

POLICY ON GOOD CAUSE FOR FOSTER CAREGIVER'S FAILURE TO COMPLETE REQUIRED TRAINING

Every foster caregiver is required to complete forty hours every two years of continuing education as defined by Ohio Revised Code 5103.032. To ensure completion of these requirements, Trumbull County Children Services will provide or arrange for training throughout the year, refer families to other agencies and community sources that are offering relevant training and reading material, and provide video tapes to families with valid reasons for not attending training. Foster caregivers can also fulfill up to 20% of their required continuing training by teaching one or more training classes for other foster caregivers or by providing mentorship services to other foster caregivers.

Ohio Revised Code 5103.032 allows the Agency to establish good cause criteria and a good cause policy for a foster caregiver's failure to complete the forty (40) hours every two years of continuing education training. If a foster caregiver complies with the Agency's good cause criteria and policy, the Agency may recommend the foster caregiver for recertification even though the foster caregiver has not completed the forty (40) hours of continuing education.

Timely completion of training hours for foster caregiver is an essential part of the recertification process. It is the Agency's expectation that all caregivers will complete their trainings hours for recertification within 30 days of recertification, unless a good cause standard exists that prevents them from doing so. If a caregiver does not complete all training hours for recertification within 30 days of recertification, a rule violation will be given with a corrective action plan. Further, if a foster home does not complete all of their training hours required for recertification, and a good cause standard does not exist, then they cannot be recommended for recertification and their foster care certification will expire.

The Agency has established the following criteria which constitute good cause:

- a. An illness of the foster caregiver and/or foster family member that can be documented. The foster caregiver must notify the Agency of the illness, and the Agency may request additional confirmation and documentation of the illness.
- b. An emergency situation which occurs within the last three (3) months prior to the annual date or the date of recertification. Examples of these situations include, but are not limited to, the following: Death of a family member; Fire in the foster home; Need for relocation; Illness of an out-of-state family member. The Agency will require documentation which includes written notification by the foster caregiver and any other written documentation requested by the Agency.
- c. The Agency's inability to provide the required training or inability to accommodate the foster caregiver due to limited capacity for the training.
- d. A period of inclement weather which occurs within the last three (3) months prior to the annual date or the date of recertification.
- e. The foster caregiver has served in active duty outside the state with a branch of the armed

forces of the US for more than 30 days in the preceding two year period or they have 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 the state.

When a foster caregiver has met one of the criteria for good cause for the failure to complete forty (40) hours of continuing education, the Agency will then develop a corrective action plan with the foster caregiver according to the following procedures:

- (A) According to Ohio Administrative Code rules, the foster caregiver's failure to complete the forty (40) hours of continuing education must be documented as a rule violation.
- (B) As part of the corrective action plan, the Resource Caseworker along with the Foster Care Supervisor will develop a training plan and schedule in writing with the foster caregiver in order to complete the required training hours within ninety (90) days of the date of recertification.
- (C) The corrective action plan must also include notification to the foster caregiver that any foster children placed in their home will be removed if the foster caregiver fails to comply with the corrective action plan within ninety (90) days. The Agency will not place any new foster children in the home. A foster caregiver's failure to comply with the corrective action plan may result in a recommendation for revocation of the foster home certificate.
- (D) If a foster caregiver has failed to meet their training requirements because they have served in the military or militia, as defined in the previous paragraph, they will be given one month for each month that they were on active duty to complete the required training hours. Any training that is not met at the end of the caregiver's certification period, shall be waived by the Agency.

If a caregiver continues to demonstrate Good Cause the Agency will review the situation and determine whether the caregiver should be given an additional 90 days to complete the required training.

When a foster caregiver fails to comply with the corrective action plan, the Agency will complete the following procedures for recommending revocation of the foster home certificate:

1. The Agency will remove any foster children from the foster caregiver's home.
2. The Agency will provide the following written notification using the JFS 01315 "Notification of Denial of Initial Certification, Recertification or Revocation of a Foster Home Certificate" by regular mail and certified mail, return receipt requested, to the foster caregiver:
 - a. The reason for the decision to recommend revocation of the foster home certificate;
 - b. The specific rule with which the foster caregiver is not in compliance;
 - c. A copy of the Agency's Grievance Policy for Foster Parents and Foster Parent Applicants; and
 - d. That the final decision to revoke certification will be made by the Ohio

Department of Job and Family Services at which time the foster caregiver will be afforded the opportunity to request a hearing pursuant to Chapter 119. of the Revised Code.

3. The Agency will submit to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services a JFS 01317 “Recommendation for Certification/Recertification of a Foster Home” and documentation of the following:
 - a. A summary of the grievance meeting, if one was held;
 - b. Identification of the rules with which the foster caregiver is not in compliance;
 - c. Specific documentation and evidence supporting the recommendation; and
 - d. A copy of the JFS 01315 and a copy of the certified mail receipt sent to the foster caregiver.
4. Upon receipt of the Agency’s documentation, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services will evaluate the evidence and documentation submitted and take one of the following actions:
 - a. Return the JFS 01317 and evidence to the Agency due to insufficient or inappropriate evidence and documentation with a written explanation of the deficiency; or
 - b. Reject the Agency recommendation in writing specifying the reasons for rejection; or
 - c. Proceed with the revocation process.
5. When the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services proceeds with the revocation process, ODJFS will notify the foster caregiver and the Agency. The Agency must then notify any other agency which may have a foster child placed in the foster home.
6. If ODJFS revokes the foster caregiver’s certificate, the foster caregiver will not be eligible for any ODJFS children services license or certification for **five (5) years** from the date of revocation or the exhaustion of all appeals, whichever is later.

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