



**Department of  
Job and Family Services**

Mike DeWine, Governor  
Kimberly Hall, Director

Office of Families  
and Children

# FFPSA Model Standards

Issued 2/4/2019

# History

- Proposed standards released late summer 2019
- Largely based on NARA model standards  
(National Association of Regulatory Administration)
- Comment period open 8/1/2019 – 10/1/2019
  - 1,273 comments were received
    - Majority from public re: vaccinations
    - No significant changes made, few clarifications
- Final standards posted 2/4/2019

# Categories of standards

Eligibility

Health & Safety

Capacity

Sleeping Arrangements

Emergency Preparedness,  
Fire Safety, Evac. Plans

Transportation

Training

Foster Parent Assurances



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# Significant Changes To Practice or Processes To Laws, Rules, Forms, SACWIS

# Foster Family Home Eligibility

## Threshold Requirements

- Applicants must be at least 18
  - Currently 21 for foster
  - Currently 18 for adoption
  - Relative foster parents can waive now
- Change to OAC and some forms

# Foster Family Home Eligibility

## ○ Physical and Mental Health

- Applicants- Physical Exam within 12 months that states applicant is capable of caring for children
- Household members must report physical & mental health history, including substance abuse/treatment
  - No exam required for HH members or physician signature

## ○ Change to OAC and medical form, pg.1/pg.2

# Foster Family Home Eligibility

## ○ Physical and Mental Health

- Children who are HH members must be up to date on all immunizations recommended by
  - AAP- American Academy of Pediatrics
  - ACIP- Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices
  - AAFP- American Academy of Family Physicians
- Unless immunization is contrary to child's health as documented by licensed health care professional

# Concern

ORC 3313.671 (ODE law) Parents can complete form to exempt students from vaccinations due to:

- Reasons of conscience
- Religious convictions

# What would this mean?

47 states allow religious exemptions

17 of those states also allow personal belief exemptions

3 states only allow exemptions for medical reasons (allergic to something in vaccination, weakened immune system, etc.)

- California (2015), West Virginia, Mississippi

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/health/school-immunization-exemption-state-laws.aspx>

# Foster Family Home Eligibility

## ○ Physical and Mental Health

- HH members of those caring for **infants** must be up to date on **pertussis vaccine** (whooping cough) as recommended by ACIP
- Unless immunization is contrary to individual's health as documented by licensed health care professional
- Note: Children in home would already have due to previous requirement (if aligned)

# Foster Family Home Eligibility

## ○ Physical and Mental Health

- HH members of those caring for **infants** and children with **‘special medical needs’** must be up to date on **annual flu vaccine** as recommended by ACIP
- Unless immunization is contrary to individual’s health as documented by licensed health care professional

# What does this mean?

- Could align with ODE standard of religious or personal exemption
- How will that be documented?
  - ODE requires form for exemption
  - Some states require notarized statement
  - Some states require physician signature

# Foster Family Home Eligibility

## ○ Background Checks

- Only requires applicants to submit criminal background checks
  - CAPTA requires for all adult HH members
  - Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act

## ○ Not planning to align in order to stay compliant with CAPTA

# Foster Family Home Eligibility

## ○ Background Checks

- Must not approve **ever** if felony conviction for:

- Child abuse or neglect
- Crime against children

- Includes child pornography

- Spousal Abuse

- Crime involving violence

- Includes rape, sexual assault, homicide

- Does not include physical assault or battery

## ○ Current Requirement:

- Spousal Abuse, Rape, Sexual Assault, Homicide

# Foster Family Home Eligibility

## ○ Background Checks

- Must be at least 5 years after felony conviction for:
  - Physical Assault
  - Battery
  - Drug-related offenses
- No predetermined timeframes for other felonies or for misdemeanors

# Foster Family Home Eligibility

Current requirement- 5101:2-7-02, 109.572

- List of prohibited offenses
  - 3 years misdemeanor, 10 years felony
- Rehabilitation standards
  - Offender's age at time of offense
  - Nature, severity, circumstances
  - Likelihood of recurrence, repeat offender
  - Employment record, other convictions
  - Other relevant factors to ensure children placed won't be at risk

# Foster Family Home Eligibility

## Background Checks- Discussion

- Could align with unforgivable and 5 year timeframe for other specific violent crimes.
- Still a need to assess even if not a prohibited offense.
- Could require assessment of other felonies and misdemeanors based on rehabilitation criteria.

# Foster Family Home Health & Safety

- The home must prevent access to alcoholic beverages as appropriate to the child's age and development.
  - High shelves
  - Child safety locks on cabinet
  - Locked liquor cabinet

Current requirement: None

# Foster Family Home Capacity

Total number of foster children in a family foster home must not exceed six (6)

- Specific exceptions included

Current requirement:

Not more than a total of ten children, including:

- the children of a foster caregiver
- type B child care children
- children receiving any private child care services

Per ORC 5103.0317, a foster home shall not receive more than five foster children, with similar exceptions.

# Foster Family Home Capacity

## Exceptions to the six children being placed:

- Parenting foster youth to care for their child
- To allow siblings to stay together
- To allow a child with a significant relationship with the caregiver to be placed in the home
- To allow a family with special training or skills to provide care to a child who has a severe disability (NEW)

# Foster Parent Assurances

- Applicants and guests will not smoke in the foster home, in any vehicle used to transport the child, or in the presence of the child in foster care.
- Current Requirements are above **WHEN** in the presence of a foster child.

# Minor Changes To Practice or Processes To Laws, Rules, or Forms/SACWIS

# Minor Changes needed to align

## Foster Home Eligibility/ Threshold Requirement:

- Applicants must be able to **communicate** with the child, the agency, and health care and service providers

## Current Requirement:

- At least one foster parent in the home shall be able to read, write, and speak in English or be able to communicate with any child placed in the home and with the recommending agency

# Minor Changes needed to align

## Foster Home Eligibility / Threshold Requirements:

- At least one applicant in the home must have **functional literacy** to read and write at the level necessary to participate effectively in the community in which they live.

## Current Requirement:

- At least one foster parent in the home shall be able to read, write, and speak in English or be able to communicate with any child placed in the home and with the recommending agency

# Minor Changes needed to align

## Foster Home Eligibility / Home Study

- At least one scheduled **in home interview for each household member** to observe family functioning and assess the family's capacity to meet the needs of a child or children in foster care

### Current Requirement:

- Interviews are required, at least one home visit is required for safety audit. No specification that interviews be conducted in the home.

# Minor Changes needed to align

## Foster Home Eligibility / Home Study

- The title IV-E agency has discretion on whether to interview or observe each household member based on his or her age and development

### Current Requirement:

- Face to face interview with everyone in the home over 4 years of age

# Minor Changes needed to align

## Foster Home Eligibility / Home Study

- Multiple applicant references that attest to the capability of the applicant to care for the child, including **at least one from a relative** and one from a non-relative

### Current Requirement:

- Three references from people who are not related to applicant or live with applicant

# Minor Changes needed to align

## Foster Home Health and Safety

- The foster home must be a house, mobile home, housing unit or apartment occupied by an individual or a family

### Current Requirement:

- No similar specification

# Minor Changes needed to align

## Foster Home Health and Safety

- The foster home must be free from rodents and insect infestation, have proper water heater temp., have a properly operating kitchen with a sink, refrigerator, stove, and oven;

### Current Requirement:

- No similar specification

# Minor Changes needed to align Foster Home Health and Safety

- Swimming pools (not including wading. kiddie pools)
  - Must have a barrier on all sides
  - Must have access through barrier equipped with a safety device, such as a bolt lock
  - Must be equipped with a life saving device, such as a ring buoy
  - If the pool cannot be emptied after each use, it must have a working pump and filtering system
  - Hot tubs and spas must have safety covers that lock

## Current Requirement:

- Water areas shall be reasonably safeguarded, considering the age and functioning level of the foster child

# Minor Changes needed to align Foster Home Sleeping arrangements

- Foster parents must not co-sleep or bed-share with infants.

## Current Requirement:

- Each foster child shall be provided with a clean, comfortable, permanent bed and mattress of his or her own. A permanent bed is one that cannot be converted to any other form.

# Minor Changes needed to align Emergency Preparedness, Fire Safety, Evac. Plans

- Have at least one smoke detector on each level of occupancy of the home and **at least one near all sleeping areas**

## Current Requirement:

- A foster home shall have a working smoke alarm approved by "Underwriter's Laboratory" on each level of occupancy of the home

# Minor Changes needed to align Emergency Preparedness, Fire Safety, Evac. Plans

- Have at least one carbon monoxide detector on each level of occupancy of the home and at least one near all sleeping areas

## Current Requirement:

- No requirement for carbon monoxide detectors

# Minor Changes needed to align Emergency Preparedness, Fire Safety, Evac. Plans

- Maintain first aid supplies

## Current Requirement:

- No requirement for first aid supplies. Will need to determine how specific we want to be with this.

# Minor Changes needed to align Transportation

- Reliable, legal and safe
- Properly maintained vehicle/access to public transit
- If vehicle owned by foster family or friends is used to transport, must have valid license, insurance, registration and safety restraints

## Current Requirement:

- Foster parent's vehicle used to transport children shall be maintained in a safe condition in compliance with all motor vehicle laws and shall be covered by liability insurance in accordance with current state laws.

# Minor Changes needed to align Training

- legal rights, **roles**, responsibilities and **expectations** of foster parents
- **agency structure, purpose, policies, and services**

## Current Requirement:

- Legal rights and responsibilities of foster parents
- Agency's policies and procedures for foster parents

# Minor Changes needed to align Training

- CPR & First Aid for the age of children placed
- Medication administration

## Current Requirement:

- CPR & First Aid for specialized foster parents, or if agency determines it is necessary for the child in their home.
- No requirement for medication administration

# Minor Changes needed to align Training

- Importance of maintaining meaningful connections between child and parents, including regular visitation

## Current Requirement:

- Effects placement, separation, and attachment issues have on children, families, and foster parents
- Effects of caregiving on children's families

# Minor Changes needed to align Foster Parent Assurances

- Applicants must agree to comply with their roles and responsibilities as discussed with the agency once a child is placed in their care

## Current Requirement:

- The JFS 01691 "Application For Child Placement" requires applicants receive the rules
- Could add additional assurances to last page

# Minor Changes needed to align Foster Parent Assurances

- Applicants will not use corporal or degrading punishment

## Current Requirement:

- Prohibit corporal/degrading punishment, but do not have foster parents specifically attest to it
- Could add that assurance to last page of JFS 1691

# Minor Changes needed to align Foster Parent Assurances

- Applicants will not
  - Use any illegal substances
  - Abuse alcohol by using in excess amounts
  - Abuse legal prescription/nonprescription drugs by using in excess amounts or other than as indicated

## Current Requirement:

- Not currently specified
- Could add assurances to last page of JFS 1691

# Minor Changes needed to align Foster Parent Assurances

- Applicants will adhere to the IV–E agency’s reasonable and prudent parent standard

## Current Requirement:

- Foster parent will use the reasonable and prudent parent standard when considering whether to allow a foster child to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities
- Could add as an assurance to last page of JFS 1691<sup>42</sup>



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**No Changes Needed  
Already Aligned**

## Already aligned

- Applicants must have income or resources to make timely payments for shelter, food, utility costs, clothing, and other household expenses
- All household members must disclose physical, mental health, substance abuse issues or history
- Child Abuse/ neglect registry checks for all adults
  - Including other states resided within 5 years

## Already aligned

- At least one home visit to assess safety
- Adequate supply of safe drinking water
- At least one operating toilet, sink, shower
- Heating/cooling consistent w/ community standards
- Working phone or access in close proximity
- Home, grounds, all structures maintained in safe, clean, condition within community standards
- Free from dangerous or hazardous materials
- Adequate lighting, ventilation, trash disposal

## Already aligned

- Weapons locked, unloaded, separate from ammo, inaccessible
- Pets are vaccinated in accordance with law
- Prevent access to poisons, cleaning supplies, hazardous materials
- Foster Home Capacity exceptions
- Fire extinguisher readily accessible
- Home free of obvious fire hazards

## Already aligned

- Written evac. plan posted and reviewed w/child
- Emergency phone #s posted
- Training topics- Behavior management, laws and regulations, impact of childhood trauma
- Ongoing Training required regarding:
  - Foster Parent roles
  - Ensure they are up to date with agency requirements
  - May include child-specific training

## Next Steps Report to HHS by 1/1/2020

- If we align with each model standard / plan to align
- If we do not, why not
- If we waive non-safety standards for relative foster caregivers (we do)
- Which standards are most commonly waived
- How are caseworkers trained to use waiver
- Is there a process to assist workers in waiving non-safety standards in order to place quickly
- What steps are being taken to improve caseworker training/process

Questions?  
Concerns?  
Comments?



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