



PARTNERS
FOR OHIO'S FAMILIES

Every person has **value** and should be treated in a manner that is **respectful** and **culturally responsive**.

OFFICE OF FAMILIES & CHILDREN

From OFC Deputy Director Jennifer Justice – 5/1/15

I spent the past weekend at a large family wedding, which was terrific on several levels. Most of my husband's family lives in Florida so visits involve sun, heat and a little beach time—all greatly needed during this rainy spring. It also is wonderful to

return to the warmth of family, to be with people who know you as you are and love you anyway.

Thinking about what to write this month brought to mind an evening over the weekend that I think many

of you could relate to. During any gathering of my family, it's a sure bet that someone will, at some point, recount some silly family story. We'll then spend a sizeable portion of our remaining time together reminiscing. Regardless of how far apart we may reside physically, we share a permanent connection that is formed from our history and the certainty of our future together.

May is National Foster Care Month so I would like to take this opportunity to say how much I appreciate the foster parents across Ohio who work so hard to make sure that every child has someone with whom they feel connected across time and place.

I hold our foster parents in the highest regard and respect the tough job that they have taken on by opening up their homes and hearts. We know that the children they care for need more than simply a place to stay; they need a lifelong sense of belonging, the feeling that you get with "family," whether it is family by birth, fortune or choice.

This year's National Foster Care Month theme is "Get to Know the Many Faces of Foster Care." It highlights that family connections can come in many forms, from guardianships and kinship care arrangements to adoptions and informal lifelong

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relationships. Thank you to everyone who plays a role in achieving this goal. I especially appreciate the two youth from the Franklin County Youth Advisory Board, who spent their spring break writing an article for First Friday. (See "Faces of Foster Care, page 3.) I hope each of us takes their thoughts to heart.

I also want to thank everyone who took to heart the email requests to complete surveys related to normalcy, guardians ad litem (GAL) and the Supreme Court of Ohio's Subcommittee on Responding to Child Abuse, Neglect and Dependency (CAND). The response has been terrific. I am excited that your voices will help guide our work and enhance the quality of outcomes. I guarantee your input

will be put to good use! We will be sharing the results of the normalcy survey during this month's Partners for Ohio's Families Advisory Board meeting. The GAL survey will inform the review of [Superintendence Rule 48](#), which establishes requirements for GAL, and the CAND survey will guide that group's future focus.

Recently, I attended the annual Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Day at the Ohio Statehouse, hosted by the Ohio CASA/GAL Association. I appreciated the chance to participate and to personally thank all the volunteers for their contributions.

I also look forward to next week's Ohio Association of Child Caring Agencies (OACCA) Conference, where I will join some of my senior managers on a panel. Some tragic

events have occurred over the past several months, which many of us have followed closely in the media. Seeing the long list of topics to be covered at the OACCA conference reminded me how much positive work we accomplish every day. Let's not forget all that positive work as we support the workers, administrators and families during difficult times, and as we continuously seek ways to keep families safe.

Finally, I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge the passing of nationally respected child welfare advocate Caren Kaplan. Caren touched so many of us with her quirky humor and passion for her work, and I know I'm not alone in saying she will be greatly missed. Please see page 11 for a tribute to her life and career.

Celebrate Foster Care Month in May!

The federal Children's Bureau's [2015 National Foster Care Month website](#) is live. This year's theme is "Get to Know the Many Faces of Foster Care."

You can use this website to help raise awareness about National Foster Care Month; get inspired by real-life stories from children, youth and families involved with child welfare; and gain access to a wide variety of resources.

The site provides user-specific buttons for youth, foster parents, tribes, communities and child welfare professionals. It will be updated continually throughout May, so be sure to check back regularly for all the latest postings (including the Presidential proclamation), new real-life stories and videos, and much more!

For information regarding the website, call (800) 394-3366 or email info@childwelfare.gov.

National Foster Care Month



Get to Know the Many Faces of Foster Care
www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth

By the Numbers: Foster Care

Although the precise demographics of children in the custody of Ohio's child welfare agencies change daily as children enter and exit care, general trends tend to hold steady. A snapshot of the 13,369 children in foster care on March 1 shows the following data:

Living Arrangements

- 61% were in a foster home
- 18% were in a kinship home
- 16% were in a residential facility or group home
- 3% were in adoptive placement

Time in Care

- 52% had been in care less than 12 months
- 23% had been in care 12 to 23 months
- 10% had been in care 24 to 35 months
- 15% had been in care 36 months or more

Race/Ethnicity

- 58% identified as white
- 32% identified as African American/black
- 9% identified as multiracial
- 1% identified as Alaskan Native, American Indian, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

The Faces of Foster Care: Youth Voice

The theme of 2015 National Foster Care Month is "Get to Know the Many Faces of Foster Care." Youth in care have a diversity of ages, races, ethnicities, geographies and educational backgrounds. However, they have a shared experience that [Foster Care Alumni of America](#) calls the "culture of foster care."

We asked two members of the Franklin County Youth Advisory Board to share one aspect of their foster care experience. They used their spring break to cowrite an article about cultural diversity, which we're reprinting below. Thank you to these talented young adults and to Franklin County Children Services for allowing First Friday to share their insight with readers.

Cultural Diversity in Foster Care

Written by Shy'la Smith, 18 years old and in permanent custody, and Aki're Thomas, 17 years old and a foster care alumni.

What is Diversity? Diversity is the differences we all have. It is what makes us unique. Everyone has something that makes them different or something they believe in. Your ethnicity, gender, personality, behavior or even the color of your eyes makes you unique

from any another human being. Your morals and values are also diverse. Although you may have the same religion, you may have different views on commandments or things in the bible or in the book you may study. Having diversity makes our society function better. Imagine if everyone were the same. It would be boring. The differences you have make you who you are.

A foster youth may find it's much harder to deal with diversity because of being in a situation you already cannot control. Sometimes it is difficult to know if your values and beliefs are supported because you are placed into a new family with their own diverse beliefs. Often, you accept the things you cannot change, and learn to compromise, while still holding on to who you are.

Foster children want a normal life just like anyone else and want to maintain parts of their own culture. Most people spend holidays with their families but some foster children don't have that ability. Therefore, it is important to be able to include some of their own traditions into the current homes in which they live.

Accepting that you are different is the first step to understanding

The Culture of Foster Care

Youth in care sent handmade postcards to Foster Care Alumni of America expressing their hopes, fears, confessions and observations. Together, these postcards form a slideshow that depicts the overall culture of foster care in America. Please take a moment to view it [here](#).

diversity and figuring out the great things about yourself. Never try to be like someone else because you are uniquely you. Being in foster care does not mean that you have to let go of you, your dreams, goals, or desires. It just means that you have to have dialog about things that are important to your beliefs.

While being different, many of the youth share similarities. We all long for the things that will enhance our lives whether it's culture, education or life skills. It's helpful to foster youth to have a foster family that appreciates diversity and provides a sense of extended family. Foster care provides a safe, stable home for kids at a time when they really need it. It's good to be able to be yourself even while in foster care.

Ohio Grandparent Kinship Coalition

Do you know about the Ohio Grandparent Kinship Coalition (OGKC)? OGKC is comprised of kinship caregivers, kinship caregiver advocates and agencies throughout Ohio. Kinship care represents the most desirable out-of-home placement option for children who cannot live with their parents. It offers the greatest level of stability by allowing children to maintain their sense of belonging and to continue experiencing their families' culture and traditions.

OGKC meets bimonthly and continuously seeks input from kinship families in order to better understand their needs and to advocate for solutions to identified issues. A schedule of 2015 meetings, minutes from

past meetings, and other helpful information and supports is available on the coalition's website, www.ohiograndparentkinship.org. The site also features information about the 2015 biannual conference, which will be held Sept. 19 at Franklin County Children Services. The conference will include workshops for both caregivers and youth.

Caregivers and professionals who are interested in attending OGKC meetings should visit the website or call Rhonda Marsh at (419) 774-4127 for more information. OFC's representative on OGKC is Rebekah Murray, who can be reached at Rebekah.Murray@jfs.ohio.gov.

Normalcy for Children in Foster Care

Ohio House Bill 213 and the federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act both were enacted into law in 2014. Both include requirements for custodial and recommending agencies to promote “normalcy” for youth in foster care so they can more easily participate in age-appropriate social, scholastic and enrichment activities.

Normalcy activities may include spending the night at a friend’s house, going to the mall with a friend, having a picture taken for a school newsletter, having a Facebook account or attending a high school football game.

In keeping with the new laws, agencies should update their normalcy policies and procedures, eliminate inconsistent practices, and educate their employees about common misconceptions. When doing this, it will help to keep the “reasonable and prudent parent standard” (RPPS) in mind. The RPPS is intended to help caregivers make sensible decisions that maintain children’s health, safety and best interests while at the same time encouraging their emotional and developmental growth.

Per Ohio Revised Code 2151.315(C), the following must be considered when determining what activities to allow:

1. The child’s age, maturity and developmental level, to maintain the overall health and safety of the child;
2. The potential risk factors and the appropriateness of the extracurricular, enrichment or social activity;
3. The best interest of the child, based on information known by the person or facility providing out-of-home care;
4. The importance of encouraging the child’s emotional and developmental growth;
5. The importance of providing the child with the most family-like living experience possible;
6. The behavioral history of the child and the child’s ability to safely participate in the extracurricular, enrichment or social activity.

A majority of public and private agencies are willing to

improve normalcy for youth in foster care, according to a fall 2014 ODJFS survey. Some agencies already were working on improvements in this area, and others were eliciting input from youth advisory groups and foster parents. The survey revealed some misconceptions about state normalcy policies. The following are three examples. (Please keep in mind that local policies may differ.)

Misconception: For a child in foster care to stay overnight at a friend’s house, the adults living or staying in the friend’s house must undergo a background check.

Reality: The friend’s parents are not considered alternate caregivers and do not need a background check. Only foster and adoptive parents, their adult household members, and staff at residential facilities are required to undergo background checks.

Misconception: Children in foster care are not allowed to attend functions without adult supervision.

Reality: Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) rule 5101:2-7-11 states that foster caregivers should encourage children in foster care to participate in community, school, recreational and cultural heritage activities that are appropriate to their age and functioning. Furthermore, children in foster care should be allowed privileges and assigned responsibilities similar to other family members of a similar age and functioning level. However, foster caregivers must obtain prior written approval from the custodial agency before the child can be left unattended. OAC 5101:2-7-08(D) requires the written approval to specify the period of time the child is permitted to be unsupervised.

Misconception: A birth parent’s wishes must always be followed if she/he disagrees with an activity involving her/his child.

Reality: Birth parents’ involvement with children in foster care is critical, and the parents maintain certain rights

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A Resource for Families and Professionals

Parenting is a tough job. Knowing where to turn for information and support can be a challenge, but RedTreehouse.org can help. This website promotes and supports the physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of children and young adults, prenatal to age 25. It provides access to guides, toolkits, organizations and community events for learning, help and support. Information can be searched by age, location and topics of interest. A printable flyer and free brochures also are available. You can download the flyer [here](#); please send brochure requests to lkresnye@rmhcleveland.org. RedTreehouse is a partnership between the Ronald McDonald House® of Cleveland, Inc., and Ohio Family and Children First.

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regarding their children. However, 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. Agencies and substitute caregivers should be sensitive to birth parents' input. They also should remember that normalcy activities cannot override

case plans or other court-ordered requirements. For example, if a foster family vacation would cause a child to miss a scheduled visit with a birth parent, the agency and foster parent need to work with the birth parent to see if an alternate visit can be arranged.

If you have questions about normalcy, please email Karen.McGormley@jfs.ohio.gov.

It's Never too Late for Permanency

National Foster Care Month is a good time to remember that "home" isn't about four walls and a roof. It's about having someone with whom you can be yourself and feel safe, someone to turn to for guidance through life's trials and tribulations, and someone who will share your joys and sorrows.

As child welfare professionals, we want this permanent connection for every child. Let's celebrate our successes and remind ourselves that this goal is achievable for each child in care. Here are some examples of Ohio youth who recently found forever homes after spending years in foster care. (Names have been changed.)

James entered foster care in March 2010. He had three placements in two years, including a stay in residential treatment. During this time, the agency placed him in a planned permanent living arrangement (PPLA) status. In November 2012, he was placed in a new foster home. James felt at home with his new family, and they grew attached to him, as well. After years of uncertainty, James felt that he finally had a family to call his own. James' biological father came to the permanent custody hearing and gave his blessing for James to be adopted by his foster family. Although that was likely difficult for him, it allowed James to move on without feeling guilty. Permanent custody was granted, and James' adoption was finalized in December 2014.

Davonte was a teenager who had no interest in being adopted by his foster family. He had maintained a relationship with and an allegiance to his birth mother. Even though he was in a PPLA status, he was linked with a Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiter, who spent time getting to know him and building a relationship with him. The recruiter talked with him about his relationship with his birth mother, family and permanency.

During this time, Davonte's foster family was growing fond of him, and his foster father reported that he had spoken with Davonte about being adopted. In January 2014, the agency decided to proceed toward adoption and file for permanent custody. Davonte agreed to this arrangement, and his adoption was finalized in October 2014.

Siblings Cody and Kayley had been living in the same foster home for about four years and had a previous adoption disruption. When they were linked with a Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiter in November 2013, both had a PPLA status, partly due to their ongoing involvement with birth family members.

Cody and Kayley's foster parents had adopted before and were willing to adopt them, but the children did not want to be adopted because of their previous adoption disruption and because of their birth family connections. At the time, they were visiting their birth mother and other family members every other week and wanted to be back with their birth mother.

Soon after the recruiter began working with the siblings, an aunt and uncle in Cleveland expressed interest in taking legal custody of them. The aunt and uncle also had recently taken legal custody of Cody and Kayley's older sister, who had disrupted from her own foster care arrangement.

The recruiter supported Cody and Kayley's transition from their foster home to their aunt and uncle's home and helped mediate some issues between the two families. The recruiter was a strong support to the children and helped make the placement with their aunt and uncle successful, in part by encouraging their birth mother to agree with the new permanency plan. The agency asked the court to change the children's status from PPLA to legal custody so they could have permanency with their aunt, uncle and older sister. Legal custody was granted to the aunt and uncle in August 2014.

Landon had gone through two adoption disruptions by November 2013 and did not want to try again. However, after reviewing Landon's individual and family files, a Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiter found the names of many relatives and family friends. Most were difficult to locate, but a few came forward and were interested in helping, including Landon's paternal uncle and several maternal aunts and cousins.

These relatives began visiting with Landon, and several

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offered to take guardianship of him, including his paternal uncle, a maternal cousin, an aunt and Landon's father. Eventually, Landon moved in with his father, who was granted legal guardianship in November 2014.

During the diligent search process, the Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiter also was able to reconnect Landon with a teacher who he had described as the closest thing to a father figure he had while growing up. This teacher agreed to be a mentor to Landon and has

stayed connected with him. Landon has plans to find a job and live as independently as possible, supported by his father, former teacher and the other family members he has reconnected with.

If you have questions about adoption, please contact adoption policy developer Tara Shook at Tara.Shook@jfs.ohio.gov. For questions about the Wendy's Wonderful Kids program, please visit www.davethomasfoundation.org.

A Word from the Ohio Family Care Association

Wendi Turner, executive director of the Ohio Family Care Association (OFCA) sends a warm, heartfelt thank you on behalf of the organization to foster families and child welfare workers who are doing the day-to-day work to make Ohio great.

May offers a well-deserved opportunity to applaud the commitment and dedication of foster families across our state. OFCA, "the voice of Ohio resource families," is proud to join the occasion by being featured in this month's First Friday. OFCA is a state-level membership association representing thousands of adoptive, foster, kinship, primary and respite families – also known as "resource families" – throughout Ohio. OFCA is fully committed to ensuring that children have safe, caring families available to protect them for as long and as often as they need, by supporting the families who care for them. What better way to accomplish this mission than to have thousands of people speaking with one voice at the local and state level?

OFCA seeks input from resource families to understand their daily challenges and to find out what is and is not working. Through education, support and advocacy, OFCA helps members to be heard when state-level policy and statute

are being established and ensures that the complex emotional, medical and physical needs of children entering care can be addressed appropriately. OFCA also provides direct support and consultation to resource parents who seek help with their daily experiences.

Resource families provide a much broader range of support than simply a safe place to stay. OFCA has focused on the role that resource parents can serve in helping develop understanding and life-long bonds among shared caregivers. (Shared caregiving is two or more adults having joint responsibility for care, nurturing and decision-making for a child. Shared caregivers could include primary parents, grandparents, daycare providers and babysitters, to name a few.)

Recognizing that primary families are an integral component of children's long-term success, OFCA has initiated a number of activities intended to support positive interaction among resource and primary parents, including working with the Ohio Primary Parent Advisory Committee to promote enhanced collaboration among foster parents, kinship providers, biological families and professional partners.



With the support of the Ohio Association of Child Caring Agencies and the Public Children Services Agencies of Ohio, OFCA has been selected to host Ohio's premier showing of the award-winning documentary "Tough Love" during its Annual Family Conference on June 19 and 20. "Tough Love" gives an inside view of two families' journeys to regain custody of their children. It is the work of Emmy®-nominated filmmaker Stephanie Wang-Breal and will be broadcast by PBS on July 6. OFCA hopes to use this early showing as a way to help shared caregivers and professionals better work together to build successful families.

To learn more about OFCA, visit www.ofcaonline.org or email wendi@ofcaonline.org. Check the OFCA website periodically for more information about the OFCA Annual Family Resource Conference, "The Changing Roles of Resource Families"

This event will provide up to 12 hours of quality training at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Dublin, Ohio.

Primary Parents and Resource Families

You can read about one foster family's success in working with primary parents at www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/reallifestories/siblings-foster.

Meet OFCA Executive Director Wendi Turner

Hired after an extensive search, Wendi brings to OFCA significant experience and a passion for the organization's mission to improve the lives of Ohio families touched by the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

In addition to being a former OFCA board member and an active member of OFCA's Strategic Planning and Development Board committees, Wendi has been a treatment foster parent since 2002. She holds degrees in business administration and human resource management and is known for her quiet presence and openness to others' perspectives. She is a welcome partner, and we look forward to working with her on child welfare, mental health and juvenile justice issues.



Wendi Turner

Meet Karen McGormley



Karen McGormley

Karen joined the OFC Bureau of Child and Adult Protective Services last August as chief of the Substitute Care and Permanency Services Section. She and her staff are responsible for a variety of programs and rules, including foster care and adoption, substitute care, the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance, the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, Education Training Vouchers, and the Kinship Permanency Incentive Program.

Karen brings wide-ranging experience to her position. She began her career as a caseworker in Butler and Franklin counties. After becoming an adoption assessor and then a supervisor at

Franklin County Children Services, she discovered her passion for adoption. There, Karen also managed both the Wendy's Wonderful Kids program and the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. In 2012, she moved to OFC as a SACWIS business analyst before being promoted to her current position.

Originally from Pennsylvania, Karen is a devoted Steelers fan. However, she has spent most of her life in Ohio. She has a bachelor's degree in social work from Miami University and a master's degree in administration from Central Michigan University. When she's not working, Karen says she enjoys spending time with her husband and 16-year-old twins.

Save the Date



JUDICIAL SYMPOSIUM on Addiction & Child Welfare

If you are a juvenile court judge, PCSA director or director of an alcohol, drug and mental health (ADAMH) board, you should have received your "Save the Date" notice for the 2015 Judicial Symposium on Addiction and Child Welfare. An invitation letter signed by Governor Kasich and Supreme Court of Ohio Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor will be sent to the attention of each county's juvenile court administrative judge.

The invitation asks for each judge's leadership in assembling a team of up to four community professionals for participation in the symposium on June 23 in Columbus. The invitation included copies of the registration form and the day's agenda. Each team should include the county's juvenile court judge, child welfare director and ADAMH board director. Additional members may include a treatment provider, GAL, CASA volunteer, family caregiver, attorney who represents parents or another local stakeholder.

If you have not received a "Save the Date" notice or if you have additional questions about registration, email Alaina Herrel of the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities at aherrel@oacbha.org. Check out June's First Friday for more information!

National Youth in Transition Database Update

The Ohio National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) stores demographic and outcome data from a series of surveys that are given to randomly selected youth who have received independent living services. Those selected to participate are asked to complete the first survey within 45 days of their 17th birthday, and then subsequent surveys at ages 19 and 21. These participation groups are referred to as "cohorts." The 17- and 19-year-old surveys for Ohio Cohort Group 1 were conducted in federal fiscal years 2011 and 2013. A final follow-up survey for Cohort Group 1 is being conducted to capture data as these former foster youth reach age 21.

Thank you to the youth and adult supporters who contributed to Ohio's 72 percent survey completion rate for Cohort Group 1 at age 21 for the first half of the federal fiscal year 2015. The minimum compliance rate is 60 percent.

Please keep up the great work. The second half of the reporting period is April 1 through Sept. 30, 2015. In April, the 31 counties with children in Cohort Group 1 received an email listing these young people's names. Your continued support is most appreciated.

Each county can run an NYTD report in SACWIS by following these steps:

- Click the "Administration" tab.
- Click the "Reports" tab.
- Under "Report Category," select "Administration."
- For "Report Type," select "Agency."
- Filter and select "NYTD Statistical Report."
- Generate the report.
- Select "Reporting Period Start Date" (April 1, 2015, for this population).
- Under "Age," select 21
- Mark "No" for "Survey Completed"
- Select "Yes" or "No" as needed under "Stats"

The report will show the names of all young adults who will turn 21 between April 1 and Sept. 30, 2015. Workers do not have to wait until the child turns 21 to administer the survey; it can be completed at any time within this reporting period.

For information regarding NYTD, email Elaine.Early-Hall@jfs.ohio.gov. If you have an NYTD SACWIS question, email Jennifer.Watson@jfs.ohio.gov.

Attention Youth Advisory Boards: Funding Tied to Budget

Reminder: OAC rule 5101:9-6-39 requires each youth advisory board to develop a written budget every year. The budget must be approved by the board, signed by two members of the board and a representative of the PCSA, and submitted to Dan.Shook@jfs.ohio.gov. To receive state fiscal year 2016 funding in July 2015, boards must submit a projected budget and have met this requirement for state fiscal year 2015.

Although most youth advisory boards already use a budget-development process to guide decision-making and to ensure that funds are used consistently and appropriately, this requirement encourages all boards to invest in this process. A budget reflects the board's values, ensures sound financial oversight and is an excellent learning experience for the youth. The requirement that budgets be approved by a membership vote ensures that members are aware of, understand and share the budget's vision. The PCSA representative's signature ensures agency approval and support.

For additional information, email Dan.Shook@jfs.ohio.gov or Kristin.Gilbert@jfs.ohio.gov.

May 2015 Global Emails

The following emails were sent in April from Jennifer Justice to PCSA directors and/or private agency directors. They are organized below by mailing date and key word.

4/2/15 - Title IV-E Foster Care Maintenance (FCM) Federal Eligibility Review Information Webinar

4/13/15 - Child Abuse, Neglect and Dependency Survey

Criminal Record Checks for Foster/Adoptive Caregivers

Anyone with questions about criminal record check requirements for foster and adoptive caregivers can read exactly what the law says in Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Section 2151.86. Here are some key parts, followed by some frequently asked questions and answers:

Ohio Revised Code Section 2151.86

Paragraph (A)(2): Requires child welfare agencies to request criminal record checks at the time of an initial home study and every four years after approval or certification.

Paragraph (A)(3): Requires child welfare agencies to request criminal record checks before recommending foster homes for initial certification and every four years after that.

The record checks must be conducted for all prospective foster and adoptive caregivers and for all other people 18 and older who live with prospective foster and adoptive caregivers. They must be conducted by the Ohio Attorney General's

Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI, formerly the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation).

Paragraph (B)(1): Requires FBI checks for all the individuals listed above at the time of initial certification or approval of an adoptive or foster home. An FBI check for recertification is allowed but not mandatory.

FAQs

What if an individual was recently fingerprinted for a job? Does that person have to be fingerprinted again?

It depends. If the BCI completed the check in the past 12 months and the current request is related to the care, custody and control of children (ORC 2151.86), you may be able to update the records check, depending on the reason for the original check. Updates are not permitted on all types of employment records checks.

BCI has advised that individuals should submit the "[Request for Copy of Ohio Background Check](#)" form and use language similar to the following example when identifying

the specific reason for the previous check: "Original request was for ORC 3319:39; now needed for ORC 2151.86."

What if an individual's fingerprints are not readable?

The BCI can complete a record check using only the person's name, date of birth and Social Security number if the request includes medical documentation from a physician or other qualified individual stating why the person could not be fingerprinted.

What if the individual does not have a Social Security number?

The BCI can do a record check using only fingerprints. For both the fingerprint card and the electronic WebCheck, all zeroes should be entered into the field for the Social Security number. The agency should include the individual's name and date of birth.

For additional information regarding record checks, call the BCI's Civilian Unit toll-free at (877) 224-0043. The line is staffed 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Guidelines for Courts: American Indian Child Custody Proceedings

The federal Bureau of Indian Affairs has developed updated Guidelines for State Courts and Agencies in Indian Child Custody Proceedings. These replace the guidelines originally published in 1979 following the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

The updates provide more comprehensive guidance regarding ICWA provisions that tribal children remain with their communities, cultures and extended families. They clarify the procedures for determining whether a child is an American Indian, identifying the child's tribe, and notifying the child's parent and tribe as early as possible before determining placement. The guidelines also clarify that ICWA presumes these placement preferences are in the best interest of American Indian children.

The guidelines became effective and were published on the Federal Register on Feb. 25, 2015. They can be accessed [here](#) and on the OFC website under [Reports, Plans & Presentations](#). If you have questions, email Rebekah.Murray@jfs.ohio.gov.

Rule Review Update

Currently, no Ohio Administrative Code rules are posted to Ohio's Families and Children Rule Review website, www.ohiorulereview.org. Please continue to visit the site periodically for new postings. We welcome your input and hope you use this opportunity to share your experiences. The website received 2,736 hits during March 2015.

CFSR Measure of the Month

Each month, First Friday features one Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) measure in our “Measure of the Month” series. May’s measure is “Reentry to Foster Care in 12 Months.” Because the CFSR looks back at prior years’ activities, the work we do today will affect Ohio’s performance in the 2017 CFSR. It is critical that stakeholders fully [understand the CFSR process](#) and assess their current performance.

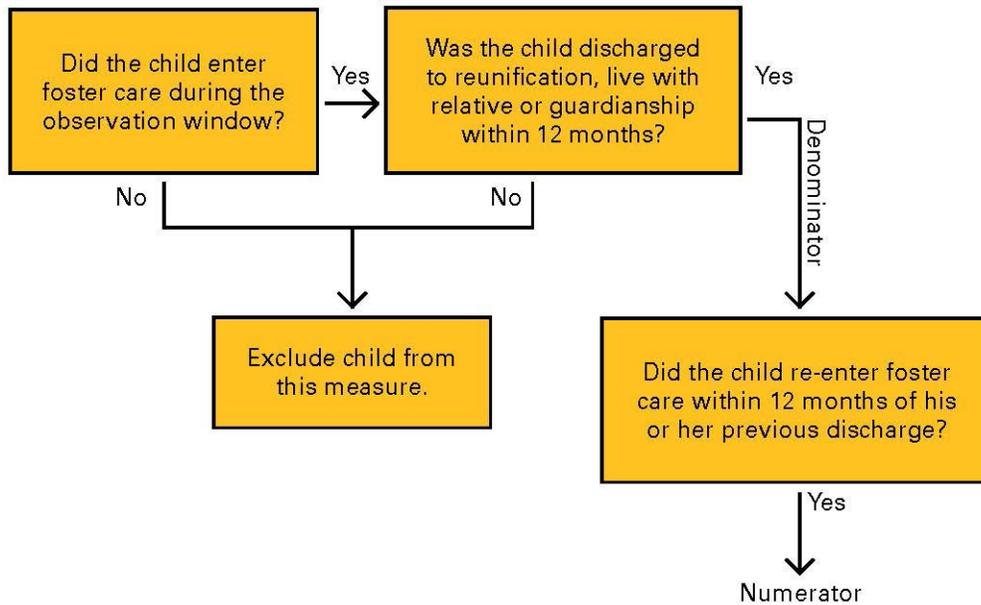
CFSR Round 3 significantly changes how this month’s measure is structured. In previous CFSR rounds, this measure focused on children discharged to reunification (with parents, guardians or relatives), regardless of when they entered foster care. This group was then monitored for reentry to foster care. Length of stay was not taken into account.

The current measure focuses on children who entered care during a year-long observation window and then exited care by being reunified within 12 months. It then counts the number of children who reentered foster care within 12 months of reunification. If a child reentered foster care multiple times within 12 months after reunification, only the first reported reentry is counted.

Effective practices before and after a child’s exit from care can reduce the likelihood of reentry. These include the following:

- Ensuring opportunities for overnight and/or extended visits between parents and children as they prepare for reunification.
- Communicating openly with families about their concerns or worries as they prepare for reunification.
- Coordinating with service providers to respond to families’ concerns and/or needs as they prepare for reunification.
- Continuing services and supports for a period of time after reunification.
- Partnering with foster parents during reunification efforts by involving them as a source of support for both the child and parents during the transition.

This measure is risk-adjusted by the child’s age at exit and the state’s foster care entry rate. The national standard is 8.3 percent or fewer reentries to foster care. Ohio’s most recent risk-adjusted performance was 11.9 percent, which was 39th among all states.



Remembering Caren Kaplan



Caren Kaplan, a long-time child welfare advocate and an independent consultant in the development of Ohio's Differential Response program, passed away the morning of April 15. We are deeply saddened by the loss of this vibrant and brilliant woman whom so many of us called a friend.

Those who knew her will remember Caren for her intelligence, her sensitivity and her sense of humor. She could be conspiratorially silly one moment, intensely passionate the next, but always deliberate, intentional, compassionate and kind. Even though she might have been the smartest person in the room, she saw herself as a facilitator, not a lecturer. It was this respect for the integrity of others' experiences that made her such an effective motivator for change.

Caren had an expansive and laudatory national career long before helping to lead Ohio's exploration of Differential Response in 2007. But we at OFC will remember her most for this role, in which she helped forever change how we engage with and view the families and children who come to the attention of Ohio's child welfare system.

Although Caren would be the first to say that there is much left to do, let us celebrate her as an individual who worked hard every day to make a difference in the lives of others. It is said that such people live with you forever because they leave a mark that lasts for all time.

Principle of the Month

Every person has value and should be treated in a manner that is respectful and culturally responsive.

Feedback and Subscriptions

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