

# **Trumbull County Children Services: Foster Care Policies**

# **Table of Content**

- 1. Introduction: Foster Care Policy**
- 2. Confidentiality Policy**
- 3. Position Description – Foster Caregiver**
- 4. Policy on Foster Caregiver Assessment Activities**
- 5. Process for Simultaneously Approving Foster Care & Adoptive Placement**
- 6. Site & Safety Policy**
- 7. Psychotropic Medication Policy & Procedure**
- 8. Care, Supervision, & Discipline Policy**
- 9. Religious Participation, Socialization, & Education Policy**
- 10. Consumer Complaint Resolution Policy, Procedure, & Exhibits**
- 11. Notification of Convictions of 12 to 18-Year-Old Policy**
- 12. Payment to Foster Caregiver Policy**
- 13. Normalcy & Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard**
- 14. Approved Mileage Requirement**
- 15. Destruction of Property Caused by Foster Children Policy**
- 16. Liability Insurance, Legal Representation, Legal Fees, Counseling and Legal Advocacy for Foster Parents**
- 17. Third Party Investigation Policy**
- 18. Accessibility to Administrator Policy**

- 19. Notification to the Custodial Agency of Incidents with Foster Children Policy and Procedure**
- 20. Care & Treatment Team**
- 21. Good Cause for Foster Caregiver Failure to Complete Required Training Policy**
- 22. Discharge Policy**
- 23. Policy Regarding Participation in Human Research Projects, Public Relations & Fund-Raising Activities**
- 24. Assurance of Children's Civil Rights Policy**
- 25. Volunteer & Student Intern Policy**
- 26. Adoption by Foster Home of a Child or Sibling Group Who Becomes Available While in the Foster Home**
- 27. Sharing of Transfer of a Foster Home**
- 28. Notification of Foster Caregiver or Relative with Custody of a Child of the Agency's Permanent Custody Motion or Prospective Adoption Placement**
- 29. Foster Caregiver Pre-placement & Continuing Training**
- 30. Agency-wide Disaster Plan & Exhibits**
- 31. Appendix A: Procedures for Investigating Alleged Acts of Discrimination in the Foster Care or Adoption Process**
- 32. Appendix B; MEPA Employee & Contractor Standards of Conduct**
- 33. Appendix C: Non-Discrimination Requirements for Foster Care & Adoptive Placements (JFS 01611)**

**Trumbull County Children Services  
Reeves Road NE  
Warren, Ohio 44483-4354  
(330) 372-2010  
(330) 372-3446 FAX**

**FOSTER CARE POLICY**

The attached policies and procedures in their totality constitute Trumbull County Children Services' Foster Care Policy. Trumbull County Children Services is fully licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA), to provide a full range of Foster Care services. During the provision of these services, including all recruitment activities, the Agency fully abides by all applicable State and Federal laws, rules, and regulations, including, but not limited, to:

- The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, 2 U.S.C.A. 1901 et seq. 42 U.S.C. 671(a);
- The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, Pub. L. No. 105-89;
- The Multiethnic Placement Act Oct..20, 1994, P.L. 103-382, as amended by section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, Aug.20,1996, P.L. 104-188 (MEPA), and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), as they apply to the adoption process, which do not supersede the provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, 25 U.S.C.1901 (11/1987).
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq (hereafter referred to as Title VI);

MEPA and Title VI prohibit Trumbull County Children Services from utilizing policies, procedures or actions which serve to: 1) 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 2) 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. For an overview of MEPA and Title VI, as they relate to the foster care and/ or the adoption process, refer to the "Non-discrimination Requirements for Foster Care and Adoptive Placements (JFS 01611).

All documents, training aids, and materials utilized by Trumbull County Children Services fully comply with MEPA and Title VI, the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, 25 U.S.C.A. et seq, as amended, and the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.

As required by Ohio Administrative Code, Trumbull County Children Services has established procedures for investigating alleged violations of MEPA and Title VI, as they apply to the foster care and adoption process. This procedure is attached as **Appendix A**.

To assure employee and contractors compliance with MEPA and Title VI, Trumbull County Children Services has developed "Standards of Conduct" for the provision of adoptive and foster care services, these Standards are attached as **Appendix B**.

Effective	February 2005	RMT/ PJJ
Revised	January 2009	RMT

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

It is important that Foster/ Adoptive Parents for Trumbull County Children Services (TCCS) maintain the confidentiality of any and all case information learned through their affiliation with TCCS. Any identifying information of TCCS clients and their children must be kept strictly confidential, both during the Foster/ Adoptive Parents' affiliation with the Agency and continuing into the future. This information includes, but is not limited to, the identity of residents, clients' names, the names of clients' children and family members, results of assessments or evaluations, and any details regarding a family's child welfare involvement which could be used to identify a family or its members. A violation of confidentiality could result in legal action.

Protecting the confidentiality of the foster child. It is of utmost importance that any information about the foster child be kept confidential and not be shared with family, friends, or others in the community. Also, absolutely no photographs or identifying information of any child, in the temporary custody of the Agency, may be given to the media or published in any way for any reason. Permission must be first obtained from the legal guardian and/or parent by an agency staff person.

Review/ Revised  
Revised

December 2019  
1/31/2020

MMM/RMT  
RMT

## **TRUMBULL COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES POSITION DESCRIPTION – FOSTER CAREGIVER**

### **Brief Description of Duties:**

A foster caregiver temporarily assumes the role of parent to a child in Agency custody. Basic duties include providing for the foster child's daily living needs, i.e., regular and sufficient meals, appropriate sleeping accommodations, clean and appropriate clothing, a safe, secure environment, nurturance and guidance in the foster child's activities and responsibilities.

### **Age Requirement:**

Minimum of 18 years old.

### **Training Requirements:**

Completion of a minimum of **42 hours** of pre-service foster parent orientation. In addition, all foster caregivers must complete CPR/First Aid certification prior to the initial certification of their home for foster care and they must maintain this certification throughout the time that their home is licensed for foster care services. Forty hours of continuing training is required for each certification period.

### **Licensure:**

Foster caregivers must be licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services **every two years**. Foster caregivers must comply with the requirements found in the chapters 5101:2-7 and 5101:2-5 of Ohio Administrative Code to be licensed.

### **Expected Skills and Values of a Foster Caregiver:**

A foster caregiver understands and is willing to assume the role of foster caregiver as a member of the care and treatment team.

- Is knowledgeable about and committed to abiding by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services foster care rules, agency policies and procedures.
- Is responsive to children's needs and able to provide encouragement at the developmental level of children in the foster parents' care.
- Is able to provide discipline that teaches children positive behaviors, utilizing logical and natural consequences.
- Is able to accept and work toward reunification and/or permanency planning for the foster child.
- Can identify and deal with issues associated with the separation, attachment, and loss of the foster child and the foster family.
- Understands the impact of abuse and neglect on child development and behavior, (is aware of indicators of child abuse and neglect).
- Knows the methods of treatment and precautions to take when dealing with children with communicable or sexually transmitted diseases.

- Willing to provide transportation for the foster child whenever possible.
- Able to seek and accept help, for the foster child or the foster family, when needed.

Effective February 2004  
Revised February 2006 RMT  
Revised August 2009 CLM  
Review/ Revised December 2019 MMM

## **POLICY ON FOSTER CAREGIVER ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES**

All prospective foster caregivers and adoptive parents must be legal residents of the United States and must reside in Ohio. A foster caregiver/applicant may be a legally married couple, a single person, or co-parents. At least one foster caregiver/applicant 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 with TCCSB. To formally express their interest in becoming foster caregivers or adoptive parents, all prospective foster caregivers and adoptive parents must complete an "Application for Child Placement (JFS 01691)." TCCSB shall not accept an incomplete 1691 and a home study will not be initiated until a fully completed and signed 1691 has been submitted to TCCSB by the applicant. All prospective foster caregivers and adoptive parents are required to abide by the following requirements and assessment activities as part of Trumbull County Children Services' assessment or home study process:

1. Face to face interviews with all members of the household based on his or her age and development.
2. Trumbull County Children Services requires a psychological examination of prospective foster caregivers and adoptive parents as an assessment tool to determine the strengths and weaknesses of a family. This tool is useful to better match a child to a family in order to decrease disruption and improve the success of the placement.
3. Trumbull County Children Services also requires more than three references for foster parent applicants. One of the references must be from a relative, the other references must be from non-relatives. If an applicant was previously certified as a foster caregiver or provided care and supervision of children in any capacity (i.e. Babysitting, daycare worker, etc.), references from all relevant employers and/or authorizing Agencies must also be provided. Through this requirement, the Agency receives more information about the applicant in order to thoroughly complete the assessment and decision regarding certification.
4. Trumbull County Children Services must complete a "Safety Audit (JFS 1348)" of all prospective foster caregivers and adoptive parents' homes. If the Agency identifies a problem or concern in a home which could affect the safety of the residents of the home, the Agency may require additional specialized inspections of the home including, but not limited to, the following: electrical, heating, plumbing, sewage, etc.
5. A state fire inspection certifying that the home is free from conditions hazardous to the safety of children must be completed prior to certification. This report shall not be dated more than twelve (12) months prior to the date that the agency recommends the home for certification.
6. If the Agency has identified an issue or concern about an applicant, foster parent or household member, the Agency may request an additional assessment including, but not limited to, drug/alcohol assessment, mental health assessment, anger management assessment, parenting assessment, etc. Effective 5-1-2010 all applicants must sign releases of information for community agencies that provide drug/alcohol treatment and/or complete a drug screen/test.



7. The Agency may also require interviews, references, criminal record checks, site and safety checks, etc. of alternative care providers prior to their approval.
8. The Agency shall request the conducting of a criminal records check for the foster care applicant and each adult who resides with the foster care applicant. The results shall be reviewed prior to the agency's recommendation for certification to ODJFS. For a certified foster caregiver and each adult who resides with the foster caregiver every four years within six months prior to the upcoming recertification of the caregiver. The BCII shall include information from the FBI in the criminal records check for each foster care applicant and each person eighteen years of age residing in the applicant's household subject to a criminal records check. Prior to certification, a foster care applicant subject to a criminal records check shall notify TCCSB of the revocation of any foster home license, certificate, or other similar authorization in another state occurring within the five (5) years prior to the date of the application to become a foster caregiver in Ohio. Due to Adam Walsh rule a foster care applicant cannot be certified and a license should be revoked if any adult has a record of conviction for any of the following offenses: Spousal Abuse, Rape, Sexual Assault, and Homicide.
9. To ensure Trumbull County Children Services' compliance with the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, and all applicable sections of Ohio Administrative Code, the Agency must request a Central Registry/SACWIS search of the all prospective foster caregivers and adoptive parents. The conducting of a Central Registry/SACWIS search must also be completed on each adult household member and within 10 days for all new household members.

As according to OAC 5101:2-7-02, the need to complete a criminal screening within ten days of a child turning 18 in foster care was eliminated. However, the child will need to have a criminal record check at the time of the next recertification.

Additionally, the Agency will complete a review of the National Sex Offender Registry. This check will be completed for all foster care applicants and each adult who resides in the foster care applicant's home. The results must be reviewed prior to the Agency making a recommendation for certification to ODJFS and an application may be denied based solely on the results of the search. For currently certified foster caregivers, this search must be completed prior to each recertification on each foster caregiver and each adult residing in the foster caregivers' home. The recertification may be denied based solely on the results of the search.

10. A foster care applicant shall notify TCCSB in writing if a person at least twelve (12) years of age, but less than eighteen (18) years of age, residing with the applicant has been convicted of or pled guilty to any criminal offenses, 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.
11. As according to OAC 5101:2-7-02, A foster caregiver or applicant shall have an income sufficient to meet the basic needs of the household and to make timely payment of shelter costs, utility bills, and other debts. To show the household has an income sufficient to meet the basic needs of the household and makes timely payment of shelter costs, utility bills, and other debts, a foster caregiver or applicant shall provide at a minimum:
  - a. A completed JFS 01681 "Applicant Financial Statement".

- b. Proof of income for the household for the most recent tax year prior to the date of application.
- c. Proof of income for the household for a two-month period. The verification of income shall not be dated more than six months prior to the agency's recommendation for initial certification.
- d. At least one utility bill for each utility necessary to maintain the household. The bill or bills shall not be dated more than six months prior to the agency's recommendation for initial certification.

For a foster care applicant:

- a. A completed JFS 01681 "Applicant Financial Statement".
- b. Proof of income for the household for the most recent tax year prior to the date of application.
- c. Proof of income for the household for a two-month period. The verification of income shall not be dated more than six months prior to the agency's recommendation for initial certification.
- d. At least one utility bill for each utility necessary to maintain the household. The bill or bills shall not be dated more than six months prior to the agency's recommendation for initial certification.

For certified foster caregiver: a completed JFS 01681 "Applicant Financial Statement" if there are any substantial changes to a caregiver's financial situation.

- 12. Trumbull County Children Services must ensure that all foster homes have a continuous supply of safe drinking water for foster children placed in the home. Well water used for drinking and cooking must be tested and approved by the health department prior to the date TCCSB recommends the home for certification. It must be tested annually thereafter.
- 13. A physical exam and a JFS 01653 "Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household members" (rev. 6/2009) are to be completed for each applicant by a licensed physician, physician assistant, clinical nurse specialist, certified nurse practitioner, or certified nurse-midwife within one year prior to the Agency's initial recommendation for certification. All household members are to complete a JFS 01653. Any written documentation of the physical examination shall be completed by the individual who conducted the examination. The form shall document the applicant and all members of the household are free from any physical, emotional, or mental condition which would endanger children or seriously impair the ability of the household members to care for a foster child. Additionally, the Agency may require an applicant or household member to secure and provide to the Agency a report of an additional examination by a licensed physician, psychologist, or other certified licensed professional if the applicant or any household member has suffered a serious illness or injury within the past year or if it is determined to be necessary by the Agency to ensure the safety, health, or care of any foster child who may be placed in the home of the applicant.
- 14. All household members in a home caring for infants and children with special medical needs are to have an annual influenza vaccine and they must be up to date on the pertussis vaccine, as consistent with the recommendations of the advisory committee on immunization practices

(ACIP). These requirements can be waived if the immunization(s) is contrary to the individual's health as documented by a licensed health care professional or for reasons of conscience, including religious convictions.

All children who are household members must be up to date on immunizations consistent with the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the advisory committee on immunization practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Academy of Family Physicians. This requirement can be waived if the immunization is contrary to the child's health as documented by a licensed health care professional or for reasons of conscience, including religious convictions.

The Agency must be provided with copies of the immunization records to be placed in the file of the foster home.

15. All foster care applicants must complete and sign the "Child Characteristics Checklist for Foster Care and/or Adoption" (JFS 1673-A) indicating the acceptable characteristics and type of child the applicant is willing to foster prior to the end of the assessment process.
16. As according to ORC 5103.0326(A) (B), this agency may deny recertification if a foster parent does not accept a placement of foster child. Also, ODJFS may revoke if the foster parent has not received a placement in the past 12 months. Agency should contact JFS with the foster child placement information. ODJFS may proceed with the revocation.
17. Trumbull County Children Services may close an applicant's home study should the applicant not respond to assessor's efforts to initiate a home within a three (3) month timeframe.

Effective February 2004 PJJ/RAS

Revised January 31, 2006 RMT

Revised August 14, 2008 CLM

Revised July 1, 2009 CLM

Revised April 1, 2010 CLM

Revised April 23, 2010 CLM

Revised June 7, 2010 CLM

Revised July 1, 2014 RM

Reviewed/ Revised December 1, 2019 MMM 8

Revised September 23, 2020 RMT

**POLICY ON THE PROCESS FOR SIMULTANEOUSLY  
APPROVING FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT  
AND ADOPTIVE PLACEMENT**

When a family who has been informed of the criteria for foster care and adoption decides to become a licensed foster family, as well as to adopt, they will be provided joint training on foster care and adoptive placements. An application, ODJFS 1691, will be completed by the family. On the application, they can check both boxes that apply to foster care and adoption, which will approve them for both types of placements when the home study is approved. As the need arises, the family will be considered for either placement and the rules and policies will be followed based on the type of placement. Trumbull County Children Services approves dual licensing of new foster caregivers. In this way, the foster family can be viewed as a resource home to meet the child's temporary, as well as permanency needs.

An agency not certified to recommend foster homes or conduct adoptive homestudies may refer that part of the homestudy to Trumbull County Children Services to complete all or part of the homestudy.

Effective  
Effective

February 2004  
July 1, 2009

PJJ/RAS  
CLM

## **TRUMBULL COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES' SITE AND SAFETY POLICY**

All structures, grounds, furnishings and/or equipment used or located on the grounds of the foster home shall be continually maintained in good repair and in a clean and safe condition. A home is to be free of peeling or chipped paint. If a potential lead hazard is identified, the Agency will make a referral to the appropriate agency, following ODJFS guidance.

Swimming pools are to have a barrier on all sides. The method of access through the barrier is to be equipped with a safety device, such as a bolt lock. They are to be equipped with a life saving device, such as a buoy. If the swimming pool cannot be emptied after each use, the pool is to have a working pump and filtering system.

Hot tubs and spas are to have safety covers that are locked when not in use.

Foster children are not permitted in pools or swimming areas unless the foster caregiver has current First Aid and CPR certification or there is a lifeguard present. All foster children must be visually supervised by the foster caregiver when they are in a pool or swimming area.

All outdoor recreation equipment must be maintained in a safe state of repair. Trumbull County Children Services strongly discourages our foster families from purchasing trampolines. There is even the possibility that certain insurance companies may not provide homeowners protection for dwellings where a trampoline is on the property. Nevertheless, if a foster family insists, all trampolines utilized by foster children must have a safety net and be utilized in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. All foster children must be visually supervised by the foster caregiver when using trampolines.

A foster caregiver must visually supervise any foster child using any outdoor play equipment. All outdoor play equipment must be utilized in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements. All play equipment or toys must be maintained in a safe and sanitary manner and utilized in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements.

All porches and patios more than thirty-six inches above ground level, elevated walkways and elevated play areas within or on the grounds of the foster home shall be enclosed with barriers to prevent falls. Interior and exterior stairways accessible to children shall be protected by child safety gates or doors according to the child's age and functioning level.

All stairways having more than four steps and are not enclosed by walls, must have a railing. It is recommended that *all* stairways with more than four steps have a railing. Foster children should be supervised in accordance with their age and functioning level on any stairway, with or without a railing. All stairways outside of the foster home, having more than four steps, must have a railing.

All workshop or outdoor power-driven equipment/machinery shall be maintained and operated in a safe manner, and only be utilized by children if permitted by law, permitted in writing by the custodial agency, and under the direct supervision of the foster parent. If permitted, all required safety equipment must be worn. If the area where the equipment is stored is not locked, foster children must be visually supervised by the foster parent when in or near that area. If possible, the equipment should be made inoperable.

All outside buildings or structures, such as garages, barns, sheds, etc. should be maintained in a safe manner. If buildings are not locked, not safe, contain workshop or power-driven equipment or poisonous, toxic or flammable materials and substances or dangerous animals, then foster children must be visually supervised by a foster parent when in or near these areas.

Outdoor areas on the grounds or immediately adjacent to the foster home which may be potentially hazardous, such as ponds, lakes, streams, cliffs, high traffic areas, etc. must be safeguarded or foster children must be visually supervised by the foster parent when outside. Garbage shall be disposed of on a regular basis and if stored outside, shall be in covered containers or closed bags.

All grills and propane tanks should be appropriately safeguarded. Foster children, according to their age and functioning level, should be visually supervised when grills are in use.

Household heating equipment used in a foster home shall be equipped with appropriate safeguards in accordance with the age and functioning level of any foster child in the home. Unvented heaters that burn kerosene or oil shall not be used. All heaters must be approved by "Underwriters Laboratory" or a certified fire inspector and not prohibited by any local zoning ordinances.

All bleach, cleaning materials, poisonous or corrosive chemicals, toxic, flammable, combustible materials or substances, and potentially dangerous tools, utensils, electrical equipment or machinery within the foster home should be maintained in a locked area in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Foster children must be visually supervised by the foster parent when in these areas or when using any of these materials or substances. Additionally, alcoholic beverages are to be stored in a safe manner that prevents the child's access, as appropriate for his/her age.

A foster home shall comply with the following requirements regarding weapons per ORC 5101:2-7-12:

1. The following weapons kept on the grounds of or in a foster home shall be stored in an inoperative condition in a locked area inaccessible to children:
  - a. Fire
  - b. Air rifles.
  - c. Hunting slingshots
  - d. Any other projectile weapon.
2. All ammunition, arrows or projectiles for such weapons shall be stored in a separate locked space.
3. Any foster caregiver who is also a law enforcement official and can document that their jurisdiction requires them to have ready and immediate access to their weapon shall be exempt from the requirements of this paragraph.

A foster caregiver shall administer or supervise the administration of prescription drugs to a foster child only for whom the medication was prescribed and according to the prescribing physician's instruction. Prescription drugs shall be kept in a container, labeled with the foster child's name, the correct dosage and relevant instructions.

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. Prescribed drugs shall be disposed of in a safe manner when the prescription is no longer current. Any side effects of prescription drugs shall be reported immediately to the prescribing physician and the recommending agency.

A foster home is to maintain first aid supplies.

In accordance with 5101:2-7-12(BB) of the Ohio Administrative Code, a foster home shall provide a smoke free environment for foster children:

1. If a foster home has a current placement or respite, smoking on the grounds of a foster home shall be permitted only if all of the following requirements are met:

- a. Smoking shall not occur in the home or attached building areas or vehicle.
- b. All smoking shall be conducted out of the sight of foster children.
- c. The area where smoking is occurring is so far removed from the foster children that the children cannot inhale any smoke.

2. Smoking may be permitted in the home or vehicles only when the foster home has no current placements or respites.

All lighters should be kept on the foster parent or safeguarded. In accordance with 5101:2-7-12 (P), the home must have working smoke alarms, approved by "Underwriter's Laboratory" or a certified fire inspector, on each level of occupancy and at least one near all sleeping areas of the home. ). Batteries must be replaced in the smoke alarms at least annually. Additionally, the foster home is to have at least one carbon monoxide detector on each level of occupancy of the home and at least one near all sleeping areas.

All foster parents must have an appropriate child restraint seat or booster seat for each foster child placed in the foster home. All child restraint seats/booster seats must be utilized in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements and in accordance with 5101: 2-7-15 of the Ohio Administrative Code, which requires that:

(A) Any vehicle owned or leased by a foster caregiver and used to transport a foster child shall be maintained in a safe condition and in compliance with all motor vehicle laws. Such vehicles shall be covered by liability insurance in accordance with current state laws.

(B) A foster caregiver 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.

(C) A foster caregiver shall ensure that a foster child transported in an automobile a motor vehicle shall be restrained by a seat belt both a lap belt and a shoulder belt in vehicles that are so equipped when the foster child is more than four years old and forty pounds in weight. When the foster child is less than four years old or forty pounds in weight, a child restraint seat shall be used.

(D) When the foster child is less than four years old or forty pounds in weight, a child restraint seat secured by a seat belt shall be used. The child restraint seat shall be placed in the back seat of any motor vehicle that has a back seat. (The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that toddlers be restrained in a rear facing car safety seat until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their car safety seat's manufacturer.)

(1) An infant less than one year of age or twenty pounds in weight shall be restrained only in a rear-facing position and whenever possible shall not be placed in the front seat of a motor vehicle equipped with passenger air bags.

(2) Toddlers between twenty pounds and forty pounds in weight shall be restrained in a forward-facing position.

(E) When the foster child is more than four years old and forty pounds in weight and less than eighty pounds or shorter than four feet, nine inches in height (57 inches), the child shall be restrained in a belt positioning booster seat in a forward-facing position. The booster seat shall be placed in the back seat of any motor vehicle that has a back seat.

(F) All children age twelve and under shall be restrained by a seat belt at all times and if riding in a motor vehicle that has a back seat, whenever possible, shall not ride in the front seat of the vehicle.

(G) When any child who is at least eight years of age but not older than fifteen years of age, and who is not otherwise required to be secured in a child restraint system or booster seat, is being transported in a motor vehicle, shall have the child properly restrained either in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions in a child restraint system that meets federal motor vehicle safety standards or in an occupant restraining device as defined in section 4513.263 of the Revised Code.

(H) Paragraphs (C), (D), (E), and (F) of this rule do not apply to the foster caregiver who has a signed affidavit by a licensed physician in Ohio or a licensed chiropractor in Ohio. The affidavit shall state that the child who otherwise would be required to be restrained, has a physical impairment that makes use of a child restraint system, booster seat, or an occupant restraining device impossible or impractical, provided the person operating the vehicle has safely and appropriately restrained the child in accordance with any recommendation of the physician or chiropractor as noted on the affidavit.

(I) Each foster caregiver shall ensure the recall and safety information issued by the consumer product safety commission (CPSC) related to child safety seats or booster seats are reviewed. Any safety recommendations made by the CPSC in regard to child safety seats or booster seats shall be implemented by the caregiver.

A foster home that is licensed for children under the age of two (2) must be able to readily and easily access and assemble a crib which meets the standards as set forth in 5101:2-7-10 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

Cribs used for children under two years of age or under 35 inches in height are full-sized, with slats no more than two and three-eighths ( $2 \frac{3}{8}$ ) inches apart, no decorative cutout areas on crib end panels which could entrap a child's head are permitted, mattresses will be firm and at least 1 and one-half ( $1 \frac{1}{2}$ ) inches



think and covered with waterproof material not dangerous to a child, the mattress must fit close enough to the frame so that there is no more than one (1) inch between the mattress and the sides of the crib. Only cribs that are compliant with the U.S. consumer product safety commission shall be used. A bassinet or cradle may be used only for infants less than fifteen (15) pounds in weight.

If a fully assembled crib was not observed prior to the placement of a child under the age of two into the foster home, then a site and safety by the foster caregiver's Resource Caseworker must be conducted prior to any placement being able to occur in order for the worker to observe a fully assembled crib in the home.

All toddler beds must be used for foster children must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements for height, weight and age. ORC 5101:2-7-10 (A). No foster parent may change a foster child's bed or bedroom without prior approval of the agency.

Locks to at least one door to any room or walk-in storage area inside a foster home in which a person could become confined, and from which the only other means of exit requires the use of a key, shall be able to be unlocked from either side and be unlocked from inside of the room or storage area without a key. Locking of the children's bedroom doors while children are sleeping is prohibited. Locking of outside doors and fencing around a yard or outside play area is permitted.

A foster home shall be adequately heated, lighted and ventilated. A bedroom for a foster child shall have at least one outside wall window. The window shall be screened and capable of opening and closing. A working telephone or reasonable access to a working telephone is required for emergency situations. Appropriate emergency telephone numbers, including fire, police, ambulance, poison control, Trumbull County Children Services, and any other agency with a foster child placed in the home shall be posted in a prominent place in the home.

A foster caregiver shall have a written evacuation plan for evacuating the home or seeking shelter in the event of fire, tornado or other disaster. This evacuation plan shall contain a primary and alternate escape route for each floor. A foster caregiver shall provide initial orientation and ongoing instruction on the contents of this plan to each foster child in accordance with the foster child's age and functioning level. All escape routes shall be kept free of clutter and other obstructions.

A foster home shall have a portable fire extinguisher in working order in or near the cooking area of the home. The fire extinguisher shall be "Underwriters Laboratory" approved or approved by a certified fire inspector.

Pets or domestic animals in or on the premises of a foster home shall be kept in a safe and sanitary manner in accordance with state and local laws. A foster child shall be protected from animals potentially dangerous to the child's health and safety in or on the premises of a foster home.

A foster home is to be free from rodents and insect infestation.

A foster home shall have a continuous supply of safe drinking water. Well water used for drinking and cooking shall be tested and approved by the Health Department prior to initial certification and annually thereafter.

A foster home shall have working bathroom and toilet facilities located within the home and connected to an indoor plumbing system.

A foster home is to ensure proper water heater temperature not to exceed one hundred-twenty (120) degrees Fahrenheit.

I understand and agree to abide by the standards set forth in the site and safety policy.

---

Foster Parent Signature

---

Date

---

Foster Parent Signature

---

Date

Revised March 8, 2007 CLM/cm  
Revised December 1, 2008 CLM/cm  
Revised August 1, 2009 CLM  
Revised May 1, 2011 RM  
Revised July 1, 2014 RM  
Revised December 1, 2019 MMM

## **Psychotropic Medication Policy/Procedure for Children in Custody of Trumbull County Children Services**

### **Policy**

#### **Rationale**

National and statewide data show a high prescription rate of poly-psychopharmacology among children and youth in the custody of the child welfare system. A growing body of research has identified the high rate of trauma endured by children in the child welfare system, the value of trauma informed practice and care, and differences in environmental trauma vs. other types of mental illness, and the value of medications for addressing trauma. There is concern nationwide that the significant trauma issues for these children and youth have been treated at times with a greater focus on use of psychotropic medications, when trauma-based practice and services could or should be used in tandem with temporary, declining medication use.

As custodial agencies, Public Children Services Agencies have a profound responsibility (and statutory mandate) to focus on not only safety and permanency for our children, but also improving child well-being for the immediate time and as our children and youth age and transition out of our care. PCSAs are the ultimate consenting authority if birth/adoptive parents are unavailable to consent.

#### **Definitions**

**Psychotropic Medication** – Medications used to treat mental health conditions. Has the effect to alter a person's thoughts, feelings, mental/physical activity, mood or behavior.

**Antipsychotic Medications** – A class of psychotropic medications approved for treatment of autism, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and severe aggressive behavior in children.

**Polypharmacy** – Use of more than one (1) psychotropic medication concurrently.

#### **Authority to Grant Informed Consent**

The Executive Director (ED) of Trumbull County Children Services (TCCS) will provide informed consent for psychotropic medication use for children in custody of TCCS. The informed consent will be necessary for any new medication prescribed to treat any behavioral health disorder, as well as for changes in dosages of psychotropic medications. Informed consent must be given before the medication is given to the child except in psychiatric emergencies.

When psychotropic medications do not fall within prescribing guidelines (**Attachment 1**), the ED or designee shall contact the prescriber to discuss the rationale. If the ED is still not comfortable granting informed consent, the ED shall consult with the Agency Medical Consultant who shall be a Board Certified or Eligible Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist.

## Prescriber Limitations

Psychotropic medications will only be prescribed to children in custody of TCCS if the prescriber is one of the following:

- a. A board Certified or Eligible Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist or Adult Psychiatrist with child experience;
- b. An Advance Practice Nurse (APN) with Prescriptive Authority who is certified in child psychiatry;
- c. A Pediatrician, Family Practice Physician, APN with Prescriptive Authority or Physician's Assistant for psychotropic medications that have been originally prescribed by a clinician listed in a or b, when the medication has stabilized the behaviors and the medication at the same dosage needs to be periodically represcribed for maintenance of symptom change.

## Covered Medications

Medications requiring consent shall be defined as any medication that is used to treat symptoms related to a behavioral health diagnosis. This includes the following:

- a. Psychotropic medications as described above;
- b. Non-psychiatric medications that are used for symptoms related to a behavioral health diagnosis;
- c. Over-the-counter (OTC) medications if prescribed for symptoms related to a behavioral health diagnosis; and
- d. All psychiatric medications will be included if used for a condition NOT related to a diagnosis found in the DSM IV.

## After Hours/Emergency Informed Consent

**A psychiatric emergency exists when a child needs to be treated by emergency healthcare providers for conditions, symptoms or behaviors that are causing or might cause a danger to self or others and are or might be related to a diagnosable behavioral health condition.** If child is admitted to an emergency room (ER) due to a psychiatric emergency, the ER contacts our Agency for Permission to Treat. Permission to Treat shall cover any psychotropic medications prescribed during ER admission and any prescriptions written by ER personnel for 24 hours post discharge. If the child is transferred to a locked, inpatient child psychiatry unit/hospital, Permission to Treat at that site shall be considered informed consent for the use of psychotropic medications, as ordered by the treating physician, for the first 24 hours of his/her stay there. Except in an emergency while inpatient, hospitals shall follow the procedures described below to obtain informed consent from the ED for use of psychotropics. **A psychiatric emergency while in an inpatient setting shall be considered when a set of behaviors or symptoms exist that are related to the child's psychiatric diagnosis and may result in imminent harm to self or others.** Psychotropic medications may be used by the treating physician in the event of an inpatient emergency with simple notification of on-call staff.

## Procedure

### Informed Consent for Youth on Psychotropic Medication when Taken into Custody

1. Within the first 72 hours after being taken into custody, the caseworker shall complete the **Psychotropic Medication Information Checklist (CSB form #623, Attachment 2).**
2. At the same time, a Request for Release of Information shall be sent to the prescriber requesting the

following:

- a. Current psychotropic medications, dosage, route and times;
  - b. Diagnostic assessment with DSM diagnosis, if not available then 5 Axis DSM IV diagnosis;
  - c. Individualized Service Plan (ISP) if available;
  - d. Obtain medication history (may be part of diagnostic assessment if available); and
  - e. Most recent MD progress note.
3. The information above shall be sent to the ED designee who shall create a psychotropic medication file for the child.
  4. The ED designee shall enter all existing information on the Psychotropic Data Collection spreadsheet (**Attachment 3**).
  5. Following review of the above, the ED shall grant informed consent based on the judgment of the previous custodian in consultation with the prescriber unless the medication is outside of the prescribing parameters. In that case, the ED shall discuss this medication with the prescriber. If no common agreement can be reached, the ED shall consult the Agency Medical Consultant to assist with final decision.
  6. Informed consent for these medications will be sent to the prescriber by the ED designee using the **Request to Administer Psychotropic Medication form (Attachment 4)** completed by the ED designee upon receipt of the information listed above and as granted by the ED.
  7. Upon receipt of the information outlined above (#'s 1 & 2), the caseworker will document the information in SACWIS via the child's Education and Health Information form (JFS #1443). In addition, the caseworker will make a copy of the information to place in the child's case record and forward the original information to the ED/designee for inclusion in the Psychotropic Medication File.
  8. Caseworker regularly monitors medication adherence and role of child and caregiver in adherence and documents in SACWIS.
  9. Informed consent for new medications is described below.

#### **Informed Consent for Newly Prescribed Psychotropic Medications**

1. As soon as possible after being taken into custody, the child shall receive a psychological evaluation. If this evaluation indicates that the child may benefit from psychotropic medication and other behavioral health services, or if the child's team believes at any time that this may be needed, the child shall be referred for a comprehensive diagnostic assessment.
2. The caseworker shall notify the caregiver of the recommendation and provide the name of a provider to assess the child.
3. The caseworker is responsible for making the appointment, and communicating appointment date and time to the substitute caregiver.
4. The caseworker informs the provider of Agency policies on psychotropic medications before the appointment or during the appointment.
5. The appointment and communication for informed consent:
  - a. The caseworker attends the initial appointment. For youth placed out of county, caseworker attends psychiatric appointments at least quarterly. An attempt to schedule to coordinate with time of team meeting in mind.
  - b. The caseworker assures that the prescriber documents diagnosis, symptoms to be addressed with medications, potential risks, expected benefits, medication name, route, dose and time(s) to be administered.
  - c. The caseworker ensures that the child and substitute care provider understand the name of the medication, the benefits and any potential side effects (as appropriate considering child's

- developmental level). The caseworker obtains/documents their input into the decision.
- d. The caseworker assures that the provider completes **Request to Administer Psychotropic Medication form** and faxes or emails it to ED designee.
  - e. The provider may request informed consent for a medication and indicate the maximum dosage he/she will titrate up to. This is to avoid repeated informed consent requests for a single medication titration.
  - f. ED reviews and provides informed consent for the psychotropic medications and communicates the decision to the caseworker and provider within 24 hours of receipt of the form. If the ED cannot provide informed consent, every effort is made to contact provider to share concerns. If still not able to provide informed consent following discussion with provider, ED contacts Agency Medical Consultant. Informed consent decision is emailed or faxed to the prescriber by the ED designee.
  - g. The caseworker communicates the final decision to the prescriber, care provider, child and biological parent (unless contraindicated).
  - h. **Out-of-home care provider fills and administers only after approval received.**
  - i. The caseworker contacts the pharmacy if the prescription was electronic and the informed consent is not given to have the prescription canceled.
  - j. The caseworker documents all the information in SACWIS. The ED designee makes the appropriate changes to the Psychotropic Medication File and adds the data to the spreadsheet.

#### **Informed Consent for Changes in Type, Dose or Route of Psychotropic Medication**

When an approved prescriber wishes to make changes to the medication and/or adjust the dose or route, the following shall occur:

1. The prescriber shall complete the **Request to Administer Psychotropic Medication form** and faxes or emails it to the ED designee. If the prescriber has an internal form with identical information, this form may be substituted. The provider may request informed consent for a medication and indicate the maximum dosage he/she will titrate up to. This is to avoid repeated informed consent requests for a single medication titration.
2. The ED designee shall contact the caseworker for input into this change. The caseworker may contact the caregiver for additional input.
3. If the medication changes do not fall outside of the prescribing parameters and have the support of the caseworker and caregiver, ED shall grant informed consent. This will be faxed or emailed back to the provider within 24 hours of receipt of the request. If the ED has concerns, the prescriber shall be contacted to discuss. The Agency Medical Consultant will be contacted if ED has continued concerns about the change.
4. The caseworker communicates the child and substitute caregiver the name of the medication, and other changes and ensures he/she understands benefits and potential side effects (as appropriate considering child's developmental level). The caseworker obtains/documents their input into the decision.
5. The caseworker informs the biological parent of the medication or change unless contraindicated.
6. The caseworker communicates the final decision on informed consent to the care provider, child and biological parent (unless contraindicated).
7. **Out-of-home care provider fills and administers only after approval received.**
8. The caseworker contacts the pharmacy if the prescription was electronic and the informed consent is not given to have the prescription canceled.
9. The caseworker documents all the information in SACWIS. The ED designee makes the appropriate

changes to the Psychotropic Medication File and adds the data to the spreadsheet.

### **Informed Consent During Inpatient or Residential Placement**

1. A psychiatric emergency while in an inpatient or residential setting shall be considered when a set of behaviors or symptoms exist that are related to the child's psychiatric diagnosis and may result in imminent harm to self or others. Psychotropic medications may be used by the treating physician in the event of an inpatient or residential emergency with simple notification of on-call staff.
2. Other changes to psychotropic medications, types, doses or routes shall follow the procedure outlined below:
  - a. The prescriber shall complete the **Request to Administer Psychotropic Medication form** and faxes or emails it to the ED designee. If the prescriber has an internal form with identical information, this form may be substituted.
  - b. The ED designee shall contact the caseworker for input into this change.
  - c. If the medication changes do not fall outside of the prescribing parameters and have the support of the caseworker, ED shall grant informed consent. This will be faxed or emailed back to the provider within 24 hours of receipt of the request. If the ED has concerns, the prescriber shall be contacted to discuss. The Agency Medical Consultant will be contacted if ED has continued concerns about the change.
  - d. The caseworker communicates to the child the name of the medication, and other changes and ensures he/she understands benefits and risks (as appropriate considering child's developmental level). The caseworker obtains/documents his/her input into the decision.
  - e. The caseworker informs the biological parent of the medication or change unless contraindicated.
  - f. The ED designee notifies the prescriber of informed consent by fax or email within 24 hours.
  - g. The caseworker communicates the final decision to the treatment team, child and biological parent (unless contraindicated).
  - h. **Inpatient or residential provider administers only after approval received.**
  - i. The caseworker documents all the information in SACWIS. The ED designee makes the appropriate changes to the Psychotropic Medication File and adds the data to the spreadsheet.

### **Orientation and Training**

1. Training in this policy/procedure shall be provided to caseworkers, caregivers and supervisory staff. This training shall include the following:
  - a. An overview of the statutory mandate requiring this policy;
  - b. An overview of the difference in prescribing patterns for children in the child welfare system;
  - c. Basic review of the risks and benefits of psychotropics and best practices when medication is accompanied by individual, family and group therapies;
  - d. Provide a list of preferred providers;
  - e. An explanation of each procedure and form.
2. Orientation of providers will occur face-to-face whenever possible. It will include the following:
  - a. An overview of the statutory mandate requiring this policy;
  - b. An overview of the difference in prescribing patterns for children in the child welfare system;
  - c. An explanation of each procedure and form.

### **Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation**

1. Data to be collected, aggregated and analyzed:
  - a. Denials by provider and reason;
  - b. Serious medication reactions by provider and medication;
  - c. Approved prescriptions that exceed parameters by medication and provider;
  - d. Behavioral Health treatment outcomes by child, provider and service combination (This may be obtained from some providers (ODMH certified));
  - e. Data identical to that collected by the Ohio Psychotropic Medication Quality Improvement Collaborative. (See draft of core measures attached)
2. PQI “dashboards” will be published every quarter.
3. Obtain Policy/Procedure feedback from providers, caseworkers, out-of-home care providers and youth.
4. Make quarterly reports to the state or county child welfare agencies regarding the rates and types of psychotropic medication use.

Revised

03/27/13

TS



## **CARE, SUPERVISION, AND DISCIPLINE POLICY FOR TRUMBULL COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES FOSTER PARENTS**

The Trumbull County Children Services foster care policy and the State foster care rules prohibit the use of any type of physical punishment and/or practices with foster children. More than just being a rule, this Agency believes that physical punishment and/or practices are not an appropriate type of discipline for our foster children. All children, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, color or national origin, shall at all times be treated with kindness, consistency and respect. Discipline is seen as an effort to teach a foster child self control and appropriate behavior, so the child can get along as a member of a family and the community, and eventually be a responsible, mature adult.

As a foster caregiver with Trumbull County Children Services, the following rules as specified in Chapter 5101:2-7-09 of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Family Foster Home Rules must be adhered to in regard to the care, supervision and discipline of foster children:

- A. A foster caregiver shall treat each foster child with kindness, consistency, and respect.
- B. A foster caregiver shall not discriminate in providing care and supervision to foster children on the basis of race, sex, gender, sexual identity, sexual orientation, religion, color or national origin.
- C. A foster caregiver shall provide humane, instructive discipline appropriate to the age and functioning level of a foster child.
  - 1. Disciplinary methods shall stress praise and encouragement for desired behavior rather than punishment.
  - 2. 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.
  - 3. A foster child shall not be punished for actions over which the child has no control.
  - 4. A foster child shall not be punished for bed-wetting or in the course of toilet training activities.
- D. A foster caregiver shall not subject a foster child to verbal abuse or swearing; to derogatory remarks about foster children, and their families, races, sex, **gender, sexual identity, sexual orientation**, religion, color or national origin; or to threats of physical violence or removal from the foster home.
- E. A foster caregiver shall not use any of the following practices for a foster child:
  - 1. Physical hitting or any type of physical punishment inflicted in any manner upon the body **including but not limited to spitting**, spanking, paddling, punching, shaking, biting, hair pulling, pinching, or rough handling.

2. Physically strenuous work or exercises, when used as a means of punishment.
  3. 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.
  4. Denial of social or recreational activities, for excessive or prolonged periods- not beyond 7 days without approval of the Senior Supervisor or his/her designee.
  5. Denial of social or casework services, medical treatment, or educational services.
  6. Deprivation of meals.
  7. Denial of visitation or communication rights with the family of the foster child as a means of punishment.
  8. Denial of sleep.
  9. Denial of shelter, clothing, bedding or restroom facilities.
- F. Physical restraining may not be used by any foster caregiver. Physical restraint may cause harm to a child if not properly done. Special training is required for physical restraint, for it to be safe and effective. In that our foster families are not trained in physical restraint, the use of physical restraint is prohibited.
- G. A foster caregiver shall not use any device to prevent or restrict movement as punishment or for the foster parent's convenience.
- H. A foster caregiver shall not use any form of chemical or mechanical restraint on a foster child.
- I. 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 and/or immediate revocation of a foster home certificate. Any recommendation to revoke the certificate of a foster caregiver may be made by the recommending agency supervising a foster home or the Ohio Department of Job and Family services.
- J. Concerning the hygiene needs of a foster child, the foster caregiver shall:
1. Ensure that:
    - a. Each foster child's clothing and footwear shall be clean, well-fitting, seasonal and appropriate to the child's age and sex.
    - b. Each foster child capable of meeting their own personal hygiene needs shall be provided with adequate personal toiletry supplies appropriate to the child's age, sex, gender, sexual identity, sexual orientation, race and national origin.
  2. Provide each foster child instruction on good habits of personal care, hygiene, and grooming appropriate to the child's age, sex, **gender, sexual identity, sexual orientation**, race, national origin and need for training.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

A copy of Chapter 5101:2-7 of Ohio Administrative Code is given as a hand-out to all pre-service participants at the training session where it is reviewed. This handout is also given to all licensed foster parents at the time of recertification.

A copy of the Discipline Policy for TCCSB Foster Parents is given as a separate hand-out with a signature line to assure that all foster families are aware of and agree to comply with the requirements for foster children's care, supervision and discipline.

I/WE, THE UNDERSIGNED AGREE TO COMPLY WITH THE ABOVE RULES.

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

WITNESS: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Effective	February 2004	PJJ/RAS
Revised	December 11, 2006	PJJ/rmt
Revised	January 11, 2008	CLM/PJJ
Revised	August 1, 2009	CLM
Revised	July 1, 2014	RM
Reviewed	December 1, 2019	MMM

## **POLICY ON RELIGIOUS PARTICIPATION, SOCIALIZATION AND EDUCATION BY CHILDREN IN OUT OF HOME CARE**

### **RELIGIOUS PARTICIPATION FOR FOSTER CHILDREN**

Every foster child has the right to enjoy freedom of thought, conscience and religion. An agency, and its foster caregivers, shall be considerate of, and sensitive to, the religious backgrounds of all children in out-of-home care and of all families receiving services. Consequently, Trumbull County Children Services and its foster caregivers shall provide opportunities and encouragement for each foster child in out-of-home care to practice his/her chosen religious faith or that of his/her parents, including dietary restriction due to beliefs, unless it is documented in the case plan to be contrary to the child's best interests. Foster caregivers shall not subject the foster child to any form of religious coercion. Religious coercion may include, but is not limited to, being required to accompany the foster parent or other residents of the foster home to religious services, but allowed to sit outside the area where the service actually occurs; being given extra chores to perform or being required to read or listen to specific materials while others attend religious services; or being required to view or listen to specific religiously oriented television, video tapes or music.

In further addressing the Agency's policies, in reference to the foster child's religious tenets or practices, concerning the foster child's non-emergency and emergency medical treatment and baptism, the following stipulations must be adhered to:

1. The Agency shall not require a child in an out-of-home care setting to receive non-emergency medical treatment which conflicts with the religious tenets or practices of the religion of the foster child or parent without the specific written consent of the parent, guardian or custodian.
2. When a child in an out-of-home care setting requires emergency medical treatment and such treatment conflicts with the religious tenets or practices of the foster child, parent, guardian or custodian, the out-of-home care setting shall immediately transport or arrange for the transportation of the child to a medical facility and contact the custodial agency or individual which placed the child.
3. A foster child shall not be baptized or submitted to any religious procedures without prior consent of the child according to his/her age and functioning level and prior approval of the foster child's parent, guardian or custodian.

### **EDUCATION FOR FOSTER CHILDREN**

#### **1. Enrollment**

Generally, the caseworker enrolls the foster child into school. However, in some schools, the foster caregiver is allowed to enroll the foster child. If you, as the foster caregiver, enroll the foster child, the caseworker will provide any documentation that the school may want (e.g. a copy of the legal journal entry verifying that the agency has custody, a copy of the birth certificate, etc.). Also, it is important to note that the "Emergency Medical Form" is to be completed by the child's caseworker and that only the Executive Director of the Agency is permitted to sign the

completed form.

The child will be enrolled in a school which complies with the minimum standards as prescribed by the State Board of Education, and the foster caregiver shall ensure that the child attends school in accordance with the child care agreement. Foster caregivers are not permitted to home school foster children.

2. **Foster Parent Involvement**

Given the educational and social needs of foster children, it is very important that foster caregivers attend:

- a. All parent-teacher conferences for the foster child.
- b. The I.E.P. (Individualized Educational Plan) conferences for your foster child if he/she is in a special education program.
- c. Performances in which your foster child is involved (e.g. choir, band, school play, Christmas programs, etc.).
- d. Any awards ceremonies in which your foster child is involved.

3. **Family Visitation During School Hours**

Every effort is made so that visitations don't interfere with the normal school day. However, occasions arise when children must be removed from school. When this occurs, the following procedures are to be used:

- a. The child's caseworker will notify the school in writing to inform them that visits will be taking place. The visitation schedule is enclosed with this letter.
- b. The foster caregiver should send a note to the school with the child on the day of the visit.

4. **Free Lunches**

Most foster children are eligible for free lunches. The foster caregiver is responsible to complete the school's application form for free lunches for the child. Please note that you only need to complete the information about the foster child. You do not need to complete personal information about yourself such as social security number, income, etc.

5. **School Fees and Reimbursements**

The Agency provides financial assistance for the following:

- a. Senior Graduation Expense Allotment - \$800.00 maximum
- b. School Fees – any required school fee for coursework
- c. School/Other Pictures –\$25.00 per child, per year

- d. Extracurricular Activities - \$150.00 maximum (expenses over \$150.00 per year will be subject to review on a case by case basis)

### **SOCIALIZATION FOR FOSTER CHILDREN**

Foster parenting brings with it a set of rights different from, and in addition to, any parenting rights that you might have experienced before. These rights include the right to:

- a. receive adequate orientation, before entering the foster care program, regarding ODJFS foster care rules, Agency policies, and other information pertinent to understanding the needs of foster children and to providing for these needs.
- b. receive all pertinent available information regarding a foster child before making the decision to accept the child.
- c. refuse to take a foster child into your home if you feel that it would not be for the best.
- d. receive board and clothing payments for the foster child(ren) and to be informed of the payment procedure.
- e. receive consultation and regular visitation from the child's caseworker.
- f. be informed of available resources for the foster child and for yourself.
- g. be informed of the status of the foster child's case plan.
- h. be consulted before your foster child's visitation schedule with his/her parents is finalized to ensure that it is a convenient time for you.
- i. be notified of all court hearings and legal proceedings regarding the foster child.
- j. expect that agency personnel will not disclose the foster parent's name and address to the parents without the permission of the foster parents.

Being a foster caregiver and caring for another person's child on a 24-hour-per-day basis also has corresponding responsibilities along with the above-mentioned rights. Foster caregiver responsibilities include:

- a. Offering love, affection, respect, and guidance to the foster child.
- b. Meeting the foster child's physical needs (adequate food, clothing, and shelter).
- c. Trying your best to make the placement succeed by utilizing appropriate support services so that the foster child won't need to be moved.
- d. Scheduling the foster child's routine medical and dental appointments.

- e. Documenting all medical information in the foster child's medical folder.
- f. Accompanying the foster child to all medical and dental appointments.
- g. Notifying the Agency when the foster child has a medical/dental emergency, serious illness or accident.
- h. Assuring that information about the foster child and his/her family is kept confidential and is discussed only with appropriate Agency staff members or other professional persons designated by the Agency.
- i. Informing the Agency of any significant change in the child's behavior.
- j. Using reasonable, appropriate and consistent discipline on the foster child.
- k. Complying with all ODJFS foster care rules and Agency foster care policies.
- l. Cooperating with the Agency's case plan for the foster child.
- m. Participating in educational opportunities provided by the Agency.
- n. A foster caregiver shall encourage a foster child to participate in the following activities as appropriate to the child's age and functioning level:
  - 1) Community
  - 2) School
  - 3) Recreation
  - 4) Cultural heritage

A foster caregiver shall, as is necessary and reasonable, arrange appropriate transportation for the foster child to and from the activities. During Family-to-Family meetings and other contacts, the foster parent and child's caseworker will consult with the child's parent, guardian or custodian to make available to the child cultural or ethnic activities appropriate to the child's cultural or national origin.

The foster caregiver shall allow privileges and assign responsibilities to a child similar to those which would be assigned to a family member of the caregiver who is of similar age and functioning level.

The foster caregiver will teach a child tasks and skills required for life in the community. The foster caregiver will utilize TCCSB's Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard when considering whether to authorize a foster child in their home to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities. TCCSB's Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard Policy can be referenced in this manual.

Giving the Agency adequate notice when requesting the removal of a foster child from your home.

Effective	February 2004	PJJ/RAS
Revised	December 11, 2006	PJJ/rmt
Revised	January 31, 2007	RMT
Revised	March 6, 2007	RMT
Revised	January 11, 2008	CLM
Revised	December 31, 2008	CLM
Revised	April 15, 2013	RMM
Revised	December 1, 2015	RMM
Revised	December 1, 2019	MMM



**TRUMBULL COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES**

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**FOR**

**CONSUMER COMPLAINT RESOLUTION**

Reviewed and Approved 06/22/2010  
Reviewed and Approved 6/21/2011  
Reviewed and Approved 11/18/2014  
Approved & Effective Dates: 10/17/2016, 11/01/2016  
Approved & Effective Dates: 08/28/2018, 09/01/2018

## **I. COMPLAINTS**

Although Trumbull County Children Services prefers complaints to be resolved informally within the administrative chain of command, this formal complaint review procedure has been created for consumer complaints which cannot be resolved through informal discussions and good faith negotiation. The policies and procedures outlined herein do not eliminate or replace the present policy preferring informal discussion and resolution of problems with the caseworker, supervisor, senior supervisor, director, or the Executive Director.

If informal means are exhausted and prove unsuccessful, consumers may file a formal complaint. Individuals who may file a complaint include parents, custodians, legal guardians, foster caregivers, kinship caretakers, applicants or providers of adult-supervised living arrangements and children. The Complaint Procedures for Children in Residential Care must be used to address concerns regarding the Agency's Residential Treatment Program. Examples of potentially appropriate consumer complaints include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Concerns involving action taken by Agency staff and issues with service delivery;
- Alleged perpetrators who disagree with the Agency's disposition/resolution of a report of child abuse or neglect;
- A foster parent or foster parent applicant's disagreement with the Agency's interpretation and application of the requirements of Chapter 5101:2-7 of the Ohio Administrative Code or Agency policies (i.e., Alleged Rule Violations) *(See Note 1 at the end of this section.)*;
- A foster parent or foster parent applicant's disagreement with the Agency's decision to recommend denial of their initial certification, denial of their recertification, or revocation of a foster home certificate. *(See Note 2 at the end of this section.)*

While informal discussions may occur, the following may not be reviewed by the filing of a consumer complaint:

- Changes in service provision and custody where court action is involved;
- Foster care or adoptive placement decisions made by the Agency in accordance with the requirements of Ohio Revised and Administrative Codes.

Both the Board and the Executive Director desire that all complaints be resolved in the most efficient and speedy fashion. To this end, the complaint being reviewed must have occurred within the past 14 days. *(See Note 3 at the end of this section.)* Complaints submitted after 14 days will not be accepted.

At the sole discretion of the Agency's Executive Director, and only when new information is brought forward by the consumer, the Agency may allow a case-by-case exception of the 14-day filing requirement for a complaint.

Consumer inactivity or delays exceeding thirty (30) days from the initial filing of the complaint will result in the termination of the complaint. Examples that constitute inactivity and delays may include the

following: failure to respond to phone calls, letters or requests for information.

All parties are charged with the responsibility of working in good faith and promoting harmonious and considerate relationships. There will be no retaliation by any Agency staff against a consumer for filing a complaint. In this way, staff energies can continue to be channeled toward the goal of maintaining a quality program of family and children services in Trumbull County.

**Note 1:** A foster parent or foster parent applicant who disagrees with the Agency's decision regarding their foster caregiver certification, or application, must file a complaint within 14 days of the mailing of the Agency's decision to deny or revoke their foster home certificate.

**Note 2:** When a foster parent disagrees with the Agency's decision to recommend denial of their recertification, or the revocation of a foster home certificate, due to the enforcement of Section 5103.0326 (B) of Ohio Revised Code, the review procedures outlined in Exhibit 4 will be followed.

**Note 3:** Alleged perpetrators who disagree with the Agency's disposition/resolution of a report of child abuse or neglect must file their complaint within 14 days from the date that the Agency mailed the Assessment/ Investigation Dispositional letters.

## **II. CONSUMER RIGHTS**

The consumer has the right to be accompanied by one (1) representative of his/her own choosing throughout the resolution process. Unless the consumer designates otherwise, the representative will receive all appropriate forms and notifications. In order to avoid any potential conflict of interests, a consumer's representative cannot be an active client with the Agency. Consumers are also permitted to have witnesses appear/testify on their behalf. Consumers and their representatives shall be assured freedom from reprisal for availing themselves of the complaint procedure.

In the event that the consumer is hearing impaired, visually impaired, or speaks a language other than English, Trumbull County Children Services will arrange for the provision of any required communication services to accommodate the consumer's hearing, visual or language need.

The consumer will be allowed to have one postponement of a scheduled complaint review at each step. Asking for a second postponement will mean cancellation of the complaint review for that complaint.

## **III. RESPONSIBILITIES OF AGENCY STAFF MEMBERS**

It is the obligation of Agency staff members to openly receive consumer complaints and to assure that all complaints receive a fair and equitable hearing. Children Services shall provide access to the complaint resolution process and resolve all complaints in a manner consistent with Ohio Administrative Code Rules. To this end, consumers will be provided information to access this complaint resolution process within three days of request. At all times throughout the complaint review process, all Agency staff members shall remain committed to work toward the informal resolution of complaints through discussion and other open-door problem-solving techniques. If a formal complaint is prepared and submitted, it is the obligation of Agency staff members to implement the procedures outlined in Section IV to ensure a fair hearing.

When an appeal of a PCSA disposition/resolution of a report of child abuse or neglect is heard and the PCSA changes the original disposition/resolution, the PCSA shall update the statewide automated child welfare information system and notify the principals of the report in writing as to the revised report disposition.

#### **IV. PROCEDURES**

In order to protect confidentiality and assure that all complaints are processed properly, all complaints will be filed through the Agency's Ombudsperson. The consumer will be given the appropriate forms, and the Ombudsperson may assist the consumer in completing them. The Ombudsperson will also secure communication services when necessary.

In cases where a problem cannot be resolved by informal discussions, the following steps must be observed. A new Consumer Complaint form must be completed at each step (**See Exhibits 1 through 3**) to document that the submission and response dates comply with the stipulated timetable.

##### **A. Step One - Caseworker/Supervisory/Management Staff**

1. The consumer having a complaint will present it to the Agency, usually following discussion of his/her concern with the Agency Ombudsperson. The complaint will be in writing on the Consumer Complaint Form (**See Exhibit 1**) and will be presented to the staff member who has provided the services in question or to the Agency Ombudsperson.
2. Once the signed Consumer Complaint Form is received, a Consumer Complaint Conference will be arranged within ten (10) working days. The Ombudsperson will work with Agency involved staff in the selection of a management staff member who will facilitate the Consumer Complaint Conference. The Consumer Complaint Conference Facilitator must not have been involved in the case, including the assessment/investigation of the incident or approval of the report disposition. The Ombudsperson will work with all parties to the complaint to schedule a date and time convenient for their schedules. The Ombudsperson will be responsible for informing all parties of the date and time of the meeting.
3. All involved parties may request the presence of any persons they believe can assist in making a fair decision. In addition to the involved Agency staff members, the consumer and his/her representative, and witnesses while testifying, will be the only persons present during the Consumer Complaint Conference. The Consumer Complaint Conference Facilitator must exclude unauthorized persons from the Hearing unless all parties involved consent to their presence. All documents, copies of documents, and physical evidence which are accepted as evidence at the Consumer Complaint Conference must be retained as a part of the Consumer Complaint Conference Record.
4. The facilitator will furnish a written reply to the consumer within ten (10) working days after the Consumer Complaint Conference (**Exhibit 2**). If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the consumer, and he/she wishes to appeal the complaint to step two, the appeal must be completed within five (5) working days of the receipt of the facilitator's decision, or the consumer will be deemed to have waived the right of appeal. The appeal is filed by forwarding a copy of **Exhibit 2** to the facilitator. (The facilitator will inform the staff, the supervisor and the ombudsperson of the response.)

##### **B. Step Two – Executive Director**

1. Upon receipt, the facilitator shall immediately forward the complaint copy (**Exhibit 2**) to the Executive Director.

2. Within ten (10) working days after receiving the appealed complaint, an appeal conference for the consumer to meet with the Executive Director. The Ombudsperson will work with all parties to the complaint to schedule a date and time convenient for all. The Ombudsperson will be responsible for informing all parties of the date and time of the meeting. The Executive Director may request the presence of any persons he/she believes can assist in making a fair decision.
3. The Executive Director shall render a written decision including the reason for such decision **(Exhibit 3)**. The decision shall be based upon the evidence presented at the appeal conference. A copy of the decision shall be provided to all parties to the appeal conference within ten (10) working days.

#### **V. STATUS UPDATES**

The Agency, through the Ombudsperson or other designated staff member, will apprise the consumer of the status of the complaint. The Agency will also advise the consumer that he/she may take the complaint to the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services for further review if the complaint does not involve a personnel issue.

When an appeal of a PCSA report disposition of a report of child abuse or neglect is heard, the PCSA shall follow steps outlined in Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:2-33-20. The final decision involving appeals to case disposition will be documented in the record.

In the case of consumer complaints regarding disposition/resolution of a report of child abuse or neglect, the decision of the Agency shall be final and decisions are not subject to state hearing review under Section 5101.35 of the Ohio Revised Code.

#### **VI. DOCUMENT FILING**

Upon resolution of the complaint, all parties and persons present at a hearing on the complaint shall receive a copy of the complaint which includes the resolution.

As all complaints are filed through the Agency's Ombudsperson, the Ombudsperson shall receive copies of all complaint forms, including the resolution.

The original complaint documents will be filed in the office of the Executive Director, and copies of the documents will be filed in the appropriate case record.

**EXHIBIT 1**  
**TRUMBULL COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES BOARD**  
**Consumer Complaint Form**

Name of Complainant \_\_\_\_\_

Complaint # (office use only) \_\_\_\_\_

**A. Date & Time of Incident leading to complaint:** Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
(Must have occurred within the past 14 days)

**B. Describe your complaint: (Be specific & attach additional documentation)**

**C. Recommended Solution:**

**D. I request CSB to notify my representative of the Complaint Meeting.**

Do you have legal representation? \_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_no

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Affiliation (pastor, counselor, etc.)** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Address**

**E. Client Information:**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date Submitted** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

(office use only)

**Received by** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date Received** \_\_\_\_\_

**EXHIBIT 2**  
**TRUMBULL COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES BOARD**

**STEP ONE**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Complaint #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date original complaint form submitted to Caseworker: \_\_\_\_\_

Date discussed with Supervisory/Management Staff: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting must be held within ten (10) working days of the date the original form was submitted to Supervisor.

Date of Supervisory/Management Staff's written reply: \_\_\_\_\_

Written reply must be furnished to the consumer within ten (10) working days of the date discussed.

Supervisory/Management Staff's reply:

Caseworker's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisory/Management Staff's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to proceed to Step Two of the Complaint Procedure.

Consumer's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Request for Step Two hearing must be within ten (10) working days of Step One reply.

I do not wish to proceed to Step Two of the Complaint Procedure.

Consumer's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**EXHIBIT 3**  
**TRUMBULL COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES BOARD**

**STEP TWO**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Complaint #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date submitted to Supervisory/Management Staff requesting to proceed to Step Two:** \_\_\_\_\_

**(Form will be submitted to Executive Director)**

**Date discussed with Executive Director:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Meeting must be held within ten (10) working days of the date consumer requested to proceed to Step Two.**

**Date of Executive Director's written resolution:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Must be forwarded to the consumer within ten (10) working days of the date discussed with Executive Director.**



## Exhibit 4

### **R.C. 5103.0326 (B) Foster Caregiver Complaint Reviews**

Section 5103.036 (B) of Ohio Revised Code (R.C.) states that the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) may revoke the certification of any foster caregiver who has not cared for a foster child within the preceding twelve months. This statute does not require a foster caregiver fault component; it only requires a finding of fact that a foster caregiver has gone 12 months without a foster child being placed in their home<sup>1</sup>.

Within 7 days of receiving a Complaint filed by a foster caregiver regarding the Agency's decision to enforce R.C. 5103.0326(B), the Agency's Ombudsman will conduct a review of the foster caregiver's Agency Record. The purpose of this review will be to verify that there is reliable, probative and substantial evidence that the foster caregiver has not had a foster child placed in their home during the preceding 12-months.

- If the Ombudsman finds that the foster parent has not had a foster child placed in their home during the preceding twelve months, the Agency will consider the foster parent's Complaint resolved and no further action will be taken.
- If the Ombudsman finds that the foster parent has had a foster child placed in their home during the preceding twelve months, the procedures outlined in the Agency's Consumer Complaint Resolution Policy will be applied and followed.

The Ombudsman will notify the foster caregiver in writing within 7 days of the completion of a R.C. 5103.0326 (B) Foster Parent Complaint Review what further action the Agency will take, if any.

The result of a R.C. 5103.0326(B) Foster Parent Complaint Review shall in no way interfere with a foster caregiver's ability to seek a State Hearing under R.C. Chapter 119.

Once there is a resolution regarding the Agency's decision to recommend the denial of the recertification, or the revocation, of a foster home certificate for any reason, including the enforcement of R.C. 5103. 0326(B), the Agency will follow all subsequent recommendations made by ODJFS regarding the status of the foster caregiver's certification.

<sup>1</sup> *Taulbee v. Ohio Department of Job and Family Service*, Scioto C.P. No. 12-CIF-010 (July 3, 2014)

**POLICY ON NOTIFICATION OF CONVICTIONS OF  
12 to 18-YEAR OLDS**

- 1) Every foster caregiver or prospective foster caregiver is required to notify Trumbull County Children Services in writing within 24 hours if a person residing in his/her home who is at least 12 years old, but under 18 years old, has been convicted or pleaded guilty to any of the offenses listed at the end of this policy. The foster caregiver or prospective foster caregiver must also notify TCCS in writing if the 12 to 18-year old has been adjudicated to be a delinquent child for committing an act that if committed by an adult would constitute one of the listed offenses. This notification is also required for any conviction or adjudication of delinquency resulting from a violation of an existing or former law of Ohio or any other state that is substantially the same as any of the offenses listed at the end of this policy.
- 2) If Trumbull County Children Services learns that a foster caregiver failed to notify the Agency of the conviction/adjudication of a 12 to 18-year old as required by this policy, TCCS must notify the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services of the foster caregiver's failure to notify. Upon notification from TCCS, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services may initiate action to revoke the foster caregiver's license.
- 3) The Agency will inform all prospective foster caregivers of these requirements during the pre-service training sessions which include the review of the Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-7 Rules and Agency policies and procedures. Each prospective foster caregiver will receive a copy of the OAC 5101:2-7 Rules and a copy of this policy and will be required to sign a copy of this policy for the foster home file.
- 4) At recertification, the Agency will again provide each foster caregiver with a copy of this policy and will explain these requirements. The foster caregiver will be required to sign a copy of this policy for the foster home file.

**WE, THE UNDERSIGNED HAVE REVIEWED THE LIST OF PROHIBITIVE OFFENSE AND AGREE TO NOTIFY TCCS WITHIN 24 HOURS IF ANYONE RESIDING IN OUR HOME IS ADJUDICATED, COVICTED OR PLEADS GUILTY TO ANY OF THESE OFFENSES**

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

WITNESS: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**OFFENSES LISTED IN PARAGRAPH (G) OF RULE 5101:2-7-14  
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

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; after positive HIV test

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

#### **OFFENCES AGAINST THE FAMILY**

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; school-related offense

#### **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

Effective	February 2004	PJJ/RAS
Revised	August 14, 2008	CLM
Revised	August 1, 2009	CLM
Revised	December 1, 2019	MMM/rmt

## **POLICY ON PAYMENT TO FOSTER CAREGIVERS**

Foster caregivers are compensated for the board and care of all foster children. Agency staff research the compensation packages of several other counties and looks at the needs of the program to determine a reasonable compensation for providing care for foster children. Any compensation package is then approved by the Trumbull County Children Services Board, resulting in an approved board and care pay rate. The Agency will be paying one daily rate for foster children which will include both the Board and Care amount and the Clothing amount. The specific compensation rates are noted at the end of this policy. The Agency will pay foster caregivers the amount due for the month in the following month (For example, money due for May 2018 days of foster placement and clothing will be paid in June 2018). The approved board rate is also the rate paid to foster caregivers who provide respite care. Board and Care payment is usually received within one week after the monthly Children Services Board Meeting (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday). The Agency offers avenues for foster caregivers to voice their thoughts and questions regarding compensation for the board and care of foster children. Currently, the avenues available are through monthly meetings with the Executive Director and Resource and Out-of-Home Care Department staff, known as "Thursdays with Tim meetings" and the Foster Care Revisioning Committee and its sub-committees. These avenues may modify over time as new venues for change may present themselves in the future.

Foster caregivers will also be reimbursed for mileage at the Agency rate of the federal IRS reimbursement. All necessary transporting of foster children to medical, educational, therapeutic visits and for parent/child visitations, must be documented on an Agency mileage sheet and submitted by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the following month for timely processing in the accounting department. Late mileage requests will not be processed.

Stipend payments must be made to the foster caregiver within one hundred twenty calendar days of the completion of the training event for continuing training or within one hundred twenty calendar days after certification for pre-placement training. Training hour means sixty consecutive minutes of instruction and may include a break of no longer than five minutes per training hour when a training session is longer than one training hour in duration. Stipend payments may not be held or otherwise deferred pending reimbursement by ODJFS. Stipend payments shall be rendered for fractional hours in quarter hour increments. The stipend rate paid by recommending agencies shall be calculated as follows:

1. For pre-service training a lump sum payment shall be made in the amount of ten dollars per foster caregiver per training hour for all hours completed with an agency.
2. For continuing training, ten dollars per foster caregiver per training hour successfully completed within a training session that is a minimum of one training hour in duration.

Recommending agencies shall make stipend payments according to the following:

1. For pre-service training, the agency that certifies the family shall record the pre-service training in the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS) and shall be responsible for paying the stipend to the caregiver upon certification.
2. For continuing training, the caregivers' recommending agency shall be responsible

for paying all stipends to the caregiver and shall enter all of the training sessions into SACWIS.

3. If the training is provided by a regional training center of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP), the agency that enrolled the participant is responsible for paying the stipend to the participant.

**BOARD RATE 2020**  
**Effective 1/1/20**

**2020**

Child Age 0-9	\$29.50
Child Age 10-18	\$34.40

**Clothing/Initial Placement**  
**(voucher-Foster Parent to select Gabe's or JC Penney or Burlington)**

Child Age 0-2	\$120.00
Child Age 3-18	\$200.00

**\*Winter Clothing**

Child Age 0-3	\$ 60.00
Child Age 4-18	\$110.00

**\*Only given during September-February**

**Christmas Gift Cards**

Child Age 0-5	\$ 50.00
Child Age 6-10	\$ 80.00
Child Age 11-18	\$120.00

**Activity Fee Reimbursement**

Child Age 0-18	\$150.00/calendar year
----------------	------------------------

Activity fees over \$150.00 require supervisory approval

**Mileage Reimbursement**

57.5 cents/mile \*subject to change according to Federal rate

### **Diaper Reimbursement**

\$40 reimbursement per quarter

In addition to the quarterly diaper reimbursement, the Agency will allow \$60.00 of the clothing stipend per quarter to be used for diapers.

The Agency will pay \$50.00 per diem for the first 30 days of placement as an incentive if a foster caregiver agrees to take the placement of a child stepping down from residential care or a paid placement.

### **ADDITIONAL FOSTER CARE PAYMENT**

An extra \$3.00/day will be provided to the foster caregivers(s) for a child with a prescription for a Nebulizer/breathing treatment, Apnea Monitor or Oxygen needed for medical care.

The foster family's caseworker will obtain the appropriate documentation/prescription from the pediatrician via the foster caregiver, and submit it to the Accounting Department.

A review of the foster child's need for the above-mentioned equipment will be held by the Foster Care Supervisor every three months from the original date of approval to determine the continuance of the additional foster care payment.

Note: Children eligible for special or exceptional needs payments must be placed in a treatment foster home through a contact agency.

Effective	February 2004	PJJ/RAS
Revised	September 2004	PJJ
Revised	December 2004	PJJ
Revised	January 11, 2008	CLM/PJJ
Revised	May 22, 2008	CLM/RAS
Revised	December 26, 2008	CLM
Revised	December 28, 2009	CLM
Revised	April 28, 2011	CLM
Revised	April 1, 2015	RM
Revised	October 1, 2017	RM
Revised	January 19, 2018	RM
Revised	December 1, 2019	MMM
Revised	January 31, 2020	RMT



## **Trumbull County Children Services Policy for Normalcy and the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard**

Trumbull County Children Services is committed to protecting the children in the Agency's custody from adverse or traumatic experiences or further abuse/neglect. However, at the same time, the agency is committed to providing children with "normalcy," which is defined by the Juvenile Law Center as "ensuring a child's range of experiences while in foster care is typical of the range of experiences of any child of the same age." The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard is defined as "the standard characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain a child's emotional and developmental growth, that a caregiver shall use when determining whether to allow a child in the care of the caregiver to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities" (ACYF-CB-IM-14-03, 2014; ORC 5103.162, 2014). Public Law 113-183, the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act, requires that states implement a Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard to support normalcy for children in care. The provisions in this law are effective, as of September 29, 2015. Likewise, Ohio has passed a similar law with House Bill 213.

The Federal and State laws provide factors to consider when applying this standard as listed below:

- Child's age, maturity and developmental level  
Example: Even though the child is 14, will the PG-13 movie have content that the child isn't able to handle without behavioral issues or strong emotional responses?
- Potential risk factors  
Example: What is the risk difference in allowing a child to ride with a friend to school vs. allowing him to ride with a friend to a late night concert?
- Best interest of the child  
Example: Was the sleep away camp selected because it fits the child's interest and is what she wants to do, or is it to give the caregivers a "break"?
- Emotional and developmental growth  
Example: Will being on the soccer team help build the child's self-esteem and develop the social skills she needs?
- Family-like living experience  
Example: Is this something the caregiver would let her birth or adopted children do?
- Child's behavioral history  
Example: Given this child's history of underage drinking, is allowing him to stay at a friend's home a prudent decision?

In addition, the Ohio Revised Code, Section 2151.315, addresses normalcy and the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard by citing that children in out of home care are entitled to participate in age-appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities and defines "age-appropriate" as activities that are generally accepted as suitable for children of the same chronological age or level of maturity. Lastly, ORC 5103.162 cites that caregivers are immune from liability if they used a reasonable and prudent parent standard to authorize participation in an activity.

In an effort to define Trumbull County Children Services policy and provide guidance to foster parents and workers, the following scenarios are being highlighted as common occurrences for foster children. However, on a case by case basis, Trumbull County Children Services reserves the right to include or expand activities or events as part of the normalcy plan for the minor child in question. For purposes of this policy, "team" is defined as the foster parents, the child's caseworker, the caseworker's supervisor, and the director of out of home services. In addition, where specified, "team" will also include the agency's Executive Director. Out of respect and sensitivity for the rights of birth parents, the agency will be discussing the Prudent Parent Standard with birth parents during visitation orientation following a child being placed into substitute care. The birth parents will be informed of the guidelines noted below and objections, if any, will be documented. However, as noted in Ohio's "Normalcy and the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard, with the exceptions of visitation and cultural or religious practices, OAC rules do not directly address parental rights regarding age appropriate social, scholastic and enrichment activities for children in foster care; other than to note that normalcy activities cannot override case plans or other court-ordered requirements." If a birth parent objects to one of the guidelines noted below or other normalcy decisions, the objection will be discussed with the team and Executive Director, who will render the final decision.

#### **Foster Children Spending the Night at a Friend's Home**

A foster child, age 9 or under, cannot spend the night at a friend's home. Using the Prudent Parent Standard, a foster child, age 10 or over, can spend the night at a friend's home only after the adults in that home sign a release of information for a background check and the child's team and the Executive Director gives approval.

#### **A Friend Spending the Night at the Foster Home**

The foster parent is to exercise the prudent parent standard in allowing a friend to spend the night in the foster home.

#### **Foster Children Dating or Attending Homecoming/Prom**

The foster parent is to exercise the Prudent Parent Standard when allowing a foster child to date or attend school dances. Chaperoned school dances are considered to be supervised. However, a foster child being unsupervised for any period of time, whether for dating purposes or other activity, MUST be pre-approved by the agency's Executive Director.

#### **Foster Children Dating a Same Sex Peer**

The same standards as noted above apply to dating a same sex peer.

#### **Foster Children Riding in a Car with an Under 18 Youth who has a Driver's License**

Foster children are not allowed to ride in a car with a driver who is under the age of 18. The foster parent is to exercise the Prudent Parent Standard when allowing a foster child to ride in a car with an individual who is age 18 or older and must document that the individual has shown proof of a valid driver's license and car insurance. The vehicle must be maintained in a safe condition according to state laws and seat belts must be worn at all times.

#### **Foster Children Having a Cell Phone**

Using the Prudent Parent Standard, foster children are permitted to have a cell phone if the team approves. The cost of the phone and any fees are to be covered by the child's board and care payment. Caregivers must have access to the phone's password and set expectations of use, parental limits and monitor activity.

**Foster Children Having a Social Media Account(s)**

Using the Prudent Parent Standard, foster children are permitted to have a social media account if the team and the Executive Director approves. In addition, the foster parent and the caseworker must have access to the account's password. The caregiver must set expectations of use, parental limits and monitor activity.

**Foster Children Using Playscapes, Rope Courses, Trampolines, etc.**

The foster parent is to exercise the Prudent Parent Standard when allowing a foster child to play/participate in these activities.

**Foster Children Riding Motorized Vehicles on Private Property (i.e. Dirt Bikes, Quads, etc.)**

Using the Prudent Parent Standard, foster children are permitted to ride motorized vehicles on private property if the team and the Executive Director approves. Helmets and other required safety gear must be used.

**Foster Children Taking Driver's Education Classes and Obtaining a Driver's License**

Foster children are not permitted to obtain a drivers permit or license.

**Foster Children Participating in Extracurricular Activities**

Caregivers are to encourage foster children to participate in school, community, recreational and cultural heritage activities, as appropriate to the age and developmental level of the children. Caregivers are expected to provide necessary transportation.

Approved:	9-8-15	MP
Revised:	12-15-15	MP
Revised:	2-1-16	MP
Revised:	4-6-16	MP
Revised:	8-1-16	MP
Revised:	2-28-18	MP
Revised	12-1-19	RMT

## Approved Mileage Reimbursement

1	<b>Visitation</b> (Agency, off grounds, or Sibling visits)
2	<b>Counseling Appts. and Wraparound Mtgs</b>
3	<b>SAR's/Court Hearings/Family-To-Family and any meetings held at the Agency</b>
4	<b>Medical Appts., Hospital Appts/Visits</b>
5	<b>School</b> (only if child is suspended from bus, or transportation is not offered for tutoring, special education programs, summer school, or to maintain child in his/her home school)
6	<b>All agency sponsored events/programs for foster children that are held on Agency property</b> (i.e. graduation luncheon, Independent Living)
7	<b>Student Senior Activities</b> (i.e. Baccalaureate, Graduation ceremony, OGT exam)
8	<b>FAPA meetings that involve ongoing training.</b>

- Transportation to school, daycare, sporting events/practice is not reimbursable.
- Per the Trumbull County Auditor's request, all mileage will be figured using the "shortest distance", at the agency approved mileage rate. This is the same for all staff.
- Foster caregivers will also be reimbursed for tolls and parking if an official receipt is submitted. (Without an official receipt which clearly shows the source and date, an affidavit must be completed and submitted with the receipt).
- Any "special" mileage reimbursement requests must be submitted in memo by the Foster Caregiver's Resource Caseworker. The request will be reviewed and approved/denied by the Senior Supervisor.
- All mileage forms must be submitted no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> of month (for the previous month).

Effective

September 1, 2015

MP

## **DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY CAUSED BY FOSTER CHILDREN**

Fortunately, destruction of property by foster children is not a common occurrence. Most acts of destruction are prevented through training, preparation and supervision. Still, despite the best efforts on the part of the Agency and foster caregivers, foster children may be the cause of damage to a foster caregiver's home. The following policy has been adopted for the purpose of assisting foster caregivers in such circumstances.

It must first be understood that some amount of wear and tear to a foster caregiver's home is normal and should be expected, especially when children undergo a separation from their home of origin and experience a new placement in an unfamiliar environment. In addition, foster caregivers are expected to take reasonable precautions regarding their property when taking new children into their homes. Such steps include the following:

- Acquiring and maintaining home insurance
- Safekeeping valuables
- "Child proofing" the home
- Inquiring about the level of risk presented by a child prior to placement
- Providing adequate adult supervision of children.

Protection in the form of homeowner's insurance is the best possible means of addressing the situation. **All foster caregiver's licensed after January 1, 2011 will be required to carry homeowner's or renter's insurance.** Foster caregivers licensed prior to January 1, 2011 who already have homeowner's insurance will be required to continue to carry and maintain their insurance. Foster caregivers licensed prior to January 1, 2011 who do not already have homeowner's insurance and choose not to obtain it will be "grandfathered" into the new policy and sign a Waiver of Liability & Release of Claims Form.

As is age appropriate, if a foster child intentionally damages property in a foster home, it is the responsibility of the foster caregiver to report the damage to the appropriate law enforcement agency and pursue charges at the Juvenile Justice Center. Depending on the circumstances, the child may be ordered to pay restitution to the foster caregiver for the damage he or she caused.

Trumbull County Children Services Board is not responsible for the payment of insurance premiums or deductibles. In addition, the agency is not responsible for paying for any un-reimbursed losses or depreciation costs.

### **DOCUMENTING A DAMAGE CLAIM**

The following procedures should be used in response to reported incidents of damage and destruction caused by foster children.

#### **1. Gathering of Facts**

Incidents must be reported to your insurer according to your insurance policy. In addition, an

agency Critical Incident Report form must be completed within 72 hours of the occurrence. It is recommended that the foster caregivers immediately place in writing the basic facts of the situation, such as:

- The date and time of the incident.
- Summary of the circumstances.
- Names of witnesses and their statements.
- Pictures of the damages.
- Copy of the police report.

## **2. Determine if the foster child was responsible for the damages**

A determination of the responsibility of a foster child should be made jointly by an agency staff member and the foster caregiver. If the incident is of a more serious nature, involving a criminal nature or intent, the local police should be involved in the investigation of the incident. The following points can assist in making this determination:

- Did the child admit to causing the damages?
- Can any witnesses provide a statement?
- Was the act deliberate or accidental?
- Does the child show remorse?
- Should charges be filed?
- Was there adequate adult supervision?

## **3. Complete a Critical Incident Report**

If it is determined that the foster child is responsible for excessive damages or destruction to property, the foster caregiver is responsible for completing the required Critical Incident Report regarding the situation. A caseworker can assist in this process.

You will need to determine the cost or extent of the damages. The original or replacement value of personal or real property should not be used in determining the amount of loss. The fully depreciated or fair market value of property at the time the loss occurred is the appropriate basis for valuation.

Prior to completing any repairs, it is recommended that you seek prior approval through your insurer. As a general rule, you should obtain at least one written estimate for damages valued under \$200.00 and three estimates of repair for damages exceeding \$200.00. Also, you should keep receipts for any items purchased to replace or repair damaged items.

## **4. Foster Caregiver Damage Committee**

After a thorough examination of the facts has been made and the foregoing procedures have been followed, a foster caregiver may request review by the Foster Caregiver Damage Committee. A memo will be drafted by the resource caseworker for review by the committee. The memo will recite the facts surrounding the incident and include the Critical Incident Report. Other supporting documentation, including a copy of your insurance policy, estimates for repair, and receipts must be included. The Foster Caregiver Damage Committee is made up of Agency staff members and

foster caregiver representatives. The Committee will review the Critical Incident Reports, along with the supporting documentation, and take further action as needed. A limited budget is available to the Committee and in some circumstances, the Committee may approve payment for un-reimbursed property damage.

Effective	2005	DB/PJJ/mn
Revised	August 1, 2009	CLM
Revised	November 16, 2010	TR/CLM
Revised	December 1, 2019	MMM

**POLICY ON LIABILITY INSURANCE, LEGAL REPRESENTATION, LEGAL FEES,  
COUNSELING AND LEGAL ADVOCACY FOR FOSTER PARENTS**

The Agency provides legal representation, legal fees, counseling and legal advocacy for foster caregivers for matters directly related to the proper performance of their roles. The Agency currently provides professional liability insurance for foster caregivers. This insurance provides malpractice coverage for foster caregivers in matters related to the performance of their roles and duties. Through this coverage, the Agency provides legal representation and pays for legal fees in the event of a lawsuit. In addition, the Agency provides counseling and legal advocacy for foster caregivers on both an active and proactive basis in order to control and reduce any exposures of risk.

The Agency's provision of professional liability insurance does not replace a foster caregiver's homeowner's policy which should cover property damages caused by a foster child in the home.

The choice of legal representation in the event of a malpractice lawsuit is made by the insurance company. At times, the insurance company seeks and accepts recommendations made by the Agency regarding the choice of counsel. It must be recognized that malpractice lawsuits are serious matters that are often complex and involve competing interests. For the greatest protection in the event of a lawsuit, foster caregivers may also wish to retain their own private counsel at their own expense.

Effective	February 2004	PJJ/RAS
Effective	8-1-09	CLM
Effective	08-12-2014	GE/rmt
Effective	2-15-17	MP



## **POLICY REGARDING THIRD PARTY INVESTIGATIONS**

When Trumbull County Children Services receives a report of abuse and/or neglect involving a child that may create a conflict of interest between the Agency and an involved party, an independent third-party must be requested to perform an assessment/investigation. "Involved Party" includes, but is not necessarily limited to:

- (1) Any employee of an institution or facility that is licensed or certified by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) or another state agency and supervised by the Agency;
- (2) A foster caregiver, pre-finalized adoptive parent, adoptive parent, relative, or kinship caregiver who is recommended, approved, or supervised by the Agency;
- (3) Any employee of the Agency as defined in Chapter 5153 of the Revised Code;
- (4) Any authorized person representing the Agency who provides services for payment or as a volunteer; or
- (5) A foster caregiver or an employee of an institution or facility licensed or certified by ODJFS and the alleged child victim is in the custody of, or receiving services from, the Agency that accepted the report.

The following is an overview of TCCS' procedures for conducting third-party investigations:

- (A) Within twenty-four hours of the identification of a conflict of interest, the Agency must request and document the assistance of an independent third-party. The existence of a conflict of interest, and all contact with all involved parties, must be documented in SACWIS

An appropriate third-party is a law enforcement agency or another PCSA (public child service agency). If the report of child abuse and/or neglect alleges a criminal offense, then the Agency shall request the assistance of law enforcement as the third-party. If the report does not allege criminal activity, then another PCSA may perform a third-party assessment/investigation. The Agency and the third-party PCSA will agree to participate in the assessment/investigation and will mutually agree upon the delegation of investigation responsibilities between the agencies.

Immediately following contact, or attempted contact, with any third party for purposes of an assessment/investigation under this policy, the Quality Assurance Department must be informed in writing (an email is acceptable). The QA department will assume oversight

responsibility of the procedures contained in this policy.

- (B) The Agency must contact the appropriate Licensing Supervisor from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services no later than the next working day following the receipt of the report in order to share information regarding the report of abuse and/or neglect involving a conflict of interest situation.
- (C) A Third-Party Investigation does not relieve the Agency of its responsibility to ensure assessment/investigation activities are completed. For a Third-Party Investigation, the Agency is required to follow the same investigation procedures that are required for all investigations of child abuse and neglect. All third-party investigations must comply with Ohio Administrative Code §5101:2-36-04.

If there is no alleged criminal offense and law enforcement agencies and other PCSA agencies decline to perform a third-party assessment/investigation, then the Agency must perform the assessment/investigation. These circumstances (refusals) must be documented in the SACWIS case record. The Agency assessment/investigation will be performed by regular in-house assessment and investigation department personnel. Any in-house assessment/investigation, in lieu of a third-party assessment/investigation, must be reviewed and approved by the Agency's Quality Assurance Department.

- (D) The Agency has a clear responsibility to immediately protect all alleged child victim(s) and/or other children. As part of this responsibility, the Agency may elect to move the child/children to another substitute care setting. At the discretion of the Agency, any child involved in a possible conflict of interest situation may be placed in respite care during an investigation and remain there until the investigation is complete and/or there are no concerns of safety or risk.
- (E) The investigator(s) will determine the timing and location of the interviews of all of the involved parties. In most cases, the alleged child victim will be interviewed first, before any other involved party. This interview may occur without the involved party's knowledge and may occur at the school, at the Agency, or at some other neutral setting. This interview should be completed within twenty-four (24) hours of the report being screened in. The involved party(s) will be notified as soon as the third-party investigator(s) allow.

Within forty-five (45) days from when the Agency receives the report, the Agency must make a disposition in the case as to whether the abuse/neglect allegations are substantiated, indicated or unsubstantiated. The Agency may utilize an additional fifteen (15) days if the Agency is awaiting a report which contains the information necessary to make the case disposition. Once an official disposition to the investigation is rendered, the Caseworker(s) for the involved parties will notify the involved parties by telephone of the disposition.

- (F) No later than three (3) working days after the completion of the case disposition, the Agency will provide written notification to the involved parties and to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Licensing Specialist of the disposition of the abuse/neglect allegations.

**NOTE:** If a child in Trumbull County Children Services' custody is placed in the care of another public or private agency and there is a report of abuse and/or neglect involving that child the Agency will comply with the Third-Party Investigation procedures and protocols of that public or private agency.

Effective	February 2004	PJJ/RAS
Effective	August 1, 2009	CLM
Effective	August 12, 2004	GE/rmt
Effective	February 15, 2015	MP
Revised	December 1, 2019	RMT

**POLICY ENSURING ACCESSIBILITY TO ADMINISTRATOR**

The Trumbull County Children Services Board employs one Executive Director. The Agency's Department Directors and Senior Supervisor have executive authority in the Executive Director's absence. These administrators are available 24 hours a day through the Agency's telephone number (330)372-2010. During regular business hours (8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.), one or more of the administrators are available by phone or in person. These administrators also carry cellular phones and/or pagers by which Agency staff can contact them if they are out of the office or if they are needed outside of Agency business hours. The Agency employs staff and also contracts with an answering service to respond to all telephone calls received 24 hours a day.

Effective February 2004	PJJ/RAS
Revised September 1, 2006	RMT
Revised August 14, 2008	CLM
Revised September 15, 2015	RMM

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR NOTIFICATION TO THE CUSTODIAL AGENCY OF INCIDENTS WITH FOSTER CHILDREN**

Trumbull County Children Services will notify the custodial agency of the foster child within one hour of gaining knowledge of the following circumstances involving the foster child:

- A serious injury or illness involving medical treatment of the foster child.
- The death of a foster child.
- Unauthorized absence of the foster child from the home.
- Removal or attempted removal of the foster child from the home by any person or agency other than the placing agency.
- Any involvement with the foster child with law enforcement authorities.

Furthermore, Trumbull County Children Services will also adhere to the written contract with the custodial agency in regard to their specific procedures about incidents with foster children.

## THE CARE AND TREATMENT TEAM

- (A) A foster caregiver shall work cooperatively with Trumbull County Children Services representatives as a member of a care and treatment team responsible for planning, providing and discussing the care and services provided to a foster child and shall fully disclose all information related to a foster child's problems or progress to agency representatives.
- (B) As a member of the care and treatment team, a foster caregiver shall participate in review with the recommending agency once every two years, through a recertification process, to evaluate the strengths and growth areas of the foster home and of the support services of agency representatives to the foster caregiver.
- (C) A foster caregiver shall work cooperatively with Trumbull County Children Services representatives in the conducting of an independent living skills assessment on an age appropriate foster child, and, as requested, provide instruction to a foster child on independent living skills. (This is required of all foster caregivers who will accept children age **14-18** in their home.)
- (D) A foster caregiver shall not prohibit the foster child from participating in independent living services.

Effective:	08/01/2009	CLM/cm
Effective	07/01/2014	RMM

## **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.

Effective	February 2004	PJJ/RAS
Revised	September 2004	PJJ
Revised	December 2004	PJJ
Revised	April 28, 2005	RMT
Revised	May 22, 2008	CLM
Revised	December 28, 2009	CLM
Revised	September 15, 2015	RMM
Revised	December 1, 2019	MMM
Revised	June 23, 2020	MMM
Revised	September 23, 2020	RMT

## DISCHARGE POLICY

A child may be discharged from a foster care setting to any of the following settings:

Own Home  
Relative Home  
Independent Living  
Adoptive Home  
Another Foster Home  
Group Home  
Children's Center  
Psychiatric Hospital

Discharge of a child from a foster care setting to his/her own home, a relative home or independent living is based on the following criteria, as applicable to the child's age and needs:

1. Satisfactory progress of family in attaining case plan goals and objectives and a satisfactory reduction/elimination of risk to the child in returning home or to a relative; and/or
2. Satisfactory progress of the child in the attainment of goals and objectives (e.g., improved behavior, improved mental health status, stable medical condition, etc.); or
3. Attainment by the child of adult age and termination of Agency custody.

Discharge of a child from a foster care setting to an adoptive home is based on the following criteria, as applicable to the child's age and needs:

1. Agency's attainment of permanent custody and legal clearance for adoptive placement of the child.
2. Child's acceptance of adoption.

Selection of an adoptive home based upon the child's best interest and special needs, including, but not limited to, factors such as the placement of siblings together, the information contained in the child study inventory, the child's case plan, the adoptive family home study, and the JFS 01689 "Documentation of the Placement Decision-Making Process."

Discharge of a child from a foster care setting to another foster care setting or to a group home or residential setting may be based on criteria, as applicable to the child's age and needs, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Movement of a child to another foster home in order to reunite siblings;
2. Change in status of a foster home (e.g., voluntary withdrawal, illness of foster caregiver, etc.);
3. Concern with the care provided to a child by a foster caregiver;

#### 4. Behavior problems of child or treatment needs of child.

The Caseworkers, Supervisors, service providers, foster caregivers, family (as applicable), child (if age and developmentally appropriate), and other involved parties participate in the decision to discharge a child. All discharges require supervisory approval and require the Caseworker to complete the appropriate paperwork and ensure an exchange of information about the child and his/her care and needs.

When the child's Caseworker and Supervisor determine that the family has shown satisfactory progress or that a relative home is approved for placement, the Caseworker arranges for prior visitations of the child with the parents or relatives to prepare them for the child's return. During these visits, the child's Caseworker will assess the family's ability to care for the child and their demonstration of positive parenting techniques. As part of the Family-to-Family program, the foster caregivers may also provide some information about the family's care of the child based upon the contact between the foster caregivers and the family. Once the Caseworker and Supervisor determine that the family is ready for the child's return, the Agency petitions the court for a hearing if one is not already set and requests the transfer of custody to the family. Once the court approves the child's return to the family, the Caseworker may continue to provide ongoing casework assistance to the family.

When an adoptive family is identified for a child and the adoptive family has received the background information about the child and agrees to potential placement of the child, the Caseworker arranges for prior visitations of the child with the potential adoptive parents in order for all involved parties to assess the viability of the adoptive placement. Following successful visits between the child and adoptive parents, the involved parties identify an adoptive placement date. Following adoptive placement, ongoing services are provided to the child and adoptive family.

For the planned discharge of a child from a foster home to another substitute care setting (e.g., foster home, group home, residential center, psychiatric hospital, etc.), the Caseworker arranges for at least one visit prior to the discharge of the child to another substitute care setting. When the involved parties identify a discharge date, the Caseworker facilitates the placement of the child in the new substitute care setting and ensures the exchange of required information and completion of required paperwork.

Although most discharges are planned, an emergency discharge of a child or a discharge which is not in accordance with the case plan may be required in circumstances including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Severe behavior problems of the child;
2. Mental health issues which pose a risk to the child or caregiver's safety;
3. Abuse or neglect of a child in a substitute care setting which requires the child's immediate discharge;
4. Immediate need of the substitute caregiver for discharge of the child

For an emergency discharge of a child from a foster home to another substitute care setting (e.g., foster home, group home, residential center, psychiatric hospital, etc.), the Resource Caseworker arranges for the discharge of the child to another substitute care setting. All substitute care resources who meets the

criteria needed for the child will be considered. The ongoing Caseworker facilitates the placement of the child in the new substitute care setting and ensures the exchange of required information and completion of required paperwork.

Effective	February 2004	PJJ/RAS
Revised	January 11, 2008	CLM/PJJ

## **POLICY REGARDING PARTICIPATION IN HUMAN RESEARCH PROJECTS, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES**

Families in Trumbull County rely upon the principle of confidentiality when they approach the Children Services Agency for help. In order to preserve this trust, the Agency takes steps to prevent the unauthorized dissemination of confidential information regarding case situations, including those children placed in substitute care (the Children's Center, Secure Care and foster care, etc.). So as not to reveal one's identity, a child in the custody of Trumbull County Children Services is not to participate in publicity or fund-raising efforts or in any research project.

Since the residential units and foster homes are funded through levy-generated monies, there is no need for fund-raising efforts to maintain operations. On occasion, residents at the Children's Center and Secure Care facility, may wish to participate in a group project to supplement a planned special activity. Such efforts have included bake sales, raffles, craft sales and luncheons for outings such as camping trips, sight-seeing excursions and visits to amusement parks. During such activities, staff are instructed to maintain the confidentiality and protect the identity of those in custody of Trumbull County Children Services.

Should there be reason to compromise or violate any issues of confidentiality, there must be prior, written, informed consent given by the child's parent, guardian or legal custodian and the child. This consent will be kept in the child's case record.

In the event that media personnel desire to photograph Agency children at a public outing, staff and foster caregivers are instructed to alert reporters about the issues of confidentiality. If pictures are taken, they must be photographed in such a way that the child or children are unrecognizable and that no names are given that would identify the child or children as being in the custody of Children Services.

Effective February 2004  
Revised August 14, 2008

PJJ/RAS  
CLM

## POLICY ON ASSURANCE OF CHILDREN'S CIVIL RIGHTS

The civil rights and the following rights of children are respected and protected by the Trumbull County Children Services Board and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. Pursuant to the Ohio Civil Commission, protection of a child's civil rights means the protection of the child against unlawful discrimination of the race, color, religion, sex, military status, national origin, disability, age, or ancestry. It is recognized that some of these rights listed below may occasionally be restricted in order to protect the safety and rights of self and others. When these restrictions are made, the foster child is entitled to an explanation. All restrictions will be noted and documented. It is expected that any violation of these rights be reported immediately. We are committed that we will NOT violate any of the civil rights or the following rights of any children or teenage mother:

1. The right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or to abstain from the practice of religion.
2. The right to reasonable enjoyment of privacy.
3. 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 life.
4. The right to receive appropriate and reasonable adult guidance, support, and supervision.
5. The right to be free from physical abuse and inhumane treatment.
6. The right to be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation.
7. The right to receive adequate and appropriate medical care.
8. The right to receive adequate and appropriate food, clothing and housing.
9. The right to his or her own money and personal property in accordance with the child's service plan.
10. The right to live in clean, safe surroundings.
11. The right to participate in an appropriate educational program.
12. The right to communicate with family, friends and "significant others" outside the facility, in accordance with the child's service plan or case plan.
13. The right to be taught to fulfill appropriate responsibilities to himself or herself and to others.

Effective	February 2004	PJJ/RAS
Effective	October 2011	RMM
Revised	January 31, 2020	RMT

## **VOLUNTEER AND STUDENT INTERN POLICY**

This Agency does not make use of volunteers in its program of services, or as replacements for paid staff. Due to non-voluntary aspect of Child Welfare programs, the Agency does not use volunteers in order to respect and protect the confidentiality of Agency clients.

Trumbull County Children Services is committed to the education of social workers who are interested in the field of child welfare. To assist in the development of these social workers, Trumbull County has developed agreements with local colleges and universities to place social work student interns at the Agency. Interns are not placed as child care staff in any of the Agency's Residential Units and are not used as replacements for paid staff.

All applicants for internships through Trumbull County Children Services who are not Agency Employees shall complete an application to indicate interest in completing their internship at the Agency, as well as to provide basic information about the applicant to the Agency. All interested applicants will complete an interview, with an interviewing committee designated by the Human Resources Department. The Agency's screening process requires the applicant to successfully complete the following, prior to receiving approval to intern at the Agency: criminal background check, fingerprinting, MMPI, and positive references from three sources who are not relatives of the applicant. All interns must also have a valid driver's license and show proof of automobile insurance, which meets the minimum requirements set by Trumbull County, and be available during Agency hours from 8:30 a.m. through 4:30 p.m.

Interns receive a copy of the Agency Personnel Practice Manual and must agree to abide by all Agency rules and policies for employees, especially those related to confidentiality. Also included in this is the expectation that the intern will notify the Agency if they have any criminal charges filed against them during their internship within twenty-four hours of receiving the charges. Failure to notify the Agency will result in immediate dismissal from the Agency. If a student is convicted of any crime, they must also notify the Agency within 24 hours. Failure to do so will mean immediate dismissal of the student intern. Conviction of any crime in rule 5101:2-5-09 while serving as a student intern for the Agency, will result in the immediate dismissal of the student intern from the Agency.

The number of interns the Agency will approve is dependent upon the availability of supervisory staff to meet the developmental and time requirements necessary to provide a good learning experience for the student intern. The Field Supervisor, Department Manager of Administrative Services, and University Field Advisor will meet to develop a learning contract. All learning contracts will include the following:

1. A statement of the student's role and responsibilities,
2. A description of the minimum qualifications the student must possess, and
3. A statement outlining the respective supervisory and evaluation responsibilities of the Agency and the school.

All Learning Contracts will also include an outline of the topics that will be discussed/ covered during orientation/ training, which, at a minimum, will include the following:

1. An over of the Agency's mission and its departments,
2. Confidentiality laws and requirements,
3. The Multiethnic Placement Act and all related rules and policies,
4. Worker safety policies and procedures,
5. Agency and community resources.
6. When deemed appropriate, and/or necessary, by the Field Supervisor, the intern may also be given the opportunity to attend additional ongoing training.

In addition, the schedule and assignments for the student will be agreed upon and addressed during this meeting. The assigned Field Supervisor is responsible to establish an orientation plan for the student and to complete all paperwork as agreed upon with the University. Completion of agreed tasks will be documented and files will be maintained in the Human Resource Office.

Offers of internships in no way imply that a full time position will be available or offered to any student intern. All student interns interested in employment after graduation, must follow the Agency application and interview process.

Effective	February 2004	PJJ/RAS
Revised	February 9, 2007	RMT
Revised	March 6, 2007	RMT
Revised	March 8, 2007	RMT
Revised	August 14, 2008	KL



## **POLICY ON THE ADOPTION BY FOSTER HOME OF A CHILD OR SIBLING GROUP WHO BECOMES AVAILABLE WHILE IN THE FOSTER HOME**

### **Foster Caregivers**

As a foster caregiver, you will be notified when the Agency is planning to file for permanent custody of your foster child or sibling group. If you are then interested in adopting your foster child or sibling group, you need to notify the Agency of your intentions by completing the "Foster Parent Interest in Adoption" form. The completed form needs to be given to the foster child's caseworker.

When a foster caregiver who has not been approved to be an adoptive parent through the joint home study process expresses an interest in being approved as an adoptive parent and the foster child has resided with the foster caregiver for less than least six consecutive months, an agency's assessor is responsible for the following: the Agency shall:

1. Assist the foster caregiver in completing the applicable sections of the current JFS 01691, "Application for Child Placement" (rev. 6/2009) on file or completing a new JFS 01691. The foster caregiver shall sign the revised JFS 01691 or a new JFS 01691 indicating they would like to be approved for adoption.
2. Review and compile in the record the following information to determine the appropriateness of the foster caregiver for adoptive placement:
  - a. The most recent JFS 01653, "Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members;"
  - b. JFS 01349, "Foster Home Homestudy" or the JFS 01673, "Assessment for Child Placement (Homestudy), the JFS 01673-A "Child Characteristics Checklist for Foster Care and/or Adoption" and the JFS 01530 "Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment" as applicable.
  - c. All JFS 01385 "Assessment for Child Placement Update" (rev. 12/2006) forms, if applicable.
  - d. Documentation from the foster home record including but not limited to the most recent training records, fire inspection reports, safety audits, foster home exit interviews, and copies of all complaint or rule violation investigations and any applicable corrective action plans. If there are any outstanding complaints or rule noncompliance investigations, or corrective action plans that have not been fully implemented, the sending agency, if different, shall notify the agency completing the adoption approval of the nature of the investigations or corrective action plans.
  - e. Case record information documented by the placement worker's visits to the foster home.

- f. If the agency completing the adoption homestudy approval is different than the agency that recommends the foster home, the foster care agency shall forward copies of all applicable documents in the foster home record within fifteen business days of receipt of the signed release of information.

3. Once the documentation in paragraph (A)(2) of this rule is received, the assessor shall:

- (a) Review information contained on the JFS 01691 and all supporting documentation.
- (b) Conduct a home visit.
- (c) Complete the JFS 01530, if applicable, as outlined in the Rule 5101:2-48-12 of the Administrative Code when a family has a total of five or more children residing in the home, including 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.
- (d) Observe the interaction between the child, foster caregiver and other members of the household, if applicable.
- (e) Discuss how the foster caregiver is working with the child on problems identified in the case plan and how they will deal with long term issues the child may have.
- (f) Discuss the differences between foster care and adoption with the foster caregiver, and the reason for the request for adoption approval at this time.
- (g) Discuss the availability of adoption assistance and post finalization adoption services with the foster caregiver.
- (h) Complete the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reports as outlined in Rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code.
- (i) If the agency has the ability to complete the search in SACWIS, the agency shall complete a search of abuse and neglect report history through the system for each foster caregiver and adult household member. If the agency does not have the ability to complete the search in SACWIS, the agency shall request a search of the system from ODJFS for each foster caregiver and each adult household member. The report with the results of the search shall be placed in the foster home record.
  - (1) This adoptive search is to be used to determine the suitability of the adoptive applicant as an adoptive applicant.
  - (2) The search shall also be conducted within ten days of the addition of any new adult member of the household once the homestudy has been approved.
- (j) Request a check of the child abuse and neglect registry of any other state an applicant or other adult household member 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.

4. Based upon information obtained through interviews and the review of documentation outlined in Paragraph (A) of this rule, the assessor shall complete any sections of the JFS 01673 not completed on the previous homestudy.

Following the completion of these activities, the Agency will provide the foster caregiver with a written approval or denial of the application for adoptive placement. All consideration will be given to the foster caregiver's application provided it is in the best interest of the child. Falsification of documents will result in denial of the application.

### **Foster-to-Adopt Caregivers**

If a foster caregiver expresses the desire to adopt a foster child who has resided with the caregiver for at least six consecutive months prior to the date the foster caregiver submits the Application to Adopt to the Agency, the Agency will provide the foster caregiver with a JFS 01692 "Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Application for Adoption of a Foster Child." A completed JFS 01692, with supporting documentation, will serve as a shortened home study and replaces the JFS 01673 "Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Assessment for Child Placement."

Upon receipt of a completed JFS 01692, the Agency will review the application with the foster caregiver. The Agency will inform the foster caregiver that although a BCII check is not required as a condition of acceptance or approval of the application to adopt a foster child, a criminal records check is required before a court may issue a final decree of adoption or interlocutory order of adoption. The Agency will also provide the foster caregiver with information regarding the requirements for adoption training and the application process and eligibility requirements of Title IV-E adoption assistance, state adoption maintenance subsidy, state special services subsidy, post-adoption special services subsidy, and non-recurring adoption expense.

The Agency must document in the case file that the foster caregiver has fulfilled the adoption training requirements. The Agency must also compile and review the following information to determine the appropriateness of the foster caregiver for adoptive placement:

1. JFS 01653 "Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members;"
2. JFS 1673 "Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Assessment for Child Placement (Homestudy);"
3. All JFS 1385 forms, "Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Assessment for Child Placement Update," if applicable;
4. Foster home record;
5. BCII and FBI criminal record check; and summary report of a search of the central registry for all adult household members
6. Case record information documented by the placement worker's visits to the foster home.
7. Agency must compile and review the JFS 01530 as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-12 of the Administrative

Code when a family has total of five or more children residing in the home, including 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.

8. Completion of the Required Adoption training sessions: Sexual Abuse, Permanency for Children, and Permanency for Families. Other training including Adoption Related Issues and the Adoption Process, (i.e. Talking about adoption with the adopted child, the child's birth family and ongoing contact with significant others, Adoption and the extended family, adoption issues at school and in the community, using community resources, advocating for the adoptive family and child, agency policy and procedures, role of the agency, pre-service training, homestudy, matching, placement, post – placement services, adoption subsidies, legalization, openness of adoption. Additionally, if a foster/adoptive caregiver received training or transferred from another agency, they would need to receive training on Trumbull County Children Services adoption policies.
9. Assessor will conduct a SACWIS and Central Registry Search.

The PCSA, if different from the PCSA in the county in which the adoptive applicant(s) resides shall provide a letter containing relevant information about the adoptive applicant(s) to the PCSA in the county in which the adoptive applicant resides when the adoptive home study is initiated.

Following the completion of these activities, the Agency will provide the foster caregiver with a written approval or denial of the application for adoptive placement.

The placement of a child in an adoptive home or the matching decision will be based on the child's individual needs and the ability of the prospective adoptive parent to meet those needs. At a minimum, the matching decision shall be based on the consideration of the placement of siblings together, information contained in the Child Study Inventory, the JFS 01689, "Documentation of the Placement Decision-Making Process" and the JFS 01688, "Individualized Child Assessment", if applicable.

Regardless of the geographic location, the following preferential order shall be given when considering families in the matching process:

1. All adult relatives of the child. This includes a relative or non-relative who the birthmother has indicated by name as a potential resource to adopt her child.
  - a. The identified relative or non-relative shall have, at minimum, a signed JFS 01691 or other signed adoption application on file with another state at least 5 working days prior to the matching conference.
  - b. The identified relative or non-relative shall meet all relevant state child protection standards unless the PCSA or PCPA determines that the placement is not in the best interest of the child.
2. The child's foster caregiver who is approved to adopt or who has completed the JFS 01691 at least 5 working days prior to the matching conference unless the agency determines that placement is not in the best interest of the child.
3. Other suitable approved prospective adoptive families.

Each case, in which a foster family desires to adopt their foster child, is assessed on an individual basis.

Factors that are weighed in determining whether the foster parent adoption is in the foster child's best interest, include the following:

- 1) the foster parents' motivation for adoption;
- 2) the ability to place birth siblings together;
- 3) the length of the foster placement in relation to the age of the foster child;
- 4) the foster child's attachment to the foster family;
- 5) the presence of "special needs" in the foster child;
- 6) the foster family's ability to remain anonymous from the birth family. If there is no anonymity, then any history of physical violence or aggressive behavior on the part of the birth parent(s) is considered.

The Agency shall not release a homestudy to any other agency or probate court if it is determined the application, homestudy, or any document submitted throughout the homestudy process contains a false statement knowingly made by the applicant(s).

If a child in the Agency's custody, but placed in the foster home of another agency, becomes available for adoption, the TCCSB caseworker for the child will notify the other agency, as well as the foster caregiver, of the adoption process. This notification will include a copy of this policy.

Effective	February 2004	PJJ/RAS
Revised	January 11, 2008	CLM/PJJ
Revised	July 1, 2009	CLM
Revised	January 11, 2010	CLM
Revised	September 17, 2015	RMM

## **POLICY ON SHARING OR TRANSFER OF A FOSTER HOME**

Trumbull County Children Services has established the following policy in regard to sharing or transfer of a foster home. In order to transfer a foster home, the certifying agency, receiving agency and foster caregiver must comply with the following procedures:

- (A) Prior to Trumbull County Children Services sharing use of a foster home that has been recommended for certification by another agency, the agency wishing to use the home shall obtain a written agreement signed by the recommending agency stating how the home is to be used and that all parties affected by the agreement approve of it. The recommending agency shall also provide written notification to any other agencies currently using the home.
- (B) The agency shall not solicit homestudies or transfers from other agencies for the purpose of locating a family of a specific race, color, or national origin
- (C) Pursuant to the transfer conditions specified throughout this rule, Trumbull County Children Services shall consider a transfer request from a currently certified foster home to a private child placing agency (PCPA) or private noncustodial agency (PNA) certified by the Ohio department of job and family services (ODJFS) to recommend foster homes of the same type or to a public child services agency (PCSA). A foster caregiver certified to operate a specialized foster home may transfer to Trumbull County Children Services if the caregiver agrees that upon execution of the transfer, the foster home designation will be identified as a family foster home.
  - 1 An Agency shall accept a transfer of a foster home from another agency only if the foster caregiver has been certified with the sending agency for a minimum of one year. Exceptions to the one-year requirement may be made for the following:
    - a. If a foster caregiver has relocated to another county not served by the foster caregiver's recommending agency.
    - b. If the foster caregiver's recommending agency ceases to recommend foster homes for certification to ODJFS.
    - c. If both the sending and receiving agency agree to the transfer.
  - 2 Upon receipt of a written request from a foster caregiver who meets the requirements of this rule and who expresses a desire to transfer from the caregiver's current recommending agency, the receiving agency shall consider the request and make a decision whether it wishes to proceed further with an assessment to determine whether to accept the transfer. A foster caregiver shall not transfer more than once during a certification period.

- 3 If an agency determines that it wishes to further explore the possibility of a transfer of a foster home to its supervision, before accepting the transfer of the foster home, the receiving agency shall contact the sending agency of the foster caregiver in writing to notify the sending agency that such a request has been received and to request a complete copy of the caregiver's foster home records, except for any personal references, but including BCII and FBI reports/criminal records checks (if request is from public agency).
- 4 Upon receipt of the request from the receiving agency, if the foster caregiver's recommending agency has previously made a decision not to place any more children in the foster caregiver's home, it shall inform the receiving agency of this decision and the reasons why the decision was made. If the receiving agency still wishes to proceed with exploring the transfer request, it shall notify the sending agency in writing. Prior to sending the records to the receiving agency, the sending agency shall ensure that a signed release of information authorization from the foster caregiver authorizing the sending agency to provide a copy of the agency's foster care records to the receiving agency has been obtained. The release of information may be obtained by either agency or the foster caregiver. While the transfer request is pending, the sending agency shall continue to work with the foster caregiver as it does with all other foster caregivers associated with the agency and shall continue to provide the caregiver with notification of training events needed according to the foster caregiver's written needs assessment and continuing training plan. The sending agency shall allow the foster caregiver to attend any such events and shall continue to meet with the caregiver regarding the care of any child placed in the home. No child shall be removed from a foster caregiver's home solely because the caregiver has requested a transfer from one agency to another.
- 5 Within fifteen working days of receipt of the signed release of information and any applicable copying fee, the sending agency shall send a complete copy of the foster home records, except for any references but including BCII and FBI reports (if request is from public agency) pursuant to rule 5101:2-7-02 of the Administrative Code to the receiving agency. The records shall include the most recent homestudy, homestudy updates, training records, fire inspection reports, safety audits, medical reports, and the most recent report of the alleged perpetrator search of child abuse and neglect information from the statewide automated child welfare system (SACWIS). The records shall also contain copies of all complaint or rule noncompliance investigations and any applicable corrective action plans. If there are any outstanding complaint or rule noncompliance investigations or corrective action plans that have not been fully implemented, the sending agency shall notify the receiving agency of the nature of any outstanding complaint or rule noncompliance investigations and any corrective action plans that have not been fully implemented. The sending agency

may charge the receiving agency a reasonable fee for copying the records, not to exceed twenty-five cents per page. No additional fee shall be charged to any party. If a fee is charged for copying the records, the records shall not be sent until the fee is paid. The records shall be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested or hand delivered by agency staff. If the records are hand delivered, the sending delivered to the receiving agency and the receiving agency shall document the date it received the records.

- 6 The receiving agency shall accept the copy of the foster caregiver's records only from the sending agency. A copy of the records shall not be accepted from a foster caregiver. A caregiver may provide other information to the receiving agency that the caregiver considers to be pertinent.
- 7 Upon receipt of the foster caregiver's records, the receiving agency shall assign an assessor to review the information received and conduct an assessment of the transfer request.
- 8 To allow the receiving agency an opportunity to make an informed decision as to whether it wishes to proceed with the transfer request, the assessor shall review the foster caregiver's foster home records and any other information received from the sending agency and the foster caregiver(s). The assessor shall complete the review and make a recommendation to the receiving agency regarding the transfer within sixty days after the records have been received. If the transfer review cannot be completed within sixty days, the assessor shall document in the foster home records the reasons why the review cannot be completed within sixty days. In addition to reviewing the sending agency's records and any information provided by the foster caregiver(s), in conducting the transfer review, the assessor shall contact staff from the sending agency and the foster caregiver(s) to ascertain the reasons why the request is being made and to determine if there are foster children in the home and, if so, to identify the agency with custody of the child(ren). The assessor shall also make at least one visit to the foster home and conduct a face-to-face meeting with each foster caregiver and with all other household members. If the foster caregiver's records indicate that there are any outstanding complaint or rule noncompliance investigations or corrective action plans that have not been fully implemented, the assessor shall not recommend acceptance of the transfer unless the assessor is satisfied that any outstanding complaints or rule noncompliance investigations are not material to the request to transfer the home and the safety of any children who are or may be placed in the home. All transfer review activities shall be documented in the receiving agency's foster home records.
- 9 The receiving agency shall not approve the transfer request until the following information has been received and approved by the agency.



- (a) Three new personal references for the foster caregiver(s) from three persons who are unrelated to the caregiver and who do not live with the caregiver;
  - (b) New references from all adult children of the caregiver(s). If the adult children are unable or unwilling to provide a reference this shall be assessed during the transfer process and documented in the caregiver record.
  - (c) A new criminal records check has been obtained, reviewed and approved by the assessor for all persons subject to a criminal records check residing in the foster home;
  - (d) A new safety audit of the foster home has been conducted to verify that the home meets all current safety requirements for foster homes; and
  - (e) Documentation of the assessor's decision to recommend approval of the transfer request, and the reasons for the decision are recorded in the receiving agency's foster home records. The foster caregiver and the sending agency shall be sent a written notice of the receiving agency's decision within five working days of the decision.
10. If the receiving agency approves the transfer request, all information contained in the copy of the caregiver's records sent by the original recommending agency as well as any information gathered in the transfer review process and the assessor's written recommendation shall be incorporated as part of the receiving agency's foster caregiver records.
11. If the receiving agency does not approve the transfer request, the copy of the records received from the sending agency and the assessor's written recommendation to reject the transfer request shall be maintained by the agency for at least two years.
12. The approval or rejection of a transfer request rests solely with the receiving agency subject to the approval of ODJFS and creates no right of appeal pursuant to Chapter 119 of the Revised Code for any party to the transfer request.
13. Prior to accepting a transfer, the receiving agency shall ensure that the custodial agency of any 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 shall not take place until the child is no longer placed in the home. A child shall not be removed from a caregiver's home solely because the caregiver seeks to transfer his/her foster home certificate to another agency.

14. Nothing in this rule shall be construed to require an agency to accept the transfer of a foster home from another agency.
  15. Prior to or not later than thirty calendar days after a transfer request has been processed by ODJFS, the receiving agency shall provide an orientation to the foster caregiver of the agency's policies and procedures for foster caregivers.
  16. The transfer of a foster home to a receiving agency has the effect of conferring upon the receiving agency all the duties of a recommending agency contained in Chapter 5101:2-5 of the Administrative Code.
- (D) When the receiving agency has decided to accept the transfer, it shall make a recommendation to ODJFS to transfer the foster home to the agency by submitting a JFS 01334 "Notification of Transfer of a Foster Home" (rev. 9/2006).
- (E) To allow for the orderly processing of transfer requests and recertifications of a foster home, if a transfer of a foster home is pending within the ninety days immediately prior to the expiration of the certificate, the sending agency and the receiving agency may determine which agency will conduct the recertification review. If there is no agreement between the two agencies, the foster home's recommending agency shall be responsible for conducting the recertification review and recommendation.
- (F) When the receiving agency has decided to accept the transfer of a foster home it shall enter the necessary data into the ODJFS uniform statewide automated child welfare database to register the foster home as a resource.
- (G) Following receipt of a JFS 01334 by the foster care licensing section, ODJFS will issue a foster home certificate with the receiving agency identification number indicated as the recommending agency and enter information into the ODJFS uniform statewide automated child welfare database to indicate that the sending agency's records for the caregiver have been closed. The certificate shall be effective from the date of the transfer until the end of the current certification period unless at the time of the transfer the foster home is changing from a pre-adoptive infant foster home to a family foster home or specialized foster home or from a family foster home to a specialized foster home. In such cases, due to the increased training requirements, a new two-year certification period will begin upon the date of transfer.
- (H) Upon receipt of a signed release of information form, an agency shall release a copy of a foster care homestudy to an adoption agency when the foster caregiver is being considered as an adoptive parent.

The ultimate decision of the transfer relies upon Trumbull County Children Services. It will be based upon the foster family's history of parenting, number of non-compliance or rule violations, and the ability of providing care for children.

Effective	February 2004	PJJ/RAS
Revised	December 11, 2006	CLM/PJJ/rmt
Revised	January 31, 2007	RMT
Revised	August 14, 2008	CLM
Revised	November 1, 2015	RMM

**NOTIFICATION OF FOSTER CAREGIVER OR RELATIVE WITH CUSTODY OF A CHILD  
OF THE AGENCY'S PERMANENT CUSTODY MOTION OR PROSPECTIVE ADOPTION  
PLACEMENT**

In accordance with Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-5-13 and Ohio Revised Code 5103.161 Trumbull County Children Services shall notify a child's foster/relative caregiver when the Agency seeks permanent custody of a child and when a child placed with the caregiver becomes available for adoption. Terms of the Agency's notification to the caregiver are as follows:

Trumbull County Children Services shall notify a child's current foster caregiver or relative caregiver, if in a kinship placement, if: The Agency seeks permanent custody of the child, and the Agency seeks to place the child for adoption, they can be considered for adoption. The notification shall also be given to the recommending agency when the custodial agency is different than the recommending agency.

If the foster caregiver or relative informs the agency that the foster caregiver or relative wants to adopt the child, the agency shall inform the foster caregiver or relative the following: The process for obtaining an application for adoption and that the child may be placed for adoption in another home, even if an application for adoption is submitted. The child's caseworker shall provide the above outlined notification to a child's caregiver in written form and this will be documented in the case record.

Effective	February 2004	PJJ/RAS
Revised	September 1, 2006	RMT
Revised	August 14, 2008	CLM
Revised	September 15, 2015	RMM

## **POLICY ON FOSTER CAREGIVER PRE-PLACEMENT AND CONTINUING TRAINING**

Trumbull County Children Services is committed to having well-trained, qualified foster homes. The Agency has a strong belief that children who have been victims of abuse and neglect and suffer emotional trauma as a result of being removed from the care of their birth families, deserve to have the best possible care the Agency can provide for them. Therefore, the Agency is committed to having a sufficient roster of foster caregivers who are well-trained and knowledgeable in the care of children who suffer from emotional, behavioral or physical difficulties as a result of the trauma they have experienced. The Agency offers Pre-Service Training and Continuing Training to prospective foster caregivers and to licensed foster caregivers respectively.

### **PRE-SERVICE TRAINING**

Individuals who have an interest in becoming foster caregivers with the Agency are scheduled for an in-home orientation session where they are provided with information about the Agency's Foster Care Program. If the prospective foster caregiver wishes to continue, they begin participation in the pre-service training

- For the convenience of the prospective foster caregivers, pre-service training is made available at this, or other local agencies, a minimum of three times a year.
- The pre-service classes are held on a variety of days and at different time of day accommodate the foster caregivers' work and child care schedules.
- A prospective foster caregiver is required to successfully complete thirty-six hours of pre-service training, as well as an additional six hours of agency specific training, CPR and First Aid certification training. Pre-service training can be completed prior to being assigned for the completion of a home study; it must be completed before a prospective foster caregiver can be recommended to the Department of Job and Family Services for certification as an approved licensed foster home.
- During the certification period, the prospective foster parent undergoes further screening by the Agency including criminal background checks - inclusive of BCII and FBI, and security clearances, psychological testing, drug testing, and submittal of personal references.
- At least two hours of training on cultural issues including cultural diversity training is provided in the pre-service training.
- A prospective foster caregiver must successfully complete all required pre-service training, complete all screening activities, and have an approved home study prior to being recommended to the Department of Job and Family Services for certification as an approved licensed foster home.

Pre-service training offered complies with Section 5103.039 of the Revised Code and will include the following course information:

- a. The legal rights and responsibilities of foster caregivers;
- b. The Agency's Foster Care policies and procedures;
- c. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' requirements for certifying foster homes;
- d. The effects placement, separation, and attachment issues have on children, their families, and foster caregivers;
- e. A foster caregiver's involvement in permanency planning for children and their families;
- f. The effects of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and substance abuse on normal human growth and development
- g. Behavior management techniques;
- h. Effects of caregiving on children's families;
- i. At least two hours of cultural issues in placement training including cultural diversity training;
- j. Prevention, recognition, and management of communicable diseases;
- k. Community health and social services available to children and their families.
- l. The Agency will provide the prospective foster parent with a course detailing the legally required information that they must be provided with about the child, and this course will not be less than one hour in length (The substance of 2152.72 of the Ohio Revised Code).
- m. Independent Living Training: Issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living and services (required for homes certified for children from 14 to 18 years of age).
- n. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation .
- o. First Aid .
- p. The reasonable and prudent parent standard as described in division (c) of Section 5103.162 of the Revised Code.

## **FOSTER CAREGIVER CONTINUING EDUCATION**

All certified foster caregivers are required to complete forty hours of continuing training during each certification period. Advance notice of education opportunities will be mailed to all foster caregivers through the Foster and Adoptive Parent Association's Newsletter and/or special flyer mailings, or other medias. Courses which the foster caregivers must complete will be identified in the foster caregivers' written needs assessment and continuing training plan, and may include, but not limited to, the following:

- A. Parents and foster caregivers as part of child protection teams;
- B. The dynamics of child abuse and neglect and recognizing and preventing child abuse and neglect;
- C. The effect of child abuse and neglect on child development;
- D. How foster caregivers should work with children and their families regarding placement, separation and attachment issues;
- E. Behavior management techniques;
- F. Foster caregivers working with children's families;
- G. Effects of caregiving on children's families;
- H. Caring for children who have been sexually abused;
- I. Cultural competency;
- J. Substance abuse and dependency;
- K. Symptoms of mental illness and learning disorders;
- L. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid;
- M. Developmentally appropriate activities for children;
- N. No preplacement training received shall be counted towards the completion of continuing training required.

When a foster caregiver will likely be caring for a youth until they turn eighteen years of age, in addition to the above noted continuing training requirements, additional training will be provided to ensure that they have appropriate knowledge and skills to understand and address the issues confronting the adolescents preparing for independent living. Ideally, this training will be coordinated by the Agency's Independent Living Coordinator so that the program addresses the unique needs of the child in question.

The Agency offers the following options for foster caregivers to obtain their continuing education credits:

#### **Agency sponsored Educational Workshops**

At a minimum, six to twelve hours of continuing education is offered every month. There are at least eight, six hour Saturday sessions offered each calendar year. These trainings are provided at the Agency and are scheduled by the Agency's Training Liaison.

#### **Foster and Adoptive Parent Association Meetings**

The Foster and Adoptive Parent Association holds monthly meetings at the Agency. All foster caregivers are encouraged to attend these meetings where issues, policies and trainings are provided on specific areas identified by the Agency and foster caregivers. The following applies:

- a. One hour of continuing education credit will be granted per meeting.
- b. The topic discussed must be child welfare related and must be documented by the Agency.
- c. The presenter's curriculum outline must be reviewed by the Agency before approval can be given to grant educational credit for the session.

#### **Video Presentations**

Video presentations can be an approved means of meeting pre-placement or continuing foster caregiver training when:

- A qualified trainer is present during the training session to respond to questions.
- The video presentation is part of a self-directed learning program approved by ODJFS.
- ODJFS has approved the video presentation as part of an agency's training proposal as set forth in rule 5101:2-5-40 of the Administrative Code.

Video presentations that are for entertainment purposes may not be used to meet training requirements. Self-directed video presentations can be approved by this agency's Resource Supervisor. Self-directed video presentations are not approved by ODJFS

### **Trainings Outside the Classroom**

Trainings completed outside the classroom when 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-fourth of a foster caregiver's continuing training requirements.

Continuing training completed outside a classroom may include training offered through the following methods:

- A. Video presentation
- B. Books or magazines
- C. Computer programs
- D. Internet sites
- E. Interactive video presentations

Transfer of learning components may include the following:

- A pretest
- A post test
- A discussion following the training.

Continuing training where a foster caregiver is teaching one or more training classes to other foster caregivers or providing mentoring services to other foster caregivers may be used in combination with training completed outside a classroom to meet no more than one-third of the foster caregiver's continuing training requirements.

### **Reading Material**

- a. A maximum of one (1) hour of continuing education credit per year may be obtained through reading material.
- b. The reading material must be prior approved by the Agency
- c. The foster caregiver must read at least 150 pages of reading material in order to receive one (1) hour of continuing education credit.
- d. The foster parent must write a summary of the reading material in order to receive continuing education credit.

### **College Course**

- a. A maximum of eight (8) hours of continuing education credit per year may be obtained through a college course.
- b. The course must be in the child welfare realm.
- c. The foster caregiver must receive prior approval from the Agency to receive continuing education credit.
- d. The foster caregiver must submit a copy of the course syllabus to the Agency in order to receive the credit



### **Conducting Training and Mentoring Services**

A foster caregiver may complete up to twenty per cent (20%) of his or her continuing training requirement by teaching one or more training classes to other foster caregivers or by providing mentoring services to other foster caregivers. To qualify for teaching or mentoring services a foster caregiver shall:

1. Have at least two (2) years' experience as a certified foster caregiver.
2. Have had at least two child placements in their foster home.
3. Be a currently certified foster home ; or a previous foster caregiver that has been approved by the Agency to provide mentoring services.
4. Not be under a corrective action plan by a recommending agency.
5. Not be under investigation for a violation of state statute or rule by a recommending agency of ODJFS.

Mentoring services means, at a minimum:

1. Assisting foster caregivers with information that will encourage communication between the new foster caregivers and human service agencies.
2. Offering foster caregivers possible solutions to problems that may occur while caring for a child in placement.
3. Assisting and guiding recently certified foster caregivers in day to day activities while caring for a child in placement.
4. Offering to assist foster caregivers in utilizing resources within their community.
5. Encouraging recently certified foster caregivers to attend training sessions in order to maintain their current certification.

\* In addition to the above requirements, a recommendation to train or mentor must be made by foster care worker.

These types of trainings cannot be used to fulfill pre-service training requirements but can be used to meet no more than one-third of a foster caregivers' continuing education requirements. To qualify for credit, these trainings must include a transfer of learning component prior to or following the training.

Such trainings must be consistent with the foster caregiver's written needs assessment and continuing training plan. When the above training tools are utilized, the Agency will notify in writing the Regional Training Center so appropriate plans for these trainings can be made.

Training hours completed outside of the classroom where a person in the role of trainer is not present, will not include a training stipend, nor an Agency training allowance payment.

Trumbull County Children Services shall make stipend payments to foster caregivers under their supervision to compensate their cost of attending training sessions. Stipend payments for completion of ongoing trainings must be made to the foster caregiver within one hundred twenty calendar days of the completion of the training event. Stipend payments for pre-placement training (pre-service) will be made to the foster caregiver with one hundred twenty days of certification. Training hour means sixty consecutive minutes of instruction and may include a break of not longer than five minutes per training hour when a training session is longer than one training hour in duration. Stipend payments may not be held or otherwise deferred pending reimbursement by ODJFS. Stipend payments shall be rendered for

fractional hours in quarter hour increments. The stipend rate paid by recommending agencies shall be calculated as follows:

1. For pre-placement training a lump sum payment shall be the equivalent of ten dollars per foster caregiver per training hour for all hours completed.
2. For continuing training, ten dollars per foster caregiver per training hour successfully completed within a training session that is a minimum of one training hour in duration. This stipend will be paid only for Ohio Department of Jobs and family Services (ODJFS) approved trainings.

All training documentation must include the date, location, course name, length of the training session, caregiver's name and the trainer's name. Without this information, the training session cannot be applied towards the foster parent's required training hours and cannot be reimbursed.

Continuing training hours obtained by a foster caregiver by teaching one or more training classes to other foster caregivers are eligible for stipend and training allowance reimbursement in the amount of hours as specified in the foster caregiver's written needs assessment and continuing training plan. Any continuing training hours obtained by a foster caregiver by teaching one or more training classes to other foster caregivers in excess of the specified amount in the written needs assessment and continuing training plan shall not be reimbursable.

#### **WRITTEN NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND TRAINING PLAN**

Every foster caregiver who has successfully completed pre-service training and completed all the requirements to become a licensed foster parent through ODJFS, shall work in cooperation with their Resource Caseworker to develop and implement a written Needs Assessment and a continuing Training Plan, within the first thirty days of a foster caregiver's certification period.

When developing the Needs Assessment and Training Plan, the foster caregiver and their worker will identify areas of strength, as well as areas for further skill development for each foster caregiver. Each training area will be assessed on the relevance and/or need for each foster caregiver. For example - if the foster caregiver only cares for infants who have never been exposed to sexual abuse, their need for training in the area of sexual abuse would be low.

Each Needs Assessment and Training Plan shall satisfy all of the following requirements:

1. Will be in effect for the two-year period the foster caregiver's license is in effect and include training for the caregiver that relates to providing independent living services.
2. Training areas will be selected based on the type of home the foster caregiver is certified to provide
3. The foster caregiver will successfully complete specified courses and any other courses the Agency considers appropriate. Specify the number of hours of continuing training, if any, the foster caregiver may complete by teaching one or more training classes to other foster caregivers or by providing mentoring services to other foster caregivers as referenced in this policy
4. Include criteria the Agency will use to determine if the foster caregiver has successfully completed the required courses
5. 5. The Agency will ensure that the courses that the caregiver's are being required to complete are made available to them at reasonable times and locations.

6. 6. The Agency shall maintain a record for each foster caregiver showing the date, location, course name and length of each pre-placement and continuing training course each foster caregiver attended, along with the name of the trainer.
7. 7. Specify whether the Agency will waive any of the hours of continuing training when the foster caregiver meets the conditions needed for the Agency to issue a Waiver. If a Waiver is approved, the Resource Worker must state in the Needs Assessment and in the Continuing Training Plan the number of hours, not to exceed eight that the Agency will waive.

The Agency may waive up to eight hours of continuing training if the following applies:

1. The foster caregiver has provided foster care for at least two years.
2. The foster caregiver has provided foster care for at least ninety days of the twelve months preceding the date the Agency issues the Waiver.
3. The foster caregiver has not violated any requirements required for certification during the twelve months preceding the date the Agency issues the Waiver.
4. 4. The foster caregiver has complied in full with the Needs Assessment and Continuing Training Plan developed for the foster caregiver.

For each continuing training waiver approved, the following documentation shall be maintained in the foster caregiver's record:

1. The date of the Waiver.
2. The number of hours of training waived.
3. A statement that each of the requirements for receiving a Waiver have been met (see above five requirements)
4. The name and signature of the authorized Agency Representative who approved the Waiver.

Additional time will be given if the foster caregiver has served in active duty outside the state with a branch of the armed forces of the United States for more than thirty days in the preceding two-year period or if the foster caregiver has served in active duty as a member of the Ohio organized militia, as defined in section 5923.01 of Ohio Revised Code, for more than thirty days in the preceding two-year period and that active duty relates to either an emergency in or outside of Ohio or military duty in or outside the state. The additional time shall be one month for each month the foster caregiver was on active duty. Any required training that is not met at the end of the foster caregiver's certification period will be waived by the Agency. The foster caregiver is not expected to make up the waived training during the next certification period, and the training required in the next certification period will be the same as any other foster caregiver. The Agency will document any extension of time or waiver in the foster parent's record.

Effective February 2004 PJJ/RAS  
Revised September 2004 PJJ  
Revised December 2004 PJJ  
Revised April 28, 2005 RMT  
Revised January 11, 2008 CLM/PJJ  
Revised May 22, 2008 CLM/PJJ  
Revised August 1, 2009 CLM  
Revised September 15, 2015 RMM

Revised December 1, 2019 MMM  
Revised September 23, 2020 RMT

**Trumbull County Children Services**  
**2282 Reeves Road N.E.**  
**Warren, Ohio 44483-4354**  
**(330) 372-2010**  
**(330) 372-3446 FAX**

## **Agency-Wide Disaster Plan**

Effective December 2, 2009

### **I. Introduction:**

Natural disasters, man-made crises, or medical events can affect the routine ways Trumbull County Children Services (TCCS) operates and serves children, youth and families. It is especially important for any agency caring for vulnerable populations—such as abused and neglected children—to do what it can to prepare for these disasters. The safety and health of the staff and their families is a top priority, as staff need to be safe and know that their families are safe, if they are to ensure the well-being of children in care.

For the purpose of this Plan, “Disasters” have been grouped into the following three types: Natural Disasters, Man-Made Events, and Medical Events.

Natural Disasters: Hurricanes, Tornados, Floods, Droughts, Tsunamis, Landslides, Earthquakes, Winter/Ice Storms, Extreme Temperatures, Fires, and Volcanic Eruptions.

Man-Made Events: Terrorist Attacks, War (including armed conflict and civil strife), Technological Disruptions (e.g., electrical power blackouts/brownouts, computer system and network disruptions, widespread electronic equipment breakdowns), Hazardous Materials Incidents (e.g., chemical, biological, radiological), and Economic Collapse.

Medical Events: Outbreaks of infectious diseases/epidemic and pandemic outbreaks (e.g., flu).

Some of these events are more likely than others. Trumbull County is inland and is not prone to violent earthquakes or volcanic action. On the other hand, Trumbull County has many industrial plants nearby, is traversed by a major highway system, and experiences frequent and dramatic winter weather events. The Agency’s Disaster Response Guide, submitted herein as **Exhibit A**, provides employees with procedures and activities that should be taken should a disaster ever occur.

At the first sign of a potential disaster/emergency situation, the Executive Staff (Executive Director, Deputy Director, Department Managers, Senior Supervisor) are to convene at the alternative work location (Christ Episcopal Church) to assess the disaster situation and formalize the Agency’s Emergency Operational Plan (EOP). (See **Exhibit E**.) The EOP will allow for the continued provision of Agency services and will be based on the

uniqueness of the presenting situation. The Executive Staff will utilize policies and procedures formalized in the Agency-Wide Disaster Plan and the Agency's Residential Treatment Program's Safety and Disaster Preparedness Plan (**Exhibit B**) as the supporting structures and foundation for the development of the EOP. TCCS' Executive Staff will ensure that the EOP addresses all requirements of Section 5101:2-5-13.1 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

This plan has been developed as evidence of the Agency's compliance with Section 5101:2-5-13.1 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

## **II. Important Contact Information & Phone Numbers:**

### **EMERGENCY:**

Ohio State Highway Patrol	1-877-7-PATROL
Local Police Department	330-841-2536
Local Fire Department 3	330-841-2542
Local State Highway Patrol	330-898-2311
American Red Cross – Trumbull County Chapter	330-392-2551

### **BUILDING:**

Building Maintenance	Pat Maenpa	Cell Phone:	330-719-4358
	Jim Brady	Beeper:	330-254-2077
		Cell Phone:	330-719-4254

### **IMPORTANT NUMBERS TO KNOW:**

The home number of your immediate supervisor.  
Office of the TCCS Executive Director Extension 1104  
Office of the TCCS Deputy Director Extension 1102

### **EMERGENCY ASSEMBLY LOCATION:**

**Rear Parking Lot  
Saint John's Orthodox Church  
2220 Reeves Road, N.E.  
Warren, Ohio 44483**

*(For temporary building closure: safe distance from your building,  
within walking distance.)*

### **ALTERNATE WORK LOCATION:**

**Christ Episcopal Church  
2627 Atlantic Street  
Warren, Ohio 44483  
330-372-4998**

*(In the event your building is closed, report to this location. If a location is not  
designated, contact your supervisor for instructions.)*

**INCIDENT REPORTING: Administrative Services Department Manager**

### **III. Agency Access:**

Due to the sensitive, sometimes volatile, nature of child welfare, the issue of building security is of great importance to everyone at Trumbull County Children Services. The Administration Building of TCCS utilizes an electronic key card system that prohibits non-employees from entering the main part of the building. This system directs the flow of clients and visitors to the front lobby, where they are required to sign in and state the nature of their visit. Upon determining that the visitor can be admitted to the waiting area, the Receptionist is then able to push a button which allows the visitor to open a secured door and obtain access to the waiting area. The visitor is unable to leave the waiting area and enter other parts of the building unless escorted by an Agency staff member. Throughout various parts of the Administration Building, there are doors that require a "card key" in order to pass through. Clients and visitors cannot enter, unless they are escorted by staff. After hours, the Administration Building is equipped with motion detectors and sound detectors throughout the building and is monitored by Sonitrol of Northern Ohio, a security company that has an office in Warren. The system is monitored 7 days a week and the burglar alarms are monitored when the system is armed after hours. All fire alarms are directed to the Warren City Fire Department via an electronic call box. A fire drill is conducted at least semiannually for the Administration Building.

Trumbull County Children Services also prohibits the possession of weapons on Agency premises except by qualified law enforcement personnel. There is a sign posted in the Agency lobby which states, "Pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code, no person shall knowingly possess, have under the person's control, convey, or attempt to convey a deadly weapon or dangerous ordnance onto these premises."

Within the Administration Building, four visitation rooms are equipped with closed circuit TV's to allow internal monitoring, as needed. Should there be a safety concern noted, the receptionist notifies staff at the switchboard area, allowing a coded message to be announced through the Public Address system throughout the Agency, alerting supervisors that assistance is needed in the Lobby area.

To ensure communication for staff who are working in the field, the Agency has cellular phones available for staff to take with them, and many staff carry their own personal cellular telephones. Each Supervisor carries a pager and must keep the pager on so that he/she can be reached immediately. Every service area staff member at the Agency has a telephone at his/her desk.

### **IV. Staff Responsibilities:**

The success of the Agency-Wide Disaster Plan relies upon each TCCS employee to become familiar with the safety, security and emergency response procedures of the department. The following responsibilities should be viewed as standard response and awareness guidelines for all TCCS employees at all locations. Employee Responsibilities include the following:

- Treat every alarm as if it were a real event.
- Participate in safety and security training opportunities (such as fire drills).
- Become familiar with the "Important Numbers to Know". Contact

appropriate personnel in the event of an emergency.

- Be conscious of your personal valuables and county-owned property/information – contain or lock up accordingly.
- Support and comply with the department's disaster recovery plan.
- Know your assigned role in the event of an emergency.
- Familiarize yourself with your office's designated report-in/assembly location (outside of the building, within walking distance).
- Identify your office's alternate work location (in the event your building is closed).
- Notify your supervisor of any gaps in the current safety/security procedures and/or disaster recovery plan. Employees should help to ensure updates are incorporated.
- Assist your supervisor by identifying operational or facility changes that may alter established emergency procedures.
- During declared emergencies, contact your immediate supervisor for more information, as soon as possible, to let him or her be aware of your present situation, safety, availability to work and any other pertinent information.

## **V. Supervisor Responsibilities**

Supervisors of this Agency have the task of overseeing the day-to-day business operations while keeping a steady focus on the future needs and expectations of our clients and citizens. Supervisors are equally responsible for providing employees the opportunity to confidently perform their responsibilities.

### **A. Daily Supervisor responsibilities include the following:**

- Maintain a heightened level of safety and security awareness.
- Proactively accept responsibility to ensure employees and services are prepared to successfully respond in the event of an emergency.
- Take a leadership role in all matters relating to the Agency Disaster Plan and this list of responsibilities.
- Encourage employee participation in drills.

### **B. Agency-wide Disaster Plan Supervisor's Checklists**

Agency-wide Disaster Plan Supervisor's Checklists (**Exhibit C**) provide direction related to tasks for which supervisors are accountable, in addition to topics to review with staff. Completed checklists should be given to the Administrative Services Department Manager. The completion of this checklist ensures the



following:

- That all TCCS supervisors discuss safety procedures with their employees.
- The familiarization of employees with your floor plan, evacuation route, emergency report-in location, site of fire extinguishers and hoses, and location/operation of fire alarm pull stations.
- That all employees receive adequate training in safety and security procedures.
- That each employee possesses a current copy of the Agency's safety and security information.
- That employees are provided a copy of the relevant portion of the Agency's current Continuity of Operations Plan and are familiar with their role in the plan.

**C. New Employee Agency-Wide Disaster Plan Orientation**

- Within thirty days of employment, new employees should be briefed on the procedures outlined in this plan.
- Introduce new employees to others on the floor and in the facility.

**D. Employee Emergency Information:**

- Provide the Employee Emergency Information Form (**Exhibit D**) to all employees for completion. Explain to employees that if they require emergency medical attention, basic medical information will assist medical professionals in assessing their condition. Likewise, employees' families want to be notified of medical emergencies. We strongly urge employees to voluntarily complete the form.
- Forms should be maintained within the Administrative Services office and made available to authorized personnel. Employees concerned about privacy may seal the form in an envelope with their name to only be opened in the event of a medical emergency.

**VI. Disaster Response Kits:**

TCCS' Executive Staff (Executive Director, Deputy Director, Department Managers, Senior Supervisors) have Disaster Response Kits, which contain any/all documents, forms, contact information necessary to enact the policies and procedures outlined in the Agency-Wide Disaster Plan. At a minimum, TCCS' Disaster Response Kits contain the following:

- Contact information for all Agency employees;
- Contact information for all Board Members;
- A copy of the Agency-Wide Disaster Plan, including any/all Exhibits;

- The “Directory of Trumbull County Officials,” which contains the names, telephone numbers, and addresses of all elected and law enforcement officials;
- Contact information for all local television and radio stations;
- A list of all open cases, organized by the Department and Supervisor to which it is assigned, that includes contact information for all open cases.
- Hard copies of all mission critical Ohio Department of Job & Family Services (ODJFS) and non-ODJFS forms and documents (i.e., Safety Assessment, Family Assessment, Case Plan, Juvenile Rule 6 form, Payroll Sheets, etc.) ;
- A copy of the Agency’s Personnel Practices Manual;
- A current copy of the Children’s Center & Secure for Children Unit Roster;
- A current roster of all children in the Agency’s custody (to include those in Independent Living), including the names, addresses, telephone numbers, and emergency contact information of their substitute caregivers and birth families;
- The names, addresses, telephone numbers, and emergency contact information for all Agency foster and adoptive parents;
- A current copy of the Medication Log for the Children in the Agency’s Residential Treatment Program;
- Contact information for the birth families of the children in the Agency’s Residential Treatment Program;
- A copy of all Agency contracts and contact information for those contractees;
- A copy of the CD or flash drive provided by the Trumbull County Juvenile Court containing all of the Agency’s legal filings; and
- A current copy of the Agency’s Statistical Report.

It is the responsibility of the Agency’s Planner to ensure that all Disaster Response Kits are updated at least monthly. As deemed appropriate and necessary, additional items, forms, and/or documents may be added to the Disaster Response Kits. Disaster Response Kits are to be kept off-site by each supervisor and each supervisor is responsible for keeping Disaster Response Kits in a proper working condition in a secure, yet accessible location, in the event of an emergency.

## **VII. Essential Personnel:**

The EOP will establish the minimum staff levels needed to allow the Agency to continue to fulfill its legal mandate. Although the exact level of personnel needed may vary by situation, the minimum staff levels will consist of: The Executive Director, Deputy Director, Department Managers/Senior Supervisors, Supervisors, and Emergency Team Members. Building maintenance personnel are to be included in the case of a disaster affecting any structure on TCCS property. Based on the staffing needs established in the EOP, Administrators and Supervisors will be responsible for contacting their workers by telephone, cell phone, pager, e-mail, or other means to impart important information, instructions, and directions. The State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), the Agency's website, and media announcements will also be utilized for general communication to the staff and the public. If deemed as being appropriate and necessary given the presenting situation, and as defined in the EOP, TCCS employees may be given temporary permission to work from their homes.

If it appears that the unavailability of Agency offices will extend beyond three (3) work days, the Executive Director shall immediately convene a meeting of the Board and Agency Executive Staff to develop a written long-term contingency plan that addresses, at minimum, the following agenda items:

- Review and refinement of the EOP.
- Establishment of an Agency "hotline" telephone answering service for referrals and information.
- Continuation of key Agency functions, including response to referrals and services to open cases and foster parents.
- Establishment of a temporary work site (and supplies, equipment, etc.) for non-direct service personnel as appropriate.
- Coordination with neighboring sister agencies for support and assistance.
- Implementation of urgent plans for the repair of Agency offices.

The Executive Director will be responsible for communicating the decisions made during any emergency Board Meetings to all staff, substitute caregivers, and all print and electronic media.

During an emergency situation or disaster that renders the Agency's Residential Treatment Units uninhabitable, the Agency's Executive Staff (Executive Director, Deputy Director, Department Managers, Senior Supervisor) will ensure that the Agency's Residential Treatment Program is adequately staffed to meet the needs of its residents. During the crisis period, the Residential Coordinators will remain on site. At a minimum, TCCS will assure a ratio of one staff person to ten children level of supervision. Unless otherwise directed, regularly scheduled child care staff are to continue to supervise the residents at the Alternative Work Site as if they were at one of the residential units.

#### **VIII. Alternative Work Location(s):**

The temporary work site for staff to report the next day for instructions shall be the

following: **Christ Episcopal Church, 2627 Atlantic Street, Warren, 330-372-4998.** Assignments for response to child abuse/neglect referrals and other field work will be made from this office setting.

If due to the disaster Christ Episcopal Church is unavailable, the Agency will utilize the offices of **Trumbull County Department of Job & Family Services, 280 N. Park Avenue, Warren, Ohio 44481**, as its temporary work site.

If both Christ Episcopal Church and Trumbull County Department of Job & Family Services are unavailable, the Agency will utilize either **Mahoning County Children Services**, or **Ashtabula County Children Services**, as its temporary work site.

**IX. Communication Plan For Staff, Substitute Caregivers (Including the Residential Treatment Program's Staff), & Other Critical Team Members:**

In the immediate aftermath of a disaster/emergency situation, the Executive Director and other administrators will communicate with each other by telephone, cell phone, pager, e-mail, or any other means available for example, through postings on the Agency's website or through the media.

If they are unable to reach each other due to the severity of the situation, the Executive Staff understand that they will be expected to meet at the Alternative Worksite identified in this plan within four hours of learning of the disaster, or as soon as is feasibly possible given the situation. The Executive Director will be responsible for contacting Board Members, by whatever means is possible, to inform them of the situation.

The Executive Director (or an administrator delegate) will immediately notify print and electronic media and major law enforcement departments of the news of an Agency facility shutdown including the following information for broadcast: Reason for the shutdown; estimated duration of shutdown; and direction that reports of child abuse/neglect should be made to local police departments. Throughout the duration of the crisis, the Executive Director shall be responsible for updating the print and electronic media on developments regarding the building disaster and shall use these outlets to inform the public as to how Agency services can be accessed.

As defined by the Emergency Operation Plan, Administrators and Supervisors will be responsible for contacting their workers by telephone, cell phone, pager, e-mail, or other means to impart important information, instructions, and directions. The State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), the Agency's website ([www.trumbulcsb.com](http://www.trumbulcsb.com)), and media announcements will also be utilized for general communication to the staff and the public.

The Agency's Department Manager of Out-Of-Home Services will ensure that the assigned caseworker attempts telephone contact or face to face contact (where telephone contact is unsuccessful) with the Substitute/Kinship Care providers who currently have children placed in their homes within twenty-four hours of a declared emergency situation. They will also ensure that the Residential Treatment Coordinators contact all program staff within twenty-four hours of any disruption in normal operations. This communication will occur by telephone, cell phone, pager, e-mail, or any other means available.

The Executive Director (or an administrator delegate) will be responsible for contacting other Critical Team Members/Community Partners, as deemed appropriate and necessary given the situation.

**X. Essential Work Activities:**

If a disaster were to occur, the following essential work activities must continue in order to ensure the safety of the children, to support caregivers, and to respond to service providers:

- Responding to new reports of child maltreatment. The details for how TCCS will fulfill this legal mandate if a disaster were to occur have been provided in Section XI of this plan.
- Case management services for all ongoing cases, including monthly face-to-face contact with all children, parents, caregivers, and custodians;
- Transportation to all essential medical appointments for children in substitute care placement;
- While supervised visits between children and their families may need to be temporarily stopped, as soon as feasibly possible, TCCS would arrange a small private area for children and their parents to visit.
- The Recertification of Foster Homes;
- Adoption Services, as outlined in the Agency's Adoption Plan;
- Foster Care Recruitment, as outlined in the Agency's Recruitment Plan.
- Residential Treatment Services;
- Determination of IV-E eligibility for children being placed into the Agency's custody;
- Current payroll information;
- The placement of children into substitute care; and
- The completion of all pending foster Care home studies.

The EOP will prioritize the procedures for the provision of these services if a disaster were to occur that disrupts the Agency's ability to carry out normal daily operations.

**XI. Responding To New Reports of Child Maltreatment:**

As noted in Section IX of this plan, in the immediate aftermath of a disaster/emergency situation, the Executive Director (or an administrator delegate) will immediately notify print and electronic media that reports of child abuse/neglect should be made to local police departments or Trumbull County's 911 emergency calling system. This information will also be posted on the Agency's website. Throughout the duration of the crisis, the Executive Director shall be responsible for updating the print and electronic media on developments regarding the building disaster and shall use these outlets to inform the public as to how Agency services can be accessed. If it is viable, the Agency Emergency Team caseworker(s) and supervisor(s) will be able to handle incoming reports of child abuse or neglect and will be able to work from home, as they do currently, to service the referral. Caseworkers can access SACWIS from home, or if internet access is unavailable, can record information on paper copies of SACWIS forms in order to provide services.

**XII Tracking of Clients and Substitute Caregivers:**

Detailed client and substitute caregiver contact information is maintained in the Agency's Disaster Response kits. A complete listing of the documents/information maintained in the Agency's Disaster Response Kits is provided in Section VI of this Plan.

If available, current contact information can be accessed through SACWIS. If computer systems are down or access to the internet or computer is unavailable, all documentation must be done manually.

**XIII. Services to Families Receiving In-home Supportive Services:**

If a disaster/emergency situation were to occur, the primary focus of the Agency's services to families receiving In-home Supportive Services would be to reestablish contact and to complete an "Emergency Needs Assessment" (**Exhibit H**). The Emergency Needs Assessment process will focus on continuity of service provision and the identification of any "service gaps" caused by the disaster/emergency situation.

In the event of a disaster, the following activities would occur on all In-home Supportive Services cases:

- Attempt telephone contact or face to face contact (where telephone contact is unsuccessful) with the family within twenty-four hours of the declared disaster.
- Within one week of the disaster, or sooner if deemed necessary due to the uniqueness of the situation or the case, the assigned Caseworker will attempt to have face-to-face contact with the family.
- The assigned Caseworker will complete an Emergency Needs Assessment.
- Refer the family to appropriate agencies who could offer assistance if the Agency is unable to provide those services.
- In cases where access to client's homes is considered dangerous or prohibited, alternative plans will be made.
- Agency staff will have at least monthly face-to-face contact with the parents/caregivers, and all children in the home.

Unless otherwise indicated during the Emergency Needs Assessment process, all Case Plans finalized prior to the disaster/emergency situation would remain in effect. Every effort will be made to fulfill any/all Ohio Revised and Administrative Code requirements.

In cases of extreme emergencies, when the Agency's staff are unable to contact or visit clients and/or foster/adoptive parents, law enforcement may be contacted to conduct a "well child" visit.

#### **XIV. Services to Children in Substitute Care and Kinship Placements:**

If a disaster were to occur, the primary focus of the Agency's services to Children in Substitute Care and Kinship Placements would be to reestablish contact and to complete an "Emergency Needs Assessment" (**Exhibit H**). The Emergency Needs Assessment process will focus on continuity of service provision and the identification of any "service gaps" caused by the disaster/emergency situation.

In the event of a disaster, the following activities would occur on Substitute Care and Kinship Care cases:

- Attempt telephone contact or face to face contact (where telephone contact is unsuccessful) with the Substitute/ Kinship Care providers who currently have children placed in their homes within twenty-four hours of a declared disaster.
- Attempt telephone or face to face contact with children in the Independent Living Program to assess their needs and safety.
- Attempt telephone contact or face to face contact (where telephone contact is unsuccessful) with the involved birth parents of children in care within twenty-four hours of a declared disaster.
- Within one week of the disaster, or sooner if deemed necessary due to the uniqueness of the situation or the case, the assigned Caseworker will attempt to have face-to-face contact with all children in Substitute Care and Kinship Placements, and involved birth parents.
- The assigned Caseworker will complete an Emergency Needs Assessment. On Substitute and Kinship Care cases. Emergency Needs Assessments will be completed for both the substitute caregivers and involved birth parents.
- Refer family/caregiver/children to appropriate agencies who could offer assistance if the Agency is unable to provide those services.
- In cases where access to family/caregiver/children's homes is considered dangerous or prohibited, alternative plans will be made.
- Agency staff will have at least monthly face-to-face contact with all children in the home and with the Substitute/ Kinship Care providers. In addition, the Independent Living Coordinator is to have at least monthly face-to-face

contact with every child in the Independent Living Program.

Unless otherwise indicated during the Emergency Needs Assessment process, all Case Plans finalized prior to the disaster/emergency situation would remain in effect. Every effort will be made to fulfill any/all Ohio Revised and Administrative Code requirements.

For details regarding the services that will be offered to the children in the Agency's Residential Treatment Program, refer to Residential Treatment Program's Safety and Disaster Preparedness Plan, which is attached to this Plan as **Exhibit B**.

**XV. The Maintenance & Security of Agency Records:**

TCCS maintains both paper and electronic records on the Agency, its clients, personnel, and contract agencies. At the first sign of a potential disaster situation, the Department Manager of Fiscal and Planning and/or the Data Systems Manager are authorized to act independently to shut down and safeguard the Agency's computerized data system if this can be accomplished safely. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services already routinely completes a centralized backup of the Agency's server. The centralized backup process works in the following manner:

- On a nightly basis, any data files that have been changed since the previous session, are transmitted to a Storage Area Network (SAN) in Columbus via existing data circuits.
- The following morning, all incremental changes to the SAN are archived to offsite tape. The offsite tape system maintains 30 versions of active files, and one version (the last version) of any files that are deleted.
  - The SAN maintains a mirror image of all county servers, and can (optionally) be utilized as the source storage server in the event of a county catastrophe.
  - Incremental restores of files back to the county (the most common task requested) are simply copied from the SAN to the county server.

All of the components of the Agency's management information system provide for rapid access, timeliness, reliability of information. The Agency's computerized and manual components of the management information system are accessible to authorized staff twenty-four hours a day, except for times when maintenance and/or back-ups are being completed. TCCS will attempt to secure, protect and relocate all paper records, if necessary, during a disaster, as well as secure and protect their computers from any damages resulting from a disaster. The Agency's computerized components are protected by up-to-date anti-virus/firewall software, and the information stored in these components, which include the Agency-Wide Disaster Plan, and all case record information, are "backed-up" daily by ODJFS. ODJFS' network servers are located in Columbus, Ohio, which is approximately 180 miles south of Trumbull County. In the event that access to the Agency's computerized data system is lost or temporarily disrupted, all activities will be hand written on "hard copies" of applicable forms, and then entered into the electronic system when access is restored.

TCCS' payroll and fiscal information is maintained and updated offsite by the Trumbull County Auditors Office.



**XVI. The Maintenance & Security of Legal Records:**

Quarterly, the Trumbull County Juvenile Court provides the Agency with a CD or flash drive containing all documents that have been filed with the Court. A copy of this CD or flash drive is placed in the Agency's Disaster Response Kits, which are described in detail in Section VI of this Plan.

**XVII. The Coordination of Services:**

During any disaster/emergency situation, TCCS will coordinate, communicate and cooperate with the appropriate local, state and federal governmental authorities, as well as with emergency responders. If service recipients are present during any emergency situation, the assigned Caseworker(s) and Supervisor(s) are responsible for coordinating and communicating with those service recipients. The appropriate Supervisor is responsible for ensuring the evacuation of their staff and/or clients with mobility challenges or other special needs.

In any emergency situation, Trumbull County policy mandates that Trumbull County Children Services participates in and follows direction of the Trumbull County Disaster Recovery Team. TCCS has been an active member of this team since 2004. This Team has developed emergency preparedness procedures, such as the identification of key staff, listing of vendors, maintenance of electronic/hard copies of critical forms, etc. The purpose of the Trumbull County Disaster Recovery Team is to ensure the continuation and coordination of critical services during an emergency situation.

Under the direction of the Trumbull County Disaster Recovery Team, TCCS will work collaboratively with local emergency shelters to coordinate services for children and families. Local emergency shelters include the following: the AMOS Christy House, 919 Main Street, SW, Warren, Ohio 44483; the Warren Family Mission, 361 Elm Rd., NE, Warren, Ohio 44483; Someplace Safe, 1540 Tod Avenue, NW, Warren, Ohio, 44485; Daybreak, 2611 Homestead Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio 44502; and the Rescue Mission, 962 Martin Luther King Blvd., Youngstown, Ohio 44501.

TCCS does not make use of volunteers in its program of services, or as replacements for paid staff. Due to the non-voluntary aspect of Child Welfare programs, the Agency does not use volunteers in order to respect and protect the confidentiality of Agency clients.

In cases of extreme emergencies, when the Agency's staff are unable to contact or visit clients and/or foster/adoptive parents, law enforcement may be contacted to conduct a "well child" visit.

Within 30 days of this plan being approved by ODJFS, the Agency's Quality Assurance Department will contact the Trumbull County Chapter of the Red Cross to assist with training of the Agency's employees on disaster preparedness.

**XVIII. Plan of Cooperation with Neighboring Counties:**

In the event of a disaster that would disrupt TCCS' normal day-to-day functions, the Agency has entered into Plans of Cooperation with Mahoning County Children Services (**Exhibit F**) and Ashtabula County Children Services (**Exhibit G**). These plans will allow TCCS, Mahoning County Children Services and Ashtabula County Children Services to continue to fulfill their legal mandates if their communities should ever experience a

disaster.

**XIX. Continuous Improvement and Assistance:**

To promote continuous process improvement, all TCCS employees are strongly encouraged to share their ideas for enhancement of TCCS' Agency-Wide Disaster Plan. Additionally, they are encouraged to report concerns regarding the plan. Comments or questions regarding the Agency-Wide Disaster Plan should be submitted to the Agency's Planner or Quality Assurance Supervisor.

Within 30 days of this plan being approved by ODJFS, the Agency's Quality Assurance Department will ensure that all Agency employees are trained on its requirements and content.

## **Trumbull County Children Services’ Disaster Response Guide**

### **Declared Weather Emergency**

*For county employees, only the County Commissioners can declare a natural disaster and/or weather emergency. In the case of such an event, the County Commissioners would contact the TCCS Executive Director, and a declaration would be broadcast on local radio/television stations. If an emergency is declared during work hours, a notice will go out over the loudspeaker and the Agency’s e-mail system. In addition, those workers out in the field will be notified by their supervisors. Only employees designated as essential are required to report for work, including members of the Emergency Team. The Deputy Director, Department Managers, Senior Supervisors, and Supervisors do not have the authority to excuse employees from work without the approval of the TCCS Executive Director.*

*Any local emergency declaration by county commissioners is applicable to county employees. If other, undesignated local officials have declared an emergency and you choose not to report for work, you will be required to use personal or vacation leave to account for the missed work hours.*

*If you are unclear as to whether an emergency has been declared, you may call your immediate supervisor for updated information.*

#### **What is a Weather Emergency?**

“Weather emergency” is a term which refers to all formal declarations or proclamations which may limit a county employee's obligation to travel to and from work for a specific period of time due to severe weather conditions not limited to snowstorms.

#### **Communicating the Weather Emergency to TCCS Employees**

In the event of a weather emergency, the Executive Director of TCCS shall notify executive personnel who will notify supervisors. Thereafter, the following shall occur:

- Public Safety will issue news releases to the media.
- Supervisors will notify the workers in their units.

### **Disaster Emergency**

*Disaster Emergencies can be the result of Terrorist Attack, Widespread Civil Unrest, Armed Conflict, or a related event. In such cases, it is important for staff to make efforts to contact their supervisor to assess the situation and plan accordingly.*

#### **Communication During a Disaster Emergency**

In the event of a disaster, the Executive Staff will notify Supervisors. Thereafter:

- The Executive Director will issue news releases to all relevant news media.

- TCCS employees should monitor television and radio for instructions.
- TCCS employees will call their immediate supervisors.

### **Office of Homeland Security Designations**

The Office of Homeland Security has established the Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS) to provide an effective means to disseminate information regarding the risk of terrorist attack to Federal, State, and local authorities and to the American people. The HSAS provides five Threat Conditions that characterize the risk of terrorist attack and corresponding protective measures which are the steps that should be taken by government and the private sector to reduce vulnerabilities.

#### **1. Green: Low Condition** Low risk, take the following protective measures:

- Refine and exercise preplanned protective measures.
- Ensure staff gain training on HSAS and agency-specific protective measures.
- Regularly assess facilities for vulnerabilities, take measures to reduce them.

#### **2. Blue: Guarded Condition** General risk, in addition to the previously outlined protective measures, the following may be applied:

- Test communications with designated emergency response locations.
- Review and update emergency response procedures.
- Provide the public with necessary information.

#### **3. Yellow: Elevated Condition** Significant risk, in addition to the previously outlined protective measures, the following may be applied:

- Increase surveillance of critical locations.
- Coordinate emergency plans with nearby jurisdictions.
- Further refine protective measures within the context of the current threat.
- Implement, as appropriate, contingency and emergency response plans.

#### **4. Orange: High Condition** High risk, in addition to the previously outlined protective Measures, the following may be applied:

- Coordinate necessary security efforts with armed forces or law enforcement.
- Take additional precaution at public events.
- Prepare to work at an alternate site or with a dispersed workforce; and restrict access to essential personnel only.

#### **5. Red: Severe Condition** Severe risk, in addition to the previously outlined protective measures, the following may be applied:

- Assign emergency response personnel and pre-position specially trained teams.
- Monitor, redirect or constrain transportation systems.
- Close public and government facilities.
- Increase or redirect personnel to address critical emergency needs.

## **Medical Emergency**

### **Reporting a Medical Emergency**

Call **9-1-1**. Where applicable, call a supervisor immediately to provide the following information:  
(Remember: you must first dial "9" from a County line)

- Location of injured or ill person.
- Any details available about the accident or illness.
- Name of injured/ill person.
- Inform your Deputy Director.

### **Take the Following Action:**

- Do not move the injured or ill employee.
- Try to make the person comfortable. Cover him/her with a coat or blanket.
- Do not administer Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) unless you have been properly trained and carry a valid CPR Card.
- First Aid Kits, Poison Control Information, and First Aid Manuals/Charts are located in the Administration Building at the Nurse's Station and in the offices of each Residential Unit.
- Notify the employee's family contact and the medical professional contact using the Employee Emergency Information form. Supervisors will maintain the employee forms and should inform executive staff of the location of the employee forms in the event the supervisor is not present.
- Complete an Incident Report.

## **Pandemic Outbreak**

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH), in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and World Health Organization (WHO) have a responsibility to assist and guide a response to cases of widespread infection/illness/disease.

In a suspected outbreak, immediately contact the local health department:

### **Trumbull County Health Department,**

176 Chestnut Avenue, NE, Warren, OH 44483

Phone: (330) 675-2489

Fax: (330) 675-2494

Email: [trumcohd@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:trumcohd@odh.ohio.gov)

Web: [tcbh.org](http://tcbh.org)

Please refer to the Agency-Wide Disaster Plan for further instructions.

## **Evacuation**

*It is the responsibility of each employee to know the evacuation plan.*

Emergency Report-In/Assembly Location for Evacuation:

**Rear Parking Lot  
Saint John's Orthodox Church  
2220 Reeves Road, N.E.  
Warren, Ohio 44483**

### **Evacuation Procedures**

- Follow the instructions of your Supervisor and/or Executive Staff.
- Close the door to your office as you leave.
- Form a single-file evacuation line.
- Help Persons Needing Assistance (or PNA, this is determined on a case by case basis). Office list follows this page.
- Stay quiet and alert.
- Prepare to merge with other people evacuating the building.
- Report to the pre-determined emergency report-in/assembly location.
- Refer to the Agency-Wide Disaster Plan for additional instructions.

### **Remember:**

- **Do not** return to your work area for any reason.
- **Do not** run or panic.
- **Do not** remain near the building upon exiting. Proceed to the Employee Parking Lot on the south end of the building.
- **Do not** return to the building until building management and public safety officials give the "all clear".

## **Natural Gas Leak**

*Natural gas leaks are extremely dangerous and should be taken seriously. If you suspect a gas leak (smell of rotten eggs or sulfur), immediately evacuate the facility. A natural gas leak can fill a room or building quickly; an explosion could occur. Contact the Fire Department or Public Utilities Commission, keep these numbers handy.*

### **Evacuation Due to Natural Gas Leak**

- Follow the instructions of your Supervisor and/or Executive Staff.
- Close the door to your office as you leave.
- Form a single-file evacuation line.
- Assist co-workers requiring assistance (buddy system – determined on a case by case basis).
- Stay quiet and alert.
- Prepare to merge with other people evacuating the building.
- Report to the pre-determined assembly location.

### **Remember:**

- **Do not** return to your work area for any reason.
- **Do not** run or panic.
- **Do not** remain near the building upon exiting. Proceed to the pre-determined reporting/assembly location.
- **Do not** return to the building until building management and public safety officials give the “all clear”.
- **Do not** turn any items on or off or use lighters. A small spark could ignite the gas.

## **Fire**

*Before a fire occurs, familiarize yourself with this section and refer to the Agency-wide Disaster Plan for additional instructions.*

### **Upon Discovering a Fire:**

1. Pull the fire alarm. This will signal the Warren Fire Department. The switchboard operator on duty is to call the Fire Department to verify the alarm.
2. Immediately evacuate the building.
3. Notify your Supervisor and/or Executive Staff.
4. If possible, close doors around the fire to contain it.

### **Evacuation Fire Safety Procedures:**

- Use the following exits:

#### **Administration Building**

- a) Staff Exit
  - b) Emergency Exit near the Receptionist's Area
  - c) Client/Visitor Exit
  - d) Emergency Exit near the Foster Care and Adoption Resources Unit
  - e) Exit near the Administrative Offices
  - f) Exit near the Coordinator's Offices
- Staff and visitors are to gather outside the Administration Building at the **Employee Parking Lot** at the south end of the building.
  - Keep doors closed. Closing doors prevents the spread of fire by minimizing the oxygen flow to the fire. In addition, closed doors limit the spread of smoke.
  - **Do not** attempt to fight the fire.
  - If caught in heavy smoke, take **short** breaths and **crawl** to escape.
  - Exit the building until advised it is safe to return.

- The Executive Director, Deputy Director, and Department Manager of Administrative Services are to do a sweep of the building to verify that all areas are clear.

## **Tornado**

*In the event a tornado warning is issued by the National Weather Service, an announcement will be made over the public address (PA) system (if available) advising building occupants of tornado procedures.*

### **Tornado Watch**

The term “tornado watch” simply means that conditions are right for a tornado to develop. It does not mean that a tornado has been sighted. During a tornado watch, employees will continue to work. Listen for information from the Agency radio system for updates and further developments. (Supervisors can turn on the radio through their phones.)

### **Tornado Warning**

A “tornado warning” indicates that a tornado has been sighted. Employees should be prepared to initiate tornado response plans should action be necessary. If a warning is in effect, the local sirens will sound for three minutes followed by seven minutes of silence. The siren pattern will continue in this manner until the warning has been terminated.

### **Tornado Warning Procedures**

- Close all drapes to the outside windows and close your door behind you.
- Follow the directions of your Supervisor and/or Executive Staff.
- Move away from the perimeter of the building to avoid flying glass.
- Go to the core of the building to one of the following areas:
  - 1) The interior wall in the Caseworker area which is located behind the Switchboard, Foster Care and Adoption Resource Unit areas and separates the new addition from the original building (labeled on attached floor plan as “A”).
  - 2) The interior wall in the hallway separating the Directors’ offices from the Clerical office (labeled on attached floor plan as “B”).
  - 3) For clients and Agency staff in the visitation area, rooms #104 and #105 (labeled on attached floor plan).
- If you are caught in an exterior office, seek protection under a desk.
- **Do not** go outside the building. You are much safer in a building than you will be on the street or in your automobile.
- Remain calm and stay in above-mentioned areas until the radio system or other designated personnel (e.g., Executive Director, Deputy Director, Department Manager, Senior Supervisor) indicate that “all is clear”.
- If possible, after the all clear is sounded, all staff should report to a location/area designated by their supervisor for accountability purposes.



## **Earthquake**

*Although earthquakes are rare in Northeast Ohio, this area is near the Midwest fault line. According to experts, evacuation of the building could, under most circumstances and according to location, be an unsafe course of action. It is important that Agency employees remember that a serious earthquake will be very widely felt; therefore, fire and police department switchboards may be inoperative. Telephone communications and utilities could also be unavailable.*

### **Procedures During an Earthquake**

- Take cover under desks and tables.
- Keep at least 15 feet from windows to avoid flying glass.
- Stay under cover until you learn that the immediate danger is over.
- Remain on your floor unless otherwise instructed.

### **Procedures Immediately After an Earthquake:**

If emergency personnel are not on the scene, do the following:

- Extinguish fires, if any. Do not light matches or fire until danger of gas leak is over.
- Administer first aid and assist in rescue operation as necessary. Carefully move the seriously injured to an emergency treatment center as soon as possible.
- Use telephones for emergency calls only.

## **Power Failure**

*In the event of a power failure, employees are asked to inform their Supervisor and/or Executive Staff.*

### **Preparing for Power Failures**

- Make a list of equipment that must be reset or restarted once power returns. Keep instructions for doing so in a nearby place.
- Equipment that operates unattended should be programmed to shut down safely during a power failure and not restart automatically when power returns.
- Identify hazardous equipment that should be turned off after power fails because it might cause injury when restarted after power returns.
- Assign an employee to shut off the power to all identified equipment unless there has been an order to evacuate the building.

### **While the Power is Off**

- Shut down equipment which automatically restarts when power is available.
- Disconnect equipment that runs unattended and turn off unnecessary lights and equipment. This will reduce the risk of power surges and other unforeseen damage or injury that could result when the power comes on unexpectedly.

**When the Power Returns:**

- Reset/restart/check equipment.
- Assess and report any equipment failure to your supervisor.

**Data Backup:**

- Back up your computer files regularly so as not to lose data if power goes off suddenly. The Ohio Data Network maintains an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) for critical machines such as servers.

**Hazardous Material Spill & Communication****Identifiable Hazardous Material Spills:**

- Identify any hazardous materials that may be used in your work area.
- Learn the emergency procedures for the hazardous materials in your area.
- Locate the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for the product and follow the safety procedures provided on the sheet. (The MSDS sheets for your office should be located outside of the janitorial closet.)

**Un-Identifiable Hazardous Material Spills:**

- Evacuate immediate area until hazardous material is identified.
- Contact a Supervisor or member of Executive Staff and Facilities Maintenance.
- Do not attempt clean up the spill until experts arrive.
- In the event of a hazardous material spill outside of your facility, contact your local fire department at 330-841-2542.

**Nuclear Biological Chemical (NBC) Incident****Exposure to a Potential NBC Agent**

- As soon as practical, shower with soap and water.
- Do not handle the item suspected of contamination.
- Notify a Supervisor or Executive Staff member.
- Ensure the contaminated item(s) are isolated and the immediate area cordoned off.
- Evacuate the immediate area beyond the perimeter of those exposed.
- Make a list of all persons who have been in contact with the contaminated item, including contact information and quarantine the individuals.
- Place all items worn when in contact with the contaminated item in a bag and keep it where you change clothes. Have the bag available for law enforcement agents.

**Evacuation Procedures**

- Remain calm.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a cloth, coffee filter, paper towels, etc.
- Take shallow breaths.
- Follow the evacuation directions of your supervisors.

## **Trumbull County Children Services’ Residential Treatment Safety and Disaster Preparedness Plan**

### **Introduction:**

Natural disasters, man-made crises, or medical events can affect the routine ways Trumbull County Children Services (TCCS) operates and serves children, youth and families. It is especially important for any agency caring for vulnerable populations—such as those with children in Residential Treatment—to do what they can to prepare for these disasters. The safety and health of the staff and their families is a top priority, as staff need to be safe and know that their families are safe, if they are to ensure the well-being of children in care.

“Disasters” can be grouped into the following three types: Natural Disasters, Man-Made Events, and Medical Events.

Natural Disasters: Hurricanes, Tornados, Floods, Droughts, Tsunamis, Landslides, Earthquakes, Winter/Ice Storms, Extreme Temperatures, Fires, and Volcanic Eruptions.

Man-Made Events: Terrorist Attacks, War (including armed conflict and civil strife), Technological Disruptions (e.g., electrical power blackouts/brownouts, computer system and network disruptions, widespread electronic equipment breakdowns), Hazardous Materials Incidents (e.g., chemical, biological, radiological), and Economic Collapse.

Medical Events: Outbreaks of infectious diseases/epidemic and pandemic outbreaks (e.g., flu).

Some of these events are more likely than others. Trumbull County is inland and is not prone to violent earthquakes or volcanic action. On the other hand, Trumbull County has many industrial plants nearby, is traversed by a major highway system, and experiences frequent and dramatic winter weather events.

The purpose of the Residential Treatment Program’s Safety and Disaster Preparedness Plan is to ensure the safety of the children and staff and a degree of service continuity. This Plan has been developed to supplement the TCCS’ Agency-Wide Disaster Plan, and as evidence of the Agency’s compliance with Section 5101:2-5-13.1 of the Ohio Administrative Code and all Ohio Department of Job and Family Services’ licensing requirements.

### **Building Safety & Security:**

The Children’s Center and the Secure Care for Children Unit have a magnetic lock system that can be armed as needed to discourage unlawful entry. Also, there are closed circuit TV monitors that allow the staff to observe the entrance/exit doors of both the Children’s Center and the Secure Care for Children Unit before permitting entry into the buildings. The windows do not allow access to the outside by mechanical means. The emergency exit door is also armed with an electronic battery operated alarm for notification when the door is breached. In addition, the Youth Leaders on duty must comply with the Agency’s requirement of “in the line of sight” supervision of the residents. The Residential facilities have a dry type sprinkler system for fire emergencies as well as a hood suppression system above the cooking area. Both systems are monitored and will alert the Warren City Fire Department, in case of an emergency.

Fire drills are held at least monthly in the Secure Care Unit for Children and in the Boys' and Girls' Units of the Children's Center. These fire drills are conducted during periods of both activity and rest and are conducted once a quarter for every shift.

Most importantly, each Unit shall ensure that all staff and children or teenage mothers are familiar with these emergency procedures, and be given a copy of the evacuation plan in the Residential Handbook.

Trumbull County also utilizes a 911 emergency calling system that can be used for reporting emergencies.

**Essential Personnel:**

During an emergency situation or disaster, the Agency's Executive Staff (Executive Director, Deputy Director, Department Managers, Senior Supervisor) will ensure that the Agency's Residential Treatment Program is adequately staffed to meet the needs of its residents. During the crisis period, the Residential Coordinators will remain on site. At a minimum, TCCS will assure a ratio of one staff member to ten children level of supervision. The youth leaders of other units will assist in the supervision and egress of children from the crisis, not foregoing the minimum level of supervision. Unless otherwise directed, regularly scheduled child care staff are to continue to supervise the residents at the Alternative Work Site as if they were at one of the residential units.

**Records:** The Residential Units supervisor maintains a Disaster Response Kit that contains copies of necessary records and information on each child in the residential units. *Please refer to Section VI and VX of the Agency Wide Disaster Plan for more information.*

**Continuity of Services to Children in Residential Treatment & Alternative Physical Work Site:**

If an emergency situation or disaster were to occur that rendered the Residential Treatment Units uninhabitable, Executive Staff along with the Supervisor of the Residential Units will coordinate the evacuation and transfer of the children to the **Christ Episcopal Church, 2627 Atlantic Street, Warren, 330-372-4998.** Youth Leaders will assist with this process. If possible, staff are to bring the Emergency Kits to the shelter. These may contain: a flashlight with extra batteries, transistor radio, first aid kit, personal hygiene items and other needed supplies.

Essential work activities that must be provided to children in residential treatment in order to ensure the continuity of services include: ensuring physical safety and housing for residents, routine and emergency first aid and medical care, medication distribution, supervision, support, provision of food, provision of water, mental health services and communication with family and required parties.

For provisions such as food, bedding, and clothing, staff are able to make use of vouchers in order to purchase needed items, or they may be provided by the local Red Cross. A current copy of the Medication Log is kept with the Residential Units Supervisor, and is placed in the Agency's Disaster Response Kits. In case of emergency, those medications can be filled by the on-call Psychiatrist or Physician. During the next working day, the Residential Treatment Coordinator and family worker will attempt to make arrangements for alternative placements of the children until a return to the unit is possible.

The Residential Supervisor shall have a Laptop computer with extra batteries, and a flash drive with important documents pre-loaded, which includes phone lists, address book, with employee, youth, contract agency and family contact information. They also have cell phones and car chargers for the phones.

Each facility has a land line and/or staff have cell phones, portable radios and extra batteries, disaster plans, maps, driving directions to alternate facilities, flashlight and/or lanterns, with extra batteries and contact lists, first aid kits, multi-tools, and personal hygiene items. The agency attempts to maintain all vehicles with at least a half tank of gas. Each facility also maintains a two week food supply of non-perishable food and water for residents and staff, non-prescription drugs (including but not limited to, pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fever reducers, fluids with electrolytes, anti-diarrhea medication and vitamins) and prescription drugs (as needed), manual can openers, thermometers, toilet paper, tissue, soap and garbage bags. If residents are required to move from the group home or residential, these items will be taken with them.

Staff will listen to radios and follow directives of agency policy, of the administrator, assistant administer and emergency response personnel. Fire, Tornado or other evacuations will be in accord with the agency's residential emergency preparedness plan. Staff are trained in First Aid, CPR and Universal Precautions and will utilize these as necessary and/or contact emergency medical, public health and emergency response personnel, if needed.

### **TORNADO**

- In case of a Tornado Watch, remind residents from both the Boys' and Girls' Units that there is a location in the Children's Center basement that is the safest place to go.
- At the Secure Care for Children Unit, the children's restrooms have been designated as the safest place to go. They are located in the center of the building and are windowless.
- In case of a tornado warning, go with all residents to these safe areas. In the basements, if possible, get under a table and sit with knees to chest and hands folded over your head.
- Staff are to carry a copy of the Children's Center Roster to perform a head count at the designated meeting area.

### **FIRE**

- In case of Fire, go to the nearest alarm and pull the lever. This will activate an internal alarm system. The Warren Fire Department will be notified.
- Dial 911 to verify that the Warren Police Department was alerted. If 911 is not operational, dial 330-393-1511 or 330-841-2542.
- Residents and staff are to evacuate the building immediately. An evacuation floor plan is posted at each facility.
- When possible, close the door to the room where the fire is located, but do not jeopardize the safety of the residents or staff.

- Residents and staff from the Boys' and Girls' Units of the Children's Center should meet at the Employee Parking Lot after evacuating.
- Residents from the Secure Care for Children Unit are to meet at the **Rear Parking Lot of Saint John's Orthodox Church, 2220 Reeves Road, NE, Warren, Ohio 44483**. A staff member is to go to the end of the drive to advise the fire truck as to which unit has the fire.
- Residents are not to return to their rooms for any reason, unless the proper authority advises that the building is safe.
- Fire drills are to be held monthly and evacuation times are recorded and kept on file by the Department Manager of Administrative Services or the Supervisor of Residential Services.
- Any problem with the alarm or fire equipment is to be immediately reported to the Coordinator, Supervisor, or Department Manager of Administrative Services.

### **CHEMICAL SPILL**

- When there has been a chemical spill in the vicinity of the Agency, the appropriate Emergency management or Law Enforcement Authority will notify the Agency if there is a need to evacuate all occupants in residential units.
- Residents and staff are to evacuate the building immediately and proceed to the Employee Parking Lot on the south end of the building.
- Residents and staff are not to return to the building for any reason until the appropriate authority notifies the Agency that the building is safe.
- If the need arises for temporary housing, emergency shelter will be located at the **Christ Episcopal Church, 2627 Atlantic Street, Warren, and 330-372-4998**.

### **PANDEMIC INFLUENZA**

In the case of pandemic influenza, the facility(s) will be quarantined. The direct care staff will utilize standard precautions in dealing with symptomatic residents. Symptomatic and exposed residents will be confined to their rooms, in on facility or one area of the facility. Staff who are assigned to work with these residents will not work in any other of the agency's facilities and no new admissions will be accepted nor will visitors be permitted.

*Please refer to page 16 of the Disaster Response Guide for further information regarding this subject.*

## **DRILLS**

Each month, the Boys' and Girls' Units of the Children's Center and the Secure Care for Children Unit shall, in consultation with state or local fire personnel, conduct fire drills and emergency evacuations. A log of such drills or evacuations will be maintained. The evacuation plan, approved by the fire inspector, will be clearly posted at each facility so that it may be easily seen by all residents.

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES FOR PERSONS NEEDING ASSISTANCE:**

- Upon admission, a resident will be identified by staff if they have any physical or emotional handicaps that would hinder their egress in a crisis.
- For example, for a child with a physical handicap (broken leg, difficulty walking, or hearing impaired) or emotional handicap (children who panic in a crisis or are developmentally unable to exit the building), a staff member will be assigned the responsibility of assisting that resident to ensure his/her safe and immediate exit.
- Each Unit will post the disaster plan and evacuation procedures in a central location and acquaint the residents to the nearest exit and rally point.

### **PROCEDURES FOR RESIDENTS AT THE RESIDENTIAL UNITS**

#### **In case of uncontrollable fire:**

1. Immediately notify the on-duty houseparent that a fire exists. Remain calm; indicate the location and the extent of the fire.
2. When instructed by the houseparent, quickly exit the unit, using the exit points marked on the floor plans. The plans are posted on each floor of the unit. Please memorize them.
3. Once out of the unit, proceed, as a group, to the designated meeting point. Residents and staff from the Boys' and Girls' Units of the Children's Center should meet at the Employee Parking Lot after evacuating. Residents from the Secure Care for Children Unit are to meet at the Rear Parking Lot of Saint John's Orthodox Church, 2220 Reeves Road, NE, Warren, Ohio 44483.
4. Once at the meeting point, residents are expected to check to make certain that the others have made it out safely. If a resident is missing, notify the houseparent immediately.
5. **DO NOT** attempt to re-enter the unit for any reason. **POSSESSIONS ARE REPLACEABLE; LIVES ARE NOT.**
6. Carefully follow the instructions of the houseparent. You may be asked to do such tasks as calling the fire department, locating residents, etc.
7. **DO NOT** interfere with the work of the fire crew, unless specifically instructed to assist.



## **FIRE PROCEDURES FOR STAFF AT THE RESIDENTIAL UNITS**

In the event that a fire broke out and has been controlled by staff intervention, the youth leader on duty **must** report the incident to the Warren Fire Department (330) 841-2542. They may document the fire or send an official to check the safety of the area. In case of a fire which is deemed to be uncontrollable using conventional methods, (fire extinguishers, water, etc.), the following procedures should be initiated by staff:

1. Notify all residents that a fire exists. This involves:
  - a. Sounding the alarm.
  - b. Visiting each resident's room.
  - c. Yelling "fire," if necessary.
  - d. When possible, close the door of the room where the fire is located.
2. Instruct all residents to exit the unit using the proper exit points, as practiced during fire drills and according to the posted floor plans. Do not panic. Make instructions clear and concise.
3. After exiting, residents should proceed to the designated meeting place as a group. Residents and staff from the Boys' and Girls' Units of the Children's Center should meet at the Employee Parking Lot after evacuating. Residents from the Secure Care for Children Unit are to meet at the Rear Parking Lot of Saint John's Orthodox Church, 2220 Reeves Road, NE, Warren, Ohio 44483. A staff member is to go to the end of the drive to advise the fire truck as to which unit has the fire.
4. Staff should call 911 to notify the fire department (through a neighbor, another unit, etc., if necessary).
5. Once at the meeting point, staff should take a head count to verify that all residents have made it out of the unit safely.
6. If a child is unaccounted for, notify the emergency fire staff immediately.
7. After all the residents have been located, **DO NOT** permit a child to re-enter the unit for any reason. Use physical restraint techniques, if necessary, to prevent this from happening. **REMEMBER, PERSONAL POSSESSIONS ARE REPLACEABLE; A LIFE IS NOT.**
8. Allow the fire crew to work without interference by staff or residents. **DO NOT** attempt to assist them unless otherwise instructed.
9. Notify the Coordinator and/or Supervisor of Residential Services as soon as the other procedures have been completed.

**Trumbull County Children Services’  
Agency-wide Disaster Plan Supervisor’s Checklists**

***Upon completion, sign and submit this form to the Agency’s Planner by December 31st.***

Check If Completed	Topics That Must be Discussed				
	Ensure that all your workers have a current copy of the Agency-Wide Disaster Plan.				
	Overview the floor plan and discuss the evacuation paths.				
	Customize procedures (phone numbers, etc.) as indicated.				
	Discuss Emergency Report-In Location (for temporary building evacuations)				
	Discuss Alternate Work Location (if work location is closed) - a process to identify an alternate work location will be developed during disaster recovery planning				
	Discuss priority list of mission-critical services.				
	Familiarize yourself and staff with the Continuity of Operations Plan. Maintain a copy both on-site and off-site.				
	Identify positions that are likely to be deemed essential for both weather-related emergencies and disaster emergencies				
	Identify your essential employees and their assigned roles based on the level of emergency.				
	Ensure employees participate in drills.				
	Distribute Emergency Information Cards				
	Distribute Employee Emergency Information Forms or update existing forms				
	Review your (manager) responsibilities				
	Discuss assignment and role of “buddies” for disabled, hearing or visually impaired employees				
	Advocate employees’ heightened awareness of work surroundings, visitors, etc.				
	Post any relevant information (posters, floor plans, etc.)				
Signature		Date		Title	

## Exhibit D

### TCCS EMPLOYEE EMERGENCY INFORMATION

TCCS Employees are provided this form for completion. Submission of this form is not mandatory although it is encouraged so that basic contact and medical information is available in the event of an emergency.

**Please submit this form to your manager/supervisor**

**NOTE:** *If you are concerned about privacy, submit this form to your supervisor in a sealed envelope. Place your name on the envelope and note "TO BE OPENED IN THE EVENT OF A MEDICAL EMERGENCY ONLY."*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Home address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

#### MEDICAL INFORMATION:

Healthcare Insurance Carrier: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_

Specialist's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Hospital: \_\_\_\_\_

Known allergies to medications: \_\_\_\_\_

Other information that a medical professional should know: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION:

Person(s) to contact in the event of an emergency:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Cellular: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_

Pager: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Cellular: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_

Pager: \_\_\_\_\_

**Trumbull County Children Services  
Emergency Operational Plan (EOP)**

**Introduction:**

An Emergency Operational Plan (EOP) is developed and implemented when Trumbull County Children Services' (TCCS) "normal operations" are disrupted due to an emergency situation or disaster. All EOPs must ensure that TCCS is able to fulfill its legal mandate during times of crisis and must meet the all the requirements of TCCS' Agency-Wide Disaster Plan and Section 5101:2-5-13.1 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

**EOP Participants:**

Name	Position	Name	Position

**Presenting Situation:**

In the space provided below, describe the emergency situation or disaster that necessitated the development of this EOP.

**Essential Personnel Needed For The Operation Of The Agency, Including If Applicable To The Situation, The Personnel Needed For The Residential Treatment Program.**

**Alternative Physical Work Location, Including If Applicable To The Situation, An Alternative Work Location For The Residential Treatment Program.**

**Communication Plan For Agency Staff (Including Residential Treatment Staff), Substitute Care Givers, And Other Critical Team Members With Or Without E-Mail, Internet, SACWIS, Or Telephone.**

**Identification Of Essential Work Activities That Must Continue In Order To Ensure Safety Of Children, Support Caregivers, And Service Providers.**

**Procedures For Handling New Reports Of Child Maltreatment.**

**Procedures For Tracking Clients And Substitute Caregivers With Or Without SACWIS Or Other Technical Systems In Place.**

<b>Continuity Of Services To Families Receiving In-Home Supportive Services.</b>
<b>Continuity Of Services To Children In Substitute Care, Children In The Agency's Residential Treatment Program, And Kinship Care Placements.</b>
<b>Maintenance And Security Of Agency Records (Including Residential Treatment Records) Not Included In SACWIS, Including Soft Copies Stored In Other Software Applications And/Or Hard Copies.</b>
<b>Maintenance And Security Of Court Records For Child Protective Services Cases.</b>

<b>Coordination Of Services With Law Enforcement, Hospitals/Medical Providers, Or Other Disaster Agencies.</b>
--

<b>Coordination Of Services With Neighboring Counties.</b>
--

## **Plan of Cooperation**

This document serves as an agreement between Trumbull and Mahoning Counties in the event of a natural or man-made disaster which interferes or prevents the public children services agency from providing critical services mandated by the Ohio Administrative Code.

Each agency will handle child maltreatment reports during a disaster as described in their county's disaster plan. In the event where assistance is needed due to volume, location of the family or unforeseen complications, assistance will be provided upon request.

Each agency will provide continuity of services to children in substitute care and kinship care as described in their county's disaster plan. In the event where assistance is needed due to volume, location of the family or unforeseen complications, assistance will be provided, upon request.

Each agency will facilitate placement of children who enter the custody of their PCSA as a result of the disaster. In the event where assistance is needed due to the volume of children entering custody, assistance will be provided by sharing homes or resources, upon request.

In the event of extended closure of the physical work location, each agency will adapt as described in their county's disaster plan. However, in the event of unforeseen complications, each agency is willing to assist by providing access to a minimal amount of office space with SACWIS capabilities.

In the event of unforeseen complications not addressed in this Plan of Cooperation, these agencies agree to communicate and problem-solve in order to work cooperatively to provide services that ensure child safety during a disaster.

The initial enactment of this Plan of Cooperation will be communicated by the Children Services Director and/or Administrator. Any amendments made to this Plan of Cooperation will be agreed upon by Trumbull and Mahoning Counties, as evidenced by the signatures below.

---

Director/Administrator signature

---

Date

---

County

---

Director/Administrator signature

---

Date

---

County



## Plan of Cooperation

This document serves as an agreement between Trumbull and Ashtabula Counties in the event of a natural or man-made disaster which interferes or prevents the public children services agency from providing critical services mandated by the Ohio Administrative Code.

Each agency will handle child maltreatment reports during a disaster as described in their county's disaster plan. In the event where assistance is needed due to volume, location of the family or unforeseen complications, assistance will be provided upon request.

Each agency will provide continuity of services to children in substitute care and kinship care as described in their county's disaster plan. In the event where assistance is needed due to volume, location of the family or unforeseen complications, assistance will be provided, upon request.

Each agency will facilitate placement of children who enter the custody of their PCSA as a result of the disaster. In the event where assistance is needed due to the volume of children entering custody, assistance will be provided by sharing homes or resources, upon request.

In the event of extended closure of the physical work location, each agency will adapt as described in their county's disaster plan. However, in the event of unforeseen complications, each agency is willing to assist by providing access to a minimal amount of office space with SACWIS capabilities.

In the event of unforeseen complications not addressed in this Plan of Cooperation, these agencies agree to communicate and problem-solve in order to work cooperatively to provide services that ensure child safety during a disaster.

The initial enactment of this Plan of Cooperation will be communicated by the Children Services Director and/or Administrator. Any amendments made to this Plan of Cooperation will be agreed upon by Trumbull and Ashtabula Counties, as evidenced by the signatures below.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director/Administrator signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
County

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director/Administrator signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
County

## Trumbull County Children Services Emergency Needs Assessment

<b>Date of Assessment</b>	<b>Family Name</b>
<b>Caseworker Name</b>	<b>Family Case #</b>

**Describe the event that required the completion of this Emergency Needs Assessment:**

### Adult Person(s) Involved in Assessment

Name	Relationship to Child	Contact information

Emergency Assessment Elements	Yes	No
<b>Are all family members safe:</b>		
<b>Do any of the family members need emergency medical attention:</b>		
<b>Does the family have an adequate supply of drinking water:</b>		
<b>Does the family have an adequate food supply:</b>		
<b>Does the family have adequate housing/ shelter:</b>		
<b>Does the family have a way to contact officials if they should need help:</b>		

**For any/all Emergency Assessment Elements answered “NO” state how the need will be met:**

Case Plan Assessment	Yes	No
<b>As a result of the current situation does the Family’s Case Plan need to be Amended:</b>		

Date/ Type of Contact	Caseworker Name	Caseworker Signature
<b>If available, the parent/ custodian/ caregiver(s) signature:</b>		

**Procedures for Investigating Alleged Acts of Discrimination  
In The Foster Care or Adoption Process  
Effective February 1, 2005**

Trumbull County Children Services has established procedures for investigating alleged violations of 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 federal laws prohibit Trumbull County Children Services from developing and/or implementing policies, procedures or practices 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 3107.06 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 the 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 5101:2-48-13 and 5101:2-42-18.1 of the Ohio Administrative Code. These rules permit consideration of 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 homestudy, update, or an addendum to the homestudy 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 interests.

**Prohibited Actions:**

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

1. Using the race, color or national origin of a prospective foster or adoptive parent to differentiate between placements.
2. Honoring the request of a birth parent(s) to place a child with 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 interests of the child.
3. Requiring a prospective foster or adoptive family to prepare or accept a transracial foster care or adoption plan.
4. Using "culture" or "ethnicity" as a proxy for race, color or national origin.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Relying upon general or stereotypical assumptions about the needs of children of a particular race, color or national origin.

8. Relying upon 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.
9. "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.
10. 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.

**Complaint Procedure:**

Any person who believes that Trumbull County Children Services, any other public or private Ohio adoption or foster care agency, or the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has engaged in discriminatory acts, or initiated discriminatory policies or procedures, involving race color, or national origin in the foster care or adoptive process 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 Trumbull County Children Services or of 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 any of the following:

- Richard Tvaroach, Quality Assurance Supervisor/ MEPA Monitor  
Trumbull County Children Services  
2282 Reeves Road, N.E.  
Warren, Ohio 44484  
(330) 372-2010.
- Ohio Department of Job and Family Services  
Bureau of Civil Rights  
30 E. Broad Street, 37<sup>th</sup> floor  
Columbus, OH 43266-0423
- Any other public or private Ohio foster care or adoption agency
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of the Chief Counsel, Region V  
233 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 700  
Chicago, Illinois 60601

A complaint may 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 know of the discriminatory act, policy, or practice.

If a complaint is filed with Trumbull County Children Services' MEPA Monitor or with any other public or private Ohio foster care or adoption agency, the MEPA Monitor or other public or private agency must forward the complaint within 3 business days to the Bureau of Civil Rights of ODJFS for investigation. Trumbull County Children Services , if subject of a complaint, may not initiate, conduct, or run concurrent investigations surrounding the complaint or take any further action regarding the complainant or the subject of the complaint until the issuance of the final investigation report by ODJFS, unless approved by ODJFS. Further, if subject to a complaint alleging discriminatory act, policy or practice, Trumbull County Children Services shall cooperate fully with ODJFS during the coarse of the investigation and shall submit any information requested by ODJFS no later than fourteen days from the date of the request, unless otherwise agreed upon.

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.

**Prohibition on Retaliation:**

Trumbull County Children 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.

**Dissemination Procedures:**

By March 1, 2005, Trumbull County Children Services shall provide written notice of the Agency's "Procedures for Investigating Alleged Acts of Discrimination in the Foster Care or Adoption Process" to all foster caregivers certified, or in the process of certification, and to all individuals who have approved adoptive homestudies, or who are participating in the adoptive homestudy process, on February 1, 2005. Effective February 1, 2005, all individuals inquiring about or applying to be a foster caregiver or adoptive parent shall receive a written copy of the Agency's "Procedures for Investigating Alleged Acts of Discrimination in the Foster Care or Adoption Process"" within 7 days of their initial contact with the Agency.

**Additional Information:**

Individuals who desire more information about MEPA and Title VI as related to the adoption and foster care process may contact:

- Richard Tvaroch, Quality Assurance Supervisor/ MEPA Monitor  
Trumbull County Children Services  
2282 Reeves Road, N.E.  
Warren, Ohio 44484  
(330) 372-2010.

**STANDARDS OF CONDUCT:  
Employee and Contractor/Provider Compliance with  
MEPA and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964  
Effective February 1, 2005**

Trumbull County Children Services has established the following Standards of Conduct to assure the Agency's 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.

The provisions of MEPA and Title VI do not supersede the provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, 25 U.S.C.A. 1901 et seq.

**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 3107.06 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 the 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 5101:2-48-13 and 5101:2-42-18.1 of the Ohio Administrative Code. These rules permit consideration of 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 homestudy, update, or an addendum to the homestudy 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 interests.

**Prohibited Actions:**

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

1. Using the race, color or national origin of a prospective foster or adoptive parent to differentiate between placements.
2. Honoring the request of a birth parent(s) to place a child with 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 interests of the child.
3. Requiring a prospective a foster or adoptive family to prepare or accept a transracial foster care or adoption plan.
4. Using "culture" or "ethnicity" as a proxy for race, color or national origin.
5. 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.
6. 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.



7. Relying upon general or stereotypical assumptions about the needs of children of a particular race, color or national origin.
8. Relying upon 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.
9. "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.
10. 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:**

Trumbull County Children 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:

- Richard Tvaroch, Quality Assurance Supervisor/ MEPA Monitor  
Trumbull County Children Services  
2282 Reeves Road, N.E.  
Warren, Ohio 44484  
(330) 372-2010

**Complaint Procedure:**

Any person who believes that Trumbull County Children Services, any other public or private Ohio adoption or foster care agency, or the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has engaged in discriminatory acts, or initiated discriminatory policies or procedures, involving race color, or national origin in the foster care or adoptive process 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 Trumbull County Children Services or of 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 any of the following:

- Richard Tvaroch, Quality Assurance Supervisor/ MEPA Monitor  
Trumbull County Children Services  
2282 Reeves Road, N.E.  
Warren, Ohio 44484  
(330) 372-2010.
- Ohio Department of Job and Family Services  
Bureau of Civil Rights  
30 E. Broad Street, 37<sup>th</sup> floor  
Columbus, OH 43266-0423
- Any other public or private Ohio foster care or adoption agency
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of the Chief Counsel, Region V  
233 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 700  
Chicago, Illinois 60601

A complaint may 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 know of the discriminatory act, policy, or practice.

If a complaint is filed with Trumbull County Children Services' MEPA Monitor or with any other public or private Ohio foster care or adoption agency, the MEPA Monitor or other public or private agency must forward the complaint within 3 business days to the Bureau of Civil Rights of ODJFS for investigation. Trumbull County Children Services, if subject of a complaint, may not initiate, conduct, or run concurrent investigations surrounding the complaint or take any further action regarding the complainant or the subject of the complaint until the issuance of the final investigation report by ODJFS, unless approved by ODJFS. Further, if subject to a complaint alleging discriminatory act, policy or practice, Trumbull County Children Services shall cooperate fully with ODJFS during the course of the investigation and shall any information requested by ODJFS no later than fourteen days from the date of the request, unless otherwise agreed upon.

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 completion of the investigation conducted pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code.

For Trumbull County Children Services' employees, these enforcement requirements shall include employee discipline as outlined in the Agency's Personnel Practices Manual or the collective bargaining agreement between the Agency and Teamsters Local 377, which could include suspension and/or removal in accordance with applicable federal and state employment law.

For contractors/providers performing foster care or adoption services on behalf of Trumbull County Children Services, 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.

**Corrective Action Plan:**

Trumbull County Children Services 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, Trumbull County Children Services shall develop the corrective action plan in collaboration with the contractor/provider or in collaboration with the contractor/provider and subcontractor.

Any Corrective Action plan developed in response shall:

- Address how the Agency 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.

Trumbull County Children Services 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.

**Dissemination of Standards of Conduct:**

Employees or contractors/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 contractors/providers shall receive a copy of the revised Standards of Conduct within 30 days of the completion of any revisions. New employees or contractors/providers shall receive a copy of the written Standards of Conduct within thirty days of their hire date or the effective date of their contract. Trumbull County Children Services and contractors/providers shall ensure that these Standards of Conduct are provided to their employees and subcontractors.