

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ODJFS Recognizes Ohio's Foster Parents

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Governor Kasich has recognized May 2015 as Foster Care Month in Ohio, and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is encouraging all Ohioans to do something positive for children and teens in foster care.

“Ohio’s foster parents provide a safe, loving environment for children in need,” said ODJFS Director Cynthia C. Dungey. “These families make a full-time commitment to help children who have nowhere else to go. I want to personally thank them for their dedication, and I urge all Ohioans to do the same.”

Ohio takes an innovative approach toward supporting the approximately 13,000 children in foster care and more than 9,000 foster families.

“Blueprint for a New Ohio,” Governor Kasich’s proposed biennial budget, provides an additional \$3.2 million in annual funding for teens in foster care who will soon transition to adulthood. County child protective services agencies can use this money as a match to draw down nearly \$10 million in federal funding for education, employment, financial management, housing, emotional and other needs. The funding also will support families working to maintain custody of their children. In addition, the budget proposes enrolling all children in foster care in Medicaid managed care plans to ensure that they get the best possible medical care.

ODJFS partners with the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption to find adoptive families for older children who have been languishing in foster care. Since the partnership began in 2012, 141 children have been adopted, and 382 have been matched with potential adoptive families. In addition, the State Adoption Incentive Program provides more than \$1 million annually to help match children in foster care with adoptive families, and new permanency roundtables bring adults and children together to help caseworkers identify safe, permanent homes.

Last year, nearly 1,400 children in foster care were matched with loving, adoptive families.

There are many ways Ohioans can help support children and teens in foster care. Ohioans interested in becoming a foster parent, adopting a child, or contributing in other ways should contact their county public children services agency. A directory of county agencies is available at http://jfs.ohio.gov/county/County_Directory.pdf.

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