transfer is accepted, due to this agency not certifying specialized foster homes.
- A foster caregiver can not initiate more than one transfer request during a certification period and only to one agency at a time.
- While a transfer request is pending, the sending agency must continue to work with the foster family in the same manner as with all other foster families associated with the agency. This includes providing notice of training needed according to the foster parent's needs assessment and 2-year training plan, permitting the foster parent to attend training and other activities provided for the agency's foster parents, meeting with the foster parent regarding the care of any child placed in the home. No child may be removed from the foster parent's home solely because the foster parent has requested a transfer from one agency to another.
- If the transferring foster family is caring for foster children at the time of the transfer request, the receiving agency must ensure that the custodial agency for each foster child currently placed in the home agrees to the transfer. If the custodial agency does not agree to the transfer while a child in its custody is placed in the home, the transfer may not take place.
- The receiving agency can only accept a copy of the foster home records directly from the sending agency. A copy of the records can not be accepted from a foster parent. However, the foster parent can provide other information to the receiving agency that the foster parent considers to be pertinent.

Procedures for the Transfer of a Foster Home

The following transfer procedures must be followed for Ashland County foster parents who wish to transfer to another agency and for foster parents from another agency who wishes to transfer to Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services:

1. The transferring foster parent must first submit a written request to the receiving agency.
2. The agency will consider the transfer, if the receiving agency wants to pursue considering accepting the transfer, the receiving agency will notify the foster parent's sending agency in writing of the transfer request and ask for a complete copy of the foster home records except for any personal references and criminal record checks.
3. Upon the receipt of the request from the receiving agency, if the agency has previously made a decision not to place any more children in the foster parent's

home, it must inform the receiving agency of this decision and the reasons why the decision was made. If the receiving agency still wishes to proceed with the transfer request, it will notify the sending agency in writing.

4. When the sending agency receives the written request from the receiving agency, it must ensure that the foster parent has provided a signed release of information authorizing the sending agency to provide a copy of the foster home records to the receiving agency. This release may be obtained by, either agency or the foster caregiver.
5. Within 15 business days of receipt of the signed release (and copying fee, not to exceed twenty-five cents per page, if applicable), the sending agency must provide a complete copy of the foster home records (with the exception of reference statements and BCII and FBI criminal record checks) to the receiving agency. No additional fees may be charged to any party. If a fee is charged for the copying of records, the records shall not be sent until the fee is paid. The records must be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, or hand delivered by agency staff. If the records are hand delivered, the receiving agency must provide the sending agency with a signed and dated receipt.

The records must include the following documents:

- Home study
 - Recertifications or home study updates
 - Training records
 - Fire inspection reports
 - Safety audits
 - Medical reports
 - Copies of all complaint or rule noncompliance investigations and any applicable corrective action plans. The receiving agency must be notified of the nature of any outstanding complaint or rule noncompliance investigations and any corrective action plans that have not been fully implemented.
6. The receiving agency will assign an assessor to review the foster home records and any other information received from the sending agency and the foster parent. The specialist will then staff the information with the supervisor an informed decision as whether to proceed.
 7. The assessor will contact the sending agency and the foster parent to determine why the transfer request is being made and, if there are foster children in the home, identify the agency with custody of the child (ren).
 8. Within 60 days of receipt of the foster home records, the agency will make conduct at least one visit to the foster home and face-to-face interviews with each foster parent and with all other household members. If the review can not be completed within 60 days the assessor shall document it in the foster home records the reason

why the review could not be completed timely. In addition the following information must be completed, obtained, and documented in the foster home record by the agency within the 60 day timeframe:

- References: Four (4) new personal references must be secured from individuals who are not related to the foster parent and who do not live with the foster parent.
 - Criminal Record Checks: A new BCII and FBI check and local background checks will be completed on the foster parents and any other adults in the household. Juvenile Record Check: a juvenile record check is completed on all youth in the household ages 12 through 17 years.
 - Safety Audit: A new safety audit is completed to verify that the home meets all current safety requirements.
 - Psychosocial assessments will be required to be completed by all applicants wishing to transfer to Ashland County.
 - Additional Reports or Assessments: If the family wishes to transfer to Ashland County, the agency may request that the foster parent(s) provide additional information or complete an outside assessment.
 - CPR and First Aid training must be completed by all applicants
9. If the records indicate that there are outstanding complaints or noncompliance investigations or corrective action plans that have not been fully implemented, the assessor will not recommend acceptance of the transfer unless the assessor is satisfied that those outstanding complaints or noncompliance investigations are not material to the transfer request and will not compromise the safety of any children who are or may be placed in the home.
10. Once the interviews and safety audit are completed and the references, criminal checks and any additional reports or information have been received, the assessor, supervisor and agency director if deemed necessary, will determine whether to approve or reject the transfer request. The foster parent and sending agency will be notified in writing of the decision and reasons within five (5) business days of the decision.

Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services may seek an agreement to determine whether the sending or receiving agency will conduct the recertification review, if a transfer of a foster home is pending within the ninety days immediately prior to the expiration of a certificate.

Approval of a Transfer Request

If the transfer request is approved, all information contained in the foster home records provided by the sending agency as well as any information gathered in the transfer assessment process and the assessor's written recommendation are incorporated as part of the receiving agency's foster home record. When the receiving agency has decided to accept the transfer the following must be completed:

1. The Notification of Transfer of a Foster Home “JFS 01334” will be completed and signed by the sending agency, receiving agency, and foster parent(s). It will then be submitted by the sending agency to ODJFS with the following information:
 - The foster caregiver(s) full name;
 - The foster caregiver(s) current address;
 - The type of foster home and effective dates of the current certificate;
 - The names of both agencies involved in the transfer;
 - A statement stating that all needed records have been received, reviewed, and the receiving agency agrees to the transfer;
 - An authorized signature from the sending agency attesting all records have been sent to the receiving agency. An authorized signature from the receiving agency, and an authorized signature from any agency with custody of any foster child currently placed in the home indicating the custodial agency’s approval of the transfer of the foster caregiver(s);
 - The current and proposed new ODJFS uniform statewide automated child welfare database resource identification number.
2. ODJFS then changes its records to reflect transfer of the home to the, receiving agency, and issues a new license with the receiving agency’s identification number. Although a new license is issued, the license expiration remains the same.
3. No later than 30 days after a transfer request has been processed by ODJFS, the receiving agency must provide an orientation to the foster parent(s) on the agency's foster home policies and procedures.

Denial of a Transfer Request to Ashland County

If the receiving agency does not approve the transfer, the receiving agency must keep the records received from the sending agency and the assessor's written assessment and recommendation to reject the transfer request for at least two (2) years.

An agency is not required to accept the transfer of a foster home from another agency. The approval or rejection of a transfer request rests solely with the receiving agency and is subject to the approval of ODJFS. An agency’s or ODJFS’s rejection of a transfer request creates no right of appeal pursuant to Chapter 119. of the Revised Code for any party to the transfer request.

Release of a Home study

Upon the written request of a foster parent, they may be released a copy of their home study, not including reference letters (OAC 5101:2-48-19 H). All requests will be processed within 15 days of written request received by the agency.

Discharges

A child will be discharged from an out-of-home care setting when:

- The family's case plan goals are completed and reunification occurs.
- Ordered by the court.
- The child needs a more restrictive placement to meet his therapeutic needs.
- The child is ready for a less restrictive placement after achieving his treatment goals.
- The foster parents give two week's written notice.
- When it is determined that continuing in a given placement puts the child at risk an emergency discharge may be made.

Order of Consideration for Adoptive Placement

For a child determined to be of Native American Origin, priority is given to a child's tribe for placement. The agency will comply with the Indian Child Welfare Act before any consideration is given to a non-tribal placement. Nondiscriminatory procedures will be used to review all approved families for matching.

When a child becomes available to be placed adoptively, the law gives the following preferential order when considering families in the matching process:

- All adult relatives of the child; a relative or non-relative that the birth parents have indicated by name as a potential resource to adopt the child. The identified relative or non-relative must have, at a minimum, a signed Application for Child Placement (JFS 01691) or other signed adoption application, five days prior to the matching conference. The adoptive applicant must meet all state and agency standards, unless determined to not be in child's best interest.
- The child's foster parents who is approved to adopt or who has a signed Application for Child Placement (JFS 01691), five days prior to the matching conference unless

determined to not be in child's best interest.

- Other suitable approved prospective adoptive families

When a foster child becomes available for adoption, a letter will be sent, within 30 days of an agency receiving the judgment entry granting permanent custody to the foster parents advising them of the child's adoptive status and the fact that as the child's foster parents they shall have priority for adoptive placement, unless the agency determines that such placement is not in the child's best interest or if an appropriate relative is available to adopt the child. This notification letter will also state that this policy of priority placement with the foster family does not apply if the agency and/or birth parents had already selected a prospective adoptive home for the child prior to the child's temporary placement with that foster family.

If an approved foster or adoptive family requests an agency review because the family believes an adoptive placement was denied or will be denied or will be denied solely on the basis of geographic location of the family, the adoptive family has the right to request a state hearing in accordance with (OAC 5101:2-48-24).

Approval of a Foster Home for Adoption/ Adoption of a Foster Child for at Least 12 Months

When a foster caregiver who has not been previously approved as an adoptive parent through the joint home study process expresses an interest in becoming an adoptive parent or completing a child specific adoption for a child who has residing in their home for at least twelve months the following will be required in the adoptive home study of a current foster family for a child:

- Application for Child Placement (JFS 01691) or Application for Adoption of a Foster Child (JFS 01692) if the child is in the home 12 months;
- Medical Statements (JFS 01653) for applicant(s) and all members of the household; If there has been a change in the individual's health a new medical statement is required.
- Current Local Background Checks,
- Current Applicant Financial Statement (JFS 01681), if more than 12 months old; Applicants must show they are financially stable and able to provide for the needs of a child. Verification of income must be shown through two (2) months of recent pay stubs, and or confirmation of social security, SSI, pension, unemployment, and any child support received.
- References
A fourth reference is required if it was not previously completed at the time of the initial foster care license. New references will be required if references are more

than 24 months old. Adult children must complete a reference for the foster/adoptive family.

- Psychological Evaluation, at the applicant's expense
Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services may request that a psychological evaluation be completed for adoptive applicants if the assessor and their supervisor think it is needed. This evaluation will be used as part of the home study process to aid the agency in assessing the applicant's suitability as an adoptive parent. This expense is reimbursable for the adoptive applicant through the Non-recurring Adoption Expenses Subsidy following a completed adoption.
- Releases to Contact Other Agencies or Individuals
If the applicant has been a foster or adoptive parent or day care provider with another agency, the applicant will be asked to sign a release to allow the assessor to contact those agencies or individuals to provide a report on the applicant's services. If applicable the assessor may ask for releases to contact:
 - ✓ Counselors/Therapists
 - ✓ Alcohol or Drug Treatment Programs
 - ✓ Child's School Counselor
 - ✓ Juvenile or Adult Probation or Parole Officer
- Central Registry Check for all applicant(s) and adult household members;
- Letter from PCSA where applicant(s) is residing if other than Ashland County;
- Notification by the foster caregiver or prospective foster caregiver that a person residing in the home who is at least twelve years of age, but less than eighteen years of age, has been convicted or pleaded guilty of any of the offenses in the attached appendix or has been adjudicated to be a delinquent child for committing an act that if committed by an adult would have constituted such a violation. See Appendix II.
- Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment(JFS 01530), if applicable
When a family has a total of five or more children residing in the home, including the foster children and children in kinship care; or if the family will have a total of five or more children who will reside in the home upon the adoptive placement of a child, an assessor shall complete the Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment.

The agency may require the foster parent to attend additional classes in the pre-service training curriculum or specific to the child's needs as a part of the adoption approval process.

The foster care or adoption specialist assigned will then compile and review the following information in addition to the above listed material to determine the appropriateness of adoptive placement:

- Child Characteristic Checklist for Foster Care and Adoption (JFS 01673-A);

- Foster home study (JFS 01349), or Assessment for Child Placement (JFS 01673);
- All Assessment for Child Placement Updates (JFS 01385 forms);
- Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment (JFS 01530), if applicable;
- Foster Home Record;
- Case record information documented by the workers visits to the home;

The foster care or adoption specialist assigned will then

- Review the information contained on the Application for Child Placement (JFS 01692);
- Conduct at least one home visit with all individuals residing in the home and observe the interaction between the child, foster caregiver and other members of the household, if applicable;
- Discuss how the foster caregiver has been working with the child on problems which were identified in the case plan and how they will deal with long term issues the child may have;
- Discuss the availability of adoption assistance subsidy, state adoption maintenance subsidy, post adoption special services subsidy, and non-recurring adoption expenses and post-finalization adoption services with the foster caregiver.

The foster care or adoption specialist assigned will then

- Complete the adoption portion of the Assessment for Child Placement (JFS 01673) and recommendations regarding the ability of the foster caregiver to be an adoptive parent and attach the previous home study and Child Characteristic Checklist to the current, if applicable. Prior to approval of the adoption home study it shall be documented that the foster caregiver has fulfilled the adoption training.
- If the applicant has completed the JFS 01692 the specialist will be required to review and complete the JFS 01692 and supportive documentation.

Separation and Grief

It is very traumatic for all children when they are removed from their birth family and placed in foster care. Placement can be very damaging for any child because it disrupts the basic developmental process of attachment to a child's parents. This is true no matter how serious the abuse or neglect was that caused the child to be removed from the birth family. All children will go through a grieving process, just as if the birth parent has been lost to the child through death.

The toughest problem for all foster children is that the child will go through the same grief process if they leave the foster home to be returned to the birth family, or if they are adopted by another family. Remember how you felt when you lost a loved one through death? Remember how difficult the “day by days” were for you? Remember how alone you felt and overwhelmed? This is exactly how each foster child feels whenever they are moved to a foster home. Sometimes, the foster child isn't able to show it on the outside or talk about the pain, but all of the foster children are feeling the loss on the inside.

The process of grief is disrupting to short-term memory. The child coming into foster care will be apt to be affected by short-term memory deficits. The child will literally forget because their short-term memory isn't processing well. The grief process disrupts the child's ability to develop and learn.

The behavior of a foster child will often indicate a grief process. Usually, there is a "honeymoon period" where the child coming into care will be very good for a few weeks. Feelings and behaviors are closely linked together. Since most foster children are not able to talk about or understand their feelings, they may express them in other ways. The anger of the child is often expressed through a good deal of acting out behavior. The child is angry about disconnections and angry about the detachments.

Some children may express their feelings and needs by:

- Bedwetting, soiling, constipation, crying, vomiting, getting sick.
- Over or under eating, stealing, or hoarding food.
- Talking, moving, or sleeping a lot or very little.
- Acting out sexually - masturbating, etc.
- Destroying property, swearing, having tantrums, hurting themselves - head banging, pulling out their hair.
- Being forgetful or afraid, having nightmares, imaginary friends or daydreaming.
- Mood swings or trying to be the perfect child.
- Failing at school, being truant, or afraid to go to school.

It is very important for foster parents to understand the grief process our foster children will go through when the child is placed. Remember to be patient and understanding. Some children will need counseling to deal with the grief. Call your case worker to discuss your foster child's adjustment to placement. Make sure to note any adjustment problems of your foster child in their monthly progress report.

Developmental Stages and Guidelines

One thing that is definitely known about children is that each child is different. However, the following are things which can be listed as probably being usual for children at these ages.

(1) At One Month:

- (a) Lifts head slightly from prone position.
- (b) Briefly watches and follows.
- (c) Head up momentarily when back is supported.
- (d) Avoids mildly annoying stimuli.
- (e) May make some "noise in throat" sounds without definite form.

(2) At Two Months:

- (a) Head erect, bobbing when supported in sitting.
- (b) Follows moving person with eyes.
- (c) Imitates or responds to smiling person with occasional smile.
- (d) Vocalizes.

(3) At Three Months:

- (a) Lifts head and chest when prone.
- (b) Vigorous body movement.
- (c) Better head control.
- (d) Recognizes bottle.
- (e) Coos, chuckles.

(4) At Four Months:

- (a) Good head control.
- (b) Rolls side to side.
- (c) Takes object held near hand.

- (d) May begin reaching.
- (e) Follows moving objects when held in sitting position.
- (f) Laughs aloud.
- (g) Enjoys play.

(5) At Five Months:

- (a) Will often sleep through the night.
- (b) Can push whole chest off bed.
- (c) Studies his fingers, and puts everything into his mouth.
- (d) Puts both hands on bottle when feeding.

(6) At Six Months:

- (a) Sits with minimal support on hard surface.
- (b) Rolls from supine to prone position.
- (c) Volitional grasp with whole hand, transfers hand to hand and to mouth (reflex grasp may still be present in sleep).
- (d) Babbles in more than two sounds.
- (e) Is aware of strangers.
- (f) Discovers his feet.
- (g) Likes to hide his face and peek out.

(7) At Nine Months:

- (a) Sits alone, can change position without falling.
- (b) Manipulates two objects simultaneously.
- (c) Says "mama", "baba" - consonant sounds.

(8) At One Year:

- (a) Stands and may take a step or two.

- (b) Has good pincer grasp and can pick up pellets.
- (c) Will stack one block on top of another.
- (d) Is affectionate and will give up a toy on request.
- (e) May say two or three words.
- (f) Is becoming more independent
- (g) Enjoys finger feeding.

(9) At Eighteen Months:

- (a) Walks and sometimes runs a bit, climbs up and down a stair.
- (b) May mark with a crayon.
- (c) May partially feed himself.
- (d) Waves bye-bye with purpose.
- (e) Responds to simple commands.

(10) At Two Years:

- (a) Walks and runs (may have retained some awkwardness) and enjoys gross motor activity. Can throw, kick a ball, open a door, and turn a page in a book.
- (b) Engages in parallel play.
- (c) Recognizes pictures in a book.
- (d) May use two and three word sentences. In indicting himself, he will use his name rather than a pronoun.
- (e) Is developing *daytime* toileting control.
- (f) Is developing a longer interest span and memory span.
- (g) Begins to have a well defined sense of possession.
- (h) Helps to dress and undress himself.

- (i) May tend to dawdle and be inconsistent in responses.
 - (j) Has some difficulty in differentiating between self and others.
- (11) At Three Years:
- (a) Begins to ask questions in sentences and tends to have confusion about the world outside his own home. May have brief adventures, but enjoys returning to the parental protectiveness.
 - (b) Begins to realize he is a person separate from others.
 - (c) Enjoys big muscle activities, but less than the two year old and may enjoy fine motor activity such as crayoning and manipulating toys. He shows finer movement patterns.
 - (d) Is imitative of sounds he hears and motions he sees.
 - (e) Shows readiness to conform to the spoken word.
 - (f) Show interest in dressing and undressing, but still requires help.
 - (g) Beginning to sleep through the night without wetting and to a considerable degree toilet trains himself during the daytime.
- (12) At Four Years:
- (a) Asks questions, questions and more questions. Take the time to answer them now so he will know he can always bring his questions to you. Asking questions gives him practice in talking and putting words together.
 - (b) Lives in the present. He doesn't know what yesterday or tomorrow mean.
 - (c) Can run better than he could before, can even skip a little and can probably jump quite well.
 - (d) Can dress himself with little help from you except with small buttons and tying shoes. Needs help in washing himself and brushing hair and teeth.
 - (e) Can play with children, not just beside them.

- (f) Can draw, but his pictures may not have much meaning to you, but they will to him.
 - (g) Cannot sit too long and will like stories with lots of action.
 - (h) Has trouble in knowing what is real and what is make-believe. Will need help in learning the difference.
 - (i) May be afraid of things he does not know, like large animals, or thunder and lightening, or the dark.
 - (j) Needs chance to experiment on his own.
- (13) At Five Years:
- (a) Will appear quite grown up. Can usually dress himself and do most things for himself, but will need help in washing and caring for his hair and teeth. Can probably be away from home for longer periods of time without any problems - such as going to kindergarten. Will be quite interested in helping wash dishes, run the sweeper. Take the time to let him do these things now.
 - (b) Is making friends and can play with two or three children at a time. Asks questions about the world around him. Talks quite well and can put several sentences together.
 - (c) Pays more attention to details. His pictures are beginning to look like what he is drawing.
 - (d) Understands time better and likes stories that tell about something he knows and does.
 - (e) Needs more chances to do things on his own, under your watchful eye.
- (14) At Six Years:
- (a) Can completely dress himself, buttoning small buttons and tying his shoes. May need a little help still in washing and in caring for hair and teeth.
 - (b) Can begin to have small chores to do like feeling the cat or putting away his own tricycle or wagon. Now is the time to begin giving chores so that he will be used to this when he is older.

- (c) Can begin to learn about money and should have chance to decide how he is to spend his penny or nickel.
- (d) Is ready to visit a friend's house by himself and to ask others to come to visit him.
- (e) Is ready for group play like hide-and seek. These are noisy games, but are the beginning of "team" play with many more rules.
- (f) Is able to spend more time on one thing. Can use his muscles better, can learn to skate, jump a rope.
- (g) Will need help in learning that he must stop and rest. Reading to him or telling a story is a very good way to help him do this.
- (h) Is ready for school. The more words he has learned, the more good ideas and information he has about people, places and things, the easier will he be able to meet the problems he must face in school.

It is important to keep in mind that some of our foster children are developmentally delayed. As a result, you may have a foster child who is four years old, and who is still working at achieving the developmental skills of a younger child. Ask your case worker, if you have concerns. There are programs to help our children catch up. Note any delays in progress you observe in your foster child's development and make sure to report that to the child's caseworker.

Appendix I:

NON-DISCRIMINATION REQUIREMENTS FOR FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTIVE PLACEMENTS

The Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services shall provide a written notice of the procedure for any complaints of discrimination in the foster care or adoption process that involve race, color, or national origin and copies of all materials related to requesting a state hearing within seven (7) days of the individual's first contact with this agency. This applies to all individuals who inquire about or apply to be foster caregivers or adoptive parents. This includes approved adoptive families who request an agency review because the family believes an adoptive placement was denied solely on the basis of geographic location.

Any individual may file a complaint of alleged discriminatory acts, policies, or practices in the adoption or foster licensing process that involve race, color, or national origin with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services, any other public children's services agency, any private child placing agency, or private non-custodial agency. The Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services will assist with this process and provide these individuals with a copy of the JFS 02333 "Discrimination Complaint Form". We will help in any way with this process and make sure that the JFS 02333 is completed correctly, in its entirety, and is sent to the proper destination.

Any person, including but not limited to, an employee or former employee of the Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services or a member of a family which sought to become a foster caregiver or adoptive parent, may also file a complaint alleging that he or she was intimidated, threatened, coerced, discriminated against or otherwise retaliated against in some way by this agency because he or she has made a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing in connection with an allegation that the agency engaged in discriminatory acts, policies, or practices as it applies in the foster care or adoption process. This complaint shall be filed within two years from the date of the occurrence of the alleged discriminatory act: or two years from the date upon which the complainant learned or should have known of a discriminatory act, policy, or practice.

No person who files a complaint shall be intimidated, threatened, coerced, or retaliated against. This includes individuals who have testified, assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation of a complaint alleging a discriminatory act, policy, or practice involving race, color, or national origin.

Agency procedure for complaints of alleged discriminatory acts, policies, or practices in the adoption and foster care licensing process that involve race, color, or national origin shall include the following:

- 1) This agency shall forward the complaint to Ohio Department of Job and Family Services within three working days of receipt of the complaint.

- 2) This agency shall not initiate, conduct, or run concurrent investigations surrounding the complaint or take further action regarding the complainant or the subject of the complaint until issuance of the final investigation of the report by ODJFS, unless approved by ODJFS.
- 3) This agency shall cooperate fully with ODJFS during the investigation.

The Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services shall provide a written notice of the procedures for any complaints of discrimination in the foster care and adoption process that involve race, color, and national origin within thirty days of the effective date to all foster caregivers certified or in the process of certification and to all individuals who have approved adoptive home studies or who are participating in the adoptive home study process on the effective date of this rule. (Effective date is 2/01/05).

Appendix II:

OFFENSES LISTED IN PARAGRAPH (J)(1) OF RULE 5101:2-7-02 OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

OFFENSES AGAINST ANIMALS

R.C. 959.13-- Cruelty to animals

HOMICIDE

R.C. 2903.01-- Aggravated murder

R.C. 2903.02-- Murder

R.C. 2903.03-- Voluntary manslaughter

R.C. 2903.04-- Involuntary manslaughter

ASSAULT

R.C. 2903.11-- Felonious assault

R.C. 2903.12-- Aggravated assault

R.C. 2903.15-- Permitting child abuse

R.C. 2903.13-- Assault

R.C. 2903.16-- Failing to provide for a functionally impaired person

MENACING

R.C. 2903.21-- Aggravated menacing

R.C. 2903.211-- Menacing by stalking

R.C. 2903.22-- Menacing

PATIENT ABUSE AND NEGLECT

R.C. 2903.34-- Patient abuse, neglect

KIDNAPPING AND RELATED ISSUES

R.C. 2905.01-- Kidnapping

R.C. 2905.02-- Abduction

R.C. 2905.04-- Child stealing (as this law existed prior to July 1, 1996)

R.C. 2905.05-- Criminal child enticement

SEX OFFENSES

R.C. 2907.02-- Rape

R.C. 2907.03-- Sexual battery

R.C. 2907.04-- Unlawful sexual conduct with a minor

OFFENSES LISTED IN PARAGRAPH (J)(1) OF RULE 5101:2-7-02 OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

R.C. 2907.05-- Gross sexual imposition

R.C. 2907.06-- Sexual imposition

R.C. 2907.07-- Importuning

R.C. 2907.08-- Voyeurism

R.C. 2907.09-- Public indecency

R.C. 2907.12-- Felonious sexual penetration (as this former section of law existed)

R.C. 2907.21-- Compelling prostitution

R.C. 2907.22-- Promoting prostitution

R.C. 2907.23-- Procuring

R.C. 2907.25-- Prostitution

R.C. 2907.31-- Disseminating matter harmful to juveniles

R.C. 2907.32-- Pandering obscenity

R.C. 2907.321-- Pandering obscenity involving a minor

R.C. 2907.322-- Pandering sexually oriented matter involving a minor
R.C. 2907.323-- Illegal use of a minor in nudity-oriented material or performance

ARSON

R.C. 2909.02-- Aggravated arson
R.C. 2909.03-- Arson
R.C. 2909.22-- Soliciting or providing support for act of terrorism
R.C. 2909.23-- Making terroristic threat
R.C. 2909.24-- Terrorism

ROBBERY AND BURGLARY

R.C. 2911.01-- Aggravated robbery
R.C. 2911.02-- Robbery
R.C. 2911.11-- Aggravated burglary
R.C. 2911.12-- Burglary

THEFT AND FRAUD

R.C. 2913.49--Identity Fraud
OFFENSES AGAINST THE PUBLIC PEACE
R.C. 2917.01--Inciting to violence
R.C. 2917.02-- Aggravated riot

OFFENSES AGAINST THE FAMILY Appendix A to OAC 5101:2-7-02 OFFENSES LISTED IN PARAGRAPH (J)(1) OF RULE 5101:2-7-02 OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

R.C. 2919.12-- Unlawful abortion
R.C. 2919.22-- Endangering children
R.C. 2919.23-- Interference with custody (that would have been a violation of R.C. 2905.04 as it existed prior to July 1, 1996 if violation had been committed prior to that date)
R.C. 2919.24-- Contributing to unruliness or delinquency of a child
R.C. 2919.25-- Domestic violence

WEAPONS CONTROL

R.C. 2923.12-- Carrying a concealed weapon
R.C. 2923.13-- Having a weapon while under disability
R.C. 2923.161-- Improperly discharging a firearm at or into a habitation or school

DRUG OFFENSES

R.C. 2925.02 -- Corrupting another with drugs
R.C. 2925.03 -- Trafficking in drugs
R.C. 2925.04 -- Illegal manufacture of drugs or cultivation of marijuana
R.C. 2925.05 -- Funding of drug or marijuana trafficking
R.C. 2925.06 -- Illegal administration or distribution of anabolic steroids
R.C. 2925.11 -- Possession of drugs or marijuana that is not a minor drug possession offense

OTHER

R.C. 2927.12-- Ethnic intimidation
R.C. 3716.11 -- Placing harmful objects in food or confection
R.C. 4511.19-- Operating vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs – OVI or OVUAC

Appendix III

ASHLAND COUNTY DJFS NORMALCY AND THE REASONABLE AND PRUDENT PARENT STANDARD

Activities-Related Policies

Children in foster care are *entitled* to participate in age-appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities (ORC 2151.315).

A foster caregiver shall allow privileges and assign responsibilities to a foster child similar to those which would be assigned to a family member of the foster caregiver who is of similar age and functioning level (OAC 5101:2-7-11).

ACTIVITY	ODJFS POLICY	Ashland County DJFS Policy ** / Guidelines and Expectations
Participate in case-related meetings such as SARs and permanency staffings.	Youth in care have “the right to have his or her opinions heard and be included, to the greatest extent possible, when any decisions are being made effecting his or her life.” Youth age 14 and over have the right to participate in case planning and to invite two adults to participate as well.	Every effort should be made by the assigned caseworker to encourage parents, guardians, caregivers, and age-appropriate children to attend and participate in case related meetings. Caregivers should also encourage and support participation for the youth in their homes, with consideration given for school schedule.
Spend the night at a friend’s home (Socialization and Overnights Away from the Foster Parent sections of policy)	No specific policy. May be considered a “leave” if the youth is gone longer than 24 hours.	Caregiver and assigned worker should discuss child's behaviors and appropriateness to spend the night with a friend. Caregiver must know the friend's family and have conversation with the other parent before approving overnights. If the child is to spend more than 24 hours in the friend’s family’s home, the agency reserves the right to request that the family complete a criminal background check through finger printing and a physical inspection of their home to ensure adequate space and safety.

Have a friend over to spend the night	No specific policy or restrictions.	<p>No specific policy. Caregiver and assigned worker should discuss child's behaviors and appropriateness to have a friend spend the night.</p> <p>Caregiver must know the friend's family and have conversation with the other parent before approving overnights.</p>
<p>Dating</p> <p>(Transportation issue addressed in Socialization section of policy)</p>	No specific policy or restrictions.	<p>Caregiver and assigned worker should discuss child's behaviors and appropriateness to go out on a date and be unsupervised in the community.</p> <p>No specific policy. However restrictions related to unsupervised time in the community and transportation will apply.</p>
<p>Be out in the community with friends unchaperoned</p> <p>(Socialization section of policy)</p>	Caregiver shall have prior written approval by the agency specifying whether or not the foster child may be left unattended and, if so, for what period of time.	Caregiver shall have prior written approval by the agency specifying whether or not the foster child may be left unattended and, if so, for what period of time based on that child's ability and behavior. Child must have the ability to contact foster parent if the family does not have a house phone.
<p>Own a cell phone</p> <p>(Cell phone and Cell Phone Use section of policy)</p>	No specific policy. Rules give a foster child the right to communicate with family, friends, and "significant others" in accordance with the service or treatment plan.	<p>Not recommended for children under age 13. Caregivers are encouraged to not allow child to have cell phone after bedtime.</p> <p>Caregivers should set expectations and monitor activity as appropriate to the child's age and developmental level.</p> <p>**Caregivers reserve the right to have rules about cell phones in their homes. The caseworker and caregiver should discuss the</p>

		<p>child's behavior and developmental level and expectations of the cell phone use and rules.</p> <p>If the child works they can buy their own phone or the child's parent can buy them their own phone and maintain payments for the phone. The agency will not be responsible for maintenance of the phone or phone bill.</p>
<p>Have social media accounts (Social Media section of policy)</p>	<p>No specific policy. Rules give a foster child the right to communicate with family, friends, and "significant others" in accordance with the service or treatment plan.</p>	<p>Caregivers should set expectations and monitor activity as appropriate to the child's age / development.</p> <p>No pictures shall be posted to any social media sight of children in the custody of ACDJFS.</p>
<p>Get a job or internship</p>	<p>No specific policy or restrictions.</p>	<p>No specific policy. Work experience and internships are encouraged for age appropriate youth and in accordance with their Independent Living Plan.</p>
<p>Participate in extracurricular activities such as school dances and field trips (Socialization section of policy)</p>	<p>No specific policy or restrictions. Foster caregiver shall encourage a foster child to participate in school activities as appropriate to the child's age and functioning level. Caregivers shall arrange appropriate transportation.</p>	<p>Foster caregiver shall encourage a foster child to participate in school activities as appropriate to the child's age and functioning level. Caregivers shall arrange appropriate transportation.</p>
<p>Participate in religious activities (Religious Participation section of policy)</p>	<p>Youth in care have the right to enjoy freedom of religion. Meals must conform to religious dietary restrictions. There must be opportunity for the child to practice her chosen religion unless it is not in her best interest. No religious procedure can take</p>	<p>Youth in care have the right to enjoy freedom of religion. There must be opportunity for the child to practice his/her chosen religion unless caregiver and the child's caseworker determine that it is not in their best interest. No religious procedure can take place without the approval of the birth family.</p>

	place without the approval of the birth family.	
Obtain a driver's license (Driver's License section of policy)	No specific policy or restrictions.	Currently youth in custody may not drive or obtain a license while in the custody of Ashland County DJFS without abiding by the qualifications set forth in the foster care policy and approved by the director of ACDJFS. Teens may take a driver's education course less the actual driving piece of the program, as part of the independent living plan and nearing emancipation or as part of adoption negotiations.
Ride in a car with a friend who has a license (Socialization section of policy)	Foster caregivers shall ensure that any person transporting a foster child in a motor vehicle shall be licensed to drive that class of vehicle and that such vehicle is maintained in a safe condition according to state laws. There are also rules regarding proper restraint.	Children ages 16 yo and older who are in agency custody are able to ride in cars with other teens under the following circumstances: The caregiver must know the teen/family; Caregiver must verify the teen driver's license and insurance information; The teen driver must follow all the guidelines set by the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles.
Ride in a car with an adult, such as a friend's parent (Socialization section of policy)	Foster caregivers shall ensure that any person transporting a foster child in a motor vehicle shall be licensed to drive that class of vehicle and that such vehicle is maintained in a safe condition according to state laws. There are also rules regarding proper restraint.	Any person transporting a foster child in a motor vehicle must have a valid driver's license and must carry liability insurance. The vehicle must be in a safe condition according to state laws and rules regarding use of seat belts / car seats apply.
Ride the city bus, public transit	No specific policy or restrictions.	No specific policy or restrictions. Caregivers will encourage and support children 16 years of age or older to participate in an independent living program or teach independent living skills to them. This will be in accordance with their independent living

		plan, case plan and or treatment plan.
Obtaining a car	<i>*Review*</i>	No current policy. **Under review**
Ride motorized vehicles such as motorcycles and ATVs (At-Risk Activities section of policy)	No specific policy or restrictions.	Children in the custody of Ashland County DJFS may ride on motorized vehicles with parental and agency permission and must follow all safety laws. They must be supervised by an adult at all times. Participation depends on the developmental and maturity of the child, determined on a case by case basis.
Participant in activities with weapons such as hunting and target shooting (At-Risk Activities section of policy)	No specific policy or restrictions.	Children in the custody of Ashland County DJFS may participate in activities with weapons such as hunting and target shooting with parental and agency permission and must follow all safety laws. They must be supervised by an adult at all times. Participation depends on the developmental level and maturity of the child, determined on a case by case basis.
Participate in water sports (At-Risk Activities section of policy)	No specific policy or restrictions.	Children in the custody of Ashland County DJFS may participate in water sports with agency permission and must follow all safety laws. They must be supervised by an adult at all times.
Temporarily alter appearance (haircut, hair dye) (Changes in Foster Child's Appearance section of the policy)	No specific policy. Should consider the birth family's wishes.	Caregivers may not authorize any action or procedure that might result in a change in appearance of the child without the permission of the child's parent or the agency's permission. This will be determined on a case by case basis.

<p>Permanently alter appearance (piercings, tattoos) (Changes in Foster Child's Appearance section of the policy)</p>	<p>No specific policy. Should consider the birth family's wishes.</p>	<p>Caregivers may not authorize any action or procedure that might result in a change in appearance of the child without the permission of the child's parent or the agency's permission. This will be determined on a case by case basis.</p>
<p>Open and maintain a bank account</p>	<p>No specific policy or restrictions. Youth in care have the right to "his own money and personal property in accordance with the child's service or case plan."</p>	<p>No specific policy. All Independent Living teens (age 16 and over) are encouraged to have a bank account. The caregiver must also be signatures on the account to enable access. <i>* Caregivers are not required to be a co-signer on an account*</i></p>
<p>Be responsible for medication management (Administration of Medication section of policy)</p>	<p>A foster caregiver shall administer or supervise the administration of prescription drugs according to the prescribing physician's instruction. Agencies must have a policy on monitoring the appropriate use of psychotropic medications. Youth in care have "the right to be taught to fulfill appropriate responsibilities to himself and to others."</p>	<p>Caregivers MUST administer prescription drugs to the foster child for whom the medication was prescribed according to the physicians instructions. Children, including teenage children, may not take medication without adult supervision. Follow the agency's Psychotropic Medication Policy.</p>
<p>Take OTC medications (Administration of Medication section of policy)</p>	<p>No specific policy. A foster caregiver shall be responsible for following instructions of the agency which placed the child for providing health care services to each foster child.</p>	<p>The home must have a locked cabinet or storage area for medication and supplies. Children, including teenage children, may not take medication without adult supervision.</p>
<p>Use essential oils</p>	<p>No specific policy. A foster caregiver shall be responsible for following instructions of the agency which placed the child for providing health care services to each foster child.</p>	<p>No specific policy. May be used with adult supervision.</p>

Have picture appear in media such as a newspaper or website (Confidentiality and Social Media section of policy)	No specific policy. A foster caregiver shall not knowingly allow the disclosure of any information regarding the child to persons not directly involved in the child's care and treatment.	Children are not permitted to appear in any form of media or media site without the permission of the agency.
Taking children on vacation	<i>*Review*</i>	No specific policy. Parent has the right to know that the child will be going on vacation, but permission is not needed. Arranged visits shall be made up.
Participate in community and cultural events (Socialization section of policy)	No specific policy or restrictions. A foster caregiver shall encourage a foster child to participate in community, school, recreation and cultural heritage activities as appropriate to the child's age and functioning level. Caregivers shall arrange appropriate transportation.	Caregivers must encourage and support each foster child to participate in community, school, recreational and cultural heritage activities and experiences as appropriate to the age and functioning level of the children. Caregivers shall arrange appropriate transportation.
Play on a sports team (Socialization section of policy)	No specific policy or restrictions. A foster caregiver shall encourage a foster child to participate in recreation activities as appropriate to the child's age and functioning level.	Caregivers shall encourage and support each foster child to participate in recreational activities as appropriate to the age and functioning level of the children. Caregivers shall arrange appropriate transportation.
Participate in community or school-related club (Socialization section of policy)	No specific policy or restrictions. A foster caregiver shall encourage a foster child to participate in community, school, recreation and cultural heritage activities as appropriate to the child's age and functioning level. Caregivers shall arrange appropriate transportation.	Caregivers shall encourage and support each foster child to participate in community, school, recreational and cultural heritage activities as appropriate to the age and functioning level of the children. Caregivers shall arrange appropriate transportation.

Have permission slips signed by caregiver (Education section of policy)	No specific policy or restrictions.	Caregivers are permitted to sign permission slips.
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Appendix IV

Psychotropic Medication Form

Name of child	John Smith	ACDJFS Caseworker	Jane Doe
Date of birth	01/01/2000	Date of placement	02/02/2009
Height	4' 10"	Weight	57

Medication	Dose	Route	Times
Vivance	5 mg	Oral	2x daily

Diagnoses
ADHD

Prescribing doctor name	Dr. Jones	Clinician/Counselor	N/A
Phone number	123-456-7890	Phone/email	N/A

Adam First

2/10/2009

Completed By

Date

****Foster parents shall provide a copy of this form to the child's caseworker each month during monthly home visits.**

Appendix V

Ashland County Family Foster Home Per Diem Rates

The following rates shall be in effect February 1, 2015

Standard Rates:

Ages birth through age 7 years old \$23.00/day

Ages 8 years old through 13 years old \$28.00/day

Ages 14 years old through 18+ years old \$35.00/day

Emergency Rates* \$50.00/day for first, initial 2 days of placement

***defined as having less than 12-hours notice from agency for placement**

****Sibling groups of 3 or more children placed in the same home will received an additional \$10.00 per day for the first 3 children in addition to the above per diem/per day rates. (Ex: Child 1 \$3.33 + the per diem for their age listed above, Child 2 \$3.33 +, the per diem for their age listed above, Child 3 \$3.34 + the per diem for their age listed above = \$10.00). No additional per diem is given for more than 3 children; just the \$10.00 stipend.**