

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **May Is National Foster Care Month**

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is joining Governor Strickland in recognizing May as National Foster Care Month and urging all Ohioans to do something positive to make a difference for children and youth in foster care.

There are many ways to make a positive difference in the lives of children in foster care – as foster parents, volunteers, mentors, employers or in other ways. These and other suggestions are available at [www.fostercaremonth.org](http://www.fostercaremonth.org):

- Wear a blue ribbon in May in support of National Foster Care Month (NFPA Blue Ribbon Month Campaign, [www.nfpainc.org](http://www.nfpainc.org)).
- Volunteer. Give of your time, expertise, compassion and enthusiasm. Get involved with Foster Care to Success, a national movement that harnesses the power of volunteer groups to support foster youth in their own communities ([www.orphan.org](http://www.orphan.org)).
- Send a care package to foster care alumni attending college through the Orphan Foundation of America ([www.orphan.org](http://www.orphan.org)).
- Make a financial contribution to a national organization working to heighten public awareness of the issues affecting foster youth ([www.fostercarealumni.org](http://www.fostercarealumni.org)).

Ohio has approximately 11,000 children in foster care and more than 6,000 licensed foster homes. In addition, many children live with grandparents or other relatives when their parents cannot care for them. This kinship care increases stability for children by keeping them closer to their siblings, extended families, neighborhoods and schools.

“Foster families and kinship families do not get enough recognition for all the work and service they provide. These families and individuals are the reason many of the children have been reunified with their parents,” said ODJFS Director Douglas Lumpkin. “These families and individuals continue to provide more than temporary shelter; many families change the lives of children forever. It is with great appreciation that we recognize all child advocates and organizations that support children in crisis.”

ODJFS develops rules and guidelines to aid counties in implementing programs for children who cannot safely remain in their own homes. Local children services agencies regularly recruit potential families to serve in this capacity. A directory of county children services agencies is available at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/county>. For more information about foster care, visit <http://jfs.ohio.gov/factsheets/FosterCare.pdf>. For more information about kinship care, go to <http://jfs.ohio.gov/factsheets/KinshipCare.pdf>.