

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 15, 2014

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May Is Foster Care and Adoption Recognition and Recruitment Month

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

“On any given day in Ohio, approximately 13,000 children are in foster care, and more than 3,200 are waiting for adoptive families,” said ODJFS Director Cynthia Dungey. “Ohio’s foster, kinship and adoptive parents serve a vital role in our communities. They offer safety, stability and love to children who need and deserve it. They’ve made a 24/7 commitment, and in return we owe them our sincere respect, support and gratitude.”

Whenever children can’t safely remain in their own homes, caseworkers first attempt to place them with a suitable relative. When kinship care isn’t an option, caseworkers then attempt to find a suitable non-relative with whom the child or family has a relationship. If that’s not possible, the child is placed into a licensed foster care setting, ideally in the child’s own neighborhood or community. Foster care is designed to be temporary. However, if a court determines that it is not in a child’s best interest to return home, caseworkers take steps to find an alternative permanent placement, such as legal guardianship or adoption.

In recent years, ODJFS has made finding permanent homes for children in foster care a priority. Through a partnership with the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, 45 child-focused adoption recruiters have been trained in the “Wendy’s Wonderful Kids” model, which is almost twice as likely as traditional methods to result in adoptions. Since the program started in October 2012, 33 adoptions have been finalized for children ages 9 to 17 who had been in foster care more than two years.

Ohioans interested in more information about becoming a foster parent should contact their county public children services agency. A directory of county agencies is available at http://jfs.ohio.gov/county/County_Directory.pdf. Ohioans interested in learning more about adoption should call their county public children services agency or visit <http://jfs.ohio.gov/oapl/>.

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