

POLICY ON THE ADOPTION BY FOSTER HOME OF A CHILD OR SIBLING GROUP WHO BECOMES AVAILABLE WHILE IN THE FOSTER HOME

Foster Caregivers

As a foster caregiver, you will be notified when the Agency is planning to file for permanent custody of your foster child or sibling group. If you are then interested in adopting your foster child or sibling group, you need to notify the Agency of your intentions by completing the "Foster Parent Interest in Adoption" form. The completed form needs to be given to the foster child's caseworker.

When a foster caregiver who has not been approved to be an adoptive parent through the joint home study process expresses an interest in being approved as an adoptive parent and the foster child has resided with the foster caregiver for less than least six consecutive months, an agency's assessor is responsible for the following: the Agency shall:

1. Assist the foster caregiver in completing the applicable sections of the current JFS 01691, "Application for Child Placement" (rev. 6/2009) on file or completing a new JFS 01691. The foster caregiver shall sign the revised JFS 01691 or a new JFS 01691 indicating they would like to be approved for adoption.
2. Review and compile in the record the following information to determine the appropriateness of the foster caregiver for adoptive placement:
 - a. The most recent JFS 01653, "Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members;"
 - b. JFS 01349, "Foster Home Homestudy" or the JFS 01673, "Assessment for Child Placement (Homestudy), the JFS 01673-A "Child Characteristics Checklist for Foster Care and/or Adoption" and the JFS 01530 "Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment" as applicable.
 - c. All JFS 01385 "Assessment for Child Placement Update" (rev. 12/2006) forms, if applicable.
 - d. Documentation from the foster home record including but not limited to the most recent training records, fire inspection reports, safety audits, foster home exit interviews, and copies of all complaint or rule violation investigations and any applicable corrective action plans. If there are any outstanding complaints or rule noncompliance investigations, or corrective action plans that have not been fully implemented, the sending agency, if different, shall notify the agency completing the adoption approval of the nature of the investigations or corrective action plans.
 - e. Case record information documented by the placement worker's visits to the foster home.

- f. If the agency completing the adoption homestudy approval is different than the agency that recommends the foster home, the foster care agency shall forward copies of all applicable documents in the foster home record within fifteen business days of receipt of the signed release of information.

3. Once the documentation in paragraph (A)(2) of this rule is received, the assessor shall:

- (a) Review information contained on the JFS 01691 and all supporting documentation.
- (b) Conduct a home visit.
- (c) Complete the JFS 01530, if applicable, as outlined in the Rule 5101:2-48-12 of the Administrative Code when a family has a total of five or more children residing in the home, including foster children and children in kinship care; or if the family will have a total of five or more children who will reside in the home upon the adoptive placement of a child.
- (d) Observe the interaction between the child, foster caregiver and other members of the household, if applicable.
- (e) Discuss how the foster caregiver is working with the child on problems identified in the case plan and how they will deal with long term issues the child may have.
- (f) Discuss the differences between foster care and adoption with the foster caregiver, and the reason for the request for adoption approval at this time.
- (g) Discuss the availability of adoption assistance and post finalization adoption services with the foster caregiver.
- (h) Complete the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reports as outlined in Rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code.
- (i) If the agency has the ability to complete the search in SACWIS, the agency shall complete a search of abuse and neglect report history through the system for each foster caregiver and adult household member. If the agency does not have the ability to complete the search in SACWIS, the agency shall request a search of the system from ODJFS for each foster caregiver and each adult household member. The report with the results of the search shall be placed in the foster home record.
 - (1) This adoptive search is to be used to determine the suitability of the adoptive applicant as an adoptive applicant.
 - (2) The search shall also be conducted within ten days of the addition of any new adult member of the household once the homestudy has been approved.
- (j) Request a check of the child abuse and neglect registry of any other state an applicant or other adult household member has resided in the five years immediately prior to the date of the

criminal records check as required by Division (A) of Section 2151.86 of the Revised Code.

4. Based upon information obtained through interviews and the review of documentation outlined in Paragraph (A) of this rule, the assessor shall complete any sections of the JFS 01673 not completed on the previous homestudy.

Following the completion of these activities, the Agency will provide the foster caregiver with a written approval or denial of the application for adoptive placement. All consideration will be given to the foster caregiver's application provided it is in the best interest of the child. Falsification of documents will result in denial of the application.

Foster-to-Adopt Caregivers

If a foster caregiver expresses the desire to adopt a foster child who has resided with the caregiver for at least six consecutive months prior to the date the foster caregiver submits the Application to Adopt to the Agency, the Agency will provide the foster caregiver with a JFS 01692 "Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Application for Adoption of a Foster Child." A completed JFS 01692, with supporting documentation, will serve as a shortened home study and replaces the JFS 01673 "Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Assessment for Child Placement."

Upon receipt of a completed JFS 01692, the Agency will review the application with the foster caregiver. The Agency will inform the foster caregiver that although a BCII check is not required as a condition of acceptance or approval of the application to adopt a foster child, a criminal records check is required before a court may issue a final decree of adoption of interlocutory order of adoption. The Agency will also provide the foster caregiver with information regarding the requirements for adoption training and the application process and eligibility requirements of Title IV-E adoption assistance, state adoption maintenance subsidy, state special services subsidy, post-adoption special services subsidy, and non-recurring adoption expense.

The Agency must document in the case file that the foster caregiver has fulfilled the adoption training requirements. The Agency must also compile and review the following information to determine the appropriateness of the foster caregiver for adoptive placement:

1. JFS 01653 "Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members;"
2. JFS 1673 "Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Assessment for Child Placement (Homestudy);"
3. All JFS 1385 forms, "Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Assessment for Child Placement Update," if applicable;
4. Foster home record;
5. BCII and FBI criminal record check; and summary report of a search of the central registry for all adult household members
6. Case record information documented by the placement worker's visits to the foster home.
7. Agency must compile and review the JFS 01530 as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-12 of the Administrative

Code when a family has total of five or more children residing in the home, including foster children and children in kinship care; or if the family will have a total of five or more children who will reside in the home upon the adoptive placement of a child.

8. Completion of the Required Adoption training sessions: Sexual Abuse, Permanency for Children, and Permanency for Families. Other training including Adoption Related Issues and the Adoption Process, (i.e. Talking about adoption with the adopted child, the child's birth family and ongoing contact with significant others, Adoption and the extended family, adoption issues at school and in the community, using community resources, advocating for the adoptive family and child, agency policy and procedures, role of the agency, pre-service training, homestudy, matching, placement, post – placement services, adoption subsidies, legalization, openness of adoption. Additionally, if a foster/adoptive caregiver received training or transferred from another agency, they would need to receive training on Trumbull County Children Services adoption policies.
9. Assessor will conduct a SACWIS and Central Registry Search.

The PCSA, if different from the PCSA in the county in which the adoptive applicant(s) resides shall provide a letter containing relevant information about the adoptive applicant(s) to the PCSA in the county in which the adoptive applicant resides when the adoptive home study is initiated.

Following the completion of these activities, the Agency will provide the foster caregiver with a written approval or denial of the application for adoptive placement.

The placement of a child in an adoptive home or the matching decision will be based on the child's individual needs and the ability of the prospective adoptive parent to meet those needs. At a minimum, the matching decision shall be based on the consideration of the placement of siblings together, information contained in the Child Study Inventory, the JFS 01689, "Documentation of the Placement Decision-Making Process" and the JFS 01688, "Individualized Child Assessment", if applicable.

Regardless of the geographic location, the following preferential order shall be given when considering families in the matching process:

1. All adult relatives of the child. This includes a relative or non-relative who the birthmother has indicated by name as a potential resource to adopt her child.
 - a. The identified relative or non-relative shall have, at minimum, a signed JFS 01691 or other signed adoption application on file with another state at least 5 working days prior to the matching conference.
 - b. The identified relative or non-relative shall meet all relevant state child protection standards unless the PCSA or PCPA determines that the placement is not in the best interest of the child.
2. The child's foster caregiver who is approved to adopt or who has completed the JFS 01691 at least 5 working days prior to the matching conference unless the agency determines that placement is not in the best interest of the child.
3. Other suitable approved prospective adoptive families.

Each case, in which a foster family desires to adopt their foster child, is assessed on an individual basis.

Factors that are weighed in determining whether the foster parent adoption is in the foster child's best interest, include the following:

- 1) the foster parents' motivation for adoption;
- 2) the ability to place birth siblings together;
- 3) the length of the foster placement in relation to the age of the foster child;
- 4) the foster child's attachment to the foster family;
- 5) the presence of "special needs" in the foster child;
- 6) the foster family's ability to remain anonymous from the birth family. If there is no anonymity, then any history of physical violence or aggressive behavior on the part of the birth parent(s) is considered.

The Agency shall not release a homestudy to any other agency or probate court if it is determined the application, homestudy, or any document submitted throughout the homestudy process contains a false statement knowingly made by the applicant(s).

If a child in the Agency's custody, but placed in the foster home of another agency, becomes available for adoption, the TCCSB caseworker for the child will notify the other agency, as well as the foster caregiver, of the adoption process. This notification will include a copy of this policy.

Effective	February 2004	PJJ/RAS
Revised	January 11, 2008	CLM/PJJ
Revised	July 1, 2009	CLM
Revised	January 11, 2010	CLM
Revised	September 17, 2015	RMM