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FOR CHILDREN'S FAMILIES

OCF seeks and supports strategies to strengthen
the voices of youth and families for its work.

OFFICE OF FAMILIES & CHILDREN

Table of Contents

From OFC Deputy Director Jennifer Justice – 5/6/16.....	1
May is National Foster Care Month	2
National Youth in Transition Database: Let's Celebrate!.....	2
Prudent Parent Standards.....	3
Oesterlen Services for Youth's Life Skills Center.....	4
Regional Summer Youth Events.....	5
Coming Soon: New Transitional Youth Activities.....	5
Save the Date: Fostering Pathways to Success.....	5
Suits for Success	6
Meet our New Transitional Youth Staff.....	6
Global Emails	7
Transitional Youth Programs Statewide Meeting.....	7
CFSR Update.....	8
Did You Know?.....	8
Rule Review Update.....	9
Missing Children's Day.....	9

From OFC Deputy Director Jennifer Justice – 5/6/16

Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month such a statewide success, whether by contributing a pinwheel selfie, hosting or participating in a community event, wearing blue on April 13, or reaching out to a parent. As always, the #PinwheelSelfie campaign was a big success. The Ohio Children's Trust Fund's **Facebook page** jumped from 500 "likes" to more than 6,000! If you haven't yet visited – and liked – the page, you should!

Kristi Burre, deputy director of protective services at the Fairfield County Department of Job and Family Services, and I posed for our own selfie (see below, left). This picture was

taken at Fairfield County's prevention month breakfast, where I gave brief comments. What an amazing show of community support! Mike Kenney, co-founder and co-director of the Waiting Child Fund, gave a keynote speech about children's right to permanency that gave me plenty to think about while driving home.

It was a great treat to travel to the Trumbull County Children Services Board the following week and take part in its Rising Up and Moving On recognition luncheon. I enjoyed filling a new and intimidating role as master of ceremonies. I also was very moved to see two families

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honored for their perseverance to overcome adversity and reunify with their children. Their stories were potent reminders of what we can accomplish when we assume parents want the best for their children. Of course, it helps to have terrific staff and strong community support, and both Fairfield and Trumbull counties should be congratulated for working hard to cultivate both.

Thanks also to Ohio Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for including me in their wonderful annual "CASA Day in Ohio" event at the Ohio Statehouse. Did you know that 45 Ohio counties have CASA programs and that last year more than 2,000 CASA volunteers served more than 8,000 children? I deeply appreciate these individuals for investing their time to serve as children's voices in court.

Now that it's May, I look forward to celebrating National Foster Care Month. Let me take this opportunity to give a huge shout-out to Ohio's 7,073 foster parents. This number fluctuates (it's accurate as of Jan. 1), but I didn't want to overlook a single individual. I once read an article that described foster parents as needing "the strength of Hercules, the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job and the humor of Steve Martin."

It's not an easy job by any means, but few others have such capacity to positively impact the children who come into our care. OFC wants to hear what you have done to recognize the foster parents who support your community!

This month's First Friday takes a look at a tricky issue close to the heart of foster parents: the prudent parent standards and how communities are approaching implementation (page 3). We also check in with our Transitional Youth Program (page 5) and welcome its new staff (page 6).

Registration opened this week for the Fostering Pathways to Success conference (page 5). I hope you have July 28 set aside on your calendar for this event and are thinking about how to support attendance of your county's current and former foster youth.

Another important event: The Wendy's Wonderful Kids Summit was held in Columbus on May 4 and 5, bringing together adoption professionals from the U.S. and Canada. This is an amazing program; since OFC began partnering with the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and Wendy's Wonderful Kids in 2012, 240 adoptions have been finalized, and more than 530 children matched with potential adoptive parents.

May is National Foster Care Month

Here are three ideas to celebrate this year's theme: Honoring, Uniting and Celebrating Families:

- Take the time to acknowledge or personally thank foster parents, family members, volunteers, policymakers, child welfare professionals and community members who are improving the lives of Ohio's children and youth in foster care.
- Raise awareness about National Foster Care Month through resources available at www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth, including social media campaigns, real-life stories, and events being held across the country to honor and celebrate families.
- Gov. Kasich issued a resolution recognizing May as Foster Care Month in Ohio. Post it in a prominent location at your agency, or distribute copies to anyone who deserves a shout-out.

We would love to hear about how your community or agency is celebrating Foster Care Month. To share your ideas, email Jennifer.Kobel@jfs.ohio.gov.

National Youth in Transition Database: Let's Celebrate!

The state has concluded the first half of the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) reporting period for federal fiscal year 2016. Congratulations and thank you for helping us attain a 76 percent completion rate for the 19-year-old population; we have surpassed the minimum compliance rate of 60 percent.

To run an NYTD report in SACWIS:

- Click the "Administration" tab.
- Click the "Reports" tab.
- For "Report Category," select "Administration" and for "Report type," select "Agency."
- Filter and select "NYTD Statistical Report" and then

generate the report.

- Select a "Reporting Period Start Date" of April 1, 2016.
- For "Age," enter 19.
- For "Survey Completed," enter No.
- For "Include Statistics," enter Yes or No.

The report will show all youth who were 19 as of April 1 through Sept. 30. Workers do not have to wait for the youth to turn 19; surveys can be completed at any time within this reporting period.

Keep up the great work! The second half of the reporting period began on April 1 and will conclude on Sept. 30. For more information, email Elaine.Early-Hall@jfs.ohio.gov.

Prudent Parent Standards

Ohio's General Assembly enacted a law in 2014 requiring foster caregivers to use a "reasonable and prudent parent standard" when considering whether to allow a child in foster care to participate in extracurricular, enrichment or social activities. It also granted caregivers and supervising agencies limited civil immunity when using a reasonable and prudent parent standard.

That same year, the U.S. Congress passed the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act, which also had requirements relating to "normalcy" for children in care. The federal legislation required states to implement the following within one year:

- A reasonable and prudent parent standard for a foster parent to make parental decisions to maintain the health, safety and best interest of the child, as well as decisions about the child's participation in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural and social activities.
- New provisions in state licensing standards for foster homes and child care institutions that provide foster care, to permit the use of the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

Implementation of the prudent parent standard requires a significant policy shift for most of Ohio's public and private child welfare agencies. When last discussed in First Friday, in **May 2015**, agencies were busy updating their policies and procedures and planning educational opportunities. To better understand how Ohio's agencies have approached this task, we asked staff from a PCSA and a private child welfare agency to talk a little bit about how their agencies have prepared staff and foster parents.

Belinda Peugh, placement resource manager, Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services:

At Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services, we began work to integrate the new prudent parent standards in our daily language early in 2015. We felt a strong commitment to ensure all our youth have as many opportunities as possible to become healthy, productive adults. We started with a committee of staff from several areas of the agency, including foster care, direct service, adolescent services and placement. We felt it was important to ensure both management and direct staff were part of the discussions to help guide our new policy and practice.

As a result of hard work and lots of discussion, we made changes to our driver's license policy, expanding it to allow all youth the opportunity to get their learner's permit and license. We came up with an extensive list of prudent parent guidelines for workers and foster parents to use when having discussions with the youth and families, as well as a log to help foster parents track

details to share during monthly home visits. The next step was to train our staff, youth, foster parents and providers. We held meetings with staff and presented the new policy and explained practice changes. We are conducting three-hour foster parent trainings monthly to ensure all our foster parents are prepared to make the prudent parent decisions. As part of our Permanency Roundtables, we include discussion of normalcy so each youth is being informed of the changes and opportunities available to them. We have highlighted the information in our quarterly provider meeting and fielded questions from all our providers about how to move forward in the process of normalcy for youth.

This is a slow process and every situation is as unique as the youth involved. Staff are working closely with supervisors and foster parents to help ensure children are safe and able to have meaningful experiences that enhance their social and emotional skills. We have already had a few youth get their learner's permit and license, many youth are now spending the night with friends and foster parents' extended families, one youth was able to go on a cruise with the foster family, and many of our teens are beginning to talk about what they want to do with more hope and openness. Overall, this has been a very good experience for our agency, and we believe it will continue to grow and benefit our youth and community.

The Caregiver Guidelines and Overnight Log documents (included as attachments with the First Friday email) are two examples of tools developed by the PCSA to support staff and foster parents. The log is used to record information when a child has an overnight and as an aid that foster parents can use when discussing overnights during caseworker visits. If you have questions about Montgomery County's efforts, email Belinda.Peugh@jfs.ohio.gov.

Angela Copes, client rights and performance improvement coordinator; Diane Stupp, treatment foster care coordinator; and Don Warner, executive director, Oesterlen Services for Youth:

In early 2016, all Oesterlen foster parents and staff received training on Ohio's normalcy and reasonable and prudent parenting policies, using "An Agency Introduction to Normalcy and the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard: Beginning the Work" (Lynn Anderson and Ronna Johnson, December 2015). More intensive training is planned for foster parents in 2016.

While some foster parents initially showed hesitation, the general reaction from staff, foster parents and youth has been positive. Emphasizing the expectation for open communication between foster parents and the

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treatment team has been helpful in alleviating fears of "getting in trouble" when allowing youth activities. Also helpful:

- Several PCSAs have written "normalcy letters" for youth that establish allowable activities that do not require contacting the PCSA. This also has made youth feel more empowered and excited about these changes.
- The residential program obtained approval of the treatment team for specified activities such as high school sports. Integrating the practice of advance discussion regarding activity plans has been beneficial for the teams.

Whether considering on- or off-campus activities, the paramount factors in the ongoing assessment of the youth's safety and well-being are the social, emotional

and developmental state of the youth. Equally important to identifying those youth who are ready to participate in various activities is preparing those youth for whom activities might not yet be appropriate. Youth assessed as not developmentally ready or not in a safe place to participate in a given activity are individually worked with to ready them for a future opportunity. In the interim, other non-threatening activities, individual and small group work are the focus for that youth.

Oesterlen Services for Youth has created an experiential learning environment, called the Life Skills Center, for youth in care. You can read more about activities at the center and how the agency helps promote normalcy for youth below. Call Angela Copes at (937) 399-6101 to learn more.

If you have questions about Ohio's normalcy policies and prudent parent standards, email Karen.McGormley@jfs.ohio.gov.

Oesterlen Services for Youth's Life Skills Center

By repurposing older campus cottages at its residential facility in Springfield, Oesterlen Services for Youth created a "Life Skills Center," where youth can gain social, vocational and relational skills, as well as academic credit. The center offers the following:

- Screen and News Press Shop
- Computer Lab
- Sewing Lab
- Woodworking Shop
- Green House
- Barnyard with goats, chickens, turkeys, rabbits, and miniature horses and pigs

Although it's open to any youth engaged in Oesterlen programming,

the center is used most often by those in residential care. As they participate, therapists and direct care staff engage them in treatment, as feasible and appropriate.

The center inspired the treatment team's summer project, which culminated last month with the first meeting of an official 4-H club open to youth from all programs. Members will participate in animal shows and project displays, both on- and off-site, as appropriate.

Infusing normalcy opportunities into residential care required an investment of time and some shifts in perspective, but Oesterlen staff

have recognized the benefit to youth. Residential, administrative, supervisory, training and treatment program staff continue to work together to expand opportunities for the youth in their care.



Left: Scenes from the Life Skills Center's Woodworking Shop, Green House and Barnyard.

Regional Summer Youth Events

Do you know a youth in care or transitioning young adult who might benefit from these fantastic opportunities? Spread the word!

2016 Reaching for Success Conference, Ohio University in Athens, May 14. This inaugural conference for foster youth 14 and older will feature workshops on career and leadership opportunities, education and higher education, healthy relationships, budgeting, and time management. Participants also will have access to a health and wellness area, Suits for Success, and a campus tour. Register at <http://ohioreach.wikispaces.com> or by emailing info@fosteractionohio.org.

Higher Education Mentoring Initiative's **2016 Career Pathways Summit**, Scarlet Oaks Career Campus in Cincinnati, June 15. The summit is open to current and former foster youth, ages 15 to 21, who live in Hamilton County. Participants are invited to observe and participate in live demonstrations of educational programs. The summit also will offer continuing education credit opportunities for professionals who work with foster youth. Email Sarah.Mangan@uc.edu for details.

The Purple Project's Seventh Annual "**I Believe in Me**" **Foster Care Youth Conference**, Cleveland State University, June 16-17. Since 2009, the Purple Project has devoted its energy to passionately advocating and providing services for youth who are on the path to aging out of foster care and those who already have aged out. Register at www.thepurpleproject.com.

Save the Date: Fostering Pathways to Success

The 2016 Fostering Pathways to Success conference is fast approaching! Mark your calendar for July 28, and don't miss this exciting day filled with valuable experiences for foster youth and the professionals who help them. ODJFS and Ohio Reach are partnering again to host this conference, which is designed to help youth in care transition to adulthood. Registration is open through July 1 at www.ohioreach.org.

Coming Soon: New Transitional Youth Activities

College Mural: To encourage youth to consider post-secondary education, the Fostering Pathways to Success Conference (see page below, left) will feature a mural of current and former Ohio foster youth who have continued their education beyond high school. We need your help to gather photos! Please either ask youth you know to let OFC use their photo, or send us contact information for potential participants so we can reach out to them. Photos must be submitted by July 1. Submission of a photo will constitute permission to use the photo in the mural. Agencies must provide written consent to include photos of minors. Please send questions, photos or contact information to Rachael.Holloway@jfs.ohio.gov or Chynna.Kelley@jfs.ohio.gov.

SACWIS enhancements: OFC has been working to enhance SACWIS functionality for those working with older youth in care. The Independent Living Plan, which is generated from SACWIS, will be easier for youth to understand and will allow independent living goals to be updated. Final Transition and Post-Emancipation plans also will be available. Updates are planned for early fall 2016.

Independent Living Webinar: Did you miss the independent living meeting and webinar on Feb. 29? Don't worry! You can view it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUI1voB0Xu4>.

Transitional Youth Toolkit: OFC's Transitional Youth staff are busy developing a toolkit to help professionals provide consistent and meaningful services that help youth transition successfully to adulthood. The toolkit will be filled with best practice engagement

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approaches and hands-on activities. Of course, we can't do this without the real experts: Our thanks to the Ohio Independent Living Association, which will review and help us with the final product.

Fall Regional Transitional Youth Meetings: Watch for information from OFC's Transitional Youth and Independent Living staff about facilitating an all-day meeting in your region during the first two weeks of October. OFC needs your help to make the meetings successful and is looking for agencies willing to host. To volunteer or to suggest meeting topics, email Transitional-Youth-Programs@jfs.ohio.gov.

Meet our New Transitional Youth Staff

OFC is excited to welcome Rachael Holloway and Chynna Kelley to our Transitional Youth staff. As former foster youth, they each contribute uniquely personal insight to their positions. To better understand their perspectives, we asked them about their work and lessons they've learned.

As a foster care youth advocate, how do you think you'll be most beneficial to Ohio's transitioning youth?

Rachael: I see myself being beneficial to any youth interested in knowing how to navigate through foster care as best as possible and communicate with caseworkers and service teams effectively. I also can offer advice on how to transition from being in foster care to returning home to your biological family, the importance of mentoring, and entering college with little or no support.

Chynna: As a former foster youth, I see myself serving as a voice of

Suits for Success

Do you have gently worn work clothes that you're no longer wearing? It's time to clean out your closet and put them to good use by donating to the fifth annual Suits for Success clothing drive. Co-sponsored by Action Ohio and the Ohio State Bar Foundation, Suits for Success provides professional attire to current and emancipated foster youth preparing for success in the work environment. Donations will be distributed at the upcoming Fostering Pathways to Success Conference (see page 5).

Donations can be dropped off at 4200 E. Fifth Ave. in Columbus from 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on May 6, May 20, June 3, June 24 and July 8. All contributions are tax deductible, and forms will be available when you drop off your items. Most-needed items are men's and women's suits, shirts, ties, skirts, blouses, belts, and new or very gently used shoes. Suit jackets also are accepted.

Please label all clothing according to size so volunteers and youth don't have to guess. For women's dresses and suits, use standard dress sizes. For men's suits, use standard chest measurement sizes. For dress shirts, use standard neck measurement sizes.

For more information, contact Rachael Holloway at Rachael.Holloway@jfs.ohio.gov or (614) 387-3653, or Chynna Kelley at Chynna.Kelley@jfs.ohio.gov or (614) 466-3128.

Chynna Kelley (right) and Rachael Holloway (far right).



the youth currently in foster care, sharing both successful and adverse experiences that I faced. I would like to shed some light on things that have a lasting effect on foster youth, some that are not commonly thought of or known. I believe that I can provide insight on practices that are in place to help contribute to the success of the foster youth, as well as assist in crafting new policies and practices that would positively affect the youth in foster care. I see myself serving as a role model and serving as an example of a positive product of the foster system.

Do you have any advice or guidance for teens entering foster care?

Rachael:

- Youth should build relationships with supportive adults that guide and encourage you to succeed in every aspect of life.
- Youth should begin to think about life after foster care, find and secure their resources (people or organizations), and begin to devise a realistic plan of goals and objectives to pre-

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pare them for life after foster care.

- Youth should choose a career that pays great and choose a career that they would enjoy! Youth in care need to think about their best interest and quality of life before anything or anyone else. By choosing a great-paying job earlier in life, they will be able to obtain financial stability, as well as confidence in other areas. This will allow them to return to

their neighborhood and give back or be charitable to someone else in need.

Chynna:

- Youth should speak up, offer their input and take an active role in their future life planning.
- Youth should stay positive and not lose focus of their dreams and goals. Their current situation is not their fault and is not necessarily a bad one. Everything is happening for their best interest and sometimes we can't see the silver lining

through the clouds.

- Youth should never give up on their dreams and goals, and should not let anyone else's opinions, perceptions or words tear them down.
- Youth should understand that everyone has an obstacle to overcome and conquer, and that it's not about where you start in life, but it's where you finish that matters! Youth should take advantage of all of the opportunities that are afforded to them from being in foster care, and that ultimately it is for their success.

May 2016 Global Emails

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

3/1/16 - Foster Care Licensing Enforcement Issues

3/1/16 - Opiate Conference Scholarship

3/1/16 - Regional Caseflow Courses

4/1/16 - Notice to PCSA and PCPA of the Issuance of an Adjudication Order to House of Emmanuel, Inc.

4/6/16 - Regional Meeting Opportunities

4/8/16 - Regional Meeting Opportunities

4/13/16 - Audit A-05-16-00020

4/18/16 - State Adoption Incentive Program Allocation Amendment

4/20/16 - Save the Date: National Foster Care Month Post-Reunification Supports and Prevention of Reentry Into Out-of-Home Care

Transitional Youth Programs Statewide Meeting

The Transitional Youth/Independent Living Statewide Meeting on March 30 had a wealth of resources and information for attendees. If you missed it, fear not! You can view it as a webinar [here](#). You need Microsoft Silverlight, a free download. Window users must be running Windows 7 or higher. Here's an overview of some of the topics covered:

- Important policy changes resulting from the federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act, including extended independent living services to youth 14 and older, the revised credit reporting procedure, and allowable expenditures for Chafee and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families independent living funds.
- Normalcy and prudent parent training for foster parents.
- The Purple Umbrella Project, an effort to improve access to services for youth who aged out of foster care. To learn more, email Danielle.Green-Welch@jfs.ohio.gov or kmcday@summitkids.org.
- Sex trafficking and transitioning youth.
- Empowering the New Generation to Achieve Their Goals through Empowerment (ENGAGE), a federal grant-funded effort to expand the system of care for Ohioans 14 to 21 with multi-system needs.
- The federal Youth at Risk of Homelessness Planning Grant, which is designed to prevent homelessness for youth in the child welfare system.
- The Safe and Supported Initiative, a pilot program providing prevention and intervention services to address the disproportionate number of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth who are homeless, as well as youth who are

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- transitioning or have emancipated from foster care.
- Credit reports for youth in foster care and foster youth identity fraud.
- The Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP), which is a youth development program targeting children who are involved in either the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. PREP coordinators will work with any children services agency that wants to implement the program. To become a facilitator, email Henry.Lustig@odh.ohio.gov.
- Permanency and transitional youth.
- The Ohio Reach Mentoring Initiative, which is designed to improve the college retention and graduation rates of students who have emancipated from foster care.

- The Ohio Independent Living Association, which has upcoming meetings on July 21 and Oct. 20 at the Quest Conference Center in Columbus.
- The Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio Youth Advisory Board (OHIOYAB).
- A U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development opportunity for public housing and child welfare agencies to provide longer-term housing assistance for youth with child welfare histories.
- The National Youth in Transition Database (also see page 2).
- The Fostering Pathways to Success Conference (also see page 5).

For handouts and PowerPoint presentations, email Transitional-Youth-Programs@jfs.ohio.gov.

CFSR Update

Ohio is scheduled for its federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) in 2017, and we have an important decision on the horizon! In this round, the Children’s Bureau of the U.S. Administration for Children and Families is offering states the option to conduct a self-review using a pre-approved methodology or to have a traditional, federally conducted case review, similar to previous rounds. ODJFS must choose which option we prefer by July 15. On the right is a side-by-side comparison.

Although the self-review option would require a significant commitment, it has a number of advantages. These include the following:

- The ability to obtain more accurate results through a larger and more representative sample of cases.
- Increased control over the review process, although federal quality assurance staff will ensure that the review tool is applied correctly and consistently.
- Greater county involvement in the CFSR process, from initial review to ongoing

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Traditional Review	Self Review
Children’s Bureau would manage the review sample.	ODJFS would use stakeholder input to determine the structure of the review sample; the Children’s Bureau must approve this structure.
Performance would be determined based on three sites (Franklin County and two other PCSAs).	Methodology may include more than three sites. Ohio may conduct a statewide random sample of cases from any PCSA and/or Title IV-E court, or select a random sample of cases from a representative group of PCSAs and/or Title IV-E courts.
Review would be completed in one week.	Review may be completed within six months (April 1 through Sept. 30, 2017).
Review would be limited to 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home).	No limitation on the number of cases reviewed, and Ohio can use a ratio of cases that is consistent with the state ratio.

Did You Know?

April marked the beginning of the case review sample period for the 2017 CFSR, regardless of which type of review we choose. Ohio’s sample will include cases open between April 1 and Nov. 15, 2016, including in-home services cases, Alternative Response cases, and foster care cases for both PCSAs and Title IV-E courts. This means the work we’re doing today impacts our CFSR results!

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annual reviews as the state's program improvement plan is implemented. The subsequent reviews will measure whether Ohio is meeting established improvement goals to prevent future financial penalties.

- Built-in opportunities for cross-county learning through ongoing peer review.

With the self-review option, county partnership would be essential for maximum benefit and meaningfulness. Ideally, OFC would like to recruit and train county reviewers to work side by side with state staff through the initial and subsequent reviews. If Ohio chooses this option, OFC would work with federal partners over the next several months to establish the structure and methodology. We would keep local agencies informed throughout this process, of course.

If you have thoughts or questions about this decision, please email Carla.Carpenter@jfs.ohio.gov. We welcome your feedback!

Rule Review Update

The following Ohio Administrative Code rules and JFS forms were posted to www.ohiorulereview.org for the times specified below.

From Feb. 24 through March 26:

- Multiple foster care licensing and training rules (OAC Rules 5101:2-5-26, 5101:2-5-32, 5101:2-5-35, 5101:2-5-38 and 5101:2-7-08).
Purpose: Five-year rule review and clarification revisions.

From Feb. 25 through March 27:

- JFS 01700 - Individual Child Care Agreement
Purpose: Revision

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 548 hits in March and 291 hits in April.

May 25 is National Missing Children's Day

Missing Children's Day is dedicated to encouraging parents, guardians, caregivers and others concerned with the well-being of children to make child safety a priority. It serves as a reminder to continue our efforts to reunite missing children with their families. It's also an occasion to honor those dedicated to this noble cause. The U.S. Department of Justice hosts a ceremony each year celebrating the heroic and exemplary efforts of agencies, organizations, and individuals to protect children. For training opportunities and resources, visit <http://mecptraining.org/>.

Feedback and Subscriptions

If you want to subscribe to First Friday, have comments or ideas about content, or wish to be removed from the mailing list, please send an email to First_Friday@jfs.ohio.gov. For additions to or removals from the list, be sure to include your name, organization and email address.

Principle of the Month

OFC seeks and supports strategies to strengthen the voices of youth and families for its work.



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